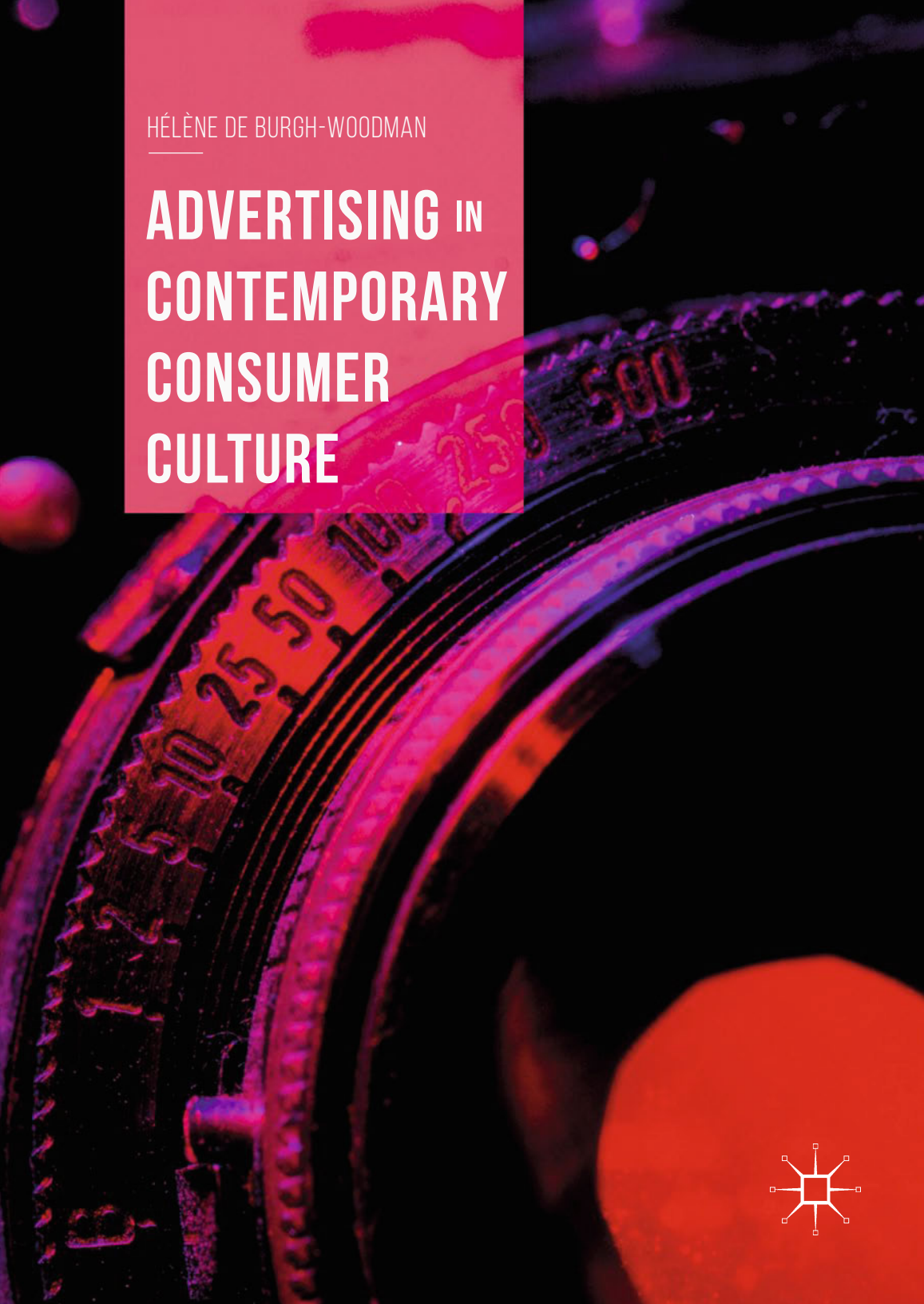
HÉLÈNE DE BURGH-WOODMAN

ADVERTISING IN CONTEMPORARY CONSUMER CULTURE



Advertising in Contemporary Consumer Culture

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For Lucia and Portia
It was difficult without you

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1

Introduction

Advertising is our cultural wallpaper. Emblazoned across our radios, our televisions, our bus shelters, flickering encouragingly in shopping centres, on computer screens, and beckoning us from roadside billboards, advertising wraps around virtually every space in which we go about our lives. Like wallpaper, the bland and mundane ad goes unnoticed, the distasteful or garish offends, but the beautiful or interesting has the potential to augment our aesthetic experience and enhance our sense of engagement with our various environments. A great deal of important scholarly consideration has been directed towards the history of advertising, which has given us rich insights into how it has emerged over the last couple of centuries and a slew of texts have been dedicated to "how to do" advertising, how to integrate it into marketing strategy and how to measure its effectiveness. But less attention has been paid to where advertising currently sits in contemporary consumer culture such that it seems timely to ask questions surrounding what advertising now is (or will potentially become), what role it plays in the digital media landscape and whether we should continue to regard it largely as a largely rhetorical-persuasive, sometimes aesthetically pleasing, communication arm of the market. Equally, there appears a second related gap in our

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understanding of what the cultural implications of this shift to digital might be for marketers, advertising creatives and media producers in terms of how content is understood and absorbed into the cultural sphere. Only recently has there been an emerging stream of research that attempts to account for how the digital environment is transforming identities and cultural engagement in the marketing context (Belk 2013; Schau and Gilly 2003). Similar questions might also be asked of advertising as we stand on the cusp of seeing how it might transform in the digital environment.

The purpose of this book is to unravel some of these questions and propose some new theoretical developments based on the proposition that advertising, in an age of media convergence where aesthetic, production and stylistic flows cross-pollinate all media forms, can be more usefully thought of as part of a complex system (or assemblage) of content inhabited by multiple actors, influences and techniques. Secondly, because advertising is open to such forces, and indeed operates within such a system, it is therefore prescient to investigate the nature of this system and how consumers as viewers engage with it. Principally, this work seeks to challenge whether classical positionings of advertising as a market-driven, persuasive form of spectacle-based communication continue to resonate at a point in time where media forms are characterised by intersection and hybridity (two terms that will receive greater attention in this chapter), rather than by distinctive genre classifications and how a different theorisation of advertising, based on an assumption of its value as aesthetic and cultural artefact, may yield new insights. The generic distinction between once classical canons such as film, television and advertising (and the theoretical assumptions that drive such canonical distinctions) have come under a degree of pressure in an era where technological innovations across all forms of media production have precipitated marked transformations in how media in its broadest sense is constructed, disseminated and consumed. As some commentators such as Donaton (2004) and Campbell (2013) have pointed out, the generic lines between media forms have increasingly blurred over time. The impact on advertising has been profound, suggesting "a disappearance of the advertisement in its traditional form… and its intensification and hybridization in oblique ways and through new

media" (Campbell 2013, p. 142). Likewise, as emergent media channels shape advertising construction and consumption, equally traditional approaches to *understanding* both the dissemination and uses of advertising content come under increasing scrutiny as their capacity to adequately interpret and theorise new kinds of consumer engagement with advertising is questioned (Taylor 2006).

Our aim in this work, then, is to focus on changes in advertising production and consumption, through such innovations as transmedia platforms and digital culture, and re-evaluate the aesthetic and cultural status of advertising in contemporary consumer culture. Just as technological innovations in previous eras have transformed visual production (Schroeder and Borgerson 2002), the current era of technological innovation has enabled the development of truly convergent media forms and caused new consumer identities to emerge (Schau and Gilly 2003). These changes are an outcome of shifting viewing relationships emerging from the convergence of traditional media (film, television, radio) with new media forms (web and digital technologies, mobile and social media) affecting all aspects of media formats and practice. Multi-platform distribution of commercials on platforms such as television and the web enable distributed approaches to storytelling, nonlinear and clustered arrangements of content (Dena 2004), offering new ways "in" for consumers to experience and engage with advertising not just as persuasive rhetoric but as aesthetically and symbolically meaningful content. Our era of convergence media (Jenkins 2006; Levy 2001), where advertising content is complex, distributed across multiple platforms and engaged by disparate audiences, challenges various traditional understandings of the role advertising has to play both for producers and consumers and animates its purpose as a cultural artefact. Jenkins' (2006) emphasis on the participatory role of the viewer as consumer is key to understanding both the potential impact of convergence on advertising in contemporary consumer culture and the new ways in which we see our world. Advertising has long been regarded as polysemous (Ritson and Elliot 1999), open to socially contextualised interpretation (Jayasinghe and Ritson 2013) and rich in textual signification (Campbell 2013). Convergent media extends this recognition to develop a new form of "mundane art"/advertising, often emerging

out of cinematic techniques, that carries across media channels and engages diverse audiences through its aesthetic appeal. In this context, advertising becomes reflexive-aesthetic media content, similarly designed to entertain and potentially capable of evoking the same emotive experiences as other classical aesthetic forms such as art, cinema and photography.

However, what becomes clear is that advertising is not just affected by technological shifts—that is to say, it is not just the medium that we need to consider. While it is certainly the case that the evolution of distribution platforms has enabled a new wave of creative innovation to keep pace with an increasingly distracted consumer culture, more to the point is what role advertising can now play in consumers' aesthetic engagement and through what hybridities and intersections such engagement can be cultivated. The observation that lines between media forms are blurring, and that multiple distribution platforms give rise to new approaches, is relevant to the extent that new connections between media forms are being born, fresh forms of consumer engagement are generated and basic assumptions around what has classically defined different media categories are disrupted. Thus, it is not enough to simply consider how the medium affects advertising but rather what new cultural and aesthetic potentialities are made possible, from where such potentialities might arise and what this new media world means for broader considerations of aesthetics and cultural engagement in the age of late modernity. As will be pursued through this work, emergent questions surrounding how we conceive of aesthetics and culture, how we come to understand concepts such as genre, form and structure (across media formats) and how consumers organise their consumptions habits or preferences around media content extend well beyond the simple matter of medium or technological shift.

The main premise explored throughout this text is that classical delineations between different media forms such as film, television, advertising and so forth collapse in the current era of convergence, giving rise to a range of hybrid media forms that need new theoretical resources with which to understand them. This also involves focusing on how consumers use these hybrid media forms. In particular, we attend to the ways in which film has influenced advertising at a point in time

where platforms such as YouTube enable advertising to occupy space beyond the thirty-second TV slot or radio ad. Advertising is no longer constrained by its traditional formats, thus enabling new creative opportunities to generate content that challenges classical notions of what advertising is—or should be. We discuss how the emergence of convergence catalyses the shift from static advertising forms to the reinvention, or, as Campbell (2013) suggests, "re-appearance" of advertising as a sophisticated entertainment form akin to a film, documentary or video game. The effect of convergence is that advertising becomes designed for multiple platforms, engages disparate audiences and utilises channels such as film, gaming and photographic production to generate content (Dena 2004). Convergence extends advertising aesthetics (Brown and Patterson 2001; Joy and Sherry 2003; Venkatesh and Meamber 2006) and provides a platform for diverse, enriched new forms of advertising production. Equally, the advent of embedded marketing "reflects the merging interests and priorities of the entertainment, communication, advertising and brand marketing industries" (Hackley 2005, p. 173). This evolution has attracted film directors such as Spike Lee, Wes Anderson, Sofia Coppola, David Lynch, Baz Luhrmann, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Spike Jonze, Martin Scorsese, Ridley Scott and Errol Morris, all of whom have applied their creative skills to innovate the "mini film" (Copping 2010) format that consciously hybridises advertising and traditional cinematic art forms.

In order to look at the aesthetic and productive relationship between film and advertising, the advertising work of some of these seminal film directors is analysed at length. To date, there has been no comprehensive consideration of advertising work undertaken by film directors and this entire body of work has gone un-theorised despite its aesthetic and cultural importance. We unpack the impact of the importation of these filmmakers' practices and the cinematic forms they mobilise in advertising, arguing that the importation of these techniques are not only made possible by shifts in media distribution but actually catalyse a shift in how the viewer as consumer experiences and values advertising. Traditionally, the advertising work of noted directors has been relegated to minor importance or viewed as a stepping stone towards their cinematic careers. Yet, if we pursue the idea, as presented here, that such distinctions between

media categories, high and low art forms, artistic and commercial endeavours are rendered irrelevant both in how they are produced and how consumers receive or use the content, then these advertisements become significant artefacts in their own right. Expanding Gurevitch's (2009) observation that these advertisements reveal "a wider tendency of both Hollywood, television and advertising industries to blur the boundaries between other, previously textually contained, promotional forms", this prompts a reconsideration of the aesthetic, stylistic and productive value of these advertisements and where they sit within the larger media landscape. Implicit in this consideration of how the importation of cinematic techniques into advertising content by those engaged in filmmaking is a re-evaluation of how we should think about advertising in relation to other media forms, what stylistic and conventional spillages occur across different forms of content and whether we should now reconfigure our theoretical apprehension of these spillages.

If our imagining of advertising is expanded in contemporary culture and classical classifications are eroded, how then do we interpret media forms with some element of specificity? On the one hand, the dissolution of the twentieth-century theorisation of advertising as a persuasive mechanism, and the classical perception of other media forms such as film and television as particular genres in their own right, leaves open a range of exciting possibilities for reconfiguring our core understanding of concepts such as "media", "art form" and "aesthetics". On the other hand, do we risk losing our ability to distinguish, delineate and classify media flow such that it loses its resonance, aesthetic parameters and character? As we grapple with the reality of the digital world, we are confronted with the need for theoretical resources for interpreting this new landscape. In response to repeated calls for more nuanced theoretical perspectives that can deal with a rapidly transforming media landscape (Duguet 1981; Kuntzel 1980; Schroeder 2006; Speilman 2008; Taylor 2006), this work shows how assemblage thinking (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980]), as perhaps distinct from assemblage theory (De Landa 2015, 2006), enables a more reflexive perspective on how we can account for this hybrid media world. To date, assemblage thinking has been applied in various contexts such as brands (Lury 2009), consumer communities (Parmentier and Fischer 2015) and the public sphere

(Campbell 2013). However, assemblage thinking has not been applied extensively to advertising. In this work, assemblage thinking as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari (1987 [1980]) is used as the organising logic for looking at from where convergent advertising derives its aesthetic, stylistic and productive drive, how certain hybridities and intersections emerge between media forms and how we can better account for the status of advertising in an era of convergence.

In order to understand where convergent advertising sits in the current consumer landscape, it is useful to firstly visit where advertising has previously been, how it has been considered against other, more culturally lauded, media forms such as film and why this has been the case. In doing so, we can start to plot a trajectory towards an elaboration of the theoretical underpinnings that will drive subsequent discussion in this work and consider how we might better apprehend this evolving aesthetic artefact. The seminal work of Gunning (1989) is instructive as a starting point for reminding us from whence cinema as a cultural artefact came and the subsequent commentary by Gurevitch (2009), extending on Gunning's insights, helps us to appreciate how and where splits in genre classifications between cinema and advertising emerged. Captured as a "cinema of attractions", Gunning documents the early days of cinema in France and the United States, pointing out that early cinema was a cinema of spectacle, a knowing collaboration between producer and consumer that a simultaneously "real illusion" was taking place. He describes how, contrary to the view of various commentators who characterised consumer receptions to early cinema as one of pure shock at the "real" of moving images, it was rather the sense of astonishment towards the spectacle itself that drew re-action. As Gunning (1989) suggests,

> rather than being an involvement with narrative action or empathy with character psychology, the cinema of attractions solicits a highly conscious awareness of the film image engaging the viewer's curiosity. The spectator does not get lost in a fictional world and its drama, but remains aware of the act of looking, the excitement of curiosity and its fulfillment…This cinema addresses and holds the spectator, emphasising the act of display. In fulfilling this curiosity, it delivers a generally brief dose of scopic pleasure (p. 121)

Against the infamous myth of the terrified cinema-goers who reared in horror at the spectre of a cinematic train coming towards them in Paris 1895, the advent of early cinema extended previous technologies such as the photograph and artwork, transforming them into moving imagery and thereby building on extant aesthetic experiences and well-established cultural artefacts. Gunning makes the salient point that cinema, in its early form, was "a successful illusion, but one understood as an illusion nonetheless… one remains aware that the film is merely a projection" (p. 119) of what was previously static imagery. There is much in Gunning's work that will necessarily go untreated here (but be discussed in further detail in subsequent chapters) but the essential point to be taken from this work, and the work of other commentators such as Cubbit and Metz, is that early cinema was a cinema of spectacle; a media form essentially comfortable in its capacity to engage, amuse and entertain through sheer visual pleasure. As this early media form found its place in cultural consumption, the "content" of cinema was secondary to its capacity to amuse and thrill as a spectacle in its own right.

At the same time that trains roared towards consumers, advertising was taking advantage of this new media form. In particular, Segrave (2004) documents the early days of filmed advertisements, citing Dewar's 1897 piece *Dewar's—It's Scotch* as one of the earliest filmed advertisements, although product placement began as early as 1895. The Dewars advertisement is significant in that it followed a filmic logic, running to fifty seconds—longer than the average thirty-second slot in contemporary advertising and verging on what might be called a "mini-film" in today's terms. Like its cinematic bedfellows depicting trains, elephants and other curiosities, the Dewars advertisement sought to tap the pleasure of the illusion through its slow-motion play of men in kilts dancing in front of a Dewars banner. Alongside the Dewars advertisement, Edison manufacturing also released a second film advertisement for Admiral cigarettes. The advent of film advertisements such as the Dewars and Admiral examples demonstrates how advertising and cinema shared the same originating practices, intents and drawing of consumer responses. Based on a logic of spectacle and visual pleasure, the promotion of illusions to elicit an astonished and delighted response started out as the provenance of both cinema and advertising.

Equally pertinent is the recognition that, in these early stages of turn of the century cinema and advertising, the intent to shock and amuse through knowing illusions was viewed as an entirely legitimate pursuit for both advertising and cinema alike. The notion of spectacle underpinned both of these media forms.

As cinema evolved rapidly over the course of the early twentieth century, and began to formalise as an aesthetic and cultural artefact, the originating pursuit of cinema as spectacle gave way to more complex and sophisticated capacities. Gaudreault (2001) gives a detailed account of the technological innovations associated with film production at the beginning of the twentieth century that enabled primitive forms of cinematic techniques such as montage and jump cut to emerge. The conclusion to be drawn from this swift evolution is that cinema quickly became concerned with its own capacity to extend viewing duration, to mobilise perspective and to generate the possibility of depicting narrative rather than simply an astonishing or curious illusion. Gunning, along with other commentators such as Segrave (2004) and Gurevitch (2009), cite the emergence of narrative in cinema as a turning point for how notions of spectacle and illusion were regarded. While the cinema of attractions did not disappear in the face of cinema as narrative, providing instead "an underground current flowing beneath narrative logic and diegetic realism" (Gunning 1989, p. 123), the development of narrative as a guiding structure for cinema nonetheless transformed this once spectacle-driven media form.

Two consequences for advertising emerge out of this transformation. The first is that while advertising remained largely regarded as a media of spectacle, cinema took on a formal structure that differentiated it from advertising both in structure and cultural reception. Despite their common roots, advertising and cinema began to splinter as cinema became a narrative medium, peppered with necessary spectacular or aesthetic elements, and began to assume cultural legitimacy as a "high" art form. Furthered by the philosophical ruminations by theorists such as Arnheim, Eisenstein, Kracauer and Bazin who pressed questions on the nature of cinema, the evolution of film theory and film philosophy lent gravitas to the art form, all the while focused on the narratological and ontological capacities of the medium. As Brown (2013) points

out, spectacle almost "got in the way" of narrative flow, signalling "an irruption of this temporal flow" (p. 85). Various assertions have been made as to how cinema acquired this guarded status. May (1983) suggests that the intervention of studio interests on film production monopolies in the 1920s served to corral the industry and Segrave (2004) makes the point that film studios sought to keep wealthy commercial interests at bay. Both of these observations make perfect sense and underscore the industrial and cultural emergence of narrative film as a "special" aesthetic object. The consequence, then, is that if narrative cinema became a high art form, then advertising as spectacle became low art—if art at all. In speaking of Baz Luhrmann's 2004 mini-film for Chanel, Gurevitch (2009) illuminates the tension of this dichotomy between advertising as spectacle and narrative film. Drawing on Cronin's (2004) insight that the need to distinguish between art form and commercial spectacle (or between people and commodities) has continually caused cultural anxiety, Gurevitch makes the point that

> the fear of collapse in the distinction between commodity and person is played out through the symbolic representations of these concepts, where the 'spectacular advert' symbolises the commodity and the 'film narrative' symbolises the artist's creativity. It should be remembered that this is precisely the same anxiety that was discursively used to frame the elimination of advertising from Hollywood production and exhibition networks in the 1920s. (p. 155)

Modernist, and subsequent scholarly, discourses on art and cinema further exacerbated this reconfiguring, or re-valuing, of narrative film as against the commercially connoted advertising as spectacle.

Throughout the twentieth century, the Marxist production/consumption critique (1990 [1867]) has contextualised our understanding of markets and advertising (Nava 1997). Advertising has long been implicated within consumer culture (Scott 2009), linking to growing mass consumption (Featherstone 1991; Ross 1996) that intensified the production/consumption binarism on which Marx based his critique. Advertising played a pivotal role in the dissemination of this brave new consumer world, providing the images of a bright, aspirational future

(Ross 1996; Samuel 2001). Advertising became a visual commodity in itself, a spectacle, a term influenced by the Situationists who marked "spectacle" with the (negatively connoted) illusions promoted in advertising and the spectre of "the market" (Debord 1995). This long tradition of advertising as the communication arm of the market is equally reflected in Baudrillard's (1968) emphasis on the commodity and the views expressed by McLuhan (1964, 1967) and Packard (1957) on the commercially grounded rhetorical force of advertising (Scott 1994). Implicit in this discourse is the situating of spectacle as shallow, empty and, thus, by comparison with its symbolically and culturally rich cousin narrative film, devoid of real value.

Barthes' (1977) observations reflect the established twentieth-century view of advertising as the communication arm of the market and lay the ground for Baudrillard's later "emptying of the sign" or simulacra (1981) endemic of postmodern culture. Like most twentieth-century European theorists, Barthes draws his analysis from a Marxist position. In his Panzani advertisement analysis (1977), he explains:

> In advertising the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional… If the image contains signs, we can be sure that in advertising these signs are full, formed with a view to the optimum reading: the advertising image is frank or at least emphatic. (p. 33)

Here, the image meaning is "filled up" by its promotional function where the attributes of the product (and thus production) dominate the creation, dissemination and reading of the image, intentionally leaving little interpretive agency to the viewer. Barthes' commentary exacts the view of advertising in the twentieth century as loaded with market meaning, directive in its purpose and ultimately situated within the market where, as Pracejus et al. (2006) suggest, it "tries to convince consumers to do something, typically to buy something. Thus, advertising is merely rhetoric in the service of selling" (p. 82). The age of convergence potentially challenges this classical view as it tends towards the reconnection between cultural production, aesthetics and the everyday which re-situates producer and consumer in a culturally embedded relationship of collective nostalgia and meaning-making (Nava and Nava

1992). Equally, our synthesis of advertising as media content (Jenkins 2006), and cinematic "mirror", held up to the rituals, symbolisms and narratives inherent to seemingly mundane experiences, contests this traditional view of advertising.

Thus, throughout this work, two core assumptions that have pervaded the apprehension of advertising are challenged. The first is advertising's status as largely spectacle. Consistent with certain other commentators who have questioned the divide between advertising as spectacle, film as narrative (Gurevitch 2009; King 2000), this work demonstrates that both media forms draw from both their spectacular roots and from narrative. Indeed, as Donaton (2004) and others have pointed out, with the advent of product placement and industry alliances between film producers and commercial interests, film itself has become more commercially driven and advertising has become more geared towards entertainment through the utilisation of cinematic techniques and attention to the aesthetic. To this end, and as we will see in the ensuing pages, the distinction between advertising and film is increasingly unclear. The second assumption to be interrogated throughout this work is the positioning of advertising purely as the communication arm of the market. As advertising becomes more complex, draws from different cinematic, documentary, gaming and cultural referents, its content has the potential to generate similar engagements of interiority, symbolic meaning and personal reflexivity that we attribute to film. This privileging of the virtual image is accelerated through the development of portable media, personal and shared collections facilitated by technology such as the iPhone, blogs, social media and dedicated sites where "digital association blurs the distinctions among the material, the immaterial, the real, and the possible" (Schau and Gilly 2003, p. 401). Essentially, if consumers engage with a range of media forms through a plurality of platforms, the originating purpose of the content (i.e. purpose as advertisement for something) is superseded by its appeal to the consumer and how it then gets used by consumers. Jenkins et al.'s (2015) concept of spreadability is instructive here and will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 1. However, at this point, it is suffice to flag their recognition that media content in whatever form is opened up to new terrains of engagement, distribution

and symbolic attachment among consumers regardless of its status as advertisement, film, music clip etc. The nature of the media content is irrelevant; rather, its entertainment, affective or symbolic appeal drives a culture of media spreadability.

The ensuing text unfolds as follows. Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical framework for the ensuing chapters by visiting the characteristics of postmodernity as the cultural context out of which current media trends have emerged. A more thorough account is also given of convergence media and its impact on traditional notions of media genre, media conventions and production with additional attention paid to intervening influences such as the conceptualisation of film as narrative, auteurism and generic distinctions within film. Chapter 3 subsequently offers an account of assemblage thinking as imagined by Deleuze and Guattari with a view to showing how assemblage thinking can explicate hybridity and intersection across media forms. The purpose of visiting these multiple theoretical conversations is to see where and how classical positionings of media forms are challenged by assemblage thinking and what impact this may have on our reconfiguration of convergent advertising as assemblage in contemporary consumer culture. This chapter is then followed by four interpretative chapters that collectively draw upon the work of film-makers such as Wes Anderson, Sofia Coppola, David Lynch, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, John Mitchell Cameron, Darren Aronofsky, Martin Scorsese and Errol Morris as examples of how advertising plays out some of the key tropes in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy and to show how assemblage thinking may give rise to new interpretations of advertising.

In order to show how assemblage theory underpins the aggregation and territorialisation of advertising imagery, the principles of critical visual analysis are utilised (Schroeder 2006; Schroeder and Borgerson 1998). This allows us to trace not only the internal meaning construction (Schroeder and Zwick 2004; Scott 1994) contained within the image but also the accumulation of visual, philosophical and symbolic force as the assemblage consolidates into a territorialised entity. Consistent with the view argued here that advertising, particularly in the digital context, draws upon many art form influences such as cinema, photography and art, the method enables interdisciplinary perspectives such as film theory and film philosophy, media

studies and, of course, advertising. As such, Schroeder's visual analysis method is adapted to take in other elements of the moving image such as its complex intertextual and technological dimensions (Conomos 2000), spatio-temporal structures, perceptual and affective attributes (Deleuze 2013a, b [1985]) and audio–visual relationships (Chion 2009). Collectively, these four extension chapters map a typology of assemblage adapting De Landa's (2006) schemata of aggregation. Assemblages can be understood as accumulative to the extent that an assemblage can exist microcosmically (i.e. a singular advertisement), extend to a larger level of complexity (i.e. a suite of multiple, connected advertisements that extend the same set of structures and can be read as one large assemblage) or sit within an overarching assemblage (i.e. form a component of an entire *oeuvre* of interrelated transmedia communications for a particular brand). Therefore, the four chapters illustrate this potential aggregation, and its resultant intensification of complexity, through the structure of 1. *Singular* 2. *Suite* or 3. *Oeuvre* assemblages.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the singular, internal characteristics or intensities of advertisements, situating their aesthetic, stylistic, narrative and consumer engagement qualities within the paradigm of assemblage. Chapter 6 extends this analysis to focus on mini-films as larger assemblages or suites, taking account of their more complex narrative forms and how they establish systems of affect (to borrow from Deleuze). Chapter 7 takes account of advertisements as *oeuvres*, or whole systems of representational forms. It focuses on complex, integrated assemblages that draw upon more complex external cultural referents and mechanisms that situate, often multiple, advertisements in a larger flow that transcends the persuasive intent. In synergy with the overarching idea of assemblages deterritorialising as extensions, assemblage thinking also works with the concept of *intensities*. These intensities are discussed at some length in Chapters 4 and 5 in order to lay the ground for the discussion of more complex assemblages in the subsequent chapters. Finally, we conclude with a general discussion of how assemblage thinking sheds new light on the construction, dissemination and reception of contemporary advertising and challenges some core assumptions about the nature of genre, classificatory impetuses in media and where advertising might go in the future.

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2

Postmodern Culture, Convergence and Advertising

Fundamentally, this book is about advertising and its changing nature in an era of convergence media. Shifts in how content may be disseminated, used and re-purposed by engaged consumers and, indeed, what we even include in the definition of advertising is in a state of flux, out of which some exciting new possibilities will emerge. Typically, most definitions of advertising emphasise the persuasive and rhetorical messaging of the advertising, where "advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of goods, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor" (Kotler 2000, p. 578). Yet, in the digital context, this accent on promotion has given way to far more sophisticated practices that are rapidly transforming advertising into an aesthetic object and aligning it with other media forms. So, our focus is not just on advertising *per se* but about what advertising is becoming, and what renewed value it has as an aesthetic and cultural object, in an era of convergence media practice. As Jenkins (2006) points out,

> Convergence does not occur through media appliances, however sophisticated they may become. Convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others. Each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments

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> of information extracted from the media flow and transformed into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives. (pp. 3–4)

To support this endeavour, we draw upon the theoretical resources of Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage thinking (1987 [1980]) to propose new ways of seeing, interpreting and conceptualising these new advertising practices. Inevitably, such an excursion also leads us towards some elements of film philosophy and media theory although our attention remains firmly fixed on the possibilities for advertising. But, before we delve into these questions, some clarifications are necessary. First, the term *media* is extremely broad and references everything from YouTube videos through to CNN reports. It also references the institutions, commercial entities and multinational interests that comprise the media industry. Sitting somewhere within this vast field of players and practices are the classically "aesthetic" media such as film (I argue), advertising, television (to an extent), photography and so forth. This book focuses explicitly on intersections, hybridities and deterritorialisations across these aesthetic media forms. Thus, the repeated use of the term media throughout is intended to reference these forms only. Second, advertising is open to a similarly vast canon of activities, including everything from billboards to sponsorship to short films. In the context of our discussion, the term advertising is intended to reference moving image works that appear in a digital platform, draw their stylistic and aesthetic qualities from a range of sources and represent new possibilities for where advertising might go. This appropriation of advertising content is rather selective and it is granted that the kinds of advertisements discussed here exclude much of the traditional advertising that still populates television screens or shopping malls and the like. However, the purpose of this work is to identify future advertising practices and look for the emergent trends that will come to shape advertising best practice in the digital environment. As media consumption habits among consumers change rapidly, where consumption becomes more mobile (and fragmented), distributed across devices, based online and highly selective, the ability for consumers to avoid advertising altogether requires producers to think more creatively about their offerings and push the boundaries of the definition of advertising.

Finally, this book focuses almost exclusively on work undertaken by (mainly well-known) film directors. On the one hand, such a specific choice of data for analysis may seem exclusionary and rarefied. On the other hand, two of the main strains of argument presented throughout this book are, first, that new forms of advertising mirror the intensities, stylistics and aesthetic components of feature film and, second, that the spillage between cinema and advertising is not just a matter of stylistics but a merging of worlds, visions and narratives distributed across shared platforms. At the leading edge of this intersection are those who work across both industries and frequently leverage the capacities of one to inform their practice in the other. Many advertising scholars have identified the textual porosity of advertising and its ability to continually blur boundaries with other aesthetic forms (Cronin 2004; Goldman 1992; Williamson 2000). In using examples of those who work across various media formats, we are able to trace where fresh points of origin in the intersection of genres, aesthetics and narrative may come from. Equally, the movement between formats also enables us to elucidate how assemblage thinking may assist in the development of theorisation around convergence media and how it works for consumers. While each advertisement can be thought of as an assemblage, the contextualisation of this work within a larger aesthetic and stylistic assemblage, evolved through the director's canon of work, gives further resonance to understanding how assemblage might be useful for viewing the possibilities for advertising.

This chapter maps the cultural trajectory that has underpinned the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, broadly framed as the era of postmodernity as a way into dealing with the questions of aesthetics, culture and the impetus towards the collapse of distinctions between high-low art, the constitution of hybridity and intersection and how different genres of media spill through to one another. From there, several theoretical conversations are entered into wherein we elaborate on key conceptual frames including the influence of film theory, convergence media and, of course, assemblage thinking on advertising. The logic of this chapter starts out with a deliberately broad sweep of the cultural conditions that support the era of convergence media and its exploitation among consumers in order to find (and disseminate)

appealing or significant media artefacts. A narrower focus is given to the relevant theoretical touch points that have, to date, driven classical understandings of different media forms and have tended to perpetuate a specifist approach to media theorisation. While much of this work has been both insightful and timely, the disparate threads of such discourses as film theory or philosophy, media studies, advertising studies and cultural theory have enjoyed minimal interaction and thus collectively fail to apprehend the substantive shifts occurring in the consumer's media landscape. In this chapter, we trace some of the most salient aspects of these disciplinary perspectives, so as to see where possible intersections may resonate in developing new theoretical resources for understanding advertising in the contemporary media environment. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we take a more specific turn again to map the tenets of assemblage thinking, as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari, in the following chapter. Once the foundations of assemblage are unpacked, we can then begin to see how assemblage thinking offers significant new insights into how we can apprehend the convergent media environment, rethink some of our fundamental assumptions around the notions of genre and platform specificity and revisit the conceptualisation of advertising as spectacle.

Postmodernity

As a frame for apprehending the advent of shifting media forms and their reception, a brief discussion of the characteristics of postmodernity is useful since the project of postmodernity underpins the very practices that now require us to rethink the potential for advertising. As a term, postmodernism has been interpreted through the axis of temporality or a specifically late twentieth century evolution of modernity (Jameson 1983) and as a specific intellectual paradigm (Lyotard 1984). More broadly, and as the grounding for a movement away from classical delineations of genre and a cross-pollination of media practices across platforms, the postmodern outlook signals a substantial paradigmatic shift from a linear, formal, production-oriented perspective (endemic of the modernist outlook) to a more hybrid, pastiched cultural space characterised

as "schizophrenic" or resistant to traditional notions of genre or style. While postmodernism emerged principally in the arenas of artistic, literary, architectural and critical production, the "mass" cultural space itself is viewed as the space in which the postmodern sensibility (Appignanesi and Lawson 1989; Best and Kellner 1997) has become equally animate and thus constitutes the context out of which consumer receptions to hybrid media forms play out. Cowen (1998) further suggests that traditional artistic and literary production benefited from the technological and cultural emergence of postmodernity to reach a new era of cultural relevance where "growth of the market has liberated artists, not only from the patron, but also from the potential tyranny of mainstream market taste… The wealth and diversity of capitalism has increased the latitude of artists to educate their critics and audiences" (p. 23). Cowan's commentary is particularly salient in the context of media production where the dissolution of classical generic divisions between different media forms have enabled the kind of cross-pollinations, hybridities and intersections that have come to characterise convergence media.

Like the media environment it foregrounds, the formal nature of postmodern has been difficult to define since we find "a good deal of loose conceptual confusion with notions of "the loss of a sense of historical past", "schizoid culture", "excremental culture", "the replacement of reality by images", "simulations", "unchained signifiers" etc., multiplying" (Featherstone 1991, p. 11). As Huyssen (1986) points out, we can make some "some tentative reflections" on the postmodern sensibility since "the amorphous and politically volatile nature of postmodernism makes the phenomenon itself remarkably elusive, and the definition of its boundaries exceedingly difficult, if not per se impossible" (p. 202). To the extent that this cultural or perspectival shift can be defined, the age of postmodernity at least embodies one quintessential characteristic upon which most commentators concur. The age of postmodernity exists as a response to the intellectual elitism and positivist epistemology that defined the eighteenth century age of reason and the following era of modernity. Postmodernity emerges as both a temporal phenomenon (i.e. as a specifically late twentieth century cultural and intellectual occurrence) and as an ideological or perspectival outlook (i.e. it manifests certain tangible principles). While Frederico de Onis, in the

1930s, coined the term postmodernism, its current understanding and common usage draw more from those such as Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva and Barthes from the 1960s onwards (Featherstone 1991). As Jameson (1983) suggests, there is a multitude of postmodernisms but that they generally appear as "specific re-actions against the established forms of high modernism, against this or that dominant high modernism which conquered the university, the museum, the art gallery network and the foundations" (p. 111). In turn, the era of postmodernity concerns itself with "the effacement… of some key boundaries or separations, most notably the erosion of the older distinction between high culture and so-called mass or popular culture" (p. 112).

This seminal trope has significant ramifications for cultural categories such as film and advertising since the implosion of aesthetic genres has led to the kind of boundary blurring that now gives way to cross-pollination of aesthetic practices, convergence of media platforms and a consumer consciousness that seeks out entertainment or resonant media "grabs" that do not necessarily hail from a specific aesthetic genre in order to be regarded as valuable. As Jameson and Featherstone also indicate, the postmodern is underpinned by the emergence of a consumer society receptive to appropriations of media and advertising spectacle, such as that described by Brown's multiplex cinema (1994), and the primacy of the "mass" (Jameson 1983). Again, for advertising, this identification of postmodernism as a "mindset" (to borrow Bauman's vocabulary) lends greater weight to the value of the spectacle (a virtue traditionally associated with advertising) as an entertaining or engaging cultural artefact.

To more specifically define the characteristics of postmodernism and how they may come to support the key argument presented here that the collapse of aesthetic categories and the blurring of media forms enables a re-evaluation of advertising as cultural artefact, Brown (1994) offers a typology of its broad elements, suggesting that "although postmodernism is a complex and amorphous phenomenon… its essential characteristics can be summarised under five broad headings: fragmentation, de-differentiation, hyper-reality, pastiche and anti-foundationalism" (p. 35). Fragmentation places pressure upon defined cultural categories such as "knowledge, language, political and social life, mass market economics, the unified self" (p. 35) replacing them with more liminal or

contested spaces of plurality and ambivalence. De-differentiation speaks to a questioning and, ultimately, the dissolution of "established hierarchies" across the cultural spectrum. Hyperreality argues for the presence of simulation; the mediated in place of "real" or "original" experiences. Pastiche plays upon the interchange and fusing of traditional stylistics and tropes to establish an almost comedic engagement with historical forms and existing codes of reference. Finally, anti-foundationalism captures a posture of "antipathy towards systematic generalisations" or, as Lyotard (1984) suggests, overarching meta-narratives that traditionally drove Enlightenment and modernist epistemologies. Later, Brown (1995) also cited pluralism which "comprises the archetypal postmodern concern for the past (or representations of the past) and the abandonment… of the progressive, forward-looking orientation of modernism" (1995, pp. 106–107) and chronology which reminds us that "in practice, the six preceding "features" collide, combine and collapse into a paradoxical postmodern mélange of incongruous phenomena. It reflects the symptomatic postmodern assumption that anything goes, everything is acceptable and nothing is excluded" (pp. 106–107).

Many of the characteristics identified by Brown play out in the media context. De-differentiation illuminates the cultural impetus towards dissolving traditional media categories, enabling greater flow across media platforms and genres. The preservation of classical media categories (such as advertising versus film) is fundamentally challenged by a consumer culture that seeks out its entertainment experiences across any relevant platform irrespective of its "status" and engages on its own aesthetic terms. We can also plot the trajectory towards what Jenkins et al. (2015) refers to as a spreadable media culture (which will be discussed further below) where the agency of viewing consumer eclipses any commercial or productive effort to preserve distinctive media categories. Likewise, the element of hyperreality where consumers comfortably engage in such experiences as virtual reality, hyperreal shopping malls and theme parks (to draw on the multiplex example), social media and the web erodes questions of high/low cultural forms, distinction between experiential categories and modernist concerns with authenticity. Baudrillard (1983) perhaps best elucidates this consumer comfort with the experience of simulation, suggesting that

> It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself; that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes. (p. 167)

While, according to Baudrillard, the experience of simulation is consequence of the sensory overload caused by the ceaseless flow of images or spectacle that saturates the postmodern space, he further posits that simulation risks our ability to discern between true and false or the real and virtual (Kroker and Levin 1993). Rather, the sign itself is empty and refers to nothing that could be considered "real" or "authentic",

> Representation starts from the principle that the sign and the real are equivalent (even if this is Utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Conversely, simulation starts from the Utopia of this principle of equivalence, *from the radical negation of the sign as value*, from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every referent. Whereas representation tries to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum. (1981, p. 170)

Accordingly, there can be no meaning or context embodied in signs; therefore our access to meaning and thus a veritable reality is negated at the outset. Through simulation or "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (Baudrillard 1981, p. 166), we exist in the state of the hyperreal. However, before moving to Baudrillard's interpretation of hyperreality, two points regarding simulation are worthy of emphasis in the context of media production and consumption. While Baudrillard elucidates a sense of something lost through simulation and a disdain for spectacle in the vein of the Situationists, both of these facets of postmodernity give rise for opportunity to create new sites of consumer engagement through unanchored aesthetic categories. The absence of the "real" or the "authentic" in the media landscape would seem to be only made possible through the elaboration of formal tropes pertaining to each media form and the preservation of those tropes through the

agency of scholars, film-makers, producers and so on. To preserve the artistic or cultural integrity that Baudrillard appears to be lamenting in his discussion of simulation requires something of an edifice in its own right. For how do we define "meaningful" cultural or aesthetic artefacts unless some formalistic framework is created around them? They are not, in and of themselves, more or less "true". While Baudrillard concentrates his critique upon sites of entertainment such as theme parks and media, it would seem that these sites of simulation are the very sites at which new aesthetic and cultural frontiers are being negotiated. So, while Baudrillard's identification of simulation may well exist, we might ask whether this is such a bad thing for the media landscape.

Hyperreality is the inevitable state or "phase" that emerges from simulation. The loss of the true or real leaves us with an empty society, one in which meaningless images or signs disseminate with no promise of accessing an original or authentic reality; in other words, we accept the hyperreal as a comfortable substitute for the real. Indeed, we see no need to discern between the two. Baudrillard goes further to argue that while we are aware the real once existed, and therefore nostalgically mourn for a lost reality, our efforts to recuperate the real only produce more hyperreality. Baudrillard invokes the now seminal example of Disneyland to illustrate how the hyperreal functions and what substitute role the hyperreal plays in contemporary society (see also Wakefield 1990). Disneyland is read as a complete simulation, an impeccable model of the hyperreal. It is, on the one hand, a fantasy, a site of "illusions and phantasms". On the other hand, it simulates "real" American values and thus becomes a utopian site of myth, a projection of a lost or nostalgic America

> Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which is Disneyland… It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. (p. 172)

Disneyland as a site distracts us from the hyperreal at work in our own existence. It defines us as real, by its binary status as myth. Indeed, as Eco (1986) points out, the key ingredient is its self-proclaimed play of

fantasy, where "Disneyland makes it clear that within its magic enclosure it is fantasy that is absolutely reproduced… But once the "total fake" is admitted, in order to be enjoyed it must seem totally real" (p. 43).

While Eco and Baudrillard both interpret Disneyland as an ideal case study for hyperreality, they argue for two quite different experiences and consequences. While Baudrillard identifies the threefold simulation of the fantasy, American values and the obliteration of the boundary between false Disneyland and real USA, Eco discovers self-exposed fantasy, acknowledgment of fantasy, translation into a "real" experience and the proliferation of "real" emotions and re-actions. Eco (1986) points to the frightening or bad experiences one seeks at Disneyland, thereby soliciting a plethora of simulated experiences that nonetheless evoke something real, where "the ideology of this America wants to establish reassurance through Imitation. But profit defeats ideology because the consumers want to be thrilled not only by the guarantee of the Good but also by the shudder of the Bad" (p. 57). The Disneyland metaphor has been discussed at length by various commentators and the contributions of Baudrillard and Eco have been seminal to many discussions of postmodernity as a culture of the de-centred, fragmented subject and a liminal, meaningless state of imagery, spectacle and culture. Baudrillard might be thought of as one of the more critical commentators of postmodernity as he casts a suspicious eye over a perceived loss of meaning, his work also sparks significant questions for advertising as spectacle at a point in time where cross-pollination of media forms, greater consumer agency in the production, consumption and dissemination of media and a blurring of media categories is at work.

By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's rendering of simulation is salient for our discussion of the positioning of advertising in an age of convergence media since it speaks to a cultural comfort with simulation and to different modes of cultural engagement that might be thought of as virtual or occurring in unexpected spaces. De-centrality and rupture of linearity are positioned as a positive, liberating response to the perceived stratifications and structure of modernism. Massumi (1987) illuminates the essence of Deleuze and Guattari's position that runs through *Mille Plateaux*, suggesting that

> According to Deleuze, the point at which simulacrum began to unmask itself was reached in painting with the advent of Pop Art. In film, it was Italian neo-Realism and the French New we are now reaching that point in popular culture as a whole. Advanced capitalism, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is reaching a new transnational level that necessitates a dissolution of old identities and territorialities and the unleashing of objects, images and information having far more mobility and combinatory potential than ever before. As always, this deterritorialization is effected only in order to make possible a reterritorialization on an even grander and more glorious land of worldwide capital reborn. (p. 97)

Thus, in contrast with Baudrillard who laments the loss of a so-called authentic or original, Deleuze and Guattari resist the notion that simulation implies loss but rather signals regeneration. For Deleuze and Guattari, there is no "real" to mourn but a terrain of differences that territorialise, dissemble and revive again in new forms. Simulations are not copies but represent the products of these eternal intersections.

