

Postgraduate English

www.dur.ac.uk/postgraduate.english

ISSN 1756-9761

Issue 12

September 2005

Editors: Anita O'Connell and Michael Huxtable

The First Rule is....
Images and Reflections of the Rhizome in
Fight Club

Paul Elliot *

* University of Essex

The First Rule is....Images and Reflections of the Rhizome in Fight Club

Paul Elliot

University of Essex

Postgraduate English, Issue 12, September 2005

Introduction: The Rhizome

Deleuze and Guattari describe the rhizome in the introduction to their 1980 work *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). It is, they say, “an open system” (Deleuze, 1995:32) that is characterized by a number of differing, although interconnected, traits^[1] and forms the basis of not only their questioning of traditional notions of ontology but imbues the very structure of the work itself, as thoughts and concepts are at various times adopted and abandoned and theoretical lines of flight are allowed to form plateaus of consistency or merely come to nothing. As Charles Stivale asserts, the rhizome is used by Deleuze and Guattari as a “framework for their multiplanar interdisciplinary theorization of multiplicity.” (Stivale, 1998: 13)

Deleuze and Guattari oppose the rhizome with the traditional Modernist notion of the tree - what they term ‘the arboreal’. The tree, like Chomsky’s grammar or Barthes’ codes, is primarily based on dichotomies, binary offshoots from a hierarchically- based central stem; each node providing both progression and division:

“...the Tree or Root as an image, endlessly develops the law of one that becomes two, then two of the two that become four...Binary logic is the spiritual reality of the root-tree. Even in a discipline as “advanced” as linguistics retains the root-tree as its fundamental image, and thus remains wedded to classical reflection...”^[2]

A critical problem with the root-tree image is its reliance on comparison and dialectic, for there to be two, there must first be one, for there to be a tree there

must first be a root, for there to be an end there must first be a beginning. The rhizome recognizes no such reliance because, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, it is un-teleological, its progression (for there is progression) is one of immanence rather than exteriority; of *becoming* rather than teleology. This point is made by Kisho Kurokawa in his essay concerning Deleuzio-Guattarian architectural theory, “Toward a Rhizome World or “Chaosmos”” (Kurokawa, 2001):

“...a rhizome is an interlocking web. It is a conjunction of dynamic relations – producing bulbs here and there, interweaving with great complexity, *reaching outward in its continuing growth*^[3]. It represents the principle of dynamic, varied pluralism that absorbs the hierarchical structure of the tree.”^[4]

The rhizome, then, allows lines of flight to destratify and deterritorialize itself; as a space it is constantly shifting and transgressing borders, as a structure it recognizes no hierarchy or boundary. Its nomadic nature means that it questions the autonomy of molar constructs such as the self and society. The orchid, for instance, forms a rhizome with the wasp that it needs for fertilization, the book forms a rhizome with the reader, the human body itself forms a rhizome with the many microbes and bacteria that make up its bio-system (Kurokawa, 2001: 1030), viruses form rhizomes with their hosts - fusing genetic material in something more than a symbiosis and, as we shall see, some modern narratives are themselves nomadic and rhizomorphous, refusing to conform to either the linear or the circularity of traditional structure of Modernist experimentation.

In this essay I would like to look at the leitmotif of the rhizome in David Fincher’s film *Fight Club* (1999). Fincher’s film dramatizes Chuck Palahniuk’s 1996 novel of the same name. In the first section I will concentrate on visual representations of the rhizome and the way that it is supported by both the editing and the *mise en scene*, arguing that this seminal anti-structure appears throughout the film in many guises and on many denotive levels. In the second section I will look at the more diegetic manifestations of the rhizome, looking at the sense in which Fincher

explores notions of micro-fascism and the rhizomorphous ways in which the fight club itself represents a line of flight which is then destratified, in turn, by Project Mayhem. In the concluding section I will look at the degree to which the film employs what I shall call ‘nomadic narrative’, that is narratology that is highly reflective of the rhizome and thus unlike many traditional ideals of structure.

Titles: The Rhizome and the Tree

Fight Club and Psycho

From the very opening titles, *Fight Club* declares its intentions as a film that deals with multiplicity. The first sound we hear is soft easy-listening music; however, like a line of flight that is abandoned, the needle shifts and we are brought suddenly into the titles, where diegetic, harsh, fast music is twinned with images of neural networks and corporeal pathways that expand ever-outwards in a way that could only suggest the rhizome. As the titles progress, we are made aware that the journey we are on is one of molecular to molar, as we travel from the brain of the central character (Edward Norton)^[5], through his blood, skin and sweat, and on into the gun that Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt) holds in his mouth.

