Affect and Emotion in Cinema:

A Case for a Cognitive Deleuze and Deleuzian Cognitive Theory

Master Thesis

written by

Sonny Prent - s1736167

under the supervision of Dr. J. (Julian) Hanich and Drs. M. (Martijn) Boven.

Submitted to the exam committee of the Faculty of Arts for the degree

of

Master of Arts

at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
Abstract

Cinema seems to be an art form that affects us in several striking ways; viscerally, affectively, emotionally, and cognitively. Cinema does so with great conviction, perhaps greater than any other art form. What it means to be affected in such various ways is explicated in this thesis. Take for example the word “movies” itself, which reminds us not only of the essence of cinema to present us with moving images, it reminds us that cinema has the power to ‘move’ or engage its spectators emotionally and affectively, as well. Being fascinated by this ‘power of cinema’, within the confines of this Master thesis the Deleuzian conception of affect and the cognitive theory concerning both affects and emotions are investigated and compared. Rather than reading a particular movie by applying the concept of affect as appreciated by one of the abovementioned approaches, my aims are to show that a comprehensive knowledge of affect and emotion will supplement our existing critical knowledge employed in the analysis of affect and emotion in film studies. More importantly, this thesis may be read as a critique of over-simplifying explanations of “affect” and “emotion” as conceptual phenomena in the current field of film studies, urging that such concepts must in the future be used cautiously and comprehensively. By addressing thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, Henri Bergson, Baruch Spinoza, and C.S. Peirce, a broad conception of affect (in cinema) is constructed in the first chapters of this thesis. This notion of affect is then compared to the cognitive explanation of emotions as part of a broader affective system, proposed by cognitive thinkers such as Noel Carroll, David Bordwell, Ed Tan, Carl Plantinga, Klaus Scherer, and Jens Eder. All of this is done in order to answer a specific question: “In what particular way can films affect our bodies and/or minds, and by doing so produce in us certain modes of behavior or affective states according to both the cognitive and the Deleuzian perspective?”. By examining affects and emotions from both a cognitive and a Deleuzian point of view, it will turn out that both perspectives have striking similarities as well as some significant differences. However, there remains to be some conceptual unclarity about the difference between emotion and affect, and it is exactly this unclarity that will be addresses in this thesis.
Acknowledgments

I especially like to thank:

*Dr. Julian Hanich*
My supervisor for his substantive and methodological guidance, flexibility and a good cooperation.

*Drs. Martijn Boven*
My second supervisor for his insightful comments, especially on Deleuze.

*Marije de Meer*
Super motivator and awesome girlfriend!

*All of my friends*
Being great distractions, showing relativity, humor and interest at times it was most needed.

*My Parents Eddy & Monique, and my brother Robin*
For being interested and a wonderful drive to finish my education.

*Dr. Anna Rogers*
As the person who introduced me to Deleuze and sparked my interest to write both my Ba-thesis and Ma-thesis about this interesting philosopher.
# Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Reading Guide of the Thesis</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Deleuze — Cinema, Ideas, Affects, Images</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Firstness, Secondness, Thirdness</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Deleuze and Spinoza</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Affect and Idea</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Affect and Affection</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Art and Affect</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Deleuze and Bergson</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Difference between Affect, Affection and Emotion</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Affect in Cinema</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1 The Affection-image</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Conclusion</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Cognitive approach — Mentation, Affect, Emotion, Consciousness</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Introduction to Early Cognitive Theory</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Affect and Emotion in Cinema</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Affect</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Emotion</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Judgment Theory of Emotion</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 Concern-based Theory of Emotion</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.5 Appraisal Theory of Emotion</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Crucial Components of Emotion</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Paradox of Fiction</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1 Illusion Theory, Pretend Theory, and Thought Theory</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Conclusion</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Synthesis</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Why Adopt a Deleuzian Perspective on Affect?</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Why Focus on a Cognitive Account of Emotions?</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Example by Analyzing the Close-Up</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Summary</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Nuances</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Further Research</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Works Cited</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

It is often argued that the main premise of cinema is to emotionally affect its audience. Adrian Ivakhiv, for example, argues in *Ecologies of the Moving Image: Cinema, Affect, Nature* that cinema produces ‘worlds’ that engage spectators both cognitively and affectively. Films with their “sequential orderings of visual image, text and sound, [...] move us; they take us on journeys, opening up spaces for our affective involvement in relation to the worlds portrayed” (Ivakhiv, 2013, vii). The word ‘movies’ itself reminds us not only of the quality of cinema to present us moving images, it reminds us that cinema has the power to ‘move’ or engage its spectators emotionally and affectively.

Consequently, one of the main questions associated with this quality of cinema in film studies today for cognitivists, and affect theorists, will sound something like the following: “In what particular way can films affect our bodies and minds, and by doing so produce in us certain modes of behavior or affective states that are ‘constructed’ through the means of watching films and other audiovisual media?” It is oftentimes argued that in answering this question, Gilles Deleuze and his contemporary advocates would not base their understanding of cinematic affect (what cinema does to its spectators) on any experiments or empirical research in order to verify his theories concerning film. However, in their influential book *Anti-Oedipus* it is evident that Deleuze and Felix Guattari were increasingly preoccupied with neuroscience and precisely scientific understandings of the human brain and body, as Paul Elliott has recently pointed out in his article “The Eye, the Brain, the Screen: What Neuroscience Can Teach Film Theory” (Elliott, 2010, p. 1). For Deleuze this approach was not solely a means through which we could understand cinema or other arts, moreover it helped him to understand the complex processes of thought and creativity more generally. Nonetheless, cinema became of great significance within Deleuze’s philosophizing, as is apparent in his books on cinema (Deleuze, 1986; Deleuze, 1989). However, the fact that this turn in appropriating the philosophy of cinema did take place in Deleuze’s work leads to the main point for putting Deleuze Studies and cognitivists together in this thesis: namely, to make relatively clear that not only are some cognitivist and some Deleuzian film scholars preoccupied with answering similar questions concerning what happens during the film viewing experience and how film can affect us both physically and mentally. More so, we can perceive that these various currents in academic investigation are increasingly incorporating *similar concepts and methodologies*, namely discoveries in psychology and neuroscience in order to do so. There are, for instance, many recent works that refer to neuroscience...
in combination with works in the wake of Deleuze and his interpreters (Deleuze, 1994; Gaffney, 2010; Pisters, 1998; Pisters, 2012). For this reason, it appears that a comparison between the two approaches seems in place.

Therefore, within the confines of this master thesis I will explore two areas of recent research into film, especially research that is concerned with affect, and ask how they might have an impact upon our current knowledge of filmic concepts. How do developments in Deleuzian and cognitive research help us to understand moving images, and how we are affected by them? The main interest of this thesis is not to reveal objective “scientific” truths, but rather to question various models and concepts that originate from different approaches within film studies and to research how they came about and how they can be used to better our understanding of a single subject; that of affect. Rather than legitimizing each of these separate currents within the research of cinema, this thesis will investigate how two different disciplines approach the same subject, and how their language, concepts, and notions can be translated from one field to another. And perhaps even lead to a more comprehensive account of affect and emotion by bridging the gaps between these distinct theories.

That being said, it is necessary to state that a significant part of this thesis will primarily focus on Deleuzian philosophy of cinema and more specifically his account of affect, because perhaps in every research it is fruitful to have a clear point of departure from which to branch out. The choice for Deleuze is not an arbitrary one at all, because for me, his way of supporting his complex theories inspire me to delve deeper into the confines of that given theory more than any other philosopher. Not in the last place because within his Cinema I and Cinema II books, Deleuze incorporates several different fields of thought, such as, to name but a few, the theory of matter inspired by Bergson, aberrant evolutional theory evident in his concept of the sensory-motor-schemata, neuroscience, and other complex philosophical theories. Because these are all present in the enquiry into affect and other concepts within the research of cinema, this makes his line of thought both complex and capacious at the same time.

However, at the same time, this complexity of Deleuzian concepts oftentimes thwarts his findings. A striking example of this will be one of the main points discussed in this thesis because it is unmistakably connected to the study of affect. Deleuze’s account of affect is more often than not considered as a synonym for feeling or emotion, as is the case in many cognitive or phenomenologist studies. Therefore, this conceptual unclarity about the difference between emotion and affect will be the main focus of this thesis. Marco Abel states that it is exactly this erroneous “[…] articulation of affect qua emotion that currently dominates usage of affect in academic (and popular) discourses” (Abel, 2008, p. 1). Some interpreters of Deleuze do acknowledge that affect can be seen as a precondition to experiences such as emotions and feelings. Abel argues, for instance, that “[…] affect,
understood with Deleuze as pre-subjective force, is the ontological pre-condition for any instantiation of representation, meaning, understanding, cognition, and consciousness to emerge” (Abel, 2008, p. 10). However, emotions and affect cannot be seen as the same thing, as an affect is closer to a pre-personal, non-intentional intensity, or bodily reaction. According to Ruth Leys, this postulation can be linked to the way Silvan Tomkins and his followers interpret affects as non-intentional, bodily reactions, which stands in contrast to Freudian, and ‘appraisal theorist’ research, for whom “emotions are embodied, intentional states governed by our beliefs, cognitions, and desires” (Leys, 2011, p. 437). Therefore, theorists like Brian Massumi and Steven Shaviro, who seem to prefer the Deleuzian concept of affect, interpret affects as non-intentional, non-signifying, non-conscious intensities (strength and/or duration of an effect on the body) disconnected from the subjective (Massumi, 1987, p. 91; Shaviro, 2010, p. 3). In other words, an affect is a non-conscious intensity, which can be explained as a moment of unformed and unstructured potential. Intensity in this sense is purely the characteristic of the encounter, and sets off the process of thinking, but comes before this process.

Let me specify this a bit more: we could say that Deleuze’s philosophy does not restrict itself to what can be seen, heard, comprehended or understood (in a ‘normal’ cognitive perceptual way). As a matter of fact, Deleuze considers human perception to be a substraction or contraction of the real (Pearson, 2001, p. 417). According to Keith Ansell Pearson, we must therefore regard Deleuze’s philosophy as a response to this “insufficiency of the faculties of perception” (Pearson, 2001, p. 418). Deleuze philosophy, then, could be seen as a method to address things which “do not explicitly strike our sense or consciousness” (Pearson, 2001, p. 418). In this light, Deleuze uses his concept of intensity to define elements that lie at the limits of our perception (Deleuze, 1994, p. 144). Intensities are pure differences, a form of ontological difference that give rise to ‘actual’ or perceived entities (Deleuze, 1994, p. 246). Despite the fact that intensites themselves cannot be directly perceived, they can be felt, sensed, or perceived in the ‘quality’ they give rise to.

Claire Colebrook uses a very plastic example of Deleuze’s concept of intensity. She writes that we can experience the pure difference of white light only through the intensity of a single color, such as a shade of red (Colebrook, 2002, p. 83). She explains that our eyes do not perceive “the difference of each vibration of light”, but “contract complex data into a single shade or object” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 83). So, intensities are imperceptible because a “perceived difference” is a difference that has “already been identified, reduced, or contracted” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 27). This is why we see white light instead of perceiving violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red all at the same time, according to Colebrook. Intensities can therefore be considered to be outside of, but implicated in our experience of them. In contrast, Deleuze uses the concept of the ‘extensive’ difference or ‘extensity’ to explain the way in which intensities are homogenised in everyday
perception (Deleuze, 1994, p. 230).\(^1\) Considering the abovementioned, affects seem to me very similar to intensities, so let us pursue this a bit further. Take for example Brian Massumi’s *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, in which he equates affect with intensity in an early attempt to explicate what affects are: “For present purposes, imensity will be equated with affect” (Massumi, 2002, p. 27). He continues by stating that “[a]ffect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion. But one of the clearest lessons of this first story is that emotion and affect – if affect is [explained as] intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (Massumi, 2002, p. 27-28). Considering the synonymous use of emotion and feelings as affects, Massumi adds that, if one does choose to use them as such, they must be understood as only one specific form of affect (we can see in §3.3.1 that Plantinga adopts a similar view). This means that, according to Massumi, affect and emotions are related but not fully synonymous, primarily because “[e]motion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning” (Massumi, 2002, p. 28). How I understand this is that Massumi believes that intensity or affect must be owned and recognized (experienced) in order for it to become an emotion or feeling. According to Marco Abel for instance, emotions are specific affects, namely, those that are territorialized (understood through experience) on the subject (Abel, 2008, p. 5). Massumi thus argues for a clear conceptual distinction between affect and emotion. He claims that affect is a category under which emotions and feelings also appertain, and argues for a distinction between the pre-personal/pre-subjective and the personal/subjective nature of emotions and affect.

In a sense we can consider an affect as a separate entity from cognition, but not entirely. Or as Deleuze puts it, “[t]he affect is the entity, that is Power or Quality. It is something expressed: the affect does not exist independently of something which expresses it, although it is completely distinct from it” (Deleuze, 1968, p. 97). First, let us explore this thesis of affect as an” entity in more detail. Massumi adds to Deleuze’s understanding of affect as an entity, that the effects that are produced by affect can exist without the cause of the effect. Put differently, the affect causes our body to infold “the effect of impingement - it conserves the impingement minus the impinging thing, the impingement abstracted from the actual action that caused it and actual context of that action” (Massumi, 2002, p. 31-31). Coming from the field of film studies, this interpretation of Deleuze’s concept of affects seems to be somewhat unclear. What I think Massumi means here is that affect cannot be understood as a conventional process of cause-and-effect terms. It should, however, be considered as an autonomous entity or force separated from the event that caused it. Abel sees the concept of affect, when thought of in such a way, as a means for (re)focusing on “the practical

\(^1\) See §2.3 on Deleuze and Bergson for a more comprehensive account of this distinction.
concerns of the body/materiality and away from what many consider an overemphasis on textuality and overly theoretical matters” (Abel, 2008, p. 7). An individual could, for instance, show a lack of emotion, but affect itself – understood as entity separated from its cause – is always present (see §2.2.2 concerning the constant increase-diminution of our power of existence as a characteristic of affect or §3.3.5 on Scherer’s assessment of intrinsic pleasure of stimuli for more information on this phenomenon). When we translate this characteristic of affect to a cinematic metaphor to exemplify what may be meant, we could see that “the image’s content, its conventional meaning, does not always necessarily have to correspond with its impact. Thus an image can have an effect that does not necessarily correspond to its meaning, or without meaning anything in particular to the viewing subject that it affects” (Abel, 2008, p. 7). What seems important to me in Massumi’s distinction is that there can be, for example, an absence of a display of emotion by an individual, even though this individual is filled with affect in response to a particular encounter or event. By arguing this, he separates emotions as those affects that are personal/subjective by already being infolded by an individual’s body, and affect as autonomous entities which transcend this process.

We can already see that by considering affect as an essential element of cinema, Deleuze and new affect theorists² posit that, when we consider cinema to be an epistemological “tool” or a platform inducing novel thought, it seems implausible to consider mind and body to be separated. When watching movies, both the body (and sensation) and the mind (cognition) influence our experience of cinema. Our mental images are based on bodily sensations as well as cognitive constructions, therefore we should consider a sort of brain-body-connection when talking about cinematic experience. Put differently, when experiencing cinema there is a web of neural information which combines consciousness and the body into a unified, indivisible whole, according to Deleuze (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2009, p. 163). Nonetheless it seems that affect and emotions can be theoretically separated as having distinctive qualities, according to Deleuze-inspired thinkers of affect (Leys, 2011, p. 441). We will discuss this more extensively in the second chapter.

1.2 Reading Guide of the Thesis

This thesis will thus be preoccupied with setting forth the fundamental differences and analogies of the Deleuzian and cognitive accounts of affect in order to investigate in what manner these accounts can be utilized to construct a better understanding of exactly that single subject which kept many academics in its grip for over a decade: affect. In order to do so, we will firstly examine the Deleuzian

---

² Some of the most influential interpreters of Deleuze are Brian Massumi, William Connolly, and Peter Sedgwick, who have used works of Deleuze and other scientists – such as Damasio – to theorize affect. Sometimes they are referred to as the new affect theorists (Leys, 2011, p. 440). These interpreters of Deleuze can be regarded as a theoretically disparate movement which has as its aim to incorporate affect into a variety of cultural and social studies.
approach to affect, which has been adopted by several thinkers, to which contemporary theorists such as Brian Massumi, Elena Del Rio, and Steven Shaviro can be considered. It must be said that most of these adopters of Deleuzian theory interpret his concepts differently. This, perhaps, is primarily because each of these interpreters attempt to incorporate Deleuzian themes within their own research, rather than present us with a close reading of Deleuzian philosophy. This will have consequences for the overlap between Deleuze’s Spinozist’s concept of affect (as it is presented in §2.2 of this thesis) and the concepts of affect that are developed by these thinkers (especially Massumi). At times, my interpretation of Deleuze will conflict with that of other interpreters. In which case I will present my own personal take on Deleuze’s concepts, hoping to achieve an interpretation which is closely linked to Deleuze’s words. I will begin by examining the origin of this particular approach, which constitutes of the thoughts of philosophers such as Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, and which can loosely be linked to Tomkins’ account of affects in the field of psychological emotion research (Leys, 2011, p. 442). The main focus of this part of the thesis will be the distinction between affect and emotion, which in the last few decades has blown new life into the study of affect in social, cultural, and art studies alike by the influential philosophies of Deleuze and Guattari. In short, according to an influential delegation of the cognitive perspective, the difference between affect and emotion is often explained through the difference of cognitive involvement between the two. Emotions are considered to include processes of a higher cognitive order, whereas affects tend to be characterized by being cognitively impenetrable (Plantinga, 2009; Carroll, 2008; Bordwell, 1989). This means that affects are less dependent on cognitive processes. According to Deleuzians, however, affects must be seen as pre-conditions for more complex thought (Rizzo, 2006, p. 11; Åkervall, 2008, p. 6). Affects spur novel thoughts by ‘jolting our senses’; our cognitive and perceptual faculties are not capable of processing these ‘affective jolts’ directly and therefore need a re-arranging of the senses (new thought processes) to cope with these intense moments. I must add that this depiction of the difference between affect and emotion is a very plain one. We will see in the rest of the thesis that the distinction between affect and emotion actually covers a much wider debate.

Once we understand the complex grounding to Deleuze’s account of affect, we will examine further its main concepts, merits, and implications for further research in film studies in an attempt to articulate why, and in what ways, the concept of affect might be relevant to contemporary theoretical debates within cinema studies concerning both affect and emotion.

Secondly, we will investigate the cognitive approach to affect, which as we will see oftentimes utilizes affect as a synonym for feelings or emotions. We will find that within the cognitive approach under affects several different ‘orders’ of emotions are considered. Emotions, Noel Carroll explains, are “those affects that have the preceding, complex structure that integrates differential
computations with feelings” (Carroll, 2008, p. 152). Additionally, he argues that in order for this form of affects to be elicited, cognition must always play an important role, which clearly opposes the Deleuzian postulation that affect could be theorized as concerning a different domain as cognition, almost considering them two different components or entities even, as affect is pre-personal, pre-intentional and autonomous. According to some cognitive theorists, however, (deliberate) cognition and affect are almost always intertwined\(^3\). Our cognitive system’s knowledge of the object or “stimulus” is often considered a precondition for an affect or reaction to occur in the body of the subject. Recent tendencies in cognitive research, however, have emphasized non-cognitive affects. Examples of this are presented by research of Carl Plantinga and Jens Eder in this thesis. Their theory on the perceptual-cognitive aspect of emotions and perceptual affects will be discussed. In order to parallel both approaches it is necessary to compile a sufficient representation of the cognitive approach to affect: studies by thinkers such as Carl Plantinga, Greg M. Smith, and Noel Carroll will be inquired to fulfill this criterion.

When one decides to write about multiple theories of aesthetic emotion in an extensive manner, it can be argued that it is beneficial to treat the paradox of fiction. When we engage with fiction – by watching movies for example – we are affected by sensory stimuli brought forth by the art form. These may include reactions to strong visual and audio triggers such as loud noises, sudden movements, and bright colors, but we are affected by the film’s more complex narrative triggers as well. Within the confinements of this thesis I will present different perspectives and theories of how one might look at this broad phenomenon of emotional activation and response. Hence, the paradox of fiction is treated in order to present an adequate overview of these different perspectives on our affective responses towards fictions. After explicating both the Deleuzian and the cognitivist take on affect, the paradox of fiction will primarily help us by placing these two in the broader context by situating them within the debate. So, the paradox of fiction in this thesis functions as a overview of sorts in which the significant perspectives of this emotional research are placed and by doing so, this overview aids us in understanding the fundamental differences between several perspectives focused on emotional response to fictions.

Finally, rather than reading a certain film by applying affect as appreciated by one of the abovementioned approaches, this thesis will aim at showing that a comprehensive knowledge of affect will supplement our existing critical knowledge employed, for instance, in the analysis of affect and emotion in film. Moreover it sets out and examines the ontological foundation of film theory or

\(^3\) It must be noted that in cognitive studies affect is often used as an umbrella term that comprises non-intentional as well as intentional types of affectivity. This means that not every type of affect involves cognition, but generally emotions do. Sometimes affect is reserved for precisely the non-intentional, non-cognitive types of affectivity which stands in opposition to emotion. This divergence within cognitivism is addressed more comprehensively in Chapter 3 of this thesis.
other academic acts of critique and, by doing so, directly influences how we find our way around, and operate within, theory and criticism. Additionally, this thesis may be read as a critique of over-simplifying explanations of affect and emotion as conceptual phenomena in the current field of film studies, arguing that such concepts must in the future be used cautiously, comprehensively, and certainly not as synonyms.
2. Deleuze – Ideas, Affects, Cinema, Images

2.1 Introduction

Before addressing the Deleuzian conception of affect, it seems imperative to shortly introduce Deleuze’s “cinema project”, because essentially this thesis aims to investigate a certain concept, which takes a significant place within the works of Deleuze, and its implication in the field of film theory. When reading Deleuze’s books on cinema, called Cinema I and Cinema II, at first, the work by the inspiring French philosopher seems to be clearly about cinema, as Deleuze was always aiming to recognize the specificity of all the different practices of art. However, his ambition was also to analyze and rethink human thought as a whole. Therefore Deleuze did not see cinema as merely a form of presenting stories, moreover he saw the art of cinema and the cinematic form as a possibility to change the capabilities of thought and imagining. Consequently, Cinema I and Cinema II can be seen as a work of philosophy, in which time, movement, and life as a whole are theorized using a clearly ‘cinematic understructure’ or ‘cinematic perspective’.

Defining what Deleuze’s Cinema I and Cinema II are about in this manner may give us insight into the question why many scholars find it so hard to comprehend or appreciate his inter-categorical work. We can imagine that philosophers often ignore his books as they seem to be predominantly addressing examples taken from films, and filmmakers can get confused by the use of complex, philosophical argumentation. However, in writing such a book Deleuze brings together cinema and philosophy in a new and exciting way, because Cinema I and Cinema II explore what it is like to think of cinema philosophically and philosophy cinematically. Combining the two as an interwoven whole, yet different at the same time, Deleuze’s aspiration is to effectuate a becoming-cinema of philosophy, and becoming-philosophy of cinema. To use Claire Colebrooks words when addressing the significance of cinema for Deleuze,

“Cinema, like art or literature, is philosophical not only because it conveys ideas or messages or offers us some theory of the world. Cinema produces new possibilities for the human eye and perception; it creates new affects” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 53).

Exactly because cinema, as well as the other arts, creates these new possibilities, in the form of novel qualitative combinations of sensation and feeling (Deleuze calls them “percepts” and “affects”), philosophy is challenged with creating new theories and concepts in order to grasp these

---

4 Many film scholars would even be inclined to say that the Deleuze’s books on Cinema are not about film at all, but are pure philosophy in every respect.
possibilities. Thus, Deleuze aims to create a philosophical framework that is not exclusively about understanding or interpreting film, but more so about thinking cinema in new ways; for instance by thinking about cinema as a means for the creation of percepts and affects (we will examine more closely what Deleuze means by "percepts" and "affects" when we get to discussing these concepts as entities on their own). In other words, cinema may provoke us to see, to feel, to sense, and finally to think differently. Moreover, in his books on cinema, Deleuze sees cinema as quite a unique art form, that is, it deals with its subject matter in ways that other forms of art are less capable of. He considers cinema particularly suited as a way of relating to the experience of space and time.

So, cinema can be considered philosophy, according to Deleuze, because he believes that philosophy, science, and art should be considered equally, and essentially practical and creative. However different in their objects of research all of these disciplines should evoke novel thoughts and a continuous creation of new concepts. It is exactly because both philosophy and cinema create novel thoughts (despite being through different means) they can both be considered philosophical. Moreover, none of these disciplines should be considered as having primacy over the others. While in philosophy one predominantly creates concepts, and in the sciences one creates quantitative theories based on fixed points of reference, in the arts the creation of qualitative novel combinations of sensation and feeling seems essential for the creation of novel thought (Deleuze, 1997, p. 123-124). In other words, art creates percepts and affects, and each art form does so according to its own “blocs”, or means, for instance, “painting invents blocs of lines and colors, and cinema invents blocs of movement and time” (Flaxman, 2000, p. 4). Therefore the investigation into art and, more specifically, cinema seems essential in order to comprehend the notion of affect fully. Moreover, for Deleuze cinema is important in the investigation of affects, because when perception encounters pure optical and/or sound images — images it cannot recognize — the continuity of bodily processes from sensation to cognition is disrupted, as in the case of an irrational cut in cinema, and suddenly it is possible that we find ourselves being torn out of a process of automatization of response and thinking the affect itself. Thinking the affect itself is meant here in a metaphorical way, that is, we suddenly feel impacted, but are not capable of consciously dealing with it yet, making way for a reordering of ‘the logic of our senses’ through an ‘disrupting’ episode of internal contemplation. In other words, this enables us to reflect on the affect by recognizing it as a force that influences us and, consequently, as becoming a new concept (to bring order to that which overwhelmed us by its ‘chaos’). Put differently, cinema has the power to present us with imagery that disrupts our automatic mental processes of meaning-making and thus forces us to ‘reorder our cognitive

5 See §2.2.3 ‘Art, Perception and Affection’ for a further examination of what it means to bring chaos to the logic of sensation.
processing’ and create new concepts in order to understand what it is that we are represented with.\(^6\)

Let me be more clear on this point. We must acknowledge that for Deleuze a concept is not a simple labeling. It is a creation that gives direction to thought. Understanding affect itself means, for Deleuze, forming a concept of what affect is in its ‘pure’ or ‘virtual state’ (Deleuze opposes this to the ‘actual’ or its actual state), because the experience of affect in actuality is always already a contraction of the ‘real’. Take for example the human eye. A human eye reduces the perception of light. It actualizes light in a certain way (perceiving certain colors, etc.), a tree in a different way, a dog in a different way, and so on. So, the flow of light “in itself” – as is the case with affect in itself – is not actual, but, rather, “the pure virtuality of infinite possibilities actualized in a multitude of ways” (Zizek, 2004, p. 4). We should not attempt to think the affect as if it were not as in our everyday life either, as we do not have the ability to grasp the concept fully in our everyday life, which is governed by economically efficient processes such as recognition and guided attention. We must conceptualize it as it is in its pure infinite potential. It is exactly this what Deleuze aims for – his purpose is not to label what is most common or frequent in day-to-day experience. Rather, he sets out to think and imagine those extreme points (points in all their yet-to-be-actualized potential) where all the singularities that make up experience are disclosed. And it is cinema that presents to us these ‘pure’ affects and images. In other words, we never actually perceive a world of pure affect in our everyday life; we always see affect in relation to fixed conditions and concerns that shape them. A concept, however, takes us from the actual and everyday world to the virtual possibilities of that world. As if our world is made up of affect (equal to what cinema tries to achieve). The concept strives to think exactly that affect from which we then later organize a fixed and relatively actual world.