Such a view is borne out in the marketing arena where Deleuze's emphasis on the regenerative potential of simulation (and by extension, the postmodern state) is echoed in certain strains of marketing. Firat and Venkatesh's (1995) critique deduces some of the primary strains of disillusionment with modernism, suggesting that (1) Modernism has "run its course", (2) it has "failed in its quest for an ethically ordered, rationally constructed, technologically oriented, seemingly progressive and relentlessly unifying social order", (3) it reduces the world into simple dichotomous categories, (4) Modernism, "while incorporating uniqueness actually produces conformity" and is riddled with ideological contradictions, (5) Modernist notions of "art and architecture were stifling and repressive" because of their adherence to rationality, function and universalism, (6) Feminist critiques of modernism enable us to see the "dominance of the masculine subject under the guise of a more universally gendered subject" (p. 241). Their critique finds currency with the majority of postmodern proponents who have focused their attention on the bourgeois realist phase of the nineteenth century wherein the industrial revolution established the foundation of capitalism—a point in time understood to be the beginning of

the "modern" and a pivotal moment in the destiny of advertising as a communication arm of the market. This period of economic and cultural shift should be differentiated from Modernism per se of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which, by contrast, advocated perspectival fragmentation (Lowe 1982; Kern 1983). Stemming from an emergent critique that questioned the rationalist discourses of the eighteenth century, criticism began to circulate through publications throughout Europe. Commentators challenged the belief in the achievement of universal knowledge (symptomatic of the Enlightenment stance) advocating instead for a more relativist position. McHale (1987), after Fokkema (1982), alludes to this relativist subjectivity of the Modernist outlook as expressed in fiction writing, where,

> At the macro structural level, Modernist fiction is characterised by the provisional and hypothetical nature of the narrator's or lyrical subject's perspective… This same provisionality of perspective is also at the micro-structural level… Fokkema identifies themes of intellection and intellectual independence and detachment as being typical of Modernism. The semantic universe of Modernism, according to him, is organised in terms such as *detachment, awareness, observation*. (1986, p. 57)

This play of perspective and sense of fragmentation of reality was also visible in art and literature, although the assumption of a tangible reality remained intact (Lowe 1982; Kern 1983; Harvey 1989). This basic assumption is obliterated in the postmodern era.

Postmodernity and the Consumer

In approximating a working understanding of Postmodernism and its basic philosophy, subsequent questions emerge for how this cultural outlook comes to bear on media production, dissemination and consumption. If postmodernity signals new forms of cultural engagement predicated upon a philosophy of resistance to meta-narrative, rejection

of high/low cultural aesthetics, a willingness to embrace the virtual or simulated and a comfort with the notion of spectacle, then how does this reflect in contemporary marketing and, by extension, advertising? Further, we should perhaps also ask where does the consumer fit into this new landscape? The first, more general, question is a way of directing the discussion to re-appropriating postmodernity in the hope of actualising some of its more promising attributes. Later, the second question is a way of understanding how the individual consumption experience may reflect a postmodern reality as a participant in culture.

The first question is how does this reflect in contemporary marketing and, by extension, advertising? Recent marketing scholarship has been quite positive in its reception of the postmodern spirit (Brown 1995; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; O'Donohoe 1997), due to its perceived liberatory impetus for consumers. In this respect, we see a re-reading of Baudrillard, where the use-value (Slater and Tonkiss 2001) of commodities and cultural artefacts opens the horizon towards newfound consumer advocacy and participation (Goulding 2003; Saren et al. 2007). We should also note that such artefacts increasingly include digital artefacts too. The absence of material, economically generated value and the circulation of empty signs enable the consumer to attach their own meaning to commodities. Marketing discourse has identified the fact that, in the postmodern context, commodities or artefacts do not have a pre-prescribed meaning generated by an overarching cultural and economic meta-narrative. Rather, the postmodern emphasis on locality, nonlinearity and fragmentation potentially transforms material goods from market fragments to personally appropriated objects. These fragments may be acquired for their nostalgic value (Goulding 2000; Holbrook 1993), their temporary capacity to fulfil the void of desire (Belk et al. 2003) or for their role in supporting identity projects or a particular lifestyle (Holt 2002; Erdem and Swait 2004). Equally, such fragments may become interwoven into a particular brand loyalty or community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Whatever the reason, this strain of research emphasises the view that postmodernity offers a new emancipatory environment for the consumer. Such acquired objects in the postmodern context have the capacity to emancipate us from the capitalist discourse attributed to the era of modernisation.

It comes as something of a paradox then that one of the primary findings to emerge from marketing research into consumer culture is how the postmodern spirit empowers consumers to imbue their loved possessions with meaning when postmodernity itself resists the notion of any meaning at all. Research such as that carried out on *Burning Man* participation (Kozinets 2002), mid-western flea markets (Sherry 1990), rodeo and stock shows (Peñaloza 2001), brand communities (Muniz and Shau 2005), gay communities (Kates 2002, 2004), sky diving (Celsi et al. 1993) or Harley Davidson riders (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), diligently illustrate the meaning-making practices at play among consumers who attach deep emotional and personal value to their experiences and objects. In a culture of clearly enunciated surface depth and simulation, marketing research repeatedly affirms that, paradoxically, people seek (and create) meaning that underpins their emotional, social, financial, political and psychical lives.

Wakefield (1990) illuminates this tension by asking "how can one describe disappearance without nostalgically invoking and resurrecting the absent object?" (114). For if consumers embark on a project of consuming to recuperate meaning, how does this resonate with a postmodern ethos of emptiness? Baudrillard offers a rather pessimistic account of how this paradox emerges, suggesting that

> One can, however, say that solicitation and greed have created out of it [the desire for fascination in the absence of meaning] disproportionately inflated images. These have become our real sex objects, the objects of our desire, and it is this substitution, this confusion (between desire and its materialised equivalent in images, not only sexual desire, but cognitive desire and its materialised equivalent in "information", the desire to dream and its materialised equivalent in all the Disneylands of the world, the desire for space and its materialised equivalent in the programmed movement of 'two weeks paid vacation', the desire for recreation and its programmed equivalent in home video equipment, etc.) that gives rise to the obscenity of our culture. (p. 168)

Although Baudrillard perceives the relationship between postmodern deathlessness and consumption as an attempt to reinvigorate surfaces through an almost false attachment of meaning to objects and

experiences, marketing research would offer a different account of what the postmodern sensibility can mean for consumers. Rather than a futile effort to reanimate lost meaning through idle consumption, marketing research has argued that, for consumers, new opportunities for individualised experiences and recovered objects play out the liberatory effect that postmodernity might promise. This tension between postmodernity as an agenda of deliberate depthlessness or a strategy of resistance against modernity and the pockets of possibility that it opens for consumers on the ground is prescient for our discussion regarding the contemporary environment in which convergence media operates and in which consumers use aesthetic objects. The constraining effects ascribed to modernity, according to marketing scholars such as Firat, Venkatesh (1995) and Thompson (2004), stem from the existence of an ordering mass market, the inscription of the individual into the linear mindset of capitalism and the risk of loss of personal identity in the swell of a vast global marketplace. Postmodernity, by contrast, is positioned as an open terrain that enables personalised, emancipatory acts of consumption precisely through an absence of an ordering cultural or economic narrative.

The consumer, then, is positioned as a liberated subject, free to enact their social, emotional, cultural and psychological individualism; all of which shape a specific consumption habit (Holbrook 1993; Thompson et al. 1994; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Belk et al. 2003). Certain scholars extend this argument to suggest that consumers can, and indeed should, consciously participate in their liberated buying status, using consumerism as political and cultural leverage to shape market offerings. This invocation interfaces neatly with larger, organised anti-mass market consumer groups who seek to subvert the corrosive effects of the capitalist paradigm through conscientious or political consumerism. Examples such as the *Burning Man* festival symbolically represent this sensitivity to market agency. *Burning Man* is a "week-long communal gathering that alters participants' consumption meanings and practices through discourse, rules and practice. The entire community's consumption experiences are socially constructed as distanced from, or even outside of, consumer culture and the market" (Kozinets 2002, p. 23).

Kozinets traces the rituals and alternate consumer practices enacted over the course of the event and the sense of community that individuals enjoy from the experience, as fleeting as that community may be. *Burning Man* endorses forms of exchange such as barter and gift-giving as signs of a "market outside of the market", a vision of how consumers might continue to participate in the marketplace but retain certain social values that are perceived to be under siege by capitalism. Kozinets' *Burning Man* example is somewhat akin to the kind of media consumption communities that form around the discussion, dissemination and interpretation of various media. Reflected in the ethos of Jenkins "spreadability" (2015) where the success or failure of media messaging is based on its reach and dissemination rather than just the number of views it receives, convergence media punctuates a similar form of cultural agency ascribed to consumers who seemingly make little distinction between what are traditionally deemed high or low aesthetic forms by the market but rather seek entertainment, amusement and personal resonance that can be shared, liked and commentated.

In one sense though, the dichotomy between the idea of the emancipated consumer and the reality of a dominant capitalist structure exposes the fundamental fissure between reality and practice that has plagued postmodernism generally to the point where we can now ask where postmodernity now sits in the cultural and political landscape. Postmodernity sought to implode high and low cultural division remnant of the modernist era, taking artistic and cultural production out of the classical institutions such as museums and galleries. Witnessed most vividly in Pop Art, and its contemporary inheritors, artistic production self-consciously declared itself as being born of the mundane experience and thereby engaged with the *vie quotidien*. Iconic works such as Warhol's *Campbell Soup Cans* (1961–1962) formed the basis of postmodern pastiche and critique, selected for their irony and political resistance. Playing out Baudrillard's theory of simulation of the real and invoking what Jameson calls a form of "depthlessness" (Jameson 1983), Warhol's work signalled a new artistic participation in mass culture. But is not surprising then that, in an era of convergence that we might see as post-postmodern, to the extent that the refusal of meaning and the

valorisation of mundanity as a resistance strategy has been eclipsed by more global en-actions through social media and web-based activism, that advertising has moved past the status of low art political instrument. Perhaps one significant turn in the cultural landscape, partially enabled by technology, is the realisation that it is not the content of artistic production or the statement a particular artwork makes that constitutes high or low culture. As Jenkins et al. (2015) suggest, it is the cultural reception of the work, the value attached to it and the audience that receives it, that creates a high or low culture.

The point to be made from this discussion is that postmodernity as an intellectual framework has harboured some problematic shortcomings. It denies the full impact of meaning-making practices in the cultural sphere; it lauds a political or economic freedom that does not correspond with global economics and its emphasis on fragmentation does not enable the interpretation of cultural flux and flow. There is enough contradiction or incongruity in current syntheses of postmodernity to justify a re-evaluation of the way we read and employ this paradigmatic shift in consumer research. Postmodernism as an intellectual project has remained stunted by its initial re-actionary aspirations, where "Postmodernism may serve as a productive platform for poetic and aesthetic experimentation; however, as now constituted, it does not provide a viable platform for constructing communities or crafting portals to wisdom" (Jameson 1991, p. 244).

Philosophically and paradigmatically, postmodernism appears to remain a re-action to post-Enlightenment modernity or "a transitional epistemology awaiting its own negation and transcendence into a synthesis that is still to be articulated" (Jansen 1990, p. 244). Kumar (1995) further explains this fundamental failure of postmodernity,

> Postmodernity flattens time; it solves the problem of the future by simply denying the relevance of the concept of 'past', 'present' and 'future'. It denounces modernity's belief in progress and attacks its faith in science and technology. To that extent, it echoes the cultural conservatism of the earlier part of the century. But, unlike that, it refuses to replace modernity with anything; this denial of an alternative is indeed its principal characteristic. (p. 210)

Yet this critique of postmodernism is challenged by more recent evolutions in cultural theory (hence why we might suggest that the era of postmodernity in on the wane) with a reinvigoration of historicity, materiality and cultural engagement. Straw (2007), for instance, suggests that a new focus on history is being animated by the internet, creating new opportunities for engagement with otherwise lost or inaccessible pasts

> The Internet has strengthened the cultural weight of the past, increasing its intelligibility and accessibility. On the Internet, the past is produced as a field of ever greater coherence, through the gathering together of disparate artifacts into sets or collections and through the commentary and annotation that cluster around such agglomerations, made possible in part by high-capacity storage mechanisms. (p. 4)

While others, such as Blom (2002), would suggest that this kind of rarefication of history through the organising of fragments into curated collections constitutes a kind of inauthenticity, similar critiques could be levelled against efforts to preserve the past in any society or, indeed, the practice of history itself. It is not in the collecting or curating of artefacts that history lives but rather in the uses and engagements that history produces in an ongoing way. In the context of media artefacts and how we apprehend the idea of cultural or aesthetic objects, it is true to say that postmodernism has left a legacy of disavowing high-low art distinctions but it is in how we now animate this lack of distinction and use our cultural and historical resources that will form the basis of cultural engagement for the future. Jenkins et al. (2015) are quite insightful on this point, suggesting that, in the context of media,

> Audience members…are not at the service of the brand; rather, they select material that matters to them from the much broader array of media content on offer (which now includes audience creations alongside industrially produced works). They do not simply pass along static texts; they transform the material through active production processes or through their own critiques and commentary… Content – in whole or through quotes – does not remain in fixed borders but rather circulates

> in unpredicted and often unpredictable directions, not the product of top-down design but rather the result of a multitude of local decisions made by autonomous agents negotiating their way through diverse cultural spaces. (p. 294)

Distinctions between media forms, old and new or high and low art are dissolved by the practices described by Jenkins. The value of the object does not reside in the site of its production but rather in its cultural or aesthetic resonance. This observation has implications for the pursuit of our consideration of advertising and its classical positioning as a low-art form utilised for pure commercial spectacle since Straw (2007) in his consideration of the changing nature of historical engagement, and Jenkins et al. (2015), in their identification of meaning as resident with consumers rather than producers, open a theoretical lens through which we can begin to see advertising as one of many cultural resources open to generating consumer resonances and offering grist for spreadability and transformation. The spreadable nature of convergence media potentially prompts the same self-extension, symbolic meaning and personal reflexivity we attribute to the object-possession (Belk 1988) transposed into a digital context (Belk 2013). It becomes important, then, to view advertising potentially as part of these kinds of culturally mediated collections. It is perhaps, then, in the mediascape, and, for our purposes, the advertising scape, that postmodernity has not only reached its apotheosis but been transcended by a new era of intelligibility facilitated by technology and a renewed consumer willingness to engage, transform and participate.

Convergence

The context in which media forms are transforming and consumers enact their new participatory roles is largely described as one of a convergence culture in which convergence media circulates. Based on Levy (2001), the term convergence was coined by Jenkins (2006) to describe three key trends occurring as a result of newly enabled relationships between consumers and media institutions. Hinging on *convergence media,*

participatory culture and *collective intelligence*, the era of convergence speaks to fundamental shifts in how production/consumption relationships work, different evolutions in consumer networks and what "work" consumers are prepared to do in order to engage with media content. Jenkins defines convergence media as the

> flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, the search for new structures of media financing that fall at the interstices between old and new media, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes depending on who's speaking and what they think they are talking about. (p. 3)

Implicit in this idea of convergence media as symbolic of shifting producer/consumer relationships, media content flowing across platforms and a consumer culture prepared to actively engage with that content is a form of intellectual democratisation that challenges favoured theorisations, institutional authority and existing ideological and creative structures around content itself. Just as we see in other creative industries such as fashion, the emergence of consumer voices as participants in highly hierarchical industries, (where institutional authority has traditionally dominated the entire creative discourse and dictated what consumers should like), are transforming those industries and the scholarly discourses that orbit them (Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Scaraboto and Fischer 2012). Participatory culture, defined by Jenkins (2006) as composed of commercial and consumer "participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands" (p. 4), has partially enabled this kind of challenge to the institutional and intellectual *status quo*, opening up new horizons for fans and consumers to draw closer to industrial entities and exert more influence over the production and reception of content. Participatory culture, in turn, enabled collective intelligence as consumers share their many fragments, stories, experiences and commentaries and enrich each other's understandings. As Jenkins also points out, collective intelligence also

has the capacity to transform public discourse, debate and the nature of media itself. Benkler (2006) shares this view is suggesting that "emerging models of information and cultural production, radically decentralised and based on emergent patterns of cooperation and sharing, but also of simple coordinate existence, are beginning to take on an ever-larger role in how we produce meaning" (2006, pp. 32–33). As a view into the future of how the media landscape might unfold in this new terrain of competing interests, visible consumer agency and alternative discourses of meaning production taken over by consumers themselves, Couldry (2009) suggests that

> Instead of collapsing, 'the media' will become a site of a struggle for competing forces: *market-based fragmentation* versus *continued pressures of centralisation* that draw on new media-related myths and rituals. The construction 'the media' will continue to frame not only the activities of media institutions, large and small, but also the actions of individuals that operate across the producer/consumer division. Because it has lost the unquestioned, unchallenged status of a 'fact of nature', 'the media' now must be more actively defended and reaffirmed; uses of that construction will be increasingly contested by many actors, not just by media institutions themselves. Meanwhile pressures of audience fragmentation closely tied, as Turow argues, to the changing economics of media industries' advertising income-base will operate not in contradiction to but against the background of media's increasing insistence on their general importance in our lives. (p. 449)

So, while convergence culture, with its attendant strains of media, participation and collective intelligence, will influence the concept of "media" and how consumers use it in their lives, this does not signal the end of commercial interests, institutional presence or creative industries but rather a shift in the relationship between producers/consumers and in the resultant media content. The effect of convergence for advertising, then, is that advertising becomes constructed for multiple media platforms, engages disparate audiences (despite highly targeted approaches) and utilises creative modalities such as film, documentary and photographic techniques to generate content (Dena 2004). Convergence extends advertising aesthetics (Brown and Patterson 2001;

Joy and Sherry 2003; Schroeder 2006) and provides a platform for diverse, enriched new forms of aesthetic production under the aegis of advertising. Further digital capacities such as transmedia storytelling (Dena 2004; Jenkins 2006), where narratives are deterritorialised across "multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006, pp. 95–96), transfiction where "the story is dependent on all the pieces on each medium, device or site to be read/experienced for it to be understood" (Dena 2006) or mega-narration (Mikos 2017) where narratives are interwoven in vast story worlds such as the Marvel Comics world all suggest a landscape characterised by hybridities, intersections and interpolations from a range of aesthetic, cultural and stylistic influences. Such influences are brought to bear on most media forms such as film and television, where the cross-pollination is seen frequently. Advertising increasingly has a conducive role to play in animating this highly intertextualised and symbolically heterogeneous space. These forms give rise to consumers engaging in "spreading" (Jenkins et al. 2015) activities, whereby advertisements become shared cultural resources and valuable objects. More broadly, in the context of hybridised marketing, such an approach from advertising creators "reflects the merging interests and priorities of the entertainment, communication, advertising and brand marketing industries" (Hackley 2005).

This evolution has given rise to the "mini-film" (Chen 2015; Copping 2010) that consciously hybridises advertising and traditional cinematic forms. Chen (2015) defines mini-films as

> branded entertainment with the form of a short feature film, generally with a duration of between three and ten minutes with a romantic or comedic storyline, which is posted on a dedicated website or video-sharing website. The sponsor is identified at the beginning or the ending of the movie, and brand messages may or may not be explicitly placed in the film. (p. 21)

While the length of mini-films varies, with, for instance, some Miu Miu's *Women's Tales* (2012) running to twelve minutes, Dior's *Lady Blue Shanghai* (2010) running to sixteen minutes and Chanel's *The Tale of*

a Fairy (2011) running to twenty-five minutes, and storylines going beyond romance or comedy (for instance Roman Polanski's *A Therapy* for Prada (2012) and the suite of *The Hire* films for BMW (2004)), Chen's definition is not quite reflective of the complexity of the mini-film landscape. However, the essential emphasis on short film structures disseminated across digital (and sometimes print and TV) platforms with an identified sponsor is accurate. While our attention is focused on convergent advertisements, mini-films feature prominently in this canon and, as an example of how cinema, art and advertising have intersected, it is worth giving them special attention here. Despite a lingering perception of advertising as pure spectacle (Gurevitch 2009), it has long been acknowledged that narrative is powerful instrument in successful advertising (Stern 1991). On the one hand, there is an established tradition of scholarship in advertising narrative but, on the other, as Kim et al. (2017) acknowledge, it remains somewhat under-theorised as to *why* narrative is a successful technique. For film theorists, such a question seems unimaginable since much of the film theory canon is based upon the fundamental assumption of film as a narrative medium (a classification that comes under increasing pressure in the current era). Kuhn (2014) is particularly emphatic on this point, suggesting that

> Film, in general, is a narrative medium or, at least, a medium of many narrative capacities. Nearly every film, except specific types of experimental films and documentaries, includes at least a few basic narrative structures. This applies especially, but not only, to feature films. If we take the representation of a change of state as a basic necessary condition for narrativity – and thus follow a broad definition of narrativity – moving pictures have at least two basic possibilities of narrative representation: a) to represent motions (and therefore changes) within one short; b) to confront two (or more) comparable states through the combination of shots into sequences (i.e. the process of editing or montage in terms of classical film theory. (Kuhn 2014)

Narrative is seen as the film's *raison d'être*, the mechanism through which character motivations, psychological states and emotional responses are revealed. Bordwell (2007) contends that narrative engenders three elements of the story world, *plot structure* and *narration*, all of which

encompass complex elements in their own right. They also lay the foundations for an affective experience that the viewer *wants to see*. Each of these elements appear in narrative advertising, leading to experiences of narrative transportation (Chen 2015; Kim et al. 2016), absorption and entrancement (Gerrig 1993; Nell 1988) that apparently translate to positive brand perceptions (Chang 2013) and enhanced purchase behaviour (MacKenzie et al. 1986). But perhaps this accounts for why such an obvious question around why narrative works continues to elude advertising scholars while appearing abundantly clear to film theorists—while film theorists freely acknowledge the value of stories, symbolisms and affective intensities in their own right, advertising scholars are still attempting to translate these inherent human affects into brand equity and sales. It is precisely this dissonance between creative impetus and commercial imperative that convergence culture challenges, forcing disparate motivations and energies into consonant spaces.

Mini-films have traditionally fallen within the provenance of luxury marketing. It is now a given that every luxury house has an archive of films, made accessible either through their website or through video-sharing platforms such as YouTube. The films are usually visually lavish and call upon the talents of high-end directors and creative teams. This perhaps comes as no surprise since luxury firms have typically viewed themselves as inheritors of valuable aesthetic legacies conveyed by iconic predecessors expressed through a *philosophy* rather than simply a brand image. While high prices, premium quality, exclusivity and dazzling retail experiences all characterise the luxury marketplace (Fionda and Moore 2009), the articulation of a clear philosophy (that flows through to branding and products) remains seminal to the success of luxury firms. Such a philosophy has frequently been expressed through aesthetic engagement and dalliances into a range of creative outlets. Glossy coffee table books showcasing the pedigree of the brand through photography, preservation of the brand's heritage (through dedicated sites such as the Gehry designed *Fondation Louis Vuitton* in Paris, the *Gucci Museo* at the *Palazzo della Mercanzia* in Florence and the *Musée Christian Dior* in Granville at the site of Dior's beach home), travelling exhibitions of vintage designer collections around the world (such as Gianni Versace (1997) and Chanel (2005) at

The Met, New York, Gianni Versace (2001) and Christian Dior (2017) at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and Valentino (2012) at Somerset House, London) and documentaries (such as Teboul's's *Yves Saint Laurent—His Life and Times* (2007), Trynauer's *Valentino—The Last Emperor* (2008) and Lafont's *Hermès—Hearts and Crafts* (2011)) all reflect the interweaving of luxury into various aesthetic and cultural arenas. Thus, it seems fitting that an industry that has historically harnessed its historical and aesthetic value and articulated its vision through creative channels situate at the vanguard of convergence media where further opportunities for alignment with cinema, photography and art exist. Yet, it is not only the luxury houses, with their eye for detail and handsome budgets, that recognise the possibilities for consumer engagement in the convergent environment. The use of mini-films for firms such as Visa, Fedex, Miller Beer, WildAid, American Express and Nike (to name just a few) have involved creative agencies and renowned film directors (Ang Lee for Visa, Michel Gondry for Fedex, Wes Anderson and Martin Scorsese for American Express, Errol Morris for Miller, Kathryn Bigelow for WildAid, Spike Lee for Nike) in making engaging, narrative-driven short films for these household names. The impetus for this extended format advertising, made possible via the digital environment where content can be organised as either singular works or as suites, resides in the fact that consumers can elect to avoid advertising through ad blocks or selective viewing and that, to reach the consumer, there must be value or meaning attached to the viewing experience. Just as Gunning (1994) traces the history of film as a "cinema of attractions", the creation of advertisements as mini-films offers similar opportunities for wonder and attraction. The nature of convergence culture also suggests that these works can be spread, collected, shared and commentated by consumers.

But it is in this fissure between media forms, in the hybridising space between art, cinema and advertising now occupied by the consumer as well that new challenges arise for practitioners and scholars alike. In responding to these challenges, one of the core arguments sustained throughout this work contends that, given this spillage between media forms and the blurring of boundaries between aesthetic objects where hybridity, intersection and cross-pollination have come to dominate

the terrain, is it time to re-evaluate how we classify aesthetic media and abandon some of the more stagnant modes of classification that continue to linger in both advertising and cinema theory? Film theorists rarely talk about advertising, despite the overwhelming emphasis on auteurism at a point where many of the celebrated *auteurs* are involved with advertising and see their advertising work as seminal parts of their opus. The occasional reference to advertising work appear in directorial biographies (such as Resha's (2015) *The Cinema of Errol Morris* (2015) and Todd's (2012) *Authorship and the Films of David Lynch: Aesthetic Receptions in Contemporary Hollywood*) only to be quickly subsumed by the more pressing consideration of their feature length works. Equally, advertising scholarship has suffered from its lack of engagement with film theory, film philosophy and media studies in attempting to take account of shifting ground in the advertising environment. One thing that becomes clear is that convergence culture implodes notions of media category; the striated spaces of film, television, gaming, advertising, art and so forth no longer operate within demarcated boundaries.

There is a certain irony in the circularity of the historical trajectory between film and advertising. While both started as spectacle, or visual "attraction" to borrow from Gunning (1994), advertising followed the path of becoming empty spectacle in the sense intended by the Situationists, regarded as the almost immoral visual expression of consumer manipulation in a post-Fordist commodity culture. Traced through a Marxist discourse gripped by concerns with the manipulation of mass society and overarching political ideologies, the legacy of figures such as Adorno and Horkheimer (1973) and Marcuse (1964), Althusser (1971), and Packard (1981 [1957]) have continued to influence contemporary receptions of advertising as representative of a capitalist machine against which the consumer is powerless. Nava (1997) illuminates this point in asking

> Why is it so frequently singled out as the bad object of the critic's gaze, even today, when the intellectual climate is ethically and politically so uncertain, and the pleasures of popular consumption so much more widely acknowledged? Why is advertising so much more incriminated than, say, cinema, magazines or corporate architecture? Why, additionally are some critics so provoked by the idea of commercial exchange, by the association of imagery and buying? (p. 47)

While several answers can be advanced, such as Silverstone's (1994) argument about the displacement of our relationship with television or Nava's own suggestion that advertising acts as the repository of "the injuries of our dependence on commodity capitalism" (p. 47), the point of asking such questions speaks to the enduring reading of advertising as the problematic communication arm of the market and its location with cultural discourse as spectacle. By contrast, as film developed into a narrative medium and became gathered up in critical conversations around how to define and approach cinema (such as those led by Bazin, Arnheim and Kracauer) as either a representation or reification of reality, the impetus for film philosophy was born. In granting the status of art form to film, its cultural capital was elevated above that of advertising and established within the now-dissolving locus of "high-art". Endemic to the film theory pedigree of critical interrogation, philosophical development and theoretical framing resided questions of indexicality or "the existential trace or impression left by an object, and used to describe (and solve) a number of problems dealing with the way what we might call the light-based image media refer to the world" (Gunning 2007, p. 30) based on Peircian semiotics and auteurism, or the belief that the director is the author, as elaborated by Truffaut and Astruc both of which situated considerations of film within lofty considerations of the nature of reality and who constructs our (creative) vision of it. Intervening views from Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytical, structuralist and formalist voices also served to edify the status of cinema as culturally and critically worthy. While it is not the purview of our study to rehearse the evolution of film theory since such an endeavour is complex in its own right, it is suffice to say that such a rich and vast body of critical development undertaken by film scholars has significantly aided in the popular perception of film as a legitimate art form. It is also important to note, too, that the commentary here is intended to illuminate the two radically divergent trajectories along which film and advertising as cultural objects have travelled rather than critiquing the evolution of film theory itself. Indeed, one of the major shortcomings of advertising scholarship is that not enough engagement with film theory has taken place.

However, in the contemporary media environment, something of a reversal has taken place. As advertising producers have come to recognise the need to utilise more creative and affecting strategies and the impetus for film production companies to recuperate their significant investments in what is now an extremely expensive venture, the boundaries between "advertising as empty spectacle" and "film as sophisticated, narrative-based aesthetic" are forced to blur. Product placement, film sponsorship and financial aid from major corporations all have roles to play in the production of the contemporary Hollywood film (Donaton 2004). Equally, celebrated film directors, actors and producers are engaged in advertising work precisely for their creative skills and vision. Theoretically then, as cinema drifts towards a return to spectacle with digital cinema, CGI and dazzling visuals being the staple of the Hollywood blockbuster and convergence advertising turns to complex narrative and studied aesthetics (sometimes routed through the *auteurist* vision of a particular director), the two mediums have seemingly come full circle, restoring them both to media of narrative and spectacle, both driven by aesthetic and commercial impetus. Herein lies the effects of convergence culture.

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3

Assemblage Thinking

If the first proposition put forth through this text is that media categories are obfuscating and classical generic division according to media type are increasingly problematised within a convergence context, then the second proposition is that new theoretical resources are required to interpret this shift. As such, assemblage thinking is explored as one possible avenue into developing a novel framework for interpreting convergent advertising. To date, assemblage thinking has not appeared in advertising scholarship—or much in film theory despite the immense attention given to Deleuze's film philosophy in *Cinéma I: L'image-mouvement* (2013a [1985]) and *Cinéma II: L'image-temps* (2013b [1985]). Brown and Fleming (2011) have drawn on assemblage thinking to interpret "radical potentia for deterritorialisation" using the work of David Fincher (Brown and Fleming 2011). Pisters (2003) uses the tetravalence of assemblages to deconstruct the anatomy of film, plotting it along two axes—the vertical axis of molar lines and the horizontal axis of form of content moving to form of expression. Films as open totalities sit at one end of the molar line, deterritorialisation and lines of flight through character and genre at the other end of the molar line. In other words, films work as territorialised, open totalities

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that reflect and draw from the reality of the world. However, genres and characters can also "break away" from expected conventions, leading them towards deterritorialisation. She then aligns different kinds of images from Deleuze's film theory, (the use of the perception, affection, action, relation and time images) to forms of content which sit along the horizontal axis of the molecular line towards forms of expression embodying sign and incorporeal transformations. While the vertical axis speaks to the relationship between film and the world, the horizontal axis plots the internal characteristics of the film that hold it together as an assemblage. Pisters is one of the first to integrate Deleuze's philosophy of film with assemblage thinking in a comprehensive way, roaming across a wide canon of works by Fassbinder, Hitchcock, Tarantino and Cronenberg. Her work punctuates the under-explored relevance of assemblage thinking in film and, while film as such is not the focus of our discussion, it is nonetheless significant to note the inclusion of a wider Deleuzian reading into film theory.

In their seminal work, *Mille Plateaux*, published initially in 1980, Deleuze and Guattari emphasis the

> principle of multiplicity: basically, everything is not composed of units operating within rules, as in structuralism, but of multiplicities spreading and connecting with other multiplicities within a non-centered structure. A multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature (the laws of combination therefore increase in number as the multiplicity grows). (p. 381)

While the philosophical implications of this basic premise are complex (some of which are explored in our ensuing discussion), their fundamental preoccupation with the flow of multiplicities within bounded spaces would seem to find resonance with the contemporary convergence environment and potentially offer new insights into how we conceive of advertising in contemporary consumer culture.

Assemblage thinking (and its attendant assemblage theory) is often linked to Latour's actor–network theory through their shared interest in how things come to be, how they enter into relations that hold

together through evolution and how, ultimately, they come to morph into something else or dissipate. Both also assume the importance of human and non-human elements. One key difference between the two might be seen, as Harman (2009) suggests, in the nature of entities and the fragility of their existence, where "on one side are figures like Bergson and Deleuze, for whom a generalized becoming precedes any crystallization into specific entities. On the other side we find authors such as Whitehead and Latour, for whom entities are so highly definite that they vanish instantly with the slightest change in their properties" (2009, p. 6). This distinction between the emphasis on flux in assemblage thinking and comparative rigidity in actor–network theory is important for a consideration of assemblage thinking in the media context as the constant return to emergences and becomings illuminated through assemblage are key to our project here. Assemblage theory has attracted attention from consumer researchers seeking to understand diverse contexts such as individual consumption experiences (Canniford and Shankar 2013), consumer communities (Scaraboto and Fischer 2012) and families (Epp et al. 2014; Epp and Velagelati 2014).

Although much of the philosophical logic was laid out on Deleuze's *Différence et Répétition* (2004 [1968]) wherein Deleuze essentially argued that thought proceeds via difference rather than a Cartesian unity of thought, assemblage thinking was more formally described by Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille Plateaux* (1987 [1980]) with further development of some of its key concepts in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (1994 [1991]), and elaborated as theory by De Landa (2006, 2015) (hence the distinction between thinking as we use it throughout and theory). Throughout all of his writings, Deleuze remained intrigued by how thought comes to be within the planes of time and space. For Adkins (2015), Deleuze is primarily concerned with continuity, suggesting that

> one of the great virtues of *A Thousand Plateaus* (and of Deleuze's work in general) is its creation of a philosophy that is predicated on the continuity of the sensible and the intelligible… The sensible and the intelligible, along with all the other binarisms proposed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, should be thought of as abstract and opposing poles of the continuum to which they belong. (pp. 11–13)

Central to Deleuze's sense of continuity is the plane of immanence (as against transcendence via Kant), a concept that appears in *Mille Plateaux* and receives greater attention in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* For Deleuze, the plane of immanence is the grounding terrain out of which thought and concept can emerge. Tending to his foundational belief that the role of the philosopher is to develop new concepts or "intensive ordinates", Deleuze saw the plane of immanence as that which "constitutes the absolute ground of philosophy, its earth or deterritorialization, the foundation on which it creates its concepts" (1994 [1991], p. 41). In the context of assemblage, the plane of immanence or plane of consistency as it is termed in *Mille Plateaux*, is the substrate upon which all multiplicities, intensities and becomings rest and from which they emerge. The plane of consistency, then, "knows nothing of differences in level, orders of magnitude, or distances. It knows nothing of the artificial and the natural. It knows nothing of the distinction between contents and expressions…" (p. 80). Connected to the rhizome, or a tendril that "connects any point to any other point and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature" (p. 21), the plateaus outlined in the text are all assemblages located on the plane of consistency to the extent they comprise intensities and connections within a continuum. Deleuze and Guattari borrow from Bateson's anthropology to describe a plateau as a "continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end" (p. 22). This definition, with its emphasis on the animating force of intensities foregrounds their subsequent definition of assemblages. But plateaus are also rhizomic, in that they are "multiplicities connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome" (p. 23). Through the inflection of the rhizome and plateau, Deleuze and Guattari move towards the conceptualisation of the assemblage.

When asked in interview with *L'Arc* Magazine (1980) what Deleuze thought the unifying idea of *Mille Plateaux* was, he responded "I think it is the idea of an assemblage". While it is true to say that a clear definition of an assemblage does not emerge out of *Mille Plateaux*, we are given indication of its meaning in the example drawn with a book,

> All we know are assemblages. And the only assemblages are machinic assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation. No significance, no subjectification: writing to the nth power (all individuated enunciation remains trapped within the dominant significations, all signifying desire is associated with dominated subjects). An assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously… There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather, an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders, so that a book has no sequel nor the world as its object nor one or several authors as its subject. (p. 24)

Deleuze, in later commentary, went on to clarify the concept of assemblage further. In his dialogues with Claire Parnet, Deleuze illustrated an assemblage as

> a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, allows; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind. (Deleuze and Parnet 1987 [1977], p. 69)

Common to both of these renderings is the articulation of becomings made possible through colliding intersections, duplicating multiplicities made up of intensities that morph, shift and spill forth into new relations. De Landa (2006) provides further clarity on this point in suggesting that assemblages are also "agentic systems of diverse components [intensities] that interact with one another in ways that can either stabilize or destabilize an assemblage's identity" (p. 12). Material components have a function or presence; others have an expressive or symbolic function that organise the assemblage. Equally, assemblages are characterised by extensions (the evolving inclusion of new components via expansion) and intensities (the greater or lesser power of individual components within the assemblage) (De Landa 2015). Müller's (2016)

taxonomy of an assemblage is instructive here in deconstructing the essential attributes of assemblage thinking. He posits that assemblages are (a) relational, (b) productive, (c) heterogeneous, (d) deterritorialising and reterritorialising and (e) desired. An assemblage's capacity for deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation is worthy of particular attention in the context of the analysis advanced throughout this work. Although these two terms have come to be used in a variety of ways, the manner in which they are intended by Deleuze and Guattari is relatively specific. They posit that "the assemblage has two poles or vectors: one vector is oriented toward the strata, upon which it distributes territorialities, relative deterritorializations, and reterritorializations; the other is oriented toward the plane of consistency or destratification, upon which it conjugates processes of deterritorialisation, carrying them to the absolute of the earth" (p. 168). Here, deterritorialisation is characterised as a line of flight, as a spillage beyond the territory of the assemblage. In synergy, the process of reterritorialisation is a consolidation, a gathering up of the assemblage into a bounded—although perhaps new—territory or entity.

So where can this theory of flows, multiplicities and states of becoming take us in looking at advertising and its relationship with other media forms in an era of convergence? Assemblage thinking allows us to excavate how ideas are composed to create new interactions between artistic, market and media platforms. In the same way that research has suggested brands can hold together or dissipate as assemblages (Lury 2009; Parmentier and Fischer 2015), advertisements are assemblages in that they collate diverse components that interact to produce a tangible, stable (yet open to deterriorialisation) entity. Deleuze and Guattari (1980) emphasise the rhizomic nature of assemblages as entities with "multiple roots" that spring up across time and space. This inherent quality is reflected in convergence media itself and, by extension, convergent advertising as it moves across multiple platforms, springing "new roots". Some insights from Cubbit (2004) and Manovich (2001) perhaps enable us to establish the connection. In tracing the evolution of cinema, Cubbit argues for a transition from temporality as the defining feature of the image to spatiality as the essential quality of the digital pixel. Pixels, in a digital medium, appear simultaneously, flowing together to form the image. He argues that "in pursuit of an ideally

attentive and stable subject, the cut produces multiple unities and hierarchies. And yet the oceanic protosubjectivity of the pixel is never entirely subsumed into the new formation" (p. 51). The identification of digital technology as inherently spatial and relational, but also unbounded as captured in the metaphor of *oceanic* protosubjectivity, speaks to the apprehension of contemporary cinema as an assembled structure prone to deterritorialisation and simultaneous flow rather than ordered linearity or sequentiality. Cubbit elaborates this point further in suggesting that the shift to spatialised cinema is endemic of a deeper cultural turn where

> as the lifeworld appears consistently more random, so the mediascape becomes more scathing of any pretence at order, mocking the revelations and resolutions that once passed as realistic by elaborate and mocking simulations that reveal the diagrammatic origins of complex plotting, instead of fostering the illusion of psychological or moral motivation for action or the patterning of the world. (2004, p. 249)

This insight bears resemblance to Deleuze's resistance towards classical philosophical endeavours to unify notions of truth. Just as Cubbit suggests,"digital media do not refer. They communicate" (p. 250), Deleuze exhibits comfort with a philosophical project of becoming rather than a representation of being or prescribing of realities. Where one may find randomness, assemblage thinking finds new multiplicities or opportunities for renewal.

If digital technology is symptomatic of, (or a catalyst for), a cultural turn towards randomness out of which new concepts can advance, something akin to a plane of immanence out of which all transpire, Manovich (2001) gives form to this digital plane of immanence in a rendering of modularity that finds synergy with the logic of assemblage. Modularity is used to describe the nature of objects as they are composed, arranged and aggregated in the digital environment in a matter reminiscent of intensities. Small objects or elements are stored, populating databanks ready to be assembled into larger objects (one might reframe "object" as assemblage here since each element of self-composing in its own right) yet the small objects or elements do not lose

their "independence" (p. 30). Advertisements, films, games, websites, etc., are composed of these independent elements that flow together to form the whole. While Manovich refers to these objects as fractals, in that they form fractions or fragments of a larger composite, they nonetheless retain a self-sustaining capacity. Manovich points out that the Internet is an agglomeration of these fractals, an entirely modular being in a constant state of flux and flow. The entire web itself is modular, as is each web page, "consisting of separate media elements. Every element can always be accessed on its own" (p. 31). When placed in the context of convergence media where elements are composed, edited, stored or mashed, the logic of modularity not only explains how digital artefacts are created but also accounts for a kind of "egalitarianism of intensities" where each element is available to combine with another to compose a whole, only to be dissembled and rearranged later. No element is more significant than another with each end product such as a film, website or advertisement signalling a temporary composition of intensive elements ready to be recast anew in another composition. Thus, the logic of modularity implicitly mirrors an assemblage sensibility and, to that end, the nature of convergence media, with its increasingly sophisticated use of digital technology, can be understood as a mechanical materialisation of assemblage thinking. Equally, just Deleuze and Guattari argue for assemblage as a strategy of resistance to homogenisation and stasis, the fluidity of convergence media, made possible by the logic of modularity reflects this outlook. Such an unexpected linkage between the spatialisation of relations in cinema, the logic of new media and assemblage thinking returns us to the foundational concept of rhizome in that the combination and recombination of intensities to form new assemblages can "spring up" in unexpected ways.

Advertising further augments this rhizomic nature as advertisements can be viewed as rhizomic "lines of flight" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980]) connecting to greater cinematic, narrational, authorial and stylistic multiplicities that render our view of rhizomic advertising as "always in the middle, between things, inter-being, intermezzo…the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance" (p. 26). Viewing advertising in this way also requires us to see its extensions and intensities as perpetually engaged, shifting and changing the nature of the assemblage. The relationship between extensions and intensities is symbiotic

as the affective, narrative, stylistic and referent intensities of the ad enable both deterritorialisation in the form of larger, emergent assemblages and reterritorialisation of key assemblage components. De Landa (2015) emphasises intensities that interact within the assemblage. As the valence of different intensities morph and realign within the assemblage, so too does the assemblage itself. Thus, intensities are not static but always in an iterative dialogue of becoming with one another. Like certain forms of cinema (Brown and Fleming 2011), the simultaneous capacity for deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation through extension and intensification of affective, stylistic, narrative and referent intensities is shown through the advertisements discussed later.

Drawing from narrative, particularly in the context of film directors who make ads, visual-narrative affect (or the synergy between the storyline, its visual realisation and the emotional affect on the consumer) and the stylistic visual effects intensify the narrative through aesthetic and audio cues (Chion 2009). Linked to stylistic character, the style and effect of the ad is often a replication of the film director's cinematic signature (Wes Anderson for H & M, David Lynch for Calvin Klein), intensified by similar visual styling, use of the same cast (Lara Flynn Boyle for David Lynch's Calvin Klein Obsession, Adrien Brody as train conductor in a similar role to his *Grand Budapest* character for Wes Anderson for H & M, Nicole Kidman referencing her *Moulin Rouge* "Satine" character for Baz Luhrmann for Chanel No. 5) and a replication of similar cinematic techniques and strategies to create a rich story world that harkens to other similarly rich story worlds (Jean-Pierre Jeunet for Chanel referencing *Amélie*). Further intensities include the authorial presence or stamp of the director (Gerstner and Staiger 2003) whose distinctive stylistics and filmic techniques inhabit the viewing experience. These multiple intensities thus not only work within the advertisement itself but also affect consumer perception, engagement and use.

Extensions enable core intensities such as narrative, stylistics, spatio-temporal parameters and authorial stamp to spill over either into other advertisements to compose a suite, i.e. a larger assemblage that at once extends and intensifies core components. De Landa's (2006) assemblage schemata offers a framework here. Starting with persons and networks, moving through organisations and governments and ending with cities and nations, De Landa plots the aggregating nature of

assemblages through the axis of size and complexity. While he cautions against the reductionist micro–macro view in the context of discussing social compositions, De Landa's methodical mapping of escalating complexity is instructive for our consideration of evolving assemblages. He defends this approach in arguing that "it is only by experiencing this upward movement, the movement that in reality generates all these emergent wholes, that a reader can get a sense of the irreducible social complexity characterizing the contemporary world" (p. 6). In the pages to follow, our discussion adopts similar schemata of aggregation in order to reveal how the flow of intensities across wider and wider horizons further complicate the advertising assemblage, drawing from wider circuits of cultural meaning, artistic referents and philosophical tropes.

Following De Landa, our first point of discussion visits some core intensities through a focus on singular advertisements. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy provides the frame for discussion of time, space, becoming and posthumanity. From there, our discussion turns to suites of advertisements that complicate the assemblage by deterritorialising across multiple zones. For instance, David Lynch's *Calvin Klein Obsession* ads represent this suite approach where each one of the four ads draws from a great writer (D.H. Lawrence, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Gustave Flaubert), utilise black and white photography and conjure a similar brooding mood with signature Lynchian close-ups and abstractions of bodily forms. While each advertisement is complete (or territorialised) in its own right, there is nonetheless a larger narrative, stylistic and interpretative becoming that brings the four works into a larger assemblage. Finally, where these components are further extended into larger assemblages again, an *oeuvre* is composed. Unlike a suite, which essentially replicates the intensities of the singular advertisement across a further two or three advertisement, an *oeuvre* further intensifies its original components but embeds within a much larger assemblage where the original assemblage potentially faces deterritorialisation as its components move across a greater diversity of platforms, confronts additional, more complex branding/marketing/cultural components and becomes open to consumer spreadability—which, in turn, replicates further deterritorialisation as components find new, possibility de-commodified, assemblages with which to interact.