The images in the titles of *Fight Club* reflect a number of Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic traits^[6]; there is the concept of multiplicity or, rather, multiplicities for instance that form assemblages of networks of ever-increasing complexity:

“An assemblage is precisely (the) increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections. There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, or tree or root.”^[7]

There is also a sense of what they term “cartography” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 13), the spontaneous mapping of space without *a priori* design or trace. As the camera moves through the pathways and arteries of the computer-generated biological network, it randomly maps its path, forging new connections and offshoots without, ultimately, recognizing the molar divisions of flesh and gunmetal.

The opening titles are a reflection of what is to come, a notion that Deleuze also saw as being the case with many Hitchcock films such as *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho* (1960) (Deleuze, 2004: 21):

“Analysing certain Hitchcock films Francois Regnault identifies a global movement for each one, or a ‘principal’ geometric or dynamic form’ which can appear in the pure state in the credits...”^[8]

The titles of *Psycho*, for instance, feature vertical and horizontal stripes that invade the screen from the left and right, from top to bottom, and this visual trope is continued throughout the film as characters are continually filmed in front of venetian blinds or telegraph poles or, famously, the geometric pattern of the shower-room wall. The linearity of *Psycho*'s visual sense is also reflected in its narrative as Robert D. Newman asserts in his *Transgressions of Reading: Narrative Engagement as Exile and Return*, (Newman, 1993: 69-70).

In fact the only non-linear pattern in *Psycho* is the fade from the plug-hole to the iris of Marion as she lies dead on the bathroom floor and it is this that makes the image all the more shocking, coming as it does as a visual non sequitur.

In *Fight Club*, Fincher constantly revisits the visual leitmotifs of his opening titles. In the early sections of the film, the characters of Tyler and Marla appear phantasmatically at various moments, briefly superimposed in a visual line of flight that serves to both suggest Jack's gradual mental breakdown and unsettle the audience (like Tyler's splicing of subliminal pornography). Tyler Durden is an assemblage of sorts, his wardrobe, is culled from a multiplicity of sources and he resembles, at various times, a pimp, a hustler and a hobo, as Chuck Palahniuk explains:

“What really scared me wasn't the telegram as much as eating out with Tyler. Never, no never, had Tyler paid cash for anything. For clothes, Tyler goes to gyms and hotels and claims clothing out of the lost and found. This is better than Marla, who goes to Laundromats to steal jeans out of the

dryers and sell them at twelve dollars a pair to those places that buy used jeans.” (Palahniuk, 1996:89).

Pitt’s wardrobe then, is literally a multiplicity of different people, which of course is contrasted throughout the film with Jack’s striated, stratified existence. We note, for instance, how his life is rendered in two dimensions in the IKEA scene, with each tastefully designed piece of catalogued furniture priced and described through computer-generated montage; a visual rendition of what Patricia Pisters in her book *The Matrix of Visual Culture* (2003) calls the complete territorialisation by capitalist consumption, (Pisters, 2003: 96). This two dimensional *mise en scene* is also employed as a counterpart to the fullness and cartography of *Fight Club*; as Jack stands at the photocopier and narrates:

“With insomnia, nothing is real. Everything is far away. Everything is a copy of a copy of a copy.”^[9]

Our dimensional sense is reduced, as the screen loses its sense of depth and perspective and the figures and objects pictured lose their interconnectivity, becoming merely composite entities in a frame. This is, in itself, a direct contrast to another of Deleuze and Guattari’s signifying traits: “interconnectivity”; the two dimensional composition of this scene highlights Jack’s striated, unconnected, unrhizomatic existence before *Fight Club* and before Tyler Durden.

There is, then, a whole wealth of visual representations of the rhizome in Fincher’s film, both directly suggesting and contrasting. The opening titles, as Deleuze suggests with *Psycho* and *Vertigo*, provide us with a concrete image of what is not only a recurring theme but leitmotif and stylistic trope. The rhizome is both multiplicitous, as with Tyler’s wardrobe and in contrast to Jack’s stratified life, as in the opening titles where human and gun become rhizomes with each other.

In the next section I will discuss how these ideas manifest themselves in the socio-political text of the film.