Understanding how Deleuze produces and uses these concepts helps to show the radical nature of his (constructivist) method (Colebrook, 2002, p. 36). The whole objective, as evidenced in his work on cinema, is that of discerning singularities: stepping back from our composed and ordered world, and thinking the differences from which it is composed (Colebrook, 2002, p. 36). We will see at the end of this chapter, why and how art and essentially cinema play a crucial role in thinking the entity of affect, or affect in itself.

### 2.1.1 Firstness, Secondness, Thirdness

In order to clarify the essential difference between the Deleuzian perspective and the cognitive perspective, the latter will be discussed in the second part of this thesis, I want to illustrate it by considering what C.S. Peirce defined as Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness (Peirce, 1931, p. 300-356). I will try to connect these concepts to the different approaches considered in this thesis. I decided to use the notions of firstness and secondness from C.S. Peirce here, not only because

\(^6\) With imagery meant in the broadest possible sense of the word, including images, sounds, etc.
Deleuze addresses the theory of C.S. Peirce as a great inspiration throughout his books on cinema, but primarily because they seem to correspond quite well with affect(ion), emotion, and cognition. Therefore, C.S. Peirce’s concept of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness will serve as a suitable framework corresponding with the different theories treated throughout this thesis. Peirce’s framework can be seen as a mainstay throughout this thesis by referring back to it, and connecting parts of this thesis to one of the three categories discussed below. (Deleuze, 1986, p. 91; Colebrook, 2006, p. 61).

For C.S. Peirce all philosophical thought emerges from categories. Categories are understood as “[tables] of conceptions drawn from the logical analysis of thought and regarded as applicable to being” (Peirce, 1932, p. 300). This means that in order to understand life, we must understand first and foremost how thought functions. Considering this, thought can either be understood in relation to perceptions about the world outside or to the ideas one has from his or her interior, for example inside your head. Peirce posits that all thought can be categorized into three component parts. These parts are labelled “Firstness”, “Secondness”, and “Thirdness” (Peirce, 1932, p. 300). All of these categories govern a distinct domain of thought. Simply put, “firstness” governs qualities, “secondness” forces, and “thirdness” governs mediation (Peirce, 1932, p. 300-310).

In a sense these categories could be thought of as affect, emotion, and cognition. For Deleuze, that which can be categorized as secondness is formed in opposition between two distinct things in a concrete situation, quite similar to the “aboutness” of emotion (between action and reaction or individual and milieu, for example). What we know to be “actual” things belong to the category of secondness. On the contrary, firstness, is that which is “difficult to define” because it “concerns what is new in experience, what is fresh, fleeting and nevertheless eternal” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 98). Consequently, Deleuze posits that affect, with its ability to express pure intensity or power, belongs to the category of firstness. Firstness is defined by pure Possibility, not actual reality, for instance “the quality of a possible sensation, feeling or idea, detached from any concrete state of things, opening a virtual future of possibilities” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 99). Affect with its fleeting and transcending nature seems to fit the first category in this respect. If firstness is purely quality, Peirce argues that firstness does not refer to anything else, nor does it lie behind anything else. Firsts are those entities whose being is simply in itself, not possessing ‘aboutness’ (Peirce, 1931, p. 356). It is the sensation of having only one thing occupying your senses. Affects defined as being firstness are “pure”. Such affects are forces or entities not infolded by subjects. Just as Colebrook states for example, the perception of “redness” of a particular manifestation of the color red, detached from its distinctive details or context (Colebrook, 2006, p. 59). We are affected by just that particular shade of color, because we do not need to consider its causes or its circumstances or relations to any other thing. As Claire Colebrook explains, for Deleuze, affect as firstness is not defined by the relation
yet, but rather the potential to relate – a pure quality or power that can actualize itself in a myriad different circumstances in different individuals (Colebrook, 2006, p. 61).

Now imagine a state of being affected by this firstness; by affect, or the aforementioned “redness”. In this situation the affect makes a connection with an affected body. Secondness in this sense is existential: “a physical force, a shock that strikes you, a process involving a relational process; an emotion” (Colebrook, 2006, p. 61). In Cinema 1, Deleuze discusses Carl Theodor Dreyer’s Passion of Joan of Arc (1928) as the affective film pur sang, for example. Deleuze argues that in this film the whole secondness-level of Joan of Arc’s situation is undeniably present, such as historical circumstances, social relations, individual characters – the trial of Joan. However, in Deleuze’s perception, the affective level of the depicted dominant event (the Passion of Joan) goes beyond the states-of-affairs and their impacts on Joan (secondness). Affect moves, as it were, through the characters and situations, and by doing so the pure power of anger and pure quality of martyrdom become present. Affects are thus seen as the pure qualities and powers that are present in a particular situation but yet extend beyond the particular actualization (Deleuze, 1986, pp. 107-108), whereas emotions are actualized, and subjectively felt, and defined by their “aboutness” and “infolding”. I argue in conclusion that it is in this “Firstness” (affect) and “Secondness” (emotion) we find the difference in perspective between Deleuzian affects and cognitivist emotions.

The three categories of Peirce are categorized in a cardinal as well as ordinal manner, meaning that firstness is included in secondness, and both are included in thirdness. So when talking about firstness (affect), which Peirce himself described as ‘raw feels’, they can be considered immediate (Rodowick, 1997, p. 55). And because they are instantaneous they are considered only possible instead of actual present (Rodowick, 1997, p. 56). Think of consciousness requiring time in order to experience an affect, and interpreting an affect. Opposed to a feeling which is still a simple quality, because such processing has not yet been triggered. With secondness the initial affect – which at that point was still only pure possibility because of its immediacy – makes a connection with an affected body (Rodowick, 1997, p. 56). The body infolds the power of the affect and it becomes an emotion. This is the domain of secondness. Thus, secondness includes firstness (affect) and transforms it into something that has been determined or brought into existence as a (perceivable) thing. Secondness could thus be seen as the consequence of the affect (powers affecting our senses and producing physical effects in us), making the last category, that of “thridness”, the consciousness of the experience of the entire above described process. If we take the example of “redness” again, thridness would be defined by a conscious categorizing of that “redness” for example as being the color of ‘danger’ or ‘toxicity’. Thirdness is a conscious, cognitive conclusion attached to the aforementioned categories of firstness and secondness. So, thridness compares one thing to another, and by doing so it establishes a “law”, or a “predicative concept” (Rodowick, 1997, p. 56).
From this initial, elementary threefold distinction we will zoom in to the questions about affect and emotion in the coming chapters. Considering this arrangement, we will first consider “affect” (as this ‘pure’ quality or force in art, which exists without having a clear connection to its causes or its circumstances or relations to any other thing). Secondly, we will explore “emotion”, and we will examine if emotion always involves this consciousness of the powers affecting our senses and producing physical effects in us. Which would mean – from this initial distinction – that thirdness (or being consciously aware, interpreting, and attaching causal “laws” to these categories) is primarily connected to having emotions, instead of affects.

2.2 Deleuze and Spinoza

2.2.1 Affect and idea

First, we must clarify what Deleuze means when he uses the words ‘affect’ or ‘affection.’ In order to do so, we must focus on his reading of Spinoza’s Ethics concerning affect. Deleuze often regards himself as a Spinozist, and Deleuze admits that his ideas of affect are not seldom drawn from the works of Spinoza. As he writes in Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?, “Spinoza is, for me, the ‘prince’ of philosophers” (Deleuze, 1968, p. 11) or “Spinoza: the absolute philosopher, whose Ethics is the foremost book on concepts” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 140). This brings us to the first problem concerning affect; nowadays, the word ‘affect’ is generally used as a verb which means to impress, or act upon (in mind or feelings) or to ‘influence, move, touch’ (Oxford Dictionary of English 3rd online ed., 2010). Furthermore, affect as a noun is oftentimes reduced in translation as “affection” or more simply “feeling”. However, affect and affection must be understood as two separate concepts. Deleuze does sometimes use the concept of ‘sentiment’ or ‘feeling’ in relation to both “affection” (affection) and “affectus” (affect), but sentiment and emotion are not to be seen as equal (Deleuze, 1978, p. i). Here it is important to note that Deleuze himself does not generally use the concept of “emotion” when dealing with affect, but uses his own concept of ‘sentiment’ which is generally translated in English as ‘feeling’ or rather a ‘personal feeling’. Despite the fact that ‘feeling’ covers both affection and affectus, neither word denotes a personal feeling per se. This means that the words ‘sentiment’ and ‘feeling’ should be seen as overarching terms with which the field of affective response is denounced, but they are in no way synonyms for affect, as for Deleuze feelings consist of different elements. On a very elementary level, these are affects (autonomous beings of sensation that exist in themselves) and affections (the encapsulation of affects by an individual). So the fact that concepts as ‘feelings’, or even ‘affects’ are used as synonyms for emotions is a reduction that is far too simplistic, and it is exactly this reduction of the concept of affect, which Deleuze wanted to clarify in his exploration of Spinoza in Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza (1968).

Deleuze begins this exploration of the concept of affect by clarifying the difference between
affectio and affectus, which are Spinozist concepts taken from the Latin language. Concerning these two concepts Deleuze explains, “[s]ome translators, quite strangely, translate both in the same way. This is a disaster. They translate both terms, affectio and affectus, by ‘affection’” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 2). According to Deleuze we should translate affectio as “affection” and affectus as “affect”.

In order to get a better understanding of what affect and affection are, we must also understand what Spinoza considers to be an idea. Spinoza, as many other philosophers before and after him, considers an idea to be a mode of thought which represents something: a representational mode of thought (Deleuze, 1978, p. 2). On this preliminary level, it is useful to know that this aspect of an idea (its representational nature) is defined as its ‘objective reality’. In other words, when encountering the objective reality of the idea this means the idea is envisioned as representation of something. This idea, to the extend that it represents something, has an objective reality: it is the relation of the idea to the object that it represents (Deleuze, 1978, p. 2). So we may start by saying: “the idea is a mode of thought defined by its representational character” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 2). This, in turn, provides us with our point of departure for making a distinction between idea and affect (affectus), because Deleuze will call any mode of thought which doesn’t represent anything an affect. Or as Deleuze posits: “Every mode of thought insofar as it is non-representational will be termed affect” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 2). So what does all of this mean? Deleuze, argues that we can take at random that what everybody would call affect or feeling: “a hope for example, or a pain, a love […] they are not representational” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). Deleuze admits that “[t]here is an idea of the loved thing, there is an idea of something hoped for, but hope as such or in itself or love as such represents nothing, strictly nothing” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). For example, “[a] volition, a will implies, in all rigor, that I will something, and what I will is an object of representation, what I will is given in an idea, but the fact of willing is not an idea, it is an affect because it is a non-representational mode of thought” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 1). We must keep in mind that this is a very early and simplified attempt at discerning between ideas and affects. Deleuze’s second, more successful attempt, starts from the insight that ideas are not only representations of something else (their objective reality), but also have a reality of their own (their formal reality). This distinction between the objective and formal reality is addressed in §2.4, where we attempt to explain that ,on a very rudimentary level, according to many cognitive accounts of emotion, an emotion is directed at something; it is about something, it processes the quality of “aboutness”. Whereas affects have a cruder, or no direct relation to the objects that elicit them at all. It is exactly because of this dissimilarity that a clear conceptual distinction between emotion and affect seems in place.

Considering the abovementioned division between affect and emotion, we could also say that an affect is the element potentially eliciting a sensation, minus the intentionality or the intentional object as affects are fundamentally pre-cognitive, and pre-subjective. According to
Deleuze then, affect is something expressed, as it does not exist independently of something which expresses it, it is located beyond the experienceability and cognitive capacities of the subject. And at the same time, it is completely distinct from it (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 191-192). Massumi expands on this idea, by stating that an affect conserves the “impingement minus the impinging thing, the impingement abstracted from the actual action that caused it and actual context of that action [...] In this sense an affect is primary, non-conscious, a-subjective or pre-subjective, a-signifying, unqualified and intensive” (Massumi, 2002, p. 32). This explanation of an affect separates it from an emotion. As an emotion is derivative, conscious, qualified and meaningful, a ‘content’ that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject. Massumi adds, “[e]motion is affect ‘captured’ by a subject, or tamed and reduced to the extent that it becomes commensurate with that subject” (Massumi, 2002, p. 33). We can already see according to this line of thought that Deleuze sees an affect as an autonomous entity. We will discuss why he did so in the coming paragraphs.

2.2.2 Affect and Affection

Now that we have addressed the divergence between affect and idea we must investigate the difference between affection and affectus. Deleuze explains this by using one of Spinoza’s examples, which can be characterized as a geometrical portrait of our life. That is, within Ethics Spinoza sets out to explain what happens concretely in our life through a geometrical, almost mathematical method presented in the form of propositions and demonstrations (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). Spinoza tells us that “our ideas succeed each other constantly: one idea chases another, one idea replaces another idea, in an instant” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). For example, you walk down a street where you know people, you say “Hello Pierre” and then you turn and say “Hello Paul” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). This can be thought of as “a series of successions of ideas that already coexist in our world, successions of ideas” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). But there is something else that happens, as our everyday life is not only made up by the ideas which succeed each other. There is also a continuous variation in us. Deleuze notes that Spinoza employs the term “automaton” or “spiritual automaton”; we are, he says, “spiritual automata, that is to say it is less we who have the ideas than the ideas which are affirmed in us” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 4). Next to the succession of ideas which we encounter in our lives, there is something else. Deleuze argues there is something in human beings that never ceases to vary. In Deleuze’s words, “there is a regime of variation which is not the same thing as the succession of ideas themselves” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 4). Spinoza defines this as the ‘capacity to be affected’. Deleuze employs the concept of “variations” to serve his own philosophical appropriation of affect; as Spinoza does not employ the word in the exact same way (Deleuze, 1978, p. 4). Nonetheless, Deleuze argues, in accordance with Spinoza’s arguments, that it is important to acknowledge that a continuous variation of the power of existence exists in us, and that this capacity is always
completely fulfilled. Deleuze states that for any individual “for a given degree of power assumed to be constant within certain limits, the capacity for being affected itself remains constant within those limits” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 27). However, the power of acting and the power of being acted upon can vary immensely in proportion to each other.

We must remember here that Spinoza tried to perceive everyday life and, subsequently, the body through mathematical formula’s and schemata. Therefore, the body is defined by two axes, according to Spinoza. First, the body is defined extensively and kinetically (or as ‘relating to’), as affection, by a complex set of relations under which a multiplicity of parts is subsumed, and these parts affect each other continuously (Smith, 2012, p. 240). Secondly, a body is defined intensively (or by constant change), as affect, by a continuous variation of a particular degree of power: the capacity to affect or be affected by other bodies (Smith, 2012, p. 240). The first axis determines the knowledge we have of our body through its affections, indicating the state of our body at a given moment as it endures the action of another body (think of two affected relations combining to form a new composite relation: when digesting food for instance). Of course, decomposition is also a possibility (poison breaking down cells). As for the second axis we can think of the body through the affects of which it is capable: the manner in which affections augment or diminish power (Smith, 2012, p. 240). We experience joy or pleasure when our body encounters another and when this increases our power of existence by entering into composition with it. We feel sadness or pain when another body threatens our coherence by diminishing our power. Sadness and joy pass from one state to another, making for the continuous variation of our power of existence (Smith, 2012, p. 240).

So, our being is defined in terms of the continuous variation of power or the capacity to affect and be affected. What then is this variation? Let us consider the before mentioned example once more: in the street you run into Pierre, for whom you now feel hostility, you pass by and say hello to Pierre, or perhaps you are afraid of him, and then you suddenly see Paul who is very charming, and you say hello to Paul in a reassured and contented manner (Deleuze, 1978, p. 4). This then is in part, a succession of two ideas, the idea of Pierre and the idea of Paul; but there is something else, there is more: a variation also operates. Spinoza explains this as a: “[variation] of my force of existing” (Deleuze, 1978, p.3), or other words he employs as a synonym are: ‘vis existendi’, the force of existing, or ‘potentia agendi’, the power [puissance] of acting, and these variations are perpetual (Deleuze, 1978, p.3). Deleuze would say that for Spinoza there is a continuous variation—and this is what it means to exist—of the force of existing or of the power of acting. This variation is quite similar to what is called the pleasure/displeasure (or valence) axis of an emotion in psychology. For, meeting Paul has a positive valence (is pleasurable), whereas meeting Pierre has a negative valence (is not pleasurable). See §3.3.5 for a more comprehensive explanation of this concept.

In addition, Deleuze introduces the concepts of active (actions) and passive (passions)
affects, to serve the notion that if our being is defined by a degree of power – the capacity to affect and be affected – then we can evaluate the degree in which we come into possession of our power. As we have seen, for Deleuze, the degree of active and passive affects is open to variation, within a permanently filled capacity of being affected (Deleuze, 1968, p. 222). However, it can be exercised in two directions at once. Namely as a ‘power of acting’, but also as a ‘power of suffering’, or a ‘power of being acted upon’. With the ‘power of being acted upon’ being the limitation of our power of acting, confining us from what we are capable of doing. Hence, there are two types of affections: passive affections, these originate from outside the individual and diminish his or her power of acting; and active affections, defined by the affected individual’s own nature and which will allow the individual to come into possession of its own power. Henceforth, the degree to which a body’s power of being affected is suffused by passive affections, is called the ‘power of being acted upon’, whereas the degree of being affected by active affections is known as the ‘power of acting’. The capacity to affect and be affected is continuously suffused by successions of affects and affections. The power of being acted upon and the power of acting, however, vary greatly in relation to each other. When our capacity for being affected is filled in such a way that its power of acting is increased, producing active affections and adequate ideas, Spinoza would say that we can ‘judge’ our existence as “good” or free, although he tries to distance himself from such dichotomies as Good/Evil (Smith, 2012, p. 235). Rather, judgment comprises of the degree to which we exercise our force of existence; the intensity of our power of acting. To further develop Deleuze’s point it is necessary to explain Spinoza’s distinction between: inadequate (passive) and adequate (active) ideas. In short, an idea is adequate when it is caused by us; it is inadequate when it is caused by an external body outside of us. In addition, to such an extent that we have adequate ideas our mind will necessarily become active; and to the extent that we have inadequate ideas our mind will become passive. Let me explain a bit further: Spinoza argues that the nature of beings is defined by the complexity of their bodies, and consequently, the complexity of their relation to external bodies. The relations can be active or passive. Active, meaning that an individual determines or regulates himself in relation to external bodies; passive when they determine him. The higher degree to which an individual determines himself, the more one’s ‘power of acting’ increases. In contrast, the less one determines himself (or the more you are determined by external causes) the more one’s power is reduced (Bennett, 1984, p. 255-257).

Subsequently, an increase or decrease in the power of the body to act (power of acting), is paralleled by an increase or decrease in the power of the mind to think as well. Spinoza adds that our minds undergo many changes because of the complex relation that our bodies have to the external. These changes must be thought of as the passage from a great or lesser ‘perfection’ (Bennett, 1984, p. 257). To understand what this ‘perfection’ is we must realize, according to Spinoza, that we are
part of world with an infinite succession of causes and effects (here with might think of deleuze’s similar notion of affect as always and everywhere around us), however, we do not and can not have absolute knowledge about these effects, according to Spinoza. Moreover, the human body is, as a rule, exposed and vulnerable to external bodies, considering it has so many diverse, complex and involved relations to them (Bennett, 1984, p. 257). As a consequence, an individual’s power of acting is increased by the degree to which one determines himself by reacting to these external bodies through what Spinoza calls the ‘desire of self-preservation’. And conversely, my power of acting is decreased when the external bodies threaten my existence or when we are acted upon. Perfection, then, is defined as the affirmation of existence, or in other words: the more perfect something is the more reality that thing has, and therefore the more power to act one has (Bennett, 1984, p. 257).

Deleuze notes, in treating Spinoza, that it is as for this increase or decrease of the power of acting that we are capable of delineating joy and sadness (which are the two fundamental affects, according to Spinoza). Correspondingly, it is through the affect of joy that the mind passes to a greater perfection, and through sadness to a lesser degree (Deleuze, 1988, p. 21). Now, as we have seen above, an individual is defined by its degree of power, and this degree of power is determined by our ability to be affected. Deleuze argues that the ‘power of being affected’ is defined by two types of affections: actions and passions. For Deleuze, this distinction between passive and active thus applies to the affections of our body. We must think of actions as defining the nature of the individual (what it can do) and of passions as defining how it is affected by external bodies. The power to be affected is presented as a ‘the power of acting’ in the case that it is ‘filled’ by active affections of the individual, and as the ‘power of being acted upon’ in the case that it is ‘filled’ by passions (Deleuze, 1988, p. 27). Deleuze adds, that we can distinguish two kinds of passions: when we undergo a relation with an external body which does not agree with us, the power of this body will be opposed to the power of ours and it may ‘subtract’ or ‘fixate’ our own power of acting: in this case we experience sadness. In other words, when the external body diminishes, or subtracts from, our power to act, the passions that correspond to this relation are sad. Adversely, when we encounter an external body that agrees with us, then its power is added to ours, and we are affected by the passion of joy (Deleuze, 1988, p. 26-27). Henceforth, passive affections (passions) will lead to inadequate ideas that result in passive affects; active affects are the result of adequate ideas. Joy brings us closer to active affects, without reaching them. Sadness takes us further away from active affects. The example of Peter and Paul refers to this last point. Generally, affections can never become active, this only happens with affects (when they are the result of adequate ideas). Therefore, joy and sadness must strictly speaking be separated from our own ‘power of acting’, since it is a passion and must have an external cause, however, it is possible for our ‘power of acting’ due to external relations to increase proportionally such that it is possible to reach a point where passive
joy ‘transmutes’ into active joy. (Deleuze, 1988, p. 27-29).

Perhaps we could argue, then, to some preliminary degree that movies, or arts for that matter, should not merely have as their objective to affect its viewers passively (affect through that what is only external to us), according to Deleuze. Moreover, movies should affect us in such a way we must create our own adequate ideas and active affects and ideas. We must not be passively affected by movies as would be the case with reflex responses, for instance. Cinema should affect us in such a way as to produce active and adequate ideas, meaning movies must affect us in order for affects to catalyze the formulation of our own adequate ideas (active affects) Making us are able to create novel thought during an episode of inner contemplation in which a disruption of our senses – our cognitive capacity to deal with what is represented – occurs. Strong affects in cinema should therefore be disruptive – by being novel to its recipients or by ‘jolting the senses’ – in order for them to become active affects, adequate ideas in stead of passive, economical, and automatized responses.  

Recapitulating, we might say that each one of the abovementioned ideas in relation to an individual has a certain degree of reality or perfection, which Spinoza calls the formal reality of the idea (Deleuze, 1978, p. 4). This formal reality of the idea is what Spinoza very often terms a certain degree of reality or of perfection that the idea has, as such. Spinoza argues that, in essence, every idea has a certain degree of reality or perfection. This degree of reality or perfection is connected to the object that it represents. It should however, not be confused with the object. In other words, the formal reality of the idea, the thing the idea ‘is’ or the degree of reality or perfection it possesses in itself, is what Spinoza calls, its intrinsic character (Deleuze, 1978, p. 5). The objective reality of the idea, which is explained as the relation of the idea to the object it represents, is its extrinsic character. According to Spinoza, these extrinsic and intrinsic characters may be fundamentally connected, but they are not the same thing (Deleuze, 1978, p. 5). Deleuze gives us an example of this theory:

“'The idea of God and the idea of a frog have different objective realities, that is they do not represent the same thing, but at the same time they do not have the same intrinsic reality, they do not have the same formal reality, that is one of them—you sense this quite well—has a degree of reality infinitely greater than the other's. The idea of God has a formal reality, a degree of reality or intrinsic perfection infinitely greater than the idea of a frog, which is the idea of a finite thing’” (Deleuze, 1978, p 5-6).  

---

7 For further information about affect in cinema and the purpose of affects in cinema see §2.5.

8 In regard to the objective and formal reality of the Idea it can help to note that for Spinoza ideas derive from passive affections, and to the extent that the idea remains connected to these passive affections it will be inadequate. However, if it is possible to disconnect the idea from its passive affections and to take it as something in itself, it also becomes possible to have an adequate idea that is no longer caused by an external body, but that has its cause in itself.
Deleuze then argues that the idea of Paul, in relation to an individual, has more intrinsic perfection than the idea of Pierre since the idea of Paul contents me and the idea of Pierre upsets me. Neither ideas result in active affects as such, but the affection of Paul comes closer to ‘becoming active’ than the idea of Pierre. When the idea of Paul succeeds the idea of Pierre, it is agreeable to say that my force of existing or my power of acting (vis existendi) is increased or improved. Vice versa, when after having seen someone who made you joyful you see an individual who makes you sad, we could say that our power of acting is inhibited, obstructed, or weakened. Deleuze then argues that, to the extent that ideas succeed each other in us, with each idea having its own degree of perfection, the individual who has these ideas, never stops passing from one degree of perfection to another. In other words there is a continuous variation in the form of an increase-diminution-increase-diminution of the power of acting or the force of existing of someone according to the ideas which he or she has. These concepts are very similar to what appraisal theorists of emotion would call ‘coping potential’ and ‘goal conduciveness’, which will be discussed in §3.3.5. We must remember that the capacity to be affected is always completely fulfilled, and, as we have seen, there is a distinction between adequate (passive) and inadequate (active) ideas, which impact our power of existence by either enhancing it or reducing it. An individual never ceases to pass from one degree of perfection to another and it is exactly this kind of melodic line of continuous variation which will define affect (affectus) in its correlation with ideas and at the same time in its difference in nature from emotions. According to Deleuze, this brings us to a more solid definition of affectus; “affectus in Spinoza is variation, continuous variation of the force of existing, insofar as this variation is determined by the ideas one has” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 5). We must recognize, however, that there is a difference between (the continuous succession and variation of) ideas and that of affects. Deleuze uses the example of Spinoza’s Ideas to introduce us to what affects are. However, the example of ideas is limited, as affects are more crude or fleeting than ideas which have a much stronger and more direct representational character. Regarding this fact, Seigworth argues in correspondence to Deleuze:

“[a]n affective path cannot be threaded through those places where representations or images of thought are predominant or hold sway. For affect is something more or other than a mode of thought: an affect, first as Spinoza’s affectus, is the transitive effect undergone by a body (human or otherwise) in a system – a mobile and open system – composed of various innumerable forces of existing and the relations between these forces. More succinctly, affection (affectio) is the state of a body in as much as it affects or is affected by another body. Affect, then, cannot be converted into or delimited by the discursive, by images or representations, by consciousness or thought” (Seigworth, 2011, p. 116).

---

9 More on this in §2.4.
Compendiously, there is a key distinction made by Spinoza and adopted by Deleuze between affectus (“a body’s continuous, intensive variation (as increase-diminution) in its capacity for acting”), and affectio (“the state of a body as it affects or is affected by another body”) (Seigworth, 2011, p. 162). There is, for example, already a difference in temporality or a gap between affect and affection, as an affect disrupts the process in which we pass from the senses to that of the cognition. We will discuss this more extensively at the end of this chapter.

First, let us continue with another difference between affect and affection. When speaking of affect, Deleuze speaks of the ability to affect and be affected. In this way, an affect can be seen as a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xv). This passing corresponds with the augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act (vis existendi). Understood from the perspective of the ‘capacity to be affected’ that is always completely fulfilled, augmentation means: a more active fulfillment, whereas diminution means: a more passive fulfillment. Affection, then, is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second affecting body (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xv). Note that Deleuze uses the word body in the broadest possible sense, including even “mental” or ideal bodies (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi).