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4

Intensities and the Singular Assemblage: Becomings

In his 2001 interview on the Japanese DVD edition of the film *Mulholland Drive*, David Lynch unwittingly speaks to the assemblage nature of media as integrated elements. He commented that

> You know a film is, when it's finished, all the elements together in a way that feels correct and feels complete and that's what goes out. So it's, since it's complete in my mind, nothing should be talked about more and it's a, it's a very big shame when something is finished and then people want you to translate it back into words because it's, it never will work. It never will go back into words and be what the film is…. (2001)

His commentary suggests that a film is composed of components or elements that comprise a tangible entity that holds together as a territorialised assemblage characterised by its expressive and functional capacities. The expressive capacities of the assemblage foreground its deterritorialisation as the process of viewing opens the assemblage up to innovative connections, new intensities and a reconfiguring of the original assemblage. But, as Lynch points out, this process of deterritorialisation equally results in a form of reterritorialisation as the completeness or the nature of "what the film is" remains in view. Thus, the media

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assemblage is at once complete and extended through acts of dissemination and consumption. Lynch's commentary provides an appropriate point of departure for our own investigation into how assemblage thinking may shed light on alternative ways of seeing advertising, and its relationship with other media forms, in contemporary consumer culture. Simultaneously an intensive, expressive entity and an artefact animated by its deterritorialisation through hybridisation, intersection and consumption, advertising, like film, brings "all the elements together in a way that feels correct".

In this chapter, we focus on the internal components and their resulting intensities of singular advertisements, situating their aesthetic, stylistic, narrative and consumer engagement qualities within the paradigm of assemblage thinking. This approach transforms perceptions of advertising as spectacle, bringing it closer to a system of affect. Bearing in mind that assemblages are bounded entities, defined by their components and intensities, the purpose of this analysis of singular advertisements is to map how specific intensities identified by Deleuze and Guattari are established within a single structure to comprise, as Lynch describes, a complete work in its own right or, as consistent with our view of advertisements as assemblages as bounded entities with material components and intensities (Deleuze and Guattari 1980). In visiting some of the intensities that drive contemporary advertising, we can begin to appreciate the complexity of these works that frequently engage in dialogue with profound philosophical or human questions in the same way that cinema, art and literature have traditionally done. Such apprehensions of questions surrounding humanity, technology, time and space propel these advertisements forward, rendering them significant artefacts capable of contributing to extant philosophical, cultural and aesthetic trends. In order to achieve a completeness or a bounded assemblage, we also trace how a singular work deterritorialises to draw in capacities from other assemblages, such as literary, cultural or filmic intensities, in order to stabilise its own boundaries. As Bartlett et al. (2013) suggest, many of these films merge "between what might have previously been termed art and what might have previously been termed media or lesser forms of culture with a commercial imperative" (p. 3). In tracing some of the intersections with other cinematic, literary

and cultural referents, it becomes clear that to situate these works as pure spectacle or persuasive mechanisms, as existing scholarly work has been inclined to do, denies their hybrid nature as simultaneously advertisements, short films and cultural critiques located within wider aesthetic, cinematic and literary trajectories. By bringing an assemblage focus, it is possible to map these trajectories outside of the parameters of classical media categories that constrain our understanding of the significations that sit behind these works. While the analysis presented here draws heavily from some of the most seminal ideas embedded in assemblage thinking, it is not exhaustive in its analysis of all the intensities played out. Much more could be said about the aesthetic intensities (for instance) and how they connect with other media forms. That said, the purpose is to utilise some of the more important elements of assemblage thinking to illuminate new ways of thinking about these works in an effort to move away from classical demarcations of media forms and to shed new light on the cultural value of these artefacts.

The following analyses focus, first, on the advertising work of Darren Aronofsky, John Cameron Mitchell and David Lynch as a series of assemblages that locate the becoming-feminine as the primary intensity around which the assemblage itself orbits. The inflection of Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman is used to frame the assemblages considered. Subsequently, the posthuman assemblage as it is contemplated in the advertising of David Fincher is compared with that of Rupert Sanders. Using the motif of the Body without Organs (Deleuze and Guattari (1987 [1980])), the discussion considers the ontological positions put forth in these advertisements, thus demonstrating how advertising, like film, can meditate on seminal human concerns. All of these works are composed of multiple intensities and capacities that ultimately render a stable assemblage, working together to deliver a tangible visual entity that draws from complex cinematic, aesthetic, cultural and narrative capacities. At once branded ads, cinematic experiences and cultural artefacts, these stand-alone advertisements all seek to engage consumers in unique ways. Working across such complex intensities as life stories, magical dreams, exotic locations, ominous threats or sexual desire, all of these advertisements evoke affective responses from the consumer that transcend a mere marketing message. While all of the advertisements

discussed here are beautiful, resonant and affecting in various ways, our primary point of focus remains how conceiving of these works as assemblages challenges conventional notions of what advertising can be, how these works hold together as hybrid media forms open to alternative modes of classification or analysis and what kinds of new engagements can open up for consumers.

The Becoming (Woman) Assemblage

The first assemblage offered for analysis is termed here as a becoming assemblage. Central to assemblage is the notion of becoming (becoming-woman, becoming-animal) as a metaphor for states of evolution. In particular, the two examples below focus on becoming-woman. They utilise the presence of the feminine figure as the primary intensity around which all consequent intensities are ordered and depict her becoming. Her presence is located as the anchor for the composition, upon which the narrative, aesthetics and mood of the advertisements are played out. The feminine as a state of becoming in itself reflects a long-standing positioning of the feminine as the mysterious, hidden state of becoming, a rhizomic intensity that "springs up" to express an intangible zone of intrigue and fleeting revelation, which must "become" in order to be. In their critique of the majority against which they position the concept of becoming-minor, Deleuze and Guattari (1987 [1980]) speak of how things must become in order to find their full expressive form, writing that "although all becomings are already molecular, including becoming-woman, it must be said that all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings" (p. 323). Illuminating how in order to realise our expressive capacities, we must inevitably pass through states of becoming, the purpose of their critique is not so much to stress the political dimension of minorities or the feminine (although this may be seen as one pragmatic avenue for their critique) but rather to acknowledge that states of becoming emerge outside of classical dualisms such as masculine/feminism and that the becoming-woman embodies the evolution of its own intensities and capacities. In order to be, one must first *become*

through embodiment. This process of becoming is depicted through the advertisements analysed here. The feminine intensity deterritorialises the advertisement, reaching out and gathering up waves of other intensities and components around her, and reterritorialises by re-stabilising the assemblage through her presence.

Darren Aronofsky—Hypnotized (2011)

Darren Aronofsky's 2011 advertisement for Revlon (DDCD Partners) entitled *Hypnotized* provides first work for analysis. Darren Aronofsky's distinctive vision has resulted in numerous high-profile films. To date, his directorial credits include *Pi* (1998), *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), *The Fountain* (2006), *The Wrestler* (2008), *Black Swan* (2010), *Noah* (2014), and *Mother* (2017). His work has attracted awards from the Venice Film Festival and the Sundance alongside nominations from the British Academy of Film and Television Academy and the Golden Globes. Aronofsky has also directed numerous advertisements including a series of public service announcements for The Meth Project that leveraged his distinctive aesthetic and preoccupation with themes of addition, emotional trauma and lives in negative transition.

Hypnotized is a sixty-second advertisement starring Jessica Biel and Pharrell Williams with Williams contributing his own original song *You Got Me* as the soundtrack for the entire advertisement. The work was distributed online and as a television spot. The black and white advertisement opens with a long shot of a sumptuous boudoir, a lush empire-style bed, some occasional furniture and a vanity table occupying the lavish, neutrally toned space. The tone is soft, only moderately lit as the tinkling cascade of chimes and first hesitating notes dissolve into the rhythm of the song "You Got Me". The camera pans through what might be a piece of crystal or glass, creating a distorting ripple effect just as we glimpse a black-clad feminine figure right of the screen. The scene is at once classical, elegant and lavish, reminiscent of an old Hollywood film set, but also intriguing, mysterious and slightly foreboding as the distortion of the lens at the moment of the revelation of the feminine figure leaves us unsure as to who the figure is. The camera cuts to a shot

of the bed as Jessica Biel enters the screen to sit, her hands softly resting beside her face as she adjusts an earring. The figure has arrived, she is revealed and the scene is complete. The camera cuts to a long, dark hallway, a midway arch and rows of traditional wall sconces as though to mark the way demarcate the depth of space as a spear of light reflects from the black floor at the end of the hall. Two large, black doors open and a similarly black-clad man enters the hall from the back of the shot. Little is shown of the figure yet the cut back to a close-up of Biel's face reveals an expression of alertness, anticipation yet also an ambiguity of feeling as her face suggest only the slightest of Mona Lisa smiles. By contrast with the soft tonality of the boudoir, the hallway is dark, severe and only dimly lit yet also a space of refinement and sophistication. As though to answer the feminine close-up of Biel's face as she becomes aware of the person in the hall, the camera cuts to a similarly anticipatory close-up of Pharrell Williams as he passes through the door and starts to make his way down the long, dark hall.

At this point, the components of the assemblage are all present. The interior feminine as the primary site of focus, the intervening masculine, the stylistics and the aural tenor have all been introduced to the viewer, leaving the development of intensities such as narrative, aesthetics and the sense of affect to play out. Thus, a signature Aronofksy shot of Biel going to the vanity table is refracted back through the ripples of the crystal before revealing her face reflecting off three mirrors at the table simultaneously. The feminine interior is intensified, multiplied but also partial. The feminine is augmented as though in a crescendo of becoming, just as the Revlon mascara itself is finally shown. We return to the similar echoing of a close-up of Biel followed by a close-up of Williams in the hall as the two figures visually call and answer to one another, Biel preparing herself for revelation to Williams and Williams shivers in anticipation as he approaches the doors of her boudoir. In an extension of the call and answer use of close-ups, the multiple images of Biel's face reflected in the mirrors of the vanity are again answered by a close-up of Williams before cutting to an extreme close-up of Biel's eyes as she applies mascara. Her make-up is dark, sultry and the intensity of her eyes fill the screen. This intensification of femininity and masculinity echo each other for several seconds in a double-mirroring of

Biel and Biel/Williams. Finally, the moment of resolution is achieved as Williams approaches the boudoir door. The doors fly open and, in a flash of light, Biel is revealed to Williams, sitting at her vanity table. The point of view shot of Williams as he enters the boudoir shows Biel in the background before cutting to a close-up of her turning to see Williams. The final shot returns to the stylistics of the opening scene where once again a long shot of the room is then panned through the rippling, distorting lens of the crystal. Biel, in mid-shot, turns to conclude the advertisement.

The advertisement draws upon a range of aesthetic and narrative devices found in classical cinema. In a nod to the styling of film noir with its sensuous, but also somewhat menacing quality, the advertisement utilises black and white cinematography and conjures a sense for the consumer of, at once, uncertainty and anticipation. Influenced by cinematic evolutions such as German expressionism and Italian neorealism, the aura of Hollywood film noir often focused on a female figure as a site of investigation, bringing her psychological and sexual motivations into view. Classic noir films such as *Double Indemnity* (1944), *Gilda* (1946) and *Out of the Past* (1947) emerge as examples of this emphasis on the feminine figure as the galvanising force for the film's motivation. A similar focus on the feminine as a site of investigation is depicted in the Revlon advertisement. It is not clear as to what the purpose of Williams' visit to the boudoir will entail. Charged with a sense of sexuality and brooding, Biel's evanescent facial expressions give little away. Should Williams be there? Is he an invited guest or an unexpected interloper? Consistent with the themes of sexual motivation and the feminine figure as a site of intrigue, the advertisement captures a film noir intensity, playing between the intrusive masculine and the yet-to-be-revealed feminine.

Connected with this situating of the feminine figure as the plane of consistency upon which the rest of the advertisement sits, several key intensities interact to concentrate our attention on Biel. Her constraint within the interior space elevates her presence, at once obscuring and displaying her as she moves around the bounded territory of her boudoir. Her presence "fills up" the territory but, unlike Williams, she does not leave her deeply demarcated space. She is master of her domain

but also a captive to it, a princess and a prisoner subject to the inventions of others. Within her bounded territory, we witness her become-woman as she adjusts her earrings, looks at her reflection in multiple mirrors and applies her mascara. She "becomes" feminine in the eyes of the viewer as she awaits the arrival of the masculine. Again, from a stylistic perspective, the genre of the boudoir is old Hollywood echoing the visual styling of films such as *Top Hat* (1935) and *Camille* (1936). The space is mastered and occupied by Biel but it also engulfs her. By contrast with the motion of Williams, as he walks down a hallway to his destination, the interior space of the bedroom entraps Biel physically leaving her to become another object/subject in the room. However, this necessity to maintain the territory of the assemblage will ultimately become deterritorialised or disrupted by Williams' presence. She is the primary intensity around which the feminine space orbits. To leave is to deterritorialise, to disrupt the assemblage upon which the narrative and motivation of the advertisement operates. Thus, rather than deterritorialising, the advertisement instead intensifies the feminine through the sequence of call and answer close-up shots between Biel and Williams. Going between the two figures, the close-ups of Williams remain relatively consistent but the close-ups of Biel shift and change, revealing different layers of her, multiplying her and showing her in extreme detail. Her power as the Hollywood actress archetype, mirroring such characters as Rita Hayworth's Gilda, is depicted and intensified but also de-centred and abstracted.

In this respect, we see some of the intensities and components found in the larger Aronofsky assemblage. The filming of Biel in close-up, with heavy eye make-up and through a series of refractions, is also found in *Black Swan* (2011) where the emphasis of the eyes through dark make-up and frequent referencing of the becoming-woman through multiple and, sometimes abstracted close-up, is used. In a nod to Cocteau (The Blood of a Poet, 1930) and Fassbender (*World on a Wire*, 1973) who was inspired by Sirk (*La Habanera*, 1937, *All That Heaven Allows*, 1955, *Written on the Wind*, 1956), the motif of multiplication through mirrors or the mirrors as a site of self-confrontation, is also utilised across *Black Swan* and *Hypnotized*. As Mast (1992) points out, "doorways, partitionings, screens, window panes, glass mirrors,

plate-glass windows, reflective surfaces… dominate Sirk's frames, calling attention to the fat hat we look not at life but at a frame" (pp. 312–331). This view resonates with Deleuze's own view of cinema as a brain that transforms and mediates our own view of the world. In *Cinema II*, Deleuze comments on the significance of the mirror as an instance of the crystal-image where

> the mirror-image is virtual in relation to the actual character that the mirror captures, but it is actual in the mirror which now leaves the character only with a virtuality and pushes him back out-of-field… When virtual images proliferate like this, all together they absorb the entire actuality of the character, at the same time as the character is no more than one virtuality among others. (p. 73)

The play of replication, multiplicity and loss of the original signifier dominates various scenes in *Black Swan* and, in *Hypnotized*, suggests a multiplication of the becoming-woman as she splits, morphs and duplicates in front of us. In this respect, Aronofsky captures some of the tension regarding the mirror as visual device expressed by Sirk when he commented in an interview that "what is interesting about a mirror is that it does not show you as you are, it shows you your opposite" (Halliday 1971). Sirk framed his leading ladies such as Lauren Bacall and Jane Wyman in mirrors in a style reminiscent of the framing of Biel. Like Bacall and Wyman, Biel is a deterritorialised being, a becoming through repetition, that consumes both the screen and Williams' imagination.

Aronofsky's *Hypnotized* assemblage animates Deleuze and Guattari's notions of pure multiplicity and states of becoming through its cinematography while connecting with the heritage of film noir cinema through its aesthetic styling. Thus, the assemblage can be situated within wider cultural and aesthetic references and plays with significant philosophical questions of becoming, virtuality/actuality, representational forms and their hybridity. Equally, the assemblage is deterritorialised as it works within the larger circuits of meaning established in other Aronofksy films. Returning to themes of the becoming-woman/becoming-animal of Nina in *Black Swan* (Bignall 2013), the cinematic

tropes of close-up and cuts found in *Black Swan*, *Pi* and *The Wrestler* and the preoccupation with interiority found across most of Aronofksy's work (Vignoles-Russell 2015), *Hypnotized*, can be viewed as both a territorialised entity in its own right but also as part of a larger assemblage. As can be argued across all of the analyses presented here, the impetus to categorise or classify these assemblages as specific media forms can only serve to repress their connectedness to wider media and cultural repositories and flows of meaning. Instead to trace their flows and intersections yield up a deeper apprehension of their capacities as meaningful cultural artefacts.

John Cameron Mitchell—Lady Grey London (2011)

Another instance of the feminine assemblage is found in the series of Lady Dior advertisements produced by Christian Dior. The famous fashion house has commissioned various noted film directors over the years as they endeavour to realise their unique advertising strategy based on the immersion, aesthetic engagement and a melding of art, film and brand. Combined with other assemblage multiplicities, such as a museum in Granville, France, a series of hardcover coffee table texts, product placements in hallmark films such as Hitchcock's *Stage Fright* (1955), Jean-Pierre Melville's *Les enfants terribles* (1950) and René Clair's *Le silence est d'or* (1946) and relentless editorial coverage in the world's finest fashion magazines, Dior has successfully integrated the brand into the most significant aesthetic arenas (Khan 2012). In particular, the work of John Cameron Mitchell and David Lynch provides further elaboration on some of the intensities seen in Aronofsky's advertisement for Revlon. Like Aronofsky, Mitchell and Lynch establish the becoming-woman as the intensity upon which the entire assemblage rests, yet do so through striking different motifs, mobilising different aesthetic, stylistic, aural and narrative intensities to achieve the final cultural artefact. The examples of Mitchell and Lynch articulate how similar intensities, when arranged or made to interact via different capacities (including the directorial vision) can

produce diverse assemblages. In the same vein that cinema utilises a suite of intensities and capacities to produce radically different assemblages, the subsequent work discussed here reflects similar possibilities for advertising when conceived of as an aesthetic assemblage.

John Cameron Mitchell's career both as an actor and director has led him to a diverse range of roles. His film credits have included *Hedwig and the Angry Itch* (2001), *Shortbus* (2006), *Rabbit Hole* (2010) and *How to Talk to Girls at Parties* (2017) and his work has extended to television. Mitchell has directed several advertisements for Dior along with other brands such as Agent Provocateur. Lady Grey London Dior (2011) (Anonymous Content and in collaboration with John Galliano) is an eight-minute short film starring Marion Cotillard (who also appears in another of Mitchell's Dior advertisements *L.A.dy Dior* 2011) and Ian McKellan featuring the iconic Lady Dior handbag. Distributed primarily online, the eight-minute piece is positioned as a short film rather than as an advertisement with its running time of eight minutes and its opening credits introducing the piece as a film by John Cameron Mitchell with subsequent actor and title credits. Thus, the terrain of the assemblage as film is established as the hybridised viewing experience commences and the demarcation of genres is eroded. We are at once experiencing film in its classic sense while simultaneously viewing an advertisement.

The advertisement opens with a red screen; the insistent beat of David Essex's *Rock On* accompanies the scene. It becomes clear that the red is sand in a life-size hourglass, its level dropping to reveal first hands and then Cotillard's heavily made-up eyes. The camera cuts to a mid-shot of an audience, moving between various members all of whom watch in anticipation. It is clear they are watching Cotillard in her hourglass as the camera moves to a long shot of Cotillard in her hourglass on a stage, the red sand level ever dropping. Like Biel in Aronofsky's piece, Cotillard is the centre of the scene around which the intensities orbit. The audience, music and visual arrangement of the scene all hinge on what she will do in her hourglass. The camera cuts to a shot of McKellan who is seated in the audience. His expression speaks of total anticipation, but also of admiration. He is transfixed, beguiled,

by the feminine revelation taking place on stage. But he is not the only admirer as the camera cuts then to a stage worker watching Cotillard from the wings as he paints a wall. It is clear from his expression that he too shares feelings of anticipation and affection. The camera parlays between mid-shots of Cotillard as the red sand continues to flow, the audience as they eagerly await an answer to the question of what she is wearing (or not), McKellan and the worker played by Russell Tovey. The camera moves rapidly between these four elements and thereby establishes the key intensities that galvanise the assemblage.

The audience leaps to its feet in wild applause. As viewers, we can only assume that the red sand has fully drained and Cotillard is revealed yet we are left to wonder whether she is clad. The answer is given in the next shot where Cotillard is on stage with her Lady Dior bag, dressed in a strapless gown and headdress whereupon she pulls a Dior keychain from her bag and begins to stalk the room, meandering among audience members, all of whom are hopeful of receiving the key. The moment is seminal as it is made clear that all action, all becomings will reply on her as the plane of consistency. Literally and figuratively, she holds the key to the entire assemblage. She alights upon McKellan, gazing down upon him with an appraising look. In a kind of shot-reverse-shot, the camera cuts to McKellan's face with his expression of pure awe. Cutting back to Cotillard, we see her glance down to notice that McKellan is in a wheelchair. An expression of slight pain flickers across her face before she tosses him the key with a knowing smile. But a key to what? A close-up of the key reveals an engraving stating "Dressing Room". This sequence of the *mis-en-scene*, Cotillard's performance, the introduction of the three key characters and her selection of him to join her in her dressing room establishes the boundaries of the assemblages and the intensities that hold it together. As in the Revlon piece, the feminine holds the entire assemblage together, generating a multiplicity of intensities around her. The foundation of the narrative is established through her presence and all possible outcomes will rely upon her. The visual styling of the advertisement is rich, its tonality overwhelmed by lavish reds and golds that seem to encase the beauty and brilliance of the feminine. Unlike Biel's figure for Revlon, Cotillard is not lost in, or part of, her milieu but rather appears to radiate from it, leaping from her

theatrical world into the lives and hearts of her audience and the advertisement's viewer. From the viewer's perspective, we have entered a story world with its beauty and its intrigue.

The camera dissolves to the dressing room and the sensual beats of "Rock On" transition to the soft piano intro of Hawksley Workman's "The Sweetest Thing There Is". Cotillard is framed in the centre of the room, dressed in black lingerie adjusting her suspender stocking. McKellan enters the dressing room where this seductive scene of intimacy is revealed to him. Cotillard stands in the centre of the room at once posing for McKellan but also claiming her mastery over the space. The camera cuts to a tender scene of the two sharing a Dior flask where, as McKellan sips, Cotillard draws the rug from his lap, stretches his legs out and begins to caress his crippled limbs. Her expression of sadness and empathy fills the scene. In the following scene, we return to Tovey who sketches a portrait of Cotillard. She comes to him, sits beside him and regards the portrait before taking it and making her own flourishing additions with a Dior pen. The piano music gathers pace, volume and strings are added as though we have begun to move towards a significant climax. In close-up, he looks at her additions to the portrait before realising she has gone. In the final sequence, Cotillard begins to leave the theatre in a blaze of audience applause and adulation. She has donned a coat, scarf and Dior bag before beginning her descent down the staircase to exit. McKellan wheels desperately after her, pushing his way through the admiring crowd and we cut to Tovey who calls after her in equal desperation, but Cotillard continues to exit. Tovey begins to frantically paint on the wall behind, sweeping black paint over the wall. In the rapid cut, we see McKellan calling to her from his chair, constrained by his physical limits before cutting back to Tovey working on his painting. Finally, the portrait is revealed. In an act of desperation and love, Tovey has realised his artistic abilities, his talents liberated by Cotillard. The camera cuts back to Cotillard who draws back the exit door at the rear of the shot and pauses momentarily before cutting back to McKellan who, in mid-shot, compels himself to stand from his wheelchair. Two miracles have been achieved through the agency of Cotillard. The audience stand in wonder, admiring the standing man before cutting back to Cotillard who walks away. She does not look

back to see McKellan. The final scene details extreme close-ups of the architecture of the London Eye followed by a long shot of Cotillard up in one of the pods of the eye overlooking the Thames and Parliament. The credits then roll.

The advertisement, or short film, evokes a nostalgic nod to old burlesque with some referencing to the stylistics of such films as *All That Jazz* (1979) and *Cabaret* (1972). The headdresses worn by Cotillard echo those of Minelli's in *Cabaret* and the signature black satin costume of *Cabaret* is evoked in Cotillard's dressing room scene. The cinematography matches this distinctive world of colour, entertainment and sensuality with its rich tones and painting-like framing of the subjects. The movement between frequent close-up to emphasise specific emotional touchpoints in the narrative and the long shots that reveal perfect balance of composition and tonality (like that of a painting) enables the viewer to oscillate between the beauty of the narrative and the intensity of its seminal moments. Mitchell returns to these kinds of vivid compositions, and movement between close and long shots in his other Dior films *L.A.dy Dior*, capitalising upon the sharp sunlight of Los Angeles and setting the scene for Cotillard to once again take centre stage. He uses a similar cinematic lighting, aesthetic composition and editing style in *Dior Homme Sport* (2012), featuring Jude Law, with the sparkling, crisp light of the French Riviera to frame the assemblage. In this respect, Mitchell's work here follows a cinematic trajectory similar to that of Paolo Sorrentino or David Lynch where each frame is a highly composed detailing of light, tone and balance with punctuated editing for affect.

The casting of Cotillard and McKellan is also significant for this assemblage. Just as the inclusion of Biel and Williams at once deterritorialises into popular culture, music and Hollywood, Cotillard and McKellan deterritorialise this piece into European art house and serious British cinema. Known for her roles in acclaimed French films such as *La vie en rose* (2007) and *De rouille et d'os* (2012) alongside roles in English-speaking films like *The Immigrant* (2013) and *Allied* (2016), Cotillard might be seen as a "serious" actress with the pedigree of European cinema behind her. From a brand perspective, she is, of course, quintessentially French in the same vein as the Dior name.

Equally, Sir Ian McKellan, a British icon in his own right, has graced the screen of British cinema for decades with his nuanced rendering of Shakespeare in Richard III (1995), his depiction of the beloved Gandalf in *Lord of the Rings* (2001–03) and enjoys ongoing popularity in the *X-Men* film series. Straddling serious stage, cinema and popular culture, McKellan, like Cotillard, is both a serious actor and popular icon. The significance of this choice of cast is that the assemblage is extended beyond advertisement into serious, popular culture, drawing upon the capacities of Cotillard's and McKellan's status to legitimise and extend the assemblage. Their presence further consolidates the piece as a film, all the while playing with its hybrid status as an advertisement. Consumers are invited to view the piece as a cinematic experience, engaging in its story world narrative of love, the power of redemption and the mysterious powers of the feminine to elate, heal and intrigue.

David Lynch—Lady Blue Shanghai (2010)

Similar themes of love, mystery and redemption are captured in David Lynch's *Lady Blue Shanghai* (2010). Produced by Christian Dior, Marion Cotillard returns in this short film for Christian Dior Lady Dior handbags. Running over sixteen minutes, *Lady Blue Shanghai* is an even more elaborate example of the merging of cinema and advertisement to create a truly hybrid cinematic assemblage. Distributed online, the hybrid short film/advertisement showcases classical Lynchian motifs, symbolisms and themes and builds on the Dior cinematic/advertising *oeuvre*. In commenting on his collaboration with the French fashion house, Lynch described how

> They called me up and said, 'Would you like to make a short film for the internet? You can do anything you want, you just need to show the handbag, the Pearl Tower and some old Shanghai.' […] This falls between a regular film and a commercial. I liked that idea. There are adverts and people get hit hard, and then there is this, where it is like coming at it from a different angle. (Copping 2010)

Lynch's commentary points to the creative interstice that opens up between film and advertising, leaving open an unstructured terrain where generic categories are eroded and the endeavour to find reflexive ways of telling stories, compelling viewers and achieving aesthetic outcomes assume primary importance.

David Lynch is one of the most renowned American film directors of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. His film credits include *Eraserhead* (1977), *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Wild at Heart* (1990), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992), *Lost Highway* (1997), *The Straight Story* (1999), *Mulholland Drive* (2001) and *Inland Empire* (2006). Nominated for four Academy Awards, two BAFTA Awards and five Cannes Awards, Lynch won the Palm d'Or for *Wild at Heart* and for *Mulholland Drive*. Lynch created the highly significant television series *Twin Peaks* (1990–91), which saw a third season return in 2017 after a twenty-five-year hiatus. He has made numerous short films and is known as a painter, sculptor and musician. Lynch has also directed over thirty advertisements, acknowledging in a 2008 interview that "I do commercials to make money, but I always say, every time I learn something: efficiency of saying something and new technologies". Working with diverse brands such as Yves Saint Laurent, Georgia Coffee, NYC Sanitation, Clearblue and Calvin Klein, Lynch has successfully mastered the efficiency of narrative while mobilising key aesthetic intensities.

The *Lady Blue Shanghai* short film, and its accompanying piece entitled *The Poem* (2010) featuring Marion Cotillard narrating a poem written by Lynch, revisits the feminine and, like Aronofsky and Mitchell, articulates a feminine assemblage. As with Lady Grey London, the credits roll at the outset announcing the piece as a short film. They run over the establishing shot of the Shanghai night skyline where the symbolically significant Pearl Tower looms. The camera cuts to a low-angle shot of a beige building, revealed to be a hotel. Natural sound hollows out the image as the camera cuts to a plain, brown foyer whereupon, from the background, Cotillard enters. The clacking of her heels on the floor dominates the scene, announcing her arrival. A close-up of a concierge watching her with interest cross the foyer coincides with slightly tense music creeping in. He watches as she enters a lift. In a style seen in other Lynchian environments such as *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Twin*

Peaks (1990–91), the opening scene is visually flat, foreboding, with no accompanying soundtrack as such and a dull tonality that conjures a disturbing normality and a prescience of events to come. The scene is banal and yet disconcerting. The camera cuts to the lift opening as Cotillard walks towards the camera down a long, brown hallway. We see the backs of her calves, her conservative black heels motioning down the brown striped carpet that leads us both visually and narratively towards a destination. As she moves down the hallway, the natural sound turns to a nostalgic, yet ominous, dance hall tango style music. From where does this music come and what does it foretell? Cotillard appears to hear it too as she approaches her room with caution. Upon opening the dark door, the music amplifies as though to confirm that it is coming from her room. We glimpse the room for the first time, a typically Lynchian space populated by a couch, lamp and phone. Again, the tones are flat, neutral with only the hint of colour offered by a decorative screen showing green and pink flowers. As the camera follows Cotillard around the dark room, zooming in on her approach to the 1920s mahogany turntable, the scene captures her hesitation. She struggles to turn the music off before a signature Lynchian blazing flash of light fills the room. Fear passes across Cotillard's face in close-up, the light hitting her delicate features. A plume of well-lit mysterious smoke rises from the red velvety carpet of the room, revealing a blue Lady Dior bag (reminiscent of the transitional symbol of the blue box in *Mulholland Drive*, 2001), light pouring from its top opening. Light and smoke feature prominently in the Lynchian oeuvre to punctate moment of chaos, revelation or crisis. As Paiva points out, for instance,

> Smoke comes before fire, and Lynch acknowledges that fact. He used smoke in most of his early films as a symbol for obscurity, darkness, and confusion. Henry Spencer practically gets lost in the smoke cloud which envelops him in Eraserhead; dirty, foul smoke follows John Merrick in his misfortune during Elephant Man. In these examples, Lynch uses the connotations of smoke quite simply. Later, in Wild at Heart, the protagonists emphasize the act of smoking as an important habit, regardless of the fact that their parents died of smoking related diseases. Seen in this light, smoke relates to self-destruction, the inner darkness of a person. (Paiva 1997)

The camera zooms to the bag before cutting to another Cotillard close-up as the light from the bag intensifies its reflection on her face. She approaches the bag with caution as she crosses to phone the concierge. Informing him that "someone is here. Someone is in my room", the concierge advises that "someone will be up immediately" before hanging up on Cotillard mid-sentence. In high-angle close-up, Cotillard continues to watch light and smoke pour from the mysterious blue bag as it sits on the floor front of shot.

Back in the foyer, a pair of security guards consult with the concierge before ascending the foyer lift. The camera cuts to a fearful Cotillard in close-up, still seated on the couch, framed by the green and pink floral screen, and a knock on the door is heard. A classic de-centred Lynchian shot of two security staff entering the muted room commences the sequence in which the room is checked, the camera oscillating between close-ups of Cotillard and the security as they appraise the situation. The tonal music ebbs, replaced by natural sound. After a brief search, the staff approach as though to interrogate, looming over Cotillard in low-angle close-up. They appear large, severe and interrogatory as Cotillard must then begin to account for the strange events surrounding the mysterious bag.

This sequence establishes the frame for the ensuing narrative offered by Cotillard. As the guards ask whether she opened or touched bag, she emphatically replies "no, who knows what's inside of that bag. I was afraid to even go near it" as though to punctuate the mystical qualities of the blue bag. Yet the staff seem sceptical, suggesting that perhaps Cotillard is the one who left the bag as "it is very beautiful". At this point, and under the probing eye of the staff, Cotillard begins to narrate her time in Shanghai. Unlike Aronofksy's and Mitchell's female protagonists, Lynch's heroine speaks, assuming narrative control over the assemblage. In a scene reminiscent of Laura Dern's "robins" monologue (*Blue Velvet*, 1986), Cotillard begins to tell her story of arriving in Shanghai, and time and memory are introduced as assemblage intensities. As she recounts having lunch with a colleague, the camera cuts to the scene of two women lunching in flashback moving back to an earlier point in the day. But the staff member points out that it is now night-time. What has occurred in those intervening hours? Time is lost, memory

is scant and the mystery of what has happened in Shanghai becomes more pressing. Intensifying the sense of time lost and memory regained, a further flashback to lunch shows Cotillard gazing at the Pearl Tower. Extending this sense of memory, Cotillard narrates how she went to see the Pearl as a cut of the Tower plays into her narrative of hearing a poem about pearls falling on jade and hearing the sound. Just as she reflects a sense of having been "here before in Shanghai", the camera then cuts to images of pearls falling on jade and a swell of music punctuates the significance of this reflection.

This entire passage conflates time, memory and sensation, intercut with imagery that both intensifies and aestheticises Cotillard's narrative. The reference to pearls falling on a jade plate references David Lynch's own poem (read by Cotillard in an extension of the advertisement disseminated on YouTube), which, in turn, draws upon the T'ang poet Po Chü-I's motif of the sound of pearls falling on a jade plate to describe the sound of a woman's lute playing in the tradition of Chinese onomatopoeia in poetry (Shih 1976). This nod to old Chinese poetry anchors the narrative to a historicity beyond the boundaries of the advertisement itself via the circuits of Lynch's own poetry and the symbolic presence of the Pearl Tower. The connection between the tower, the poetic motif and Cotillard as becoming-woman (bear in mind the onomatopoeia analogised by a woman's lute playing) is mediated by Lynch as poet and director, but also by the passage of Chinese history itself.

The aesthetic, stylistic and narrative quality of the film then shifts. The first part of the film is characterised by flat, dull tones, a representation of "normal" circumstances with a realistic *mis-en-scène*, an absence of visual effects and movement between natural sound and the most minimal use of music. The use of tracking shots, as people move around typically empty Lynchian spaces, is seen in other works such as *Inland Empire* (2006) where Laura Dern (again the feminine assemblage) is destined to wander interminable hallways, scantily furnished rooms with similar couches and lamps. Lynch replicates the spatial intensity written onto the feminine in *Mulholland Drive* (2001) too where Naomi Watts is tracked through empty houses. Similar scenes also appear in *Twin Peaks* where nostalgically furnished rooms like that of

Laura Palmer's lounge room and the Red Room evoke a similar aura. Lynch's work often conceals the disturbing or mysterious beneath the veil of seeming normality. *Eraserhead* (1977), *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Twin Peaks* (1990–91), *Mulholland Drive* (2001) and *Inland Empire* (2006) all capture the notion of normality concealing disturbance or foreboding. In this respect, *Lady Blue Shanghai* connects with a key expressive intensity present throughout the entire Lynchian assemblage but also draws upon it to generate one of the key intensities for the short film. Cotillard's struggle to remember, to contextualise and to account for the mysterious in a context of normal is buttressed by a larger Lynchian consideration of these intensities, at once deterritorialising Cotillard into her larger assemblage shared with figures such as Isabella Rossellini (*Blue Velvet*), Laura Dern (*Wild at Heart, Inland Empire*), Naomi Watts (*Mulholland Drive*) and Lara Flynn Boyle (*Twin Peaks*), but also reterritorialising this Lynchian intensity into one specific assemblage.

By contrast with the flat realism of the first half, the second half of the film gives way to distortion, dreamlike recollection and fantasy. Making more conspicuous the digital camera used to shoot the film, the cinematic quality of the film also shifts to reflect this change of narrative direction. The segue way for this shift is the recollection of pearls falling on jade. Time recedes as Cotillard recounts how it seemed she was in "old Shanghai" and we are taken back in time travelling through a distorted old bridge. Illuminated in blue, the bridge is blurred, lights are blurred, the old town is blurred as though in a dream. The camera slows down, slow motion is used for the first time and the camera brings us back to winding hallways and stairs. The atmospheric music used throughout this passage gives way to the same kind of nostalgic dance hall music heard earlier in the film. Cotillard enters from the front of screen, a blurred, static figure. The camera reveals the *apogée* of Lynchian styling—the red velvet curtains seen in virtually every Lynch film and made famous in the Red Room of *Twin Peaks* appear alongside the signature lamps and couches in retro styling. We are back in time but it is distorted time, emanating from the uncertain memories of a Cotillard who, at once, has been, but also not been, to this time and place. Having watched Cotillard enter the room from behind, she turns towards the viewer in shock as a well-dressed man creeps into the corner

of the room and gestures for her to be quiet. The figure is reminiscent of Kyle McLaughlan's *Twin Peaks* FBI agent character in his well-cut suit and clean grooming. He crosses to kiss her in close-up as the nostalgic music plays.

Yet disturbing sound is heard off-screen and the lovers must flee. As this strange, blurry scene develops, the lovers run out into the night as a stylised montage of them running through the streets in old Shanghai, all in blur and punctuated by flashes of light ensues. The scene is unreal, distorted and we are unsure of its veracity. Flittering fragments of streets, buildings and lights skip through the montage in scenes reminiscent of the driving motion found in *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Twin Peaks* (1990–91). Cotillard and her lover are equally blurred as they cling to one another, their image superimposed over the blurry lights of Shanghai. We hear the words "I can't be here".

The nostalgic music gives way to the same atmospheric sounds heard earlier in the film as the lovers alight on a rooftop above the city. The swimming, blurred close-ups of the two lovers re-articulate the dreamlike sequence, leaving us to question what has happened and to what extent the sequence is real. As her lover laments his inability to stay, he oscillates between present and absent as his image disappears or "slips between her fingers". A billboard in the distance showcases a woman in blue (a distinct nod to Isabella Rossellini in *Blue Velvet* upon which Cotillard's own styling is based—their appearance is strikingly similar) dancing with the blue bag and upon closer inspect the lady on the billboard is revealed to be Cotillard. How is this possible? Where is Cotillard and how can this simultaneous presence occur? The camera comes back to Cotillard and her lover on the rooftop declaring their love and bemoaning his departure. As he departs, he holds a blue rose (also referenced in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1991) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001)) out to her before disappearing in a blaze of light. The simultaneous appearance of Cotillard on the billboard and the rooftop returns to Lynch's later works where parallel existences, states of being and physical realities are frequently explored. As Nochimson (2016) notes,

> in his first stage cinema, Lynch gave us heroes who achieved a kind of blissful knowledge of a unified cosmos through their courageous

> crossing of boundaries set by culture. As it turns out, we now see that they only partially encountered the absurdity of social claims that there is a hard and fast materialist definition of reality. Lynch's second stage protagonists, more stuck in the Marketplace, are more confused, more stringently tested. Lynch confronts them with a quantum mechanics poetics of boundless materiality that radically challenges everything their Marketplace conditioning has presumed. (2016, p. 6)

This challenge to the material reality assumed by the notion of the Marketplace as perhaps a symbol or metaphor of contemporary stasis is played out in the possibility of protagonists living "in an alternating current of certainty/uncertainty, struggling between intimations of a stable universe beyond the Marketplace and uncanny experiences within the Marketplace of infinitely uncertain particle behaviour, as proposed by modern quantum mechanics" (Nochimson 2016, p. 2). Simultaneous existences, recurrent memories of events, transportation of human matter between rooftops and billboards cannot be accounted for as simple dreams or fantasies but rather serious Lynchian conversations about the nature of being.

The camera cuts to an extreme close-up of a distressed Cotillard back in her hotel room as the two security staff continue to loom above her, seemingly unmoved by her tale of love, time and memory. Yet, as Von Stosch (2016) points out,

> the viewer achieves a higher level of awareness, thus entering a different mental space, quite remote from the actual course of time. In this context we might recall the dream of the young aspiring poet Heinrich von Ofterdingen in the famous fragment novel-fairytale by Novalis: in his dreams he wanders in strange forests and encounters the blue flower, the ultimate object of desire, losing all sense of space and time – only to wake up in the dull reality of his ordinary home. (p. 3)

In close-up, Cotillard slowly turns her attention to the blue bag as it beckons her from the red velvet floor. Rising from the couch, she moves towards the bag and, in low angle, crouches over it. The music shifts from atmospheric to momentarily ominous as flashes of light reveal her

opening the bag to reveal a shimmering blue rose. From low angle, she lifts the magical blue rose to smell it before replacing it in the blue bag. The final frames reveal Cotillard centre screen, clutching her bag in the spotlight. The rest of the room, and the security staff, are dimmed while the shard of light illuminates Cotillard. As she clutches the bag, digital blurring returns to obscure her face, her own image hovering over that of the "real" Cotillard. She is a fragmented subject, simultaneously present and absent, working at the interstices of dream and reality. The credits then roll.

These advertisements/films all work as bounded assemblages, locating the becoming-woman as the central intensity around which the ensuing drama orbits. While Aronofsky's work captures some seminal intensities seen in other films, such as the fragmented or schizophrenic representation of the human subject (*Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan*) which links this piece to a larger Aronofsky assemblage, similar recapitulations of auteurist motifs demonstrated through elements like Lynch's return to the play of distorted time and memory and Mitchell's use of painting-like frames also work to situate these advertisements within larger filmic assemblages. While these assemblages are bounded, held together by the elements of narrative, visual styling and emotional affect in the Deleuzian sense (2013 [1985]), they also deterritorialise within and beyond the advertisement. For instance, Aronofsky's narrative and styling draws upon classic *film noir* motifs, locating the piece within a cinematic trajectory of "risky women", unknown approaches and (typically black and white) low-lit mysterious circumstances. The feminine is contained within a fixed context, her mystique and secrets only revealed to those who dare enter her realm. As subject, she is also deterritorialised, her image multiplied, fragmented and scrambled via repetitive representation in mirrors, spilling forth and unable to be contained within the parameters of a singular image. Likewise, as seen in other Lynchian works that frequently locate the feminine as the central assemblage intensity (*Blue Velvet, Lost Highway, Mulholland Drive*, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me, Inland Empire*), Lynch's feminine subject is deterritorialised, moving across planes of time, space and memory and buoyed by expressive intensities of love and intrigue. This is a femininity that both

frames and exceeds the assemblage. Similarly, Mitchell's figure whose redemptive power to elevate and heal those around her cannot be contained within the theatre. She flies to the heights of her London Eye pod, bursting out from the boundaries of her originating context. She is an enigma, a figure of fantasy whose affective presence transcends the assemblage.

Through the feminine, other intensities are mobilised. Time and memory feature in *Lady Blue Shanghai* while redemption and faith underscore the impetus for Mitchell's work. Intrigue also works as a central intensity across all of the work, leading the viewer to specific story worlds created through an intense micronarrative. In all cases, music is also a key intensity. In Aronofsky's and Mitchell's work, music is non-diegetic and characters do not speak. The soundtrack forms the outer parameters of the assemblage, creating boundedness or context for the visual drama. Pharrell Williams' original song stamps his otherwise secondary presence on the piece, providing a form of verbal narrative for the action. The song speaks of the simultaneous sexual allure and risk that plays out in the visual imagery, transporting the consumer to a place rich in sensory cues. Yet the soundtrack also introduces the possibility of a further hybridisation. On the one hand, the piece blurs the boundaries between film and advertisement but the homogenous soundtrack also opens the possibility that we are viewing a music video. The visual story unfolding on-screen aligns with the lyrics such that further questions can be asked about the nature of the assemblage and the cultural being formed. Given that so many possibilities are at play, it seems almost arbitrary to attempt to categorise this kind of media form. Similarly, the music throughout Mitchell's work is used not only to evoke mood but to demarcate significant moments in the narrative. Opening with *Rock On* and moving to *The Sweetest Thing There is*, the shift between the two comes at a point where Cotillard herself moves from alluring temptress to tender redeemer. The non-diegetic music punctuates the multivalent layers of the character, the intensity of the narrative and complexity of the story world. In this respect, the music acts as a key intensity but also serves to convey in

sound the narrative unfolding on-screen. By contrast, the Lynchian feminine protagonist speaks. She drives the narrative forward, assuming responsibility for the unfolding events and the diegetic natural sound, along with the diegetic music, play a secondary role in contextualising the narrative. This different approach enables Cotillard's characters, as a key intensity, to roam her own assemblage, visiting different places and times in her own memory experiencing, with the audience, a raft of sights, experiences and sounds that comprise the assemblage. Again, she is at once both reterritorialised and deterritorialised, located within and beyond in a state of becoming.

The Posthuman Assemblage

Just as the question of different becoming is played out on the advertising screen, complex questions around the nature of the human/technology relationship, perceptions of what it is to be human and how we conceive of ourselves in an era of technological innovation also emerge as rich arenas for consideration both in film and in advertising. While the duration of film enables the extension of narrative and the exploration of complex philosophical themes, advertising offers a similarly contemplative approach albeit in a more condensed form. Perhaps this need for comparative brevity creates the affective intensity demonstrated in the posthuman assemblage in advertising.