Project Mayhem – The Political Rhizome

As Bulent Diken and Carsten Bagge Lausten state in their essay “Enjoy Your Fight – Fight Club as a Symptom of the Network Society” (2001), “Fight Club...poses significant questions about micro-fascism, the herterogeneous, subterranean “other” of political theory.” (Diken and Bagge Lausten, 2001: 1), and it is here also that the notion of the rhizome finds it most socio-political relevance.

At the beginning of the film and the novel, as we have briefly touched upon already, Jack exists within the kind of capitalist striated space that most people in the early twenty first century would recognize:

“I wasn’t the only slave to my nesting instinct. The people I know who used to sit in the bathroom with pornography, now they sit in the bathroom with their IKEA furniture catalogue.

We all have the same Johanneshow armchair in the Strinne green stripe pattern...

We all have the same Rislampa/Har paper lamps made from wire and environmentally friendly unbleached paper...”^[10]

In Zizek (1999) this is the realm of the uncastrating Master where control no longer functions to restrict the individual’s thoughts or movements but instead offers unlimited freedom to choose. As Diken and Bagge Lausten assert, this very rarely equates to freedom at all:

“The paradox of postmodern individuality: the injunction to be oneself, to realize one’s creative potential, results in the exact opposite, that is, the feeling of inauthenticity of all acts. No act, no commodity is really it.”^[11]

The religious or socio-political voice of the father gives way to an authority of commodity that segments and creates anxiety-producing pseudo-freedoms, resulting in “The IBM Stellar Sphere, The Phillip Morris Galaxy, Planet Starbucks.” In Deleuze and Guattari this is viewed as a process of

territorialization^[12] and deterritorialization. The capitalist molar machine first of all deterritorializes the stratification of the nation and the state and recodes its flows. What desire and energy was once directed at statehood, law and God, is recoded and redefined in order to produce the reterritorialized stratifications of capital and commodity accumulation:

“Capitalism arises as a worldwide enterprise of subjectification by constituting an axiomatic of decoded flows.”^[13]

This is Jack’s world; he has become so striated by the capital’s decoding of his desiring flows that, at various points, he mimics the Reader’s Digest article that he finds in Paper Street and becomes that opposite of Deleuzio-Guattarian philosophy - the organ without a body:

“I am Joe’s Raging Bile Duct...

I am Joe’s Grinding Teeth.

I am Joe’s Inflamed Flaring Nostrils...”^[14]

Jack exists in a universe where individuals are known either by their afflictions or by their possessions; they are segmented and classified, restricted by the capitalist axiomatic^[15]. It is no coincidence that the cave Jack retreats into during his “guided mediation” sessions resembles the smooth space of the body without organs; the penguin, his totem, instructs him to “slide”, a clear visual clue to de-stratification, friction-free living: “an organism without parts” (Deleuze, 2004: 216).

This is the background to the formation of the fight club, for the fight club represents a line of flight from this stratified, striated space. The fight club represents, as Adrian Gargett suggests in his essay “Doppelganger: Exploded States of Consciousness in Fight Club” (2002), a recuperation of identity essence,

as pain and violence shatter boundaries and forge new cartographic networks beyond accepted borders.

The fights themselves become pure physicality, pure energy as the two fighters, for brief moments, become one multiplicity in the larger rhizome of the club. Fincher magnifies this sense by choreographing each fight so that the two combatants constantly appear entwined, their spilt blood mixing together, their bodies homoerotically exchanging sweat and mucus in a display that is part bare knuckle fight, part *pas de deux*. At one point in an early fight, the face of the “local maitre D” is lifted from the floor covered in blood and severely beaten, but the victim of such horrendous violence smiles orgasmically into the camera, a testament to the erosion of boundary between pleasure and pain.

Briefly, fight club becomes the smooth space that Jack longs for:

“You weren’t alive anywhere like you were there. But fight club only exists in the hours between when fight club starts and fight club finishes...After fight club, everything else in your life gets the volume turned down. You can deal with anything.”^[16]

Fight club rhizomatically provides the line of flight from a highly stratified society and, albeit briefly, allows glimpses of the body without organs, where pleasure and intensity become unleashed from their usual flows.