Moreover, according to Deleuze, affects are not simply the same as affections, they are independent from their subject. In this sense, affections and perceptions are located within an individual or a point of view of this specific person, but the affect or percept is freed from this interested or organizing subject (Colebrook, 2002, p. 6). In terms of Peirce’s categories, affections seen as such belong the category of Secondness, as they are defined through the relation they make. They comprise of a process involving a relational process. The initial affect – which at that point was still only pure possibility because of its immediacy – makes a connection with an affected body, which corresponds to secondness. Deleuze clarifies this statement in What is Philosophy?. In collaboration with Guattari, he writes: “[t]he affect transcends affection no more than the percept transcends perception” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 204). He continues by stating that affections can thus be understood as the actualization of an affect or as what we might call feelings, as that which is and can be experienced in ordinary, everyday life experience. Affects, however, are the non-actualized part in experience, the part, which still transcends any actualizability and everyday life experienceability and therefore exist in a state of virtuality, still freed from being (cognitively) infolded by a subject. Whereas Deleuze explains virtuality as yet to be actualized potentiality.  

Deleuze and Guattari write in light of this:

---

10 In Deleuze’s early writings, the distinction between the actual and the virtual is Deleuze’s alternative for the Aristotelian distinction between actuality and potentiality. For that reason this description is a bit misleading,
“The percepts are not perceptions anymore, they are independent of the states of those, who experience them; the affects are not feelings or affections any more, they surpass the powers of those, through whom they pass. The sensations, percepts and affects, are beings, which stand for themselves and transcend all experienceability” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 191-192).

What this means is that we can regard affects as beings, with their own ontological status. Affect can be thought of as independent of an experiencing subject. It is exactly this what sets them apart ontologically from personal feelings and emotions. Considering this distinction, we are able to see the connection to Peirce’s framework presented at the beginning of this thesis, once more. The framework suggested that ‘affect’ should be seen as this ‘pure’ quality or force in art, which exists without having a clear connection to its causes or its circumstances or relations to any other thing (Firstness). ‘Affection’, then, already moves towards the second category, which we initially connected to emotions. As Secondness involves a consciousness of the powers affecting our senses and producing physical effects in us. Similarly, affections could be understood as the actualization of affects, or as what we might call feelings (the effects of affect). They are what have can be considered the affection of one body upon another and are defined by our body at a given moment as it endures the action of another body. Deleuze, however, does not seem to fully support the fact that affections involve the process of being fully consciously aware, including both interpreting, and attaching causal “laws” to these feeling, nor that there is a strong experiential component involved with affection. Therefore still slightly distinguishing affection from the conception of emotions as presented in the next chapter of this thesis. Nonetheless, we have seen now how affect varies from an idea, and how affections differ from affects, however, all in regard to what Deleuze calls force of existing, vis existendi, or potentia agendi, the power of acting. How then, is the concept of affect translated to art, or more importantly cinema?

2.2.3 Art, Perception and Affection

In an attempt to further develop the abovementioned distinction between affections and affects, we might consider what Claire Colebrook states concerning perceptions and affections: “Affections are what happens to us (disgust, or the recoil of the nostrils at the smell of cheese); perceptions are what we receive (odor, or the smell itself)” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 21). We can see here that when talking about affections as different from perceptions, affections are more closely linked to feelings, or emotions than when we spoke of affects. Affects, which must be considered as entities on their own according to Deleuze, are separate entities freed from, or escaping the experiencing individual –
think of the example of affective forces in Joan of Arc which moved through and beyond the characters and their relational situations – whereas affections are not. Colebrook continues by stating that within art, affects and percepts free these forces, that which befalls us from the particular observers or bodies who experience them. She explains by using fear as an example, “[a]t its simplest level imagine the presentation of ‘fear’ in a novel, even though it is not we who are afraid. Affects are sensible experiences in their singularity, liberated from organising systems of representation” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 22). We can imagine that through a poem or a movie it is possible to create the affect of fear without an object feared, a reason, or a person who is afraid. To achieve this, we need not refer to objects, we can achieve this even through rhythms and pauses for example, “so that it is the sense of absence, of halting, of hesitation or holding back that creates an affect of fear” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 22). By doing so, we are capable of creating a fear that is not located in or experienced by a character nor directed to an object. Let me clarify this a bit more: in this example the novel creates an affect of fear that the reader may or may not be affected by, but should the reader be affected the affect of fear would turn into a state of affectation. Greg Seigworth exemplifies the meaning of affection by linking it to ‘power’ in his chapter “From Affection to Soul,” in Charles Stivale’s Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts (2005). According to Seigworth, ‘affectio’ or ‘affection’ must be thought of as an affection of a body by or upon another body: “[affection is] actualization as the “state of a thing”, that is, affect turned into “effect”. Thus, to say that “‘power is an affection of desire’ is, indeed, to say that power is an effect of desire, one of its (desire’s) arrested, although reso-nating, modes of existence” (Seigworth, 2005, p. 166). This conception of affection presented by Colebrook and Seigworth, however significantly distinct from it, might come very close to a certain conception of mood. As mood differs from emotions in that they are less specific, and less inclined to be set forth by a particular stimulus or event. Mood, however, in my eyes is not quite the same thing as affect or affection. Deleuze does not make a clear distinction between mood and affect in his work, as he never treated mood as one of his main concepts. To be more clear on this point, the cognitive research presented later in this thesis will differentiate between mood, affect, and emotions more comprehensively. For a clear distinction between mood and affect see §3.3 and §3.4.

Colebrook continues by arguing that for Deleuze, great art creates affects that dissociate or disengage our regular, automatized responses in such a manner that we can no longer simply identify and delimit feelings of boredom, or fear, or desire as we would in everyday life. This means that an effective affect keeps us from re-cognizing, or simply acknowledging those kinds of feelings we would normally have in the event of being affected by art. These affects short-circuit the affectional responses that have become automatized through numerous instances of art consumption. Art must have, as one of its main objectives, the task to dislodge or disconnect our automatized response from
its recognized and expected origins.

Deleuze argues that when we perceive via the mere ‘re-cognition’ of the properties of substances, we see with “a stale eye pre-loaded with clichés” (Smith & Protevi, 2013, p. 20). Meaning, we order the world in what Deleuze considered to be “representation” or mere recognitions of stimuli (Smith & Protevi, 2013, p. 20). Deleuze regards clichés as ready-made categories and schemata, which bring forth ‘prefabricated’ links within our sensory-motor-schema which does not allow us to be affected in a way described above. When we perceive via such an economically channeling of affective impulses into a broader narrative drive, as we do in everyday life, we order the world in what Deleuze calls “representation” (Smith & Protevi, 2013, p. 20). Art should have at its core another way of perceiving or sensing, in this regard Deleuze cites Francis Bacon: “we’re after an artwork that produces an effect on the nervous system, not on the brain” (Deleuze citing Bacon in Daniel Smith and John Protevi, 2013, p. 20). What he means by this figure of speech is that in an art encounter we are forced to experience the “being of the sensible”, or that which is sensed; the affect. Or in the words of Smith & Protevi:

“[w]e get something that we cannot re-cognize, something that is “imperceptible”—it doesn’t fit the hylomorphic production model of perception in which sense data, the “matter” or hyle of sensation, is ordered by submission to conceptual form” (2013, p. 20).

Art, according to Deleuze however, cannot simply be re-cognized as something we might perceive in everyday life, but can only be sensed; in other words, “art splits [our] perceptual processing [...] forbidding the immediate move to conceptual ordering” (which is part of cognition) (Smith & Protevi, 2013, p. 20). It disconnects or disrupts the sensory-motor schema through which stimuli are sensed and immediately progressed into motor reactions in normal everyday life; the economical channeling of affective impulses. Therefore, with art we must reach “sensation,” or the “being of the sensible”; through the use of affect (Smith & Protevi, 2013, p. 20). In other words, in order to reach creative thought (a philosophical approach to the “chaos” of the world attempting to bring order to it) you have to be forced to think, which starts with chaos of the senses (an affective art encounter) in which pure intensity is transmitted in affects (Smith & Protevi, 2013, p. 19). Instead of a “common sense” wherein all our faculties recognize the ‘same’ object in unity, within this communicated violence, or dissension of the senses, we find a “discordant harmony,” (which has strong comparisons to the Kantian sublime) “that tears apart the subject” (Smith & Protevi, 2013, p. 20). For Deleuze then, the aesthetic event of a potent artwork is viral in its action upon us, being known not through representation, or order of (re-)cognition but through affective contamination, which can be seen as creating an irrational logic of the senses (Deleuze, 1981, p. 83).

In summary, the task of art and the affects it creates is to produce ‘signs’ that will push our
perceptual and cognitive processes out of habits of perception and cognition into the conditions of creation, the creation of new concepts via the rearranging of our sensory faculties in order to develop a new coherence among these perceptual and cognitive faculties, to be precise, in order to ‘understand’ or ‘comprehend’. This is the constructivist notion of thought which is one of the main aims throughout Deleuze’s entire work.

2.3 Deleuze and Bergson

When investigating Deleuze’s development of a theory of affect we must also acknowledge his interest in Henri Bergson as an influential thinker in this process. Deleuze adopts several concepts from Bergson’s book *Matter and Memory* (1896) in which he addresses the bodily condition of what he terms ‘affection’ in relation to ‘perception’. We will see that Deleuze not only uses Bergson’s distinction between affection and perception, he also identifies with the fundamentally ‘cinematic’ philosophy in Bergson’s implication of ‘the universe as cinema in itself’, a ‘meta-cinema’.

In her essay “Jack the Ripper’s Bodies—without—Organs: Affect and Psychogeography Under the Scalpel in *From Hell*” Anna Powell identifies Henri Bergson as “the direct philosophical precursor of Deleuze’s temporally based thinking on cinematic affect” (Powell, 2009, p. 2). It is evident that Deleuze identifies with Bergsonian philosophy, which he finds to be fundamentally cinematic, even though Bergson stated that early cinema was merely representing (false) temporality through the use of a series of static, immobile images strung together by mechanical movement (Bergson, 1986, p. 306). Bergson even uses the cinematic process to prove his thesis of false movement: “immobile sections [individual still frames/images] plus abstract time [the projector]” (Frampton, 1991, p. 2).

Deleuze nevertheless sees in this already a fundamentally ‘cinematic’ approach to Bergson’s philosophy regarding time and affection, and like Deleuze himself, Bergson regarded the world as ‘flowing-matter’, a material flux of images, with the human perceiver as a ‘centre of indetermination’ both within it and able to reflect on its intensive affect in duration (Deleuze, 1986, p. 59). Whereas I used Deleuze’s account of Spinozist philosophy primarily to underline the difference between idea, affect, and affection, Bergson will primarily function to aid in understanding the difference between perception and percepts and affection and affects. It seems necessary to study these notions a second time because when discerning affection from perception with regard to Bergson, Deleuze seems to treat the notion of affections and affects slightly differently from when he discerns affections from ideas, and affects from affections in his reading of Spinoza.

With regard to affection, Bergson sees perception as extensive and actual, a response
triggered by external stimuli and producing external action. Deleuze would later call this the sensory-motor-link: perception translates movement (image’s influence), internalizes it via senses and neural structure and transforms it into action (Deleuze, 1986, p. 62). Affection, however, is characterized as unextended and virtual. Therefore it fills in the temporal gap between stimulus and response. So, perception has as its primary purpose to identify and quantify external stimuli. Being dissimilar to affection which is qualitative, and can be seen as “the intensive vibration of a motor tendency on a sensible nerve” (Bergson, 1991, p. 56). Put differently, affection sets forth internal contemplation, as opposed to perception which translates into outward projected action. Following Bergson, Deleuze argues that affection positions itself in the progression from external action to internal contemplation. In his investigation into the affection-image in Cinema I, Deleuze posits that while “delegating our activity to organs of reaction that we have consequently liberated”, we developed specific facets of our body to become “receptive organs at the price of condemning them to immobility” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 65). As a consequence, these immobile facets function to absorb and break down images, allowing a self–reflexive pause rather than performing a habitual sensory-motor-response (Deleuze, 1986, p. 65). For example, you may think of the sensory faculties of the face in comparison to our arms and legs. However, in this approach we must not see affective response as a failure of a perception-action system, but as the birth of a third element in Deleuze’s sensory-motor-schema, which is necessary to produce new thought. In Powell’s words, “affects occupy, without filling, the interval between stimulus and response” (2009, p. 5). According to Deleuze then, affections are internal and self-reflexive in nature, and operate by “a co-incidence of subject and object, or the way in which the subject perceives itself, or rather experiences itself or feels itself ‘from the inside’” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 65). Here we can see that Deleuze is much more concrete in conceptualizing affection. Moreover, by distinguishing affection from perception, affection is thought of as the experience of an encounter between a subject and a object, whereas before affection was merely defined as the effect of one body (in the broadest sense) as being affected by or affecting upon another body. By discussing Bergson in combination to affection, the experience of being affected or affecting is incorporated by Deleuze. As a consequence, this conception of affection – set forth by Deleuze’s reading of Bergson – moves even closer to our category of Secondness and emotion. However, the experience here is different from the experience of ‘normal’ emotion, as being affected here sets forth a ‘violent’ or abrupt moment of response, according to Deleuze, which can also be the case with emotional response, but is not necessary. Subsequently, we could argue that the power of cinematic affect then lies in its capacity to interrupt our habitualized perception and response, as was also argued in the previous chapter. This cinematic affect brings about a perceptual process which extracts those images that interest us merely for potential action, and allow for a self–reflexive pause, an attempt to ‘infold’ that which affects our body. This then sets
forth, what Claire Colebrook, calls “a temporal hiatus catalytic for potential change” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 40). Colebrook continues by arguing that the power of affect is “crucial to such violent forcing of thought out of accustomed patterns by shifting them from spatial extension to intensive temporality” (2002, p. 38). In light of this, it is wise to once again distinguish the notion of affect from the immediacy of a feeling or affection. For the Deleuzian concept of affect is not the same as the idea or experience of a direct or purely corporal affection or a feeling in the usual sense of our everyday life. An affect is not just the starting point of a ‘simple’ stimulus-response succession, but an encounter, which in its pure virtuality forces to think. More importantly, an affect brings about an almost traumatic encounter of our senses, in which the process from the senses to that of cognition is interrupted, discontinued. Meaning, “[affect] short-circuits any idea of a physiology of sensation, of a ‘visceral immediacy of cinematic experience [by] raw contents of sensation’” (Shaviro, 2004. p. 36). Cinematic affect thus creates the necessary principles for the creative act of constructing new thoughts and concepts “through the emergence of a new coherence among [our perceptual and cognitive] faculties” in order to cope with the chaos of the senses set forth by these affects (Åkervall, 2008, p. 5-7).

***2.4 Difference Affect, Affection and Emotion***

Now that we have outlined the origins of the Deleuzian theory of affect, we must try to start making sense of the ostensible theoretical impasse suggesting that affect and emotion can be considered synonymous. As we have seen, it is exactly this conceptualization of affect as emotion that dominates the understanding of affect in current academic discourse on cinema. Perhaps at this point we need to consider some selective evidence for the erroneous conceptual usage between affect and emotion. For example, in Elena Del Rio’s *Deleuze and the Cinemas of Performance: Powers of Affection*, where she investigates the performing body. Her study brings forth the notion of affective force as dominant over the notion of visual form in regard to theories of spectacle and performativity. However well-grounded in the theory of Deleuze and Spinoza regarding affect this study may seem, in her book Del Rio admits that although emotions and affects may seem different, “one should also keep in mind that in practice these two notions remain rather fluidly connected. For although the term “emotion” is generally preferred when describing psychologically motivated expressions of affect, emotion nonetheless actualizes and concretizes the way in which a body is sometimes affected by, or affects, another body. Thus, I regard emotion and affect as connected and coterminous, involving varying degrees and distinctive modes in a continuum of affectively related concerns” (Del Rio, 2008, p. 10).
Despite the fact that Del Rio argues that affects and emotion are often fluidly connected (which differs from them being synonyms), later on in her book she uses “affect” and “emotion” interchangeably, as is the case with her use of “affect” and “expression”, which Del Rio regards as synonymous terms without actually treating the differences between these notions (Del Rio, 2008, p. 92). In opposition to Del Rio, Christopher Nealon recognizes the fundamental difference between affect and emotion in his essay concerning performativity called Affect, performativity, and actually existing poetry (2011). In his essay Nealon accentuates that his primary objective is not to investigate the concept of affect as such, but to explicate the difference between (pre-singular) affect and (subjective) emotion – an attempt that is not often made in contemporary theoretical and critical discourses. In the next paragraph we will see what exactly are these differences. Like Nealon, Steven Shaviro underlines the importance to differentiate between emotion and affect in various studies. Already in the critically acclaimed book The Cinematic Body, the distinction between emotion and affect is explicates respecting Deleuze and Guattari (Shaviro, 1994, p. 1). Another example is found in Sharviro’s critique of Jeff Warren’s The Head Trip: Adventures on the Wheel of Consciousness. Shaviro comments on Warren’s book stating, with reference to Massumi’s Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation, that “any coherent explanation [of emotion and affect] requires a distinction between the two” (Shaviro, 2008, p. 10). Shaviro continues by referring to Brian Massumi’s use of “affect”. Affect as such refers to,

“the pre-personal aspects (both physical and mental) of feelings, the ways that these forces form and impel us; he reserves “emotion” to designate feelings to the extent that we experience them as already-constituted conscious selves or subjects. By this account, affects are the grounds of conscious experience, even though they may not themselves be conscious” (Shaviro, 2008, p. 8).

Massumi, who is Deleuze and Guattari’s English translator, and whose conceptualization of affect can be seen as derived directly from Deleuze and Guattarrian philosophy, acknowledges that affect and emotions are related, however, not exhaustively synonymous at all. In short, according to Massumi, “[a]ffect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion [however] emotion and affect - if affect is intensity - follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (Massumi, 2002, p. 27-28).

In his Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation, Massumi examines the discourse of Baruch Spinoza’s theory of affect. In this work, which can be seen as a continuation of the Deleuzian philosophical inquiry into affect, Massumi writes, quoting Spinoza in the progress, that when academics talk about affect, they commonly understand “affect [as] an ‘affection [in other words an impingement upon] the body, and at the same time the idea of the affection’” (Massumi, 2002, p. 31). Affect, however, is the force that initiates the impingement upon the body which causes the body to infold. Affection, then, is “the effect of [this] impingement - it conserves the
impingement minus the impinging thing”. The affect, then, is “the impingement abstracted from the actual action that caused it and actual context of that action” (Massumi, 2002, p.32). Massumi characterizes affect as,

“primary, non-conscious, asubjective or presubjective, asignifying, unqualified and intensive. Opposed to emotion, which is derivative, conscious, qualified and meaningful, a ‘content’ that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject. Emotion is affect ‘captured’ by a subject, or tamed and reduced to the extent that it becomes commensurate with that subject. Subjects are overwhelmed and traversed by affect, but they have or possess their own emotions” (Massumi, 2002, p.33).

As mentioned before, when we approach the conception of affect in such a way we clearly differentiate affect from emotion. Affect is an entity, a being of the sensible, which exists outside of the subject. Affect has yet to be captured or ‘infolded’ like an emotion. Thus, when speaking about affects, we address entities external to subjects. When we speak of emotions, we speak of the infolding of an intensity by a subject. Following Massumi, we could say that once an affect is subjectively felt, or better yet, subjectively acknowledged, it most likely becomes a feeling, or an emotion. Massumi’s claim that subjective acknowledgement of affects is a characteristic of feeling and emotion corresponds to the third category of Peirce’s framework. He clearly differentiates between affect and emotion on the basis of the subjective appraising, and being aware of doing so, of an affection. Acknowledgement seems to be a step further than merely experiencing affective stimuli, which was part of secondness. But let us develop this a bit further by summarizing what has been said in the previous paragraphs in an attempt to answer the following question: What does it mean to describe affect as different from emotion? In answering this question I followed Brian Massum to a great extent in discerning affect from emotion. We have seen that for Massumi, “affect is primary, non-conscious, asubjective or presubjective, asignifying, unqualified and intensive; while emotion is derivative, conscious, qualified and meaningful, a ‘content’ that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject” (Massumi, 2002, p. 23-45). Opposed to this reading of affect, emotion can be regarded as affect captured by a subject, or “tamed and reduced to the extent that it becomes commensurate with that subject” (Sharviro, 2008, p. 1). Individuals are often traversed by affect, but they have or possess their own emotions. Conversely, according to Massumi, emotion as such is never completely closed or complete. Emotion still testifies to a certain degree to the affect from which it is constituted, and that the emotion has captured, reduced and repressed (Massumi, 2002, p. 34). This means to Massumi that behind every emotion, there will always be a certain surplus of the affect that ‘escaped the confinement’ of the (capturing) emotion. Moreover, this affect “remains unactualised, inseparable from but unassimilable to any particular, functionally anchored perspective” (Massumi 2002, p. 35).
It seems to me that Massumi tries to argue here that our world is always suffused with affect, or forces which are always, everywhere around us, and have the potential to influence us, but they transcend subjectivity. This primary, non-conscious, presubjective, unqualified and intensive affect is what will eventually make us feel, that what makes us affect others, what makes us human as it influences our force of existence. Perceiving affect in such a way, it becomes the entity of interaction. However, affect is still distinct from emotion, because even though affect is defined by its relational character, it is certainly not limited by an internalized or embodied feeling (still being pre-conscious and transcending subjectivity). In this regard, affect is considered pre-personal, operating in those domains where the subject and other forces meet (Massumi, 2002, p. 34). However, once this affect is “infolded” by an individual by affecting the body (resulting in a reduction or increase in our power of existence) the affect is transformed into an emotion, still hinting at its former state, but having become something else. This is coherent with our framework of Firstness and Secondness. The body infolds the power or affect as it becomes an emotion. Here we enter the domain of secondness. Because Secondness includes Firstness – the original affect as an autonomous entity – and transforms it into something that has been determined or brought into existence as a (perceivable) thing, it is infolded by the body and converts into a feeling or emotion: Secondness. Nonetheless, according to the Deleuzian account of affect, an impingement on the body, or fluctuation of the bodily state may still very well impact an individual unconsciously.

2.5 Affect in cinema

Let us recapitulate the above conceptions of affect, starting with cinematic affect as we move to the conclusion of this chapter. Following Deleuze’s view of what is cinematic about cinema is the fact that cinema sets forth a “liberation of the sequencing of images from any single observer, so the affect of cinema is the presentation of an ‘any point whatever’” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 31). This means that Deleuze believes that cinema has the potential to produce or elicit in us a non-human form of perception, which stands in contrast to those cognitive theories which base cinematic perception on human perception. With “human perception” we could think of our everyday life way of perceiving objects and events. Teresa Rizzo articulates this new mode of perception as “[a] becoming with the film [or] opening up the viewing experience to specific cinematic movements, temporalities and ways of perceiving that are non-human” (Rizzo, 2006, p. 11). The manner in which a cinematic sequence is shot and edited together, for example, disrupts the sense of the kind of central or privileged perception that normal, everyday life human life is based on. Cinema ‘sees’ quite differently than how we ‘see’ in everyday life (i.e. from several different angles at once). As a result of the way these
cinematic sequences are put together, a distinct cinematic form of perception is set forth. This particular form of perception then acts to de-territorialize our everyday life form of perception. According to Rizzo, in doing exactly this, “[the cinematic form of] non-human perception produces affects across the body of the viewer, producing an attunement with the film or a kind of non-human becoming with the outside (Rizzo, 2006, p. 11). Moreover, the disorienting and affective quality of cinema often function as “a jolt to the senses that is felt throughout the body” (Rizzo, 2006, p. 11).

Put differently, by disrupting the impression of a privileged or central mode of viewing, cinema engages the affective – nonconscious and molecular – level more substantially than the representational or cognitive level. It is the potential of cinema to disrupt and disorganize human cognitive orderings and hierarchies through affective address that is the purpose of cinema, according to Deleuze (Rizzo, 2006, p. 11). In this way, the affective quality of cinema is to free our processing of the everyday world and construct a presentation liberated from a purely economical process of perceiving things and images. We always see our everyday world through an interested and embodied perspective, as we organize the continuous flow of affections and perceptions into our own schemas and categories. Cinema, then, has the power to present images (of affect, time or movement) or perception freed from this organizing structure of our everyday life.

According to Deleuze cinema has the power to release us from our impulse to organize images into some shared external world. We no longer effectuate an economically channeling of affective impulses into a broader narrative drive, as we would do in everyday life in order to make it through the day (Colebrook, 2002, p. 31). When we are able to perceive without imposing the interested or practical connections and selection of our sensory-motor schema made onto what we perceive and sense (images), then we might get a metaphorical sense of the affects and percepts itself. Deleuze argues that art has this capacity to construct ‘affects’ and ‘percepts’. The art of cinema lies not only in its capacity to free us from conceptual organization and an interested viewpoint. Moreover it is the capacity to present us with images of affection, perception, and so on. In other words, it is possible for cinema to function in a manner that its process of becoming – the disconnection or singularity of its images – is displayed (Colebrook, 2002, p. 32).

If cinema is characterized by its capacity to disconnect images from our everyday life meaning-making process, affect, then, is a sensible or sensibility not organized into meaning. Colebrook states that in this way,

“[a]ffect is [...] the opposite of a concept. A concept allows us to think a form or connection without sensibility; we can have the concept of ‘roundness’ which we can think both without perceiving any round thing and in anticipation of those further round things which we might encounter. A concept gives order or direction to our thinking” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 32).
On the contrary, an affect has the capacity to interrupt synthesis and order. Art works take us back from the composites of experience to the affects from which those organized and synthesized wholes have emerged (Colebrook, 2002, p. 32). This interruption of the synthesis and order of our perceptual and cognitive faculties is what Deleuze calls a “violence of thinking” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 32). Affect, then, is a crucial component within this violence of thinking. We conceptualize affect as some sort of pre-personal, pre-cognitive perception. When an individual watches a film his or her heart may race, eyes can flinch and perspiration may set in before thinking or conceptualizing there might be an element of response that is prior to any decision we consciously make (Colebrook, 2002, p. 33).

Affect as we have seen is intensive and not extensive as is our experience of everyday life. By examining Bergson’s account of affection and perception we have seen that extension organizes a world spatially, into ordered and synthesized perceptions which give us “an exterior world of varying extended objects, all mapped on to a common space, differing only in degree” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 32). In our everyday processing of the world this extensive form is effectuated. For example, we do not organize the world as a continuous flow of colors, tones and textures. Our extensive processing synthesizes or outlines the world in terms of presupposed purposes and intentions. However, affect is intensive. Primarily because it is that which happens to us, even beyond us, as “affect is not objectifiable and quantifiable as a thing that we then perceive or of which we are conscious” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 39). Thus, affect operates in divergent ways from everyday life. Affect can also differ extremely in kind; it can manifest itself as “the light that causes our eye to flinch, the sound that makes us start, the image of violence which raises our body temperature” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 39). So, in general, when we perceive the world in everyday life we have synthesized and ordered the impingement that work upon us as “a set of extended objects and as part of a uniform and measurable space” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 39). The power of cinema then lies in the fact that it ‘composes’ images through sequences of time, and consequently, that it can present affects and intensities in itself through a disjunction of the usual process of perception. That is to say, the usual order of how we perceive the world with a continuous expected fluctuation of events is disrupted. Therefore cinema allows for the perception of affects in itself, liberated from their standard economical order and meaning. Examples of such a process are presented in the investigation of what Deleuze coins as the “affection-image”.