One of the most salient contributions to questions of technology, the body and posthuman discourse is Haraway's seminal text *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991) wherein she argues for a re-evaluation of the human/technology relationship. However, in her critique of Haraway's (1991) figure of the cyborg, Currier (2003) isolates the essential problem of Haraway's theory regarding the possibility of the truly posthuman cyborg. Haraway's cyborg is a hybrid being that eludes classical binarisms such as human/machine, mind/body in an effort to liberate essentialising Western narratives regarding what it is to be human and make way for a re-conceptualisation of the feminine. Haraway asks

> Why should our bodies end at the skin?… For us, in imagination, and in other practices, machines can be prosthetic devices, intimate components, friendly selves. We don't need organic holism to give unpermeable wholes, the total woman and her feminist variants (mutants?) (1991, p. 178)

Yet, as Kirby (1997) and, more recently, Currier (2003) point out, the very construct that Haraway seeks to contest remains intact throughout her manifesto. While Haraway argues for a challenge to the concept of an organic human and the human/technology binarism that has underpinned the epistemological thrust of the modern era, her conceptualisation leaves untouched the core philosophical notion of identity upon which distinctions between human/non-human, human/machine and so forth are elaborated. If a genuine re-evaluation of the cyborg figure is possible, the preservation of the essentialising element of identity that inevitably distinguishes, rather than melds, human and non-human potentialities must also be questioned. But, as Kirby (1997) argues,

> Haraway's 'dissembled and reassembled' recipe for cyborg graftings is utterly dependent on the calculus of one plus one, the logic wherein pre-existent identities are *then* conjoined and melded. The cyborg's chimerical complications are therefore never so promiscuous that its parts cannot be separated even if only retrospectively. (p. 147)

Thus, as long as the logic of identity with its unifying, totalising reinstatement of the organic human subject remains intact, a true cyborg upon which the logic of intersectionality, hybridity and melding are written remains an elusive possibility.

Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage thinking offers a way out of this impasse. Based on the insights of Grosz (1994), Currier illuminates how assemblage thinking offers new possibilities for conceptualising human/technology intersections, some of which we see played out on the advertising to follow. As Brown (2008) points out,

> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (*Anti-Oedipus; A Thousand Plateaux*) also play a pivotal role in the development of posthumanist discourse,

> since they similarly argue that the use of machines sees the creation of a new "assemblage," which in itself has a new identity separate from our traditional conceptions of self. Deleuze and Guattari see the creation of assemblages not as the irredeemable loss of something uniquely human, but as the opportunity for endless self-recreation through the creation of ever-more complex and wonderful identities (p. 67)

One of the most significant aspects of assemblage thinking (in the context of advertising but also more broadly as a philosophical approach) is its resistance to acknowledge pre-existing structures as a basis for understanding the intersections or relationalities between things. Latour's (2005) work on social assemblages through the prism of actor–network theory (a theory that shares much in common with assemblage thinking) illustrates this point well in his argument that there is no such thing as the "social", no over-arching, organising logic to which we must inevitably ascribe in order to seek understanding, explanation or potential for action. Situations, people, social agency and all the dynamics that play out in the social sphere should be understood not as a function of structures but rather of actions and effects. Likewise, in the context of the human/technology interface presented here, assemblage thinking opens up the possibility of exploding the notion that the logic of a preordained human identity that orders the human/technology relationship or even that "the body" is a determined territory. As Currier (2003) suggests

> In each assemblage the particles, intensities, forces and flows of components meet with and link with the forces and flows of the other components: the resultant distribution of these meetings constitute the assemblage. This formulation obviously presents a challenge to a straightforward prosthetic account of the meeting of bodies and technologies, where a pre-existent unified body and technology meet. (p. 325)

Bodies, in the context of assemblage, are not unified wholes, the sum of the parts do not constitute the total and the result is not stable. If bodies are assemblages comprised of forces, flows and components with varying intensities, speeds and fluxes, then the very notion of a "body"

in its classical understanding is challenged. Bodies alter, change, morph and evolve as the components shift, rendering them "continually in flux and in commerce with the circumstances, energies, fields of objects and discourses through which they find particular temporary articulations" (Currier 2003, p. 328).

Deleuze and Guattari's theorisation of Antonin Artaud's idea of the Body Without Organs (BwO) is elaborated as part of the assemblage thinking presented in *Une mille plateaux*. Connecting directly with this question of what the body is and, by extension, what it *does* as a result of its expressive and functional capacities, the BwO is one of the most important elements of Deleuze and Guattari's work. They remained consistently pessimistic towards the discourse of psychoanalysis at a point in time where psychoanalytical approaches had attracted mainstream presence, arguing that the experience of different neuroses being recuperated through the reunification of the body, teaching it to deal with the limitations of constraint and lack (of desire), only served to render the body stratified, inert and falsely brought back to a non-existent whole. Instead, the

> BwO is made in such a way that it can be occupied, populated only by intensities. Only intensities pass and circulate. Still, the BwO is not a scene, a place, or even a support upon which something comes to pass. It has nothing to do with phantasy, there is nothing to interpret. The BwO causes intensities to pass; it produces and distributes them in a spatium that is itself intensive, lacking extension. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980]), pp. 177–78)

This is a body alive with multiplicities, flows and intensities that operate at the surface level, a body of *doing* rather than of *being* as an organic entity. As Del Rao (2008) suggests, like the notion of assemblage, the BwO "dis-organ-izes the organs/affects of the body; through such a process, the organs multiply connections with each other and with the organs of other bodies in ways that defy the systematicity that keeps them bound to the slave morality of representation and majoritarian behaviour" (p. 11). The BwO is not confined by the logic of the unified being either as an identity or as an organic whole. Rather, it a deterritorialised body, a body

able to take on new intensities, multiplicities and flows as it deterritorialises and reterritorialises, finding new rhythms and flows along the way. This explosion of the notion of unified body as grounding concept and its attendant possibilities for new hybridities and intersectionalities made possible through technology lays the basis for our ensuing discussion of the advertising assemblages presented here.

David Fincher—Adidas Mechanical Legs (2002)

David Fincher's advertisement for Adidas entitled *Mechanical Legs* (TBWA/Chiat, 2002) is a sixty-second piece that plays out some of the forces and flows of BwO assemblage. Composed entirely of digital effects, as seen in the accompanying four-minute *Making of Mechanical Legs*, the advertisement depicts the ultimate BwO, a perfect fusion of human/technology intersection. David Fincher has enjoyed popular success as a film director with credits including *Alien 3* (1992), *Seven* (1995), *The Game* (1997), *Fight Club* (1999), *Panic Room* (1992), *Zodiac* (2007), *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008), *The Social Network* (2010), *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011) and *Gone Girl* (2014). He has also directed the television series *House of Cards* (2013–) and *Mindhunter* (2017) along with a range of music videos. Fincher's career started in advertising seeing him work with some of the most influential brands in the world. Echoing the view that advertising is not simply a persuasive spectacle, Fincher acknowledges that

> there's this assumption that commercials are just close-ups of celebrities holding products up to their faces. But some of them are great art. It's not the art of the surrealistic painting or the poem, but it is art… There are certain easy truisms that we all adopt. Beautiful people are stupid. Smart people have the potential for evil and should be watched. Commercials are supposed to sell you something, and therefore must be bad (Fincher in Brookes 2002)

Fincher's refinement of his distinctive cinematic technique is found throughout his early commercial work and carries through to his more contemporary advertising pieces—a medium in which he continues

to work. *Mechanical Legs* (2002) is one of many significant Fincher advertisements who brings the dark, gritty quality of his storytelling to this piece. The establishing shot opens with a dark, almost futuristic warehouse-like space, with pipework, ducts and a production line-like apparatus suspended from the lofty ceiling suggesting a space buoyed by the hums and flows of machinic life. No humans are shown, their residual presence suggested only by the empty office chairs pushed back from sparse desks. This is a dark space, an almost posthuman territory where humans have been superseded by the machinic. The viewer is left to wonder what this place is? Is it a laboratory? A morgue? A future glimpse of life without humans as the march of technology eclipses the need for human intervention? The space evokes a similar tonality seen in a range of science-fiction films that depicts the future as a bleak, dark world; this is the world of Neo (*The Matrix*, dir. The Wachowskis, 1999) the prophetic Terminator (*The Terminator*, dir. Cameron, 1984) or the mind-controlled world of John Murdoch (*Dark City*, dir. Proyas, 1998). Rather significantly, this is also the land of Fincher's *Alien 3* (1992) with its stark, post-industrial aesthetic, haunted by the steely tones that frequently characterise Fincher's cinematography. The camera tracks towards a pair of mechanical legs, suspended from the apparatus above, its feet resting on a constructed platform. Other legs are visible although they are suspended, lifeless from the apparatus above. In an evocation of Virilio's "motorization of the living being" (1995), trapped in a space somewhere between an assembly line and an abattoir, the technologically constructed physiology of the legs dangles above the room. The eerie quiet of the scene is punctured only by the slightest natural sound, its somewhat hollow tone resonating as the camera tracks rapidly towards the legs standing on the platform, lower than the other legs and clearly marked as the focus of the ensuing action. The camera moves to a close-up of the legs, the full impact of their bionic engineering made apparent. The scene moves from dark to light as the glinting steely legs are illuminated. The viewer can see the representation of sinews, muscles, bones and tendons, replicated in steel rods and carbon connective tissues, a posthuman reconstruction of the once fleshy human body. In contrast with the steel mechanics, the hard engineering of this posthuman body without organs, very human Adidas shoes are zoomed in on.

We are confronted by the tension between the familiarity and comfort of human shoes now the property and purview of this work of science, this robotic form that replicates and exceeds the human. This is not a unified body but a half-body conjured together by components, materials, connections and forces.

All at once, the legs come to life, first with the shake of a foot and a vibration of the pelvis. The low-angle close-up of the pelvis reveals further the details of this technological spectre. The steel plates of the pelvic bone, the carbon of the replicated bones and the steels rods of tendons confront the viewer with their remarkable detail, their scientific ingenuity and their faithful replication of the core human anatomy. We are confronted with a post-version of our own physicality. As the camera jumps to a longer shot of the legs, the platform beneath its feet starts to move, splitting and cutting under the legs' feet as though dancing with the legs themselves. The legs begin to move this way and that, reproducing the human motion of a basketballer. The slightly longer shot reveals more of the space in which this action takes place, the hazard line marking on the ground, the mechanics of the platform itself come into view. We are again left to wonder what this strange place, filled with half-humans, machines and hazards actually is? Is it a place that can exist yet or a sign of industrial/technological things to come? The camera pans around the legs as they leap and jump, revealing their range of motion and agility. The cut to a close-up of the sneakers speak to the superhuman speed with which the legs can move. This is a body of slowness and speed, variations, multiplicities and intensities that accelerate and delay, leap and pause. The camera continues to swirl around the legs as the platform struggles to keep pace with the intensifying movement. The sounds of sneakers on a basketball court can be heard as the squeaks, skids and a slight mechanical hum provide the soundtrack to this uncanny show. As the camera pans back and the legs perform one final leap into the air, a flash of a screen sitting on the desk reveals the seeming profile of a basketball player, his anatomy mapped on the screen. For whom is this spectre of technology intended? Until this moment, it seems that this is not a space for humans as the mechanics of technology have dominated. Yet this fleeting reference point to the human on-screen reconnects the narrative with the human

world, meshing human and robotic anatomies in a shared pursuit of physical excellence. Are the robotic legs the mechanical simulation of this player? Are indeed the robot and human one, the robot revealing a glimpse of its human potential? The ambiguity of this fleeting human reference places the narrative in flux, complicating a seeming portrait of almost post-apocalyptic futures where robots rule the world and laboratories potentially make players.

The camera cuts back to the legs as they continue to leap, run and dodge the moving platform below. In a sequence filled with rapid motion and frenzied movement, the camera captures this intensity through low-angle motion as though to accentuate the body in motion. A cutback to high-angle, long shot then punctuates the legs' sudden pause, a definitive stop as its feet stamp the ground. Again, this body is a body of speed and slowness, rapidity and pause, a body taking flight and embodying intensities. The use of the camera works with this bionic synergy, moving between high-angle, low-angle, moving and close-up frames, all of which proceeds to the natural sound of human feet and a mechanical hum. But then, the legs leap to life once again, more frenzied, energised, than before. A constantly swirling camera, moving against the direction of the legs as they leap get ever higher and the feet ever faster offers a sequence of breathless motion and superhuman agility. The technological body exceeds the limits of the human, its capacities channelled into preternatural intensities and yet it feels as though the legs are more "alive", more human than at any other point. As the legs perform a remarkable leap into the air, the frame is paused and the camera circles 360 degrees around the suspended motion while other inert sets of legs dangle either side. This is motion and pause, speed and slowness, animate and inanimate, human and robot all played out together in the one whirling frame as the body in motion is juxtaposed against the lifeless legs beside it. The camera and legs leap back into life as a high-angle shot returns the viewer to the increasingly rapid motion of the platform, shifting and changing under the frenzied feet of the robot. A slight change in mood is introduced as the legs appear to almost acquire a comedic posture, the mechanical sounds gesturing to this moment of humour as punctuated hums mirror the kicks before the legs mimic a classically Michael Jackson pelvic thrust.

The legs come to a slow halt and recede briefly back into the air on the assembly line as the sound of a crowd cheering is heard. Aside from the brief reference to a real athlete shown earlier on the deserted computer screen, this is the only tangible presence of humans in the entire advertisement. Yet it is unclear as to who this audience is. Where did they come from and why are they cheering? The sound of the unseen crowd perhaps lauds the stunning physical show of agility or maybe pre-empts the human achievements that will be made possible on the real basketball court once the potential of the shoes is set in human motion. As the legs come down from their suspended position, the camera captures in foreground close-up the legs of the next body in motion as it shudders to life. The camera jumps back as the two sets of legs leap, clashing together mid-air, the second legs falling to its platform. This body is deterritorialised, its lines of flight are infectious, sparking new energies and multiplicities in other beings. The first legs are triumphant, perfect and the screen reads "more power to you". The final shot depicts the defeated legs crawling away in defeat, the sounds of a dysfunctional machine winding down to a slow pause.

The advertisement plays out the BwO conceptualisation of the non-organic body, composed of intensities. Mirroring Deleuze and Guattari's question of what the body *does*, as opposed to what it is structured or understood to be, Fincher's narrative depicts a body of flight, a body that *does* the superhuman in spite of its dismemberment and its missing organs. Its forces and flows constitute the narrative and its intensities collude to produce an effect that exceeds the human. But, it is also an imagining of the human, a body replicated on a real human body, a pairing or a coupling of human and technology. It is not clear where the human potential and technology realisation meet as the physiology of the human basketball player and the steely surfaces of the technological form meet. The legs are a true hybrid, a merging of human and technology to create the ultimate athlete. In the *Making of Mechanical Legs* video, we see how motion capture was used to replicate the motion of a human basketballer. Thus, while we marvel at the speed and range of motion performed by the mechanical legs, we are reminded that indeed this is a rendering of human motion as the technological stands in for the fleshy physical—they are, nonetheless, one

in the same. To this end, Fincher's depiction of a human/technology hybrid reveals a deterritorialised body, a body that exceeds its limits, gathers energies and intensities and infects others with its force. But it also a reterritorialised body, a perfect merging of human and technology in a collective synergy of human and technological forces into one coherent being.

In this respect, the key intensity, upon which the entire premise of the assemblage rests, is that of a "post"-human intensity. We should understand posthumanism as the inevitable apotheosis of the long-standing paradoxes endemic to the modern age (Wolfe 2010), contextualised in an epoch of technological innovation that has accelerated over the last century (Baldwin 2015). These paradoxes are laid bare in posthumanist discourse. This nuancing of posthumanism as endemic to, rather than as an alternative to, humanism is pivotal for both its understanding and practice in consumer culture since it challenges many of the long-established assumptions regarding the privileging of the consumer as the central actor (Giesler and Venkatesh 2005) and reveals the long, complex relationship human beings have had with the notion of a reducible, technologically controllable world.

Posthumanism emerges in parallel with, and as a contestation of, much of (although not all (Wolfe 2010)) this epistemological thrust, giving rise to such divergent theoretical perspectives as animal (Braidotti 2014; Taylor and Twine 2014; Taylor and Hamilton 2013) and disability studies (Goodley et al. 2014) where the primacy of the sensorially superior human subject is fundamentally challenged and alternative forms of embodiment are proposed. Common to all of these disciplinary arenas is the acknowledgement of the human as embedded within (and dependent upon) wider circuits of meaning, experienced and embodied through an ongoing negotiation with the world. Alluding to Deleuze and Guattari's BwO, the posthuman cyborg body is a body of hybridity, flows and morphs. As Giesler and Venkatesh (2005) suggest, the quintessentially posthuman consumer, a figure who fuses the organic and the technical, "treats cognition not as something that happens in the brain. Instead, it analyzes meaning and identity in terms of the relationship between itself and the environment, integrating mind and biosphere" (p. 664). This contestation of the traditional humanist

subject is further intensified in an era of technological intervention where technology leads us to consider the possibility of evolving technological embodiment where, no doubt, new sources of tension or ambivalence may emerge (Lai 2012; Lanier 2010). Again, for the posthuman cyborg consumer

> technology is, with Heidegger (1962), a fundamental 'mode of revealing', that determines its 'being-in-the-world' rather than mere 'tool consumption', or 'human interaction' with the external world of bodies and objects. Technology is implicit in all being, so fundamentally determining of existence that it becomes an epistemic device for the cyborg consumer. (Giesler and Venkatesh 2005, 664)

Fincher's cinematic sensibility accentuates this hybridity of human and technology, capturing it as a synergy of varying speeds, pauses and agilities. The camera, like the hybrid body, is always in motion, refracting and inflecting the motion of the body itself. Long shots, close-ups, high and low angles keep the viewer constantly in motion, continually breathless. Browning (2010) observes this sense of motion throughout Fincher's work, with a use of cropped shots, strong backlighting and lack of continuity editing to "convey the concept of movement as more important than a specific movement for a specific end" (p. 6). The stark soundtrack, with its sound effects and slight mechanical hum, keeps the viewer focused on the visual motion. Much of Fincher's aesthetic such as special effects, camera motion, steely colour palette and precise cinematography that have drawn comparisons with Kubrick can be seen as early as his emerging career in music videos. Fincher's videos for Madonna (*Express Yourself*, 1989) Billy Idol (*LA Woman*, 1990) and George Michel (*Freedom*, 1990) foreground the blue palette, shots of ochre and flat tonality used in *Mechanical Legs*—and throughout Fincher's entire *oeuvre* epitomised in the bleak terrain of *Seven* (1995) and oppressive tonality of *Fight Club* (1999). Perhaps even more telling is the video for Michael Jackson (*Who Is It*, 1991) where the steel blue and orange-shot palette is reiterated and the representation of alternate human forms through the special effects of haunting human faces emerging from various surfaces foregrounds Fincher's use of special

effects and complicated representations of human forms. Equally common to much of Fincher's work is an enduring preoccupation with the presence of technology, a component that forms the central feature of *Mechanical Legs.*

Rupert Sanders—Sony PS3 Baby Doll (2006)

Before interrogating further the intensities that constitute the posthuman assemblage as presented in *Mechanical Legs*, a brief consideration of another advertisement offering a radically different image of the BwO as a trope of the posthuman is worthy of attention. Rupert Sander's thirty-second television advertisement (and its extended one and a half-minute online version) for Sony PS3 entitled *Baby Doll* (TBWA/Chiat/Day Los Angeles, 2006) provides a radically different view of the posthuman assemblage while still leveraging the notion of the BwO. Rupert Sanders is a British film-maker whose credits include the feature films *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) along with the short film *Black Hole* (2010). Sanders has made several advertisements and has writing and production credits to his name. Sander's *PS3 Baby Doll* piece formed part of a larger Sony campaign assemblage that thematised representations of human/technology fusion, cyborgism and the PS3 box itself as an animate being.

PS3 Baby Doll opens with a long shot as a light flickers on in a stark white room. Symmetry dominates the frame as the clean lines of the walls and ceiling confront the viewer. The scene is reminiscent of the laboratory of *Resident Evil* (Anderson, 2002), a quintessentially futuristic space filled with the ambiguity of nothingness. The perceptual depth of the room is conveyed through its angularity where, despite the uniformity of tone, the space itself appears both expansive and constrained. The space is, at once, highly territorialised and yet a space that runs off-screen, a deterritorialised plane with no end. Four squares of light reflect from the ceiling, a curious white on white play of light that further accentuates the frame as a cubist composition of squares. At the bottom of the screen, a baby doll figure sits, its back to the viewer, seemingly watching a screen-like black box located on the floor in the

lower-right of the frame. As a strange, hollow tone provides the diegetic sound, the camera jumps to a zoom shot of the baby doll before moving to the black box—now revealed to be a Playstation 3 (PS3). As though in response to the call of the PS3, the camera jumps back to the baby doll maintaining its zoom trajectory as the baby's eyes snap open. The mouth moves imperceptibly as the indiscriminate sounds of a human baby's voice can be heard. The baby is disturbing for its replicated human form with paunchy contours represented in flesh coloured plastic, the sheen of its artificial skin refracting the starkness of the room as light hits one side of its face. The other side of the baby's face is shadowed in a play of light and dark, its eyes staring fixedly at the mesmerising PS3 box. As though engaged in conversation, the baby and the box appear to be communicating in a shot-reverse-shot sequence. The camera then jumps to an over-the-shoulder shot of the baby as its stumpy plastic arm reaches towards the PS3 box that appears to be further away than ever in the receding depth of the room. The baby's human noises express a sense of joy leading the viewer to question whether the baby sees the PS3 as its mother or as a source of curiosity. The gesture of reaching out towards the box suggests a sense of identification, of affection, as the two technological beings exist in the ambiguous white space together.

The camera moves to a de-centred close-up of the baby's face, the sounds of a giggling baby intensifying in concert with the moving facial gestures, blinking eyes and head movement of the baby. As its mouth appears to laugh, the sounds morph to an almost adult male laugh racked with an almost manic hysteria. The camera moves back as the baby raises both of its arms, reaching out towards the substitute mother (?) as a squeal of delight emits from the baby's mouth. The camera jumps to an extreme close-up of the baby's glassy false eyes. Flickering, rapid images reflect in the staring glass eyes as real tears well up in a gesture of human emotion as the infantile squeal gives way to an adult sound of weeping. The tears recede back into the baby's eyes as the camera takes a step back to the de-centred baby's head before the long shot of the room is restored and we hear the mechanically produced words "Mama". The final shot shows the PSB in close-up levitating from the stark, white floor as the words "play beyond" appear below

the box and the intense, tonal sound used at the top of the advertisement returns.

What is this thing, this weeping, emotional thing so moved by a technological device? Like Fincher's *Mechanical Legs*, the advertisement deeply problematises the meaning of "human" through the intensity of quasi-human representation, a representation complicated by the intervention of a tangible technological discourse of replication and mimicry. From the outset, the assemblage is bounded, both spatially and discursively, by the terrain of a scientific milieu, a laboratory white space that resonates with its nothingness and its absence of human presence. The lines of room territorialise the ensuing narrative but also the point of reference for the viewer. The figure of the baby itself provides a disturbing visual intensity but also the narrative device through which the complexity of the posthuman assemblage is played out. Drawing on Kristeva's (1982) notion of abjection, where "ontological liminality and paradox [become] simultaneously fascinating and repulsive" (Buchanan-Oliver and Cruz 2015), Buchanan-Oliver and Cruz discuss the sense of abjection at work in the PS3 advertisement, arguing that abjection of human autonomy, the human body and human emotion act as key intensities throughout this advertisement. Arguing for the positioning of the machinic as lauded entity (as reflected in the levitation of the PS3), they point out the connection with cinematic figures such as Hal the Computer from *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968) suggesting that the advertisement re-visits existing posthuman conversations around human ambivalences and fears of technology "which are alien and superior to human understanding, but also fears of transforming the human being into something other-than-itself" (p. 282).

Likewise, the advertisement's assimilation of human emotion and technological artifice taps a long-standing cinematic tradition of the "creepy doll" motif made famous by such characters as Chucky (*Child's Play* dir. Holland, 1988), the dolls from Death Doll (*Mims*, 1989) and Talky Tina (*Twilight Zone*, dir. Sarafian, 1963). The power of these figures reside in their deterritorialised status as human, but not quite human, that translates into symbolic pollution and a threat to the homogeneity of humanness. They are abhorrent, terrifying and haunting precisely because of their liminality (Buchanan-Oliver and Cruz

2015), their interstitial problematising of human embodiment and their merging of artifice with the "real". Such intensities drive the PS3 assemblage as the deeply human expression of childish joy and wonder is polluted not only by the manic interpellations of adult emotions (through the morphing of adult laughter and crying into the child's giggling) but also the routing of these expressions through the circuits of plasticity, falsity and replication. The simulation of sacred human relationships, such as the mother–child bond, are also deterritorialised here as they are taken out of the hands of flesh and blood human experiences and relocated in the quasi-bodies of a plastic doll and a non-animate (yet curiously animate) black box. How can we then account for these artificial bonds, these substitute relationships that, despite the falsity of the spectre, nonetheless produce real human tears in the baby's eyes (and indeed why is it crying?). Taking one step further from recent cinematic explorations of human–technology relationships in works such as *Her* (Jonze, 2013) and *Passengers* (Tyldem, 2016) where the delineation between human and technological being remains crisp, Sanders' PS3 advertisement fundamentally challenges such delineations and, in doing so, presents a highly deterritorialised posthuman assemblage.

The cinematic composition of the advertisement supports these intensities. The *mis-en-scène* suggests a non-space where, as in *Mechanical Legs*, humans have no presence. In a visual rendering of white noise, with its stark nothingness, the advertisement conjures a smooth space yet it is space bereft of nomads, of life as we understand it, of lines of flight. It is space now populated by replicant beings, of substitute experiences embodied in the visual devices (baby and box) positioned in distanciated opposition across the room. Space is eternal as the baby and box communicate across the white void. Both figures are imbued with aesthetic and narrative intensity as close-ups, extreme close-ups and de-framed mid-shots punctuate their presence. Simultaneously tropes and characters, the composition of the frames, supported by the diegetic noises and non-diegetic sounds, bring to life these two troubling beings.

Fincher's *Mechanical Legs* and Sanders' *PS3 Baby Doll* offer two different, yet equally compelling assemblages that both play out a preoccupation with the posthuman narrative of human/technology hybridity

and intersection. Both emphasise the absence of the human played out in unidentifiable non-spaces that seem at once both futuristic and, in a sense, post-apocalyptic. Fincher creates his world through a sense of motion with a broad range of camera angles and his signature use of cool colour palettes, replete with steely tones and a precision of visual detail found in much of his other works. Sanders, on the other hand, creates his world through static imagery, jumps and cuts that frame and de-frame his subjects/objects in a way that renders them strange. In a play on Freud's notion of the uncanny (1955) or the literary device of *ostranenie (de-familiarisation)* (Shklovskij 1990, 2008), Sanders complication of the seemingly inert figure of a baby captures Shkovskijj's observation that

> The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (1990, p. 16)

While Shklovkij's sense of *ostranenie* was intended to force attention upon the use of artistic language as a means of disrupting everyday perception, enabling the viewer/consumer to re-see their world in renewed perceptual terms, Sanders' reconfiguration of the figure of the baby (a normally benign source of pleasure and affection) reconstitutes this symbolically imbued figure and suggests a new perceptual terrain grounded in radically different aesthetic language. Thus, Sanders enacts the *ostranenie* motif by de-familiarising mundane readings of the "baby" through the interpellation of a posthumanist sensibility. Again, the cinematic devices utilised in the assemblage support this process of *ostranenie* through the de-framing and close-up of the baby doll, the complexity of emotional representation and the starkness of the scene.

These advertisements draw on several intensities to compose the posthuman assemblage. Both works leverage key cinematic or literary devices (thus deterritorialising them to connect with wider cultural flows and circuits of the meaning) while creating distinctive story worlds in which the tensions of human/technology relationships

are enacted (thereby reterritorialising the advertisement). Fincher's *Mechanical Legs* can be seen as an extension of his *oeuvre*, re-situating within the aesthetic, narrative and symbolic concerns seen in his other films and shorter pieces where

> the links between technology and embodiment, specifically male embodiment, figure prominently in Fincher's oeuvre. His preference for shooting on digital film and inserting CGI techniques into dramatic live-action narratives is not simply part of his aesthetic signature but is inextricably intertwined with his films' contemplation of the connections between corporeality and identity, feeling and knowing, texture and surface. (Schreiber 2016, p. 3)

Given that Sanders' filmography to date is relatively short, it is difficult to see what lines of flight will emerge from *PS3 Baby Doll* and whether the intensities that compose the assemblage will rhizomatically re-emerge at other points in the broader Sanders opus. Nonetheless, both works exemplify the capacity of advertising to speak to fundamental human ambivalences about our own points of intersection with technology and nature. They depict the posthuman narrative in concise and revealing ways with a degree of intensity and aesthetic complexity typically attributed to film. Again, we are left to conclude that if we liberate advertising from its cultural constraint as spectacle, draw our attention away from its persuasive function, and instead conceive of these works as assemblages underpinned by important ontological questions that manifest through their aesthetic, narrative and stylistic intensities, then the resonance of advertising as a cultural artefact is laid bare.

Questions of what it is to be human and states of becoming are all visited in the assemblages presented here. The purpose of tracing these assemblages through the advertisements discussed is to firstly illuminate the different kinds of intensities that often underpin these assemblages, suggesting that the complex philosophical, aesthetic and narratological questions often explored through cinematic or literary forms have as much salience in advertising thereby bringing advertising closer to such systems of affects. If we return to the earlier observation made by Gurevitch (2009) that advertising has been traditionally relegated to

spectacle, it would seem that, as advertising spaces become more distributed and longer forms are made possible, this classical positioning of the advertisement is fundamentally challenged. Second, these advertisements draw upon refined cinematic techniques, developed narrative and wider circuits of cultural references to develop the assemblage and do so with a greater intensity as they are often working in short form. While they essentially seek to depict or represent a specific element, they achieve this through the same sophisticated devices, tropes and technical machinations as other media forms. These assemblages are, at once, both highly territorialised as entities that draw their energy from a coalescing of intensities into a comparatively condensed artefact and deterritorialised in that they spill over into a host of other aesthetic and cultural assemblages. For instance, as we see in all of the advertisements discussed, persistent aesthetic or thematic reference can be made back into the director's other works where the advertisement can almost be read as part of another extant assemblage. Equally, and given that films frequently draw upon larger historical and cultural reference points thereby intensifying the circulations of meanings and intensities embedded in these assemblages, these broader reference points also come to pass in the short form advertising such as those discussed here. But just as we can trace the spillage of intensities across assemblages as they deterritorialise in order to morph and develop, the reterritorialising effects of narrative, motion and time re-contain these advertisements as bounded entities, complete assemblages in their own right. What is clear from the analysis above is that these works, when conceived of as assemblages composed of intensities, flows and extensions, take on renewed philosophical and aesthetic relevance within the cultural sphere.

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5

Intensities and the Singular Assemblage: Time and Space

Just as advertising reflects intensities of becoming, further elements of time and space also work within these assemblages. In this chapter, the work of David Lynch and Martin Scorsese are discussed as instances of the spatial assemblage and concepts of time are discussed through the work of Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Using the concepts of striated and smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980]), the discussion reveals how diverse compositions of assemblage components can produce two radically different renderings of spatial experience for the consumer. We then move to a consideration of the temporal assemblage as viewed through the work of David Fincher and Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Drawing from some of Deleuze's philosophy of the time-image presented in *Cinema II* (2013b [1985]), the discussion considers how time is used as a key intensity within the assemblage.

The discussion in the previous chapter illuminates how the elements of signature cinematic elements, story worlds, narrative, visual affect, sound and underlying philosophical concepts can be captured through hybrid media forms and understood as stand-alone assemblages, though such intensities as states of becoming. In the following discussion of David Lynch's and Martin Scorsese's work, the concept of the

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urban-spatial assemblage will be approached as a way of showing how the configuration of key intensities (in this case a sense of place) is seminal to how the assemblage holds together. Lynch and Scorsese both use the urban environment of New York City as the key intensity, yet their renderings of the same space yield three markedly different assemblages whose expressive capacities evoke radically different emotional and aesthetic affects for the consumer.

Just as the spatial assemblage can be traced through advertising, the temporal assemblage is also present. The term temporal, or temporality, in this context refers to an assemblage that draws upon the complexity of time for its intensity although Deleuze, after Bergson, prefers the term actualisation as will be discussed. In order to understand how we might approach the temporal assemblage, it is useful to visit some of Deleuze's other writings to apprehend how he conceived of time and how this concept spills through into the kind of assemblage thinking presented in *Mille Plateaux*. The question of time returns consistently through Deleuze's opus with his *Cinema II—The Time Image* (2013b) perhaps being the most important elaboration for the purposes of understanding the relationship between time and the image. That said, his consideration of time in *Différance et Répétition* (1994 [1968]) and *Logique du sens* (1990 [1969]) lays out the philosophical approach. Therefore, in our subsequent discussion of temporality, we extend our focus to some of Deleuze's earlier works to contextualise how temporality fits within the framework of assemblage thinking.

The Spatial Assemblage

Deleuze and Guattari (1987 [1980]) give considerable attention to the question of space and spatiality. Drawing a distinction between smooth space and striated space, or "nomad space and sedentary space" (p. 552), they envision a series of models or examples to illuminate the nature of these kinds of spaces and the relationship that may exist between them. Using the examples of fabric with its different kinds of interweaving, music with its contrasts between the smooth continuous variation and striated order that produces "a succession of distinction forms"

(p. 556) and the sea, an example of smooth space *par excellence* that becomes highly striated as it becomes mapped and inhabited, Deleuze and Guattari appear to distinguish between smooth and striated spaces through the lens of movement, emphasising that the capacity for voyage, motion and revelation is the tipping point between the two forms of space. In the context of the urban environment, they comment that

> In contrast to the sea, the city is the striated space par excellence; the sea is a smooth space fundamentally open to striation, and the city is the force of striation that reimports smooth space, puts it back into operation everywhere, on earth and in the other elements, outside but also inside itself. The smooth spaces arising from the city are not only those of worldwide organization, but also of a counterattack combining the smooth and the holey and turning back against the town: sprawling, temporary, shifting shantytowns of nomads and cave dwellers, scrap metal and fabric, patchwork, to which the striations of money, work, or housing are no longer even relevant. (1987 [1980], pp 559–560)

But how can the highly striated, occupied and sedentary space of the city with its ordered layers of intensity, like that of the organising logic of music or the guiding fibre against which free threads are woven give rise to smooth space, space that stretches out to the limits of movement, enabling the return of smooth space characterised by lines of motion? Deleuze and Guattari argue that

> It is possible to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad (for example, a stroll taken by Henry Miller in Clichy or Brooklyn is a nomadic transit in smooth space; he makes the city disgorge a patchwork, differentials of speed, delays and accelerations, changes in orientation, continuous variations…). Voyage in place: that is the name of all intensities, even if they also develop in extension… In short, what distinguishes the two kinds of voyages is neither a measurable quantity of movement, nor something that would only be in the mind, but the mode of spatialization, the manner of being in space, of being for space. Voyage smoothly or in striation, and think the same way… But there are always passages from one to the other, transformations of one within the other, reversals. (1987 [1980]), pp. 560–561)

The film *Kings of the Road* (dir. Wenders 1976) is used as an example of this interweaving of smooth and striated journeys with one character staying in striated space but "open[ing] space for himself" (p. 561) while the other roams physically only to have striation close him in. Thus, smoothness and striation are not contingent upon the composition of the city itself (the city forms a plane upon which striation and smoothness are experienced). Instead, if striation is about the organising of (static) points and smoothness is the tracing of lines (of movement) then the consideration of space, and more specifically urban space is essential in the context of how intensities within an assemblage move. Do the assemblage intensities change, slowing or accelerating, pausing or delaying, crossing wide spaces or staying close, ordered? Space, as reflected in urban space, analogises not only physical movement but, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, a sense of being, a way of thinking and, for the purposes of the advertisements considered here, a mode of representation. Thus, what emerges out of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of striated and smooth space for our analysis is not only the potential differences in representational energy that play out (for instance, Lynch's advertisement could be seen as working within striated space while Scorsese's could be seen as engaging with, and representing smooth space) but also how the ways of thinking and seeing space impact the other intensities at work in the assemblage. In his discussion of how we might diagrammatise an assemblage, De Landa (2015) extends this distinction between points and lines as being the point of departure for either the deterritorialisation (or reterritorialisation) of the assemblage, suggesting that the rigid points present in striated space speak to a high degree of territorialisation while lines of flight (those lines that constitute smooth space mark "the directions along which an assemblage can become deterritorialised" (2015, p. 109). De Landa's observation points to the key notion that, while an assemblage as a composition of its intensities and capacities can ultimately hold, the intersections and imbrications of the assemblage's intensities and the extent to which they can open up lines of flight also test the boundaries or parameters of the assemblage. In the ensuing analysis of Lynch and Scorsese's representation of city space, these questions of striation and smoothness, points

and lines, underpin the aesthetic intensities at work, offering up to the consumer radically different assemblages and visual experiences.

David Lynch—We Care About New York (1991)

We Care About New York (1991) is a sixty-second public service announcement advertisement commissioned by the New York City Sanitation Department. Bringing David Lynch as director and Frederick Elmes as director of photography once again after collaborations on *Eraserhead* (1977) and *Blue Velvet* (1986), the purpose of the anti-littering campaign was to highlight the city's rat problem and the associated problems of dropping litter. Distributed across television screens, and now widely watched on YouTube as a snippet of the Lynchian *oeuvre*, this black and white advertisement paints a bleak picture of the striated city. As John Metcalfe, in his 2012 Citylab blog, commented "after watching a slo-mo close-up of a rat's tail cycle like a plane's propeller, and a group of bikers/swingers locked into paroxysms of creepy glee, I certainly want to litter less. Hell, I want to go outside less. (Don't bother calling that number at the end. It's now a fax machine listed to Broadway Hair or Island Video)."

The advertisement opens with the establishing long shot of Manhattan's buildings by the river glistening in the sun as a barge meanders by on the river. The frame is postcard-like, nostalgically familiar as we are instantly transported to the towering Manhattan seen represented in the sweeping location shots of Allen's love letter to the city *Manhattan* (1979), the Times Square montage of Pressman's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze* (1991) or the dazzling downtown scenes in De Palma's *Bonfire of the Vanities* (1990). Yet something is not quite right as ominous strings and a constant, hollow tone aurally overlay the image. The long shot dissolves into a tighter shot of buildings as we creep visually closer to this densely populated metropolis, the Chrysler Tower shimmering in the centre of the frame. In this opening sequence of moving from long to mid-shot, Lynch establishes the urban assemblage as striated space, sedentary, unmoving and sinister. The sapping of life and motion is augmented through the

use of black and white photography, conjuring the same kind of flatness seen throughout the surrealist classic *Eraserhead* (1977) where it was also used to empty the urban wasteland in which the protagonist Henry confronts psychological breakdown after the unwanted birth of a deformed child to a woman who leaves him, leading him to commit infanticide. The dreary streets, repeated referencing of machinery (the machinic assemblage) and the claustrophobic interior spaces of Henry's apartment might seemingly fit in this looming, threatening urban terrain shown in the opening sequence of the advertisement.

The shot of the New York skyline dissolves to a close scene of everyday pedestrians wandering the streets, their backs largely turned to the camera in a gesture of anonymity. They are the masses, the meandering, faceless masses who inhabit the confines of striated space. Centre frame, one particularly large back fills the screen—bald head, a grey suit and a wide back depict the "average New York guy". He turns around, his plain face becoming visible to the viewer as he surveys the teeming masses around him as though to check that he is not under surveillance. A cut to a close-up of his hand reveals that his surreptitious glance around the crowd is to mask the act of littering as we go to a close-up shot of a hand releasing a piece of wrapping paper and we watch it, a lone piece of garbage as it bounces centre frame onto the bitumen street. The ominous strings and hollow, wind-like tone penetrate the scene. The litter is at once complicit in an act of civic dissent and disregard but also freed and curiously reanimated as an aesthetic object as it comes to rest. This focus on the detail of the object as both aesthetic object and symbol of everyday mediocrity and constraint is echoed in the plastic bag sequence in Mendes' *American Beauty* (1999) where Wes Bentley's character Ricky films the bouncing bag as it is tousled by the wind. In both cases, this extraction of the aesthetic through the mundane offers a moment of respite in the otherwise repressive terrain of the narrative. The camera cuts back to the man in the suit as he casts another glance around the crowd as though to ensure that no one has witnessed his illicit act.

The camera then dissolves to a mid-shot scene of rats spilling forth from a drain box. Framed by a pale wall and dark grate, the rats teem

around their makeshift nest. Lights flicker as though to punctuate the presence of the rats in a similar cinematic strategy as the flickering lights through *Eraserhead* to depict the moment of threat or crisis or spectacle in the case of *The Elephant Man* (1980). Once again, we see the use of bright light as part of the Lynchian assemblage as a strategy for emphasis, lending another element of intensity. Almost unconsciously, the sound becomes a little more urgent, the strings a little more strident, as the villains of the narrative are revealed in their filthy, subterranean lair. The camera cuts back to a mother and child, a seemingly idyllic scene, enjoying an ice-cream in Central Park, the Plaza Hotel framed in the background. Middle-class, privileged and enjoying the beauty of the natural environment, the little girl's expression is one of joy as her mother hands her the coveted ice-cream. From the darkness of the rats' nest, we are liberated by the natural light of the outdoors, the scene filling with a sense of optimism only to then have it revealed that this seemingly lovely girl and her caring mother are also complicit in the destructive act of littering that risks bringing with it the ominous threat of rats. The camera cuts to another close-up of the crisp white litter blowing along the bitumen and, again, the tension between the ominous, slightly intensified music, the idyllic family revealed to be litterers and the omnipresence of the rats intensifies. This tension between superficial beauty or idealism and troubled underworlds is a constant theme throughout the Lynchian assemblage. The oft-cited opening sequence of *Blue Velvet* (1986) where the colour-saturated aesthetics of the perfect all-American town give way to extreme close-up of teeming insects gnawing on a dismembered human ear or the entire narrative thrust of *Twin Peaks* (1990–91), where the picturesque town becomes the scene of sordid violence and dark family secrets, exemplify an ongoing preoccupation between surfaces and depths. In this advertisement, surfaces are represented through the spectacle of the city assemblage while the sordid, sinister rats reside at the true depth of the city. Yet the characters share in this sordidness, their seeming civility masking destructive acts and emboldening of the evil that lurks beneath. While the rats may be the symbol of plague, filth and aggression, the human actor enables them through recklessness and selfishness.

As though to consolidate this tension between the surface of the city and the evil that dwells beneath, the camera cuts to an extreme-close-up montage of rat body parts, interpolated with shots of pieces of litter. Sharp teeth, long lashing tails and clutching, almost human, claws fill the screen as the intensity of the music escalates. As the music crescendos, the discordant tones ever more strident, the extreme close-up body parts of the rats echo the intensity and fervour of the insect sequence from *Blue Velvet* (1986). Still, in montage, the camera cuts to a classic NYC taxi as litter flies from its window, a suited man on the street throws his litter away, bikies and their gang throw bottles while partying under a bridge, a plastic cup of coffee hits a city grate and food is thrown into a drain. Littering is everywhere, enacted by everyone, regardless of race, gender, class or location. Everyone is complicit in bringing forth the horror of disease, chaos and fear. Each frame is a composition, oscillating between everyday scenes and evocative close-ups (such as the discarded coffee cup) yet, despite their aesthetic sensibility, the montage is increasingly frenzied as though a world is getting out of control. Yet all of these people, in their myopic, apathetic state, cannot see the threat that swells in their midst, again re-capturing the intensity of unconscious threat that emerges through the larger Lynchian oeuvre. These are people ensnared in striated space where, despite the whirlwind of Manhattan life where the masses fill every corner, the oppression of thoughtlessness characterises the entire assemblage. In this advertisement, striated space forms the key intensity of the assemblage. The camera returns to an extreme close-up of a rat's teeth, its whiskers radiating out as the light bounces off them. The music reaches climax point, a cacophony of discordant notes, sounds and chords as the scene swells with terror, the imminent threat of the rat ever closer. As though to further accentuate the juxtaposition between surface and depth, the camera cuts back to the original long shot found in the opening sequence before superimposing an image of teeming, seemingly multiplying scores of rats, weaving and crawling over each other onto the postcard image of the city. A final shot of the slogan "Clean Up. We Care About New York" is shown.

Martin Scorsese—American Express Tribeca Film Festival (2004)

Before advancing some observations about the nature of the assemblage established in Lynch's littering advertisement, it is perhaps useful to shift to another representation of a spatial assemblage using New York City as its point of departure. If Lynch's New York is a striated space, inflected with thoughtless, sedentary masses, festering rats and imminent demise, then Scorsese's New York is a smooth space, depicting lines of flight, voyages of becoming and thought in motion. Once an analysis of Scorsese's work has been offered, we can then assess the significance of space in the composition of the assemblage. Perhaps one of the most recognised and awarded modern film directors, Martin Scorsese's filmography is extensive. Reaching back as far as 1967, Scorsese's credits include *Who's That Knocking at My Door* (1967), *Boxcar Bertha* (1972), *Mean Streets* (1973), *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974), *Taxi Driver* (1976), *New York*, *New York* (1977), *Raging Bull* (1980), *The King of Comedy* (1982), *After Hours* (1985), *The Color of Money* (1986), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), *Goodfellas* (1990), *Cape Fear* (1991), *The Age of Innocence* (1993), *Casino* (1995), *Kundun* (1997), *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999), *Gangs of New York* (2002), *The Aviator* (2004), *The Departed* (2006), *Shutter Island* (2010), *Hugo* (2011), *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) and *Silence* (2016). He has also played the role of producer in a vast number of productions and has made a significant number of documentaries and short films. As perhaps one of the most prolific and influential directors in film history, Scorsese's work has been recognised with every award imaginable leading to twenty Academy Awards, eleven Golden Globes and twenty-three BAFTAs.