Fight club is itself, then, a rhizome - or rather it forms a rhizome with the larger body of society and displays many of the traits that we have mentioned, already; it is heterogenous and yet connected to the social, it is chaotic rather than prescriptive, and it is formed by a multiplicity of social offshoots – the disaffected, emasculated males who have outgrown their own Oedipus complexes:

“Tyler: A generation of men raised by women. I’m wondering if another woman is the answer we really need.”^[17]

The fight clubs themselves form multiplicities, morphologically sending out tubers and tendrils in order to form other clubs elsewhere, each with its own

genetically-modified version of the Tyler Durden myth. Fight club deterritorializes itself, giving up part of its borders in order to reform elsewhere, existing not as a single finished entity but in a constant state of becoming.

Bataille's essay "The Psychology of Fascism" (Bataille, 1999) gives us some clues as to the nature of fight club as a rhizome:

"Social homogeneity fundamentally depends upon the homogeneity...of the productive system. Every contradiction arising from the development of economic life thus entails a tendential dissociation of homogeneous social existence. This tendency towards dissociation exerts itself in the most complex manner, on all levels and in every direction."^[18]

For Bataille, as for Deleuze and Guattari, these tendential heterogeneities, what in *A Thousand Plateaus* are called "lines of flight", inevitably take on fascistic overtones. The fight club, first of all, as we have seen, deterritorializes itself then undergoes a process of reterritorialization as Project Mayhem, as Patrica Pisters states in *The Matrix of Visual Culture*:

"Looking at the kind of territorializing (consumption culture) and deterritorializations (the fight clubs, Tyler's rebellious actions) in *Fight Club*, we also have to add that reterritorializing forces are at play as well. By the end of the film, the fight clubs have turned into a sort of terrorist organization, Project Mayhem."^[19]

Project Mayhem is characterized by the wearing of uniforms ("two black shirts? Two pair black trousers? One pair black boots?") the shaving of heads, a highly regimented regime, and a depersonalizing refusal to use participants' names. This is the fascist offshoot that Bataille talks of or the "micro-fascism" of Deleuze and Guattari that is molecular in structure and so fluid and malleable (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 236). This is also addressed by Deleuze and Parnet in their *Dialogues II* (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002)^[20]:

“Guattari discusses microfascisms which exist in a social field without necessarily being centralized in a particular apparatus of the state. We have left behind the shores of rigid segmentarity, but we have entered a regime which is no less organized...the Stalins of little groups, local law-givers, micro-fascisms of gangs.”^[21]

We can see here how the images of the titles reflect the movement of the fight club; shoots are sent out, connections are formed and others severed, new avenues and pathways are forged creating an-ever complex set of multiplicities. Society - fight club - Project Mayhem; each one sharing genetic material of the former but also becoming a distinct entity. Like the many-layered connections and topographical multiplicities of the internet, fight club exists under the “principle of asignifying rupture” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 20), allowing Project Mayhem to continue even though Jack/Tyler is no longer a part.^[22]

As Diken and Bagge Lausten (2001) state, the microfascist notions of *Fight Club* are, aside from the schizophrenia of Jack, the film’s most successful theme. As we have seen, *Fight Club* is synecdochically concerned with the formation of micropolitics that manifest themselves in contemporary society as instances of sexism, racism, homophobia, and the myriad of other lines of flight from the uncastrating social Master. The rhizomatic nature of these groups is an integral part of the fluidity and molecular structure that enables them to exist; the rhizome helps us understand their formation and their progression.

Marla’s Story – Nomadic Narrative

In many of the commentaries on *Fight Club* (Pisters, 2003; Giroux, 2001 etc.) the character of Marla (Helena Bonham Carter) is seldom mentioned, and when she is it is with a reasonable misunderstanding. Adrian Gargett’s article (2003) gives us some flavour of the general consensus concerning her character:

“The arrival of Helena Bonham Carter as Marla Singer, a goth-queen with the opalescent skin of a heroin addict and a belligerent attitude, another group therapy junkie “tourist” disrupting Jack’s sense of “security” is

announced with a variety of sultry poses that jams the corners of the frame.”^[23]

This is also the sense the reader receives in the early sections of the novel. Marla, at first, is an archetypal product of generation X, her character is argumentative, quixotic; she exists in extremes, especially in her relationship to Jack. In the morning scene, after she and Tyler first meet, her reactions to Jack are confusing and obtuse, displaying the kinds of belligerence that Adrian Gargett points out in his article:

“Jack: You’re not going to believe what I dreamt last night.

Marla: I can hardly believe anything about last night.

(Marla goes to pour coffee. She takes a swig, gargles and spits in the sink.