2.5.1 The affection-image

We must note however that not every disjunction of the usual order of sequence of cinematic images directly sets forth a presentation of affect in itself. Nonetheless, it seems clear that cinema has the power to affect. Deleuze goes one step further by arguing that cinema does not only affect us in a
distinct manner unique to cinema. Moreover, cinema can present us with images of affecting or being affected, just as cinema has the capability to present us direct images of movement (movement-image), time (time-image), perception (perception-image), and so on. These depictions of being affected in cinema are termed “affection-image”. Deleuze uses his construction of the affection-image as exemplary of a cinematic image which presents affect in itself. As we have seen, the affection-image fills in the gap that exists between a perception and action. Affect thus captures the intensive: after perception, before action, where thoughts can become feelings. In cinema its most common form is a close-up of the face with an expression, according to Deleuze. Therefore, he starts the analysis of the affection-image with a statement, “The affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face…” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 87). Deleuze continues by saying that expressions are “the outward indications of internal intensities” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 88). They come after perception, before impulses or actions and actualize thoughts into feelings. Deleuze adds that these emotions are both qualities and powers. “Affective qualities express the relationship between perception and thinking”, they are an expression of the linkage between an object or environment and the face. “Affective powers express the relationship between thought and impulses or actions”, they can be seen as an expression of desire on the surface of the face, and expression that returns intensities to the world, according to Deleuze (Deleuze, 1986, p. 89). Deleuze remarks that the face does not have to be a human face, it can also be the face of a clock or for example the surface of water. As long as the face is an “immobile receptive plate” which presents itself as a “reflecting and reflective unity” and thereby expresses qualities, and is also capable of producing an intensive series of “micro-movements” towards a critical instant that can express the aforementioned powers (Deleuze, 1986, p. 87). Thus, according to Deleuze, the human face is exactly this; an “immobile receptive plate” which presents itself as a “reflecting and reflective unity”, which gave up part of its mobility to be just this, capable of only “micro movements.” So for Deleuze the close-up of the face becomes the ideal example of affection-images in films. He mentions that particularly a face that does not yet show recognition or understanding (which is already part of the impulse-image or action-image), but that simply “expresses affect” is its archetype (Deleuze, 1986, p. 87).

Take for instance a scene from Quentin Tarantino’s compelling movie Pulp Fiction. Connecting the concept of the affection-image to Pulp Fiction gives us a striking example of a cinematic depiction of affection. There is the infamous scene in which Vincent Vega (John Travolta) and Mia Wallace (Uma Thurman) return to Mia and Marsellus Wallace’s residence. When they arrive Vincent heads to the toilet to convince himself to leave as soon as possible, before anything “disloyal” may happen. At the same time, however, Mia finds a bag of what she thinks is cocaine and snorts a line of what we, as the viewers, already know is actually heroine. What we see after is a close-up of Mia’s face, as she is overdosing, which expresses indistinctness and confusion. At the
same time this close-up of the face indicates a movement towards a critical instant, the moment of Vincent Vega finding her and consequently is in huge trouble, or perhaps the moment of the death of Mia Wallace, through a series of micro movements; the rolling of the eyes and twitching of the mouth for example. This scene eventually gives rise to the famous scene in which Vincent Vega gives Mia an adrenaline shot right to the heart.

In the overdosing-scene we have an adequate depiction of the affection-image. For we see a cinematic depiction of how Mia is overwhelmingly affected (in this case) by a poisonous substance. Of course, narrative spectator of film are generally affected in alternative ways, however, this scene is striking in its illustration of the potential power of affect. By snorting heroine, Mia’s regulation of her bodily state to achieve optimal physiological values, what is called homeostasis in neurobiology, is so greatly affected she does not know how to cognitively cope with the situation. Moreover, her body is so greatly affected it goes in a state of shock. Meaning, the affective jolt to Mia’s body a jolt that is of such a great force her sensory-motor-linkage is disrupted as she is merely capable of producing micro-movements. These micro-movement are what Deleuze normally understand to be the (facial) expression of change, of being affected. They are the symptoms of inner-contemplation crucial to a comprehensive understanding of affect. Whether this is the case in the Pulp Fiction scene is difficult to know. Nonetheless, this scene is a clear depiction of how cinema has the capacity to present us with an affection-image, an image of being affected.

I must note, however, that this scene is an example from a film defined by the movement-image. In short, Deleuze's two cinema books, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image and Cinema 2: The Time-Image, try to demonstrate and explain a fundamental shift from classical cinema, which Deleuze dates before World War Two (movement-image), to post-World War Two cinema (time-image). In general terms this 'first form of cinema', of which the Hollywood genre film is its classic examplar, is mainly dependent on movement and action, which he therefore calls the movement-image. Protagonists in this cinema of movement are often placed in "narrative positions where they routinely perceive things, react, and take action in a direct fashion to the events around them" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 52). Thus, the movement-image is a form, of what Bergson would call, 'spatial' cinema; as time is determined and measured by movement.

The image corresponding to the post-World War Two era, the time-image, is often characterized by protagonists and other characters finding themselves in situations where they are unable to act and react in a direct way, leading to what Deleuze calls the 'breakdown of the sensor-motor schemata'. Deleuze calls the European modernist or art film its prime example. This new image which interrupts the sensory-motor link becomes, according to Deleuze, "a pure optical and auditory image", which often "comes into relation with a virtual image, a mental or mirror image" (Gilles Deleuze, 1995, p. 52). In this time-image, rational or causal temporal links between shots, a
characteristic of the former movement-image, is often replaced by inconsistent, non-rational links. Because of these non-rational links between shots, vacant and disconnected spaces begin to appear, which Deleuze calls "any-space-whatevers" (Deleuze, 1986, p. 110). As a consequence, cinema adopts a privileged narrative form, with characters adapting a more passive role, and themes centered on mental imagery instead of action-images. By using pure optical and sound images we are able to perceive a direct image of time, according to Deleuze. He calls this a time-image or crystal-image (Deleuze, 1995, p. 55).

Films characterized by the movement-image may set forth a process of thinking but, according to Deleuze, it is when cinema produces and represents its own temporalization – its own particular sense of time though the time-image – that it realizes its full capacities and introduces us to a logic of thought which goes further than mere representation. According to Ils Huygens, “[t]he cinema of the time-image with its bifurcations, false movements, disconnected spaces and autonomous images and sounds does not claim to show us a true world or a true idea, but in stead recreates the object in a purely cinematic logic, which is defined by ambiguities, irrationalities and uncertainties” (2007, p. 10). Thing brings forth the impossibility of interpreting a film in a single, unitary matter, making us “think and rethink the image in an endless chain of possible interpretations, in a continuous exchange between image and viewer, between brain and screen” (Huysgens, 2007, p. 10). Henceforth, it is through the time-image, and its pure optical and sound image, that we are affected, ‘forced’ oe ‘shocked’ into a disruptive moment of inner contemplation, an episode in which novel thoughts may truly emerge.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed affect as a pre-personal, pre-cognitive entity which comes prior to feelings or the experience of emotions. In such a manner, affect is conceptualized as a stimulus or intensity which interrupts the usual economic progression from perception to feeling, and action. This automatic process is what Deleuze calls our “sensory-motor-schema”. A stimulus is captured by our senses, and after being processed this sets in motion an action or action tendency. The affect, however, impinges us in such a manner that we cannot (re-)cognize the stimuli in an economic, merely effective manner. It transcends our usual cognitive coping-mechanisms. A process of internal contemplation must be set in motion in order to grasp the chaos set forth by affects and this is the fundament upon which creative thought is generated.

We have seen how affect is different from an idea, by discussing Spinoza’s conception of affect. As ideas have a strong representational character and no objective reality, affects are
characterized by their crude relation to objects or situations. Deleuze posited that every mode of thought which is non-representational would therefore be associated with affect. As an example, we saw that we might hope for something or love someone, but hope in itself or love as such represents nothing. Consequently, an affect can be thought of as an impingement upon the body (in its widest definition) without knowledge of the impinging thing – the impingement abstracted from is actual cause. Meaning that an affect is primarily – as opposed to cognition which is set in motion by affect – non-conscious, a-subjective or pre-subjective, a-signifying, unqualified and intensive. Therefore, we differentiated affects from affections, as they are independent from their subject. In this sense, affections and perceptions are located within an individual or a point of view of this specific person, but the affect or percept is a force freed from this interested or organizing subject. And it is only when an affect is captured by a subject’s perception with an appropriate response that it becomes or transforms into an affection, or a feeling. An affect is thus a yet to be cognized or categorized impact upon the body. An impact which is pre-personal and pre-cognitive and sets in motion a process of inner contemplation, a cognitive contemplation in order for it to be understood and for us to respond.

The power of the affect thus lies in its capacity to disconnect or disrupt the sensory-motor schema through which stimuli are sensed and immediately progressed into motor reactions in normal everyday life; the economically channeling of affective impulses. The process set forth by affects, “the intensive vibration of a motor tendency on a sensible nerve”, will give way to a self-reflexive pause in our sensory-motor schema rather than performing a habitual sensory-motor-response (Powell, 2012, p. 2). It is the affect, which is not yet fully graspable due to its non-representational nature, which brings chaos to our senses, and sets forth novel cognitive processing of stimuli.

In the coming chapter we will find that this conception of affect is rather different from that of cognitive theorists. As do researchers who adhere to Deleuze’s concept of affect, cognitive theorists often differentiate affect from emotion. Cognitive theory often acknowledge affect to be pre-cognitive, or not part of deliberate contemplation, however, they associate affect with automatic bodily responses or reflexes, and moods. These of course can be seen as pre-cognitive as they do not involve higher cognitive processing or deliberate consideration. Indeed, they are often based on unconscious processes. Nevertheless, the affective processes Deleuze refers to when talking about affect do not lead to automatic responses to stimuli, but generally lead to an interval in this automatic bodily mechanisms. Affects occupy the gap between perception and response, but do not fill it entirely as we have seen. This means that affects set forth an episode of internal chaos without direct responses to what is perceived. Through processes of ‘re-arrangement of the senses’, or finding different cognitive, neural routes to process the stimuli we generate novel thoughts and

So now that we have examined affect as opposed to emotion: those entities that exist outside of/external to subjects, prior to feeling or emotion; examined affect in art: as disruption of economical channeling of sensibilities, creating a disruption in the process from sensation to cognition and response, set forth through art; and more specifically affect in cinema: cinema as a way of portraying the affect in itself, we shall now examine how affect is perceived of within cognitive research. In what way are we affected emotionally by the cinematic experience from a cognitive perspective.
3. Cognitivist – Mentation, Affect, Emotion

3.1 Introduction

Now that we have a better understanding of the Deleuzian account of affect, and its differential nature from emotion, we could say that according to the Deleuzian account of affect, an impingement on the body (affect), or fluctuation of the bodily state (affection) may impact an individual unconsciously. A cognitivist might ask, with regard to this hypothesis: what is an affect that is not felt (or consciously noticed) by anyone, where in a corporeal topography of the human psyche, with its capacity to affect and be affected, would such an affect reside? The answer Deleuze would give, in short, would be an equivalent of an answer like: in the virtual: the real without being actual, ideal without being abstract – the unconscious (Seigworth, 2011, p. 165).

Regardless of whether this answer sounds suitable at this point, this question gives us a starting point from which to analyze the difference between the Deleuzian account of affect and that of the cognitive perspective. We suitably move from focusing on affect and Peirce’s category of firstness to emotion and the corresponding categories of secondness, and perhaps to thirdness. In order to do so, it seems fruitful to first explicate the implications of the cognitive approach within film studies. David Bordwell, as a pioneer of the cognitive approach and a highly acclaimed film scholar, will aid us in introducing the first (pure) account of the cognitivist approach within film studies. We will extract from his influential essay ‘A Case for Cognitivism’ the fundamental merits and implications the cognitivist perspective was supposed to provide with regards to film studies at the very beginning of its introduction to film studies (1989). In addition to Bordwell’s introductory essay, different cognitivists whose work is aimed at understanding the affective ‘force’ of cinema will be considered to construct the best possible understanding of emotion and affect within the cognitive theory of film studies. Cognitivists such as Carl Plantinga, Ed Tan, Noel Carroll, and Jens Eder will be discussed. Consequently, after we have established a grounding of the cognitive approach, I will present multiple cognitive models for understanding emotions elicited by cinema and ultimately try to connect them to the Deleuzian account of affect.

The main aim of this chapter is to make academics aware of the fact that the significance of the bodily aspect of emotions has grown considerably in the neurosciences, cognitive psychology, and many other fields, but has been somewhat overlooked in the research of emotions within cognitive film studies.
3.2 Introduction to (pure) Cognitive Emotion Theory

Some of Bordewell’s work on cognitive film theory can be regarded as his most influential and the same time most controversial of his oeuvre. Moreover, Bordewell, along with Noel Carroll, can be seen as inaugurating cognitive theory into the field of film studies. One of the most influential works that fall within this category is his book called *Narration in the Fiction Film*, in this work Bordewell utilizes cognitive research to reconstruct the at the time dominant ideas about the process of film viewing. Bordewell has been an advocate of the cognitive perspective within film studies throughout his career. Take for example his essay, ‘A Case for Cognitivism’, in which he quite literally advocates that “the cognitive perspective can usefully guide research into various aspects of film” (Bordewell, 1989, p. 13). Throughout this essay he not only explicates the origins of this approach, despite acknowledging that the “literature on cognitivism in psychology, philosophy, social theory, linguistics, anthropology, and even aesthetics has become so vast that no introduction can do justice to it”, he also introduces some distinctive research and the further implications these have for film studies (Bordewell, 1989, p. 12-14).

Let us begin by investigating what is not the aim of cognitive theory, according to Bordewell. Bordewell defines cognitive theory, or the cognitive perspective or cognitive frame of reference within film studies, which he regards as synonyms throughout his introductory essay, by connecting it to the cognitive science as “a wider body of inquiry resting (or so it seems to me) on significantly similar assumptions” (Bordewell, 1989, p. 11). What we should be aware of, however, is not to regard his broad perspective of cognitive theory as “one of those Big Theories of Everything that we film scholars regularly discover or assemble out of spare parts” (Bordewell, 1989, p. 15). Understanding cognitive theory as a Grand Theory would mean that most of its inquiries into what cinema does (“position subjects, reproduce ideology, appeal to fetishism and scopophilia, make itself polysemous in order to create heterogeneous meanings and pleasures”), would produce answers beyond the scope of cognitive studies, since film is according to Bordewell, “part of Everything” (Bordewell, 1989, p. 16).

Using the Freudian concept of Weltanschauung, “intellectual construction which solves all the problems of our existence uniformly on the basis of one overriding hypothesis, which, leaves no question unanswered and in which everything that interests us finds its fixed place”, Bordewell argues that it is impossible for a single ‘mega theory’ to grasp the complex diversity of all cinematic phenomena (Bordewell quoting Freud, 1966, p. 622). Bordewell argues that all cognitive enquiries within film studies should not attempt to answer exorbitant questions, which usually begin with a theory of the human subject or with isolated facts, which have a universality or generality that cannot do justice in the process of generating fruitful research, but focus on several smaller research
questions. In addition to this, Bordwell warns his reader to regard Cognitivism as “the contender that will knock [the at the time] Contemporary Theory out of the ring” (Bordwell, 1989, p. 18). He argues that the cognitive perspective is as informative and enriching as other theories that investigate the working of the mind, which have had a significant influence in earlier film studies. Cognitivism, however, should investigate problems which have been deemphasized or even ignored in past research in order to obtain new insights and reshape our current knowledge. Bordwell’s aim in his introductory work A Case for Cognitivism is to regard cognitive theory in a way that is considered “exposition, not disputation” (Bordwell, 1989, p. 20). Carl Plantinga concurs with Bordwell’s view of cognitive investigation within the film or film studies as a whole, saying:

“although it critiques the reigning paradigm, [cognitive studies] primarily consists of positive scholarship, demonstrations of the cognitive approach in relation to theoretical, aesthetic, psychological, and historical topics in film. Positive scholarship must be the focus of future efforts by cognitive theorists” (Plantinga, 2002, p. 18).

Let us now examine what precisely are these characteristics of the cognitive approach. Bordwell contests that to get a distinctive view of an intellectual perspective, we should focus on its problem-solving curriculum, or “paradigm cases on which it has focused”. Bordwell does so by contrasting these paradigmatic cognitive studies to Freudian psychoanalysis, which according to him, errs by constructing an “account of human mentation [that included] all normally unexceptional behavior and much of artistic activity”, by focusing primarily on negative neurotic symptoms, “the bizarre dream, the bungled action, the slip of the tongue” (Bordwell, 1989, p. 21).

Plantinga adds to this that it would, however, be “a mistake to claim that cognitive theorists oppose psychoanalysis per se, although most would agree that psychoanalysis as practiced in film studies has not been fruitful” (Plantinga, 2002, p. 19). He ascribes this ‘unproductivity’ to the fact that psychoanalysis is unsuitable to account for normative behavior such as perception, narrative comprehension, social cognition, and the experience of garden variety emotions such as fear and pity (Plantinga, 2002, p. 20). Consequently, cognitive studies focus heavier on a different set of core phenomena, such as normal and successful action. Essentially, one who works within the framework of cognitive theory aims to understand and explain human mental activities such as recognition, comprehension, interpretation, memory, inference-making, imagination, and judgment (Bordwell 1989). Although these studies are obviously investigating cognition in respect to the film spectator, contemporary cognitive studies have initiated an interest in neuroscience and its relation to spectator psychology, according to Plantinga. For example, the physical processes of the embodied brain in relation to cognitive processes are investigated by Torben Grodal (1997).

In any case, researchers within the cognitive framework propose theories of how the
The abovementioned processes are employed, and analyze and test these theories according to canons of scientific and philosophical inquiry. More importantly, according to Bordwell, “the cognitive framework of reference posits the level of mental activity as an irreducible one in explaining human social action” (Bordwell, 1989, p. 25). In this manner, cognitive theory rejects a merely behaviorist explanation of human action, in which human activity is understood without appeal to any ‘private’ mental events. Contradictory to this behaviorist explanation, cognitive theories assume that “in order to understand human action, we must postulate such entities as perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, desires, intentions, plans, skills, and feelings” (Bordwell, 1989, p. 30). In other words, there lies a hiatus or gap between intelligible and intentional human action, and the physiological mechanisms that execute it. This gap is filled or answered by mentation or ‘active processing of the mind’ of some sort, according to the cognitivist perspective. Here we encounter the first significant difference between the cognitive approach and (new) affect theory. As we have seen, according to affect theory the impact affects may have on us, such as an bodily action tendency, consist in large degree of pre-cognitive forces upon which we have little conscious influence. A seemingly clear opposition between Deleuzian theory of affect and cognitivist research.

In the next part of this thesis, for example, Noel Carroll’s account of emotions and affect as part of a cognitivist approach will be examined. In his research Carroll explains cinematic affect by emphasizing on the narrative and moral context of processes regarding emotions and affect elicited in the film viewer, claiming that our emotional response is primarily the aftereffect of a highly complex and conceptually mediated process. Some cognitive philosophers will emphasize more strongly the ‘thinking’ part of an emotion, “with thinking consisting of the emoter’s evaluation or judgment about the object of the emotion” (Plantinga & Smith, 1999, p. 6). Others however, as we will see, do acknowledge and sometimes emphasize the visceral component of “cognitive emotions”. In his recent book Moving Viewers: American Film and the Spectator’s Experience (2009), Plantinga incorporates a differential perspective which he labels as the “cognitive-perceptual theory”. Within this cognitive theory of emotion unconscious cognitive processes and the bodily components of emotion are widely elaborated upon. So, the cognitive approach to fictional emotions which at first sight might seem a perspective which clearly differs from the more affective scope Deleuze and his derivatives employ, does employ a certain understanding of the affective component of emotion – albeit, sometimes it uses the notions of affect and emotion in a varied manner.
3.3 Affect and Emotion in Cinema

3.3.1 Affect and the Cognitive Unconscious

Let us begin by depicting in what way some influential cognitivist film scholars use the terms affect and emotion in their studies. For example, when Noel Carroll writes in *The Philosophy of Motion Pictures* about affect and the moving images, he states that although, “[t]here is an undeniable relationship between moving images and our affective life — that is, our life of feeling”, we must not assume that “moving pictures engage our affective reactions in some simple, unitary fashion; motion pictures engender feeling-responses in us in a number of different ways” (Carroll, 2007, p. 147).

Carroll puts forward two reasons for this. First, it is because movies incorporate various distinctly different channels of affective address. Secondly, because the subject’s range of affective response is itself fundamentally diverse. In other words, movies can elicit a variety of different affects because they have multiple triggers to achieve this at their disposal. And at the same time there are numerous different affects accessible for incitement. Carroll then continues by categorizing what he calls affects, as he argues, “[t]hese affects include reflexes, phobias, affect programs, cognitive emotions, and moods” (Carroll, 2007, p. 148). Carroll thus utilizes the notion of affect or affective system as a label for the entire domain described above. He adds that this notion of affect is sometimes referred to as “emotions” by film scholars, but because he regards emotions as to have a strong cognitive component, Carroll differentiates them by speaking about the entire affective domain, rather than the emotions, as the label “emotions” is merely applied for a distinct “species within this genus”, as Carroll adds (2007, p. 148). When Carroll refers to “affect,” he is referring to “felt bodily states — states that involve feelings or sensations” (2007, p. 149). In the manner Carroll uses the notion of affect its compass is rather broad, and contains “hard-wired reflex reactions, like the startle response, sensations (including pleasure, pain, and sexual arousal), phobias, desires, various occurrent, feeling-toned mental states — such as fear, anger, and jealousy — and moods” (Carroll, 2007, p. 149). He posits that the power of cinema is that it can kindle and even inflame exactly this variety of the abovementioned states, through various means and devices. In this understanding of affect we can already find a difference between the use of ‘affect’ by Deleuzians and cognitivists such as Carroll. By defining affects as hard-wired reactions or as a genus of affective response, they are situated in Peirce’s category of secondness. Affects, defined by Carroll, as ‘reactions to’ are not comparable to the Deleuzian account of affects as defined by ‘firstness’ for they are fleeting and not yet defined by relation, but rather the potential to relate, extending beyond the particular actualization. Affects and emotions are both seen by Carroll as responses to affective address, although being different in nature.

Another cognitivist film scholar, whose work is directed at emotions, makes a similar
distinction between affects and emotions. Plantinga, whose work focuses on emotions in cinema, thinks it is no coincidence that the “language that philosophers and psychologists use to describe the structure of emotion is very close to that used by screenwriters speaking about narrative structure” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 34). Terms such as “catalysts and disruptive events, goal-orientated protagonists, conflicts and crises, expectations and reversals, rising action and climaxes, resolution, and a return to a state of calm” are closely linked to affective programs (Plantinga, 2009, p. 34). In other words, a film’s narrative structure is clearly constructed to elicit emotional, visceral, and cognitive experience.

When differentiating between emotions and affects, Plantinga in his book Moving Viewers: American Film and the Spectator’s Experience, claims that affective states are conceived as the broad category, in which emotions – as concern-based construals – are incorporated. We must note here that Plantinga – together with other cognitivists treated in this thesis – uses the term “affect” to delineate two different concepts. The first way he uses “affects” is to describe a broader ‘Affective System’ or genus, under which all such phenomena as emotions, reflexes, and affects (as a distinct category within this broader affective system) fall. The second way “affects” are used in Plantinga’s work is to denote the distinct category of responses which, at first sight, seem to be opposite to emotions (i.e. as being cognitively impenetrable).11 As emotions “result from someone’s perception or construal of an event or situation in relation to her or his concerns, and thus have a stronger cognitive component” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 29). According to Plantinga, affects, as opposed to emotions, are often characterized by being cognitively impenetrable, “their causal chain may be inaccessible to consciousness” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 29). He argues that the remaining states of feeling or sensations, such as startle responses, simple reflexes, automatic shocks and revulsions are referred to as affects is his works. We must, however, not think too lightly about these automatic responses and reflexes, as the affective experience, which is understood by Plantinga as “cognitively impenetrable,” often does add to the cognitive complexity of films. The affects elicited by movies need not necessarily be “blunt and superficial” in order to have an impact on the manner in which cinema embodies ideas and complex ways of experiencing a fictional world (Plantinga, 2009, p. 29).

As a matter of fact, Plantinga reserves a very prominent role in his theory for these ‘visceral’ responses elicited by films. He argues that “the visceral component of viewers reaction to film is what sets it apart from television or literature” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 30). In other words, the sensual, bodily experience is fundamentally linked to the experience we get from watching movies on the big-screen by going to the cinema. We must only think of the linkage between the climatic point of a movie and the visceral peak in the viewer, which often accompanies it, according to Plantinga.

---

11 It seems necessary to indicate the different utilizations of the word “affect” here, because by using affect as both an overarching term, as well as a specific category within this all-encompassing ‘affective system’ it may already elicit confusion in readers.
Nonetheless, here we can see a clear distinction between the two accounts of affect. In most cognitive research, affect is defined as those visceral or bodily responses, which are defined by their automaticity, and which are uncontrollable and impenetrable. This seems to fit only a particular aspect of the definition of affect proposed by Deleuzians, which posits that affect can be seen as non-conscious, pre-subjective, and unqualified intensities. However, they differ in a significant way: the affects Deleuze talks about do not set in motion an automatic and economical efficient response to stimuli, rather it disrupts the linkage between perception and action, reserving room for cognitive contemplation and new thought to emerge, instead of automatic actions and responses.

Carroll also discusses these kind of affective states, as movies posses the ability to activate involuntary and automatic reflexes in viewers, which happens at a sub-cognitive, or cognitively impenetrable, level of response (Carroll, 2008, p. 148). Examples of these are disruptive triggers, such as loud noises, which can either be recorded effects or musical sounds, and can “elicit instinctual reactions from spectators” (Carroll, 2008, p. 149). Sudden explosions, which can also be expected, are apt to make the viewer cringe as well. In agreement with Plantinga, Carroll argues that these responses are cognitively impenetrable, and should be considered affects, as opposed to emotions. Meaning that despite the fact the audience knows they are in no real danger, our body will respond differently by preparing us affectively for flight or other self-protective behavior (Carroll, 2008, p. 149). For example, adrenaline may rush into our veins as we are prepared for action. Carroll argues that “this ‘high’ can be enjoyable — can be savored — if there really is no real danger in the vicinity” (Carroll, 2008, p. 149).

Plantinga adds a supplementary aspect to this cognitive perspective of affect. He posits that emotions can have a conscious or unconscious genesis, however, “emotions are intentional states expressive of a relationship between a person and the environment; they therefore have objects, that is, they are directed at something or someone, whether real or imagined” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 57). He calls this relationship with the environment or directedness to objects or events “aboutness” and the unconscious genesis of emotion the “cognitive unconscious”. Moreover, we have a limited ability to elicit consciously, intentional control over our behavior and responses — as much of our behavior and responses occur as a result of unconscious mental processes (Plantinga, 2009, p. 51).

We have seen in the previous chapter that for Spinoza the idea is a mode of thought defined by its representational character. The idea, insofar as it represents something, is said to have an objective reality. We argued that it is the relation of the idea to the object that it represents. This was the basis on which we were able to distinguish between idea and affect. Along with Deleuze’s line of thought we defined affect as a mode of thought which does not represent anything. Or as Deleuze argued in his discussion of Spinoza: “Every mode of thought insofar as it is non-representational will be termed affect” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 1). It seems that distinguishing affect from emotion, and affect
from idea befalls by similar means. Perhaps it is through this logic that we must label feeling states without an apparent objective relationship as affects. But, when we continue by explicating Plantinga’s thoughts on this division we can see a clear deviation from the Deleuzian account of affect. According to Plantinga,

“affects are all bodily states (the low road), concern-based construals are emotions proper (the high road). Mood, reflexes, mimicry, felt physiological and bodily responses are affects, while fear, suspense, and pity, for example, are emotions. Emotions, as concern-based construals are a type of affect that involve a higher degree of cognitive processing than the usual affects and are more clearly identified as intentional mental states” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 57).