Scorsese's sixty-second advertisement for American Express and the Tribeca Film Festival was distributed on television and internet. In stark contrast with the city of foreboding depicted in Lynch's New York piece, Scorsese's advertisement opens with the phrase "A Love Letter to a City". This is not the city of rats, irresponsible citizens and impeding chaos. This is a smooth space filled with love, life and emotional connection. Shot in partial black and white, sepia and colour,

the sixty-second montage captures the life, diversity and history of New York City as seen through the eyes of the advertisement's narrator Robert De Niro. As the advertisement starts, the viewer captures a quick glimpse of film reel as though to introduce the piece as a film, not an advertisement, before quickly jumping to the screen that reads "A Love Letter to a City". The camera then cuts to a long shot of Manhattan, superimposed with a close-up of Robert De Niro. A gentle, slightly haunting orchestral soundtrack accompanies the image and remains a persistent presence throughout the entire sixty seconds. As one frame dissolves into the next, moving from a reflection of a water tank in a puddle, a close-up of an old man working on a shoe that fills the foreground of the screen before cutting to an extreme close-up of his spectacles as he labours at his craft, the voices of heavily accented immigrants describe where they came from, chattering over one another to have their stories heard. This is a New York of smooth space where lines of flight bring people from everywhere to this great city. Opportunities to pursue one's craft, do an honest day's work and realise a new life are essentialised in this opening sequence, giving visual resonance to New York's history as a city of immigration and refuge, the great Melting Pot.

The montage continues to depict vignettes of everyday life. We watch a figure in black and white move down a dark hall towards the door of their apartment building before cutting to a close-up portrait of an old Chinese gentleman filmed in colour as he stares back at us from the street. The camera then cuts to a black and white frame of two Hasidic Jewish men chatting on a stoop of an old New York brownstone. This is history, life, movement and diversity in an ever-evolving, always dynamic New York. The photograph-like montage, moving and weaving between the many actors that compose the rich history of the city is represented. The waves of immigration, from Italian to Chinese to Jewish (all of which constituted significant groups in the history of New York's development) fill the screen in a visual narrative of beauty and struggle. The camera then cuts to a long panning shot of New York itself, the Brooklyn Bridge sweeping across the screen in black and white. While the shot is similar to the establishing shots used in Lynch's advertisement, its intensity and its purpose in the context of this smooth space assemblage has quite different affective qualities. As the camera tracks up

the river, De Niro's voice can be heard saying "my oldest friend". This is the first time we hear De Niro speak in a gesture of affection. The camera returns to a close-up of small, slippered feet taking tentative steps before the long shot reveals a middle-aged couple enjoying an intimate moment of dance in their kitchen seen through the aperture of their apartment door, framed by an otherwise black screen. A subsequent close-up reveals the joy in the face of the man dancing. Moving from the sweeping vista of the city to this close, intimate scene of joy between people intensifies, not only the depiction of New York as a dynamic city in which real people live their lives, but the intensity of the assemblage as grounded in smooth space where multiple lives in motion; fast and slow, public and private, sweeping and intimate all collide. Lines of flight move in every direction as Jewish men chatter, old men fix shoes and a couple has a little moment of dance in their kitchen.

The camera cuts to a black and white street scene, superimposed by a cascading rooftop, with De Niro walking towards us as he utters "my first love" before cutting to colour images of two old maps of Manhattan, showing the different neighbourhoods in different tones. New York is a city of history with a heritage of diversity. As though to animate the different zones of the map, the camera cuts back to a classic Manhattan building captured in sepia before moving to a street scene, a shop front framed by the camera with its owner shown as a small figure at the left of screen. De Niro's voice contextualises the sepia images of the building and shop as he locates "my east" (East Side). The camera moves to the shopfront of Albanese Meat and Poultry and an extreme close-up of hands cutting meat before moving to vivid colour long shot of China Town as De Niro declares "my far east". Again, we are returned to a city of diverse heritage, various lines of flight, history, colour and wonder. A Chinese vendor tends his street stall and a close-up of Chinese culinary delicacies capture the energy of the street as we hear the bustling noise of the crowds over the orchestral track. The movement between the black and white intimacy of the couple dancing through to the sepia tones used in the Albanese Meat and Poultry and the vivid colour of the China Town feel like a progressive coming to life, moving through a spectrum of colour saturation while moving from the deeply private to very public life of the streets.

The camera then skips as though to the interior of a car as it moves past two police officers on horseback coloured in sepia. De Niro's voice-over creates a context for the scene, saying 'my west side' as we stay with the moving vehicle watching old buildings go by in black and white. A shot of firefighters, framed by an arch tinted red with the words 'hook and ladder' perched above, sees a bike fly past in a gesture of flight before the camera moves on to a black and white street scene, returning to the kind of everyday intimacy found elsewhere in the advertisement. De Niro mutters "my private side" as several close-ups of artworks are then shown. The West Side part of the montage is significant in that it intensifies the sense of motion, picking up slight speed as images appear more rapidly and with more frequent use of colour. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, smooth space is characterised by multiple shifts, speeds and experiences, pauses and variances, delays and accelerations. Scorsese's montage epitomises this notion by representing multiple beings in space, becoming in space, moving at variable speeds via diverse lines. The cinematography, with its rapid montage, variances between colour and black and white, roaming eye and its temporal sensibility, as it seeks to depict the heritage of the city, elaborate the very intensities that constitute a smooth space assemblage.

The camera then moves to a de-centred close-up of De Niro before dissolving into an aerial shot of the site of Twin Towers, his voice-over mourning "my heartbreak". The camera moves to a black and white image of a woman gazing out over the decimated site from behind a grill door before offering a fleeting, de-centred image of a police officer patrolling on a train. This rapid passage obviously speaks to one of the most significant events in New York's history, gesturing not only to the shock and trauma experienced by New Yorkers but to the first responders whose own story of bravery and loss has become part of the city's historical narrative. This brief image of the officer on the train captures, in an instant, that entire legacy of bravery and reminds the viewer of their ongoing, everyday commitment to the city. In a rapid shift, a black and white close-up of the Tribeca Film Festival billboard is shown as De Niro utters "my heartbeat" and the scene cuts to the energy and fun of the festival as a crowd of people in the street as shown with a Film Festival blow-up cube. Then, as lines of flight speed up, slow down

and the camera's eye continues to range across the city, we are returned to everyday images of people playing basketball, a close-up of a child expressing pleasure, a little old lady smiling towards the camera as she works in her workshop before settling on Robert De Niro walking towards us once again. He says "my life happens here. My card is American Express" as the camera cuts to an aerial shot of the city and the final frames read "see what's playing next. Tribeca Film Festival".

Like his subsequent two-minute short film (and its accompanying "the making of" film) for Dolce and Gabbana entitled *The One* (2013) featuring Scarlett Johansson and Matthew McConaughey, Scorsese depicts smooth space as his protagonists roam freely around the streetscapes of Manhattan. Both advertisements feature tracking shots of the city's architecture, long shots of significant monuments such as the Empire State Building and personalise the narrative by channelling it through the eyes of a celebrity protagonist with use of close-up. Stylistically, the use of black and white lends a photographic quality to both advertisements, at once freezing and framing space as part of a voyage of thought. Deleuze and Guattari (1980) use the metaphor of Henry Miller walking the streets of Brooklyn (like that of De Niro), drawing inspiration from, and engaging with the ever-evolving dynamics of the city. In this respect, the spatial assemblage draws its energy from smooth space, a form of space with a long literary and philosophy trajectory. With the rise of the nineteenth-century Parisian arcades, Benjamin (2002) foregrounded the notion of smooth space through his analogy of the arcade as an experiential miniature of the vast terrain of Paris, reducing and framing in such a way to enable the viewer to roam across it. In an era of bourgeois realism where distinctions between private and public were otherwise regarded as discrete, the arcades enabled the viewer to create their own voyage of thought within Paris. Baudelaire's (1964 [1863]) flâneur (a figure akin to Deleuze's nomad) emerged as the main protagonist at the centre of this experience, navigating, consuming and ultimately voyaging the public streets (Gluck 2005; Tester 1994). In a comment that evokes our own commentary on Scorsese's depictions of New York, Fournel (1867) comments that the flâneur visually consumed a "moving photograph", pointing to the personalisation through framed miniaturisation of the public sphere and

the importance of the image (like advertising) as the connective tissue between the world and the personal experience.

A comparison between Lynch and Scorsese shows two radically different assemblages based on two different conceptions of space. Despite their shared use of stylistic elements such as black and white photography, long shots of the city's streets and buildings and use of monuments, the two assemblages evoke two very different sets of intensities and express vastly disparate capacities. While Lynch depicts striated space with its tensions and constraints, Scorsese depicts smooth space, the space of the nomad or *flâneur*. For Lynch, this urban space is a space of fear, the affective quality (Deleuze 2013a [1985]) of the piece is based in a fear of the city's unknown, a psychological unrest in knowing that rats loiter below and the disquiet that irresponsible litter management will bring. Black and white depict bleakness in a tension with the sweeping aesthetic frames of the larger cityscape. Yet, on the ground, in the streets, striated space is populated, dirty and teeming with the threat. On the one hand, Lynch's depiction of the city is highly territorialised; the city is bounded with its surface and subterranean realms where the sense of a rat nest within a human nest lends a sense of stagnancy and decay. It seems like the city is inescapable, difficult to move in and the human rat race on the surface mirrors the rat's nest below. On the other hand, in order to achieve this milieu of striation, stagnancy and decay, Lynch leverages multiple intensities drawn from his larger opus and from other cultural reference points to create a climate of uncontrollability, of ensuing instability. Thus, the piece itself is highly deterritorialised, located within an aesthetic trajectory starting with *Eraserhead* (1977) where the urban striated space with its drains, gutters and machines but also its buildings and claustrophobic bleakness (shown once again in black and white) and moving through to more recent works such as *Inland Empire* (2006) where, again, a sense of striated space, oppressive urban scapes and a paralysing protagonist's experience of seemingly endless wanderings play out. These psychological oppressions, bleaknesses and threats are the very essence of the New York assemblage and situate the piece within a larger depiction of these intensities—simultaneously territorialising within the singular

assemblage but also deterritorialising its intensities. The figure of the rat itself is also a deterritorialised motif, drawing its metaphorical power as a symbol of threat from an established literary history. Browning's poem *The Pied Piper of Hamlyn* (1842) based on a Lower Saxony story from 1300 AD, Camus' *La Peste* (1947), Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty Four* (1949) and James Herbert's *The Rats* (1974) exemplify the historical use of rat as symbol for evil, threat, disease and poverty. The intensity of the rat motif in Lynch's piece, with their lashing tails, fierce teeth and clutching claws, is resonant precisely because of this pre-ordained cultural heritage of rats as harbingers of terror, evil and destruction. Thus, while the advertisements as a spatial assemblage is bounded, its narrative and symbolic forces are not. Spilling through these sixty seconds of black and white striated space are the complex historicised intensities of plague, death, evil and loss.

In contrast, Scorsese's black and white photographic sensibility with its stretching depictions of life, motion, swiftnesses and slownesses, interior and exterior worlds liberate the Manhattan images from the oppression of Lynch's vision. Unlike Lynch's world of surfaces and netherworlds, the smooth space of Scorsese's assemblage is comprised of the social and intimate, public and private, teeming not with uncivil masses and lingering evil but with life, diversity and energy. Lines of flight abound, punctuated by the occasional use of colour and sepia, as the history, culture and life of Manhattan are revealed. Equally, the black and white used to such flattening effect in Lynch's work lend a photographic quality to the Scorsese montage, the contrasting light oscillating between the detail of the interior and the soaring terrain of the exterior. In a styling reminiscent of the photos of Henri Cartier-Bresson's cityscapes and portraiture, Scorsese's montage assemblage draws upon the heritage of the *cinéma vérité* sensibility (upon which Cartier-Bresson's work was seen as influential) invented by Rouch (Bruni 2002) and inspired by Vertov's work. As Dawson (2003) points out:

> Just as some feature films—*Bullitt* (Peter Yates, 1968), or *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958), say, with San Francisco, or almost any film set in Paris—capture a particular and enduring sense of a city, so many early

> documentary filmmakers felt that the modern city itself was the only proper subject of their cameras. Through this avant-garde genre of the 'city-film', which included films as diverse as Alberto Cavalcanti's *Rien que les Heures* (1926), Walter Ruttman's *Berlin* (1927) and several of the later Crown Film Unit productions, it is now possible to see Dziga Vertov's work as the most innovative and excitingly free with the new medium of them all. Certainly *Man with a Movie Camera*, made up as it is of 'bits and pieces' of cities from Moscow to the Ukraine, remains a perfect distillation of the sense of a modern city life that looks fresh and true still. (2003)

Intrinsic to the *cinéma vérité* sensibility, and to Scorsese's own depiction of the city, is a sense of the everyday embedded within the context of the city. Just as Lynch mobilises the philosophical and literary trajectory of the rat motif as it appears in Western history, Scorsese's depiction of the bustling metropolis, with its waves of immigration, experiences and tragedies, draws upon specific cinematic conventions for its aesthetic. The assemblage itself encapsulates the modern history of Manhattan as a haven, a melting pot and a place of refuge. Kolker (2011) illuminates this spatial intensity throughout other Scorsese films, suggesting that

> In all the films set in New York, the street imagery, no matter how colored by the characters' perspective, alludes to a material presence, a factual existence. His actors (particularly Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, and Joe Pesci) create their characters with an off-handedness, immediacy, and unpredictable violence that give the impression of unpremeditated existence (as opposed to the carefully studied character making obvious in the way Kubrick, Stone, and Fincher direct their players). When these qualities are interwoven with the subjective impressions of the world that are communicated by the ways the characters see their environment and themselves, and when Scorsese modifies location shooting with artificial sets, stylized lighting, and slow-motion cinematography, a self-contradictory perceptual structure is created. "Realism" and expressionism—Scorsese's "shadow play"—work against each other, creating a strong perceptual tension that can be felt throughout his work. (2011, 163)

The presence of New York, against which the interior dramas of such characters as Travis Bickle (*Taxi Driver,* 1976), Rupert Pupkin (*King of Comedy*, 1982) and Henry Hill (*Goodfellas*, 1990) play out, returns in this piece as a backdrop for similarly interior depictions, collective experiences and personal narratives set within the stylistic approach of montage. It perhaps comes as no surprise that the majority of Scorsese's New York films also feature Robert De Niro whose presence in the Tribeca advertisement lends a further cohesion and intensity to the piece. De Niro, as Hollywood icon, native New Yorker and Scorsese collaborator, demarcates the advertisement as a "film" rather than an advertisement, a narrative rather than a spectacle and an authentic portrait told through the eyes of a credible local. His presence also connects the advertisement to the larger Scorsese *oeuvre* when it becomes possible to locate this piece of advertising within a filmic trajectory that draw on the intensities of previous Scorsese/De Niro work.

Thus, across the two advertisements analysed here, we can begin to appreciate how, despite the same subject matter (NYC), similar aesthetic techniques and attention to narrative, the arrangement of these intensities render two distinct spatial assemblages that capture radically different perceptions of space itself. Both pieces draw from the intensities of the directors' previous works, thereby locating them within a larger aesthetic and filmic trajectory and both generate and expression their own specific intensities and capacities. To this end, they are both, at once, territorialised as specific assemblages in their own right, but also deterritorialised to the extent that they draw intensities from their directors' larger aesthetic vision, the cultural symbolisms to which they allude and the historical context out of which their narratives emerge. These advertisements are representations of time and space, imagined and conveyed through the specific aesthetic lenses of their directors. To this end, it is reasonable to suggest that seemingly simple advertisements transcend a pure spectacle function to embody intensities and capacities typically reserved for film. Time, space and representation have long been the purview of film studies yet advertising is open to similar lines of inquiry, locating it once again in the fissure between media genres and positioning it as hybrid being.

The Temporal Assemblage

Much has been written on Deleuze's concept of the time-image (Ashton 2008; Brown 2013; Crockett 2005; Marty 2016; Pisters 2012; Rodowick 2010; Sinnerbrink 2008) as scholars have sought to understand the relationship between time and the cinematic image although some continue to misread the text as a piece of film theory rather than as philosophy. Deleuze borrows much of his lexicon and conceptual ground from Bergson, whose own work on time rested upon the seminal notion of *la durée* or duration defined as "intervention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new" (Bergson 1911, 14). In his review of Ansell-Pearson's critique of Bergson, Smith (2002) describes how

> what the young Deleuze found in Bergson… was a philosopher who, while developing his own concepts of duration, memory, and the *élan vital*, had at the same time formulated rigorous conceptions of "difference," "virtuality," and "multiplicity." It is these latter concepts that Deleuze himself would take up and develop in these early writings in a highly original manner, leading up to their full formulation in Deleuze's most significant work, *Difference and Repetition* (1968).

Durée offers a conceptualisation of time that diverges from notions of time as linear or constructed through a "chronological succession of instants in consciousness, as an irreversible and linear progression of psychological states" (Al-Saji 2004, 204). Instead, time is conceived in non-chronological terms where past and present exist in a co-extensive relationship.

In contrast with his notion of the sensory-motor-based movement-image described in *Cinema I*, Deleuze proposes that in the post-war era, cinema's capacity for complex thought representation intensified. Emerging out of such European movements as Italian neo-realism (as opposed for the linear form of classical Hollywood), cinema sought to represent states of mind and being in the wake of traumatic war experiences. Endemic to this representation of being was the subordination of the movement-image and its emphasis on narrative

based action to that of time-image of the evocation of thought. Out of this shift came a cinematic contemplation of elements such as representation of recollection, memory and temporal movements captured through techniques such as flashback and montage. Central to the concept of the time-image are the figures of the actual image and virtual image brought together in the crystal image. The actual image references the image seen in the "present" while the virtual image in the "past" is that which is recalled or referenced in memory through the actual image. They are brought together through the crystal—a metaphor that captures the multifaceted refraction of different memories, recollections and images brought to mind through imagery. The interaction of the actual and virtual image through the crystal image, then, complicates linear notions of time

> What is actual is always a present. But then, precisely, the present changes or passes. We can always say that it becomes past when it no longer is, when a new present replaces it. But this is meaningless. It is clearly necessary for it to pass on for the new present to arrive, and it is clearly necessary for it to pass at the same time it is present, at the moment that is the present. Thus the image has to be present and past, still present and already past, at once and at the same time. If it was not already past at the same time as present, the present would never pass on. The past does not follow the present that it is no longer. It coexists with the present as it was. The present is the actual image, and *its* contemporaneous past in is the virtual image, the image in a mirror. (Deleuze 2013b, p. 82)

Thus, the actual image is always haunted by the virtual image called up through recollection and memory. Consistent with Bergson's evocative metaphor of sheets of past, the virtual image, an image based in the past *in general*, is called out of these sheets of past and given form through pure recollection via the actual image. The actual image, as an image of the present, is thereby always accompanied, and made animate, by the virtual image whose animation of the actual image renders its equally present. While the virtual image resides in the sheets of the past, it is never truly past; it is always that corollary of the actual.

While much more can be said on how Deleuze unpacks this essential idea, two elements of the time-image are significant here. First, it is important to understand how this idea of parallel pasts and presents, conjured through pure recollection, impacts upon the kind of assemblage thinking presented in *Mille Plateaux*. Relatively little attention has been given to how Deleuze's work in *Cinema II* articulates into the larger agenda presented through assemblage. Second, it is worth giving some attention to how the time-image is manifested in cinema itself, i.e. what techniques and strategies are used to achieve the time-image as this takes us towards understanding the strategies at work in the advertising temporal assemblage discussed here. In the first instance though, it is important to trace how the time-image might operate within the context of assemblage. If the time-image is one that oscillates between the actual and virtual, mental and physical time, questions of memory and recollection and is sometimes demarcated by incommensurable spatial and temporal links between shots (Rodowick 1997), then this would seem to mirror Deleuze and Guattari's inherent proposition that assemblages hold together within a process of dynamic, evolutionary flux. Drawing upon different components with varying capacities and intensities, assemblages essentially rally these capacities and intensities in an ongoing expressive and functional iteration of the assemblage itself. Deleuze's actual and virtual images, and the sheets of past upon which they both rely for their expressive capacities, would seem to be elevated within assemblage to core intensities that can be deterritorialised (or reterritorialised) accordingly. Indeed, we might suggest that the actual image is deterritorialised by the virtual image only for the two to work together to reterritorialise the image back into the cinematic work. Further, we might also suggest that the relationship between the actual and virtual image, between duration and dynamics, mirrors the very essence of assemblage

> We can conceive of an abstract time that is equal for haecceities and for subjects and things… Even when times are abstractly equal, the individuation of a life is not the same as an individuation of the subject that leads it or serves it as its support. It is not the same plane: in the first case, it is

> the plane of consistency or of composition of haecceities, which knows only speeds or affects; and in the second case, it is altogether the plane of forms, substances and subjects. And it is not in the same time, the same temporality. *Aeon*: the indefinite time of the event, the floating line that knows only speeds and continually divides that which transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-here, a simultaneous too-late and too-early, a something that is both going to happen and has just happened. *Chronos*: the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980], p. 305)

Here, time is presented as running along two trajectories; that of duration (Aeon) and that of demarcation (Chronos). Haecceities can be understood as events but, as Adkins (2015) points out, "events do not have a specific duration. Events are not divisible. Events concern the continuous, whereas Chronos concerns divisible (and thus measurable) discontinuous time…Events are the indefinite becoming of a haecceity. This becoming is expressed in the infinitive…Becoming is infinitive precisely because it is boundless, unstratified, deterritorialized" (p. 155). This is significant in that the spirit of Aeon speaks to the sheets of past drawn from Bergson and manifested in the virtual image. The speeds and affects attributable to the haecceities that float in Aeon mirror the past out of which certain affective memories or recollections (intensities) emerge. Likewise, Chronos aligns with the actual image to the extent that the actual image punctuates, arrests a moment or demarcates a point to which the fluidity of the virtual becomes anchored. Just as Chronos gives form to Aeon, the actual gives form to the virtual. Both flow along continuums of duration, sweeping their dynamic affects and intensities along in evolving processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Deleuze (2013b) concludes of Bergson, in *Cinema II* and follows the thought in his own thesis, that "the only subjectivity is time, non-chronological time grasped in its foundation, and it is we who are internal to time, not the other way around" (p. 85). The later elaboration of Chronos and Aeos in *Mille Plateaux* mirrors this essential insight and, through the haecceity, argues for its generative potential in the assemblage.

The second element of the time-image that impacts on our discussion here is how the time-image is constructed in cinema. In contrast with, for instance, continuity editing which is intended to maintain a sense of time *in perpetua*, Deleuze argues for techniques such as flashback, ruptured montage and irrational cuts as signs of the virtual intervention on the actual image. Equally, in his discussion of *Citizen Kane* (dir. Welles, 1941), Deleuze (2013b) argues that the use of depth of field and sequence shots act as "functions of remembering" and as a "figure of temporalization" that "gives rise to all kinds of adventures in memory, which are not so much psychological accidents as misadventures of time" (p. 110). Thus, cinematic technique itself proposes a way of seeing time through a range of stylistic and aesthetic strategies that unify the actual and virtual. To this end, Deleuze speaks of cinema as a kind of brain through which elements of past, present and future are refracted and made sense of. Mirroring this ethos, Aumont (1993 [1990]) makes the point that "the cinematic apparatus implies not only the passage of time, a chronology into which we would slip as if in a perpetual present, but also a complex, stratified time in which we move through different levels simultaneously, present, past(s), futures(s)…" (p. 129). As Aumont points out, this movement between past, present, future (or Aeos) is made possible through the specific techniques and logic inherent to cinema. Thus, the temporal assemblage underpins Deleuze's time-image and re-emerges in *Mille Plateaux* in a broader contemplation of time. Such as philosophy of time, played out in the cinematic context, also comes to impact on media forms more generally including that of advertising. While Deleuze argued for cinema as a kind of brain for apprehending time, a similar process of occurs in the work discussed here.

In order to access the temporal assemblage, two contrasting works by Jean-Pierre Jeunet are considered. The first is his advertisement for Lavazza Coffee entitled *There's Always More to Taste* (2015) and the second is his 2016 piece, *The Time Machine*, for Milka Chocolate. Jean-Pierre Jeunet's relatively short filmography has nonetheless been deeply influential for its distinctive styling. His films *Delicatessen* (1991), *The City of Lost Children* (1995), *Alien: Resurrection* (1997), *Amélie* (2001), *A Very Long Engagement* (2004), *Micmacs à tire-larigot* (2009) and *The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet* (2013) all share his quirky sensibility and his remarkable attention to visual styling.

Jean-Pierre Jeunet—There's Always More to Taste (2015)

There's always more to taste (2015 Y&R Italia) is sixty second (online), and thirty second (TV), advertisement for Italian company Lavazza Coffee with an accompanying sixty-second interview with the director and a sixty second "making of" montage released by Lavazza online. Created as a true trans-platform campaign with its accompanying online back content, the Lavazza strategy culminates in a powerful hybrid media artefact.

The advertisement captures the signature style of film-making for which Jeunet has become famous. His work has often been likened to the *cinéma du look*, a style made popular by Luc Besson (*Le Grand Bleu* 1988 and *Nikita* 1990) and Jean-Jacques Beineix (*Diva* 1981), that is

> characterised by the image over the narrative; a spectacular visual style which manifests itself through a highly stylised *mis-en-scène* (elaborate framing as well as a preoccupation with colour and décor); a cinephile tendency to reference and recycle from other films; and a focus on youthful protagonists who are often marginal or romantic figures. (Higbee 2006, p. 54)

The scene opens with a family on a villa balcony, the city of Rome stretched out below them. The cinematography is sharp, almost fantastical, as the mid-shot is composed of a romantic balcony with perfectly formed oleander, soft blue and grey skies and the muted tones of the city with the Colosseum peeping out in the distance. The framing of the city is reminiscent of the romantic Parisian cityscapes found in *Amélie* (2001) for which Jeunet came under criticism as the digital depiction was viewed as unrealistic and sanitised (Kaganaski 2001) in a year that saw other films such as *Vidoqc* (dir. Pilof 2001) and *Le Petit Poucet* (dir. Dahan 2001) digitise the streets of Paris. In *Vidoqc*, as in *Amélie*, "digital camera employed rendered saturated images, high in contrast and intense in color, and allowed enormous depth of field. The images are so worked over in post-production that the film is sometimes difficult to watch, as one is overwhelmed by a multitude of rich visual elements" (Austin 2004, p. 282). Yet, both the images of Rome and Paris frame a deeper connection with time, nostalgia and a sense of a lost past as

though acknowledging that the "perfect city" can only be a figment of imagination and magic. As Jeunet himself acknowledged in a 2001 interview about *Amélie* with *Indiewire*

> I needed an explosion of colors, something very bright and happy. It worked with the story. And that's the reason I wanted to make a fake Paris, a very nice Paris, like in my head when I was twenty and I arrived in Paris for the first time. I wanted to avoid the bad things: traffic jams, dog shit on the street, the rain. I wanted to make a film like this: a fake Paris, a Paris of dreams. And we did a lot of work for it, even in [post-production]. We changed the sky when it was white. I hate white skies, and we changed it. I prefer clouds. When it's blue, it's pretty cool, like in L.A. every day. But I prefer clouds. (Meyer November 2001)

Jeunet's emphasis on the dream quality of cities is captured in the visual effects of his work. The vivid resolution of the scene in the Lavazza piece mirrors the styling of much of Jeunet's work, with an emphasis on specific colour palettes, sharp cinematic detail, high resolution and a frame packed with minute elements. The three figures on the balcony complete the shot as the narrator, in his sharp, creamy suit, grasps his espresso and begins his story. The playful orchestral soundtrack heralds his narrative as the sounds of violins accompany the tale of Luigi Lavazza and his search for the perfect coffee bean back in 1890. As the narrator tells his audience (and us) "this is more than a cup of coffee. This is a tale of passion", the camera cuts to a classical Italian villa, set in the background as laundry flaps in the breeze in foreground. In a cinematographic styling seen in Jeunet's *A Very Long Engagement* (2004), the tonality of the scene is sepia as the villa, the sky and the surrounding landscape appear merged. The sepia tone speaks to the intensity of heritage, agedness, as the motion of the crisp white laundry contrasts against the grounded, historical villa. As though taken from a painting, the villa appears almost false, again captured in sharp cinematic detail and framed by the foliage and the laundry. Here we see Jeunet's preoccupation with the manipulation of colour at work. Using techniques similar to the digital intermediate approach taken in *Amélie* (2001) and refined in other films such as *Pleasantville* (dir. Ross 1998) *Sorted* (dir. Jovey 2000), *O'Brother Where Art Thou* (dir. Coen Brothers 2000) and

Spider-Man (dir. Raimi 2004—the first digital intermediate done on 4K), Jeunet's work is frequently underlined by digital manipulation of colour to create specific story worlds and moods. In the instance of the Lavazza scene, the sepia tones suggest not only the beginning of the narrative but also a voyage through a fantastical, nostalgic world. Rapidly, cutting to a panning shot of Luigi Lavazza and his father atop the villa's turret, the camera reveals the majesty of the Italian countryside as the play of light and sepia tones of the landscape seeming stretch forever. The father's arm is raised, pointing to distant lands before the camera again rapidly cuts to a close-up of the father and son embracing. As the son's back is turned to the camera, the father's face is revealed to us.

The camera then cuts to a high-angle frame of Luigi in a dusty workshop, surrounded by bags of beans, preparing for his trip. Again, the sepia tonality is preserved and indeed intensified as the frame takes on a slightly darker quality. The camera then cuts to Luigi's face in close-up and for the first time the adventurous protagonist is exposed as the camera zooms away to follow his gaze to a sack of coffee beans out of which magic dust plumes and a virtual map of Brazil lights up. A fairy-like tinkle of revelation is heard over the persistent sounds of the violins. This is the moment of revelation, the turning point for Luigi Lavazza who must now go to Brazil to find the perfect coffee bean. The moment is also seminal in the narrative as it is the point at which magic is introduced into the narrative. As with most of his films, Jeunet creates the almost surreal quality through rapid zoon, augmenting a sense of time and space. Time, for just a second, speeds up, as though rushing towards a fleeting second of revelation before settling back down into the rhythm of the narrative. These temporal fluxes, created through shifting speeds of the camera recur throughout Jeunet's work. The constant shift in camera speed through *Amélie* (2001), the use of rapid zoom in *City of Lost Children* (1995) and the augmentation of time through editing in *A Very Long Engagement* (2004) are reiterated in the story of Luigi Lavazza as time moves around, speeds and slownesses punctuate the narrative and time itself becomes imbricated in narrative. From the close-up of the top of the coffee sack and its superimposed map of Brazil beckoning to Luigi, the camera cuts to an aerial wide-shot of a dock as masses of people surge around a large ocean-liner.

Using an ultra-wide zoom (as Jeunet often does), the scene is again magical in its remarkable clarity and painting-like quality. The camera cuts to reveal the dock swirling with people in their period costumes. The scene is frantic, exciting, as we watch Luigi charge towards the waiting ocean-liner and, in high-angle slow-motion, leap onto the ocean-liner just as the music reaches a rapid crescendo before resuming its original pace. People on the ship watch in surprise as the cheeky Luigi recovers himself and bows in a comic gesture.

The consistency of the tonality throughout the first part of the advertisement speaks to "Italy", an olde-world, rich land of colour and light that remind us of the golden tones of *Delicatessen* (1991). Once on the ship, the styling changes as the frames take on a steely blue tone. We watch the ship voyaging across the world, beating against choppy, perilous seas. This is a voyage of risk, of sacrifice and adventure. Below deck, we see Luigi among sack of beans, their aroma prompting a magical moment of revelation as shards of colour caused by spilling spices reign down from the deck and time slows. The camera pans around Luigi as he is showered with a similar kind of magical dust' seen earlier in the advertisement. The narrator tells us that Luigi is "seeing things that inspire his imagination" but it is ambiguous whether this references the coffee or the magical moments that Luigi experiences. Again, as the magical dust from the spices showers Luigi, the camera slows, the music lapses and time intervenes to create a moment of magic. As the passage to Brazil ends, the camera cuts to Luigi in the streets of Rio. The frame is light, mirroring the tonality of the advertisement's opening shot. Jeunet returns to his artful use of red seen in *Amélie* (2001) to punctuate the scene as the skirts of local women and the shirts of local men leap out against the light, creamy tones of the rest of the frame. The camera then cuts to a close-up of a beautiful local barmaid, her face filling the frame with a knowing smile as Luigi enters the bar in deep focus. Here, the tonality shifts from sepia tones to reds and greens as though to connect the memory with the exoticism or red and the organic world of greens. The camera cuts to Luigi in shallow focus close-up as the barmaid gestures towards the back of the bar. The camera then cuts to a close-up of rich timber drawers, each marked with an exotic locale as the camera watches Luigi's hand in close-up reach

for the drawer. Then, in aerial shot, the image of a local man sifting the coffee beans leaps above Luigi's head and beans are shown running through hands in another magical moment. Gold dust settles and we see a delighted Luigi enjoy his discovery of the perfect bean. The camera cuts to Luigi back in his Italian office, the sepia tones of the early frames once again demarcate classic Italy. A close-up of different coffee beans, each organised into their little dishes is revealed as the narrator says "he was the magician who created the blend". A high-angle shot zooms in on Luigi as he enjoys his perfect cup of coffee before the camera cuts back to the original scene on the balcony with a close-up of a modern white cup of Lavazza coffee. A hand reaches for the crisp white cup before the camera moves to a mid-shot of the narrator and one of his audience members, the city of Rome once again below them. The music pauses for a long note as the listener inquires of the narrator "but what his father's advice?" The narrator, in close-up, pauses before answering "in life, there is always more to taste" and taking a last, lingering sip of his coffee.

Just as with much of Jeunet's film work, the question of time dominates this entire assemblage. The piece presents the sheets of past of which Bergson speaks, while locating these sheets of past in the present of the narrator's story. The images are somewhat connected but also distinct, moving between different times and places, punctuated by different speeds and temporalities. Time is not continuous or unruptured. Instead, it leaps and shifts, slowing and accelerating, as the story reaches back in time and space. The structure of the advertisement also disrupts the notion of linear time by commencing with the present (a present that is inextricably linked with the virtual image of its past) but then going back into the past in general to extract a narrative. The role of the narrator is arbiter of the virtual image, responsible for the construction of the actual image we experience but also the virtual image that co-exists with it. Past and present track, mirror and extend each other, refracted through the mediating memory of the narrator. The narrator, then, is pure recollection. This begs the question of whose memory or recollection is being revealed? On the one hand, it would seem that the narrator "owns" the memory and story being told. Yet, it is not clear what role he actually has to play and how he has come to be in

possession of these vivid memory-images. In this sense, time is shown as being freed from any one source or anchor point. The past "in general" floats freely for anyone to access. The images of Luigi's voyage, at once actual and virtual, appear through the lens of the narrator's pure recollection (and the ordering effect of the narrative) yet there is also a sense of the images being cut adrift—somewhere "out there" in the collective memory of Lavazza's history. In this sense, Jeunet complicates ideas of memory, recollection and the image, suggesting that while the virtual and actual exist simultaneously, the source of pure recollection is undetermined. This problematisation of the Deleuzian time-image engenders a fascinating philosophical inflection of the nature of time as it is represented in cinema, unshackling it from the typical processes of "remembering".

This de-limiting of time through the unfettered collective narrative is augmented by the magical realist touches that Jeunet frequently brings to his vision. Jameson (1986) was among the first to define magic realism grasped as "a possible alternative to the narrative logic of contemporary post-modernism" and "the poetic transformation of the object world – not so much a fantastic narrative then, as a metamorphosis in perception and things perceived" (p. 301). Jameson's emphasis on a transfigured perception of an enchanted, yet oddly believable, object world speaks directly to the oscillation between the normality and enchantment of Jeunet's own story worlds. As we see in the following discussion of *The Time Machine* (2016) as well, the magical realism that has come to define much of Jeunet's film work spills through to the worlds depicted in his advertising, thereby deterritorialising both the advertisements and films in a gesture towards the creation of an interconnected story world that moves across time, places and memories. Just as the streets of Paris are nostalgicised in *Amélie* (2001), a similar treatment of Rome here gives a sense that the cities are connected in a collective reiteration of time and place lost. Fantastical voyages back in time and memory typify *Amélie* (2001) in the narration of her childhood, *A Very Long Engagement* (2004) in the stylised recollections of happier times past shot through with flashbacks and parallel stories unfolding and *City of Lost Children* (1995), where the theft of childhood memories extracted from children as they sleep through the

presence of strange green fog (not unlike the magical dust that appears to Luigi although the fog of *City of Lost Children* is threatening) all come to pass in the story of Luigi as the many sheets of time that intersect throughout the Jeunet storyworld recur through magic, memory and a sense of *déjà vu*. While we follow the story of Luigi, there is a sense of "having been here before" in the recollections of Amélie, the contemplations of Mathilde (*A Very Long Engagement*) and the dreams of Miette (*The City of Lost Children*). Time is deterritorialised, spilt across cinematic landscapes and memories, reterritorialised only by the intensity of Jeunet's ordering logic.

Before making an additional observation of how Jeunet achieves the temporal assemblage, we should turn our attention to another of his advertisements in which time works quite differently. For Lavazza, time plays catch-up where the time-image is one that works back towards the present narrative as though the virtual and actual move towards one another. As we shall see in *The Time Machine*, the time-image is given an entirely different treatment as the narrative shifts more towards the question of time and the future.

Jean-Pierre Jeunet—The Time Machine (2016)

The Time Machine (2016 Wieden and Kennedy Amsterdam) is a ninety-second online and TV advertisement for the originally Swiss, now American, brand Milka Chocolate owned by Mondelēz International. The advertisement returns to several intensities found throughout Jeunet's work; childhood, memory, fetishised objects and the enchantment of everyday life are all represented in the signature Jeunet style. When asked about the collaboration for Milka, Jeunet himself touched upon some of these intensities, commenting that

> in order to make effective work I need to start with a good story, something that I like, that touches me, that makes me laugh. Something that I can add my own twist and style to in order to make it even better. And this was the case in creating The Time Machine. I have to say the story is perfectly tailored; a Christmas tale rich in atmosphere, a little

> boy with a gift for inventing things, a surreal machine, and emotion. Basically everything I am fond of. Collaborating with Milka and W&K Amsterdam has been a real pleasure, and I think it's palpable through the film. It's actually one of my favourite ads I've ever made.

Like so many Jeunet works, the question of time remains the core intensity for *The Time Machine*—as the title itself signals. The piece itself shadows many of the aesthetic and thematic intensities of *The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet* (2013) with its preoccupation with childhood (also found in *The City of Lost Children* and *Amélie*) and the "stuff" of youth that fascinates and intrigues. In an interview with Indiewire, Jeunet spoke of how "a lot of people lose the spirit of childhood. Every child has a lot of imagination and you lose it little by little. I don't know why, but I kept it" (November 2001). *The Time Machine* revisits this sense of wonder and imagination, extending both the philosophical and stylistic Jeunet assemblage and its underpinning reliance upon the intensity of temporality to guide it.

The establishing shot opens with a picturesque wide-shot of a Swiss mountain village with idyllic snow-capped mountains, charming chalets and a milk cow right of frame in a doff to Milka's Swiss heritage. The precise clarity of the scene with its blue muted tones and slightly fantastical cinematic quality re-captures the nostalgic "real but not quite real" of Jeunet's digital Rome and Paris. The sounds of cowbells and lowing cattle can be heard. This is the land of Santa Claus, of dreams, of fresh mountains and idyllic childhoods, spent making snowmen and drinking hot chocolate. From the expansiveness of the mountain village, the camera cuts to a de-framed close-up of a young, blonde boy counting days on his Christmas calendar and looking towards the camera in an expression of earnest anticipation. Dream-like music, like that of a music box, begins to play. In extreme close-up, the boy's hand reaches for a Milka chocolate from the Days of Christmas calendar, the slight rustle of the package is heard above the fairy tale music and we watch, again in extreme-close-up of mouth and chin, the boy takes a gratifying bite of his chocolate. As the camera cuts to a close-up of the boy's face, a moment of revelation is made clear. The music pauses in a note of anticipation as the boy stops chewing—and so the ensuing story begins.

The camera cuts to a long shot of the boy's cosy home, the muted blues and golden browns found in *A Very Long Engagement* (2006) and *Amélie* (2001) return and the domestic scene of family members alludes to some of the domestic themes of *The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet* (2013). The music picks up its tempo and the camera moves from a close, interior shot to the wide-angle panorama of the township as the boy goes out into the beautiful snow-capped town. As with many of Jeunet's pieces, the township and the feel of the advertisement are timeless. The township is old and slightly vintage cars dot the street in familiar blues and reds. A vintage bus is parked in the centre of the scene as the camera pans towards a classic clock hanging from a building. Time and timelessness merge here in a scene that is at once vivid in its sense of occurring in the "now" but references an old world, a world no longer that is framed by, and frames, time itself. In this respect, Jeunet depicts the actual image coalescing with its virtual image in a remarkable frame that manages to capture both at once. The foregrounding of the clock suggests a self-consciousness of time as though the city, Jeunet and we, as the audience, are collectively locked in an actual/virtual stretch of time and memory. This de-limiting of time, history and the image is endemic to much of Jeunet's work. For instance, *Amélie* undertakes a similar convergence of time and epoch, where, on the one hand, time is made prescient for the audience with a narrative that frequently documents very specific times, dates and events, but, on the other hand, it is impossible to say "when" *Amélie* is meant to be set, whereby

> the film carries an overall retro aesthetic, with styles of the past contained in its present. Digital erasure has softened the hard edges of the modern present, and allowed the past, or at least the styles from a cultural past, to shine through. The purging fires of French heritage and history licked about *Amélie* then, too, with the result that the past melted and flowed into a now-retro present. (Austin 2004, 290)

A similar sense of a nostalgicised present, replete with gestures to the past, is present in this Milka world in an assemblage that deeply intensifies time but as a fluid morphing of pasts, presents and (as we see futures) rather than as an ordered force. Unlike the Lavazza piece where

time, although fluid, appears to follow a familiar trajectory with the aid of a narrator, the Milka piece entirely conflates time rendering the actual/virtual interface visible.

The camera cuts to a high-angle shot of a quaint clock shop, again emphasising the significance of time referenced in the previous shot through the presence of the clocks and the antiquated character of the shop itself. Jeunet's sharp cinematic quality and the signature muted red and golden tones are punctuated by the boy's red coat as she speaks with the shop owner. The camera then cuts to an equally vivid shot as the shop owner empties a box of golden clock parts into a sack for the boy and they happily shake hands on their deal. Here, time is junk, it is fragmented, scattered and composed of little pieces. This intensity mirrors some of the preoccupation of *Micmacs à tire-larigot* (2009) and *The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet* (2013) with junk as the basis for reinvention. Like the Milka advertisement, T.S. Spivet uses his junk to create the perpetual motion machine in an effort to elongate and perpetuate time itself and the little family of *Micmacs à tire-larigot* surround themselves with the junk and refuse of the city. Likewise, in *The City of Lost Children* (1995), the use of junk to create machines that capture or extract from time lays the basis for the entire narrative where time (especially childhood) is the most coveted commodity and the collection/re-purposing of junk is the vehicle through which time becomes arrested. What is this connection between time and junk, memory and refuse? Certainly, the timelessness of these works (as mentioned previously) lends a "now but not quite now" quality yet it would seem that time and junk share in a signalling of loss—lost youth, time and function. Once useful, junk is now just fragmented bits and pieces with no inherent value. The passing of time is the catalyst for this transition from valued object to useless junk where only the recuperative power of fresh youthful innovation can salvage "stuff" and the passing of time itself. The tradition of Baudelaire's and Benjamin's ragpicker where "we have a man whose job it is to gather the day's refuse in the capital. Everything that the big city has thrown away, everything it has lost, everything it has scorned, everything it has crushed underfoot he catalogues and collects" or Varda's *glaneuse* (based on her 2000 documentary—see also Guest 2009) provides a trope for Jeunet to imbricate

the innocence of youth and *la récupe* or salvage both of object and time. As Ezra (2014) suggests, "*la récupe* enfolds history into objects, imbuing them with reuse value and making of them an exteriorised, protheticised form of human memory analogous to film or other media" (p. 379). While Ezra aligns the salvaging activities depicted in *Micmacs à tire-larigot* with a broader posthuman emphasis on "life beyond the self" (Braidotti 2014), the more compelling aspect of this synergy between junk or refuse and time in Jeunet's Milka story is the recuperative presence of youth, the co-extensiveness of the actual/virtual image and the territorialisation of time as the underpinning intensity of the entire assemblage.

The camera cuts to a low-angle shot of the township as the boy trudges across the snow with his treasures on a sleigh before cutting to a shopfront where the owner places a box of junk out in the snow. From low-angle, a close-up of the boy's feet step into the foreground in a gesture of ownership towards the box of junk. A close-up of the boy's face reveals his anticipation as he licks his lips, waiting to obtain the prized junk. He traipses home, retreating to the warm interiority of his home and disturbing its quiet cosiness with the sounds and sights of his worthless junk. The family is aroused from their reading and knitting by the clatter of junk invading their pristine home. The following scene shows the boy diligently labouring with his junk, cutting from scene to scene of work, sweat and care. The sign "machine à remontrer le temps" is shown so as to signal the purpose of all this labour. Swathed as always in the blues and golds of Jeunet's aesthetic and captured in the painstaking digital detail, the assemblage is finally brought together—this is a story about engineering time itself through the assembling (assemblage?) of junk in the same vein that rickety contraptions feature in *City of Lost Children* (1995). As the family gathers at the door and peers into the secret room where the boy and his machine work together, they watch as the boy sets his make-shift dial for 24/12 and closes his eyes. The machine sputters and spits, its random assemblage of dials, horns, hoses and valves producing inexplicable plumes of smoke and flashes of red light. Time is represented here as engineered albeit through the dreams and trinkets of a boy's desire to reach forward and bring Christmas closer. It is a construct, an ambition, subject to the desires

and hopes of children. In this respect, the subjective nature of time, the Bergsonian notion of *durée* and the affect of haecceities are brought together where out of the sheets of past (which, as Deleuze commentates, work in a co-extension of the present or the actual such that the virtual image connects and de-randomises the relationship between past and present) an assemblage borne of temporality through human imagining is created. While time is deterritorialised, spilling forth in and out of past, present and future, the childish engineering with junk, objects and hope reterritorialises time in a dynamic moment. Even more salient to this reterritorialisation of time is that time is engineered to bring the *future* closer; while past and present are brought into one through the virtual/actual, Jeunet articulates the time-image through the imbrication of the future.