She gives Jack a lascivious smile).

Jack: What are you doing here?

Marla: What...?

Jack: What the hell are you doing here?

(Marla stares at him a beat, then drops the cup in the sink)

Marla: Fuck you.”^[24]

Marla’s role here is to provide a quirky sense of inconsistency and confusion to Jack’s ever-growing paranoia and mistrust. We are asked (and many commentators have surmised, see for instance Henry Giroux’s article “Brutalised Bodies and Emasculated Politics” [2001]) to assume that Jack has a tripartite relationship of which he is the centre; being pulled one way by the confident and assured Tyler and the other by the self-centred and quixotic Marla. Time and time again throughout the film and novel, Marla is pictured as a character bordering on the psychotic; we can think, for instance of the scene in Chapter 11 where Jack and Tyler sleep in the 1968 Impala “Just in case Marla burns the house down./Just

in case Marla goes out and finds a gun./Just in case Marla is still in the house.” (Palahniuk, 1996:88).

The audience’s relationship with Marla alters, however, when we are told of Jack’s schizophrenic creation of Tyler. Jack’s questioning of Marla in the last scenes of the film take on extra meaning as we gradually become aware that, in fact, Marla is one of the most consistent and empathetic characters in the narrative (Tuss, 2004); in fact her quixotic nature is merely the reaction of the partner of a schizophrenic - hurt and confused by Jack’s condition. A rereading of the above extract, with a knowledge of Jack’s schizophrenia, reveals not a “quirky inconsistency” at all but the understandable emotions of someone unmindful of the fact that she is no longer talking to the man she has slept with^[25].

Marla functions in the film as a “*brisure*”^[26] that deconstructs notions of both characterization and traditional structured narrative. On second reading of the novel or subsequent viewing of the film, her character shifts and has a markedly different effect on the reader or viewer. Not only is her character based on deferment, but it is nomadic in the true Deleuzio-Guattarian sense:

“Nomadic waves or flows of deterritorialization go from the central layer to the periphery, then from the new center to the new periphery, falling back to the old center and launching forth to the new.”^[27]

Marla Singer deterritorializes the traditional bounds of narrative^[28] and characterization and forms a rhizome with the audience’s experience; existing not a finished article but changing and becoming as new knowledge is invested into the narrative with subsequent viewings. As Deleuze and Guattari state in *A Thousand Plateaus*, this reflects neither linear nor circular narratives nor, in fact, concepts such as Christian Metz’s *Histoire/Discours* (Metz, 1985).

The use of the image of the rhizome to illuminate our notions of the audience relationship to the screen features highly in Barbara Kennedy’s book *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation* (2002):

“Rather than think only about the sign of the cinematic, or what a film ‘means’, we can also debate how the film connects across a diverse arena such as the mimetic, the pathetic, the gestural, the cognitive, the affective. Cinema operates in non-teleological ways, as process, as movement, immanence...”^[29]

Kennedy here touches on many of the points we have been looking at in this section: that the image of the rhizome enables us to view narrative and characterization, especially those in *Fight Club*, as a process of becoming that defies structural notions of linearity and stability.

Conclusions – The Second rule is....

Since their translation into English in the 1980s, Deleuze’s film theories as expounded in his *Cinema* books have gained popularity among critics and theoreticians (Pisters, 2003: 217). However, these books concern themselves more with cinema as a construct than the thematics of film; more with Bergsonian exegesis of canonical auteurs than popular releases. Increasingly however Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* are being used as a basis for cultural criticism. Concepts such as the body without organs, smooth and striated space, nomadic thought and the rhizome, have become integral to our understanding of the increasing complexities of postmodernity.

These terms, as Deleuze points out in *Negotiations* (Deleuze, 1995: 32), are neologistic because they describe new ways of seeing, new signification, and new structures and anti-structures. Foucault saw this in Deleuze in his essay “Theatrum Philosophicum” (Foucault, 1990):

“This is philosophy not as thought but as theater – a theater of mime with multiple, fugitive, and instantaneous scenes in which blind gestures signal to each other.”^[30]

The philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari allows us, I think, to study film and literature without recourse to the hitherto consoling notions of hierarchy and segmentarity. As Barbara Kennedy argues, it is in the multiplicity of experience that we find the greatest examples of beauty and profundity, not in the reduction and segmentation of narrative, visual semiotics and characterization. Films like *Fight Club*, Quentin Tarrantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and Kathryn Bigelow's *Strange Days* (1995) resist traditional interpretations using structuralist intellectual tools; how, after all, can we assess the character of Marla Singer using gender or psychoanalysis when our experience of her changes when we view the film or read the novel twice?

