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ON THE CROSSROADS OF ETHICS AND FORM: THE DIALECTICAL IMAGE IN KRZYSZTOF KIESLOWSKI'S *DECALOGUE*

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EKER, İREM. *ON THE CROSSROADS OF ETHICS AND FORM: THE DIALECTICAL IMAGE IN KRZYSZTOF KIESLOWSKI'S DECALOGUE*, MASTER'S THESIS, İstanbul, 2021.

In *On Painting* (1435), Leon Battista Alberti describes the rectangular frame as an "open window" (aperta finestra), which lays the ground for framing in painting, photography, and cinema. Considering this metaphor and taking the 'framing gesture' in *Camera Buff* (1979) as my starting point, I explore how Kieslowski's oeuvre is related to the frame and how he deals with Alberti's model of finestra and its potentialities in *The Decalogue* (1989).

Kieslowski's artistic quest for the truth of the cinematographic image and its ethical course creates a dialectical tension between the two. This dialectical tension finds its visual expression in the fissures on the surface of the image. Fissures, appearing as cracks, tears, or slits and serving as thresholds, openings, and passages, that haunt and distort the frame, are approached as visual devices and a metadiscursive figure. As the point of encounter and contact and its failure, an opening is where a haptic urge to touch, the scopic drive, and its ethical restraint occurs, thus leading their way to the origin and the primary object.

Keywords: frame, finestra, fissure, ethics, form, dialectical image, Decalogue, Krzysztof Kieslowski

ÖZET

EKER, İREM. *ETİK VE BİÇİMİN KAVŞAĞINDA: KRZYSZTOF KIESLOWSKI'NİN DEKALOG'UNDA DİYALEKTİK İMGE*, MASTER TEZİ, İstanbul, 2021.

Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*'de (1435), resim, fotoğraf ve sinemada çerçevelemenin zeminini oluşturan dikdörtgen çerçeveyi "açık bir pencere" (aperta finestra) olarak tanımlar. Bu metafor göz önünde bulundurularak ve *Amatör*'ün (1979) 'çerçeveleme jesti' başlangıç noktası kabul edilerek, bu çalışmada Kieslowski'nin eserlerinin çerçeveyle ilişkisi ve Alberti'nin finestra modeliyle potansiyellerinin *Dekalog*'da (1989) nasıl ele alındığı araştırılmaktadır.

Kieslowski'nin sinematografik imgenin hakikatine yönelik sanatsal arayışı ve bu durumun etik seyri, ikisi arasında diyalektik bir gerilim yaratır. Bu diyalektik gerilim, görsel ifadesini görüntünün yüzeyindeki çatlaklarda bulur. Yırtıklar, kesikler, yarıklar olarak görünen ve çerçeveyi ele geçiren, bozan eşikler, açıklıklar, geçitler olarak hizmet eden bu çatlaklar, görsel aygıtlar ve meta anlatı figürleri olarak ele alınacaktır. Bir karşılaşma ve temas noktası ve aynı zamanda bunun sekteye uğradığı yerler olan açıklıklar, dokunma dürtüsü ve skopik dürtüyü harekete geçirerek özneyi birincil nesne ve orijine yönlendirirken etik bir kısıtlama yaratır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: çerçeve, finestra, fissura, etik, biçim, diyalektik imge, Dekalog, Krzysztof Kieslowski

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INTRODUCTION

> *"The frame delimits our look by exercising a non-symbolic violence on it. For, in the cinema, the frame is always there, whether it is perceived or not, whether we pay attention to it or not. It is always there, waiting to be discovered as such, as what limits the portion of the visible that is accessible to the cinema."* (Comolli, 2015, p. 69)

The starting point of my thesis is that the frame and the ethical and aesthetic stakes it imposes on the spectator are fundamental through the development of images, inheriting its history from Alberti's *finestra*. The use of the frame can be considered to reveal a powerful engine of evolution specific to different media. The same story follows from one medium to another, from Alberti's *finestra* to its crumbling with the symptom of dialectical image. The frame lays the ground on which the relationship to the image is established and brings into play the game of the gaze. The pleasure of looking at images -be it pictorial, photographic, or cinematographic- is primarily due to the efficient presence of the frame. Consequently, the spectator can plunge their gaze into the opening it offers and come out of it by adhering to the solid uprights. Thus, the frame will no longer be an intermediary between the spectator and the image according to the rules of a particular medium but rather a fundamental element of representation and visual arts, which apply Alberti's formula, gradually reveal its dialectics and ghostly figure, as Comolli and Derrida suggest.

Thus, in this work regarding the dialectical image, I propose to highlight the frame's central position in the imaging process, starting from the *finestra,* the condition of its appearance, and the symbolic and material basis of its enunciation. Also, I propose to observe the link between framing and the notion of ethics, relying primarily on the 'framing gesture' of *Camera Buff (1979)* and Kieslowski's *The Decalogue (1989-90)*. Through the dialectics of the *finestra* and fissures, I aim to uncover unconscious stakes that haunt the series and are found in elaborating the dialectical image as a metadiscourse.

Kieslowski's cinema finds itself caught between the moral position of his documentary era and a more aesthetic version of his late fiction. Kieslowski's oeuvre constitutes an initiatory journey from the faith in the truth of the cinematographic image to the discovery of the symbolic power of composition and editing and finally renunciation of the medium

in favor of writing alone. *Decalogue* has been the subject of much analysis, mainly concerning the metaphysical and moral issues of the project. However, very little has been said on the individual images and their metadiscursive and reflexive dimension. Thus, one of the objectives of my thesis is to approach *Decalogue* as a polyptych and verb-image relationship in the light of its enunciative power. I will then highlight the role of the frame in the modalities of the referent's presence in its iconic or verbal sign. In that, my path will be very close to the one adopted by Olivier Beuvelet using Veronique Campan's formulation. Also, Slavoj Zizek's reflection on the "real tears" offers an insight into Kieslowski's ethical itinerary.

In architectural terms, the frame serves as a staged limit rather than an added object or receptacle. This approach leads us to find its equivalent in the windows and doors of the film image. The mobility of the film frame separates the field from its uprights and offers a passage from one space to another, thus becoming the outline of an opening and erasing its status as a border. In the aesthetic thought of the frame, my field of analysis extends from Alberti's quadrilateral to Comolli's frame, Derrida's notion of *parergon.* This dialectical approach and Bazin's reflection on the edges of the film screen as "a piece of masking" will be fruitful in grasping the ambiguities framing has.

More than the edge of support, the frame has become an essential tool in the history of images since its assumption by Alberti. He announces the advent of framing as a form of enunciation, which the techniques of photography and later of cinematograph will make more operative. As the writing of movement, the cinematograph has always existed from the flickering flame on the cave walls to the camera obscura in which spectators came to see reversed living images. Also, from the Christian polyptych to modern cinema, the editing of images has always been present throughout the history of images. With the advent of the mobile frame, cinema offered a potential passage between the space of representation and the world of the spectator. Thus, I will place my analysis in the perspective of continuity between different media through the pursuit of the spectator's eye, the desire to see.

I will then approach the images of *Decalogue* in their relationship with the eye and the spectator’s desire to see, drawing on Alberti’s *finestra* and the four properties of frame identified by Olivier Beuvelet: the frame as a detached object surrounding the image

(parergon); the frame as a dividing line between the representation and its real environment (cut); the frame as an index, a pointing finger, an act of visual enunciation (deictic); and finally the frame as a container, an envelope of the representation (body).

The dialectical image presents itself as the affection of *finestra* by the fissures (demarcations), which act as a symptom, a desire that haunts the frame throughout its history. In the first part of my thesis, I will start with the frame, its fall, the crumbling of the edges, and its relation to the ethical dimension of framing. I will then follow the frame's journey as enunciative support by pointing out its role in the photography of Niepce, Lumiere's cinema, the self-reflexive gesture of *Camera Buff*, and the windows of *Decalogue*.

In the second part, I will go through the ethical stakes of *The Decalogue*, relating its form as a polyptych to the theme of ethics and Kieslowski's journey of image-making. Then, we will see how the second commandment of Mosaic Law, which primarily deals with images, constitutes the 'phantom root' of the polyptych.

In the third part of my thesis, I will address the dialectics of *finestra* and fissures more directly and apply a phenomenological approach defining the cracks and openings as a motif, visual device, and a metadiscursive figure.

In the fourth part, we will uncover the function of the dialectical image as an opening concerning the index and the photographic nature of the film image and the passage it offers, where the gaze acts as a part of the spectator's body. Then, through a psychoanalytic approach, we will observe the haptic and oral impulses solicited by the hand and the mouth, thus leading the spectator's gaze to the origin and primary object.

Textual analysis of various theories on the ontological connection of art (painting), photography, and cinema constitutes a significant part of my methodology. I then rely on the fundamental element of seeing, thus representation: framing. While I base my research on Alberti's model of *finestra*, Beuvelet's articulation of parameters of the frame serves as a method for establishing the relationship between the dialectical image (representation), the enunciator (director), and the spectator. I follow a shot-by-shot analysis of the films and a heuristic method while adopting a phenomenological and psychoanalytic approach to define appearances and uncover the unconscious of images.

1. ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE FRAME

1.1. A Question Of Ethics: The Crooked Painting And The Order Of Things

In *Decalogue 8*, the same gesture, apparently without importance or significance in the narrative economy of the film, occurs three times and draws our attention to the fate of a painting. After being straightened by a character, it loses its balance, slides on one side along the wall on which it hangs, and finds itself bent over, destabilized, for no apparent reason. The frame collapses, ineluctably subjected to an invisible force that works on it, without either of the two characters in the film being able to restore its balance once and for all. This purely visual phenomenon is not evoked verbally by the characters in the film. Neither Zofia, the renowned ethicist who studies real-life cases of difficult choices faced by subjects in complex moral situations, nor Elzbieta, her younger American translator, who came to meet her in Warsaw, speak of this setting that obstinately loses its balance. At three different moments in the film, each straightens the frame silently, without saying anything, in an almost compulsive, almost secret gesture. They seem not to be able to bear the vision of this frame leaning to the side. This recurring phenomenon, situated beyond words, manifests an unspeakable power because it is unconscious and, in its very repetition, takes on the force of a symptom; obstinately, the frame straightened by Zofia and then by Elzbieta slips and loses its position, retakes its place. It is "abnormal," "pathological," and thus acquires, for us, spectators who have become observers of pure phenomena, the manifestation of an organic imbalance of the image exposed to the gaze. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 29)

Both deal with questions of truth, verbal precision, and balance, of which the material framework surrounding the painting of a landscape is the cinematic representation. “The crooked picture frame symbolizes something of the outside forces which philosophy never seems quite to conquer, even as it disrupts our transmodal sense of balance” (Kickasola, 2016, p. 41). Straightening the frame here means putting things back in their place, (Insdorf, 1999, p. 111) restoring balance to the world, rectifying the way we look at it. However, this truth of the gaze is affected by a symptom: the

frame loses balance and causes the world as a representation to collapse. What these two women adddress here, on three occasions, is the natural adequacy between the frame, the landscape, and the viewer's gaze. It is the protocol of the representation in perspective, formulated by Alberti. What is restored each time is the truth of the human gaze, its honesty, that Zofia and Elzbieta put back in place for the gaze of a possible viewer. In short, they seek to save the frame, to save the *finestra, to* save a gaze whose ethics place spectator and their eye at the origin of all representation. However, each time the frame relapses, the symptom reappears, and the question arises again. The leaning painting and the fragility of the spectator's place bring into play the role of the frame in the act of looking and giving to look. As this inescapable repetition of the symptom underlines, there is something wrong with the representation. The symptom can be formulated as "the present trace of an absent cause." In *Art As Symptom*, Tim Dean writes, regarding Lacan's description of the term:

> Structured like a language, the symptom is first and foremost a sign of the unconscious; its primary message is general, not specific: *the unconscious is here, and it has something to say*. By aligning the symptom with the unconscious (both of which are defined as "structured like a language") and by identifying the truth of the symptom as concealed thanks to a metaphoric subsitution, Lacan aligns subjective truth with the unconscious and implies, moreover, that this truth is hidden. Hence the necessity for interpretation to bring it out. But if the unconscious is hidden, this is not because it lies concealed inside the individual, in the depths of her mind or the recesses of his soul. Rather, the unconscious is hidden in plain view, like the purloined letter in Poe's story. (Dean, 2002, p. 27)

The process of framing the world carries an imbalance that is also a question of ethics. The tendency of the frame to instability, partly taken up by the highly mobile frames of specific episodes of the *Decalogue,* could then be the symptom of a weakening of human law, manifested through a weakening of what separates, contains, protects, designates. The frame manifests its fragility, the risk of its disappearance, but at the same time, by the decadence it imposes, it draws attention to itself and puts the image at a distance from the gaze. At the same time, it denies and reveals the continuity between the world of the spectator and that of representation, obliging the spectator to this ethical gesture to restore and manipulate its function as a container. The frame symbolizes law as the "framing" of truth and the right point of view. It acts on the gaze as ethics acts on the impulse, imposing a rupture, an interval. Ethics is a frame

for the gaze; framing is an ethical gesture that always results from a choice. This is what we learn from Kieslowski's entire oeuvre, more particularly his *Decalogue,* which tackles head-on the question of ethical choice, marking, in his artistic trajectory, the abandonment of documentary for fiction.

These first questions will allow us to cross the threshold of this polyptych, which will constitute our main corpus in this research on the edges of images. Thus, we will fully enter this reflection on the "frame" of the image and its affection. This reflection will take the form of the elaboration and definition of the concept of *dialectical image* considered through its various aspects, in its relationship, as a *fissure* with the Albertian notion of *finestra.*

1.2. On The Ethical Dimension Of Framing

It is very enlightening to follow how the frame takes on the importance and becomes the primary tool for making images in the supports that came out of the opening of Alberti's *finestra* (standard in painting, photography, cinema). The frame becomes a "window," separating itself from the surface to gradually open onto a field that potentially exceeds its limits, thus entering into work with an off-field whose access is condemned by the irrefutable solidarity between the frame and the support in medieval painting. The destiny of the concept of framing in visual arts then becomes an indication of this orientation, which highlights the relationship between a person and the visible they represent, whether it is a fiction or a real place. Choosing, selecting, sampling, and situating the looking subject in their steps are the modalities of framing that tend to establish subjective conduction between the imaging subject and the looking subject, which are superimposed in the imaging operation of the *finestra.*

Alberti gave framing a fundamental role in the constitution of the flat and framed images. The frame was no longer merely a *parergon* enveloping the image *a posteriori and* thus defining its dimension as a material object, a whole, and graspable body, but became the initial line, the basis of representation, preceding the advent of the image, the implicit hint of a cut in the wall, of an opening, the promise also of a potential passage:

> A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the ergon, the work done [fait], the fact [1e fait], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory

> that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board [au bard, a bard] . It is first of all the on (the) bo(a)rd(er) [Il est d' abord l' a-bord]. (Derrida, 1987, p. 54)

The *finestra*, serving as the edge of a hole and the end of a flat expanse, marks out this double dimension of the painted image in perspective, which will be the very object of the pictorial representation, on the axis of its flatness and depth, opacity and transparency of its support. Subsequently, photography and later cinema will give the frame of the *finestra* essential importance in making images. By preserving the luminous trace of the passage considered "real" inside the camera obscura, photography moves the image from the surface to its frame, its boundary, identifying the action of framing a field more than that of covering a carrier. The support covers itself. Although there is a part to be played by choice of photographic emulsion and luminosity; photography is an acheiropoietic image, an image whose resemblance would be established a priori and, according to common photographic knowledge, by a luminous contact, which would paint itself from the initial choice of an imaging subject.

Framing, the process of determining a subject, an angle of view, and a plane value, is no longer simply a theoretical step in pictorial representation that makes it visible as a window on history. However, it takes on great practical importance in the photographic arts since it focuses on most imaging processes. It becomes both the *modus operandi* and the *opus operatum* of a set of decisive choices that constitute the image itself. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 25) Photographic framing thus develops one of the subjective functions that Alberti assigned to the frame in his famous formula: to "please" the picture subject to their liking. The photographic arts, animated or not, become essentially framing arts. The imaging subject is, above all, the one who frames, that is, chooses and seizes, and thus gives themselves as the subject of a framing that is necessarily unique, even idiosyncratic. The cinema frame gives way to the process of which it is the instrument; it entirely exists in the gesture which makes a choice, a cutting, and sampling in the infinite field of the visible. While the frame of the photograph, like that of the painting, remains welded together with the field it delimits, that of the film image emancipates itself from its boundaries and *slides along* the field it stretches, thus making the act of seizing in a frame the very gesture of visual enunciation. In the first Lumière views, the panorama operates as a revelation of the potentialities of mobility. Eugène Promio, the Lumière operator, who came up with the idea of panning on the Grand Canal in Venice in 1896, explains:

> It was in Italy that I first had the idea of panning shots. In Venice, on a boat along the Grand Canal from the station to my hotel, I watched the banks shoot past and thought that if motionless cinema makes it possible to reproduce moving objects, the reverse might also be attempted by reproducing motionless objects with the aid of moving cinema. (Virilio, 2000, p. 19)

In the light of this revelation, Promio somehow fulfills the desire for personal sovereignty that Alberti conferred on the subject of the image. The film image is no longer only the one whose field becomes animated; it is also animated by its imaging subject, who opens the way to a new form of enunciation (through framing) and, at the same time, to a new level of subjectivity (through choice and floating). It reminds us of the Baudelairo-Benjaminian flâneur who finds the means to share a set of visual impressions enunciated by their eye's movements on the visible surface of things: “The arcades were a cross between a street and an *intérieur*. … The street becomes a dwelling for the *flaneur*; he is as much at home among the façades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls” (Benjamin, 1983, p. 37).