The introduction of the future triggers a series of camera shots depicting the boy's family preparing for an early Christmas so as to realise the boy's dream. Shot through with cuts to the boy riding his time machine and the date dial flying towards December 24, we see the father cutting down a tree, mother and daughter preparing Christmas decorations, a pan of the family frantically wrapping gifts and a grandmother emptying the Milka Christmas calendar of un-used chocolate. As the date dial whirs to a halt and the family dons its Christmas cheer knitwear, the camera zooms into the boy's face as he peers out from his helmet to see the empty Christmas calendar with only 24 remaining. Again in close-up, his expression is one of wonder. As the camera alights over the boy's shoulder, he opens the lounge door to reveal a perfect family scene beside the Christmas tree, gifts at the ready. The boy runs to his mother and they embrace before the camera zooms over the Christmas table full of food up to a close-up of the boy eating his Milka chocolate. The future of his dreams has been realised.

A comparison of Jeunet's Lavazza and Milka advertisements reveal two different treatments of time. Both are philosophically engaged with the question of time as the grounding intensity but two quite different assemblages are composed. In the Lavazza piece, time leaps between past and present, utilising the narrator as the mediator. The sheets of past are revealed through the voice-over present, thus bringing the virtual image to life. Through animating the virtual image, time is seen

to be brought forward into the present through the ordering effects of both narrative and images. In the Milka piece, by contrast, time is perceived as much more complicated moving been present (as past) and future as an imagined present. Time itself is also rendered empty or arbitrary, subject to the wishful thinking of an entrepreneurial young boy and his complicit family or open to the quasi-engineering of broken clocks and collected junk. The piece plays with the notion that time is fluid, open to re-convening through fresh perception and the future can be realised in the present. The boy and his family literally bring December 24 forward not through the success of the time machine but through a collective re-imagining of what time is. Past, present and future align through the interstices of memory and imagination. Time, then, becomes an illusion, a temporal flow out of which any image, actual or virtual, can be extracted.

Jeunet's rendering of time is inherently complicated and speaks back into wider circuits of philosophical dialogue on the nature of time. In particular, the Deleuzian time-image is brought to bear on an assemblage that leaps between temporalities, evokes memory in order to illuminate the present through visuality and questions how we construct time itself. In one instance, time reaches back and comes towards us from the beginning of Luigi Lavazza's journey to the modern day of the narrator. In the other, the present gives way to the future as time is obscured and the future is re-engineered through junk and debris—the stuff of the past. The flows, hums and imagination that bring the junk back to life are enough to render time itself malleable in a collusion of past, present and future. Of course, this deterritorialisation of time itself is sustained by the further deterritorialisation of epochal time. Much of Jeunet's work melds nostalgia and the present in a *mélange* of past and present epochs. For instance, in *Amélie* (2001), the styling of Audrey Tatou, the absence of modern technology and a highly idealised representation of the Montmartre streets that echo an almost 1950s sensibility are mashed up with the contemporary event of Princess Diana's death in 1997. Jeunet also references cinematic history with his frequent homages to New Wave cinema of the 1950s and 1960s. In *Amélie*, the cinema is playing *Jules et Jim* (1962 dir. Truffaut) and the café as the primary scene of the film's action references Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962)

and Godard's *A Bout de souffle*s (1959). Vicendeau also notes the film's frequent returns to scenes used by poetic realists of the 1930s such as the Canal St. Martin found in Carné's *Hôtel du nord* (1938). Likewise, in *A Very Long Engagement* (2006), where Audrey Tatou is "recycled" as the heroine Mathilde (and again in Jeunet's 2009 Chanel No. 5 advertisement), Jeunet challenges the notion of demarcated time and history, subjecting it instead to the forces of memory and narrative through the use of archival footage interpolated with his own filmed sequences that are then edited to look like old footage. As Ezra (2008) points out,

> Like the footage of the car crash that killed Princess Diana in *Amélie*, these sequences provide indexical linkage to the historical era depicted in the film, but they also undermine the pretence to indexical representation in their lack of distinction between archival films and films made to look like archival films. The content of the stock footage is at times contradicted by the diegetic events surrounding it. (p. 116)

Jeunet's recurring of manipulation of time and emphasis on memory, often seen through the eyes of children or "naïve" child-like characters, animates the Bergsonian/Deleuzian rendering of the human relationship with time. As Powell (2007) suggests, like Freud, "Bergson's inner self is also formed of memory, but [unlike Freud] this is not limited by actual, familial experience: it belongs to the durational process of perpetual becoming and the continuum of memory and action" where "circuits of the past spread like ripples" (p. 22). Time is not bounded by constructed temporality but rather spills backwards and forth through human imagination and agency. The two advertisements analysed above depict this sense of continuum proposed by Bergson and elaborated by Deleuze in the time-image. Significantly, this treatment of time aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's later commentary on time as implicated in becoming. Just as the earlier discussion points towards their rendering of the becoming-woman as a sense of becoming through action, time too comes into being through its intersection with other being such as memory and imagination. Commenting that "we are all five o'clock in the evening, or another hour, or rather two hours simultaneously, the optimal and the pessimal, noon-midnight, but distributed in a variable

fashion" (p. 307), Deleuze and Guattari return to the time-image as a deterritorialised interpolation of pasts, presents and futures. Jeunet's own preoccupation with time and memory converses with this notion of time, giving us two assemblages that draw their intensity from this philosophical position. Equally, as assemblages, they deterritorialise at the level of aesthetic and narrative as they utilise the tropes of Jeunet's entire opus which, in itself, relies upon wider cinematic and cultural referents. Thus, these assemblages are hybrid beings, simultaneously advertisements and short films, spectacles and philosophical dialogues, images and stories, images and memories.

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6

Extensions and the Advertising Suite

In his 2013 interview recounted in Zoller's (2013) text devoted to the director, Wes Anderson speaks of the unexpected flows, intensities and meanings that potentially emerge out of films as assemblages.

> I think, often, what ends up being important in a movie thematically, or what it ends up being really about, is usually not what you're focusing on. You're focusing on what a certain character is going to say, what this character wants from this other character, how they feel, and how she's going to express what she wants, and what's going to happen, you know? And as with everything else in life or writing or filmmaking, you don't really control what it means - my instinct is that I don't want to control it, because it's better if it just comes to life, in whatever way that can happen. And everything else, everything feels like it has to be created for one of these movies, so I'd rather have the meanings come out of the life of it, rather than wanting to demonstrate a certain theme, or communicate a certain theory. (Wes Anderson in Zoller 2013)

In this respect, Anderson mirrors Deleuze and Guattari's (1987 [1980]) emphasis on becoming through motion and the sometimes unexpected compositions that arise. In his careful commentary on the evolution

H. de Burgh-Woodman, *Advertising in Contemporary Consumer Culture*,
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of the term *flow*, Rockefeller (2011), along with other commentators (Borradori 2001; Tomlinson and Habberjam 1997; Watson 1998) situates the Deleuze and Guattari conceptualisation of flow within the trajectory of Bergsonian philosophy. Rockefeller interrogates the ways in which flow has been used in social sciences, philosophy and, more recently, discussions of globalisation and place but distinguishes Deleuze and Guattari's use of flow as implicitly connected with their concepts of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation.

> For Deleuze and Guattari, "deterritorialization" is inextricably connected to "flow"; it signifies the opening of something (a body, a polity, a sign) to flows, which allows it to integrate with and be incorporated by (or incorporate) something else. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that it is a moment of becoming not-oneself in the act of becoming part of something else. In general, deterritorialization is followed by "reterritorialization," when whatever had been opened or made part of something larger returns to being itself (although it might not be the same self it was before). (Rockefeller 2011, p. 562)

While Rockefeller is critical of the inference that deterritorialisation means motion and reterritorialisation suggests stasis or inertia, which reinstates a certain metaphysical dualism and contravenes the openness and non-dualism favoured in contemporary theory, such a reading may miss the inflection throughout *Mille Plateaux* that posits reterritorialisation not as stasis but as necessary consolidation in order to "make the assemblage hold" as it were. Deleuze and Guattari (1994) themselves clarify this point in *What is Philosophy*? in saying

> movements of deterritorialization are inseparable from territories that open onto an elsewhere; and the process of reterritorialization is inseparable from the earth, which restores territories. Territory and earth are two components with two zones of indiscernibility – deterritorialization (from territory to earth) and reterritorialization (from earth to territory). We cannot say which comes first. (p. 86)

While Rockefeller sees *territory* as an invariable term, Deleuze and Guattari see it as a term animated by flows and shift but also a space

of necessary boundedness. How else might we distinguish the tangible from the infinite? If we return to Anderson's commentary on the evolutionary nature of film-making, similar oscillations between the opening out of the film-making process (deterritorialisation) and the access to the film itself as a temporarily stable assemblage (reterritorialisation) marks the boundedness of flow but also its possibilities. Anderson's observations, then, speaks to the importance of understanding assemblages as held together but also potential sites for becoming, sites of territory and earth intertwined in a process. While Anderson directs his comments to the context of feature film-making, his unwitting identification of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation as inflections that enable the tracing of how media objects across the board evolve, spill and intersect with other objects to sift unexpected meanings and significations is important for our discussion here.

In this chapter, we focus on how advertising assemblages are able to extend beyond singular, or individual, works to become integrated suites of interacting intensities, emerging as complex systems of affect. Suite advertisements encompass evolving narratives that deterritorialise across several, interrelated works to expand their aesthetic capacities and develop the kinds of intensities (some of which were discussed in the previous chapter) that elevate advertising beyond that of spectacle. Underpinning this discussion of advertising as *suites* is the argument that these kinds of elaborate, multifaceted assemblages that range over several fragments, and yet come together as a stable entity, transform advertisements from individual artefacts to complex narrative and aesthetic structures that enable richer consumer connections with depicted story worlds and articulate a deeper reach into cultural consciousness. The ability to extend the duration, structure and narrative complexity of advertisements is partially made possible by the utilisation of convergent media platforms that facilitate longer content and a better organisation or clustering of multiple content such that it can be viewed collectively by consumers as one continuous work—as opposed to a campaign being rolled out over several weeks on television or in print. The simultaneity of the viewing experience for consumers enables a holistic grasp of the object, inviting a collective reading of the assemblage rather than as fragmentary parts. Equally, as will be discussed, digital platforms also allow for auxiliary

content, or content that does not appear in the suite or advertisements itself, to be disseminated. The emergence of "the making of" or behind the scenes content depicting how certain advertisements were made, cast and director interviews and behind the scenes footage not only aligns advertisements with cinema, since documentaries or auxiliary content about films has been a long-standing practice and features on most Blu-Rays or DVDs, but also extends and intensifies the narrative, aesthetic and technical components of the assemblage. Advertisements such as Martin Scorsese's *The One* for Dolce and Gabbana featuring Scarlett Johansson (2014), Autumn de Wilde's *The Postman* for Prada (2015), David Fincher's *Downtown* showcasing Rooney Mara for Calvin Klein (2013) and *Mechanical Legs* for Adidas (2002), Jake Scott's *The Gentlemen's Wager* for Johnny Walker (2014) featuring Jude Law and Giancarlo Giannini, Wes Anderson's *Candy* with Léa Seydoux for Prada (2013) (who also makes his own "'making-of' featuring Wes Anderson on the set of a film" advertisement for American Express (2006)) and Emmauel Cossu's *Miss Dior* campaign featuring Natalie Portman (2017) are but a few examples of advertisements accompanied by "making of" content that extends and intensifies the assemblage, giving insight into the technical and aesthetic vision of the advertisement itself.

The ensuing analyses begin by visiting the emergence of "the making of" or behind the scenes content that is able to be disseminated along with the intended cut. The line of logic presented thus far suggests (a) advertising does not just function as pure spectacle; (b) that advertising, like other aesthetic objects, animates key intensities that form systems of affect and define the assemblage; (c) advertising refracts evolving degrees of complexity through its movement across convergent platforms; and (d) the evolution of convergence media places pressure on classical notions of genre, format and media type enabling us to reconsider advertising in light of this shifting terrain. So, the dissemination of behind the scenes footage that extend and intensify the assemblage offer one way into considering how advertising not only utilises convergent platforms (by being able to distribute more content) but also deterritorialises to extend the assemblage and engage other media forms. From there, our analysis takes us to a focus on some specific examples of how advertising as suite assemblages harness their intensities (some of which were discussed

in the previous chapters) to deterritorialise across multiple fragments in order to further complicate the aesthetic or narrative structure and to engage the consumer in a more complex assemblage. Contextualising our discussion of the advertisements within the trajectory of the director's aesthetic and thematic history, Wes Anderson's campaign for Prada *Candy* (2013) and Sofia Coppola's for Calvin Klein (2017) each receive critical attention as examples of suite assemblages that mobilise aesthetic, narrative and philosophical intensities across a fragmented terrain. Finally, the work of Willy Vanderperre is considered as a further inflection on the advertising assemblage suite as a system of affect. Vanderperre has only formally made one short film and is most well-known for his fashion photographic work. A consideration of his extensive short film and print advertising work for Dior Homme over the last six years—with particular attention paid to *The Wanderer* (2011)—offers further insight into how larger assemblages such as the advertising suite can move across different terrains, draw from wide-ranging cultural and aesthetic referents and, thereby, evolve the assemblage.

The Suite Assemblage

Deleuze and Guattari use the term *agencement* which, when translated, becomes assemblage in English. The significance of this is that *agencement* and assemblage as understood in English diverge slightly in their meaning—a divergence that is key to understanding assemblage thought and has implications for the notion of advertising suites. *Agencement* infers an arrangement of heterogeneous elements while assemblage suggests a bringing together or unification of elements (as it does in French). The distinction is that while "assemblage", in the context of English, references a sense of creating a cohesive entity in which elements are interdependent, *agencement* draws no such inference about the coalescence of elements. Instead, each element is defined by "external relations of composition, mixture, and aggregation. In other words, an assemblage is a multiplicity, neither a part nor a whole" (Nail 2017, p. 23). Assemblages are bounded only by their capacities that emerge out of perpetual rearrangement; they are not organic wholes.

Deleuze is quite expansive in his commentary on this inherent nature of an assemblage as multiplicity and its consequences. His elaboration on this point is worth recounting at length since he ties the concept of multiplicities (a term also used by Bergson in a similar way), lines of flight and the resulting nature of assemblage

> To extract the concepts which correspond to a multiplicity is to trace the lines of which it is made up, to determine the nature of these lines, to see how they become entangled, connect, bifurcate, avoid or fail to avoid the foci. These lines are true becomings, which are distinct not only from unities, but from the history in which they are developed. Multiplicities are made up of becomings without history, of individuation without subject… That is, the concept exists just as much in empiricism as in rationalism, but it has a completely different use and a completely different nature: it is a being-multiple, instead of a being-one, a being-whole or being as subject. (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, p. viii)

Thus, we need to understand assemblages as an intersecting network of relationalities between multiplicities, none of which are interdependent on, or coextensive with, another multiplicity as such. This is where the concept of the machine becomes salient as a machinic view of multiplicities reveals them as working together as intensities but each element remains discrete. This view of assemblages as machines is borne out in Manovich's (2001) theorisation of new media as modular where elements converge to compose an entity such as a film or website but can then dissipate only to reassemble anew in a different form or context. As Nail (2017) points out, this theorisation of assemblages as an arrangement of multiplicities with the ability to generate intensities, not only rejects the notion of unity but also of essences. He suggests that

> an assemblage does not have an essence because it has no eternally necessary defining features, only contingent and singular features. In other words, if we want to know what something is, we cannot presume that what we see is the final product nor that this product is somehow independent of the network of the social and historical processes to which it is connected. (p. 24)

These insights from Deleuze, Manovich and Nail have implications for how we conceive of a suite of advertising as an assemblage. As De Landa (2006) suggests, assemblages are aggregations, in part, and therefore it is important to consider how its intensities and capacities transform as the assemblage extends, amplifying its degree of complexity. How does this occur in advertising assemblages that arrange a greater number of multiplicities over several works and how does it alter the nature of the assemblage? Deleuze, thus, sharpens our focus on the potentially transformative capacities of suite advertising to extend the assemblage, generate greater intensities through the emergent network of multiplicities and territorialise a more complex entity.

"The Making of"

The inclusion of behind the scenes, or "the making of", content in cinema has been a staple for DVD and Blu-Ray releases. Frequently containing cast and director interviews on the detail of the film, cut footage and out-takes or bloopers, the distribution of this content buttresses the aesthetic object to which it refers by offering insight into the creative process, artistic intention and technical or logistical challenges confronted during the project. For consumers, the capacity to interpret the object is enhanced through this engagement with otherwise hidden knowledge. This kind of additional content also has the effect of augmenting the status of the director as *auteur* and positioning the film as a distinctive entity. Implicit in the "the making of" narrative is the representation that films are uniquely complex objects, each one replete with its own necessary subtext. Special windows of perception are required to fully comprehend it. While this may be so in one sense, the couched tradition of film as isolated in its uniqueness is significantly amplified by requiring special additional information to explain or render insight. Thus, the inclusion of "the making of" content enhances the consumer's engagement but also reinstates the privilege of cinema as an aesthetic object, functioning as a key trope in the ongoing preservation of film as distinct art form. This maintenance of creative hierarchies through the mobilisation of the artist as visionary, a notion stemming

from Romantic traditions that lauded individual creative efforts (Sawyer 2006; Watson 2005), and the revelation of the technicalities of the cinematic apparatus at once invites and excludes the consumer. While "the making of" brings the consumer closer to the aesthetic object through a highly mediated form of access, it also demarcates film as exceptional terrain.

The growing dissemination of similar content pertaining to advertisements comes as something of a challenge to these hierarchies of creative worth—a sign of the digital environment's "remarkable creative potential that is still very much in the process of evolution" (Jeffery-Poulter 2003, p. 156). If 'the making of' content is the exclusive purview of film (and a signal of its specific creative and cultural worth), the dissemination of similar content for advertisements through online platforms tacitly aligns advertising with film in its cultural value and aesthetic complexity. Using Baz Lurhmann's campaigns for Chanel featuring Nicole Kidman (2004) and Giselle Bündchen (2014) as their example, Gordon and Perrey (2015) allude to this shifting terrain, suggesting that

> Talent scarcity, evolving digital storytelling, and perceived institutional rigidities have opened new debates about the best ways to access creativity. Some companies, like Chanel, are enhancing their control over the story with supplemental digital content… Agencies are responding. Many are acquiring more digital talent and working to break down silos to overcome perceptions that they are actually geared to bigger productions and may lack the digital and story skills to handle new content in an agile, integrated way. (p. 9)

As creative agencies identify a context of flux created by consumer demand for more interaction with good advertising content and the challenges of convergence, elevating the status of advertising and pursuing similar creative strategies as film not only enhances consumer engagement but further dissolves the high/low art distinctions confronted through a postmodern ethos. As Owczarski (2007) intuits, "as the text becomes increasingly difficult to pinpoint within the multimedia approach to entertainment production, new media outlets such as the Internet provide a space to discuss how contemporary film may

function in a venue that continually collapses advertising, entertainment, and information" (p. 4). While the claim can be made that to date, postmodernity has enjoyed limited success as a paradigmatic shift and that the Enlightenment perspective continues to frame many of our cultural tropes and institutions, the convergence environment is one in which a postmodern sensibility towards hybridity and the collapse of cultural distinctions between art forms is more readily apparent.

The value of "the making of" content does not just reside in its preservation of hierarchies of cultural worth. From an assemblage perspective, this content also extends the assemblage by introducing more multiplicities and generating greater intensities—the assemblage is able to achieve in its expressive capacities from the vantagepoint of its degree of affective complexity and enhanced consumer interaction. More elements are arranged where the aesthetic, stylistic, narrative and philosophical intensities are simultaneously cumulative and deepened. The scope for perceptual, emotional and cognitive engagement between advertisement and consumer is significantly enriched, leading to a system of affect. Luhrmann's campaign for Chanel, cited by Gordon and Perrey (2015), is one case in point. The original campaign, featuring Nicole Kidman, drew on the aesthetic and narrative elements of Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* (2001). Returning to the rooftops of Paris and the story of an elusive *femme* and her enamoured lover, the vanishing lady depicted through Kidman's Satine character in *Moulin Rouge* was recreated. Featuring a striking Chanel dress, digital graphics and some signature Luhrmann conventions, such as "clashing genre conventions, a histrionic acting style that do[es] not chime with cinematic realism" and an "overheated visual style with a dramatic use of colour design that complements the fast editing pace" (Cook 2010, p. 3) and distinctive use of sound that dislocates from the visual imagery (Hayward and Hill 2015), the advertisement extended the *Moulin Rouge* assemblage, locating it with what Luhrmann has called his "red curtain" cinema (2004). Gurevitch (2009) also makes the observation that, in the advertisement, "the aesthetics of Hollywood spectacle are a crucial driving force in the provision of narrative meaning. What takes place here is far more than a borrowing of spectacular drives and influences… we come to see just how intertwined the relationship between

spectacle and narrative are, and not just across one text but across many" (p. 154). The inclusion of a "making of" piece consolidated the connection between Luhrmann, film and advertising, further obscuring the exact nature of the original text and extending the "red cinema"—*Moulin Rouge* assemblage. Baz Luhrmann offered insights into the motivations of the characters, the connections between the advertisements and other works, including his own cinema and wider cultural referents and the rationale for the story. Equally, out-takes of the creative process, footage of the actors on-set and grabs of the actual filming experience depicted the same "creative rigour" attributed to film-making. The clear alignment between advertising and cinema as creative processes, aesthetic/narrative objects and culturally interlocuted artefacts was made explicit in the "making of" content. Thus, the inclusion of this kind of footage in advertising assemblages conflates boundaries between media forms and genre, extends assemblage intensities (such as narrative, perspective, aesthetics, cinematic techniques and reference to other cultural tropes) and gives rise to more complex media forms that, as the text as a static entity dissimulates, deterritorialise across platforms to combine, dissipate and recombine anew.

Wes Anderson—*Prada*: *Candy* (2013)

While "the making of" aspect of the suite intensifies and enlarges the assemblage, another key aspect of this kind of dispersed artefact made possible through convergence is the multifaceted suite itself. Unlike the traditional advertisement, regardless of medium, convergent advertising is able to work across multiple platforms, and elude the temporal constraints of the singular advertisement. The suite assemblage is comprised of several, interwoven fragments that work simultaneously as bounded in their own right but also contextualised within a larger assemblage. Consequently, these suites feature more complex narratives, iterative aesthetic tropes and draw upon more diverse technical capacities. They also challenge conventions of the linear narrative or the self-contained cinematic experience as they appear out of sequence and distributed across different media. One such example of this kind

of suite assemblage is Wes Anderson's *Candy* perfume campaign (2013) for Prada. Wes Anderson is one of the most distinctive directors in contemporary cinema. His feature film works include *Bottle Rocket* (1996), *Rushmore* (1998), *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001), *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004), *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009), *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012), *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) and *Isle of Dogs* (2018). Anderson has frequently written his own screenplays and usually features an identifiable stable of actors including Owen Wilson (also a co-writer), Adrien Brody, Seymour Cassel, Willem Dafoe, Stephen Dignan, Jeff Goldblum, Anjelica Huston, Bill Murray, Edward Norton, Kumar Pallana and Jason Schwartzman. While Anderson has been nominated for various directorial awards, his critical awards have typically come as a result of his screenplays including his British Film Award for *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2015).

Anderson's work has operated under the aegis of various labels such as "smart" (Sconce 2002), "auteurist" (Lee 2016), "absurdist" (Herzog 2014) or "quirky" (MacDowell 2012) in an effort to isolate his particular visual styling and preoccupation with the eccentricities of people and their relationships. With his signature take-double take shots between characters, use of wide-angle lens to create portrait-like framings, use of rostrum camera insert shots to highlight objects, the hazy, almost pastel, colour palette that, along with a retro sound track, conjures a sense of nostalgia and frequent use of slow-motion tracking shots, it is not surprising that various efforts to access his distinctive approach to film-making have been made. Perhaps the repeated reference to Anderson's "tone" (Gibbs 2012; MacDowell 2012) speaks to the difficulty of encapsulating this highly complex director whose assemblage is consistent in its aesthetic nature, narrative preoccupations and emotional register described by Lee (2016) as ambivalent. Various commentators have identified Anderson's perpetual return to themes of youth (*Rushmore, Moonrise Kingdom*), dysfunctional families (*The Life Aquatic of Steve Zissou, The Royal Tenenbaums, The Darjeeling Limited*) and melancholia (*Rushmore*). Anderson frequently oscillates between comedy and a certain tragic pathos in his films (such as the tragicomic figures of Monsieur Gustave in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* and Herman Blume in *Rushmore*) termed "melancomic" by Thomas (2012), captured

in the ironic, deadpan performances of actors such as Bill Murray and Jason Schwartzman. Equally, his films suggest a sense of nostalgia for an unnamed past where, as Wilkins suggests, "the merging of diffuse historical and contemporary contexts promotes identification and nostalgia that is unable to be located in a wholly contemporary or retrospective chronological context. The films occupy a chronological space imagined only by Anderson" (p. 35). This atemporality, manifested through an unspecified nostalgia for *something* or *sometime* past, is often articulated through a Bachelardian (1958) attachment to objects or curios as significations of character identity and memory. Baschiera (2012) goes so far as to suggest that Anderson's is a "cinema of stuff" (p. 118), arguing that "there is no opposition between the subject and the object, the character and the thing, the animate and the inanimate… Things create the characters in the same ways as the characters create the things" (p. 123).

Anderson himself credits mid-century cinema and, in particular, the work of Godard, Fellini, Malle and Truffaut as his influences, making frequent allusions to their work in his own. For instance, *Moonrise Kingdom* draws narrative and stylistic parallels with Godard's *Pierrot le Fou* (1965) and quotes Malle's *Le Feu Follet* (1963) line "I'm going to kill myself tomorrow" in *The Royal Tenenbaums*. This *répétition* (in the Deleuzian sense) of stylistic devices from the *Nouvelle Vague* era is particularly salient in the context of Anderson's advertisements. Crothers-Dilley (2017) emphasises how "Anderson's short films and his commercials, especially the "Bottle Rocket" short, the American Express commercial, and Prada: Candy, continue Anderson's tradition of referencing Truffaut and the French New Wave in his work, while Castello Cavalcanti is an obvious homage to Fellini and the Softbank commercial to Jacques Tati". This deterritorialising across varying registers of cinematic and literary referents is characteristic of the entire Anderson assemblage. His call upon *nouvelle vague* cinematic conventions in *Prada Candy* (as noted by Crothers-Dilley) provides a point of departure for a discussion of this advertising suite of three works.

Prada: Candy (2013) is a three-piece suite that runs for three minutes and thirty seconds in total. The work was commissioned by Prada and produced by The Director's Bureau. It was followed by Anderson's homage to Fellini in *Castello Cavalcanti* for Prada later in the year,

leading to a certain territorialising of Prada's short film aesthetic. More recent work by Autumn de Wilde, in her five short films *The Postman Dreams* (2015) featuring Tobey Maguire, essentially mirrors the iconic Anderson tone with a similar colour palette, cinematography and emphasis on "quirky", using retro motifs and absurdist comedy. While de Wilde cites Buster Keaton, The Marx Brothers and *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* as her influences for the short films (Williamson 2015), the concept and composition is distinctly Andersonian. This convergence of Anderson's cinematic work as assemblage and Prada's appropriation of his intensities beyond the scale of his work alone presents an intriguing inflection into the nature of deterritorialisation in the media environment where media artefacts are just as influential in shaping identities as identities are in shaping artefacts.

Prada Candy narrates the short story of Candy, a "modern girl" (according to Léa Seydoux who plays Candy) involved in a playful relationship with best friends Julius and Gene. The relatively direct linguistic reference to Truffaut's characters Catherine (Jeanne Moreau), Jules (Oskar Werner) and Jim (Henri Serre) is consolidated in a similar set-up of the love triangle among friends—although with radically different outcomes. In the first instalment, the advertisement opens with opening credits announcing it as a film by Wes Anderson and Roman Coppola starring Léa Seydoux. Using the signature Prada font, the credits suggest a slippage between Prada as brand and the content as cinema. The opening scene reveals Candy enjoying a banana split at a café with her as yet unidentified beau. The shot, and indeed the entire assemblage, employs Anderson's pastel colour palette and structured composition as the two figures sit centre frame. In a signature take-double take shot, we are introduced to the second male figure as he walks past the cafe. The camera swings between the couple and the man before tracking his entry to the café whereupon his friend enters from off-screen to chastise him for approaching them. As the two argue, Candy appears from left of screen and introduces herself before declaring that they can "still make the 7.15 show if we run. My treat". This the opening scene sets the dynamic for the unfolding narrative. Three characters are introduced in quick succession with Candy (like Cotillard in *Lady Grey London*) forming the core intensity for the entire assemblage.

We are also quickly reacquainted with a distinctive Anderson aesthetic. As Crothers-Dilley (2017) suggests, the assemblage is territorialised within the boundaries of a *nouvelle vague* sensibility. This is highlighted through Anderson's retro styling of his characters, with Candy dressed in a coat resembling a 1960s raincoat and the two men clad in an iconic 1960s black turtleneck and a tight suit with slender tie. The *mis-en-scène* is at once modern and nostalgic, a "not quite" rendering of *nouvelle vague* that conjures a sense of atemporality described by Wilkins (2014). Consistent with Anderson's frequent practice of recycling vintage music from the 1960s and 70s, the soundtrack intensifies this sense of nostalgic nod through the use of France Gall's *Le temps de la rentrée* (1966). The following scene shows Candy situated between the two men sharing popcorn in centre frame looking up towards a cinema screen. With extreme depth of field, the nineteenth-century architecture of the dark theatre stretches out behind them to punctuate their solitude. The beam of the cinema projector shots light above Candy's head as though to create a halo above her. The stark silence of the cinema, punctuated only by the natural diegetic sound of popcorn being passed and chewed, comes as a sharp contrast with the previous scene where the strains of the Gall track is abruptly interrupted by the cut to the silent cinematic space. In the final scene, a similarly retro soundtrack (Dutronc's *L'idole* 1970) swells as the camera jumps to close-up of a luminous Candy, captured in soft light and a pink aura, indecorously shovelling popcorn into her mouth while staring intently at the screen. A slight smirk passes across her face as the camera cuts to the Prada Candy perfume.

The second instalment opens with the words "one week later". The opening credits featured in the first instalment are not repeated and the narrative segue ways seamlessly. The temporal reference signals the continuity of narrative and the intersectional quality of the assemblage. On the one hand, each advertisement is a self-contained vignette in its own right but, on the other, they clearly work as multiplicities that interact with one another in a temporal, spatial and narrative unity. The scene opens with a car pulling up to a classic Parisian apartment block and Candy gets out with her still unnamed beau Julius (we only know this from the behind the scenes footage). The camera pans up to the top of the apartment block as though to flag their

arrival. As the camera cuts to a low-angle shot of Candy and her partner running up the grand staircase of the apartment block and away from the viewer, the refrain of Gall's *Le temps de la rentrée* is heard. Here, the sound deterritorialises across the fragments of the assemblage, working within bounded circuits of referentiality to conjure a sense of *déjà-vu*. A door in close-up opens before a depth shot framing the second man in Candy's life (Gene) standing in the centre of a room colour-coded to varying tones of purple inhabited by wood panelling, a grand nineteenth-century chandelier, velvet curtains, balloons, multiple Louis XVI chairs and couches gilt and upholstered in gold, a bourgeois side-table, a mid-century sideboard, two lamps from differing eras, a leather recliner, a Persian rug and a modern white plastic dining chair. The man stands clutching a birthday cake with candles in one hand and a third lamp in the other. His presence in the room, standing among the bizarre collection of conflicting eras and styles, reiterates Baschiera's (2012) claim that Anderson's is a cinema of stuff, contained within the confines of the colour palette but dwarfing the figure as he stands forlornly clutching his cake and lamp. The absurdist quality, found in most of Anderson's work, is also recapitulated here as Gene cries "surprise".

The camera cuts to Candy and Julius standing bemused in the doorway, the rich wood panelling wrapping around them. Julius, clearly annoyed, asks "what are you doing in my apartment?" before the camera cuts back to Gene (still buried in the clutter of the frame), reveals that "it's Candy's birthday. I baked a cake". The camera cuts to Candy who inquires "what kind?" and Julius repeats "how'd you get in here?" As though in a brief temporal rupture, the camera then moves to mid-shot. Candy is left of screen and the *mis-en-scène* shifts from a purple tonality to pink. This change of palette appears to result from Candy's presence, her intensity of aura or charisma reflected around the room. In another signature screen right Anderson entry, Gene steps into the other half of the screen and presents Candy with the cake as its luminescence centres the shot. He urges her to "taste it and see". Julius enters from left and positions in the centre of the frame behind the cake as Gene casually admits that he climbed through the window before attempting to sing *Happy Birthday* to Candy who tastes the cake. As Candy is left with the cake, the two men pull away from here and

towards the camera as it walks with them into another room. Candy is left alone, now embedded in the depth of the background previously occupied by Gene and his cake. The wide shot of the room with its clutter engulfs Candy just as it had engulfed Gene in a mirroring of the two shots. She appears centre frame but distant in the background, located between the two men who are now in conversational close-up, a spectre of competition and desire as she blows out the cake. Julius snaps shut the curtains that have now returned to their purple tone and confronts Gene before the camera follows him over to the bathroom window where they now stand. Gene is told he has five seconds to leave. Starting to count, Julius only gets to two before the beat of *L'Idole* cuts through the scene. The two men return to close-up before opening the purple curtain to reveal Candy eating the cake and announcing the cake's flavour. Again, an absurdist sensibility is invoked to shift the register of the scene as the camera cuts to a close-up of Candy with a mouth full of cake. Again, food is used as a device to signify her free abandon and her capacity to make light of the moment. The final scene shows all three characters enframed in the cluttered room dancing together.

The final instalment opens with the words "one month later". Time is accelerated and the temporal flow is augmented, moving from one week to one month. While the framing of time repeats the motif from the second instalment, a further deterritorialising takes place. The scene opens with Candy filling the frame as she sits in a chair at the hairdresser. The scene is cluttered, as a pastel pink television, hairdresser's trolley with paraphernalia and two manicurists fill the foreground with the streets of Paris and a couple inhabit the background. The preponderance of pastel pink signals the presence of Candy, although she is uncharacteristically clad in lemon yellow. While time has marched on, so has Candy's sentiment towards men. A dismissive hairdresser utters "all men are children" before exiting the scene leaving Candy to lament "maybe but at least children are innocent" before expressing her frustration at the two men. In a pensive nod to *Jules et Jim* (dir. Truffaut (1962)), Candy sighs and asks "how much longer can we possibly all be so happy together?" The question is poignant in light of the tragic ending of Truffaut's film and deterritorialises the *Candy* narrative, interpolating it into other possible endings and reaching into different systems

of affect. The camera swing around in one of Anderson's signature double-takes to reveal Gene and Julius sitting and waiting for Candy. They respond "who knows?" and "does it matter?" in a flippant dismissal of Candy's ponderings which are heavy with the existential weight of Truffaut's characters lurking in the background of her question. Again, the pair of men are framed by wood panelling, mannequin heads, chairs, tables and photographs on the wall in another space populated by nostalgic stuff in a repetition of the previous instalment room. In a repetition of the previous two instalments, Candy makes a sharp left of screen entry and announces she is ready. The camera cuts to close-up of the two men as they look in wonder at the now groomed Candy before issuing compliments. In a further repetition, the camera moves to Candy in soft close-up as she smiles at their admiration. The final scene, accompanied by the return of *L'Idole* as soundtrack, presents Candy centre screen between the men walking with/towards the camera, the three figures framed by the Parisian arcade in the background. Like the depth of field achieved in the cinema (part 1) and Julius's apartment (part 2), the arcade stretches out behind them.

The three instalments simultaneously interact and follow the same cinematic structure. Yet they also operate as autonomous entities. As true assemblages, each instalment functions as a groundswell of intensities (narrative, aesthetic, etc.) that exist as an assemblage but also within the bounded context of its other parts, thus rendering it a multiplicity. In doing so, the assemblage is intensified. The narrative structure achieves greater complexity and the portrayal of temporality is complicated firstly by the indeterminate era in which the advertisement is supposedly set and, secondly, by the stretching of time between the three instalments. To this end, the assemblage offers a more complex rendering of such Deleuzian constructs around the time-image than what singular advertisements are able to do. Equally, the progressive revelation of Candy's aura and her growing control over Julius and Gene plays out the becoming-woman depicted by both Lynch and Aronofsky but does so via fragmentation and slow revelation where we see the progression of becoming. The Candy assemblage suggests that the fragmentation or scattering of narrative across disparate, but interconnected, sites enables more iterative narratives to emerge over time.

Sofia Coppola—Calvin Klein (2017)

While Sofia Coppola is the daughter of iconic director Francis Ford Coppola and sister of Roman Coppola, her distinctive aesthetic quality has enabled her to develop a reputation of her own with her work receiving critical acclaim. Her film work includes *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), *Lost in Translation* (2003), *Marie Antoinette* (2006), *Somewhere* (2010), *The Bling Ring* (2013), *A Very Murray Christmas* (2015) and *The Beguiled* (2017). Coppola has also made a significant number of music videos and her advertising work has included campaigns for Dior, Marni, Marc Jacobs, Gap and Calvin Klein. Like Anderson and Lynch, Coppola tends to use key people repeatedly in her films with actors Kirsten Dunst and Bill Murray featuring in several of her films. Coppola has won the Oscar for her screenplay (*Lost in Translation* 2003), best director at Venice for *Somewhere* (2010) and Best Director at Cannes for *The Beguiled* (2017).

While frequently referenced in popular terms as an Indie film-maker, scholarly attention given to Coppola's opus is limited, restricted by a critical reading of her work as insubstantial, "fluffy", to use Cook's (2010) term, in describing critical receptions of *Marie Antoinette,* or lacking in "heft" (Mayshark 2007). Equally, as Smaill (2013) highlights, critics tend to read the work through the lens of Coppola's own privileged life, suggesting that

> While critics regularly praise Coppola's work on the basis of purely filmic and artistic merit, a number continue to consistently link the characters, the aesthetic and the settings of films (sometimes even the plot structure), to aspects of Coppola's image, personality and personal history. As a filmmaker of the image with a preference for minimal plots, Coppola is thought to fail when her characters are perceived as too unselfconsciously linked to her own "world," one of upper class insularity. (p. 152)

Such a sceptical reception of Coppola's work appears to be based on the recognition that much of her work is evocative, aesthetically refined and masterfully shot but does not appear to travel or interrogate its content in a meaningful way, reflecting a certain *insouciance,* attributed

to her own status as a *dilettante*. Yet, for those who have endeavoured to engage with Coppola's cinematic offerings, rather than dwelling on her biography, a certain view of her work as a non-explicitly feminist rendering of feminine experience, ennui and isolation emerges (Kennedy 2010; Rogers 2007; Tay 2009). Parallels drawn with works such as *Roman Holiday* (dir. Wyler 1953) in the depiction of the female as *flâneuse* (Murphy 2006) in films such as *Lost in Translation* offer one such example. As Murphy (2006) suggests, *Roman Holiday* and *Lost in Translation* both interrogate significant cultural questions regarding gender narratives, suggesting that "for both films, the historical icon of the *flâneur* represents a convenient and powerful mechanism to reexamine each generation's sense of gender classification and its transgressions, ambiguities, and ideological difficulties" (p. 35). Equally, Coppola's depiction of the urban landscape provides insights into the cinematic imagining of cultural excess, suggesting, on the one hand, a latent exoticisation that verges on racism (McGowan 2007)—a charge that has similarly been brought against Wes Anderson's work in its privileging of white characters and diminution of other ethnicities (Dean-Ruzicka 2013)—but, on the other, an image of strategic absence. McGowan (2007) concludes of *Lost in Translation* that "excess inevitably promises more than it can deliver, and consequently, the only enjoyment it provides for us is imaginary. When we see images of excess, we imagine that they carry the ultimate enjoyment, but this enjoyment only exists insofar as it remains out of reach in the image" (p. 62). Coppola's visual strategy of excess simultaneously "fills up" the image (a strategy seen across much of her work) yet denies the image any clear meaning, leaving surfaces and aesthetic plenitude to compensate for a deliberate representation of absence or ennui. Similarly, in drawing analogy between *Lost in Translation* and *Bladerunner* (dir. Scott 1982), Nicieja (2014) posits that Asian cities become "symbolic backdrops used to highlight the dilemmas and challenges of contemporary existence and to draw attention to aspects of city life that otherwise could have been obscured or unnoticed" (p. 334). In both critiques, McGowan and Nicieja point to Coppola's continual return to themes of excess as strategy of denied meaning, leaving her characters and viewers alike adrift in a visual surplus devoid of signification. Perhaps this accounts for the enduring

(and somewhat misunderstood) criticism that her work lacks substance which is, in fact, an elision of her auteurist intention. In this respect, Coppola should perhaps be read as quintessentially postmodern in her emphasis on excess as a compensatory mechanism for meaninglessness.

Under the creative direction of Raf Simons, Coppola's 2017 campaign for Calvin Klein underwear featured Kirsten Dunst, Rashida Jones, Lauren Hutton, Nathalie Love, Laura Harrier, Chase Sui Wonders and model Maya Thurman-Hawke in a documentary-style series of seven vignettes about the womens' lives. Accompanied by an unnamed track by French indie band *Phoenix*, the suite was shot in black and white returning to Coppola's signature as an indie film-maker. Newman (2009) illuminates the tension of the terms "indie" from the vantagepoint of cultural production, suggesting that the term evokes

> a contradictory notion insofar as it counters and implicitly criticizes hegemonic mass culture, desiring to be an authentic alternative to. it, but also serves as a taste culture perpetuating the privilege of a social elite of upscale consumers. There is a tension at the heart of indie cinema and culture between competing ideals and realities: on one hand, an oppositional formation of outsiders that sees itself as the solution to an excessively homogenized, commercialized media, and on the other hand a form of expression that is itself commercial and that also serves to promote the interests of a class of sophisticated consumers. In other words, indie cinema is a cultural form opposing dominant structures at the same time that it is a source of distinction that serves the interests of a privileged group within those structures. (p. 17)

The conflation of indie music, the use of black and white as a signifier of "artistic" or "creative" legitimacy and a quasi-documentary mode with its visually flat quality used to depict an "authentic" reality for the pleasure of equally savvy consumers not only taps the ethos of the Calvin Klein brand but the signature of Coppola's identity as a director. Here, commercial impetus and auteurist stature converge through the stylistic dimensions of the assemblage. The campaign also sees Coppola use Kirsten Dunst (*The Virgin Suicides, Marie Antoinette, The Beguiled*) once again in a circular referencing of Coppola's other work that thus

locates the advertisements within the context of the Coppola assemblage. As in Lynchian and Andersonian assemblages, the repetitive use of certain actors intensify the assemblage's territory by preserving and reiterating powerful symbolic, narrative and aesthetic dimensions.

All seven advertisements follow an essential repetitive structure, operating as individual entities in their own right but also as elements within the wider assemblage. When read together, they constitute a clustering of atemporal multiplicities that synchronise in the present to create a nonlinear narrative shared between seven narrators. However, this nonlinear atemporality necessarily requires the leveraging of certain memory fragments which casts the advertisements into seven different pasts. Time is nonlinear but also fractured or "split" as Deleuze suggests. Each advertisement oscillates between the direct address of documentary interview with the subject framed in close-up speaking directly to the camera and observational mode (Nichols 1991) as the camera occasionally captures seemingly spontaneous moments of interior authenticity or free motion. Reliant on narrative as its guiding structure, each woman recounts a story from her romantic past. For instance, Lauren Hutton recalls being asked to go for a ride a truck as an effective pick-up line, Rashida Jones speaks of her romantic gesture towards a renowned actor and Kirsten Dunst reflects on her first kiss as a moment of shock. The narrators' engagement with revelations of truth and human subjectivity through their own experience, issues that are elaborated into a form of philosophy by Errol Morris as will be discussed in the following chapter, form the foundational intensity that drives these advertisements. The Coppola assemblage is underpinned by its (re)presentation of an introspective human truth and experience and intensified through its authorial stature, cast, aesthetic styling and use of documentary mode. Coppola establishes a little system of affect, tapping perceptual, aesthetic and precognitive elements such as the bodily experience of memory to bring the assemblage together. Significantly, while each of these elements are present in all seven advertisements, and any one of the advertisements could be regarded as an assemblage in its own right through its bounded interaction of the above intensities, the deterritorialisation of subjectivity and experience, augmented by the diverse range of ages and life stages depicted, enhance the

expressive capacities of the assemblage by leveraging elements of perceived authenticity, intimacy and collectiveness. The aggregation of narratives and the repetition of aesthetic flow, along with the intimacy of direct address interview modes across the assemblage, enhances the elements that allow the consumer to engage in much the same way as they would with portraiture, documentary or film. Seeing the seven works as a composite of experiences that speak into, and interweave with, one another creates a more stable assemblage. Equally, the use of repetition and deterritorialisation through other aesthetic forms, such as documentary and arthouse cinema conventions, situates the assemblage within those wider circuits of cultural meaning that give contemporary advertising so much scope for experimentation and cross-pollination.

Willy Vanderperre—The Wanderer (2011)

Belgian fashion photographer Willy Vanderperre does not enjoy the "household name" status of Martin Scorsese or Wes Anderson. However, his presence in the world of fashion photography and digital advertising has refined perceptions of aesthetics, narrative, masculinity and youth and lays bare the integration or hybridity of aesthetics made possible by convergence across advertising, film and photography. Vanderperre studied at the Antwerp Royal Academy of Fine Arts and went on to shoot campaigns for Dior, Jil Sander and Prada. He is a regular contribution to *Love, W Magazine, AnOther Magazine, AnOther Man, Vogue Hommes International* and *American Vogue*. In 2015, Vanderperre released a monograph of his entire Instagram content entitled *635* and, in 2016, directed his first short film *Naked Heartland*. The film was accompanied by another book that highlighted stills from the film.