Notions such as the rhizome allow us to view a creative work as a process of becoming rather than an intellectual entity with stable borders and boundaries. This is more than reader theory, however, more than the death of the author; in fact the author, through Deleuzio-Guattarian concepts, becomes reborn in cyborg fashion, with the reader; the process of becoming-viewer existing in the smooth space between the polarity of creator and receiver.

What began with a semiotic exegesis of *Fight Club*'s title sequence now, rhizomatically we could say, branches out to cover all areas of the film. Like the energy coursing along the neural pathways of Jack's brain, sending out lines of flight in endless directions, meaning and inference, character and narrative connect with the brain of the viewer and, though this, with their experience and memory causing reconnection, reterritorialization and reintegration. The brain, as Deleuze famously said, becomes the screen but also the screen, in turn becomes a brain.

Endnotes

^[1] Deleuze and Guattari outline six main traits to the rhizome, connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, cartography and decalomania. Although I will make use of most of these terms throughout this essay, space forbids me to offer an in-depth assessment of them individually.

^[2] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2004), *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Continuum) 5.

^[3] My italics.

^[4] Kisho Kurokawa (2001), “Towards a Rhizome World or “Chaosmos””, published in Gary Gensoko (ed), *Deleuze and Guattari: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers* (London: Routledge) 1027. Note here how Kurokawa makes the point that the rhizome, in order to obviate the binary of the tree, must “absorb” the tree rather than oppose it. Unlike Deleuze and Guattari, Kurokawa suggests a symbiosis rather than an oppositional quasi-binary.

^[5] I have, in this essay, decided to call the central character “Jack”, even though in the film and novel he is unnamed, this is mainly due to the author, Chuck Palahniuk, himself referring to Jack in the article for the LA Times, September 12, 1999.

^[6] See footnote 1.

^[7] Deleuze and Guattari (2004) 9.

^[8] Gilles Deleuze (2004), *Cinema I: The Movement Image* (London: Continuum) 21.

^[9] Jim Uhls (1999), *Fight Club: Screenplay*, available online at http://www.geocities.com/weekend_game/final_scr1.htm

^[10] Chuck Palahniuk (1996), *Fight Club*, (London: Vintage).

^[11] Bulent Diken, and Carsten Bagge Lausten (2001), “Enjoy Your Fight – Fight Club as a Symptom of the Network Society”, published online at <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/papers/diken-laustsen-enjoy-your-fight.pdf>, p.4.

^[12] “Reterritorialization must not be confused with a return to a primitive or older territoriality: it necessarily implies a set of artifices by which one element, itself

deterritorialized, serves as a new territory for another...” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 193).

^[13] Deleuze and Guattari (2004) 505.

^[14] Palahniuk (1996) 56.

^[15] “The first movement of deterritorialization appears with the overcoding performed by the despotic state. But it is nothing compared to the other great movement, the one that will be brought about by the decoding of flows.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 242).

^[16] Uhls (1999).

^[17] Uhls (1999).

^[18] Georges Bataille (1999), “The Psychological Structure of Fascism”, published in *Visions of Excess*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota) 140.

^[19] Patricia Pisters (2003), “The Matrix of Visual Culture”, (California: Stanford University Press) 97.

^[20] We can also link Deleuze and Guattari’s notions to those of Wilhelm Reich in his “The Mass Psychology of Fascism” that, also offers us some interesting insights into the formation of attraction of fascism, “...the intensive identification with the Fuhrer had a decisive effect, for it concealed one’s real status as an insignificant member of the masses. Notwithstanding his vassalage, every National Socialist felt himself to be a “Little Hitler”.” (Reich, 1978:114).

^[21] Gilles Deleuze and Clare Parnet (2002), *Dialogues II*, (London: Continuum) pp.138-139.

^[22] “Principle of asignifying rupture” against over signifying breaks separating structures or cutting across a single structure. A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will still start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 10).

[23] Adrian Gargett (2001), “Doppelganger: Exploded States of Consciousness in Fight Club”, published online at <http://www.disinfo.com/site/>

[24] Uhls (1999).