And Conor McGarrigle explains as follows:

> Everyone loves the flâneur, Baudelaire's symbol of modernity, the anonymous man on the streets of nineteenth century Paris- drifting through the urban crowd, strolling through the arcades as a detached observer, part of the crowd yet also aloof from it. We can say that the flâneur is defined by his activity, flânerie, the art of strolling and looking, commonly associated with the shopping arcades of late nineteenth century Paris. (McGarrigle, 2013, p. 1)

The frame that Alberti traces "first" is both the basis of the representation for the painter "which is for me" and the one "from which" the looking subject will be able to *consider the* story from the place of the imaging subject. Both the painter and the spectator can, each in their way, consider the story represented. Theoretically, both the imaging subject and the looking subject occupy the same and only ideal place, determined by the point of view, which is none other than the vanishing point, in other words, the place from which the subject flees and speaks in the same movement. Any spectator can thus virtually become the subject of the shot since both are looking out of the window and are at the same vanishing point. Thus, at the level of this subjective conduction from the point of view of the imaging subject, the question of ethics of framing arises. Since the imaging subject determines, through their open subjective point of view of the other subject, who is their spectator, it is appropriate to ask oneself where they place and make themselves see, starting from the finestra, the visible on which his framing comes to make a

statement. The question of the ethics of framing thus comes down to asking oneself about the subjective freedom that the imaging subject is going to leave the looking subject. Consequently, it will be a question of seeing, appearing in the gesture of framing itself, a form of otherness, of contradiction, or reflexivity, likely to separate the spectator's place from that of the enunciator. The ethic of framing is thus here commensurate with the space left to this other, who is in part themselves (the spectator) by the imaging subject. It is a question of creating intersubjectivity between two subjects who share the same point of view. The transformation of the view into a sign through a framing effect operates this passage within the plane. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 39)

The frame plays a central role here in that it cuts the image off from the rest of the visible and isolates it, making it a sign. The ethical question that then seems to arise for the filmmaker concerns how they make this signifying cut that takes the image from the status of a view to that of a sign, from the visible to the readable, a passage that would lift the viewpoint of the enunciator of the image from the viewer and thus lay the foundations for an intersubjective relationship. This passage is based in particular on how the device can be reflected by the image itself, according to the principle of Brunelleschi's initial experience; the device must expose itself so that it corresponds to an ethical posture, i.e., the image must highlight its point of origin, its enunciating subject, so that its viewer becomes aware that it is a statement and not a realistic view, it must thoroughly present itself as an illusion and as a sign, i.e., as a space of play between these two states of the image. (Argan & Robb, 1946, pp. 104-105) However, the untimely movement of the camera transforms the firm limit of the Albertian *finestra* into a porous border, a zone of exchange between the field and the off-field, but also between the body of the spectator and the body of the image. With its crumbling edges, the frame becomes a *fissure*, a slit.

The image with a *fissure* is the image whose rigid frame is weakened by various processes that give the illusion of continuity between the space of the representation and the spectator's space. It is a pierced, open image, promising a physical exchange to the spectator's body. It is also an image with uncertain edges, disturbed by the play of reframing, which reduces the field, sometimes lacerating it, with the help of shutters, in order to give the spectator the illusion of a fortuitous, unprocessed view, having had to accommodate the immediate material circumstances of the shot. Thus creating a dialectical relationship with Alberti's *finestra,* the *image with a fissure* is both a device

and a figure of that device since it appears in the image as a figure affecting the frame. On this second condition, it acquires an ethical dimension, insofar as it brings to light the illusion that it carries within it, in the manner of the baroque trompe-l'oeil[1] which intended to disguise the eye by teaching it to tame illusion. The image is not "well-framed" if objects interposed, abrupt, and sometimes erratic camera movements or elements (shutters, doorways, curtains) obstruct the view. The spectator, subjected to the filmmaker's point of view, feels present in this space. One of the functions of the image with a *fissure is* to create a fictitious presence of the spectator's body in the space of the representation and thus to make it felt; the untimely movements of cameras contribute to accentuating this impression, conforming more and more to the way the human eye naturally travels through the visible space.

The camera movement, the reframing of the field, the interposed objects, the slats of the shutters and other doorways, become, under the effect of a reflexive gesture, signifiers of the device itself, and by this operation, orchestrate the passage from the visible to the readable, from sight to sign, which is the very foundation of the ethical process. The spectator's gaze thus oscillates between the illusion that the device provides and the awareness of this illusion provided by the reflexive dimension of the *fissure*. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 40)

The identification of the process of framing in the creation of the image leads to a kind of visual enunciation in which the eye of the imaging subject would be both the hand and the mouth; this haptic and oral dimension of the gaze constitutes a crucial point that we propose to develop in the final part of this thesis. The advent of the *finestra, which is* weakened in favor of the *fissure,* corresponds to the development of the haptic dimension of the gaze, a gaze which, as in the case of Caravaggio's *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*[2], needs to search the *slit in* order to believe. The stake of the *slit image* is thus that of the credibility of the images. The opening of the image allows the spectator to authenticate the *real* presence of the body. By separating itself from the field and accentuating the effects of framing, the frame of the *finestra* makes us believe in an

[1] See Caroline Levine - Seductive Reflexivity: Ruskin's Dreaded Trompe L'Oeil in Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 56:4 (1998), pp. 367-375 (Levine, 1998)
[2] See Michael Fried – Absorption and Theatricality: Painting & Beholder in the Age of Diderot (1980), University of California Press, p.239

opening, all the more credible as it is fortuitous as if it were a *fissure*, and therefore in the presence of the bodies seen in the neighboring autonomous space thus created.

The notion of framing thus appears very quickly from the moment the perspective digs into the field of representation, or, more precisely, transforms the representation into a field of vision, puts air into the painting, and illusively frees the represented bodies from their flatness, from their material attachment to the support. Alberti says on this subject: “I desire therefore that in a painting there are all the movements. Let there be some bodies that extend toward us; let others recede away from this part, on the right and on the left. Let, then, some parts of the bodies present themselves opposite to the observers, let others recede, let others rise upward, let others go downward” (Alberti, 2011, p. 64).

Existing in a three-dimensional universe, the painters begin to explore the possibilities of the mobility of bodies in the represented space. They also enter into a relationship with the spectator; their volume no longer depends on their spiritual or symbolic value, but on their distance from the viewer, whose gaze becomes the yardstick of their visual importance, and the frame, taking advantage of its emancipation, will be able - later on - to move through the air as well, going towards the bodies, going around them, opening up to the infinite range of possible fields and thus becoming the instrument of choice, the choice made by the subject imaging from a point in infinite space from which to see the body (angle of view) and from a distance adopted concerning this body (plane value). The choice of this point also corresponds to the establishment of a separation between the space of the representation and that of the spectator by deciding on the respective places of a seeing subject and an object seen according to the modus operandi of the perspective view as studied by Panofsky in his famous text that Hubert Damisch describes as a "threshold manner." (Panofsky, 1991, p. 27)

While the process of painting is often progressive, since the painter sees the image while being formed, and the image is born from the work of the hand that deposits forms, lines, and colors within the quadrilateral, the process of making the photographic image constitutes two distinct stages, that of sampling and that of development. While making of the painting is the result of different techniques and knowledge possessed by the artist's skillful hand, the making of the photograph is in the framing operation, which is undoubtedly less a technique of the hand than a choice of the eye, or even of the body that moves this eye. The frame thus replaces the brush with "mechanical reproduction."

(Bazin, 1967, p. 12) The ethical dimension of his imaging activity thus lies in the way he transforms sight into a sign with the help of framing, which amounts to considering the way he solicits the gaze of the looking subject.

1.3. The Dialectics Of *Finestra* And *Fissure*: Parameters Of The Frame

> Foucault was not mistaken when he began his description of the painting (« The painter is standing a little back from his canvas »), and you are struck as you reread his text again, by the emphasis he places on the painter's arm. (…) This is indeed what Velazquez painted in the second version of *Las Meninas*. The white canvas, the « blank slate,» is the reverse of the canvas we see and whose obverse contains, in potentiality, a painting of which we have no knowledge and that is conceived only by the painter who is looking at us – and the chosen moment is the one of suspense «between the fine point of the brush and the steely gaze» (Foucault, 3), before the paintbrush enacts this potentiality of painting, this potential painting that the canvas implies. (Arasse & Waters, 2013, p. 123)

From the first geometrical inscription "on the surface to be painted" of the "quadrilateral at right angles" evoked by Alberti, we can assume that the frame is linked to the appearance of the image as the line is linked to the appearance of the letter. It makes happen, gives substance, and in a certain way defines the space and the moment of enunciation of the visible, of a possible transformation of the visible into the readable. We will try to see, by going back to the sources of this comparison, how the opening of the *finestra* is an act of enunciation in the visual field that makes framing a form of naming things. Or Alberti's famous formula:

> First I trace as large a quadrangle as I wish, with right angles, on the surface to be painted; in this place, it [the rectangular quadrangle] certainly functions for me as an open window through which the historia is observed, and there I determine how big I want men in the painting to be, and I divide the height of this very man into three parts that for me are certainly proportional to the measure that people call braccio. That [measure] of the three braccia, in fact, as it results from the symmetry of the limbs of a man, is precisely the height of a normal human body. According to this measure, then, I divide the base line of the drawn [rectangular] quadrangle into as many parts of this kind as [the line] contains. Moreover, for me this very same base line of the [rectangular] quadrangle is certainly proportional to the nearest transverse and equidistant quantity seen on the pavement. After these [steps], I place only one point inside the [rectangular] quadrangle. In that place let there be the [point of] sight; for me, that point, as it occupies the place itself toward which the centric ray strikes, let it, therefore, be called the centric point. The appropriate position of this centric point is not to be higher from the base line than the height of that man to be painted. On this condition, in fact, both the observers and the painted things appear to be on a uniform plane. Having placed the centric point, I draw straight lines from the centric point itself to the single subdivisions of the base line, which lines certainly show me how the transverse quantities narrow down to sight, if I wish to advance by interval, up to an almost infi nite distance. (Alberti, 2011, pp. 39-40)

Here we will take up this founding and fundamental formula in five points that will

constitute the finestra's five parameters as Beuvelet did in his work. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 47) First of all, as Gérard Wajcman remarks, Alberti, if he does not invent the frame, of which Meyer Schapiro reminds us that, "it was late in the second millennium BC (if even then) before one thought of a continuous isolating frame around an image, a homogeneous enclosure like a city wall." he gives it a new role. He institutes it as the basis of representation, the first moment of creation and no longer the last, that of the isolation and "protection" of the image that Schapiro speaks of and that we find in the framing process. (Schapiro, 1972-1973, s. 11)

Alberti's quadrilateral is not a framing of the image; it is, on the contrary, an opening, the condition of possibility of the suffering image. Beuvelet quotes Wajcman, the window pre-exists the gaze, and with this inaugural performative gesture, the painting begins. The frame is then both the location of the place and the opening of a field of projection, a field of projection in which *historia* will find its place as image and as narrative, that is to say, as predicate linked to a theme. With this preliminary tracing that marks the image before it happens, painting becomes aware of itself; it leaves its pure transitivity at the service of which a technique skillfully worked by the craftsman was put at the service of to rise to the rank of a new concept in the Renaissance that of Art conceived as an act of creation on the model of a cosmogony. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 47)

The delineation of the perimeter of the frame thus operates a distinction and isolation of painting as a medium; one can see in it taking of autonomy of the pictorial field itself, a taking of autonomy which passes by a reflection on its own conditions and by preliminary isolation which is delimited by the frame of the *finestra*. Alberti's treatise is not a technical treatise. It is a theoretical treatise that founds an autonomous art. The inaugural act of drawing the "quadrilateral at right angles" is a way of delimiting the painting, of giving it body, as the treaty's title indicates. In a way, in tracing his frame, Alberti turns the process of representation on itself, writing a poetic art. While the frame can be used to isolate the image *a posteriori* and to distinguish the painting from the rest of the visible to draw the viewer's attention to the place where his gaze should be directed, Alberti's quadrilateral draws the reader's gaze and his own, that of the painter, to the place where the image will appear, even before it exists. Therefore, this quadrilateral will highlight the process of painting; painting naturally takes itself as an object observes itself, and it is this process of construction from the frame that will be the object of the text. Beginning at the end,

Alberti turns the creative process upside down and opens the painting on its own foundations. The frame and its stakes then become the instrument of questioning pictorial creation. In Kieslowski's work, we will follow this reflexive dimension of the finestra and the author's reflection on his own practice as a filmmaker through a specific work on the edge of the images.

Secondly, the importance of the "I" at the origin of the *finestra* should not be overlooked, nor the importance of the action verbs of which it is the grammatical subject and the psychological agent. Alberti gives himself an example, thus establishing the pre-eminence of the one whose importance he will assert in the third part of his treatise; the painter. This approach, by example, is, of course, part of the modalities of transmission of pictorial know-how as it was practiced in the workshops of the quattrocento, which was based on the imitation of the master. By saying "I," Alberti shows his pupils what they should do and sets himself up as an example. But his book is not a manual for his pupils; it is a treatise with a universal vocation which will soon be translated from Latin into vernacular Italian, and what is striking is also the affirmation of the absolute authority of the creator, of his capacity to choose, his subjectivity finds its foundation in this first, inaugural act.

Contrary to the craftsman who works the real, the artist makes it; he does not use the support given beforehand; he makes it for himself. And the basis of the representation is not precise material support. Alberti does not talk about the matter unless it has a significant dimension (like gold); he works the point of view, the framing, the relation to the spectator: (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 48)

> Now the difference between the narrative, Italian norm and the descriptive Dutch mode of painting becomes clearer: on the one hand, the framed picture as an object in the world, the Albertian window through which we look, from a position defined by perspective, at a narrated world; and on the other, the picture that takes the place of the eye itself, leaving the frame and the viewer-position undefined (45). The latter also applies to the position of the painter: according to Alpers, it is dissolved within the picture; the painter, absorbed in attentive observation of the details of the world, “merges” with the picture, anonymizing him-/herself in this kind of “selflessness” (83). In Vermeer’s The Art of Painting this manifests itself in the back view of the painter: “Like a surveyor, the painter is within the very world he represents. He disappears into his task, … Observation is not distinguished from the notation of what is observed.” (168). (Falkenhausen, 2020, p. 62)

He says, "as big as I like" about his quadrangle. In this way, he places himself as a miracle worker, or even as a god creator of men in an imitation of Genesis, affirming the

sovereignty of his decisions. The quadrilateral is thus the fruit of his judgment, reflected or not; it constitutes an ethical act or at least likely to be questioned by ethics, but in any case, a choice before which he stands as a free man. Ethics is mobilized here in its role as an internal guide to the subject's choices; it is not a question of a social morality of painting that would be imposed on the devout painter but on the contrary of an ethic that rests on the subject's potential to act freely and responsibly. There is no other rule than that of the "wish" of the creator, whose gesture the reader should not imitate but the "I." The wish here is not the desire but the moderate but firm expression of the will to the point where the desire meets the just, the desirable. We will thus follow the links that unite the act of framing and choosing, that is to say, of exercising one's free will, approaching framing in its ethical dimension from the aesthetic itinerary and the works of Kieślowski. In many respects, his career constitutes an ethical path in which the work of the frame played an important role, and it is in his relationship to framing as an ethical act that we will be interested in the contemporary fatigue of Alberti's finestra. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 49)

Therefore, an ethical act because of the choice it makes, the Alberti's frame is also a line, an inscription; the line is not a pure drawing. It is not just a dividing line; it digs a furrow, deposits a formula. It is already in the representation. It dimensions the image and assigns it a format, a ratio between height and width. It places the spectator in the space of a particular place and constitutes the emergence of an opening of the pictorial signifier, just as the voice or the stroke of the letter are the emergence of an opening of the verbal signifier. The use of the term *historia* brings us to the field of narrative enunciation. The founding act of painting in the age of the *finestra* is an act of visual enunciation. The subject is no longer in the image, the painter's hand is no longer in the picture. It is no longer enslaved to the symbolic value of the object it represents, it places itself at the service of the subject who formulates the visual statement, it makes it possible to share the painter's subjective gaze. The subject is in front of the image, whether it is imaging or looking, (or both at the same time). In other words, as we will see in a sequence from *Decalogue 1*; « framing is naming. » Gérard Wajcman even goes so far as to turn the formula upside down:

> (…) they suppose an image to be able to be 'true,' i.e. to be able to extract the real from an event, and to transfer that real truth to the spectators, so those can have access to it and appropriate it. It is basically a Christian scheme, Wajcman argues, where God, although he

> is performed as Word (as the first lines of John's Gospel state) functions as image. Because God is defined to be the Word incarnated, the Word become flesh, the reference to radical otherness which is so typical for God in the Jewish bible, has been exchanged for a suggestion of similarity with human sameness. As indeed the Christian myth of Redemption and Salvation tells, the human has again become the 'image of God', as it was the case before the Fall. The Word is again "epiphany"—i.e. image—of totality and/as truth. (Kesel, 2010, p. 173)

We will also follow the framework in its relationship to enunciation, concerned with perceiving, from the images of Kieślowski, the articulations of an enunciation of the visible where the eye expresses itself like a mouth.