Critical scholarly attention given to Vanderperre's extensive opus is scant. Thomas (2017) includes Vanderperre in her consideration of the synergies between fashion houses and publishing, Kessler (2015) fleetingly acknowledges him in her work on Raf Simons and Doron (2016) mentions him in the context of visual representations of the gay fantasy figure in fashion advertising and editorial. However, there

is no dedicated work to date that examines this influential photographer/film-maker's opus, despite his stature as one of the most influential fashion photographers for the last twenty years. At its most superficial, Vanderperre's imagery is exquisitely beautiful, echoing the painting-like compositional cinematography of Fellini, Antonioni, Sorrentino or Lynch. More substantively, Vanderperre consistently returns to themes of youth and isolation, casting a melancholic eye over the angst of growing up, coming to terms with an emergent identity and loss of innocence. Vanderperre, in one of his comparatively rare interviews, describes his preoccupation with teen youth, suggesting that

> It's when you start to reflect on yourself. It's your first identity crisis; you start to question yourself and everything around you. Your teen years are when you actually start to challenge yourself and find your identity, and I think that's why it's so intriguing for me because the evolution is very visible. There is a beauty, a romanticism in the fragility that expresses itself in the way young people act, stand, the way they think, the look in their eyes. There's something so beautiful and vulnerable about that. (Vanderperre 2016)

Vanderperre's sensitivity to the fragility of youth is expressed across his opus. Frequently working in portrait, Vanderperre oscillates between muted colour and black and white in his photography. Often shot in semi close-up or mid-shot, Vanderperre searches the teen face for motion and nuance, oscillating between sharp detail and gentle light. The muted palette of his colour photography is carried through to his cinematic work, where his imagery takes on a watercolour-like quality. Watery blues and milky yellows are juxtaposed against intensive reds, greens and browns. Vanderperre attributes his aesthetic styling to a specifically Belgian art history and his engagement trough growing up the Flemish context,

> Growing up, I was really into The Flemish Painters, the light of those paintings, the shapes of the bodies, the emotion and the drama. I absorbed a lot of that. It is still part of my signature, but I always stay receptive to what I'm drawn too. For the moment I'm very much into

> painting, sculpture and dance. Always Francis Bacon, always Lucien Freud, the raw energy, the movement. Jenny Saville, the texture and abstraction. There are Flemish/Belgian contemporaries that I find very inspiring: Berlinde De Bruyckere, she sculpts, morphs human/animal bodies into shapes and what she does- it's quite spectacular. In that similar way the idea of morphing, raw emotions and movement, but through a different medium, there is Anne Therese Keersmaeker for dance, what she can evoke is amazing. Michael Borremans, does these amazing paintings and also Cris Brodahl… hers are almost like a Man Ray picture, surreal, striking, a bit uncomfortable. Religion is a red thread through out all of it, I feel. I was brought up with the idea of Catholic guilt, which is so Flemish. It's our heritage, Catholicism is everywhere… These Belgian artists I mentioned still carry that as well, that real feeling of small town Catholic guilt. It is very much Belgian. (Vanderperre in Sterling n.d.)

Vanderperre's formal education in photography and command of art history has enabled him to draw from the classical masters and more contemporary influences. In doing so, he has evolved a distinct aesthetic that transcends medium and has enabled him to turn his eye to various formats including digital media, consistently disseminating his distinctive visual style across platforms. While *Naked Heartland* (2016) is considered to be his first film, this is not quite the case. In 2011, Vanderperre directed *The Wanderer*, a two-minute short film for Dior and has continued to blur lines between advertisement and film in subsequent filmic offerings for Dior such as the three-minute *Enfold/Unfold* (2011), *The Players* (2013) and *Underpass* (2013). The popular perception that *Naked Heartland* was Vanderperre's first "real" film in light of these exceptional works attests to the kinds of generic rigidities that continue to linger in the media environment and the degree to which they have become irrelevant. While our attention is focused on *The Wanderer* as one of his first works for Dior, his other works are as equally worthy of attention for their exquisite detailing and ready engagement with diverse aesthetic influences. The aura, or mood, of each of the advertisements are similar and they share aesthetic and technical commonalities in their composition. As such, they compose a suite assemblage.

When asked if he saw fashion films as extended editorials, films, or a new medium altogether, Vanderperre responded that

> I want to treat them as a new medium. I don't think you should treat fashion films only as an extension of the published editorial, or it has to be the purpose, that the editorial is taken from the film. Sometimes you just have to treat it differently. Again, it's the challenges of a new, very interesting medium. With the Red camera high quality digital filming became accessible. The first clips I produced for Raf Simons and Another Magazine or LOVE, were all done with iMovie. I filmed, I graded, I edited, put the music on it. It was quite interesting having to learn and understand a new medium within itself, to find what I liked. I was working around a kind of fast forward, time lapse, hysterical editing style. I think the minute you feel excited about what you're doing, you can start to explore it more. You should treat it as a world of its own. (Vanderperre in Sterling n.d.)

Vanderperre is thus cognisant of the opportunities convergence media affords for creating new media artefacts, unfettered by extant categorisations. His focus on the content, rather than the appellation or designation of genre, resonates with the persistent argument put forth here that convergence media both challenges old, and establishes new, media making sensibilities, enabling cross-pollination, intersection and experimentation with classical media norms.

As one of the early examples of Vanderperre's moving image works, *The Wanderer* (2011) was commissioned and produced by Dior and overseen by artistic director Kris Van Assche—another graduate of Antwerp. *The Wanderer* can be read as part of a larger nine-part suite. The same aesthetic composition, montage elements and represented states of existential being spill across all of the works and utilise an approximately two-minute duration. The two minute, highly edited, montages contains relatively little dialogue and are perhaps better understood as an evocation akin to a moving painting rather than a film in the narrative sense. To attempt to explicate the assemblage in linear or narrative terms would not be possible. It is more useful to describe it as a flow of images that cascade over one another in a collision of

temporalities, spatialities and sensibilities. Vanderperre brings these elements together where spatial movement between interior/exterior is enacted in different ways by the male protagonist, the natural environment is represented and the repetition of images is set against an ever-changing abstract soundtrack featuring strings and sound effects.

To illustrate the elements of Vanderperre's work, our analysis turns to *The Wanderer* (2011). As with all of Vanderperre's work for Dior, the film opens with title credits announcing its intention as a film. From there, the philosophically engaged montage commences. Over the course of two minutes, a series of images interweave, depicting wheat fields, urban landscapes in the guise of electricity poles and suburban "nowheres" through which the Wanderer (model Victor Nylander) passes. Utilising black and white, saturated and soft colour palettes, images are shown in a nonlinear repetition, all the while different with each iteration (we cannot help but be reminded of Deleuze's own preoccupation with difference and repetition as the basis for creation). We see the same close-up of moving grass blowing in the wind several times, sometimes in black and white, others in colour. Some iterations are aurally framed by a mournful violin solo. Others include natural diegetic sound as wind howls through the montage at certain points. The same image opens and closes the film yet their resonances seems different. Vanderperre also interpolates static images, juxtaposing image as photography with image as filmic motion. Again, the same static image can appear several times in various states of black and white to colour, emphasising its changing nature through repetition. The Wanderer himself is also subject to these temporal irruptions, his body moving between slow motion and frenzy with each potential repetition. His image is also dynamically cut between natural images to disrupt any temporal continuity between frames. The camera moves between close-up, mid-shot, soft focus, oversaturated tonality, point of view tracking shots as we walk behind the Wanderer, dissolves, fades, moving between different angles of the same shot, capturing different speeds of the motion contained within the same image. The sound too moves with these perpetual speeds and slownesses, stasis and frenzy, natural and urban, subjective and natural perspectives, oscillating between natural sound in the early stages where we see different iterations of the

natural environment shot through with static images of the urban landscape. Approximately a third of the way through, the aural register shifts as a mournful violin solo shifts from diegetic to non-diegetic sound and from natural to composed sound. Later, the register shifts again as the violin fades and the diegetic natural sound returns but with a percussive addition that accelerates or slows with the image on screen. At one point, the Wanderer appears to speak but, for an English-speaking audience, it is not clear what he is saying and no translation is offered. On the one hand, sound works with the image as the violin often signals a period of slowness and more use of black and white. On the other, the natural sound of wind signals agitation, where cuts between images themselves move in quicker succession, leaping back and forth between the same suite of images that appear different each time. The Wanderer is the anchor for these temporal, audio and visual shifts as his own body motion appears to determine the tempo of the image. He moves deliberately in the black and white stretch of the field. But, in the next repetition, he is in fast motion as he swirls in full colour with the wind and dances frenetically on the deserted road at night. Images move rapidly along with his motion just as they slow down with his repose.

The film is a meditation on temporality, spaces and the isolated quality of our, albeit transcendent, existence in this world. Vanderperre locates the time-image in a complication of time itself, representing it as malleable, simultaneous, excessive and recurrent. Equally, he utilises different spaces such as the natural environment, the harsh urban landscape and the flatness of surburbia (both of which tend to appear in static imagery rather than imagery in motion like the natural environment which is represented as motion) to depict different spatial engagements defined only by own perspective and how we see. The repetitive use of the same image in different format accentuates this point while suggesting it is a question of perspective and representation rather than intrinsic essence that define our relationship with the world. The transcendent quality of the film is reminiscent of Mallick's approach to cinema; particularly in *Tree of Life* (2011) with its emphasis on the nature of time and the beauty of natural space. Both directors interrogate questions of human existence as they unfold in time and space and how we see ourselves in relation to the world. The cinematic quality

is also similar to Mallick's watery colour palette, use of light at certain points, close-ups of natural detail and an often inscrutable plot. But there are also elements of Aronofsky, especially in his use of accelerated or disjointed editing and digital manipulation in *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and *Black Swan* (2010) to paint moments of psychic trauma or paranoia. All of these works utilise editing to achieve the *frisson* and, by contrast, lethargy embodied by the protagonist. Just as Aronofsky obfuscates time and shifts temporal and spatial registers to depict crisis, Vanderperre's underpinning interrogation of isolation and lone wandering is augmented by the different realities that frame this loneliness that are captured through temporal variances and perspectival splinterings. We see the Wanderer still and captured in black and white, standing stationary in the middle of a deserted road. The next shot reveals the Wanderer in colour, dancing frenetically in the same road in a complete disruption of the previous frame. Equally, one shot of the Wanderer in the road problematises the almost dream-like, ahistorical quality of the film by showing a car drive past. It becomes unclear as where and when this world is occurring. While Vanderperre shows affinity with other film-makers like Mallick (for his mediative approach to the nature of seeing the world) and Aronofsky (for his manipulation of time and emotional states through editing), his visual aesthetic draw from equally diverse sources. Vanderperre's own pedigree as a fashion photographer is displayed in the still images scattered throughout the montage as the piece embraces a tangibly photographic quality and static images juxtapose against moving ones. Difference and repetition return as the same space is represented in stasis and in flux, repeated over and over through the lens of both a photographic stillness and a cinema of motion. Much of the colour imagery borrow their tonality from the Flemish Masters with the use of dark, sepia tones and restrained, but efficient, use of reds. Emphasis on portraiture is also apparent as we frequently see the framed Wanderer in close-up, his fine facial details illuminated by Vanderperre's soft light.

Vanderperre's advertising work, (of which *The Wanderer* is one of his early examples in an assemblage that continues to evolve), should be seen as a deterritorialisation of advertising, art, photography, cinema and digital media; an explosion of different expressive strategies

manifested through diverse media to create a unique assemblage unafraid to interrogate questions of time, space and human perception. Vanderperre's resistance to media categories and the hope for something new to emerge out of digital media resonate as guiding elements of the Vanderperre assemblage as it effortlessly exploits a range of media genres, aesthetics and ontologies. Fluxes and flows, speeds and slownesses, reality and dreams all come together as multiplicities, spilling into every frame. The system of affect that underpins this suite is complex, tapping perceptual, precognitive and cognitive capacities in the consumer who must make sense of time and space collapsed, shown to be circular rendering of one another that produce more and more becomings, more and more iterations. Vanderperre shows an assemblage in evolution; it gathers its intensity through the deterritorialising of the "original" image through multiple representations and configurations undertaken throughout the piece. Each image is an intensity produced by atemporality and a multiplicity within the context of the many forms and becomings to which it will be visually subjected. This system of affect then works across the rest of Vanderperre's work where similar repetitions and movement of time and space are played out.

As discussed in the previous chapters, advertisements embody components that constitute intensities, giving the advertisement its terrain and purpose. Some of these intensities draw from complex notions of time, space and becoming. The assemblages discussed here illustrate the point that not only can certain intensities be distributed across fragments to extend the assemblage but that more complex, affective systems can be constructed. The suite assemblage extends narrative, aesthetic and cultural elements, acquiring more nuanced or sophisticated capacities as it evolves. The size and degree of complexity bounded within the assemblage makes it, on the one hand, more inclined to deterritorialise but, on the other, able to express new and dynamic multiplicities. For advertising, the purpose of seeing how larger assemblages begin to aggregate and generate more expressive capacities is to understand how a higher order approach to assemblage thinking might enable more creative latitude and new possibilities for media artefacts. The following chapter discusses the vast *oeuvre* of Errol Morris as one example of how assemblage thinking might account for multifaceted,

interpolated bodies of diverse media work that roam genre, type and format yet nonetheless coalesce around a specific philosophical agenda. As an extension of diffused intensities strewn across different localities within the assemblage discussed here, Morris's work allows us to develop this possibility further.

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7

The *Oeuvre* as Assemblage

Documentarian Errol Morris's recognition of advertising as a form of film-making and its compressed nature as "temporal real estate" resonates with several of the strains of thoughts presented here. Morris emphasises the narrative quality of advertising, seeing it as a pursuit of stories rather than spectacles in order to engage consumers, and acknowledges the boundedness of advertising as assemblages that hold together through temporal and narrative intensities.

> I once described commercials as America's haiku. I don't know if that's true or not, but you're making little films, in essence. And it's as challenging as any other kind of filmmaking. The fact that it's all compressed into a very confined piece of temporal real estate makes it harder, not easier. I sometimes say brevity is the soul of concision. Or maybe concision is the soul of brevity. I'm not sure how I would order it. But it's the goal of finding ways to tell a story. Really good advertising is about telling stories, about creating ideas for a brand. And, as such, it's a difficult and daunting enterprise. (Errol Morris in Nudd 2017)

In much of Morris's advertising work, these intensities are spilled or deterritorialised across multiple fragments comprising complex,

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wide-ranging assemblages that exceed the temporal constraints of the singular assemblage. They extend the assemblage as a suite and engage with prolonged durations, intricate depictions and sophisticated cinematic techniques. In the instances of his work for *Quaker Oats, Levis* and *Miller Beer* among others, the total duration of the interconnected advertisements resembles that of a feature film, thereby enabling Morris to develop the same narrative complexity and visual distinction typically attributed to a film. As an example, in the case of his work for Levis, the twenty-five vignettes draw upon his pedigree in documentary film and, when read together, comprise a rich mosaic of human experience dealing with:

> things completely unrelated to jeans, talking about "what's true". He harnesses the intimate nature of real people to sell an idea of cool, young people see themselves in the interviewees. The interviews themselves are shot on a green screen, but the background placed in are fairly close to the image one would expect – street corners, train station, school. The disconnect between the real (interview) and slightly unreal (background) enhances our connection to the real speaker, one of the most subtly clever elements in Morris's ad work. (Bateman 2015)

But, as Orgeron and Orgeron (2007) point out, Morris's preoccupation with interview subjects as "witnesses" to their own lives and events as a way of asking larger questions around the nature of memory, remembering and history, is not always as linear as Bateman's account suggests. Rather, Morris's entire body of work, including his advertisements, probe the degree to which acts of witnessing, remembering and narrating can really speak to inherent truths and the extent to which images themselves at once consolidate that which we wish to see but also complicate through their "vagaries" (Orgeron and Orgeron 2007).

In this chapter, we focus on the possibilities for highly complex assemblages or *oeuvres* that draw upon wide-ranging philosophical, cultural and aesthetic referents to culminate in a highly diverse, deterritorialised assemblage capable of engaging with philosophical and social dialogues. Such *oeuvres* appear in advertising such as BMW's landmark assemblage, *The Hire* (2001–2002), produced largely by David

Fincher (and later Ridley and Tony Scott) featuring eight short films by noted directors John Frankenheimer (*Ambush*), Ang Lee (*Chosen*), Wong Kar-Wai (*The Follow*), Guy Ritchie (*Star*), Alejandro González Iñárritu (*Powder Keg*), John Woo (*Hostage*), Joe Carnahan (T*icker*) and Tony Scott (*Beat the Devil*). More recently, Miu Miu's *Women's Tales* commenced in 2012 in collaboration with the Venice Film Festival. Screened each year at the festival, *Women's Tales* bring together the directorial expertise of female directors with noted actresses, models and, sometimes, high fashion brought to life on screen. To date, the *oeuvre* has featured Zoe Cassavetes (*The Powder Room*), Lucretia Martel (*Muta*), Giada Colagrande (*The Woman Dress*), Massy Tadjedin (*It's Getting Late*), Ava Du Vernay (*The Door*), Hiam Abbass (*Le donne della Vucciria*), So Yong Kim (*Spark and Light*), Miranda July (*Somebody*), Alice Rohrwacher (*De Djess*), Agnès Varda (*Les trois boutons*), Naomi Kawase (*Seed*), Crystal Moselle (*That One Day*), Chloë Sevigny (*Carmen*) and Celia Rowlson-Hall (*The [End] of History Illusion*). In both cases, the extensive catalogue of works that move across vast stylistic, narrative and directorial horizons, call upon sophisticated cultural referents, engage in meditations on the human condition and present as intense assemblages. Lee's contemplation of childhood innocence, wisdom and spirituality in *Chosen*, Scott's interrogation of death in the Faustian pact in *Beat of the Devil*, Martel's depiction of the feminist cyborg (in a nod to Haraway) in *Muta*, Sevigny's portrayal of age and authenticity in *Carmen* and the realist depiction of isolation and the redemptive power of friendship among women in Moselle's *That One Day* are but a few of the themes explored across the two *oeuvres*. Such themes draw from fundamental philosophical questions to which these various advertisements respond. Proposing a view of advertising as a philosophical dialogue seems rather a risky proposition. Yet, if we ignore the traditional view of advertising as spectacle and focus on its intensities, extensions and capacities, it would seem that the possibilities for advertising as philosophically engaged assemblages are rich.

The objective of this chapter is to explore how advertising assemblages participate in long-standing philosophical discussions and elaborate new positionalities. In particular, this chapter focuses on how Morris plays out several of the philosophical strains of Deleuze and

Guattari's work pertaining to the role of the philosopher and the nature of truth. Like David Lynch, whose distinctive visual styling and preoccupation with philosophical questions of the hidden nature of evil, parallel existence and the fluid nature of identity (Devlin and Biderman 2011), the boundaries of reality and the sublime deterritorialise across his film, Morris's advertisements fit within an opus of literature, documentary, short film and photographic works that, when read together, constitute a philosophy. While much of Morris's recognition has come from his documentary work, he pursues equally critical questions in his advertising such that it becomes important to read across his work in order to demonstrate how advertising can become implicated in larger intellectual circuits of meaning and dialogue. Again, as with much of the work discussed thus far, this reading of advertising in concert with other media forms through an assemblage lens, consolidates the suggestion that classical media genres and the ability to attribute fixity to various aesthetic categories becomes difficult in a period shaped more by subjectivity, cross-platform flow and aesthetic hybridity. Instead, the intention here is to illuminate how concepts deterritorialise across media assemblages, extending and intensifying their many philosophical and aesthetic inflections.

Errol Morris is a director whose documentary credits include *Gates of Heaven* (1978), *Vernon Florida* (1981), *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), *A Brief History of Time* (1991), *Fast, Cheap and Out of Control* (1997), *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.* (1999), *The Fog of War* (2003—Oscar for Best Documentary), *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008), *Tabloid* (2010) and *The Unknown Known* (2013). He has also directed several fiction films, several short films and a range of television pieces. He has also directed over a thousand television commercials and several short films. As a proponent of the reflexive documentary mode, Morris has come to be regarded as one of the most significant documentarians of the contemporary age (Baker 2006; Thompson and Bordwell 2010). Working with such themes as historical trauma, the fallacies of received facts and the difficulties of human memory, his work interrogates key philosophic, ethical and moral questions that go to the heart of what is meant by "truth". As Geiger (2011) points out, Morris's style of film-making emerged in

the late 1970s and early 80s as part of a wider critical re-evaluation of classical documentary conventions, aesthetics and modes such as observational, *cinéma vérité* and "fly-on-the-wall" (Baker 2006) that remained anchored to notions of realism and conveyed truths (Baker 2006; Nichols 2001) as part of a postmodern criticism of the nature of objectivity. Morris borrows from across genres utilising elements of montage, constructivism, narrative cinema, realism, expressionism and meta-documentary (Thompson and Bordwell 2010). His work often uses interviews as the basis for his stories, featuring participants filmed via his Interrotron and Megatron, essentially a two-way camera apparatus that projects his image onto lens for the interviewee, causing the interviewee to stare directly at the camera as though speaking to Morris. The Interrotron, a deliberately tongue-in-cheek name, was first used in *Dr. Death* (1992) and has featured in much of Morris's work. He argues that the apparatus is designed to "create greater distance *and* greater intimacy. And it also creates the *true first person*. Now, when people make eye contact with me, it can be preserved on film" (Morris 2004).

Deleuze, Errol Morris and the Role of the Philosopher

How is Morris's work distinct as an *oeuvre* assemblage? Two elements are significant for answering this question. The first takes us back to a consideration of assemblage thinking as imagined by Deleuze and Guattari and to the heart of the intent of their theory. The second takes us to an interpretation of Morris's work. First, though, there is no question that the theory presented in *Mille Plateaux* is wide-ranging, complex and inclusive of diverse philosophical strains. In turn, the concepts presented have been applied to a range of contexts, such as film, geography, archaeology, philosophy proper, political theory, consumer culture, etc. such that the structure of assemblage thinking with its capacity to map flows, points of intersection and the "centres that hold together" has, in a sense, come to eclipse the essence of Deleuze and Guattari's originating intent. Hamilakis (2017) reminds us that:

> a fundamental property of all assemblages is their sensorial and affective import; that assemblages are arrangements of material and immaterial entities; and that they are also about material and sensorial memory, as well as about the engendering of diverse temporalities; and, finally, that assemblages necessitate the deliberate agency and intervention of social actors. (p. 170)

While the final point may be disputed by others such as De Landa (2015), Hamilakis' encapsulation of the primary components of an assemblage draw faithfully from Deleuze and Guattari's original concept and lead us to reflect further on why these elements are significant. Beyond the effects of arrangement, temporalities and actor intervention, all of which are salient for the culmination of the assemblage, *why* should these elements come together? What is it that such a comingling of elements gives us in a fundamental human sense? While the collusion of arrangement, temporalities and actor intervention again map the bounded territories and intensities of the assemblage, as we have seen in some of the work considered thus far and discussed in Chapter 2, this would seem to risk emphasising structure over the philosophical intent of assemblage thinking. It is important to remember, then, that *Mille Plateaux* and its forerunner *Capitalisme et schizophrénie. L'anti-Œdipe* (1972) are, at their core, calls to reimagine desire and its relationality with reality, society and production. Core to their argument is a reconfiguring of desire, not as a form of lack as the psychoanalytical tradition would have it, but rather as a positive human force that, in turn, creates a reality (1972, p. 28). In their opposition to oppression, fascism and the bureaucratic forces that promote the narrative of desire as lack, Deleuze and Guattari seek to liberate the most positive elements of human desire and counteract "the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality" (Foucault 1983, pp. xii–xiii). Endemic to this emphasis upon desire as a positive force is an acknowledgement of irrationality, subjectivity and the difficulties of reason as necessary aspects of the metaphysical fluxes and flows that may lead to constructive ruptures and new ways forward. Deleuze perhaps expresses this most effectively in commenting:

> Every society is at once rational and irrational. They are necessarily rational in their mechanisms, their gears and wheels, their systems of connection, and even by virtue of the place they assign to the irrational. All this presupposes, however, codes or axioms which do not result by chance, but which do not have an intrinsic rationality either. It's just like theology: everything about it is quite rational if you accept sin, the immaculate conception, and the incarnation. Reason is always a region carved out of the irrational—not sheltered from the irrational at all, but traversed by it and only defined by a particular kind of relationship among irrational factors. Underneath all reason lies delirium, and drift. (Deleuze 2004a, p. 262)

Consistent throughout Deleuze's work, and indeed throughout assemblage thinking, is an authentic comfort with delirium and shift as the catalysts for flows, multiplicities and new lines of flight. Such a view resists the prescription of truths as objective, unalterable realities to be distributed among, and between human institutions or collectives, and human sensibilities as being in need of unification. While societies may be rational in their structure or organisation, sitting beneath these mechanisms swells a sea of uncertainty, multiplicity and the irrational. While always anchored to the continuity of the plane of immanence, out of which infinite combinations emerge, Deleuze foregrounds this random dynamic as the basis for new flows and lines of flight in his earlier writings, arguing that:

> The philosopher, it is true, proceeds with greater disinterest: all that he proposes as universally recognised is what is meant by thinking, being and self - in other words, not a particular this or that but the form of representation or recognition in general. This form, nevertheless, has a matter, but a pure matter or element. This element consists only of the supposition that thought is the natural exercise of a faculty, of the presupposition that there is a natural capacity for thought endowed with a talent for truth or an affinity with the true, under the double aspect of a *good will on the part of the thinker* and an *upright nature on the part of thought.* It is because everybody naturally thinks that everybody is supposed to know implicitly what it means to think… According to this image, thought has an affinity with the true; it formally possesses the true

> and materially wants the true. It is *in terms of* this image that everybody knows and is presumed to know what it means to think. Thereafter it matters little whether philosophy begins with the object or the subject, with Being or with beings, as long as thought remains subject to this Image which already prejudges everything: the distribution of the object and the subject as well as that of Being and beings. (1994, p. 131)

Here, Deleuze essentially demoralises the trajectory of Western philosophy, starting with Descartes, by interrogating the entrenched beliefs that thought, in itself, is inherent to the exercise of human reason, that thought as a natural act is undertaken in a spirit of "good will" and *ergo* truth will thus prevail. The imbrication of good will and truth, underpinned by the assumption of a universal human ease with thought and faculty, is instead challenged by Deleuze (following Artaud and Nietzsche) on the basis of difference:

> the conditions of a philosophy which would be without any kind of presuppositions appear all the more clearly: instead of being supported by the moral Image of thought, it would take as its point of departure a radical critique of this Image and the 'postulates' it implies. It would find its difference or its true beginning, not in an agreement with the *pre-philosophical* Image but in a rigorous struggle against this Image, which it would denounce as *non-philosophical*. As a result, it would discover its authentic repetition in a thought without Image, even at the cost of the greatest destructions and the greatest demoralisations, and a philosophical obstinacy with no ally but paradox, one which would have to renounce both the form of representation and the element of common sense. As though thought could begin to think, and continually begin again, only when liberated from the Image and its postulates. (1994, p. 132)

Here, Deleuze establishes the premise that, as against a Cartesian image of thought into which the assumptions of ease, good will and truth are inscribed, real thought is in fact difficult, located in fissures and the interstices of the inarticulable, in its search to bring forth the yet unknown. In speaking of Artaud, Deleuze illuminates the elusiveness of certainty and the fragility of "truth" as a discernible consequence of thought as a given capacity. Artaud's:

> case brings him into contact with a generalised thought process which can no longer be covered by the reassuring dogmatic image but which, on the contrary, amounts to the complete destruction of that image. The difficulties he describes himself as experiencing must therefore be understood as not merely in fact but as difficulties in principle, concerning and affecting the essence of what it means to think. Artaud said that the problem (for him) was not to orientate his thought, or to perfect the expression of what he thought, or to acquire application and method or to perfect his poems, but simply to manage to think something… Henceforth, thought is also forced to think its central collapse, its fracture, its own natural 'powerlessness' which is indistinguishable from the greatest power - in other words, from those unformulated forces, the *cogitanda,* as though from so many thefts or trespasses in thought. Artaud pursues in all this the terrible revelation of a thought without image, and the conquest of a new principle which does not allow itself to be represented. He knows that *difficulty* as such, along with its cortege of problems and questions, is not a de facto state of affairs but a *de jure* structure of thought; that there is an acephalism in thought just as there is an amnesia in memory, an aphasia in language and an agnosia in sensibility. He knows that thinking is not innate, but must be engendered in thought. He knows that the problem is not to direct or methodically apply a thought which pre-exists in principle and in nature, but to bring into being that which does not yet exist (there is no other work, all the rest is arbitrary, mere decoration). To think is to create - there is no other creation - but to create is first of all to engender 'thinking' in thought. (2004b, p. 147)

Deleuze is quoted at length here in order to capture the inflections that impact both the groundings of the image of thought as a stable engagement and has ramifications for questions of truth, sensibility and perception. If thinking as a creative act, an act in which the novel is brought forth, is embodied in thought and thought is a difficult rather than given act, this suggests a problematisation of that which is understood to be "real", "true" or "given". The act of creation, undertaken through the throws of thinking, must necessarily become a search, a discovery and a revelation. As such, the concept of thinking throws the elements of reason, truth and uncertainty into a state of

ambiguity such that the individual determination of thinking becomes the only path through which revelation may be achieved. This unshackling of thinking from the framing structures of morality (as Nietzsche points out), judgement and "good will" is further elaborated in *Mille Plateaux* through the development of assemblage thinking itself where the emphasis on the formation of the assemblage is reliant upon a coalescing of components and the flow of intensities, always in a flux of territorialising and deterritorialising, rather than a preordained state of being. The concepts developed in *Mille Plateaux* refrain in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie*? (Deleuze and Guattari 1994) where, again, philosophy is defined as the cultivation of new concepts rather than attempting speculations or propositions that fall more into the realm of science. If a concept suggests revelation, then propositions suggest the need for affirmation or denial (thus leading back to questions of truth value). It is not the role of philosophy to engage in judgements of truth against an extant schemata, but rather the evolution of concepts that perhaps enable our movement towards it:

> Philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth. Rather, it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, or Important that determine success or failure. Now, this cannot be known before being constructed. We will not say of many books of philosophy that they are false, for that is to say nothing, but rather that they lack importance or interest, precisely because they do not create any concept or contribute an image of thought or beget a [conceptual] persona worth the effort. (1994, p. 82–83)

Thus, the objective of philosophy is not to venture into terrains of affirmed truths but rather to weave a path over the plane of immanence in which all conceptual possibilities are embedded ready to be extracted or mined by the philosophical endeavour. From such a search, new terrains, or indeed truths, may be discovered.

The problematisation of truth as an inevitable outcome of reason, good will and human application is also central to the Morris assemblage. While his work is often interpreted, justifiably, as a depiction of subjectivity through the fragments of human recollection, it is equally

fruitful to see his work through the lens of a Deleuzian impetus to recuperate a philosophical project of conceptual evolution via the vicissitudes of human rememberings and actions. Morris himself has frequently emphasised the importance of truth, commenting, for example, that "I believe that there's some deep virtue in pursuing truth. Maybe it's the highest virtue. I believe that. Whether you can attain it or not, you can pursue it. It can be a goal. It can be a destination" (Pappademas 2015). Yet, underlining this sentiment is the realisation that truth is not imminent, quantifiable or even tangible. It exists, perhaps, in the plane of immanence (to borrow Deleuze) and we can only attempt to evolve concepts that bring us closer. Morris's observation that "civilization is made possible by the fact that we withhold things from other people" (McDonald 2013) implicitly concedes that the discovery of truth is rendered impossible by virtue of human nature. Instead, it remains a metaphysical possibility occasionally illuminated through the agency of inquiry and partial exposure.

In his consideration of the documentary genre, Nichols (1991) interrogates the extent to which reflexive documentary, a form that makes "the conventions of representations themselves more apparent and to challenge the impression of reality" (p. 33) as against expository or observational documentary, is able to access the real within the constraints of filmic construction. He asks "how can the viewer be drawn into an awareness of this problematic so that no myth of knowability of the world, of the power of the logos, no repression of the unseen and unrepresentable occludes the magnitude of 'what every film-maker knows': that every representation, however fully imbued with documentary significance, remains a fabrication?" (1991, p. 57). Rather than attempting to pursue the real within the constraints of construction, Morris explicates the undecidability of the real, both through his own directorial interjections and aesthetic manipulations and through the revelation of perspectival inconsistencies. In commenting on *The Thin Blue Line* (1989), Nichols suggests that:

> Morris dramatizes the quest for evidence, and underlines the uncertainty of what evidence there is. He reminds us of how every documentary constructs the evidentiary reference points it re- quires by returning us,

> again and again, to the scene of the crime by means of a re-enactment that highlights suggestive, evocative, but also completely inconclusive aspects of the event (such as a milkshake tumbling through the air in slow motion or a car taillight held in dose-up while the physical identity of the killer remains resolutely indeterminate). Though realist in many respects, the film blocks the "natural," largely unquestioned assumption of a direct correspondence between realism and the truthfulness of claims about the world. (1991, p. 58)

Thus, Morris's ambition is not to "re-construct" events through human memory or to provide the viewer with a stable account but rather to conceptualise the intersection of events, memories and perceptual frailties through the image of thought articulated throughout the film. Morris has as much of a role to play in this construction of indetermination as the documentary participants themselves, interpolating images of possible events, found footage, contextualising shots and his own directorial voice—a practice that has led some to wonder where the borders between fiction and "documentary" lie in his work. On the one hand, his work could be viewed as an investigation of "facts" especially when read against the background of his former career as a private investigator, but, on the other, it seeks to attenuate truth in the greater service of memory, aesthetics and the instabilities of knowing (Nunn 2004). In one sense, then, to interpret Morris's assemblage as an interrogation of truth contravenes its greater *puissance* as a revelation of ambivalence, articulated through the very human qualities of memory, intentionality and uncertainty. To this extent, Morris engages in a profound endeavour shared with Deleuze, Guattari and those that come before them, such as Nietzsche and Heidegger, to elaborate the nature of being not through direct questions of truth but rather a project of revealing. Grundman and Rockwell (2000) allude to this philosophical endeavour in commenting that Morris:

> uses the cinematic medium to seek realism in a philosophical rather than objective sense, by exploring the intersection of the 'fictional' and 'real' world we create and inhabit. In Morris's worldview, people live inside personal story worlds that they construct for themselves about who they

> are and what they're doing, worlds that may be divorced from reality and which are revealed through a person's language, through the stories they tell about themselves. (p. 4)

Suspended between fact and fiction, reality and delusion, this notion of the story world is central to the assemblage as it lays the ground for the many interacting intensities that subsequently shift and flow. This resistance to classical documentary expectations of pure observation, objectivity and an unmasking of "truth" has led some (Geiger 2011; Ricciardelli 2010; Williams 1993) to characterise Morris's work as postmodern since it reflects a reflexivity and rejection of a "totalizing meta-narrative as a way to organize knowledge of the past, and mixes fact with fiction" (Ricciardelli 2010, p. 36). While the alignment with postmodernity's de-emphasis of meta-narratives and an acknowledgement of the subjective positionality are present in Morris's work (and, to this extent, can draw analogy with the spirit of postmodernity), the postmodern resistance to "meaning" or the discovery of something beyond Wakefield's (1990) surface of depthlessness occludes Morris's pursuit of truths (as multiple and contingent as they may be) and his belief that, while truth may remain inaccessible, it is nonetheless real and meaningful. In this way, Morris returns to the Deleuzian agenda of new concepts, new ways of searching and new problems to resolve, sifted out from the plane of immanence.

The Morris Assemblage

In the earlier chapters, we traced some of the core concepts of assemblage thinking in advertising. The purpose of visiting the tropes of becoming, spatiality, (a)temporality and the *Body Without Organs* was to elaborate how some of the key elements of Deleuze and Guattari's theory is animated in the media context as driving intensities and building blocks of advertising assemblages. Once established, these intensities are seen to spill out, or deterritorialise, across media forms only to reterritorialise into a coherent, albeit ever-morphing, form in the guise of an identifiable aesthetic, cultural object. The Morris assemblage

is significant in that it embodies most of these intensities and elevates them to higher planes of questioning. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Morris engages in a search—a search for elusive truths that remain out of reach leaving only the possibility of discovering the partial, the interesting and, perhaps, the important. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Morris does not see this journey as fruitless wanderings in a terrain that never gives up its secrets but rather a necessary voyage of inchoate revelations that emerge out of the interstices of perception, memory and narrative. This journey spills across the entire Morris assemblage where each of his creative offerings return to common preoccupations with human subjectivity and perceptions of truth. Nunn (2004) locates these themes within even wider circuits of cultural meaning and aesthetic assemblages, arguing that his works sit within "a broader move within television (signified by popular forms such as the talk show, magazine news and reality TV), which may be loosely defined as a relatively open process of 'working through'" (p. 413) human experience without reaching ultimate judgements or definitions. As a starting point for our discussion then, Morris's own website (errolmorris.com) offers a glimpse into how we may approach the Morris assemblage replete with its fragmentary morsels of reflexive irony, philosophical musings and multi-perspectival intersections. A trip to the site (which can be read simultaneously as an assemblage in its own right and as part of the larger Morris assemblage) reveals a maze of intersecting fragments out of which intertwined themes and ideas can be discerned. The site features most of his advertisements, links to, or excerpts of, his many feature and short film works, links to his books, an archive of research material, an active twitter feed and blog, links to other interesting media and a rich array of photographic content. The site is, at once, disparate yet coherent, a reflection of the many themes and meditations that have concerned Morris over his career and a window of insight into the philosophical questions that have continued to preoccupy him. While Fallon (2013) argues that the site is interesting from the perspective of Morris's utilisation of digital media, where "far from simply promoting Morris's films, the site is a fully fledged production of its own and one of the more interesting utilizations of the internet to connect and expand upon a filmmaker's multimedia body of work" (p. 21), the site

is equally important as a portal to understanding both the possible logic of Morris's work (suggested here as a search through fragmentation towards revelation) and how the assemblage holds together in the atemporality of simultaneity and nonlinearity.

While many commentators have approached Morris's work with questions around the stylistic nature of his films, what kind of documentaries they are and whether or not he conforms to the conventions of documentary according to the theoretical structures of documentary, Platinga (2009) is rare in his explicit recognition of Morris as a philosopher. The medium, whether film, web, advertising or literature, provides the vehicle through which Morris pursues his philosophical agenda. In light of this acknowledgement, Platinga offers ten "lessons" taken from his interpretation of Morris's work (in a nod to the eleven lessons that structured Morris's Robert McNamara documentary *The Fog of War*) that frame Morris's *visual style* (the exploration of mental landscapes requires film techniques that are creative, intrusive and which manipulate and/or alter visual reality), *beliefs* (as an epistemology, philosophical realism is to be preferred to postmodernism; given the tenuous condition of humanity with respect to knowledge of self and world, the truth-seeker should ask questions and practice epistemic humility), *understanding of human nature* (once established, personal fables and other beliefs become intractable; human attempts to know the world are typically riddled with error and misunderstanding, and are side-tracked by self-interest and wilful Ignorance; the human story is a tragicomedy) and documentary approach (the filmed interview is the best tool to discover and represent mental landscapes; spoken words, written language, and other visual symbols are sources of both illumination and mystification). Platinga's ten lessons similarly offer some guidance on how the Morris assemblage holds together, illuminating the philosophical "glue" that binds his works together into a coherent assemblage. The two lessons that are of particular interest for apprehending Morris's philosophical assemblage are that *humans construct frameworks of belief—fables and dreamscapes—to make sense of their lives and their world* and that *objective truth exists; truth can be known; truth is difficult to know*. In a sense, these two lessons frame the others and therefore speak to the core intensities of the assemblage. For all the diversity of medium, seeming

randomness of content and eccentricity of characters as reflected in his website, the Morris assemblage is territorialised by some clear preoccupations that intersect, flow and morph. While Platinga draws his ten lessons exclusively from Morris's documentaries, a consideration of how these preoccupations interweave as intensities throughout *all* of Morris's content is illuminating both for a better understanding of Morris's project and for our consideration of advertising's potential for engagement with complexity.

Frameworks of Belief

As an illustrative starting point, the lesson that "humans construct frameworks for belief—fables or dreamscapes—to make sense of their lives and their world" (Platinga 2009, p. 49) underpins Morris's *Miller Beer* campaign (1999–2005). This significant opus of eighty commercials commissioned by Weiden and Kennedy draws thematic and stylistic parallels with documentaries *Gates of Heaven* (1978), *Vernon, Florida* (1988) and *Fast, Cheap and Out of Control* (1997) to depict human story worlds, myths and subjectivities. Lippert (1998) describes the character of the opus and its themes, connecting them to wider cultural sensibilities and cultural artefacts:

> the touchstones of 1950s and early '60s working-class suburbia. And it manages to honor those resonant codes in an ironic, dreamy way… the ad touches the contemporary American hunger for real heroes, for the basics of post-World War II bluecollar, movin'-on-up kind of living. This is the proud, hopeful, solid stuff that commercials for Miller High Life (the "champagne of bottled beer") once sold us straight. Miller isn't alone. In the last few months, the celebration of Spielberg's Saving Private Ryan and Mark McGwire's 62nd home run hit similar cultural chords. (p. 30)

In addition to TV, the advertisements broadcast via a host of online platforms, YouTube and Morris's website. In a return to Morris's pedigree as documentary-maker, there was also a supporting two-minute Miller montage based on the classic American road trip that only

launched online. The documentary extended the thirty-second advertisement and further accentuated the convergent identity of the campaign. There was also some preliminary discussion about a television series to be directed by Morris that did not eventuate (Comiteau 2004; Linnet 2004). Here, we start to see the impact of convergence, the extension beyond polysemy to diverse ownerships and the reach across channels, drawing different, but equally resonant, meanings (McCracken 1993; Nava and Nava 1992). When viewed together, the advertisements almost run to a feature documentary length and offer a similar degree of complexity in their detail such that an analysis of individual fragments is impossible. Through the cross-pollination of cinematic and documentary techniques that privilege the interplay between film-maker and viewer, a relationship that he has frequently emphasised, Morris contextualises advertising as an aesthetic cultural object, shifting it from a typical beer advertisement to a complex audio–visual space for viewer engagement with varying subjectivities. In reconfiguring the nature of viewership and envisaging advertising as culturally relevant content, new possibilities for advertising are made possible. Morris invites the same construction of systems of thought and mental landscape traditionally attributed to the cinematic or photographic form. As a result, certain intensities emerge.

Just as *Gates of Heaven* and V*ernon, Florida* are set in small towns in obscure parts of America populated by "regular folks" who do not recognise their own quirky eccentricities, the Miller Man's story world is equally introspective and charged with similar rituals, objects and practices that reaffirm his significance in the world. These sites of humanness represent "memories and places" where "the strange and often highly repetitive or ritualistic aspects of human behaviour" play out (Nunn 2004, p. 415). Just as, according to Benjamin (2002), Baudelaire reduced and made accessible the vast wilderness of Paris, so too does the Miller Man offer a shrunken, miniature view of his world. We are beholden to this miniature view since we see through him and share his perspective through the lens of Morris's camera. Within this miniature world, where time and space are refracted through the mundanity of small-town life, human subjectivity deterritorialises, merging into the story world itself along with the various objects that become precious.

Miller beer resides among trash compactors, food, tools and tape; one object relegated to one of many. Old objects are represented in their de-commodified light as tired, loved possessions, relegated to masculine spaces in the home where, as in *Fridge*, they assume new meanings or, as in *Tool Belt*, affirm identity. Objects as desire in traditional advertising become objects as fragments of subjective representation in the Miller story world where nothing is new and everything has its place. This preoccupation with valued objects as symbols embedded within "frameworks of belief" is mirrored across Morris's documentary work. In G*ates of Heaven* (1978), the bodies of much-loved family pets are brought to the competing pet cemeteries and in *Vernon, Florida* (1988), the precious jar of expanding sand, the fake diamond and the terrified gopher are fetishised projections of intimate subjectivities. Likewise, in *Dr. Death* (1992), the paraphernalia of death accompanies the main protagonist Fred Leuchter in his ritualised work as executioner. In all cases, interviewees narrate the object, attributing to it an almost mystical value by virtue of its contextualisation within their lives. While one cannot help but be struck by the irony of one of Morris's folks in *Vernon, Florida* who muses "I don't know what I'm looking for" as he stares via magnifying glass in the layers of artifice of his synthetic gemstone, the value of objects as symbolic gestures of subjectivity looms large in his character's story world as fragments of identity, certainty and subjective belief.