As an example Plantinga discusses jealousy. Jealousy has an object, according to Plantinga this might be the person who evokes the romantic or amorous attention of my partner. Along this line, jealousy is considered an intentional state because it expresses a certain relationship between me and the object of my jealousy. Other affective states can be causal, but differ from the depiction above. Take for example a reflexive response, which can be considered as a habitual action tendency that is caused by something, “but its causality is mechanical and hard-wired rather than cognitive and complex” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 57). Such a bodily reflex might be caused by an object (such as a snake), but it is not necessary for the subject to hold the snake as an object. In other words, the resulting flinching action (a bodily reflex) is not a mental state that is considered intentional. Plantinga explains that the distinction between affect and emotion does not carry any heavy theoretical weight in Moving Viewers. As this particular distinction between affect and emotion seems unnecessary for his theory to further develop. Plantinga addresses the distinction only because it seems to him “necessary for the purpose of recognizing that while both affects and emotions may be automatic and noncognitive in their genesis, the entities I call emotions typically employ a higher degree of cognitive processing and are intentional states” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 57). After this particular statement these emotions become the main objects of discussion in his book. This sudden change in focus seems strange considering his claim that cinema is unique in its ability to viscerally affect the audience without relying too heavily on the cognitive conscious component of emotional elicitation and response.

Nonetheless, Plantinga investigates in his book how cinema appeals to the affective and emotional lives of its spectators. How do films affect us and through what means? In order to find an appropriate answer to these questions, Plantinga incorporates an approach he calls ‘cognitive-perceptual theory’. According to Plantinga, this theory opposes the cognitive film theories in film studies which overemphasize the role of ‘consciousness’ and ‘deliberate cognition’ in the genesis of emotional and affective response. Plantinga argues furthermore that many critics of the cognitive
theories within film studies have falsely assumed that “all cognitive theorists insist on purely conscious evaluations in the genesis of human emotion” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 49). To exemplify this, he uses a purely cognitive approach to fear. This account of the experience of fear requires that the fearing subject consciously categorizes the feared object as “dangerous” or “seriously threatening” to the subject’s own well-being. Consequently for this pure cognitive approach to emotions, such a conscious deliberation must precede having the emotion of fear. We can see such purely cognitive accounts of emotion in the works of Carroll as well. For example, Carroll states:

“emotional states, like anger, are governed cognitively by criteria of appropriateness. Where the cognitions in a given emotional state come about through the subsumption of a person or event under the category of wrongs done to me or mine, the emotional response is apt to be anger” (Carroll, 2003, p. 65).

Carroll continues by arguing that many other emotional states work in the same manner. Again, when the criterion of an event of object is considered harmful or dangerous to the subject, in other words, the category appropriate to fear, “I subsume the object of my state under the category of the harmful, I am, other things being equal, apt to undergo fear” (Carroll, 2003, p. 65). Carroll claims for example: “[when] I cognize the scorpion next to my hand under the harmful, that cognition causes my blood to freeze, and the overall state is fear” (Carroll, 2003, p. 65). According to Carroll, bodily reactions only occur after a process of cognition of the affecting object. This can be seen as almost the complete opposite of the James-Lange theory of emotion, an influential theory of affective response, employed in psychology.

The James-Lange-perspective emphasizes the importance of the peripheral nervous system (nerves connected to muscles, visceral organs, and so on) on the workings of emotions. William James argued that emotion is primarily the perception of bodily changes. In other words, it is not that we cry because we are sad, or because we are frightened. James actually reverses this causal sequence. He argues that we are sad because we cry, we are frightened because we quiver and our heart starts pounding, before we are consciously aware that we are frightened. Put differently, what sets forth emotional states is the process of a stimulus impinging upon our nerves (we see a bear running at us), resulting in bodily arousal (our hearts start to pound), after which we have an emotion (fear). For James emotions, or emotional feelings are not possible without a bodily response. They are the result of feedback from the body (peripheral systems) to the brains (James, 1890). For example, James acknowledges the unique contribution of the face in relation to emotion. The researchers following James, “recognizing the high concentration of nerves in the face and the importance of the face in emotional displays, argue that the information provided by the face is particularly important in determining emotional experience” (Plantinga & Smith, 1999, p. 7) – an
approach mirrored by Deleuze’s account of affect. In this sense, information from facial muscles as well as facial nerves can regulate emotions, distinguish between various distinct emotions, or even modify emotional states (James, 1890). According to Plantinga & Smith research done within this perspective concerns with less complex structures of emotion. They emphasize physiological or behavioral response from the autonomic or central nervous system, which need not be concerned with conscious procession (Plantinga & Smith, 1999, p. 10).

Contrary to the account of emotion employed by Carroll, Plantinga claims that much of what leads a person to have an emotion must occur at the level of the “cognitive unconscious”. He adds that although the feeling of fear is felt consciously, the processes leading up to that feeling may or may not occur consciously (Plantinga, 2009, p. 49). Moreover, opposite to what most critics of cognitive theory within film studies assume, “most cognitive theorists reserve an important place for the unconscious mind and unconscious mental processes — for the cognitive unconscious” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 49). Consequently, Plantinga argues that human emotion actually requires unconscious operations and visceral operations in order to be considered an emotion. So, Plantinga considers this component of emotion to be critical and fundamentally important: “[t]he cognitive unconscious is not limited to cognition. Researchers are currently interested in discovering more about unconscious perception, unconscious affect, and unconscious conation (pleasure and desire)” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 50). Nonetheless, he primarily focuses, as many other cognitive theorists do, on the cognitive emotions elicited by cinema, which require complex cognitive processes, such as appraisal or judgments. We will see more on this in §3.3.3 and §3.3.4.

3.3.2 Emotions
In contrast to affects or felt body states, which have no clear relation to objects or higher cognition, emotions are not just static mental states, but temporal processes, Plantinga argues. However, we must not confuse emotions with moods. Moods are argued to be pervasive and long-lasting, while typical emotions can be seen as transient disturbances, which are “initiated by the subject’s construal or appraisal of a disruptive situation that relates to the subject’s concerns” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 34). So, emotions ensue in time and therefore have a temporal structure. Emotions ebb and flow in accordance to the subject’s unfolding situations and responses to them (Plantinga, 2009, p. 34). As a consequence, Plantinga argues that “[v]iewers’ emotional experiences may change dramatically as their expectations are met or thwarted, and as the situation takes unexpected turns” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 34).

When discerning emotions from the other affective states which seem somewhat primitive responses according to Carroll, the body has “affective resources that are more discerning —
smarter, if you will — in their activation” (Carroll, 2003, p. 151). Opposite to the startle response, which functions as a warning to the organism in moments of a loud noise, these more complex affective systems, which Carroll calls the “emotions proper,” are able to detect danger “not only in a resounding explosion, but also in a whispered threat or in one’s spouse’s overly attentive laughter to the attractive stranger” (Carroll, 2003, p. 151). According to Carroll, the emotions proper are determined by the situations, events and objects that evoke them. Moreover, they elicit alternative reactions to stimuli than affects and reflexes, as emotions are influenced by (past) computations, whether immediately prior or after some interval. Carroll argues that these computations,

“may occur on contact at the initial level of perception or they may be processed cognitively in the forecourts of the mind, either tacitly or consciously. They may engage the frontal cortex of the brain or they may bypass it and may be relayed directly to our behavioral response centers. It is the function of these affect systems to evaluate the circumstances before us in terms of certain recurring existential-human themes — like loss — and to prepare us to react appropriately” (Carroll, 2003, p. 151).

Carroll, thus posits that, although these computations can be both “tacitly” or “consciously” processed, and stimuli-response may be direct or subjugated to processing in the frontal cortex, they are all part of cognition. Moreover, emotional computations are connected to existential human themes, and these existential themes have the power to influence our emotional response to the events and object around us. What Carroll calls emotions proper, thus, at least “involve both cognitions and feeling states, and the two are linked inasmuch as the former cause the latter” (Carroll, 2003, p. 64). So, emotions are not merely bodily feelings, since sheer bodily feelings lack intentionality. If we, in accordance with Carroll, conceive of cognitions as necessary constituents of emotional states, the intentional gap disappears. By adding cognition to bodily feeling, however, we get a conception of an emotion proper, since emotions also require cognitive components. Carroll adds that “emotional states, like anger, are governed cognitively by criteria of appropriateness” (Carroll, 2003, p. 65). For example, when cognitions in a particular emotional state occur through the formation of a person or event categorized as “wrong-doings” to “me” or “mine”, the emotional response is most fittingly that of anger. This conception of emotions, that Carroll depicts, is known as the “judgment theory of emotion”.

What we must keep in mind, then, is that from Carroll’s cognitive perspective, cognition and emotions always seem to work together. Emotions are determined, or driven by the interaction between an individual and a given situation. So according to Carroll, essentially, cognitions cause bodily feelings and are the fundaments upon which emotions are constructed. And therefore, emotions will differ in accordance with the way the situational meaning is assessed — either through judgment (based on beliefs and judgments) according to Carroll, or through cognitive appraisal of the
situation, or the concern-based construals of situations, which correspond with several distinct theories, as we will see in the next paragraph.

3.3.3 Judgment Theory of Emotion

Before addressing the judgment theory of emotion thoroughly, we must investigate the primary assumptions inherent to this theory. The basic idea of the judgment theory of emotion is that an emotion is “a basic judgment about our Selves and our place in our world, the projection of the values and ideals, structures and mythologies, according to which we live and through which we experience our lives” (Solomon, 1993, p. 126). In this context, judging can be seen as those mental abilities that an individual incorporates whenever he or she acknowledges a particular experience or the existence of a particular state of the world.

Carroll presents us with some examples. Take for example pity and envy: “in order for me to feel pity for x, I must believe that x has suffered some misfortune; the criterion for pity, in other words, is misfortune, just as in order to envy y I must believe that y has something that I have not. If y cannot move and I know this, then I cannot envy y’s athletic prowess” (Carroll, 2003, p. 66). So, to envy y I must be capable to form the belief that y harbors particular advantages that I personally lack, or that y possesses some sort of advantage over me and superior to what I take myself to command. Thus, envying y indicates that I have categorized y as someone who possesses more or more advantageous properties than I do myself, thus making judging the central idea in this cognitive theory of emotions, because it is seen as a computation that the agent actively executes. It is not merely something that happens to the individual, outside of its cognition. Consequently, this conception represents the judgment theorists’ assertion that in order to have an emotion an individual has to judge (acknowledge, evaluate) that events are a certain way (Carroll, 2003, p. 66).

We now have a conception of emotions which is distinct from that of the other affects. For emotions depend upon cognitions as causes and have bodily states as effects, according to Carroll. He continues by arguing that those cognitions that either function to classify objects of a certain state under relevant categories, or comprehend aforementioned objects as meeting certain criteria, are crucial in the process of forming emotional states. Take fear for example: to fear an object it must be categorized as being harmful to me or mine. Similarly, anger requires that the object x of that anger must be recognized as meeting the criterion that x has wronged or offended me or mine. In Carroll’s words, “in order to be an appropriate object of the emotion in question, the relevant object must meet certain necessary conditions, or, alternatively, must be thought to be subsumable under certain essentially defined categories” (Carroll, 2003, p. 66). In order for x to be the object of anger, x has to be categorized as meeting the necessary criterion of being offensive or wrongful. Or for y to be the object of pity, it must be cognized that y meets the necessary condition of having
suffered some discomfort or misery (Carroll, 2003, p. 66).

So according to Carroll we must conceive of emotions as requiring certain cognitions. These cognitions include “subsuming the objects of the emotion under certain categories or, alternatively, perceiving that the object meets certain criteria of appropriateness [...] harmfulness, for example, in the case of fear; wrongfulness in the case of anger” (Carroll, 2003, p. 66). Carroll implicitly argues that the cognitions that are required in order to have an emotion must occur before a corresponding bodily state comes about. It must be acknowledged that even though the judgment theory of emotion claims that emotion is primarily a cognitive process, Carroll does not claim that all cognitions are done consciously or deliberatively. Moreover, while the judgment theory acknowledges that bodily responses are often the consequence of emotion, early developers of this theory, such as Martha Nussbaum, did not think of these bodily responses as an integral part of the emotion process (Nussbaum, 1884, p. 193). Carroll, however, acknowledges that the bodily response is properly considered part of the emotion, but sees it as an effect of the judgments that are made antecedently.

3.3.4 Concern-based Construal of Emotion

As we have seen, Plantinga uses a “cognitive-perceptual” approach in order to investigate the movie-going experience. By incorporating such a different approach, Plantinga assumes it will allow himself to give a more specific description of some particular pleasures of individual films, of whatever genre or type. Plantinga specifies multiple pleasures, including cognitive play, visceral experience, sympathy, narrative satisfactions, and reflexivity, and the different means by which they are employed in individual films and genres, and between individuals and audiences. According to Plantinga, we may accept that films of a certain genre can have shared fundamental tendencies, however, each particular film presents us with a complexity of intended pleasures, and this results in a unique spectator experience. Therefore, according to Plantinga, we need to accredit the diversity for spectator pleasure, as “the pleasures of the cinema are multiple, and so are their psychological and cultural effects, as well as their implications for ethics and ideology” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 39).

The cognitive-perceptual theory posits that emotions are the results of an individual’s concern-based construal of an exterior situation. However, with this in mind, Plantinga acknowledges from a film studies perspective that it is a common misunderstanding of the cognitive theory of emotion that it approaches its subject only with regard to consciousness. Plantinga opts for the acknowledgement of what he calls “the psychological unconscious”, which serves as an essential element of the human psyche and the construal-based theory of emotion (Plantinga, 2009, p. 39). In most cases, this psychological unconscious is directed toward our individual well-being (or adaptation), and is guided by motives of desires for achievement, power, affiliation and intimacy,
According to Plantinga. Furthermore, we have only a limited ability to consciously, and intentionally influence our behavior and responses, because this behavior happens as a consequence of unconscious mental processes. This means that our responses to what we see in the cinema are often automatic and minimally mediated, or not mediated by deliberate consideration at all.

Through the use of the psychological unconscious and the “cognitive unconscious” which is part of it, Plantinga preserves the allowance for preconscious and unconscious mental processes in the cognitive theory of emotion. This is necessary according to Plantinga, because “the disposition of an emotion depends on a partly unconscious conceptual system that automatically structures a person’s experience and directs his or her behavior” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 56). Thus the cognitive unconscious — judgments construed unconsciously and not deliberative — plays a central role in emotional response, according to Plantinga.

An emotion, then, is an intentional mental state or “concern-based construal” that generally involves various sorts of feelings, physiological arousal, and action tendencies. Following Plantinga, an emotion should be seen as a disturbance, or a departure from the normal state of relative composure. As does Carroll, Plantinga exemplifies his conception of emotion by using fear. He claims,

“The emotion of fear is complex, involving 1) primal concern for survival, 2) a perception or construal that survival is threatened, 3) physiological and automatic nervous system (ANS) changes, 4) the subjective experience of strong feelings, 5) a mental and physical state of excitement or perturbation, 6) a specific form of behavior or action readiness (flight, defense), and 7) other outward manifestations of behavior (body language, facial expressions)” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 54-55).

Plantinga claims that all of the abovementioned elements “have been thought to be the essence of an emotion” at some time in research concerning emotions (Plantinga, 2009, p. 54). Still, Plantinga himself avoids talking about the basic and required conditions of emotions, as “it is undoubtedly true that a particular account finds some elements of emotion to be central, or closer to necessary of sufficient conditions than others” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 54). He, however, holds an emotion primarily to be a specific intentional relationship between an individual and the world, as the kind of emotion which is experienced depends not solely on the nature of the situation but on the appraisal of the situation by the perceiver. That is to say that physiological response or situation are by themselves not sufficient to determine the emotion elicited. It is the individual’s construal of the situation that determines the kind of emotions experienced. Construals then are impressions, or way things appear to the subject (Roberts, 2003, p. 75). Plantinga uses a description which is derived from the works of Robert C. Roberts. According to Roberts, they are experiences, and not merely judgments or thoughts or beliefs, which are central to most other cognitive accounts of emotion. More so, construals are experiences of a situation in its import, or significance, and these construals can be
automatic, conscious or pre-conscious and can even occur without deliberation (Roberts, 2003, p. 75).

These construal are, according to Plantinga, based on concerns. He therefore names them concern-based contruals. He explains this by quoting Robert C. Roberts, by whom his theory is significantly influenced: construals are “imbued, flavored, colored, drenched, suffused, laden, informed, or permeated with concern” (Roberts, 2003, p. 24). Subjects have emotions because they construe a certain situation or event which relates to their concerns, and is significant to that particular subject. We grieve at the death of a loved one. But we would not necessarily grieve if we did not care for that specific person. Therefore, we have emotions only if we have concerns (Roberts, 2003, p. 25).

Let us consider a particular situation described by Plantinga: We could find ourselves in a forest, when we all of a sudden stumble upon what seems to be a bear. Naturally, if it is a bear, we perceive the bear to be threatening to our survival. That is to say, we appraise or construe the bear as dangerous. Put differently, we can perceive this situation as aversive or undesirable, as it threatens our survival. Our perceived personal power is probably weak in contrast to the bear. Therefore the emotion that is probably elicited in us is fear. However, it would be somewhat of a different situation if we had a gun at our disposal and believed that this gun will fully protect us from the furred animal. Or we could be in a situation in which we deliberately went to the forest to hunt the bear and feel confident that with our tools and state of mind we will succeed in killing the animal. Our eventual emotional reaction would certainly differ. Therefore, Plantinga argues that our emotional response is influenced by the construal of a situation, and not merely the “objective” situation itself (Plantinga, 2009, p. 54). In other words, the particular emotion experienced derives from the perceiver’s appraisal of the nature of the situation. For example, being in a crowded area an individual might suddenly feel pain, and subsequently anger because he or she feels a strong force impacting his or her back. Only later to find out later, when he or she turned around in order to snarl at the perpetrator that the person bumping into the individual was an old lady in a wheelchair, and lost control for a brief moment. Such a situation might entirely alter the residual emotional response (Plantinga, 2009, p. 54).

Plantinga adds that an emotion, “is [nevertheless] a mental state that is accompanied by physiological arousal” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 54). Still, emotions are not merely defined by particular physiological responses or their situational nature. According to Plantinga, when talking about emotions we must acknowledge the importance of construals, appraisals, and the intentional nature in emotional experience. They are intentional, not in the way that they are deliberative and considered per se, but in their “aboutness”. Emotions express a relationship between individuals and the world or situation significant to them. So, according to Plantinga, “fear, sadness, anger, jealousy,
shame, and guilt are words we use to describe relationships between persons, on the one hand, and an object (person, situation, environment) on the other, in relation to the person’s concerns” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 55). As a consequence, neither physiological response nor situation are sufficient to determine emotion; in many cases, the individual’s construal of the situation determines the kind of emotion experienced.

In fact, it would seem that Plantinga agrees with Carroll that emotions are fundamentally based upon our “place in the world”, as judgment theory would name it, and therefore based on beliefs and judgments (Carroll, 2003, p. 65). However, we must consider the appraisal of the situation of the particular emotions we feel – the concern-based construal – the experiencing of a situation in its significance. Moreover, the appraisal of the situation or our “place in the world” is often constructed unconsciously and not deliberately (Plantinga, 2009, p. 56). According to Plantinga, events are perceived to be more or less significant to the wellbeing of the self, and emotions are experienced depending on the automatic appraisal of these events and responses (Plantinga, 2009, p. 56). Thus the cognitive unconscious (judgments construed unconsciously and not deliberative) also play a central role in Plantinga’s account of emotional response. Emotions are, nevertheless, intentional mental states, meaning they are expressive of a relationship between a person and the environment; they have objects, that is, they are directed at something or someone, whether real or imagined. They possess an “aboutness”, which other affective entities do not necessarily possess.

Plantinga, thus calls his theory “cognitive” if and if only we consider the cognitive unconscious, and the automatic processes which underlie it, to be part of cognition and therefore cognitive theory. Plattinga adds that the cognitive unconscious might be available to consciousness through introspection (Plantinga, 2009, p. 56). For example, the cognitive unconscious can be understood in others through observation of emotional behavior. Thus, an emotion can be caused unconsciously and without deliberate cognition (conscious construal), “yet may nonetheless be justifiably described ex post facto as an intentional, cognitive state, because it can only be characterized accurately as a perceived relationship between persons and their environment in relation to their concerns” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 56). So, according to Plantinga it is possible to delve into the unconscious processes essential to emotions – which are fundamentally hard to penetrate – through introspection and emotional therapy. Deleuze claims this as well, as he mentions it is the purpose of art to make it possible for us to analyze and realign our preconscious and conscious mental processes. He posited that it is through the chaos presented to us by the use of affects, and the rearrangement of our cognitive processing we can delve into what causes our meaning-making-processes to ‘malfunction’ and cope with it through the construction of new concepts. Set forth by a sudden jolt of the body, we abruptly become aware of the unconscious processes inherent to us as insufficient. Because of this we form a new arrangement of our senses and consequently our
meaning-making processes in order to cope with the affects presented to us, by ‘capturing’ them with the construction of new concepts.

This also is represented in Plantinga’s notion of emotion as a concern-based construal, as the construal does not need to be a sort of conscious judgment. Indeed, emotional responses that are conscious judgments might eventually become habitual, automatic, and nonconscious. These ‘habitualized’ responses, Plantinga argues, are cognitively penetrable. Meaning that these nonconscious responses, which were conscious at an earlier stage, are in principle accessible to consciousness once again (Plantinga, 2009, p. 56). For example, through relational-emotive therapy through which psychotherapists are able to trigger new patterns of response in subjects by reshaping or adjusting the cognitions associated with specific stimuli. For Deleuze then, cinema can also act as a means through which our impenetrable processes are made accessible.

As we have seen, there are a lot of different elements of importance when talking about emotion from a cognitive point of view. What seems to be fundamentally important to emotions is that from a cognitivist perspective they are understood as mental states. And in contrast to affective reactions, emotional responses are perceived of as not merely physical, but as having a distinct mental component. What cognitivists describe as crude and impenetrable bodily states – which seem to correspond the most with affects – are not “about” anything, whereas emotions are. Emotions are states of mind that have intentionality. They are defined by their “aboutness”. Bodily states or affects are not justifiable by this logic; an individual may have a bodily state or not. Plantinga’s cognitive-perceptual theory holds that types of emotions such as fear, anger, or jealousy can only be explained on the basis of the accuracy and measure (intensity) of an individual’s concern-based construal of the situation he or she is in. Through this cognitive-perceptual theory, Plantinga is capable to emphasize on the cognitive elements of emotion while at the same time acknowledging other unconscious or inattentive influences and determinations as central element of emotions.

3.3.5 Appraisal Theory of Emotion
Dissimilar to Carroll and Plantinga, Jens Eder employs another model for investigating filmic narrative than the abovementioned two approaches. His model combines several concepts from film studies, reception psychology, and the study of emotions. Eder’s model is perhaps most specifically directed to filmic emotions and emotional triggers inherent to film structure and film viewing at large out of the theories treated in this chapter. The potential of his model lies in the fact that it allows “the connections between film structures, cognitive processing, and emotional responses to be described in a nuanced manner” (Eder, 2007, p. 231). Eder considers the cognitive approach to be the most attractive starting point for investigating emotions elicited by film, because this perspective “models reception processes in a particularly refined, empirically grounded, and conceptually clear manner”
(Eder, 2007, p. 231). That is, the cognitive perspective holds the conception that film reception is an active process of information processing. The fundamentals upon which this process builds are provided by a specific mental architecture, according to Eder. Filmic information collides with physical and psychological dispositions in the spectators, these dispositions are molded by biological, sociocultural, and situational influences and are diverse, but also display similarities. Eder argues that these mental dispositions – which are addressed through film viewing – are generally attained and applied in our everyday life. Consequently, film reception is very similar to our everyday perception. However, at the same time it differs from it significantly. According to Eder, the biggest disparities lie in the communication situation, film-specific input, and the activation of film-specific components of memory (Eder, 2007, p. 232). Hence, our emotional response when watching films are understood as a unique form of information processing. Approaching emotions from such a perspective fits the leading conception that emotions should be seen as “psychophysical phenomena shaped by both biology and culture, as multidimensional events in the mind and body of an individual that come into being in response to external or internal stimuli” (Eder, 2007, p. 233). Within this emotional process, our perceptions and our subsequent cognitions merge with physiological reactions and (expressive) behavioral tendencies. Ultimately, this combination is subjectively experienced and labeled as a “pleasant” or “unpleasant feeling” of a certain intensity (Eder, 2007, p. 233).

When this subjective experience, or feeling, is intense and relates to a particular object, we may speak of it as an emotion. However, if the feeling is weaker, and not directed at an object, we enter the domain of the affect, according to Eder. The elicited emotions, “often develop into complex episodes in several stages that involve intertwined associations, thoughts, memories, or attempts to control the emotion” (Eder, 2007, p. 233). Within this process, and perhaps because of it, it is possible for new overlapping or mixed emotions and feelings to develop. Thus, emotional triggers can be either internal or external.

All these characteristics of emotions are considered in Eder’s model, which is developed from the general phenomenon of perspective-borne appraisals. This multileveled appraisals, developed in psychology, “assumes that characters, situations, and other represented objects give rise to emotion-triggering appraisals on various levels in spectators” (Eder, 2007, p. 234). The model suggested by Eder emphasizes the fact that spectators of cinema adopt an appropriate mental perspective in the process. Meaning, film viewers comprehend objects in a particular, “qualitative way by means of mental processes of perception, thought, feeling, evaluation, or desire” (Eder, 2007, p. 240). Film viewers adopt a certain attitude toward what is represented to them, but Eder also acknowledges that viewers can attribute film-makers, narrators, and characters with a perspective and measure it with their own perspective. This sets forth a “[t]ransfer of perspective or identification with characters [which] can take place to various degrees in relation to various objects and aspects of
them” (Eder, 2007, p. 231). That is to say, we are able to appropriate the perception and knowledge of a fictional character, but our desires and feelings can be different. This means that the cognitive-perceptual approach to emotions claims that specific kinds of emotions are partly distinguished in line with the kinds of individual appraisals or construals of a certain situation.

The appraisal theory of emotion distinguishes multiple (generally around five) components with corresponding values along which an emotion can be appraised. Which implies that when stimuli are encountered they are appraised along several dimensions or components (Johnson, 2009). Each appraisal component is then assigned one of several possible values. Together these values determine which emotion response will be elicited. So, in appraisal theory, different emotions correspond with different appraisal formations. The appraisal determinants used in order to determine the emotional outcome differ in several studies, however, some remain essential quite consistently through appraisal theory literature. The appraisal components mentioned below are based on Klaus R. Scherer’s theory of emotions appraisal and his component process model (CPM) of emotion (Scherer, 2001; Scherer, 2009). This appraisal theory of emotion is presented here because earlier in this thesis we connected what appraisal theorists of emotion, such as Klaus R. Scherer, define as ‘goal conduciveness’ and ‘coping potential’ to Deleuze’s conception of Spinoza’s continuous variation in the form of an increase-diminution-increase-diminution of the power of acting or the force of existing (vis existendi).