What seems to be an essential aspect of the finestra is also how Alberti situates it in relation to the spectator. The spectator is no longer rejected outside the performance; the image no longer ignores them. The painting Alberti speaks of is mainly a fresco painting. Still, of course, it announces and accompanies the rise of the tavolo quadrato; it assigns the image an immutable or ideal place, which is in a relationship with the spectator. It is important to note his concern for the continuity that there must be between the space represented and the spectator's space to make one believe in a real opening and, as we shall see, to make a passage possible. When Alberti says: « The appropriate position of this centric point is not to be higher from the base line than the height of that man to be painted. On this condition, in fact, both the observers and the painted things appear to be on a uniform plane." it seems to suggest a spatial continuity in which the feet can come and go and almost step over the window. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 50)

This illusory continuity between the two neighbouring spaces created by the *finestra* and perspective painting is based both on the location of the *finestra,* and on the size of the men and objects represented according to the imaginary distance that separates them from the spectator. This distance determined by the establishment of the centre point is at the heart of the ethical question raised by framing, it places the spectator at a measured distance as much as it determines a type of relationship of proximity or distance. Alberti says further on this subject: "since no expert will deny that (Fig. 69c) the painted objects cannot be seen as conforming to the real ones unless they are distant according to a very precise relationship." (Alberti, 2011, p. 40)

The painter must be a surveyor, or at least capable of committing himself to respect this equality between painted things and true things, which must be adjusted on the basis of a precise measurement of the chosen distance. The ethic of the *finestra* stands there, in this fundamental principle of the equality between the representation and the true thing, in the

maintenance of continuity and illusion with the awareness of this illusion. The use of the comparative "as" is then essential, the *finestra* is not a metaphor but a comparison, the analogy is explicit, it allows a play of the mind between the illusion and the consciousness of this illusion. Here we address the natural ambivalence of the image, and we will see how the *finestra* allows passages from one to the other, thus establishing a balance that will be the essential tool for the development of images in the Christian West. It is through the use of the *finestra* that Western man tames the image and keeps at bay the danger it threatens him. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 51) This continuity between the two spaces will be the essential part of our analysis of *The Decalogue* and its dialectical images, as will be our final analysis of the stakes of the relationship between the eye and the images. The fifth point developed from Alberti's remarks is based on the dimensions of the human body in this passage relating to the framework it draws. He says as follows:

> I divide the height of this very man into three parts that for me are certainly proportional to the measure that people call braccio. That [measure] of the three braccia, in fact, as it results from the symmetry of the limbs of a man, is precisely the height of a normal human body. According to this measure, then, I divide the base line of the drawn [rectangular] quadrangle into as many parts of this kind as [the line] contains.

What will attract our attention here is the superimposition of the frame and the human body in two parallel formulas. “Divide” is used twice and applies to the quadrilateral and the human body. Thus a parallel is established between the frame and the human body, as well as a proportionality relationship since the unit of measurement of the body, which is one of its limbs; the ‘braccio’ (arm), is also the unit of measurement of the (lower) baseline of the frame, the one from which the representation is constructed. The frame as the foundation of the representation is thus measured like a human body.

We could see here a sort of transfer of the virtues of the *body image* of Pauline theology to the *body image* that the *finestra* establishes and the new role it assigns to the *object-frame* which itself constitutes the material body of the representation which becomes, through the supposed opening of the support, an immaterial body; a view unified by its point of origin. In its reversal of the order of representation, in its very reflexivity, the *finestra* makes the image an autonomous body, limited at the same time as the part of a whole (the historia) to the place where the represented bodies, each in its own place, once dismembered the image whose corporeity then resided in the material background.

(Beuvelet, 2012, p. 52) In her analysis of Velazquez's *Las Meninas*, Vera Beyer accentuates the materiality of the frame:

> On another level, the physical qualities of the frame underscore the correspondence that exists between the mirror and the painting. The mirror is bounded by a black wooden frame with a white stripe along its inner edges. In addition, one can see a red curtain on the foreground of the reflected image. The image of the mirror, therefore, is surrounded by a red-white-black framework. (Beyer, 2006, s. 13)

The frame of the cinematographic image can also be considered as a trace of the body of the imaging subject whose movements and tremors it follows. If he opens a field in front of him for the viewer's eye, he establishes a body behind him as the origin of this field. Identified with the eye that looks and makes the image at the same time, he is at the junction of the body of the image and the body of the filmmaker, at a point where these two bodies are irremediably glued together by the edges of the *finestra.* Vera Beyer continues accentuating the supposed openness of the representation by reinforcing the contrast between the materiality of the frame and the illusory immateriality of the "transparent" background:

> Having considered the relation between the represented space and the surface of the painting, I will now analyse the relation between the painting and its spectator. On the other side of the mirror-axis of the painting, there is a door opening. In this "double" of the mirror, a standing figure just beyond the threshold of the door is visible. It is also possible to trace the vanishing point to this opening, which is thus the central point of the space, as seen from the perspective of the fictive spectator of the image. Hence, the position behind the door frame can be regarded as a préfiguration of the spectator's place in front of the image. The door frame then seems to describe how the image conceives its relation to the space of the spectator beyond its frame. It can be imagined that the viewer in the door crosses the threshold. The light actually does so: it falls from the outside through the frame. This "mirrors" the light that seems to fall onto the very foreground of the image from an opening that is supposedly located just beyond the right-hand edge of the painting. The light seems to cross the limits of the framed space. (Beyer, 2006, s. 13)

That is another field of analysis that Alberti's finestra opens up for us and that we will follow in the study of the framing of the *Decalogue*. We will try to see how the frame, as the index and limit of a body image, can be for the subject looking at the support of a projection of his own body. This narcissistic reinforcement soothes and restores its limits. We will follow how Kieślowski approaches this question through his articulation of the dialectical image and reflections. The place of the spectator's body in the cinematographic device will thus be the object of our analysis.

These five dimensions of the *finestra*, which we take as our starting point in Alberti's remarks and articulated by Beuvelet in detail, are *reflexive dimension* (metadiscourse of the framework), *ethical dimension* (choice), *enunciative dimension* ("I" trace), *phatic dimension (*continuity of space, exchanges/passages) and *bodily dimension* (more or less critical corporality of the frame). We add a dimension that encompasses them all and which, moreover, constitutes the basis and concrete support of the representation of the story; it is the dimension that comes from the architectural origin of the comparator chosen by Alberti, we call it here the *architectural dimension*. (Beuvelet, 2012, pp. 53-54)

The finestra has a solid structure; it consolidates the opening of the field and constitutes in itself a generic signifier of the image (the quadrilateral, its opening, the distribution of the two spaces), "marking the frontier where our space and the space of the painting meet and intermingle." (Arasse & Waters, 2013, p. 31) In Vera Beyer's terms, a frame is "the meeting point of these three spaces," "a manifestation of the relation between represented space and the surface of the painting, on the one hand, and between the painting and the space of the viewer in front of the painting on the other." (Beyer, 2006, s. 12)

I will rely on these dimensions in my analyses of particular works and especially the *Decalogue* through the different supports that modern techniques have offered to the *finestra.* I will study painting, photography, and the cinema screen in this research.

Now, the general hypothesis of this work is that Alberti's *finestra* carries within it a *fissure*, a symptom born of the dialectic of a desire (finding the illusion of the presence of the object in its representation) and of a barrier (architectonic of the frame of the *finestra* that makes a sign), a symptom that we will call here the dialectical image, formulated by Olivier Beuvelet as the *slit image.* (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 54) This *fissure* is present from Brunelleschi's first experiments on the square in front of the San Giovanni Baptistery in Florence in 1425, it is in fact through a small hole that the single eye of the central perspective finds its place as subject at the origin of the image, as Hubert Damisch showed in his *Origin of Perspective*. Without this opening in the surface of the image itself, where vanishing point and point of view are superimposed, the image could not have been validated by its conformity to the reality it represented. And it is through this hole, which creates a passage from image to reality, that the eye confirms the indexical value of the image, as if it were an "index" of the image. This is what Brunelleschi calls

photography. (Damisch, 1994, pp. 136-140)

Alberti, for his part, speaks of "demarcations" in the painting, but these demarcations, considered cracks or defects of the painting, are the lines that delimit the painted bodies on the surface of the painting and of which he advocates the greatest possible tenacity.

> Without doubt, in this drawing of profiles, I maintain that one needs to be careful of this: that it [a drawing] is made with lines above all in the subtlest possible way and in general quite evasive to sight; they say that the painter Apelles was accustomed to practicing [lines] of such kind and that he competed with Protogenes.(28) And because the drawing of the profiles is nothing but the delineation of edges, if in reality this is made by means of a greatly accentuated line, the borders of surfaces will not appear in the painting if not as demarcations. (Alberti, 2011, p. 50)

This anticipated tilting from "border" to "demarcation" testifies to a threat of dislocation of the unified space of his painting, which Alberti feels is looming on the horizon. But what is particularly interesting is that the remedy he proposes to allow the painter to circumscribe the surfaces without supporting the contours and not cracking the canvas, is the use of the famous veil that he calls "the veil. »

> It is of this kind: (Fig. 74) a veil woven of very thin threads and loosely intertwined, dyed with any color, subdivided with thicker threads according to parallel partitions, in as many squares as you like, and held stretched by a frame; which [veil] I place, indeed, between the object to be represented and the eye, so that the visual pyramid penetrates through the thinness of the veil. (Alberti, 2011, p. 51)

Thus, then, if one understands well what is at stake in this discourse of mimetic representation, at the "crack" of the line that circumscribes, Alberti prefers that of the "thinnes of the veil" through which the "visual pyramid" "penetrates," making the entrance of the gaze of the subject imagery/looking into the space of representation the very guarantor of the "truth" of the image. The "fissure" (fessura) or « cracks similar to those that separate the various pieces in a marquetry design » (Damisch, A Theory of /Cloud/: Toward a History of Painting, 2002, p. 28) that he makes it his duty to avoid is in fact that of the fragmentation of the medieval space in which each object defines its place, whereas the "fissure" of the "visual pyramid" is that of the fragmentation of the medieval space in which each object defines its place. The "thinness of the veil" offers a spatial unity and establishes a continuity between spaces because of the possibility of this penetration.