[25] This scene compares favourably with similar descriptions in P.J. McKenna’s *Schizophrenia and Related Syndromes* (1997) or even Oliver Sacks’ *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1985).

[26] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1999), variously translated as “hinge”, “fissure”, “break” etc.

[27] Deleuze and Guattari (2004) 60.

[28] See for instance the chapter “The building blocks of narratives” in Montgomery *et al*, *Ways of Reading* (1995).

[29] Barbara Kennedy (2002), *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press) 69.

[30] Michel Foucault (2000), “Theatrum Philosophicum”, published in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology: Essential Works of Michel Foucault, Volume II, 1954-1980* (London: Penguin).

Works Cited: Books

Bataille, Georges. “The Psychological Structure of Fascism.” Published in *Visions of Excess*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. London: Continuum, 2004.

--- and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus*. London: Continuum, 1999.

---. *Negotiations*. New York: Columbia University, 1995.

---. *Cinema I: The Movement Image*. London: Continuum, 2004.

---. *Cinema II: The Time Image*. London: Continuum, 2004a.

- . *The Logic of Sense*. London: Continuum, 2004b.
- . *Difference and Repetition*. London: Continuum, 2004c.
- and Clare Parnet. *Dialogues*. London: Continuum, 2002.
- and Clare Parnet. *Dialogues II*. London: Continuum, 2002.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. London: Johns Hopkins University, 1997.
- Flaxman, Gregory, ed. *The Brain is the Machine*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota University, 2000.
- Foucault, Michel. "Theatrum Philosophicum," *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology: Essential Works of Michel Foucault Volume II, 1954-1980*. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Kaufman, Eleanor and Kevin Jon Heller, eds. *New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Kennedy, Barbara. *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002.
- Kurokawa, Kisho. "Towards a Rhizome World or "Chaosmos," *Deleuze and Guattari: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*. Ed. Gary Genosko. London: Routledge, 2001.
- McKenna, P.J. *Schizophrenia and Related Syndromes*. London: Psychology Press, 1997.
- Metz, Christian. "Story/Discourse: Note on Two Kinds of Voyeurism," *Movies and Methods*. Ed. Bill Nichols. London: University of California Press, 1985.
- Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film*. Oxford: OUP, 1981.

Montgomery, Martin, Alan Durant, Nigel Fabb and others. *Ways of Reading*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Newman, Robert. *Transgressions of Reading: Narrative Engagement as Exile and Return*. London: Duke University Press, 1993.

Palahniuk, Chuck. *Fight Club*. London: Vintage, 1996.

Patton, Paul. *Deleuze and the Political*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Pisters, Patricia. *The Matrix of Visual Culture: Working with Deleuze in Film Theory*. Stanford CA: Stanford U P, 2003.

Reich, Wilhelm. *The Psychology of Fascism*. London: Pelican, 1978.

Sacks, Oliver. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. London: Picador, 1985.

Stivale, Charles. *The Two Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari: Intersections and Animations*. London: Guildford Press, 1998.

Zizek, Slavoj. *The Ticklish Subject*. London: Verso, 1999.

---. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1989.

Works Cited: Articles and Essays

Crowdus, Gary. "Getting Exercised Over Fight Club." *Cineaste*, Vol. 25, 2000.

Diken, Bulent and Carsten Bagge Lausten. "Enjoy Your Fight – Fight Club as a Symptom of the Network Society." Published online at <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/papers/diken-laustsen-enjoy-your-fight.pdf>, 2001.

Gargett, Adrian. "Doppelganger: Exploded States of Consciousness in Fight Club." Published online at <http://www.disinfo.com/site/>, 2001.

Giroux, Henry. "Brutalised Bodies and Emasculated Politics." *Third Text*, Vol. 53, 2001.

Palahniuk, Chuck. "I made Most of it Up, Honest." *LA Times*, 1999.

Tuss, Alex. "Masculine Identity and Success." *The Journal of Men's Studies*, Vol. 12, 2004.

Films

Fight Club (1999), Dir. David Fincher

Psycho (1960), Dir. Alfred Hitchcock

Pulp Fiction (1994), Dir. Quentin Tarantino

Strange Days (1995), Dir. Kathryn Bigelow

Vertigo (1958), Dir. Alfred Hitchcock

First Response

An effective reading of Fincher's film. Perhaps more attention could be given to what Deleuze writes more generally about the cinema as a form, and how that might relate to the issue of a novel becoming film in this case.