As an appraisal theorist, Scherer argues that “[e]motion is conceptualised as an emergent, dynamic process based on an individual’s subjective appraisal of significant events” (2009, p. 1307). Scherer proposes the component process model (CPM), which consists of a design that reflects the fundamental nature and functions of emotions as a dynamic psychobiological and cultural adaptation mechanism. The component process model (CPM) of emotion, is specifically focused on the unfolding of emotion as a dynamic process. Emotion, then, is defined as certain “periods of time, during which many organismic subsystems are coupled and synchronized to produce an adaptive response to an event that is considered as central to an individual’s well-being” (Scherer, 2001, p. 93, see also: Scherer, 1987; Scherer, 1994). The model that Scherer proposes comprises of the dynamic and recursive emotional processes ensuing an event that is considered relevant to the needs, goals, and values of a certain individual. Consequently, according to Scherer, “emotion is seen as a reaction to significant events that prepares action readiness and different types of alternative, possibly conflicting, action tendencies but not as a sufficient cause for their execution” (2009, p. 1308). This multicomponential conception of emotion as appraisal has some similarities to Eder’s appraisal theory, but most importantly, Scherer’s model is addressed here to present an example of the appraisal theory of emotion, including some critical components through which emotion is appraised. Scherer refers to these components as the criteria of stimulus evaluation. The valence,
activation, and power dimensions of emotional meaning are appraised alongside these criteria. Whereas generally valence is connected to goal or need conduciveness, activation to the urgency, and power to the coping potential of an stimulus. The set of criteria are named ‘stimulus evaluation checks’ (SECs) by Scherer and are fundamental to the assessment of the significance of a stimulus event for an organism (Scherer, 2001, p.94). According to Scherer, the SECs symbolize a minimal set of dimensions, components or ‘criteria’ that are necessary to differentiate between the major families of emotional states (Scherer, 2001, p.94). Put differently, the stimulus must be appraised along the line of these criteria in order for us to be able to distinguish between several kinds of emotion. Scherer argues, however, that this appraisal is not considered to be a simple check (yes/no) or present/absent process, but are as complex as “the organism’s capacity to process this information allows” (Scherer, 2001, p.94). So, the kind and intensity of emotion elicited by a particular event depends on the results of the appraisal process based on the aforementioned SECs. In order to give a short overview of what such an appraisal theory of emotion might involve, Scherer’s theory of emotional appraisal will be discussed. Scherer’s theory will give us a more comprehensive, but still far from complete, insight of the range of the appraisal theory of emotion. Nonetheless, it seems necessary to assess the appraisal criteria of Scherer’s model more closely in order to connect it to Deleuze’s concept of affect.

The component process model suggests that there are four primary appraisal objectives according which an individual must adaptively react to an important event. These four appraisal ‘categories’ concern the most important types or classes of information concerning an object or event that an individual requires in order to respond with an appropriate reaction to said emotional event:

1. Relevance Detection (*How relevant is this event for me?*) Does it directly affect me or my social reference group? According to Scherer, individuals continuously assess external, as well as internal stimulus information to check if the situation produced by stimulus events (or lack of expected ones) requires their attention, further information processing, and possibly an adaptive response, or whether their current status can be continued and, consequently, their ongoing activity can be pursued (Scherer, 2001, p. 94-95). Scherer stresses that individuals are under a constant barrage of stimulations (as does Deleuze, arguing that our capacity to be affected is always entirely fulfilled), and out of these the organism must carefully analyze those stimuli that are sufficiently relevant to authorize more extensive processing (Scherer, 2001, p. 94-95). Scherer discusses several ‘sub-checks’ or ‘sub-categories’ important to relevance detection. I will address some of them briefly as they are connected to the earlier mentioned goal conduciveness of emotion:
a) **Novelty check.** This process checks which stimulus is likely to be registered as novel and thus deserve our further attention? This check is done by considering the degree of familiarity with the object or event, or the probability and predictability of the occurrence of a stimulus (Scherer, 2001, p. 95).

As we have seen Deleuze, argues that affects that do not strike us as familiar, have the greatest impact on individuals. Those affects that push our perceptual and cognitive processes out of the habits of economical perception and cognition into the conditions of chaos and creation, by creating jolts of sensation impact us the most. Affects, or images for that matter, that are disruptive, because we are not able to automatically assimilate them, re-order the logic of our senses and create a the foundation for novel thought. At first glance, this seems to correspond with Scherer’s appraisal of emotional stimuli through a novelty check.

b) **Intrinsic pleasantness check.** This is the evaluation of whether a stimulus event is likely to result in pleasure or pain. This evaluation is considered separate from, and prior to, a positive goal/need conduciveness check, according to Scherer. The positive evaluation of stimuli that help to reach goals or satisfy needs depends on the relationship between the significance of the stimulus and the organism’s motivational state (Scherer, 2001, p. 95). However, according to Scherer, intrinsic pleasantness can also be independent to goal conduciveness, because intrinsic pleasantness can be highly obstructive to achieving our goals (Scherer, 2001, p. 95).

Earlier, when I presented Deleuze’s example of meeting Paul and Pierre, an increase in vis existendi seemed to be strongly connected to the intrinsic pleasantness discussed here. The fact that Scherer considers this assessments to be independent to goal conduciveness is not thoroughly addressed within Spinoza’s and Deleuze’s conception of affect and the power of acting, because Deleuze’s example only showed that pleasantness equals an increase in our ‘power to act’ which has similarities to goal conduciveness. Put differently, the pleasantness of meeting Pierre, directly increases an individual’s force of existence and therefore their power or will to act. According to Scherer, there are situations in which personal pleasantness is not directly connected to goal conduciveness. He presents us with the example of an individual trying to lose weight. Eating a piece of chocolate cake would probably mean (a short moment of) intrinsic pleasantness, but over the course of time this would actually counter the likeliness of the individual reaching his or her goal. Nevertheless, Scherer does argue that the intrinsic pleasantness check determines the fundamental reaction or response of the organism, claiming that ‘liking’ or pleasurable feelings do generally encourage approach, whereas ‘disliking’ or aversion leads to avoidance or complete withdrawal (Scherer, 2001, p. 95).
c) *Goal relevance check.* This check appraises “the relevance, pertinence, or importance of a stimulus or situation for the momentary hierarchy of goals/needs; a stimulus is relevant for an individual if it results in outcomes that affect major goals/needs” (Scherer, 2001, p. 95). Scherer argues that this relevance varies continuously from low to high, depending on the number of goals or needs that are affected and/or their relative hierarchical status (Scherer, 2001, p. 95).

This conception is quite similar to continuous diminution-increase of our force of existence as conceptualized by Deleuze’s in earlier chapters. However, there are some significant differences, as Scherer argues for example that “an event is much more relevant if it threatens one’s livelihood or even one’s survival than if it is just endangers one’s need to listen to a piece of music” (Scherer, 2001, p. 95). This seems self-evident, however, according to Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza it can be said that when for instance our livelihood is threatened, we may assume that we are being acted upon. This would in turn diminish our own force of existence. Consequently, according to Deleuze, by being acted upon our own force of existence and power of acting may very well even be inhibited or obstructed. Which would mean that we would be less inclined to act upon this threat, than when we would be more pleasantly affected, for example. This does not completely correspond with the situation that when we are threatened, we are more abt to have a stronger response.

(2) Implications Assessment *(What are the implications or consequences of this event and how do they affect my well-being and my immediate or long-term goals?)*; This checks to what extend a stimulus or situation is appraised as favorable or disadvantageous to an individual’s survival or adaptation to a given environment or situation, as well as satisfying its needs and attaining its goals (Scherer, 2001, p. 95-96).

a) *Causal attribution check*: when confronted with a situation or object an individual will first attempt to attribute the cause of the event, discerning the agent responsible for the occurrence of the situation. This will asess the further evolution of the situation: the likelihood of outcomes and the individual’s ability to deal with them are dependant of attribution of agency and intention (Scherer, 2001, p. 96).

b) *Outcome probability check*: Not the event itself, but the perceived outcomes for the individual determine the ensuing emotion (this is a central idea to appraisal theory in general). An individual assesses the likelihood or certainty with which consequences are to be expected.

c) *Discrepancy from expectation check*: the situation set into action by the event can be consistent or discrepant with individual’s expectation or position in the action sequence leading up to a goal (Scherer, 2001, p. 96).
d) **Goal/need conduciveness check:** One of the most important checks is the goal/need conduciveness, according to Scherer (Scherer, 2001, p. 96). This checks the conduciveness of a stimulus event to help reach one or several goals or needs. Scherer adds that “[t]he consequence of acts or events can constitute the attainment of goals/needs, or progress towards such attainment, or facilitation of further goal-directed action” (Scherer, 2001, p. 96).

This means that the more directly outcomes of events ease or aid goal realization, and the closer they push the individual toward reaching his/her goal, the higher the conduciveness of an event becomes. Scherer adds, however, that results of an event may also be obstructive to the attainment of our goals, by placing goal or need satisfaction outside limits. This in turn delays its fulfillment, or requiring extra effort. This may lead to frustration, for example.

e) **Urgency check:** adaptive action is especially urgent when high-priority goals or needs are endangered and an individual needs to either fight or flight, or when delaying will make the situation even worse (Scherer, 2001, p. 96-97).

(3) **Coping Potential Determination (How well can I cope with or adjust to these consequences?)**; Scherer argues that “successful coping with a stimulus event implies that the individual’s concern with the eliciting event disappears and that the synchronized subsystems can be decoupled” (Scherer, 2001, p. 97). This does not mean, however, that it is necessary for an individual to reach its original goals. As coping can also be in the form of resigning yourself from a situation beyond your control.

a) **Control check:** this sub-category checks to what extent an event or its outcomes can be influenced or controlled by agents. If control is not possible the event is often avoided.

b) **Power check:** If abovementioned control is possible, the coping potential depends on the ability of the individual to exert control over the event or to attract others to aid him or her in order for the individual to change contingencies and outcomes according to its own interest.

c) **Adjustment check:** this checks whether individuals can adjust, adapt to, or live with the consequences of an event after all possible means of intervention have been utilized (Scherer, 2001, p. 97-98).

(4) **Normative significance evaluation (What is the significance of this event for my self-concept and for social norms and values?)**: According to Scherer, it is not unimportant for social species for “the reaction of an individual to take into account how the majority of the other group members evaluate an action and to evaluate the significance of an emotion-producing event for its self-concept and self-esteem” (Scherer, 2001, p. 98).
a) **Internal standards check**: this check evaluates whether the response corresponds or whether it does not with internal standards such as one’s self-ideal or internalized moral.

b) **External standards check**: Scherer adds that “being part of a social group implies shared values and rules concerning status hierarchies, prerogatives, desirable outcomes, and acceptable and unacceptable behaviors” (Scherer, 2001, p. 98). This means that an evaluation of the significance of an action concerning its social consequences is necessary before finalizing the outcome of the evaluation process and deciding on appropriate behavioral responses (Scherer, 2001, p. 98).

So, according to Scherer, stimuli are assessed or appraised along different categories; event, relevance, implication, coping, significance. Scherer adds that all of these assessments are influenced by the involvement of our attention, memory, motivation, reasoning, and self. To attain the abovementioned objectives, an individual appraises the event and its outcomes on a set of criteria or ‘stimulus evaluation checks’. The results reflect the organism’s subjective assessment (which may well be unrealistic or biased) of consequences and implications based on an individual’s personal needs, goals, and values (see Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Sander, Grandjean, & Scherer, 2005; Scherer, 2001, for further details and references). Eder, then, explores emotions, their associated triggers, and the systematic connections between the two, through a model developed by the appraisal theory of emotion (Eder, 2007, p. 231-250). Eder’s multilayered model of emotion describes the phenomenon by combining triggers and other factors from different categories of film analysis and draws upon the cognitive theories of film reception for explanations. Eder’s model has clear similarities with Scherer’s component process model of emotion appraisal and by adjoining filmic stimuli as triggers and other filmic factors to a model based on the appraisal theory of emotion, Eder creates a model fit for examining filmic emotion build on a foundation of the appraisal theory of emotion.

### 3.4 Crucial Components of Emotion

Now that we have explicated some influential perspectives on emotions as cognitive processes – namely, emotions construed through judgment, appraisal, and construal as the primary, means of eliciting emotions – it seems in order to highlight crucial elements of the emotions that are central in these studies. By doing so, we may come to a comprehensive understanding of what exactly are emotions according to several cognitive perspectives and explicate in a more detailed manner how these differ from affects and why one would prefer to focus on either (cognitive) emotions or affects.
First, we have seen that emotions are predominantly experienced in time. That is to say, emotions occur in time and, comparable to a filmic narrative, they have a temporal dimension. So, emotions are temporal processes, not static entities such as reflexes which are considered to be automatic and fleeting. Emotions, whether they are judgments, appraisals or concern-based construals, are temporal processes and as our judgments, appraisal, and construals of situations change our emotions change as our situation unfolds.

Secondly, from a cognitive perspective, emotions involve a continuous loop of conscious and unconscious cognitive processing of stimuli. More so, emotions change and evolve over time in response to external and internal feedback. Emotions, as processes by judgments, appraisals, or construals of the relationship between an individual and his or her situation are subject to continuous feedback. According to Planting, “[o]ur emotional life occurs in streams that continuously evolve in response to ever-changing construals, actions and action tendencies, bodily states, and feelings” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 60). Therefore all of the abovementioned factors may serve as input to affect our ensuing response. This seems quite similar to Deleuze’s concept of variance in vis existendi, as this is also explained as a continuous variation, a continuous upward and downward stream of acting potential.

Thirdly, emotions are inherently related to stories. As Plantinga, argues, “[t]he type of emotional state that a person experiences is in part determined by the kind of story he or she would most likely tell to explaining it” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 60). This component of emotions is somewhat overlooked in this thesis, but most theorists agree that the social construction of emotions is a crucial element of emotional life. More so, films have the potential to connect distinct emotions and affects to different kinds of stories, and therefore somewhat regulating our emotional experience.

With these characteristics of emotions, we already have a conception of emotion as a psychophysical phenomenon which is shaped by both our biology and cultural aspects. More importantly, emotions can be seen as multidimensional, or multi-componential events in the mind and body of an individual that emerges in response to continuous feedback to external or internal stimuli. Furthermore, emotions elicited in us differ in their intensity and duration. Stimuli can be weak, fleeting, and cognitively almost insignificant or they can be powerful and compelling. Consequently, emotions can increase in intensity or gradually diminish. Notwithstanding the fact that cognitive theorists often appoint particular appraisals, judgments, or construals to distinct emotions, they are often mixed, transfused, or ambiguous. Plantinga, underlines this characteristic of emotions:

“Paradigmatic sorts of emotions (anger, fear, enjoyment, etc.) may occur discretely, but emotions often occur in seemingly contradictory or ambiguous combinations. Therefore the overall experience is mixed

63
in that the emotions contrast in valence (negative and positive) and associated action tendencies” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 60).

This brings us to our next characteristic of emotions: they consist of multiple parts. Emotions involve in (no particular order): 1) Cognitive processing, such as appraisal, judgment, construal, which provides an cognition of events and objects; 2) Bodily reactions, a physiological component part of emotional experience, such as an elevated heart rate, fastened breathing, or skin conductance; 3) Action tendencies, which serves as a motivational component for the preparation and direction of motor responses and attention. 4) Expression, such as facial or vocal expression. These expressions are often part of emotions and serve to communicate reaction and intention of actions as well. 5) Feelings, which can be seen as the subjective experience of an emotional state, primarily after an emotion has occurred.

What predominantly differentiates emotions from affects or moods is their intentionality. Emotions are characterized by their “aboutness”. Emotions generally have reasons and objects; affects have causes without clear objects, according to cognitivists. Affects can be elicited by bodily states, or more concretely, physiological changes in the body, and sensory input without a clear representational nature, obtained by film viewing for example. According to Plantinga, these may include, but are not limited by, “sounds or music, high and low key lighting, the perceived energy of the on-screen activity, or various elements of the film’s sets and décor” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 60). Emotions, however, are generally speaking set forth by the object to which they are directed. Affects, moods, or reflexes need not have a well-specified object. Nonetheless, affects may influence emotion and emotions influence affect. For example, affects may influence the priming of a subject to experience a certain emotion, or may affect the intensity of a felt emotion. Having a particular emotion can influence how we affectively react to stimuli, and either numb or enrich our bodily reactions, and the same is true in reverse.

Finally, the contemporary cognitive approach to emotions elicited by films acknowledges the unconscious processes that are crucial to our emotional life. There is an acceptance of the fact that automatic responses outweigh conscious deliberation in our everyday life. If we would have to consciously, and deliberately think about every stimulus, movement, action, and reaction, “our conscious minds would be cluttered and we would be unable to live in the world” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 52). Moreover, several processes crucial to emotional reaction occur outside of our deliberate and conscious capabilities.
3.5 Paradox of Fiction

Now that we have treated several cognitive perspectives on how to address emotions, we must ask ourselves how it is, in the first place, that we are affected or “moved” by fictional objects or events even though we know do not actually exist. Put differently, how do people, their situations, and events in fictional stories elicit emotional or affective responses in us? This dilemma is often addressed as the “paradox of emotional response to fiction” or in short as the “Paradox of Fiction” (Carroll, 1990; Smith, 1995; Joyce, 2000). When speaking of “the paradox of emotional response to fiction” we find that there already lies an assumption in its formulation that our emotional response to fiction might be irrational. More on this later.

The debate elicited by this paradox generally contains three elementary premises. These premises hold that in order for us to acknowledge that we can be emotionally or affectively moved by encountering various people and situations, (1) we must believe that the people and situations in question really exist or existed; (2) that such “existence beliefs” are lacking when we knowingly engage with fictional texts; and (3) that fictional characters and situations do in fact seem capable of moving us at times.

3.5.1 Illusion Theory, Pretend Theory, and Thought Theory

Several solutions to the paradox have been argued. And it is possible to accommodate these solutions within three different categories, according to Steven J. Schneider (2009). First, we have the solutions that we may categorize as the “Pretend Theory” or “pretence theory”. Followers of this theory hold that our emotional responses to fiction are merely pretended or “make-believe” in contrast to everyday life emotions (Walton, 1973). Secondly, the “Thought Theory” posits that beliefs concerning existence (as seen in premise 1) are not crucial to having emotional responses to fiction (Smith, 1995; Carroll, 1990). Finally, followers of the “Illusions Theory”, argue that in actuality there is nothing fundamentally problematic about our emotional responses in relation to fictional works, as constructing “illusions” lies at the very heart of what fictional works suppose, and manage to do when successful. That is, fictional works, such as films, generate “illusions” that the characters and situations depicted actually exist, and to do so in a successful manner is inherent to their functioning (Paskow, 2004; Tan, 1996). In short, the “Illusion Theory” holds that spectators actually do believe propositions about fictional characters and situations; “Pretend Theory” argues that spectators have emotional responses within the context of a game of make-believe; “Thought theory”, argues that spectators can have actual emotions in response to propositions they do not actually believe to be true. For example by suspending their disbelief.

Plantinga, who also discusses the paradox in his investigation of cinematic emotion, argues that ‘art emotions’ – which are to him those emotions and affects that are “elicited by narrative film
and the other arts – have close affinities with the typical emotions of our extra-filmic lives” (Plantinga, 2009, p, 62). That is to say, the emotions that are elicited when we are watching movies are likely to follow a similar process of concern-based construal as our everyday life emotions. In addition, Platinga argues that our facial expressions that are elicited by emotions experienced in response to fiction are very similar those we have outside the context of watching movies. Even the physiological effects we experience are much like those in everyday life. For example, in both situations our sadness and sentiment may very well result in tears. Joy and happiness probably result in smiles, and fear goes along with tenseness and pursed lips (Plantinga, 2009, p, 63).

We must note, however, that when we watch movies, we are not presented with “raw” or transparent recordings of reality. Movies are oftentimes exaggerated manipulated expressions and work according to conventions of continuity or other filmic rules. Plantinga, nonetheless, argues that it is because of our extra-filmic lives, and the structure of responses we use and develop in our everyday life that we draw on in order to emotionally understand movies. More generally, even our apprehension of moving images that often represent wondrous and sometimes impossible fictional worlds, is based on real-world perceptual skills. When watching movies, our interest as viewers can only be maintained by connecting narratives to everyday life schemata, and these schemas are thus fundamental to the concern-based construals that constitute emotions, according to Plantinga. In this sense, Plantinga acknowledges that emotions elicited by movies have some strong similarities to those we experience in everyday life. However, filmic narratives often organize emotional triggers in a very dense manner. Which is to say, film narratives can be seen as over-exaggerated versions of reality. Often primarily directed at eliciting emotional or affective responses in its audience. This does not mean, however, that movies do not rely on everyday life or “real” cognitive schemas in order for them to have an emotional of affective impact on its viewers.

But what then are exactly these differences between film-elicited emotions and emotions we might experience in our lives outside the context of film viewing? Answering this question will at the same time criticize the “illusion theory”, which we mentioned before. The illusion theory, adopted by film scholars such as Ed S. Tan, holds that emotions elicited by film are wholly homologous with those emotions we might experience in our everyday lives. In one of his early essays on filmic emotion named “Film induced affect as a witness emotion”, Ed S. Tan argues that due to a process called “suspension of disbelief,” responses to events or situations of the fictional world are actually experienced as “witness emotions” (1995, p. 7-32). According to Tan, these witness emotions are equal to affective responses elicited by encountering nonfictional emotional events in our everyday life. Consequently, Tan argues that what can be understood as the “natural audience of the traditional feature film” often has the feeling of being in the film, as in, having the illusion that participants of the natural audience are “present in the scene ... [and] the adventures of the
protagonists are actually happening to [them]” (Tan, 1995, p. 82). Tan, who adopted the illusion theory in his early writing, argued that when we engage in watching movies we often have the illusion that we are some sort of invisible observer of actual events. Moreover, it is primarily when the spectator has this illusion of being an observer of “actual events” that we possess the means through which we are able to be emotionally affected by fictional events and characters. In such a way spectatorship must be defined as being some sort of a silent partaker in conversations and events. Emotions elicited through such a role are defined by illusion theorists as “as if responses”. Such emotions strongly “approximate the types of responses viewers would have were they really participating in the film’s events” (Plantinga quoting Tan, 2005, p. 63).

Opponents of the illusion theory hold, however, that various aspects of the emotions elicited in a spectator of film are different from those experienced outside the theater. Plantinga, for instance, identifies two significant elements of film viewing which make claims of direct participation, and “as if responses” of the kind adopted by Tan open to doubt.

To begin, a spectator of cinema is often unwilling to actually act upon the situations depicted or unable to influence the fictional events in any way. Obviously, this is because there is a “radical and ineluctable physical separation between the viewer and what he or she sees on the screen”, according to Plantinga (2009, p. 63). We might be willing to intervene in an actual event, or respond physically to situations in reality. However, when we watch movies we are freed from our responsibility and the will to act, or we withhold the power to respond and affect the events depicted altogether. We can see here a significant dissimilarity between the responses one might have as a bystander or partaker in actuality and the ones of a spectator of fiction film. The action tendency component of the emotional process are significantly different depending on our situation – either watching movies or responding in real life.

Secondly, opposite to Tan’s argument, the spectator of fiction film is often aware that they are watching a fictional depiction of a narrative that does not physically exist or is a representation of real or actual events. Were film viewers actually to believe that the events depicted were really occurring at that particular time – were spectators convinced to have the illusion that they were part of the events and situations represented – their physical response would probably be rather unpleasant or frightening. The physical response would be similar to those when witnessing or experiencing actual tragedy (Plantinga, 2005, p. 100). However, in actuality spectators generally stay in their seats and do not call the cops when harm is done to innocent characters. This is because when watching movies our response occurs within the context of watching fiction, which is accompanied by a mental set or mindset that assumes that the narrated events are fictional. For Plantinga, it is thus “essential to realize that the spectator has an implicit understanding that fictional movie events are narrated and not actually occurring and that the film is designed for a viewing that
presumes a knowledge of the conventional, gamelike nature of the experience” (Plantinga, 2005, p. 101).

Considering spectators know that the events and characters seen in cinema are fictional in the narrative depicted, as Plantinga argued, the question remains: Why do we respond emotionally to them? Plantinga argues that primarily cognitive theorists who posit that emotional response is based on beliefs find this paradox of fiction to be irrational and absurd (Plantinga, 2005, p. 101). In his cognitive-perceptual theory of emotion belief is not considered essential to emotional response. From a concern-based construals perspective, emotions emerge from the way events or situations affect or present themselves to the spectator (Plantinga, 2005, p. 101). And as we have seen before, emotions can often be the result of automatic responses, which are only semi-rooted in judgment, beliefs, or thoughts. Researchers of affect and the perceptual-cognitive theory of emotion underline that emotions only seldom emerge from pure conscious deliberation. In many cases emotions are automatic, and result from a blend or combination of emotional contagion, concern-based construals, or associative memories, bodily states, and so on, instead of merely deliberative judgments based upon belief. Emotions may be the result of such judgments, but emotions elicited in such a way only form a small section of the diversity of emotions elicited by fictions (Plantinga, 2005, p. 101). Moreover, when we act on belief it is not always the predominant factor in emotional response. We might, for example, unquestionably belief we are save from harm when we go see a venomous snake behind a thick layer of glass at the zoo (Plantinga, 2005, p. 101). However, when it strikes at us we often flinch at the sudden movement of the snake. In this case, our actions seem to be undermining our beliefs (Plantinga, 2005, p. 101). It is tempting to argue that our affective responses to fiction – and even our affective life as a whole – is primarily determined by our beliefs. However, it seems our affective life is never completely regulated by judgments and beliefs, as we are capable of generating responses that are partly or completely divergent from our beliefs (Plantinga, 2005, p. 101). However, we must not forget that despite film viewers may respond with fear, anger, or fascination for fictional characters and events, the normal viewing audience is able to identify the fictional character of the narrative. Therefore their actual emotional responses are commonly tempered or weakened by the knowledge of the story’s fictional status, as well.

It is of course true that we are able to respond to mere thoughts. Carroll argues for example that we can respond to something that has been merely imagined (2008, p. 155). We might feel suspense or fear by merely entertaining or imagining a certain state of affairs. Carroll argues, this is possible because our emotions are susceptible to imaginings as well as beliefs. This resulted from an evolutionary process, as it is advantageous to imagine an event and calculate possible outcomes beforehand (2008, p. 155). He argues that “[t]he cultural institution of fiction, including the precinct of fictional motion pictures, rests upon our innate capacity to be moved emotionally by
representations of counterfactual states of affairs and events” (Carroll, 2008, p. 155). Such responses are not exclusively linked to fictional representations of course, as we might also have emotional responses to dreams, imaginings, and ideas.

Nonetheless, we must underline that we respond to mere perceptual impressions in both the visual and aural registers, as well. And indeed, when we watch movies in the cinema our susceptibility to automatic perceptual responses – responses associated with affects – is heightened. Cinema generally presents us with powerful visual and aural impressions. Moreover, this seems to be one of the elements of cinema which makes it have such an profound impact on its viewers. Plantinga argues, then, that if our processing of visual and aural cues is largely done automatically and unconsciously, maybe it seems feasible to argue the same is true for the processing of images and sounds presented by the movies (2009, p. 102).

I agree with Plantinga in that in accordance with thought theory, we must not label our initial response such as the startle response when perceiving a shocking cinematic scene, as irrational or rational. Plantinga argues we cannot label these affective responses irrational because they are generally speaking innate components of our perceptual system. Plantinga continues by arguing that these automatic responses are primary to the cognitive processing that follows them. This cognitive processing tempers and evolves from the initial automatic response. Therefore it seems to be more appropriate to label the cognitive responses as rational or irrational, if we would need to label any processes as such, which to me seems quite irrelevant. However, strictly speaking it seems unreasonable to label automatic responses rational or irrational.

### 3.6 Conclusion

From the introduction of this chapter on cognitive research on emotion it seemed likely that in both cognitive film studies and cognitive research of emotion as a whole, ‘higher cognitive processes’ were the main objective within cognitive research. We have seen, however, that there are multiple different perspectives within cognitive research of emotion that tend to look further. Moreover, some contemporary perspectives discussed seem to be focusing more and more on the pre-cognitive, pre-personal, and nonconscious (bodily) aspects of emotion. A focus similar to that of Deleuze which corresponds in several ways with the conception of affect discussed in chapter two. We might even add that by reading contemporary cognitive research, for example done by Carl Plantinga, we can see a trend to refocus on the bodily aspects of emotion and cognition. This perspective clearly mirrors efforts made by Spinoza, Deleuze and their contemporary advocates, which generally would not directly be associated with the cognitive approach. Although these developments do exist in the cognitive field, film studies as of yet have not fully profited from them.
in a significant way. This might seem strange considering the influence that works within the field of neuroscience concerning emotions and affects have had the past decennia and the opportunities they pose for other academic fields, such as film studies.