The slit of the "thinnes of the veil" is what we will use here under the expression fessura;

it is this spatial continuity by which the entry of the gaze into the space of representation is played out, and it is an integral part of the Alberti's finestra, in its latent state. Instead of being a crack between the objects represented and thus a space in the adhesion of the eye to the image, as was the case in the order of medieval representation, more symbolic than mimetic, this fessura invites the eye to enter the space of representation. in a unified image to take its mark. What will interest us most in this reversal of the fissured boundary (contour) is that the frame divided into frames constituted by the intersectoral veil serves to abolish the notion of limit and distinction while offering a means of containing and measuring this new accumulation of rubbing shapes. The void thus passes from the thickness of the line of the circumscription to the interface between the two spaces; the disappearance of this crack, which is the black line enclosing the represented objects, is thus achieved at the price of a complete opening of the support, transforming the void of symbolization into the void of the continuity of matter between things and their image.
However, it is important to note that in his famous engraving, *Draftsman Drawing a Nude*, Albrecht Dürer[3] illustrates the possible use of this intersecting veil in which a naked woman is lying on her back, offering the painter facing her the opening of her crotch. The *fessura* that haunts Alberti's *finestra* finds in this its most direct and clearest spontaneous visual formulation, only one hundred and three years after its verbal formulation: the origin.

1.4. Windows: From Alberti To Kieslowski

If Alberti opened his *finestra* in the field of pictorial representation, placing it at the origin of the process of mimetic representation, this opening opened the voice to other mediums likely to develop the visual and semiotic device it established. In this way, we can very well see in the technical evolutions of mimetic representation that are photography and cinema the deepening and the results of what Alberti's *finestra* brings into play—giving credit back to the images while protecting the eye from idolatrous temptation. To establish two spaces, with different, clearly identified statuses (real/representation) but in apparent

[3] For more detailed information, see Barbara Baert - Fluid Flesh: The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts (2009), Leuven University Press, pp.116-117

continuity with each other, to make the frame a place of passage for the gaze, and to do this to abolish the surface of representation and to establish a balance between the adhesion and the distance of the eye from the image. The work of the *finestra,* in its redefinition of the frame and its specific treatment of the edge of the images, makes it possible to restore the aura of the image, which acquires a status of truth while substituting the notion of rationally constructed representation for the notion of incarnation in the matter of the image, thus modifying the regime of the presence of the object in its representation. One could, therefore, speak of the object's weak presence in its appearance, but not zero. Indeed, it is surely no coincidence that the first photograph, like the first film, was taken - for different reasons - through a real window, as if it had been necessary to go back through this origin to reopen the field of representation with the help of a new medium or a new technique. As if a window had to be opened first to open the field. Johannes Grave reminds us that in Alberti's time, windows were rarely glazed, at least in Italy, and that what corresponds to a window in our country today, a glazed opening, allowing the view to pass through but not the body, was more like a real opening that was closed by wooden panels when necessary, the "window" occasionally turning into blinds that allow you to see without being seen. A void in the wall.

> Although Alberti's comparison might seem straightforward at first glance, it poses more questions than it answers. His words seem to suggest a new potential of a picture that opens a transparent view of a depicted scene so that the viewer forgets the medium itself and its conditions. However, this interpretation of Alberti's brief description is based on a concept of the window, which was certainly not obvious in the quattrocento. For example, Gerard Wajcman and Anne Friedberg have pointed out that the forms and types of windows, with which Alberti was familiar in his practical and theoretical study of architecture, were neither transparent nor rectangular as described in his treatise De pictura? In the quattrocento, windows were not made of large, transparent glass panes, nor were they generally constructed in a rectangular form. (…) Earlier in his treatise, Alberti compares the picture's surface with the cross-section of a visual pyramid and then likens this cross-section with a transparent glass surface. Therefore, it would seem the window metaphor emphasizes the almost perfect transparency of a picture.4 However, Alberti seems to have overlooked an important dimension of meaning behind the window-picture relationship because a window is inconceivable without an architectural context, particularly without an enclosing wall. (Grave, 2009, s. 49-50)

In Alberti's mind, the *finestra* is likely *a* real opening, that is to say, for us, a window that is really "open" as he points out when referring to his breakthrough in the wall. However, in view of the dogma of photographic truth, the "miracle" operated by the photographic process rests mainly on the idea of a real exchange between the external space to be

represented and the internal space of Niépce's house, which here doubles that of the darkroom he uses. In the photographic process as it stands, it is the image (and not only the light) that comes to be inscribed on the background prepared to receive it, it enters and passes through the opening, it enters through the window and comes to be housed in the *finestra that Niépce* prepared for it; the coated surface where it will be painted. That is what this initial photograph tells us, which not only borrows the Albertian *finestra* but shows it, puts it into play.

A threshold has been crossed in the dissolution of the background of the image and the constitution of the illusion of the transparency of the support, the fabrication of the image now resides in the play of the uprights of the frame and is a real passage of light, that is to say of fluid, from one to the other of the two spaces distributed by the introduction of the *finestra*. Indeed, as Helmut and Alison Gernsheim remind us in their work, "the world's first photograph" was taken with a camera obscura equipped with an achromatic lens and preceded by a prism to avoid a lateral inversion of the image due to the length of the exposure time. Still, these transparent walls would not, according to Niépce, take away anything from the passage and reception of the image in the camera obscura. That is what is meant by this open window, chosen several times to carry out the imaging operation that will constitute the matrix of the photographic procedures. To receive the image, more than to make it, to take it or trap it in the darkroom where it has ventured, such as the founding principle of photography, its ideal, which is based here on a passage of the image from one place to another. (Gernsheim & Gernsheim, 1969, pp. 55-64)

> Knowledge of the optical principle of the camera obscura images can be traced back to Aristotle; its use as an aid in drawing, to Giovanni Battista della Porta. The photographic camera derives directly from the camera obscura, which was originally, as its Latin name implies, a dark room, with a small hole in the wall or window-shutter through which an inverted image of the view outside is projected on to the opposite wall or a white screen. (Gernsheim & Gernsheim, A Concise History of Photography, 1965, p. 10)

The open window, appearing on the edge of this image, is thus there to signify this operation which, insofar as she expériences a new process more than it aims to reproduce the courtyard of Niépce's house, is a form of metadiscourse.

> The world's first successful photograph was taken by Nicephore Niepce on a pewter plate in 1826 (III. 12), using his first professionally-made camera supplied by the Parisian optician Charles Chevalier. It shows the view from Niepce's workroom window, with the pigeon-

> house on the left, a pear-tree with a patch of sky showing through the branches, in the centre the slanting roof of the barn, and on the right another wing of the house. (Gernsheim & Gernsheim, A Concise History of Photography, 1965, p. 20)

Just like painting with the *finestra,* photography questions its existence from the day of its birth. We are here in the use of the reflexive dimension of the *finestra*. Without being able to directly and objectively link Niépce's window to Alberti's, this recourse to the window shows us that it is in its very practice as well as in its symbolism, the place of the appearance of the image and in the representational perspective opened by Alberti, the place of continuity, of exchange, between the space of the representation and the space of the looking subject. The camera obscura is a kind of single eye whose gaze is preserved by the asphalt of Judea instead of the brush and the hand. The window is this templum where the epiphany takes place. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 60) Thus, according to the mythology of photography and its indexicality formulated by Rosalind Krauss, according to the noème of "it has been" that Barthes gives it in Camera Lucida, Niépce's window is the ‘real’ opening through which the image of the object enters and leaves its imprint in the room.

The "first film" in the history of cinema is attributed to Louis Lumière. It bears the title *Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory in Lyon* and was made in the spring of 1895. It was Louis Lumière himself who framed and filmed this release. He stands behind the *camera, which has been* stripped of its dark side and is now equipped by his technician Charles Moisson with a film drive system that allows him to record sixteen images per second, to make "crank stops" that let out a few movements and a few minutes, and to sketch the first steps of the editing process. However, for the time being, it is a question of receiving and spontaneously reproducing movement by relying on the technical progress of photography and in particular on the instantaneous shooting that the "blue label" plates marketed by the Lumière factories (and which the filmed workers make, thus returning the first film to the conditions of its possibility), have contributed mainly to developing. In this "first film," Louis Lumière is very present; his presence is probably known to the workers who go out; the scene has already been filmed on March 19. However, Louis Lumière is not visible to his workers because he has settled behind a window on the ground floor of a building and « placed his camera at a window across the street » (Perez, 1998, p. 53) in front of his factory.