There is particular incongruity between the emphasis placed on objects and intimate environments such as kitchens and parlours where precious objects are housed and the visual absence of the Miller Man himself. We never actually see the Miller Man's face. Morris's focus in framing and editing is on partial faces, bodies and details such as an extreme close-up of a bald head or hands at work. Even relationships between a man and those around him are always glimpsed and fragmentary, such as the women in *Gossip* or the young man in *Mother-in-Law*. While those around the Miller Man sometimes appear in full frame (such as in *Newlyweds*), the Miller Man usually does not. In this respect, we see the return of Baudelaire's (1964 [1863]) *flâneur*, who is at once central and peripheral to the world he inhabits and narrates. While we see the suburban Paris streets through his eyes, we never truly see

him. In bringing the world closer, miniaturising it for us so as to make it accessible, we must inevitably lose him. Likewise, in seeing streets, homes and diners through the Miller man's eyes and experiencing his thoughts, it is not possible to see him since he is our intermediary or observer (Benjamin 2002). Although the character is fragmented, his thoughts are articulated to the viewer via voice-over narrative and, with this strategy, Morris privileges the subjective thought system of the advertisement over the material accessibility of the character. Resha (2015) points out the connection to some of Morris's other work in the photographic fragmentation of the body, drawing stylistic similarities between the Miller Man and the depiction of the murder in *The Thin Blue Line* (1988):

> During the re-enactments of Officer Wood's murder, the events are often fragmented into a series of specific actions framed in close-up; a hand drops off a steering wheel, feet walk up to the car, a gun emerges from dark, feet twist and spin, and so forth. Faces in the re-enactment scenes are also fragmented into eyes, ears, and mouths. Morris's High Life commercials also use close framings that crop the filmed objects, including the working-class men that populate the commercials. For example, as a mosquito attempts to attach itself to one of the High Life men for the blood that is "teeming with man juice from Milwaukee," there are shots of the man's head. We see the side of his head, half of his face, the top of his head, but never the whole head or face. (p. 113)

This dissembling of the human body speaks to the partialness, fragmentation and self-referentiality of the human story world. In the instance of the *Thin Blue Line*, it is impossible to know what transpired during the late-night murder under investigation, as we are left with only traces of speculation and imaginings represented through the extreme close-ups—something akin to the known unknowns of which Rumsfeld speaks in *The Unknown Known* (2013). Likewise, the interior world of the Miller Man is revealed in snippets, reunified only through the intervention of the exterior voice of the narrator. Truth eludes us. A similar bodily dissembling occurs in *A Brief History of Time* (1991). The film documents pre-eminent scientist Stephen Hawking and, while

significant attention is given to Hawking's scientific achievements, the inevitable fact of his disabilities as a result of Lou Gehrig's Disease is depicted in Hawking's wheelchair-bound life. In contrast with the front-on mid-shots of Hawking's family, friends and colleagues being interviewed, Morris shoots Hawking mainly in close-up, representing him as a partial subject. Smith (2015) describes how "we see only his hand, clicking the mouse-like device by which he controls his computer, or his shoes on the wheelchair's footrest, or—with increasing frequency as the film progresses—only parts of the wheelchair itself. Already physically passive and without his own voice, Hawking is steadily de-humanized, turned into a machine" (p. 204). In particular, Smith references the final scene where the camera cuts from parts of Hawking's body and chair to a view of Hawking from behind his chair. The night sky reaches out beyond him in an allegory of the universe he studies and the seeming endless potential of his intellectual capacities. Smith points to critics such as Ferris (1992) and Sterritt (1992), who have read the scene as symbolic of Hawking's glory, as failing to acknowledge our inability to see the object of our admiration himself who has been "reduced to body pieces and wheelchair parts and has disappeared almost entirely" (p. 204). Yet, when placed in the context of the larger Morris assemblage, it would seem that such a criticism misses Morris's use of fragmented or vanishing bodies as a strategy of occlusion, a gesturing towards the unknowability of human subjectivity. Tight bodily close-ups frequently appear in *The Fog of War* (2003) and *The Unknown Known* (2013) too as Morris strives to capture the detail and nuance of his subjects, as though probing for the slightest inflection in their emotional state. It would seem then that this fine detailing of the human body should be seen as emblematic of Morris's philosophical pursuit of human systems of thought, a key intensity of the Morris assemblage.

As in his documentaries where interviewees are stationary, Morris's move away from the traditional emphasis on action in his advertising is also significant. The tradition of aspirational advertising has been to show lives transitioning to the next level of satisfaction. In order to achieve this sense of motion, protagonists typically do something—whether it be play with family, go to work, prepare for parties with lots of friends and so forth. The depiction of this hectic, glamorous life has

been frequently augmented by an energetic voice-over narrating the challenges and remedies of managing so many active dimensions. In this respect, sound and image often work to affirm the need for social mobility. By contrast, Morris rejects the "life in motion" emphasis on action as a metaphor for progression and attainment to an emphasis on thought, contemplation and the narration of the interior monologue. The Miller Man does not do much; his actions are slow, deliberate, as though weighed down by thought. The voice-over reflects this physical lethargy, captured through a slow, drawling pace that narrates his complex considerations. Morris cuts through the shallow vivacity of traditional advertising and its emphasis on action to instead intensify his connection with the viewer via narrative, monologue and slow contemplation. The commentary is personal, intimate, yet also universal. The Miller Man speaks about his struggles and insecurities, the imperfect world impacted by change and uncertainty, and his own sense of grappling for a place among his things.

The Miller opus illustrates several key intensities that emerge throughout the entire Morris assemblage and show his construction of human story worlds as sites of partialness, interiority and subjectivity. Three essential dimensions emerge. The first is how this interrogation of story worlds prompts a shift in the relationship between the film-maker and consumer as viewer, the second is the different kind of relationship this shift entails and the third is how Morris achieves this involvement of his audience through a range of techniques. Collectively, these three dimensions signal a reappropriation of advertising where it moves from its traditional role as static brand marketing to reflexive art form offering a new imagining (and representation) of people, objects and terrains. In doing so, we are shown life as it is, life in its simplicity, full of the objects with which we, as viewers, can identify. Morris shifts the traditional encounter between advertising and product, subject and product to one of shared perspective. The subject (beer) acts as an intermediary and the true focus is the establishment of a complicit experience between Morris and the viewer. This nostalgic connection with traditional America, a representation of the minutiae of everydayness and an expression of old world views tapped the subjectivity of the so-called typical Miller consumer. This sense of

connection with the depicted story worlds lies in the deliberate engagement by the film-maker with the viewer, inviting a shared perspective on the world represented. Morris includes the viewer by constructing a shared, familiar social world, where depictions of "real" life become an encounter with inner, virtual worlds of perception, involuntary memory, affect (Deleuze 2013 [1985]) and refuge (Bachelard 1958). The consumer views the Miller Man as the film-maker sees him. We are complicit in our view and collective in our memories. The Miller man does not speak to us about the nature of truth but rather speaks with us, and indeed for us, in the representation of a familiar and universal consciousness.

Equally, the human quality of the content and their very real depictions of average men in mundane situations enlists a certain vulnerability to connect with diverse audiences. This is a quality that presents through much of his advertising and the assemblage as a whole. The departure from an advertising spectacle where attractive families entreat us to purchase new commodities to make us happier and more glamorous is marked by Morris's emphasis on the earthy physicality of the Miller Man himself. We see bald heads, imperfect stomachs, hardened hands and bodies covered in shabby, well-worn clothes. This intimate, true and inevitable humanity reveals the inelegant vulnerabilities of the body all the while racked by doubt and pleasure narrated by the voice over. Again, this reflexive quality of gritty realism creates a point of connection with the audience as they remember their own encounters with sugary donuts or juicy burgers, prompting, as Bachelard (1958) describes, personal memories through the acts shown on screen. Advertising here is shifted away from the commodity since we are not focusing on Miller beer but rather the memory of a BBQ with friends, a stolen donut in the kitchen or some other buried recollection as we retreat into a Bachelardian world of objects as triggers for recollection—a return to the sheets of past of which Bergson speaks. He achieves these connections with the viewer through his cinematic techniques. Morris himself has discussed the stylistic slippages between his documentary and advertising work:

> There are a lot of things. Visual storytelling. Interviewing. The concern with the camera. Unusual framing and camera placements, which is something that has interested me from the very beginning of my career as a filmmaker, and still interests me, of course. I take great pride in the fact that, for a lot of nonfiction filmmaking, there's a kind of standard of how you're going to shoot the material. You're going to shoot handheld with available light. And occasionally I do just that. But often I am looking for different and new and innovative ways of telling true stories. And I've been quite successful in finding ways of covering a true story that is almost anti-documentary in character. The lighting can be beautiful. The camera can be controlled. The framing can be very much part of the style of what I'm doing. And yet, at the same time, preserve an authenticity, a genuineness, to the performances that I'm getting in front of the camera. I think if I have one virtue as a filmmaker, that's it. (Nudd 2017)

Thus, the visual renderings that define Morris's aesthetic intensities such as camera angles, cropping, jump-cuts, close-ups, relatively flat colouring or colour saturations all work to cohere his vision of human subjectivity, illuminate their interior worlds and locate their stories, memories and fragilities within.

Truth Exists

If the philosophical emphasis on frailty of human subjectivity is one key intensity in the Morris *oeuvre*, paradoxically the defence of the reality of truth is another. If we return to Platinga's lessons for understanding Morris's philosophy, the second principle that steers our discussion is that "objective truth exists: Truth can be known; Truth is difficult to know" (p. 44). While the human gaze may be obfuscated by bias, subjectivity and myth, Morris has repeatedly stressed that truth does exist and, while it may not be accessible, the inquiring mind or film-maker should attempt to seek it out. This view of truth as an existential, if not material, reality reflects aspects of Deleuze's own belief in continuity (Adkins 2015), made concrete in the concept of the plane of immanence. The plane of immanence, for Deleuze, is the consistent reality out of which every emerges. It is constant, unwavering

and encompassing—it is truth. As though levitating above the plane, assemblages form; combining and re-combining to accommodate fluctuations of relationalities, disciplining these flows into territorialised entities. While truth may not reside in assemblages (just as truth does not reside in human subjectivities or representation), since they are varying aggregates of the intensities that emerge from the plane, they are nonetheless grounded in the constancy of the plane. Morris locates his view of truth and reality within a conscious philosophical framework, defining his position as realist (which problematises claims that his work is postmodern). In describing *Dr. Death*, he comments:

> My background is in American analytical philosophy rather than in Continental philosophy, and that's where my sympathies lie. I once said that one of the good things about Cambridge, Massachusetts is that Baudrillard isn't in the phone book. Because first and foremost there is a kind of realism behind all of the movies that I've made. Realism in the philosophical sense. That there is a real world out there in which things happen. Truth is not subjective. When you make claims such as poison gas was used in Auschwitz, there is a true and false answer. Just as there is a true and false answer to the question of whether Randall Adams [from *The Thin Blue Line*] shot police officer Robert Wood on that roadway in West Dallas. This is not up for grabs. You don't take an audience survey. (MacDonald 2013, p. 7)

Deleuze and Morris share in this belief in the materiality of things, events, people, world and the constancy of the line of truth that arrows between them. But, as Morris acknowledges, the line is rarely clear and often eludes human comprehension. Morris is sometimes read to resist final conclusions or to sufficiently interrogate his interview subjects to "get at the truth" as was the case in various critiques of *The Fog of War* and *Dr. Death*, leading to the impression that he is engaged in revelations of the human condition rather than searching for truth. Yet, such readings overlook the possibility that truth is not to be found in the interior musings of a Holocaust denier or self-preserving politician engaged in war—rather, the untruth of their self-delusions are laid bare as though to question human perception as a source of evidence. Morris emphasises the illegitimacy of believing the claims of someone who

acknowledges they would have been deemed war criminals if they had lost the war (McNamara in *Fog or War*) as though morality and truth are a by-product of winning or losing or a Holocaust denier whose work is appropriated by neo-Nazis and proven to be manifestly wrong by any scientific standard but who nonetheless continues to defend his own mythology (Leuchter in *Dr. Death*) through depictions. It is not necessary to question such unreliable sources or to point out the preposterousness of their claims. The fact of their words and the eye of the Interrotron do it for him. Indirectly, then, Morris as film-maker does question, does reveal and does discover through the camera's unmasking of human fictions.

So, the search for truth is, at once, a project of revealing falsity while attempting to access reality in its distilled form. Morris is circumspect about this endeavour, conceding that human nature often gets in the way. As he comments "people often become confused about the difficulty of finding something out and the impossibility of finding it out. Some things are really, really, really hard to determine and maybe you fail. Doesn't mean that there isn't something there to uncover or to pin down" (McDonald 2013, p. 4). This begs the question of how Morris "pins down" truth and how the search for truth flows through the Morris assemblage. Interviews feature prominently in much of his work, frequently overlaid by symbolically referential images from found or archival footage that contextualise the narrative. This strategy of interview is leveraged in his advertising work in campaigns for *Apple* (2002), *Wealthsimple* (2017), the John Kerry campaign (2004) and for *Levis* (1998). The *Levis* campaign, framed by its dialectical tagline "what's true?", is worthy of particular attention. Commissioned in 1998 by TBWA Chiat Day, the assemblage of twenty-five thirty-second advertisements were distributed online and in limited television slots. Morris re-captures a documentary-like format, interviewing teenagers about certain aspects of their lives. Stylistically, the advertisements draw from signature Morris intensities through the use of Interrotron interview, careful construction of the *mis-en-scène* via green screen, tight framing of the face and jump-cuts to other parts of the body. Unlike the Miller Man who remains partially shot, the teenagers directly address the camera. On the one hand, these advertisements represent a refrain

of the preoccupation with human subjectivity and the interior story world. But, on the other, we see Morris attempt to access truth through the authenticity of human experience. In doing so, he illuminates issues of sexual identity, new experiences, friendship and navigating the complexities of the world. As much as Morris has traditionally favoured the interview technique, he resists the assumption that this mode, in and of itself, produces truth. As Musser (1996) points out:

> Morris emphasizes that "truth is not guaranteed" by style or expression. Truth is not guaranteed by anything, including, presumably, his own approaches to documentary. What are the challenges for documentary filmmakers engaged in this search for truth? Not surprisingly perhaps, Morris 'statements echo those of Dziga Vertov, who admitted that after all his calls for scientific filmmaking, "it's hard to offer a' formula. It is hard to specify when and where it should be applied." (p. 975)

Thus, the revelation of truth cannot be an inherent characteristic of the documentary mode, interviews or any other cinematic convention but can only searched for and revealed on its own terms. This is perhaps the appeal of the Levis campaign. Like most of Morris's figures in his advertising (in contrast with his documentary interviewees), the teenagers have "nothing to hide" and while their narratives emerge from their own subjectivity, their storytelling appears unfettered by self-deception. For instance, in *Capitalism*, a girl expresses the politically charged view that equality is unrealistic, arguing that working hard should have its "extras like a nice house, and nice clothes and nice jewellery" thereby refracting capitalism through materialism. By contrast, in *Happiness*, a boy presents the opposing view that people are too concerned about money and need to have more happiness in their lives. The same boy appears in *Fun* where his only comment is that "I'd say we're not having enough fun". These worldviews are presented simultaneously, drawing consumers into competing moral registers. The rhetorical question/statement "what's true" appears at the end of each advertisement as though to recognise the paradoxical "truth" embodied in these narratives that are left suspended in perpetual tension. Yet, such a tension illuminates Morris's

concept of truth. Truth is not necessarily "fact" (although facts certainly guide his investigations in some of his documentaries). Truth is also the underpinning of the real, an exposure of things that really exist. Morris interrogates this relationship between truth and real things in other works such as his short documentaries *You're Soaking in It* (2000), *The Killer Inside Me* (2000) and *Stairway to Heaven* (2001). The first short documentary captures the story of Joan Dougherty who became a crime scene cleaner after the suicide of her son. *The Killer Inside Me* depicts Sondra London, an everyday woman who became romantically involved with a serial killer after her first boyfriend was indicted for the same crime and *Stairway to Heaven* is concerned with Temple Grandin, an autistic college professor who became an expert in developing humane cow slaughter techniques. In all three short documentaries, made as part of the *First Person* series, the interviewees expose the uncomfortable reality of their lives. Reality contests accepted moralities as the interviewees narrate their mental states, motivations and beliefs. Campey (2001) contends that "*First Person* can be interpreted as a development of ideas explored in films such as *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) and *Mr. Death* (1999). Ultimately Morris questions the nature of the first person, from within the framework of reflexive documentary. He presents a truth, but one which raises as many questions as it does answers". Yet, such a reading fails to acknowledge the divergent worldviews of the interviewees involved across the content and the nature of the questions being posed by Morris. Like the competing views presented by the *Levis* interviewees, Dougherty, London and Grandin portray their own reality through lived experience—manifestation of the real. Equally, while *The Thin Blue Line*, *Mr. Death* and *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008) interrogate ostensibly fallacious claims and tacitly dispute a misrepresented reality, the *First Person* and *Levis* works pursue no such agenda. Like the personal realities told in *First Person*, the *Levis* interviewees narrate their encounters with transgender prostitutes (*26th and Lex*), of being falsely advised of their entry to NYU (W*orst Day*) and the challenges of coming out as gay to a resistant father (M*agazine*). The act of self-revelation may not be entirely "truthful" in the factual sense yet they reveal the patent realities of their narrators.

Thus, the Morris assemblage engages in a dialectic of the nature of truth, slipping between a search for the absolutely knowable and the possibility that truth is revealed through the interstices of reality through self-exposure. This aspect of the treatment of truth is frequently missed in accounts of his work. Yet it is dimension of his search for truth that Morris himself acknowledges:

> When I first came up in documentary, there was this idea that you should shoot them in a certain way. I remember even getting into an argument with the first person who worked with me on Gates of Heaven about how I should shoot it… The camera was on a tripod through all of Gates of Heaven. I used to say there was something incredibly perverse about the style of it. No available light. Everything was lit. Everything was very consciously framed. But there was a very important element of spontaneity, of authenticity, of genuineness, however you want to describe it, of getting people to talk in front of the camera in a way that was surprising, arresting, and on some crazy level, natural… I sometimes distinguish between taxidermy and something that's alive. You don't want something that's just dead on arrival. You want something that's breathing, that has some spirit. Today they talk about authenticity. By authenticity, I think what people mean most often is a feeling that you're being shown something that has a life of its own. That isn't just endlessly manufactured. (Nudd 2017)

These comments, made in the context of both Morris's advertising and film work, suggest that breaks from convention and the animation of the subject can at least begin to approach truth through the axis of authenticity. While not quite synonymous with truth, authenticity at least emerges out of reality and the perception that something meaningful has been portrayed. Perhaps this is as close to truth as the camera can get.

If the entire Morris assemblage is, simultaneously, a philosophical meditation on the nature of truth and the unreliability of human subjectivity, this begs the question of whether we can really approach a representation of truth at all? The 2004 *More to See* campaign for Sharp televisions (Wieden Kennedy, New York) appears as one possible site

where the question of truth is (temporarily) reconciled. The convergent campaign, comprised of ten websites, print ads and seven television spots, spreads the story of fictional anthropologist Dagobert Steinitz who hid three urns around the world and left clues as to their location. As part of the campaign, Morris directed *The Pool, The Library, The Woods, The Country Road* and *The Key*. The advertisements focused on the characters of Mike, Natalie and Peter (who all had dedicated websites featuring their diaries along with sites where consumers could track the search for the urns). The elaborate campaign converged advertising, gaming, web interactivity and print media to create a highly interactive experience for consumers defined by its absolute ambiguity. Ironically, and as against the obscurity confronting consumers engaged in the search for the urns, the five advertisements discover a rare moment in which the question often posed by Morris of "what happened?" is answered. Visually, the works are a radical departure with their almost *nouvelle vague* quality (perhaps in a nod to the apparently French site of Steinitz's death), intense colour saturation, multiple camera angles, use of high-angle, panning and point-of-view shots, and an absence of narrative. Each advertisement represents a fragment of an event involving a driver veering off the road and landing in a pool where a man is swimming after a woman runs across the road, viewed from the perspective of one of the three characters. As individual works, they make little sense since they are de-contextualised. Together, they tell a cohesive story revealed iteratively as though to mirror Morris's search. While some, such as Shortman (2004) have classified the works as Rashomon—style (after the Kurosawa film *Rashomon* (1950) in which four contradictory accounts are given of a murder), there is no actual incongruity to the characters' perspectives on events but rather an in-filling of detail to cohere the story. By the end of the five advertisements intended to drive the viewer to the website and engage in the campaign, this comparatively minor aspect of the story achieves closure and truth is revealed through the multiplicity of perspectives from the characters. Morris unwittingly resolves the dilemma of discovering truth through the tacit possibility that the assimilation of fragments, perspectival balance, multiplicity of views and scrutiny of facts can yield an often veiled reality.

This complex assemblage, comprised of a vast range of works (many of which are not discussed here as such an endeavour is beyond the scope of this text), embraces advertising as an important component, locating it with wider circuits of aesthetic intensities and philosophical questions. When read against the work of Deleuze and Guattari, it becomes clear that not only does an assemblage approach generate important insights into the flows, intersections and intensities that territorialise the *oeuvre* but that Morris, Deleuze and Guattari share something of a common understanding in their notions of truth as a constant (the plane of immanence) and its obfuscation (human subjectivity and shifting assemblages). The Morris assemblage also demonstrates how advertising is able to deterritorialise across aesthetic and cultural referents in order to present systems of thought that engage important philosophical tropes. This capacity for confronting questions of reality, subjectivity, truth and the human condition is augmented by convergence where narratives can be extended, a greater range of visual techniques can be utilised and intersections with other referents intensify the resonance of the advertisement. Morris's assemblage illustrates the complexities of treating aesthetic media types as discrete forms, given that hybridity and interpellation underscore their relational nature. This dynamic quality of advertising furnishes so many possibilities for consumers as they seek evocative, spreadable objects of their own.

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8

The Assembled Advertisement and the Consumer

In their text on how assemblage thinking may illuminate elements of consumer culture, Canniford and Badje (2015) ask

> What does this viewpoint offer us? Principally, by keeping an eye on instability and the necessity for multiple things to gel together, assemblage research can illuminate previously overlooked aspects of markets and consumption. If the processes of brand management, consumer experiences or market creation require multiple things to come together, then we must discover what these things are, and search out the catalysts, enablers or inhibitors or processes that interest us, many of which are yet to be described. (p. 3)

Here, Canniford and Badje acknowledge that the value of assemblage approaches resides in the ability to trace the shifting connections, junctures and catalysts that exist both in the marketplace and, in the context of this work, the media landscape. Inherently connected to questions of brand management, consumer life and the creation of new objects, questions around what advertising is, how it flows through to other media and cultural referents and how consumers engage with a dynamic media marketplace are as salient here as in the consumer culture context

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to which Canniford and Badje's own observations refer. The primary pursuit of this text is to consider how assemblage thinking can be mobilised to apprehend a rapidly evolving media landscape characterised by convergence and underpinned by postmodern sensibilities of hybridity, pastiche and the rejection of high/low art distinctions. The analysis of campaigns by noted film directors presented here illuminates how assemblage thinking might enable us to conceive of advertising in a convergent environment as a rhizomic intersection of intensities and extensions that draw upon diverse media, filmic, cultural and persuasive influences. From the consumer's perspective, new terrains of affect, engagement, and spreadability are animated if advertising as static "genre" is exploded, challenged by a conceptualisation of advertising as a liminal entity, working at once within and across its territories or planes. Assemblage thinking enables us to consider the intersectional, embedded nature of convergent advertisements, seeing them not as snippets of media "content" or grabs of persuasive rhetoric but rather emergent forces and flows, driven by the aesthetic, cultural, directorial and stylistic intensities that propel them across platforms, linking rich terrains of cultural referents, filmic influences and fantastical possibilities. At once deterritorialised to take lines of flight across platforms and reterritorialised back into the story worlds at the heart of the assemblage, conceptualising convergent advertising in this way opens up new possibilities for consumers, practitioners and scholars.

In this work, assemblage thinking has framed how we think about advertising as a hybrid media form in an era where the convergence of traditional media formats, dissemination channels and consumer engagements are rapidly changing. Consistent throughout this work is the argument that classical approaches to thinking about media forms no longer account for the nature of these hybrid media artefacts or how they intersect in the convergent environment. Instead, new ways of seeing the interpellations, articulations and intersections between convergent media forms are required. To date, assemblage thinking has not been explored in advertising yet, as our analysis suggests, it would appear to yield significant new insights into the fluxes, flows and intensities that underpin contemporary advertising production and its situation within a broader media context. Endemic to an assemblage

approach to advertising is the ability to illuminate the hybridities, intersections and merging of media forms, aesthetics and structures that inform contemporary advertising practices in much the same vein that such practices underpin a range of other media forms and objects that should be open to similar theoretical scrutiny. The intention throughout this work has been to demonstrate how traditional notions of media categories are rendered inert through assemblage thinking in an era of convergence, giving rise to a more confluent, dynamic theorisation both of advertising and media more generally. Advertising has long been acknowledged as polysemous (Ritson and Elliot 1999), open to socially contextualised interpretation (Jayasinghe and Ritson 2013) and rich in textual signification (Campbell 2013). The evolution of convergence intensifies this by enabling extended formats, more experimental approaches and a willingness to fundamentally regard advertising as something beyond the persuasive arm of the market that engages diverse audiences through its aesthetic and narrative appeal. In this context, advertising becomes reflexive, aesthetic media content, designed to engage as well as entertain, evoking the same emotive, intimate visual experiences as art, cinema and photography. Advertising then prompts the same self-extension, symbolic meaning and personal reflexivity typically attributed to traditional "high" art media forms such as cinema or television. Consumer engagement with these hybrid media forms is accelerated through the use of mobile technology, personal and shared collections facilitated by digital capacities such as the smartphone, social media and dedicated sites or blogs where "digital association blurs the distinctions among the material, the immaterial, the real, and the possible" (Shau and Gilly 2003, p. 401). Advertising, like most other visual forms, becomes the substance of creation, collection and sharing expressed through the image.

How can we think about these media artefacts as something beyond just spectacular advertisements? In their elaboration of how assemblages work, Deleuze and Guattari draw upon Bachelard (1958) for their theorisation of space, memory and human perception (or smooth space) and their significance as physical signifiers of flows of nostalgic and reflexive meaning. According to Bachelard, and connected with Bergson's conceptualisation of memory, objects of signification

become caught up in an assemblage of memory, nostalgia and private thought which constitute the mental terrain. In the context of this work, media assemblages can be thought of as objects of signification to which consumers attach personal meaning and memory through their visual consumption and subsequent engagement through other convergent platforms such as social media. Objects evoke memories of experiences and, in doing so, sensorially re-attach us to different periods of our lives. In this respect, Bachelard, and later Deleuze and Guattari, foreground subsequent theorisations of the object (Epp and Price 2009; Kopytoff 1986; McLaren 2003) and its embedded role in the practice (de Certeau 1984—upon whom Deleuze also draws), spatial practices (Lefebvre 1974) or habitus (Bourdieu 1977) of everyday life. Belk's (2013) work on the extended self in a digital age elaborates this notion of the object or possession into the virtual realm, suggesting that physical tangibility is no longer a requisite for an "object". The notable aspect of Bachelard's work for Deleuze and Guattari resides in the capacity of the object to not only represent shifting meaning in the course of the everyday (Hand and Shove 2007) but also the capacity to embody nostalgia or to re-capture a sense of a past (Strahilevitz and Loewenstein 1998). Bearing in mind the potential to view media assemblages as objects, the theorisation of the assemblage object as an entity that enables movement between the past and present, everyday life and former experience, conducted in consumer research, has resonance for a re-conceptualisation of advertising. The more recent focus on transitioning things from commodity to meaningful object (Coupland 2005; Sherry and McGrath 1989), the situation of objects within the domestic sphere, the connection between objects and everyday life (Epp and Price 2009) and the importance of space (Brown and Sherry 2003) have all contributed to a more nuanced theorisation of the meaning of the object as it firstly moves across spaces and becomes integrated into the flux and flow of life. As such, we are able to theorise the human interaction with the visually representational force of media assemblages/objects as part of a larger mental and cultural terrain.

The significance of this observation is that conceiving of advertisements as hybrid media forms that function as assemblages/objects, capable of evoking a range of human emotions, memories and affects,

requires us to firstly depart from the classical distinction between "cinema as narrative and advertising as spectacle" that have drawn disciplinary and productive delineations and, more importantly, seek new ways into looking at how hybrid media forms draw intensities and capacities from one another. This is a theme returned to throughout this text because it represents a significant constraint on our capacity to focus on the potentialities for advertising. The view that advertising "does not construct a fully fictive world. The actor or model does not play a particular person but a social type or demographic category" (Schudson 1993, p. 212) has been a common argument for delineation but one rendered obsolete at a point where advertisements can run as along as fifteen minutes and engage consumers in complex storylines centred around specific characters. As Gurevitch (2009) points out,

> While the process of advertising has frequently been one that privileges spectacle, the association of spectacle in its promotional capacity with advertising alone is problematic. Such a dichotomy simplifies the relationship between the spectacular and narrative components of both movies and advertisements. Just as the use of spectacle in movies is not always or only promotional, so spectacle in advertisement is not only promotional… The logical conclusion of the assertion that spectacle is purely promotional is frequently to appeal for the exclusion of spectacle from the domain of narrative films, or to assert that spectacle is only appropriate where it is firmly and securely subordinated to narrative drives within film forms. (p. 149)

By regarding advertisements, like films or TV shows, as assemblages that territorialise and deterritorialise across other media forms, we begin to move towards a re-theorisation of media assemblages as bounded entities or objects generally and, for advertisements, begin to re-situate them within larger conversations pertaining to whether classical modes of stratification across media forms, and the endemic discussion around spectacle versus narrative that Gurevitch rightly suggests is problematic, are relevant any more. Gurevitch's use of Baz Luhrmann's advertisement for *Chanel No. 5* featuring Nicole Kidman as a nod to his feature length *Moulin Rouge* (2001) provides an appropriate case in point where Luhrmann "explicitly constructs his Chanel advert as a part of his 'red

curtain cinema'" (Gurevitch 2009, p. 153), not as a promotional entity detached from his cinematic opus. Miller (2001) accounts for why such seemingly arbitrary parameters have been established both within scholarly communities and media production entities in commenting that,

> Despite the continuity of textual and audience axes within film theory, latter-day lines have been drawn dividing media, communication, cultural, and screen studies for reasons of rent-seeking academic professionalism— on all sides. The theorization of production and spectatorship relations between film and television, for instance, continues to be dogged by the separation of mass communication's interest in economics, technology, and policy from film theory's preoccupations with aesthetics and cultural address, although attempts are underway to transform both sides of the divide. (pp. 92–93)

While it is important to note that such disciplinary boundaries are being increasing challenged, if for no other reason that the dynamics of the contemporary media environment make it inevitable, it is also important to understand those dynamics as being in constant flux, subject to new and evolving flows, connections and confluences. Gurevitch's (2010) comments (with respect to the intersections between cinema and gaming) similarly shed light on some of the forces that have come to impact upon media hybridity and intersection more broadly. He remarks that,

> it is apparent that the boundaries of cinematic production, consumption and study have been greatly expanded with the rapid changes brought about by the emergence of digital technologies and production practices. To this end, Gunning's questioning of film theory's tendency to approach cinema from the direction of narrative privilege has been followed in recent years by a broader meta-critique of scholarly boundary setting that theorists such as Jenkins, Caldwell, Everett, Miller and Boddy have argued is increasingly overtaken by industrial, technological and economic events. (Gurevitch 2010)

Picking up on Gurevitch's, and by extension, Gunning's, identification of narrative as one of the defining elements of the contemporary privileging of cinema (and the castigation of advertising as spectacle), it is

useful to re-visit the origins of cinema discussed in the early stages of this work in order to recall how such a split came about with a view to contextualising how assemblage thinking may not only rehabilitate the schism between advertising and other media forms but also advance an assemblage theorisation of advertising as a media object intrinsically imbricated in wider circuits of media meaning and practice. Gunning (1990, 2006) and Gaudreault (2006) are both instructive in reminding us that cinema, at the turn of the twentieth century, was essentially a cinema "of attractions" delivering spectacle of shock, awe and dazzling visuality for viewers. As Gaudreault (2006) points out, "the attraction is there, before the viewer, *in order to be seen*. Strictly speaking, it exists only in order to *display its visibility*" (p. 95). The purpose of cinema in its early stages was to delight and shock audiences through exhibitionism, wherein those depicted in the film consciously referenced, and played to, the audience. Facially expressing to the audience in *Mary Jane's Mishap* (Albert 1903) or *Par le trou de serrure* (Pathé Frères 1901) or bowing at the end of a trick in *L'homme orchestre* (Méliès 1900) spoke to the self-conscious spectacle of cinema *for viewers* as a form of entertainment often combined with other visual spectacles playing simultaneously. Run in a fairground environment, it was not uncommon for cinema to be played outdoors alongside singers, circus acts or comedians. Equally, advertisements were often presented as short films (in a similar practice now seen in the convergence era) shown for their entertainment value (Segrave 2004). Such a concept of cinema as a public spectacle with easy movement between advertising and story, as opposed to the immersive, sensorially geared confines of the darkened movie theatre in which the psychological intensity of the narrative plays out, fundamentally challenges what we understand as cinema today with its concomitant intellectual culture of critique and analysis.

It is perhaps at this level of scholarly fetishisation that Gunning's re-theorisation of early cinema is most resonant for the works discussed here. He argues that "the inheritance of the 1970s High Theory still confined ideas about spectatorship to uncovering ideological complicity in the narrative construction of popular films, while describing cinema spectatorship technically as a process of unconscious enthrallment" (Gunning 2006, p. 32). While Gunning's work contributes to understandings of spectatorship and gives a reading of cinematic history that

continues to challenge persistent emphasis on narrative, auteurism and indexicality as the distinguishing features of cinema, the thrust of his theorisation of cinema also has implications for other media forms. For if cinema can be read not purely as a narrative construction that relegates consumers to experiences of "unconscious enthrallment" but rather a *mélange* of visual, sensorial, affective and emotional triggers in which the imagery and viewer are complicit, as subsequent theorists such as Powell (2007) and Del Rao (2008) suggest, such a reading would lend impetus to the possibility that any media form is open to leveraging such capacities (or intensities) and create similarly evocative rapports with consumers. As Errol Morris (in Nudd 2017) points out with reference to advertising "you're making little films" that embody the same capacities and intensities found in cinema and have the capacity to affect consumers in similar ways. If, like cinema, advertising is designed to be viewed, imagined and integrated into mental terrains then advertising as art form and entertainment vehicle (Campbell 2013) gives rise to an experience where images become part of our mindscape, acting as symbolic catalysts for memory, affect and immersion in the same way that other media forms have traditionally done.

These intersections between different media forms and their collaboration in creating affective experiences for consumers have been discussed in various contexts. For instance, Gurevitch (2010) speaks of the relationship between cinema and gaming. Since as far back as 1993 with *Super Mario Brothers*, the uptick in cinematic appropriations of popular video games such as *Mortal Kombat* (1995), *Tomb Raider* (2001), *Prince of Persia* (2010), *Warcraft* (2016) and *Assassins Creed* (2016) have consolidated a spillage from game to film and, likewise, games such as *Batman, Watchmen, Ghostbuster* and *Harry Potter* have extended cinematic assemblages to provide viewers with more immersive experiences. Similarly, the relationship between cinema and television is long-established (Thompson 2003) with popular television programmes such as *The Odd Couple* (1970 and 2015), *Teen Wolf* (2011), *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (1997), *La Femme Nikita* (1990) and *Stargate* (1997) all finding their origins in feature-length cinema. One might also point to David Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992) as a cinematic prequel that came after the original television series alongside film adaptions

of television series such as *Get Smart* (1965), *Miami Vice* (1984) and *Sex in the City* (1998). Such hybridities can also be found among television series adapted into video games like *The Addams Family* (1964) (a television series and film made in 1991) and *Star Trek* (1966) (which also has its cinematic extensions). These bifurcations, intersections and hybridisations to both intensify and extend the media assemblage has thus been long practised and, as Donaton (2004) has pointed out, this will only continue as gaining maximum brand traction for franchises becomes an important revenue vehicle. In discussing the intertextuality of Spike Jonze's work, Annesley (2013) identifies precisely the conditions in which creative media producers, including film directors, increasingly find themselves where Jonze's themes, as they appear in his work, like many of the creative minds discussed throughout this text,

> need to be read as more than just ends in themselves. Instead they can be recognized as signs of a wider engagement with the fluid terrains that characterize not only the products of contemporary culture, but the industrial and business contexts in which that culture is produced… Seeing the shared patterns that characterize his work across a range of different forms and understanding the conceptual, stylistic and industrial relationships that lie behind these patterns thus not only furthers the interpretation of Jonze's films, but works more broadly to illuminate the work of all contemporary film-makers operating within an increasingly convergent mediascape. (pp. 34–35)

Similar observations can be made of all of the examples discussed here as aesthetic, narrative, authorial and commercial intensities are brought together and styles, themes, stories and opportunities for consumer engagement spill across one another. The important point to note, however, is that such spillage is not simple cross-pollination or replication but rather the elaboration of ideas and meaning through simultaneous modes of dissemination. For instance, as Annesley suggests, Jonze's preoccupation with metafictionality and genre-bending seen in his cinematic work is as acute in his advertising and music videos where to distinguish between them becomes arbitrary and misses the point of viewing diverse dissemination strategies as modes of intensity

through which common ideas are cultivated and freed. The virtue of an assemblage approach in this media context is that such ideas are able to trace for their confluences, multiplicities and simultaneity without becoming trapped in questions of genre or platform type.

The question then becomes twofold: first, if media forms intersect, unify and flow into one another, how can we continue to speak of distinguishable media forms based on the categories of genre or classification? Second, if we cannot continue to view media forms through the lens of genre, where can assemblage thinking assist us in re-conceptualising how we envisage media dissemination and use in an era of convergence? To take the first of these propositions, it is evident that many of the theoretical suppositions that demarcate or stratify media forms become immensely problematic. As such, one of the key contributions of this text is to explode long-held, and rigorously defended, notions of media genre or category and find new theoretical approaches to understanding the production, dissemination and cultural uses of these interpolated, hybridised media forms—especially with reference to advertising which has been subject to highly bounded parameters for how it is studied, theorised and understood. Equally, a theoretical lens that traces the capacities, intensities and lines of flight, which necessarily touch on aesthetics, narratives, style, wider influences etc., is needed in order to appreciate the forces and flows that drive media production and consumption. While it is widely acknowledged that media draws from, and reticulates back into, the cultural sphere, the impetus towards modes of classification and stratification are at odds with this basic recognition. In this respect, we should share in Levy's (1997) optimism for the future of participatory culture, not just for fans and consumers, but for creative producers whose work can be viewed within wider circuits of meaning and beyond the boundaries of classification.

In response to the question of what implications for thinking through advertising via an assemblage lens are, several possibilities emerge. An assemblage view transforms the consumer into a participant consumer who is complicit in the territorialisation and deterritorialisation of the assemblage since the consumer participates in the affective mutuality of viewing but also spreads (Jenkins et al. 2015) or

deterritorialises the assemblage across platforms via sharing, blogging and collecting etc. As a result, the first implication for advertising practitioners and scholars comes about as a result of the shift away from a theorisation of advertising content as being owned by its producers who, in turn, get to control its reception since assemblage thinking necessarily situates the consumer within the assemblage as a key intensity and catalyst for deterritorialisation. If the ownership of the ad is passed from producer to consumer and the marketing message is subordinate to the affect of the advertisement, this challenges the core assumption underpinning most research that advertising is solely designed to convey a marketing message and persuade a passive audience (Pracejus et al. 2006). The assumed producer/consumer relationship is problematised whereby the traditional, highly territorialised production and flow to market of consumable content is situated alongside the deterritorialising forces of the consumer and, indeed, the lines of flight made possible by the media object itself. Consumer researchers have long identified the deterritorialising capacities of consumers through their participatory agency, captured in terms such as ludic (Kozinets et al. 2004), fantastical (Belk and Costa 1998), magical (Arnould et al. 1999), emancipatory (Firat and Venkatesh 1995), subcultural (Kates 2002; Kozinets 2001; Moisio and Beruchashvili 2010) and transformative (McCracken 2008). Equally, film theorists have begun to acknowledge the mutual becomings between screen and spectator, tracing how the experience of viewing is felt at the bodily level by the viewer and inscribed upon the film itself (Powell 2007; Scholefield 2014). At the philosophical level, we are reminded by Rajchman (2000) that assemblage thinking is about "mak[ing] connections since they are not already made for us" (p. 6), whereby

> Deleuze's basic principle is that society is always *en fuite* (leaking, fleeing) and may be understood in terms of the manner in which it deals with its *fuites* (leaks, lines of flight). It says there is no determination of ourselves that does not at the same time create zones of indetermination… Such zones are then the ones from which original "connections" may come. (Rajchman 2000, p. 12)

Thus, we are in the assemblage, participants in a world of leaks, lines of flight and zones of indetermination out of which we must make connections, seek flows and convergences and bring meaning to bear on our world. Nowhere is this perhaps seen more acutely than in the media landscape where relics of previous understandings around media forms and usages linger while new zones of indetermination reveal themselves. What new modes of thought in film theory and consumer research highlight is that these new zones do not rely on old structures or predetermined sites of ownership but rather present evolving and dynamic connections between producers, consumers and culture. Jenkins (2013) points to these new zones of indetermination in his commentary on "textual poachers" and the participatory culture of fans who seek to shape and evolve texts beyond the confines of their original dissemination. Drawing on Levy's *Collective Intelligence*, (1997), Jenkins (2006) points to how

> Levy explores how the 'deterritorialization' of knowledge, brought about by the ability of the net and the web to facilitate rapid many-to-many communication, might enable broader participation in decision-making, new modes of citizenship and community, and the reciprocal exchange of information… On-line fan communities might well be some of the most fully realized versions of Levy's cosmopedia, expansive self-organizing groups focused around the collective production, debate, and circulation of meanings, interpretations, and fantasies in response to various artifacts of contemporary popular culture. (p. 136)

Obviously Levy's own use of assemblage language is telling for his insights into how participatory culture is enabled by the online platform and Jenkins' reference to artefacts connects with the view suggested here that advertisements constitute cultural artefacts. But what is significant is not so much the fact that consumers have an intensive role to play in media assemblages, as Jenkins correctly identifies, but rather how this, along with various other developments in the media landscape, transform the boundedness of how we regard media forms and, by extension, the nature of what constitutes aesthetically or culturally valuable artefacts—which brings us back in part to the earlier discussion of media assemblages as objects or possessions as imagined by Belk (2013). An assemblage view of these artefacts sees them as being in constant

flux, composed of internal (aesthetic, narrative, stylistic, authorial) intensities and subject to external forces that transform and re-configure (deterritorialise and reterritorialise) the assemblage over time to acquire new intensities and possibilities. What Deleuze and Guattari show us is that these artefacts, whether advertisements, films or games and so on, are not "of a type" but rather of a rhizomic multitude, a surging wave of ever-forming connections and mutations that take new lines of flight with each iteration. These assemblages are valuable for their affective, communicative, aesthetic and narrative capacities. They speak to us as any creative expression does at an intrinsically human level. We are reminded of Errol Morris' "American haiku", the deeply affecting images of addiction portrayed by Darren Aronofsky, the mysterious allure of David Lynch's *Lady Blue Shanghai* replete with its dazzling cinematography or the engaging humour of Jake Scott's "wagers" between Jude Law and Giancarlo Giannini. These works are valuable because they *affect us* as good art should.

Perhaps, that is the value of assemblage thinking for advertising and for aesthetic media more generally. When Deleuze and Guattari first posited their notion of the assemblage, with its lines of flight, bodies without organs, abstract and war machines, their vision was to view the world, and material social relations, through the lens of joyous possibilities rather than arbitrary structures and stratifications in an effort to unify. As they conclude

> the first concrete rule for assemblages is to discover what territory they envelop, for there is always one: in their trash can or on their bench. Beckett's characters stake out a territory. Discover the territorial assemblages of someone, human or animals: "home". The territory is made of decoded fragments of all kinds, which are borrowed from the milieus but then assume the value of "properties"; even rhythms take on a new meaning (refrains). The territory makes the assemblage. The territory is more than the organism and the milieu, and the relation between the two; that is why the assemblage goes beyond mere "behaviour". (p. 586)

Nowhere is this ambition more resonant than in the creative sphere where territories are formed through the interface between the milieu of which Deleuze and Guattari speak (the wider cultural sphere) and

the capacities and intensities brought to bear through aesthetic, stylistic and creative composition that offer up new territories and spaces. It is somewhat surprising that, to date, there has been no use of assemblage thinking in advertising when it seems such a timely way of looking at how advertising might fit and evolve in the convergent media landscape. It is hoped that this text goes some ways towards introducing Deleuze and Guattari's valuable work into the advertising conversation in order to start considering ways in which this rich theoretical frame might yield new insights and possibilities. Marcus and Saka (2006) allude to these potentialities in concluding that "in current predicaments of theory, assemblage as a conceptual resource has to do with the imaginaries for the shifting relations and emergent conditions of spatially distributed objects of study in the contemporary period of so-called globalisation, which has heightened older modernist aesthetics of perception and given them fresh empirical challenges" (p. 106). Deleuze and Guattari's do indeed offer up important conceptual resources for re-convening ongoing discussions around the nature of aesthetic artefacts, their significance in the contemporary cultural milieu and how we use them to forge new connections and possibilities.

Further to its key premises that classical theorisations of media forms have little purchase in the de-stratified context of contemporary consumer culture and that assemblage thinking offers us some new ways into thinking new theoretical possibilities for media scholarship—particularly in the advertising sphere which has been consistently assumed as part of that landscape throughout this text—the purpose of this work is to demonstrate *how* assemblage thinking illuminates typically unseen or unacknowledged complexities borne out in contemporary advertising. By adopting an explicitly assemblage lens, the analyses offered here reveal the hidden philosophical impulses and creative resources that advertising extrapolates. Jeunet's complicated depictions of time and memory as renderings of the Deleuzian time-image, Fincher's Body without Organs captured in the image of the posthuman athlete, Scorsese's and Lynch's divergent uses of the Manhattan landscape to explore spatiality and the multiplicities of becoming-woman offered up by Lynch, Cameron and Aronofksy all show how advertising can engage fundamental philosophical debates regarding the very nature of human

perception, memory and being. Read through the prism of Deleuze and Guattari, these advertisements take on new significance as micro-dialogues, miniature musings on profound questions with the consumer. Equally, all of the work considered here leverages sophisticated cinematic, aesthetic and stylistic techniques and conventions that frequently connect with expansive historical trajectories from a range of creative sources. These advertisements are located within the larger assemblage of the director's opus, marking out new terrains for building the director's story world. But they also animate trajectories such as ancient Chinese poetry (David Lynch), classical documentary technique and enduring philosophical debates around truth (Errol Morris), the Dutch Masters and Caravaggio (Willy Vanderperre), the influences of the *cinéma du look* and magical realism (Jeunet) and Georges Méliès (Wes Anderson) among numerous others are as the intensities brought to bear on these assemblages as they extract from wide-ranging aesthetic, historical and cultural "sheets of past" to borrow Bergson's expression. These are precisely the lines of flight enabled by assemblage thinking that become sharper as we bring them into focus. These trajectories, histories and sources also connect with the brand, product or "thing", situating it within alternative universes of meaning and new territories of relationalities. To this end, we might also conclude that, from an advertising practice standpoint, assemblage thinking enables brands, firms and products to be enriched or enhanced by seeing their capacities as intensities within an assemblage buttressed by many other territorialising (and also deterritorialising) influences. The possibilities are infinite.

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