Through research done by Plantinga, who seems to me influenced by thinkers such as Antonio Damasio and Jenefer Robinson, cognitive research seems to acknowledge the pre-cognitive and non-cognitive influences, often described as affects, on cinematic emotions. However, we must acknowledge that there is still a strong difference between the different notions of affect described in this thesis. The cognitive conception of affect is often associated with cognitively impenetrable responses, which are pre-personal and pre- or non-cognitive, and initiate difficult to control motor tendencies, strongly differs from the Deleuzian account of affect. Deleuze and his derivatives argue that affect should be considered a force that bring a temporary hiatus in the automatic bodily, and consequently, the cognitive processing of sensory input into motor responses. This seemingly makes both views rather incompatible with each other. We will see in the coming chapter whether this is really the case, and if so, why we would adopt a cognitive perspective on affect rather than a Deleuzian perspective or vice versa.

Beforehand, it seems appropriate to nuance the conception that all (cinematic) emotions are overly affective or mere projections of embodied feeling, which at some point might seem to be Plantinga’s perspective of emotion, as discussed above. Indeed, not all emotions, and especially not all emotions elicited by cinema are merely the unconscious utterances of embodied affective states. Indeed, a significant portion of emotions elicited by cinema is a result of higher cognitive activity. In the end, theories like the “cognitive-perceptual theory” of emotions which focus on unconscious aspects of affect and emotion still have to be supported more strongly by empirical evidence in order to be fruitful, or even applicable to the field of film studies. Some research that suggests the presence of mirror-neurons seems to be filling this empirical gap. Then again, it seems rather palpable that we might differentiate between affects and emotions on the ground of neural processing or routing within the individual, and gain from this a broader perspective on how emotions in films can affect our bodies and/or minds, and by doing so produce in us certain modes of behavior or affective states. Moreover, it seems apparent that affects or unconscious processes do influence the intensity of experiencing an emotion, and can cause bodily reactions without ‘higher’ conscious activity. In other words, affects as pre-personal, noncognitive bodily processes can cause our bodies to change. Though, they become emotions proper once they are infolded (meaning is contributed to affects) into the individual’s consciousness.

Be that as it may be, through the cognitive research presented above, it seems impossible to disregard the significance of the affective aspect, as a grounding for higher cognitive processing needed for further emotional response. It is possible and perhaps fruitful to approach them as
distinctly different aspects of a multi-component theory of emotion, but they do influence each other in significant ways — as mind and body are both entailed in, and capable of ‘thinking’.

Having discussed the paradox of fiction, we came at a crossroad. It became obvious that most of the cognitive research done in the field of cognitive film studies primarily focuses on higher-order emotions. These emotions are more easily penetrable in contrast to what are generally called “affects”. Whereas cognitive researchers would claim that we have emotional responses to fictional narratives because of beliefs, judgments or construals we have concerning what we see. It seems to me, we should not depreciate affect as an essential element for us to be emotionally affected by fictional representations. We have seen that in the cognitive field affects are primarily seen as automatic bodily or visceral responses to what we see when watching cinema. Along with Plantinga, I posit that these affects are essential in bestowing upon us the feeling that what we see is actually, perceptually real. In the sense that when something affects us viscerally or bodily we more easily assume this is a genuine feeling. I want to argue, then, that the affective – as the more corporal, visceral, non-conscious – responses to stimuli eliciting emotions is crucial to this ‘richness’ of the particular response Plantinga & Smith talk about. Moreover, this attitude towards affect is often disregarded in studies concerning cinematic emotion or affect, but has had a major influence in cognitive (neuro)psychology, most recently, through the works of neurologist Damasio (2003; 2010). For example, his theory of the ‘embodied mind’ assumes that physiological states either consciously or non-consciously influence our emotions. This posits a contemporary scientific validation of the linkage between feelings and the body by highlighting the connection between mind and nerve cells (Damasio, 2008). Put differently, the intensity of an autonomic arousal has a significant influence on the non-conscious as well as the ‘more complex’ consciously felt emotions. In arguing this I want to bridge the gap between a cognitive approach to emotions elicited by film and the Deleuzian account of affect, by saying that these two approaches could be seen as separate systems for affective information processing but are always inherently connected in the same way as Damasio’s contemporary neuropsychology argues that the body is connected to emotion in a crucial way. This implicates that they are crucially linked in that without the visceral affective response to stimuli the cognitive experience of emotions loses its ‘richness’ or meaning all together, as Plantinga & Smith argued. In order to achieve this we briefly used Plantinga’s conception of the two-road process of emotional response: The direct or low road (quick and dirty) and indirect or high road (slow, but accurate) route from affective stimuli to emotional responses. This theory builds upon LeDoux’ two pathway theory published in The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life (1998). So, we have seen that not only can emotion-activation be a non-cognitive process (set forth by affects which need no cognitive appraisal), the cognitive experience of emotion is also crucially influenced by nonconscious, affective reactions. With cognition, in line with abovementioned
accounts of cognitive theory, being generally defined as dependent on some form of learning, computing or experience-based memory (Izard, 1993, p. 70). Which does not include all the forms of information processing that lead to emotion as it typically excludes that which guides affective – reflexive, instinctive, and sometimes biologically prepared or genetically – disposed behavior (Izard, 1993, p. 70).

Moreover, when we are affected viscerally this process is generally primary to the cognitive act of assuming something is real. What we feel has affected us in the first place, therefore it must have been (unconsciously) considered to be real (Izard, 1993, p. 70). If it wasn’t real – the feeling we have is not a false or an irrational one – we would not be affected by it. For example, when we are shocked or in awe by what was depicted on the screen we have a bodily feeling. Most contemporary researchers of emotion acknowledge this bodily aspect of emotion is an essential part of emotion. Cognition may actually serve as weakening the initial shock set forth by our affective response. As it is due to cognition, in the form of a constant reminder that we are watching cinema, that we do not act upon our initial bodily responses. Cognition weakens the emotional experience of cinema and therefore we do not generally run away or scream continuously at what we see in the context of film viewing. Think for instance of the cognitive mental capacities available in spectators of early cinema as were they not yet as fully developed as are our mental sets today. This could be seen as the reason why people, in the early 1900’s, screamed and jumped up when they saw a train rushing towards them on the white screen or scream in agony when it happened. Without these feelings of genuine (bodily) reactions and the continuous development of techniques that give the cinema back this feeling of “realness”, we perhaps would not have the same strong bodily reactions to what we see now. Put in extreme form, without technological developments that address us affectively (in the sense of viscerally or bodily) we would become numb and robot-like as spectators of cinema; analyzing what is depicted on a white screen, purely for its analytical qualities. It is inherent to cinema, which has refined the quality to affect us in such a visceral and bodily manner, for it to function as it does. No other art form has the capacity to affect us like cinema does. When we see a scary painting we do not generally recoil back as we do in our cinema seats. It is this affective quality which makes our emotions feel genuine. We can be shocked by a sudden cord in music, but we do not generally cover our ears and eyes and feel agony when we do so. We can have a gut wrenching feeling when reading about a disastrous situation in a novel, but we do not have the same strong bodily reactions accompanied with it when we watch the scene in cinema with all its agony through a audiovisual account of it.

It is thus in addressing our bodily senses, our viscera (affective reactions) where the power of cinema lies for a great part. It is not merely because we have high cognitive processes that we have emotions to what is seen of the screen that feel genuine and strong. It is because there is a certain
balance between cognitive and bodily processes which makes cinema have such a profound impact on us. In actuality, higher cognitive processes, such as metaresponses, might function to numb our initial emotional response. In theory, would they not do so, the affect of cinema could be so strong as it would become too unsettling and unwatchable to us as viewers. However, this is of course exaggerated, as we do ‘think’ during our visit at the movies (we are constantly inferring, making hypotheses, anticipating, judging our beliefs, etc.). We need cognition in order to make sense of what we see in front of us. However, from an exceedingly affective perspective, the function of cognition could be seen as to weaken the initial bodily affective responses we get from going to the cinema. Still, the way cinema addresses its viewers is also characterized by overtly unconscious processes. But why is this aspect of affective response acknowledged, but not widely investigated? Why is it that most cognitive researchers of cinema and emotion research in film studies do acknowledge the power of affective reactions we feel when sitting in the cinema, but do not investigate it more fully?

This might have to do with it being disregarded for being automatic – as we do not have complete cognitive control over these responses. Why would it be constructive to investigate such crude and raw bodily reactions? I think such an interpretations is wrong. Investigations of higher cognitive functioning when watching cinema is essential to film studies, but because there must be a continuous interplay between higher cognitive functions and affective, visceral, bodily responses, in order for us to feel “the potential power of cinematic address” we should be focusing on both sides of the equation. It is because of this interplay between what we feel to be “real” or “valid” and what we know to be “fictional” or “unreal” we enjoy cinema. And it is cinema with its conventions and viewing apparatus that makes this interplay so effective. We should perhaps focus more on how initial bodily responses are generated and in what way they are then provided with feedback from higher cognitive processes in order for them to be not too disruptive and still enjoyable. That being said, we must never forget that there is a continuous feedback loop between our affective, visceral, bodily states and our cognitive processing. This loop (conceptually separated in this thesis by explaining them as the high-road and low-road of cognitive processing) makes cinema enjoyable (i.e. not too disruptive and shocking and not too dull and weakened).
4. Synthesis — Cognitive Theory and Deleuzian Affect

Theory

4.1 Introduction

Now that we have investigated both the Deleuzian account of affect and the cognitive account of affect and emotion, it seems that both perspectives do have some elements in common when addressing the importance of affect. Both understand affect (as opposed to emotion) as being largely cognitively impenetrable, and pre-subjective. Despite the fact that contemporary cognitive research more frequently acknowledges the unconscious and automatic influences – described by them as affects – on the elicitation of cinematic emotions, there still is a significant difference between both notions of affect discussed here. The cognitive conception of affect (as opposed to emotions), commonly associated with cognitive impenetrable responses, which can be pre-personal and pre- or non-cognitive, still strongly differs from the Deleuzian account. The Deleuzians see affects as forces which bring a temporary hiatus in the generally automatic advancement from bodily sensations to our cognitive meaning-making processes. Put differently, they interrupt the movement from sensory to motor responses. And by doing so, affects create conditions for cinema and its cinematic form to change the capabilities of our perception, thought and imagining.

Deleuze believes that the images presented by cinema and images presented in our everyday world are in many ways interchangeable. However, cinema on the big screen can help us construct new ways to view our world, to spur novel thought, through the means of conditioning creativity on multiple levels of scale by breaking up our psychic ‘automatizations’ and blockages. Cinema rethinks and re-expresses the world, and by doing so, potentially gives us new ways to perceive the world and to live our lives. All of this might seem too ambitious, that is why Deleuze sometimes emphasizes modesty about his aims, asserting that his classifications of the cinematic images (such as the affection-image) are not so much an analysis of the image, but more an indication of “certain affects whose relation to the cinematographic image remains to be determined” (Deleuze, 1989, p. 265). It is thus in the potential (or ultimate goal) of affect and cinema where we find the most significant difference between both theories. For Deleuze affect is seen as an essential element to change the way we make sense of images (both mental images and cinematic images). Cinema and cinematic affect have the potential to change the capabilities of thought and imagining. Because affects fill in
the gap that exists between a perception and action, conditions for a moment of inner contemplation, a reflective moment not yet associated with recognition are created, which aids us in understanding our automatic motor tendencies and thought processes, which Deleuze argues to be already part of impulse or action. To recapitulate, we saw that the cognitive approach finds that affects are pre-cognitive, pre-personal and automatic responses to stimuli, which do not require higher cognitive functioning within the brain. In contrast, Deleuzians see affect as pre-cognitive or non-cognitive, pre-personal too, but more importantly, Deleuzians believe affects facilitate a highly potential interval – occupying but not filling the gap between perception and response – generating conditions for internal contemplation. This internal contemplation is seen as a reflective interval, which leads to novel thoughts freed from our normal, everyday life, direct response. Affects do so by disrupting the sensory-motor linkage, rather than expediting automatic response. To summarize, according to Deleuze’s account of cinema, affects are pre-personal, but do have the potential to elicit a process of re-arranging our cognitive meaning-making processes and therefore have the power to elicit new thoughts, whereas cognitive researchers characterize affects as those responses (reflexes, moods, felt body states, and so on) not involving higher cognition in any way.

This chapter will explore why one would adopt the Deleuzian perspective to focus on affect, or rather a cognitivist perspective when investigating the ways in which films can affect our bodies and/or minds, and by doing so produce in us certain modes of behavior or affective states. Subsequently we will see what elements of cinema and the cinematic experience as a whole are central to both perspectives, and what are the most significant implications of both attitudes in film studies concerning affect and emotion.

4.2 Why adopt a Deleuzian perspective on affect?

There are several reasons for film scholars to adopt a Deleuzian view on cinema, and on the ways in which cinema affects us. One of the reasons we might prefer Deleuze, and investigate affect instead of emotions involving a higher cognitive order, is because affects are thought to be essential and primary (first) to these cognitive modes of thought. Let me clarify this by arguing that affective reactions to stimuli, in line with cognitive-perceptual theory of emotion and research of perceptual affects, should be thought of as the very first reaction of an individual. According to Robert Zajonc, a proponent of the research of affect, affective reactions can occur without, and before extensive perceptual and cognitive qualification or labeling (Zajonc, 1980, p. 151). Zajonc believes that by conceiving affects in such a way, they are considered to be the pre-personal aspects or conditions (both physical and mental) of feelings or emotions. Affects function as the elements which bring the
body in a state of preparedness for an emotion – requiring higher cognitive functioning – to be elicited. This would imply that affect and cognition “are under the control of separate and partially independent systems that can influence each other in a variety of ways, and that both constitute independent sources of effects in information processing” (Zajonc, 1980, p. 151).

Vice versa, it is argued in Roberts Zajonc’s influential essay *Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences* on the primacy of affective reactions, that without the pre-subjective affective sequence an emotion loses its intensity or “richness”. For Zajonc, when writing about the connection between feeling and thinking, “affect is always present as a companion to thought, whereas the converse is not true for cognition” (1980, p. 154). According to this reasoning, Zajonc argues that it is quite possible that both the very first stage of the organism’s reaction to stimuli and the very first elements in retrieval are indeed exceedingly affective. He adds that it seems possible that an individual can be afraid of something or even like something before this individual actually knows exactly what it is, and perhaps even without knowing what it is. Moreover, when an individual tries to recognize, recall, or retrieve an event or episode, a person, a story, or rather, anything at all, “the affective quality of the original input is the first element to emerge” (1980, p. 154). Zajonc does add that the early affective reaction is both rather gross and vague. However, the affect or affective reaction is capable of influencing the subsequent cognitive process to a significant degree (Zajonc, 1980, p. 154). We should add that after cognitive processing of stimuli has been executed, it is possible for a new feeling to be connected to the stimulus, which differs from the initial one associated with the affective, pre-personal route of the stimulus. But the fact that these cognitions may produce affective bodily states does not necessarily entail that cognitions are crucial or even necessary components of affect, according to Zajonc (1980, p. 156). His aim then is to argue that 1) the pre-personal, non-cognitive affect accompanies all cognitions. Additionally, 2) this aspect arises early in the process of registration and retrieval, in a fast manner and vaguely connected to objects [corresponding with the quick and dirty route], and (3) this reaction to affect develops from a parallel, separate, and partly independent system in an individual [e.g., the affective route, and the cognitive route of emotion] (Zajonc, 1980, p. 158). Zajonc, tries to convince his readers, from within the psychological cognitive field, why affects should be thought of as preceding and more essential than emotions which include (conscious) cognition. Like Deleuze, Zajonc upholds the importance of an investigation into affect. However, what Deleuze considers to probably be the most important aspect of affect is not worked out in Zajonc essay. For Deleuze, affects are the purpose of the artistic act. Moreover, affects should function as to disrupt and disorganize human perception and cognition. The purpose of affect is to free our processing of the everyday world and construct a presentation liberated from it. This is done by startling the senses throughout the body and creating new perspectives and conditions for novel thought. Despite the fact that Zajonc argues that affect
influences many aspects of our lives, such as decision making, meaning making, and social interaction, he does not describe the same purpose of affect as Deleuze does. Nonetheless, his conception has far-reaching similarities with Deleuze’s description of affect in cinema (§2.5.1). Zajonc concludes his essay on the importance of affect by stating that

“[t]he evolutionary origins of affective reactions that point to their survival value, their distinctive freedom from attentive control, their speed, the importance of affective discriminations for the individual, the extreme forms of action that affect can recruit— all of these suggest something special about affect” (Zajonc, 1980, p. 172).

The main purpose of Zajonc’s essay on affect is to demonstrate us that a significant variance in the course of our lives is controlled or influenced by affect. Because of the importance of affect in these aspects of our lives, whether it is decision-making, social interaction, or having emotions, research should not disregard these affective phenomena, according to Zajonc (1980, p. 171-172).

Another reason why Deleuze’s views are attractive to researchers within the field of film studies may be because of the fact that Deleuze acknowledges a “higher purpose” for affect. Deleuze’s account of affect is not overtly descriptive as is the cognitive perspective of affect and emotion. In a way, Deleuze’s conception of affect is a far more romantic one compared to cognitive research, in that there is a “larger” purpose or potential for cinema to change the ways we perceive the world, make sense of it, and therefore live life. In essence, affect has the purpose to elicit internal reflective moments for new thoughts to emerge according to Deleuze, which seems to me a highly attractive point of departure when analyzing the phenomenon of affect. It is in Deleuze’s theory – which includes the sensory-motor-link, perception-images, affection-images, and action-images – that affect finds a ‘higher’ purpose. As a breakage of the sensory-motor linkage will result in movement from our sentiendum to our cogitandum. Automaticity – which cognitive theory often associates with affect – allows us to attend to one thing at the time, while actually our unconscious minds perform thousand tasks beneath the surface. Automaticity creates order in the chaotic nature of our mental activity. The affect, however, can re-create chaos of the senses and force a re-ordering of our (automatic) mental processes, which may bring to the fore some things that are automatized and forgotten by us.

This purpose of affect, corresponds greatly with romanticism, a movement that validated strong emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience. Deleuze sees much of the same potential in affects as did the romanticists in such emotions as apprehension, horror and terror, and awe. In the Romantic period, known as an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement in the 1800’s, artists, writers and academics placed new emphasis on emotions such as fear and wonder. They saw
the experience of affects such as these, which particularly confronted the sublimity of untamed nature, as new potent aesthetic categories. By doing so, romantics appraised and elevated “folk art” and ancient customs to something elegant and noble to pursue. Spontaneity, and crude emotions were presented as desirable characteristic of art. Romantic artists and academics supported the idea of a “natural” (as opposed to “rational”) epistemology of human activity, modified to nature (Christiansen, 1988, p. 192-195). Deleuze, does so as well in his aim to re-emphasize the importance of the pre-cognitive, and pre-personal aspect of affective address. Romanticism, as does Deleuze in a way, focused away from the rational and Classicist idealist belief in order to elevate a re-imagined medievalism with particular elements of art and narrative authentic to it in a pursuit to grasp the exotic, and unfamiliar. And by doing so, Romantic thinkers appropriated the capabilities of the imagination to envision and to escape. Cinema, according to Deleuze, has a similar purpose, which starts with disrupting the impression of a central or privileged perception that normal, everyday life human life is based upon. Cinema gives us the ability to adopt a perspective of events freed from mere re-cognition, and by presenting us with such a perspective, cinema elicits in us the ability to re-appropriate a novel way of envisioning the world. The use of affect in cinema pushes our perceptual and cognitive processes out of learned habits (of both perception and cognition), and into the conditions of creation. That is, the creation of new concepts via the rearranging of our sensory, and subsequently our cognitive faculties.

Another reason to adopt a Deleuzian perspective on how we are affected by cinema is that his stream of research perhaps lends itself more adequate to investigate those movies which do not necessarily fall within the category of ‘mainstream Hollywood’ narrative movies. It seems that Deleuzians sometimes harbor an animosity against the alleged mainstream cinema, precisely because it only enables and confirms stereotypes and worn-out schemas, leaving little room for the creation of new ways of coping with affects. Deleuzians, therefore, tend to focus on those cinematic utterances that present us with such strong imagery, that they are sometimes labeled disruptive or even uncoherent by viewers used to watching mainstream Hollywood narrative movies. As we have seen, most contemporary cognitive research concerning affects and emotion has these kinds of movies as its primary objective of research. Deleuze, however, focused his theory of affect primarily on movies that would be considered disruptive, portraying images of time (duration) or such strong visual and auditory images known as pure optical and sound situations. It is within these movies, Deleuze argues, that the dimension of affect and feeling has not merely the function to reinforce or strengthen our interpretation of cinema, but it becomes autonomous. Ils Huysgems writes, concerning the focus of Deleuzians towards a different kind of film, that “[i]n the radical de-association of autonomous images, purely emotive and affective intensities break through the level of logical expectations causing a sudden disruption, a suspension of the narrative progression” (2007,
She adds that it is when cinema bring forth direct images of time – known as an image of time in its featuring of duration – “the purely affective micro-processes which normally stay in the realm of the non-conscious become pure intensities which can linger and grow into a virtual counterpoint to the actual image” (Huysgems, 2007, p. 10). Consequently, these images confront film viewers with the opposite aspect of thought, that is, with “something too powerful, too beautiful or too intolerable for our mind to grasp” (Huysgems, 2007, p. 11). Furthermore, cognitive theory assumes spectators of these movies to be part of a ‘normal’ audience, that is, all with the same, functioning cognitive capabilities. However, perhaps as a researcher of film we are more interested in focusing on the affective qualities of cinema — the means through which film directors elicit strong bodily reactions in film viewers — such as the grotesque, the cinema of attractions, new technological advances, disruptive narratives, discontinuity editing, regulation of automatic bodily responses, mirror-neurons, and so on. A Deleuzian perspective might effectuate novel insights in how these phenomena influence fundamentally different spectators of cinema. Moreover, it seems clear that Deleuze and his derivatives utilize an aberrant way of thinking film, as well as human thought as a whole. Through its large incorporation of philosophy into the field of film studies, Deleuzian philosophy of film has had a strong appeal on researchers trying to work outside of framed confinements of the field of film studies as it is widely presented in the common academic discourse. Contemporary examples of which include the works by Patricia Pisters, for instance.12

4.3 Why Focus on a Cognitive Account of Emotions?

In the introduction of this thesis I argued that both the cognitive perspective and the Deleuzian philosophy of cinema incorporated findings from fields such as psychology, neuroscience and their scientific understandings of the human brain and body. However, without much doubt, the cognitive approach to affect and emotion seems to incorporate, and benefit from such an approach most significantly. As does Deleuzian philosophy, the cognitive tradition sets out to investigate topics about the moving-image, and questions about its artistic nature. However, cognitive researchers examine cinema and its spectators with the most comprehensive guidance of academic findings and theoretical frameworks obtained from the cognitive sciences of psychology, anthropology, and other disciplines.

In doing so, however, cognitive film studies are characterized by being primarily descriptive, emphasizing on descriptions and empirical explanations over interpretations. Of course, these

explanations are causal and functional. Cognitive research on emotions does involve means and ends, goals and motives, an aspect sometimes overlooked in its overly descriptive nature, though. For example, Bordwell argues that several studies investigating different media in the field of the humanities “[emphasize] interpreting films but [leave] causal and functional processes unexamined” (Bordwell & Thompson, 2009, p. 1). Another characteristic of the cognitive approach is that it is “mentalistic”. Meaning that in explaining viewers’ affective responses for example, the cognitive approach focuses first and foremost to features of the human mind. In this thesis I have tried to explain that this does not directly mean that the cognitive account of our minds and mental processes are conceptualized as ‘cut off’, or separated from the body, or from society. Rather, cognitivists prefer to emphasizing the deliberate mental activities of a ‘higher’ order when examining the emotional aspect of watching movies.

Along with its emphasis on empirical research, the type of argumentation used in cognitive research is that of “rational inquiry, induction and deduction” (Bordwell & Thompson, 2009, p. 1). According to Bordwell, even in the contemporary field of film studies, this opposes much of the current theory on film, “which consists of more or less free association and the rote citation of major thinkers” (Bordwell & Thompson, 2009, p. 1). All in all, cognitive film theory sets out to investigate explicit, unequivocal phenomena concerning how we experience watching movies. Moreover, it seeks justification on an empirical grounding and with conceptual coherence (Bordwell & Thompson, 2009, p. 1). What sets apart the cognitive approach and the Deleuzian approach, discussed in this thesis, is that the cognitive tradition has a strong tendency to address the cross-cultural regularities among artworks and viewer experiences. This opposes the Deleuzian perspective, which places emphasis on the singularity of encountering art and the experience that may follow. The sources of the regularities, which cognitive studies examine, are not necessarily innate or congenital in a robust sense. It is often claimed that the cognitive tradition considers everything (mental capabilities) to be “hard-wired,” for example. Bordwell argues, however, that no cognitivist will say or believe this to be true (Bordwell & Thompson, 2009). Even so, dismissing the findings of cognitive research as “hard-wired” does not make them less interesting and fruitful as explanatory factors and research subjects.

The cognitive tradition, as many cognitivists call their approach, does not have an all-encompassing, overarching philosophy or “Grand Theory”. Cognitivism can rather be characterized as a “shattered” or diverse mode of research held together by the focus on a particular set of core phenomena, such as normal and successful action, aiming at researching distinct processes of our cognitive abilities. Consequently, most of the cognitive research done within film studies focuses on experiences of “normal” Hollywood movies, because they are characterized by their continuity in narrative progression and seen as “mainstream”. This is one of the reasons why cognitivists generally speak about a “normal” audience when analyzing spectator’s experience of watching movies.
Assumed is that members of a “normal” audience possess natural, ordinary cognitive abilities. In other words, a normal audience of cinema is believed to not have any invasive mental diseases or incapacities. In line with this, Carroll argues that cognitivism – as would any productive film theory – should be fallibilist in its essence. Although this seems obvious for any academic tradition, cognitivists argue this was often not the case in approaches such as psychoanalysis or other Grand Theories of film. As a fallibilist theory, cognitivism holds that contemporary beliefs, expectations, or the understanding of the world could at a particular point in time be wrong, but be defended in holding these incorrect beliefs. In short this means that academics should adopt an open disposition to new evidence that could potentially discredit by proving some previously held beliefs or assumption to be wrong (Carroll, 2003, p. x).

The cognitive approach of film studies should thus be considered as what Carroll labels a “piecemeal” approach to film theorizing (Carroll, 2003, p. 160). Carroll argued, for instance, that “monolithic” conceptions within film studies, in which theory was held to be a “comprehensive instrument that was supposed to answer virtually every legitimate question you might have about film”, has been the greatest hindrance to producing productive theory and outcomes (Bordwell & Carroll, 1996, p. 38). A fact I can easily relate to. Instead, cognitivism aims to divide the processes underlying the experience of watching movies into more controllable and feasible bits of research. By doing so, cognitivism progressively unifies research in order to construct a more comprehensive theoretical framework of the cognitive processes at work in cinema, making cognitivism in film studies essentially a descriptive view of emotions and cinema, as opposed to “woolly” philosophical overarching theories. Cognitive research is thus seen as a constantly evolving theory of cinema with a strong affiliation to empirical research.

4.4 Example by Analyzing the Close-up

Now that we have seen how the cognitive and Deleuzian approaches within film studies approach topics such as emotions and affects elicited by watching movies, it seems conducive to expound the differences between both approaches by analyzing the same phenomena, one of cinema’s most important techniques: the close-up. Over time a great deal has been written about the close-up and the affective impact it has by presenting extreme enlargements to its viewers.