The window here no longer plays the role of a simple opening, and it also serves to

conceal the body of the operator and his camera; it hides the imaging subject as much as it shows the objects represented, it acts as a slit, like a window with blinds, it allows one to see without being seen. Here again, using a real window to produce the image using a new medium, to invent a new medium, is not explicitly linked to Alberti's *finestra.* But the link is no less potent if we analyze the apparent reasons why Louis Lumière took shelter behind this window to make his first animated photograph. What is at stake here is the invisibility of the gaze and the invisibility of the device. The window's upright does not appear in the field to leave all the room for the monstration that takes the place of the representation and legitimately takes the name of the view. And it is an unseen view. In a way, by erasing the *reflexive dimension* of the frame on which Alberti's primordial line insisted, by concealing the *finestra*, Lumière conceals the presence of the operator, and thus the imaging process, giving the impression of a view that would be the fruit of a visual consciousness devoid of body. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 63)

At the same time, whenever the frame makes itself felt, in some way or another, each time it orchestrates a to-and-fro movement of the eye between gullible adherence and critical cutting, instituting a form of distancing. Cinema, regaining the reflexive dimension of the finestra without losing its power of wonder in the face of illusion, will illustrate Walter Benjamin's formula that "with regard to the screen, the critical and the receptive attitudes of the public coincide." (Benjamin, 1969, p. 14)

It is perhaps on the frame line that the eye balances itself. Through its awareness of the limits and possibilities of the *finestra* (here, the materiality of the screen and the effect of the framing), the spectator becomes an expert. In the first views, the passage of the characters from the field to the off-field reminds us of the presence of the limit, reduced to the fine line between the seen and the unseen. Moreover, the fixedness of the framing, linked both to the material and technical conditions of the shooting and to the aesthetic weight of the fixedness of the images from the model of the *finestra,* which is necessarily immobile, reinforces this impression of the strength of the frame. We could speak here of the *architectural dimension of* the *finestra, a* dimension based on the masonry dimension of the actual window. But even though the uprights of the image lose nothing of their straightness, they tear away from the background, dissociate themselves from the surface of the image to replace it with the notion of a field, an opening subject to the dimensions of the frame. This field, itself giving rise to the off-field and the reverse field, a space

formerly condemned in painting (except for the use of mirrors). Here we are close to the Bazinian conception of the frame conceived as « a piece of masking » (Bazin, 1967, p. 166) which becomes, in the light of this revealed dissimulation, a *masking of the gaze*.

> (…) a frame is also a hiding-place; framing also means hiding. (…) The role of the invisible is more important than that of the visible. (…) Everything that moves, can enter the frame and become visible; but also exit the frame and become invisible. (…) Yes, it is always an entrance-exit, apparition-disappearence. When we say this, it necessarily entails the fact that the visible is potentially invisible, and vice-versa; the articulation of the two things *creates* the cinematographic frame. (Comolli, 2016)

Indeed, what characterizes the cinematographic treatment of the *finestra is* that the imaging gaze is considered invisible, that the hand is forgotten in favor of the eye, which seeks this invisibility to better bear witness to reality without resorting to theatricality, that is to say, to something of the order of writing, play and sign.

The real window used by Louis Lumière for this first view thus testifies to this desire to see without being seen, which will be the condition of credibility of the cinematographer and his realistic paradigm, so much praised by André Bazin, but it also operates an innovation in terms of the question of the passage and the real opening of the *finestra* inaugurated by Niépce. In its founding principle, the first photograph lets the light coming from the object itself, which Niépce and many others consider to be the very image of the object, pass through and enters the spectator's space (house room and darkroom, receptacle representing the eye), in the case of the "first" cinematographic image, it is no longer only the light that enters by passing through the frame, it is the bodies that pass through. The *finestra* is no longer a container nor a "wall of a city;" the limits are porous since there is a void between the uprights and the background of the image. Moreover, the figures can disappear and appear within the field, behind a wall or a door jamb. The frame is like an element of architecture, a square opening in the interior, which refers as much to the wall of a house as to the limits imposed by the human body on the conditions of vision. The other way this view deals with the question of the passage of bodies is, of course, the reversal proposed by the first view. When the operator enters the performance theater, this "exit" responds, which is also an entry into the field, a burst of energy from the workers. One could speak of a fluid flow through the door. To the window behind which the operator stands, the door responds, through which the bodies reach visibility before disappearing into the off-field. The motif of flow, the liquid dimension of the

moving image of the cinematograph, the "stream of workers," this reume « refers to a fluid or liquid perception which passes continuously through the frame. » (Deleuze, 1997, p. 32)

In *Camera Buff* (1979), Krzysztof Kieślowski takes up the device of the first cinematic view in an astonishing way when he portrays his character as an amateur filmmaker, Filip Mosz, discreetly filming from a factory window where he works. *Camera Buff* is the film from Kieślowski that most directly links the question of the making images to the question of ethics. It constitutes a counterpart to the *Decalogue*, and illustrates the second commandment of the Mosaic Law, the very commandment that deals with the prohibition of making and worship images that are mysteriously absent from the polyptych. In the shot that interests us here, after a first noticed success as an amateur filmmaker, Filip decides to make a film about a worker who belongs to the staff of his factory. A humble man dedicated to his task and faithful to his job, whose life is regulated by the necessities of his work. So he follows him as closely as possible, without being noticed, and anxious not to affect his subject's attitudes by the presence of his camera, he films his exit from the workshops from this window that hides him. As in the first Lumiere film, the window here plays the role of shelter and hiding place. Leaning slightly forward to make himself smaller; Filip hides behind the window, which at the same time opens the field in which his character will appear. Seeing without being seen is the guarantee of the authenticity of what is seen; it is as a naturalist on the lookout, as a spy, as an invisible eye that Filip transforms himself to capture "the snapshot taken from life without a pose." But Filip is not seized by shame when the gaze of his boss catches him in the act of concealment. His gaze does not turn back on itself in what Lacan calls "the conflagration of shame by the introduction of the other," it was not his gaze that he sought to feel through the use of this window; it was not a perverse instrument, reflecting the gaze folded back on itself in the position of *object a*, but it was without reflection, opened on something else. Her gaze is transitive; it is not a voyeur's gaze here.

> You grasp here the ambiguity of what is at issue when we speak of the scopic drive. The gaze is this object lost and suddenly refound in the conflagration of shame, by the introduction of the other. (…) What he is trying to see, make no mistake, is the object as absence. What the voyeur is looking for and finds is merely a shadow, a shadow behind the curtain. There he will phantasize any magic of presence. (Lacan, 1978, p. 182)

The filmmaker's gaze is hidden but known as was the position of Louis Lumière, who did

not seek to surprise his workers but not to attract their attention too much so that the scene appears as natural (real) as possible. Relying here on the naturalist paradigm then in force in Romanesque aesthetics and on the ideal of transparency of the *finestra*, Lumière gave birth to cinematographic art through this gesture of withdrawal and refusal theatricality. It is reality becoming a spectacle without his knowledge that founds the *cinematographic* relation of the eye to the world. This sequence highlighted an ethical question that arose at Kieślowski: How to film the real without violating reality? For the moment, halfway between directing fiction and capturing reality, between the image as fable and the image as a document, Kieślowski questions in its fiction the consequences that documentary films can have on the real-life of their subjects. As such, it reflects his art that the author gives himself up in this film in which his morals and his desire are mixed. The little film Filip is making has thus two points of anchorage with the reality of Kieślowski's career. First of all, it corresponds to a documentary film project that Kieślowski had and that fiction allows him to take on another level by making it an object of reflection. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 72) Secondly, it is very similar in form to a documentary film he made two years earlier, *From a Night Porter's Point of View* (1977). He follows the daily life and the blind and obsessive devotion of a very authoritarian, even fascinating, night watchman. But while Kieślowski had marked an ironic shift towards the night watchman, Filip has real and sincere empathy for his subject, whose self-sacrifice is far removed from his ambition as a filmmaker. But this difference in position is not apparent in his film. Filip becomes a simple witness without any interpretative distance, and Kieślowski corrects in fiction the deviations of Kieślowski in the documentary. Indeed, aware of the harm that a television broadcast could have on the image of his model of a night porter, Kieślowski refused to allow his documentary to be broadcast on TV. (Insdorf, 1999, p. 25)

While passing, fortuitously or not, through Louis Lumière's window to film his leaving the factory, Filip and behind him, Kieślowski himself, question the documentary's cinematic device and, in particular, the interaction between the operator and reality. Then it is Kieślowski himself that goes back through this initial device, this cinematographic *finestra, in a* "natural" way, to signify this first condition of the authenticity of the filmed image. The window must hide the operator to represent the real thing. In both cases, whether voluntary or not, this mention of the first film image in this film about the birth of a filmmaker is the expression of questioning about the authenticity of film images and

about the possibility for the filmmaker to grasp reality without affecting it with his presence. That is precisely the ethical question that Kieślowski will continue to ask in its work. In any case, it is around this filmed window, through which a gaze is exerted, that Kieślowski has arranged the elements of the problem, and this is what we will find many times in *The Decalogue.* Many of the shots show people looking through windows, sentinels of the visible; they are behind reflections or behind shutters that are half-hidden, half visible.