Cognitivists have argued that the close-up works primarily as a technique to elicit empathy or sympathy in viewers. Let us begin by highlighting a paper by Ed Tan named Three views of facial expression and its understanding in the cinema (2005). Ed Tan can be seen as an advocate of cognitivism within film studies. Examining Tan’s paper, we can see a clear connection between
Deleuze’s inquiry of the importance of the face and close-up (concepts we have seen are conceptually almost interchangeable for Deleuze) concerning affect and the affection-image. As for Deleuze the depiction of the face, freed from spatio-temporal dimensions, is the primary vehicle of affect. Comparably, Tan investigates in his paper how facial expression in cinematic close-ups have a strong connection to emotion. In order to do so, Tan asks: “How does recognizing the character’s emotions, [...] important for understanding the plot and appreciating the film as a whole, come about through perceiving facial expressions?” (Tan, 2005, p. 107). Tan takes up the challenge by introducing three distinct perspectives about how we may understand emotions by looking at facial expressions. For reasons of clarity, let us focus on the first of these three, namely that one which is based on the universal facial expressions of emotion, what might be called “The Universal Theory of Facial Expression”, or “UTFE”. Tan utilizes this theory as it is currently still a dominant theory, although there is growing criticism, employed in mainstream psychology in order to understand the connection between facial expression and basic emotions (Tan, 2005 p. 107). The UTFE considers facial expressions to be universal, or in other words, biologically based and cross-cultural. This theory, most notably elaborated by Paul Ekman, posits that we have fifteen fundamental emotions which have a tight relationship to distinctive facial expressions. These seven emotions are: anger, fear, sadness, surprise, happiness, disgust, and contempt. Corresponding to these seven universal emotions are different expressions for which the UTFE has constructed a structure for classifying them. This system is called the facial affect coding system, or “FACS” (Tan, 2005 p. 107). This system categorizes facial expressions into “action units” which represent movements of particular facial muscles. Researchers found that subjects from different cultural backgrounds read certain facial expressions as indicators of emotions the same, cross-culturally. These researchers did accede to the fact that emotions are complex and at any given moment, an individual may experience a number of different emotions and simultaneously display a combination of facial expressions.

By introducing the UTFE theory of emotional expression Tan argues, “[...] that in traditional narrative film, basic emotions are expressed in accordance with the theory of universal facial expression and that the expression is exaggerated to some extent, compared to the norm of everyday life.” (Tan, 2005 p. 111). However, Tan does admit that facial expressions can and sometimes do occur in the absence of true emotion. Nonetheless, by analyzing cinematic depictions of close-ups of faces in accordance with the The Universal Theory of Facial Expression, Tan connects psychology with film studies in a clear-cut manner. Concluding that the depictions of close-ups in cinema have a strong resemblance with those perceived in our everyday life.

In accordance with Tan, Deleuze ascribes great significance to facial expressions, as the affection-image is closely linked to the close-up, and the close-up is in essence the same as the face (considering that this could be the face of an body or object as well, think for instance of the face of a
As long as this ‘face’ is a “reflecting and reflective unity” and is able to express in some way or form qualities, and must capable of producing an intensive series of micro-movements that can express the aforementioned powers. The cinematic representations of the act of being affected are termed “affection-images” by Deleuze. It is the affection-image that occupies a gap between our perception and our action resulting from it. Consequently, Deleuze argues that the affection-image captures the affective moment, the moment of intensity, or the moment of internal contemplation due to disruptive conditions set forth by affects. It is in the close-up and in the depiction of the face that affection is observable. Being affected comes after perception, before action, where thoughts can become feelings and later actions. According to Deleuze, a close-up of the face with an expression is one of cinema’s most powerful techniques and an fundamental part of cinema’s affective address. We can see here that Deleuze analyses affect and the affection-image through a strong philosophical method inspired by thinkers such as Spinoza, Bergson and even C.S. Peirce (who will be discussed in the last chapter). Deleuze continues by saying that facial expressions are “the outward indications of internal intensities” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 88). They come after perception, before impulses or actions and have the potential to actualize thoughts into feelings. Deleuze adds that these affects are both qualities and powers. As, “[a]ffective qualities express the relationship between perception and thinking”, they are an expression of the linkage between an object or environment and the face (Deleuze, 1986, p. 89). In addition, “[a]ffective powers express the relationship between thought and impulses or actions”, they can be seen as an expression of desire on the surface of the face, and expression that returns intensities to the world, according to Deleuze (Deleuze, 1986, p. 89).

Most importantly, we can already plainly see the difference in the methodological techniques used to address one and the same cinematic phenomenon. It seems that although the Deleuzian philosophy of cinema was believed to incorporate scientific findings, when we compare it to cognitive theory, Deleuze seems to rely predominantly on philosophical reasoning. The cognitive approach relies much more on scientific models in order to explain cinematic phenomena. In the upcoming chapter, which is the last chapter of this thesis, I will continue by presenting an even more exhaustive account of how both theories differ from each other.
5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary

I started this thesis by asking in what particular way films affect our bodies and/or minds, and by doing so produce in us certain modes of behavior or affective states that are ‘constructed’ through the means of watching films. To answer these questions the different theories and methodologies incorporated by cognitive theory and Deleuzian theory to address affects and emotions were presented in the different chapters of this thesis. In addition to this question I claimed that it is argued that in answering this question, Deleuze and his contemporary advocates would be comparable to cognitivists in that they expressed a similar need for their understanding of cinematic affect (what cinema does to its spectators) to be grounded on psychological experiments and other empirical research. Before writing this thesis I presumed that not only were cognitivist and Deleuzians preoccupied with answering similar questions concerning what happens during the film viewing experience, and how film can affect us both physically and mentally. More importantly, I posited that an increased interest in the incorporation of similar methodologies were observable in both perspectives within the field of film studies. I considered both Deleuzian derivatives and cognitivists to base their findings on theories from psychology and neurobiology.

I have come to understand, however, that what Deleuze aimed to do – evoke a shift in emphasis from the purely cognitive, to a consideration of the affective, bodily aspects of experiencing movies in the field of film studies – did not necessarily involve the incorporation of scientific findings to be central to this cause. More so, Deleuze’s theory of affect and the power of cinema, which is to condition us to generate novel ways of perceiving, thinking and producing concepts, is primarily grounded on complex philosophical inquiries. Perhaps this is because at the time of writing his philosophy of cinema, scientific tools and findings were not as readily available as they are for contemporary cognitivism.\footnote{Also presumably because Deleuze has always been quite skeptical about empirical research in general as it tends to work within the confines of accepted opinion and are often based on simple observations, rather than real thinking that is based on affects, percepts and so on.} It was only in the second half of the twentieth century due to advances in molecular biology, electrophysiology, and computational neuroscience, that neuroscience started becoming a significant field of study which relied on scientific findings to build a comprehensive knowledge of our brain and nervous system. Furthermore it seems that derivatives of Deleuze’s philosophy of cinema and affect adopted a similar approach to that of Deleuze, as they still do not rely as heavily on findings from academic fields such as psychology and neuroscience, as do
cognitivists. Nonetheless, contemporary cognitive theory on emotion seem to move towards a perspective which incorporates the bodily, and the visceral as undetachable elements of the experience of emotions and the way we experience cinema as a whole. A view adopted and promoted by Deleuze in a very early stage of his ‘cinema project’.

The goal of this thesis was to analyze developments in Deleuzian and cognitivist research in order to construct a more comprehensive understanding of moving images, and how we are affected by them. In doing so, I would try not to reveal objective “scientific” truths, but to explicate various models and concepts that originate from different disciplines within film studies, and argue why and how they would help to better our understanding of affects and emotions. The Deleuzian philosophy of cinema attracted my attention primarily because of its complexity and strong philosophical lines of argumentation. On the other hand, it is this complexity which often leads to a misunderstanding of Deleuzian concepts, as was the case with Deleuze’s account of affect being considered synonymous with feeling or emotion. In order to understand this often made mistake, first we had to examine what are affects from a Deleuzian point of view, and how they are differentiated from emotion and perception. By doing so we understood affect to be first of all inherently connected to (the power of) cinema. Cinema and affect could be considered tools for producing new possibilities for human perception and knowledge, by creating novel ways of perceiving and being affected. It is cinema and its inherent cinematic techniques which transforms our habitualized perception by distorting and transforming it into a “non-human” way of perceiving the world through moving-images and their framing and montage. Secondly, we differentiated affect from concepts such as affection (affection is understood to be the mode of affecting or being affected, whereas affects are entities, which stand for themselves and transcend our subjectivity and experienceability) and idea (affects have no clear representational object as opposed to ideas and concepts). In short, affects are considered to be entities freed from cognition, that are autonomous in that they have no direct connection to what caused them. Continuing this line of thought, we have seen that affects are characterized as primary, non-conscious, a-subjective or pre-subjective, a-signifying, unqualified and intensive ‘beings of the sensible’ rather than beings of cognition. Finally, affects have a meaningful goal, that is, to push our perceptual and cognitive processes out of habits of economical perception and cognition into the conditions of chaos and creation, by creating jolts of sensation. Consequently, the creation of new concepts via the rearranging of our sensory faculties in order to cope with the chaotic situation is set in motion to effectuate the development of a new coherence among our sensory and cognitive faculties. So once again, affects elicit a process of affection – as opposed to perception – which is considered to be qualitative, and can be seen as “the intensive vibration of a motor tendency on a sensible nerve”, a process transforming external action into internal contemplation (Powell, 2012, p. 2). This creates an almost traumatic encounter with the senses, in which the neural routing of stimuli
from the senses to cognition and motor tendencies is disrupted. Put differently, “[affect] short-circuits any idea of a physiology of sensation, of a “visceral immediacy of cinematic experience [by] raw contents of sensation” (Shaviro, 2004. p. 36). Cinematic affect thus creates the necessary principles for the creative act of constructing new thoughts and concepts through the emergence of a new coherence among our sensory, perceptual and cognitive faculties. According to this philosophy, affect, seen as an entity transcending experienceability, is clearly different from an emotion, which is considered to be an “infolding” of stimuli through a subjective, cognitive processing. An appraisal, judgment or construal of a subjective event. Put differently, emotion is seen by Deleuzians as affect ‘captured’ by a subject, or tamed and reduced to the extent that it becomes commensurated with that subject. In contrast, subjects are overwhelmed and traversed by affect, but they have captured and possess their own emotions.

For Deleuze and researchers of a new affect theory cinema is unique in that it not only produces affects, and subsequently affects its audience. But also, because cinema is capable of representing the act of being affected (the affection-image) through the use of cinematic techniques. For Deleuze, the close-up is the primary exemplar of the cinematic representation of affection, illustrating the intensive vibration of a motor tendency on a sensible nerve. Affect as an entity itself is not observable, as it transcends experienceability, and “cannot be converted into or delimited by the discursive, by images or representations, by consciousness or thought”, only its effect is felt and representational (Seigworth, 2011, p. 161). At this point we arrived at the introduction of cognitivism into the field of film studies. Cognitive theory, as new to film studies, was at its point of introduction characterized by the strong emphasis on deliberative cognitive processes when watching movies. Cognitivists’ primary goal was to understand and explain human mental activities such as recognition, comprehension, interpretation, memory, inference-making, imagination, judgment, and so on. With entities such as perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, desires, intentions, plans, skills, and feelings as essential elements to experiencing cinema, cognitive theory set out to capture all these different elements in a descriptive manner, based on empirical research. Nowadays there is far more acceptance of the importance of bodily aspects and unconscious processes essential to having emotions, such as unasserted thought and automatic cognitive processes innate to our perceptual capacities. We have seen that cognitive theory addresses emotions as part of an all-encompassing affective system. Opposed to Deleuzian affects, emotions involve ‘higher’ or more complex cognitive processes than the other affective responses. Affects, then, are often sanctioned as either the other part of the all-encompassing system of response, or those responses which are automatic and crude, such as felt bodily states, feeling-toned mental states, startle reflexes, or moods, as well as other residual affect programs. Nonetheless we can see a conformity between Deleuzian affect and cognitivist accounts of emotion emerging, that considers the visceral character of bodily responses or
“affects” as being essential to our more complex emotional reactions. Nonetheless, affects in cognitive theory are commonly referred to as crude, automatic reflexes or felt bodily states elicited in viewers, which happen at a sub-cognitive, or cognitively impenetrable levels of mentation. In addition, affects differ from emotions in that they are not defined by their “aboutness”. Put differently, they have a crude or no relation at all to objects that elicit them, being “mechanical and hard-wired rather than cognitive and complex” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 57). As opposed to emotions, affect can be considered as not requiring ‘higher’, conscious or deliberate cognition.

After having established the main differences between emotions and affects, three different cognitive approaches to emotions were presented. The first approach, known as the appraisal theory of emotion held the elementary idea that an emotion is “a basic judgment about our Selves and our place in our world, the projection of the values and ideals, structures and mythologies, according to which we live and through which we experience our lives” (Solomon, 1993, p. 125-126). Secondly, the concern-based construal theory of emotion was introduced. This approach was adopted by Plantinga, creating his cognitive-perceptual theory of emotion, which holds that emotions are the results of an individual’s concern-based construal of an exterior situation. Plantinga posited that emotions do require visceral and unconscious elements: “the disposition of an emotion depends on a partly unconscious conceptual system that automatically structures a person’s experience and directs his or her behavior” (Plantinga, 2009, p. 56). That is to say that either physiological response, or situations are by themselves not sufficient to determine the emotional outcome. It is the individual’s construal of a situation that determines the kind of emotions experienced. Construals, then, are impressions or ways things appear to a subject. They are experiences, and not merely judgments, thoughts or beliefs. Finally the appraisal theory of emotion was addressed. The appraisal theory, as adhered by Jens Eder and his model deriving from it, combines several concepts from film studies, reception psychology, and the study of emotions. This model argues that filmic information collides with physical and psychological dispositions in the spectators, these dispositions are molded by biological, sociocultural, and situational influences and are diverse, but also display similarities. Eder argued that these mental dispositions – which are addressed through film viewing – are generally attained and applied in our everyday life. Consequently, film reception is very similar to our everyday perception. However, at the same time it differs from it significantly. Eder accepts the notion that within the emotional process, our perceptions and our subsequent cognitions merge with physiological reactions and (expressive) behavioral tendencies. Ultimately, this combination is subjectively experienced and appraised as an emotion (Eder, 2007, p. 231). Appraisal theory emphasizes the belief that spectators of cinema adopt an appropriate and distinct mental perspective in the process of appraising emotion-triggers in the form of characters, situations, and other represented objects. This means that film viewers comprehend objects in a particular,
“qualitative way by means of mental processes of perception, thought, feeling, evaluation, or desire.

The crucial components of emotion were explicated in the subsequent part of the thesis, taking into consideration all the above mentioned approaches to emotion. More importantly, I tried to exemplify how the several components crucial to emotion treated by cognitivists, differ from the structure of affects as conceptualized by Deleuze and other affect theorists. By doing so, we saw that emotions are primarily temporal processes, not static entities such as reflexes and other affects which are considered to be automatic and fleeting. In addition, emotions involve a continuous loop of conscious and unconscious cognitive processing of stimuli. More so, emotions change and evolve over time in response to external and internal feedback. Which implicates that emotions, can be seen as processes conditioned by either judgments, appraisals or construals of the relationship between an individual and his or her situation or objects that are subject to continuous feedback. This makes emotions psychophysical phenomena shaped by both our biology, culture, and encounters with situations, events, and objects. Moreover, emotions can be seen as multidimensional, or multi-componential events in the mind and body of an individual that emerges in response to continuous feedback to external or internal stimuli. Furthermore, emotions elicited in us differ in their intensity and duration. Stimuli can be weak, fleeting, and cognitively almost insignificant or they can be powerful and compelling. In contrast to affect, emotions are generally defined by their “aboutness,” having reasons and objects. Hence they posses what Spinoza would define objective reality, a relation to the object it represents.

At this point, we – hopefully – had a more comprehensive knowledge of what we mean by emotions and affects from a cognitive point of view. This knowledge, however, gave rise to another question concerning how we come to experience emotion by perceiving objects and events we know not to be real. The discussion generated by this question has come to be known as the “Paradox of Fiction”. We considered three different theories aiming to answer this apparent paradox. Thought theory, illusion theory, and pretend theory were considered, and ultimately it seemed tenable that affect could be considered as bringing validity to our emotional responses. Cognition, on the other hand, might serve as to weaken, or ‘make sense’ of, our essential, primary, and strong bodily responses, by continuously reminding us that we are perceiving a fictional representation.

Finally, in order to compare both perspectives even more comprehensively, the question of why we would adopt the Deleuzian philosophy of cinema and affect, rather than a cognitivist perspective focused on the higher-cognitive processes, as a point of departure to research affects and emotions elicited by cinema, was postulated. In order to answer this question, the main differences between both perspectives were explicated.

In order to conclude this thesis it seems imperative to provide an overview of the several uses of the notion of “affect” that were employed in the research treated in this thesis. Imperative,
because it seems that we can, in general, distinguish between two uses of affect in both Deleuze’s conception of affect and that of cognitive studies, as well. Considering the concept of “affect” was the primary focus of attention of this thesis, such an overview would help to ameliorate our knowledge of this complex and multidimensional phenomenon. First we have seen that, according to the Deleuzian perspective, we can summarize two types of affect:

1) Affect as the increase-diminution in our power of existence. Affect as continuous variation in the passage of forces or ‘intensities’. Affect, in such a way, is thought of as the continuous increase-diminution ‘scale’ or the reaching of a greater or lesser degree of perfection set forth by affective intensities.

2) Affect as the autonomous entities or forces that are all around us and that traverse and define all the connections one makes with other affecting bodies. Affect, then, is thought of as pure immanence, not yet defined by an “aboutness”.

Secondly, the cognitive approach generally also distinguishes between two uses of the word “affect”:

1) Affect as an all-encompassing affective system, ‘genus’ or ‘category’ of affective response, including reflexes, cognitive emotions, phobias, moods, and affect programs.

2) Affect as those particular responses that are primarily characterized as being cognitively impenetrable. In this form, affects are often thought of as the opposite of emotions, which involve higher cognitive processing.

Considering the abovementioned uses of ‘affect’ in combination with the application of Peirce’s categories of Firstness, Secondness, Thirdness throughout this thesis, I posited that the different categories correlate to the concepts of affect (Firstness), emotion (Secondness), and cognition (Thirdness). However, after having discusses both the Deleuzian conception of affect and the cognitive approach to emotion in depth, it seems possible to apply the same framework within these two perspective, separately. Although, the earlier use of Peirce’s framework is very fruitful in order to have a comprehensible mainstay on the entire matter of this thesis, a further division based on the same framework can be utilized to amplify the use of the framework.

For instance, within the Deleuzian conception of affect, Peirce’s categories seem to apply to difference concepts. Peirce’s tables of conceptions can be connected to Affect (Firstness), Affection (Secondness), and the creation novel thought (Thirdness). In the first chapter, affects were explained as “the quality of a possible sensation, feeling or idea, detached from any concrete state of things, opening a virtual future of possibilities” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 99). Affect, as such, is an autonomous entity with a potential to change. Affect with its fleeting and transcending nature seemed to fit the first category in this respect. If firstness was thought of as purely quality and does not refer to

89
anything else, then affects must be those entities whose being is simply in itself, not possessing ‘aboutness’ (Peirce, 1931, p. 356). Subsequently, if affect is defined in such a manner, affection must be defined as the effects set forth by affects. The process of ‘affecting’ or ‘being affected upon’. Affections are the actualization of affect, and may be thought of as the complex set of relations undergone by a body in which a multiplicity of affects is subsumed. It is a body impacting another body or the body’s process of ‘infolding’ affects, this relational nature of affections can be linked to secondness. Consequently, thirdness could very well be thought of as the goal of affect, formulated by Deleuze as the objective of art. This goal lies in the domain of cognition and must be thought of as the creation of novel thought. I have referred to the goal of creating novel thought by virtue of the use of affects in cinema for many instances, but let me clarify once more what is meant by this process as this thirdness category of the Deleuzian perspective is not yet fully addressed.

In his Negotiations, Deleuze emphasizes on the importance of the brain as the subject of research and philosophy, while appreciating microbiology, and the brain as a form of organization. Concerning the brain, Deleuze argues that “[i]t’s not that our thinking starts with what we know about the brain but that any new thought traces uncharted channels directly through its matter, twisting, folding, fissuring it” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 149).

I would want to argue that it is within this quote that we dissect the critical difference between Deleuze’s approach and the cognitive perspective to the ‘brain’, and subsequently to affect. Moreover, it let’s us understand what is meant when Deleuze highlights the ‘creation of novel thought’. Deleuze posits that “opinions” or “doxas” – modes of thought that progress along what can be seen as established or automatized “charted channels” – is not an act of real thinking of producing novel thought. Real or novel thought must move along or involve “uncharted channels”, according to Deleuze (Murphie, 2010, p. 4). Henceforth, Deleuze recognizes the possibility of a new assembly of our faculties, or of the older organization of the faculties, now defined by automatization, surprising us, or dissolving. For Deleuze, then, the purpose of art and the brain lies in the creation or utilization of “new cerebral pathways”. Correspondingly, science has as its objective to “discover what might have happened in the brain for one to start thinking this way or that” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 176). In light of this, Deleuze argues that “there’s a hidden image of thought that, as it unfolds, branches out, and mutates, inspires a need to keep on creating new concepts, not through any external determinism but through a becoming that carries the problems themselves along with it” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 149). According to Deleuze, this mutating, innovative “image of thought” is still not correctly and fully captured by the (then) current forms of image production (such as PET or fMRI technology), as opposed to ‘conventional’ cognitive systems such as conditioned reflexes that can be mapped and traced. According to Murphie, this might suggest that “the real activity of the brain might not be
totally amenable to overdetermined “models” or “pictures” of thinking processes” (Murphie, 2010, p. 5-6). According to Deleuze, the cause of this problem is connected to the brain’s creativity:

“The problem is that [creative] activity isn’t very compatible with circuits of information and communication, ready-made circuits that are compromised from the outset […] the brain’s the hidden side of all circuits, and these can allow the most basic conditioned reflexes to prevail, as well as leaving room for more creative tracings, less probable links” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 61).

It seems here that Deleuze posits that we can distinguish between two general types of actions that our brain carries out: “basic learned or conditioned reflexes” (which cognitivists would call affects) and “creative tracings” (which are caused by affects according to Deleuze). Both of these processes are characterized by uncertainty and are probabilistic, according to Deleuze (1994, p. 74). However, the creative tracings are far more radical. They emerge out of discontinuities – “in which there is a [cognitive] gap that must be jumped” – composing something new out of them: conditioning the assembly of new syntheses (Deleuze, 1994, p. 122). Deleuze clearly focuses on the creative activity of the brain, however, both of these types of brain activity will obviously always be found in combination to each other, “contributing to the complexity of the probabilistic nature of synaptic activity” (Murphie, 2010, p. 8). Still, according to Deleuze we must be aware that things can become an “organized mindlessness” very quickly, as seems to be the case with “most cinematic production, with its arbitrary violence and feeble eroticism, reflects mental deficiency rather than any invention of new cerebral circuits” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 60-61).

Peirce’s categories seem to be applicable to concepts within the cognitive studies of emotion as well. Affect, as Firstness, correlates with cognitive impenetrable response. Emotions, in this thesis often defined by their “aboutness”, seems to connect to Secondness, and the experience and classifying of emotion will be the Thirdness-category. For Peirce, those processes that can be categorized as secondness are brought into existence by an opposition between two distinct things in a concrete situation, quite similar to the “aboutness” of emotion (between individual and milieu as we have seen with the construal-based theory of emotions, for example). We defined those processes which we know to be “actual” to belong to the category of secondness. On the other hand, firstness, was thought of as that which is “difficult to define” because it “concerns what is new in experience, what is fresh, fleeting and nevertheless eternal” (Deleuze, 1986, p. 98). The cognitive impenetrable reponses – named affects by cognitivists – fit this description. Affects, defined as such, are automatic, quick responses that move almost separately from further cognitive processing.
Affect, with its mechanical causality, moving along a path of charted channels (automatized response) rather than being complex and cognitive belongs to the category of firstness. Thirdness, correspondingly, would be seen as the finalizing stage of having emotions, of attaching conclusion to emotion, assessing them and their consequences and giving them meaning to them.

Finally, when we compare both perspectives treated in this thesis, Deleuze argues – in contrast to cognitivists – that by analyzing the ‘known paths’ of neural activity, which are are the matter of research in cognitive studies, we will never find the true purpose of art and how it affects us. The cognitive approach, relying heavily on scientific models explaining ‘normal’, attested cognitive behavior, will not be able to fully grasp the creative activities of the brain if they are not willing to shift their focus to the re-ordering of our senses and the creation of novel thought.  

5.2 Nuances

I must state, that in much of this thesis I differentiated between both faculties, affect and cognition, body and mind, primarily for conceptual and explicatory reasons. However, as we have seen in contemporary cognitive theory and Deleuzian philosophy, both faculties are inherently connected and thus a bridge must be built between affect theory and emotion theory, as bodily states and cognitive processing are often considered inseparable. It can for investigational purposes be fruitful, however, to focus primarily on one particular aspect over the other. Nonetheless we must try to keep in mind several findings obtained in both fields in order to create significant research outcomes, considering there is a continuous feedback between cognitive process and bodily sensations and therefore they should be considered both.

Additionally, I should once more consider the difference between affect (force which affects us and is semi-autonomous entity) and affection (being affected and subsequently feeling of being affected). For instance, in treating the rather cognitively infused goal of creating novel thought which seems to be inherently connected to affect according to Deleuze. This, however, can be seen as already part of the domain of what Deleuze would call the “thought-image” or “action-image”. This aspect of affect is inherent to its nature and its goals, but can be considered an entirely different domain, already closer to having an emotion or a cognitive experience of the emotional response elicited. For conceptual reasons though it seems in order to state the difference between affect and affection once more. As there is a distinction made by Spinoza which is adopted by Deleuze between affect (“a body’s continuous, intensive variation (as increase-diminution) in its capacity for acting”), and affectio (“the state of a body as it affects or is affected by another body”) (Seigworth, 2011, p. 162).
5.3 Further Research

It is obvious to state that further research into the concrete ways of how we are affected by cinema should be done in order to comprehend both emotions and affects more fully. Research into the unconscious aspect of emotion, such as the finding of mirror neurons by Gallese and colleagues, would provide new perspectives on the discussion presented in this thesis (Gallese et al., 2004). Gallese is known for his research of mirror neurons and the implications this has for the simulation theory of the mind. Simulation theory is commonly known as the theory of how it is we understand each other on a purely bodily and emotional level. Gallese found that the “fundamental mechanism that allows us a direct experiential grasp of the mind of others is not based on conceptual reasoning, but based on direct simulation of the observed events through the mirror mechanism” (Gallese et al., 2004, p. 396). Such findings could shift the entire focus within the field of emotion studies and the discussion of the Paradox of Fiction as presented in §3.6. Moreover, perhaps these findings could elicit a newly placed emphasis on affects in the way Deleuzians consider them. Still, what remains an overlooked theme in film studies and the study concerning affect are the techniques used in order to create and elicit strong visceral reactions through the cinematic image (How do we actually create affects?). The act of filmmaking itself as an inspirational and fruitful partner for the field of film studies should be considered in this discussion, because knowledge of cinematic techniques give us a better grounding for those concepts we construct when thinking about cinema.

In addition it seems to me that it would be beneficial to Deleuze’s philosophy of cinema to incorporate scientific findings and endorse its academic legitimization and persuasion, as it was intended. On the other side of the equation, an incorporation of experiential accounts would withhold cognitive studies from becoming to descriptive, too “dry” or too distant a theory of what actually happens to us when watching movies. Perhaps cognitive theory would benefit from such a perspective, even though it seems unnatural at this time to do so. Nonetheless, it seems to me that subjective and a-typical experiences must always be considered as significant aspects to researching what happens to us when watching moving images and experiencing the shocks, horrors, amusements, disgusts, and surprises when going to the cinema. As no person who watches a movie in this world is the same.
6. Works Cited