The window is, for him, the instrument of the gaze, an allegory of the eye; it mediatizes the gaze by giving it a visible organ. Place of contact and exchanges between the outside and the inside brings into play the body as the primary condition of vision; it intervenes in sum as the allegorical body of vision. We will come back several times to the use Kieślowski makes of windows in its *Decalogue.* Windows have a significant place in it insofar as the ten films as a whole constitute a reflection on *showing* and *seeing*. Still, it may be necessary to observe one of their functions, that of designating, as a *finestra,* taken in its deictic function, the place and the characters whose "represented story can be considered. » (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 74)

1.4.1. Windows of the *Decalogue*

"What one can see in the light of day is always less interesting than what happens behind a pane of glass."
-Charles Baudelaire, "Windows"

> Before, I often used to deal with the surrounding world, with what's happening all around, how external circumstances and events influence people, and how people eventually influence external events. Now, in my work, I've thrown aside this external world and, more and more frequently, deal with people who come home, lock the door on the inside and remain alone with themselves. (Stok, 1993, p. 146)

That is how Krzysztof Kieślowski justifies his choice to situate *Decalogue* in the same Warsaw city, turning his camera towards a real window behind which people's inner life unfolds. The city from which the characters of the *Decalogue* come from and where they cross paths presents to the filmmaker's camera the high façades of its modern buildings, covered with windows behind which the characters stand and live, and whose inner trajectories the viewer will follow in the course of the films. The ten narratives of the

polyptych, which very sensitively blend the visual notations of cinema with the events and dialogues of the short story genre, thus present at the beginning of each episode various "windows" behind which ten singular stories are woven, more or less explicitly involving one or more of the commandments of the Mosaic Law in a concrete situation of daily life. These initial windows, from which the stories begin, are also assimilated to faces, a point of access to the characters' inner lives. They are the place where « pensive » faces emerge, turned towards the spectator. In fact, in the initial idea of the screenwriters, the films were, to begin with, faces caught in the crowd.

> So we wanted to begin each film in a way which suggested that the main character had been picked by the camera as if at random. We thought of a huge stadium in which, from among the hundred thousand faces, we'd focus on one in particular. We also had an idea that the camera should pick somebody out from a crowded street and then follow him or her throughout the rest of the film. In the end we decided to locate the action in a large housing estate, with thousands of similar windows framed in the establishing shot. (Stok, 1993, p. 146)

Windows and faces are thus two sides of the same contact with the neighboring space. In the act of looking, the face that bears the eyes is therefore open to a glance back from the window that the gaze opens, in a way, the contours of my face are the material edges of the window through which I see the outside, it is not only my eye that looks, but it is my whole face that faces and opens my field of vision at the same time. To look is, therefore, to offer one's face as a surface, and to look at the intimate, it is to enter the neighboring space as if through a window that has become a face. The close-up is, moreover, the privileged figure.

First of all, it should be noted that the arrangement of the windows on the façade of the building is in some ways reminiscent of the arrangement of the ten squares making up the medieval polyptych (see next section) from which Krzysztof Piesiewicz drew inspiration for the *Decalogue* project he proposed at Kieślowski. It is thus a superimposition of squares in which different yet contiguous situations appeared, which served as an iconographic and narrative matrix for the cinematic polyptych, so much so that this building conceived by the screenwriters and which will become a *framework city* during the filming (buildings arranged in a square) takes as much from the initial picture as from the desire to offer windows through which to access the souls watching behind. The window thus represents the place of contact between the interiority of a consciousness, materialized by an apartment interior that bears the traces and projections of the soul or souls that occupy it, and the outside world, where the gaze comes from, and which will

pass through this real window to enter everyone's life.

The façades of the city are thus the places where lives and existential problems are stacked up, whose windows are presentations, points of entry, and places for reflection. Suppose the window is for the spectator a means of looking inside. In that case, it is often for the character who stands inside, the place of thought that escapes, the place also where the gaze is questioned, referring to the work that the film proposes to its spectator. The window is very often pensive; looking and thinking, watching and thinking are intertwined, and if the windows at the beginning lead us to look inside, it is so that we can see ourselves thinking about it. As we will see in the course of this work, the glass wall of the window is the essential object of reflection in every sense of the word. To what extent and to what exactly is this transparent material that makes the window and the counter and the screen area open? That will be the recurring question of our analysis based on the metadiscursive images of the *Decalogue* and other films or paintings.

Each episode opens on the façades of buildings in the same city, and one can thus follow in the script, from the very first sequences, the references made to them, which draw, film after film, the contours of the poetics of the window.

In *Decalogue 1*, it is a pigeon that comes to land on a windowsill and so chooses the location of the first story. Behind this window stands Pawel, the young boy whose life will be the focus of the first film. Here, the pigeon is the embodiment of the viewer's visual awareness, whose role will be to "look inside" through the window. In *Decalogue 2*, it is a hare frozen under the snow that attracts the attention of the city's caretaker. He raises his head and slides his interrogative gaze along the façade. The concierge raises his head, and his gaze stops on a balcony that contrasts with the others by its appearance. It has been converted into a loggia, thanks to smoked glass walls, and transformed into a small winter garden. This balcony belongs to the professor of medicine who will be one of the main protagonists of this second film. At the beginning of *Decalogue 3*, the façade of the building is shown to us from a distance, the windows each showing the same thing. What counts here, in this film which will deal, among other things, with the loneliness of lonely people accentuated by family celebrations, is the unanimity of the windows, all decorated, each one declining in its way the common rejoicing. And it is in his car, through the window, that Janusz, the main character, will be approached, as he disguises himself as Santa Claus to join his family behind a window. Cars will also often be used

by Kieślowski in *The Decalogue* as a means of having an inner and outer world on either side of a window. That will be particularly the case in Decalogue *3* and *Decalogue 9.* At the beginning of *Decalogue 4*, Anna appears through an open window. We will see further on that in the film, however, it is only a question here of showing and underlining the place and the role of the window device as a contact between the inside and the outside and as an entry point into the stories, which brings the real window offered by this building facade closer to Alberti's *finestra*. That leads us to take a special look at the beginning of Decalogue 5, where the window is only indirectly evoked. In this episode, which will deal with the most radical transgression of the Mosaic Decalogue, that of the prohibition of murder, it is no longer the solid frame of a window that points to us and introduces us to the character, but a shapeless object that falls from a window and symbolically replaces it in the order that had been imposed from the beginning, as an object pointing to the character. Almost the window itself falls ragged in this episode entirely filmed with a filter that makes the image yellowish, an image eaten away at its edges by shadowy areas that sometimes make it uncertain, ragged, and make it lose its quadrangular appearance. The first affection of the window is linked to the most irreversible transgression of the Law. *Decalogue 6,* which gives a very important place to the window and the glass surface of Tomek's counter, opens with a power failure that plunges the façade of the building into darkness. Later, the murmur of the television sets swells as soon as the power supply returns to normal. This time, the window is used as a television set, a luminous surface that offers itself to the eye and "satisfies" a certain appetite of the eye; this may be a mise en abyme of the series itself, which is produced by TOR, a production unit of Polish television. The set itself, the one that gives access to the stories, becomes *finestra,* the frame where the spectator's gaze must be directed.

In *Decalogue 7*, it is still a window that designates the point in the whole where a new story begins. The prolonged silence is torn by the strident, tragic cry of a child. One of the windows lights up at once. The cry persists. The window here becomes disturbing, the window through which the thief enters, the window of surprise in the middle of the night, of childish fear, of a nightmare. In *Decalogue 8,* it is the exit of Zofia, the ethicist we met at the beginning of this part, who points to her, at the foot of her building, as the film's central character. Zofia, in many ways, is one of the filmmaker's doubles who also questions the ethical choice and the consequences of this choice on existence. Following

a very painful experience that we mentioned at the beginning of this part, she has made this her profession and her major work. It is thus from a voluntary act of a character who is himself on the side from which she looks at the world and people that the story begins, taking the device against the grain by not placing an object of the gaze behind a window but by staging a looking subject who is interested in others. Moreover, as soon as she leaves her building, Zofia meets a neighbor (the philatelic father of the two brothers who will mourn him in *Decalogue 10*) to whom she asks questions with interest. That is the character who puts herself in the position of observation that generally suits the spectator of *Decalogue*. There is no window on the character who is herself, by virtue of his profession and his reflection as an ethicist, a window, a frame, the representative of ethics, overlooking the stories of others.

In *Decalogue 9*, which focuses on the visual device of jalousie as a play on an unconscious desire to see the origin, Hanka leaves her home and suddenly returns, identifying herself as the central character in the film. The window is not directly mentioned, but we find, from the first lines of the narrative, the little Ania from *Decalogue 7* playing in front of the building. However, this scene will not be integrated at the beginning of the film but will appear later, the little girl seen through a window by Romek, the impotent and jealous husband. The intriguing presence of this child thus carries within it the cinematic presence of a reflective window through which she will be seen in the film and become a subject of reflection for the impotent man who then plans to adopt a child. It is no longer the real window in the façade of the building through which the viewer is led to consider the story represented. As such, *Decalogue 9* is an exception to the principle behind the other narratives, which consists of going behind the windows of a building. However, we can still notice this pensive window that the film will reveal around the presence of Ania.

In the series of ten written narratives, the viewer is gradually brought inside the fictional space of this building. Thus, as early as *Decalogue 5*, the authors use the "we" to include the spectator in their enunciation. In the same way, later on, since the episodes are placed in a chronological order that is supported in fiction by the evolution of the climate that bears witness to the sequence of seasons, the last episodes are accessible from the ground, without the obvious trick of the window on whose ledge the initial pigeon, carrying the aerial eye of the spectator, had landed. From the eighth episode, the window becomes the very gaze of a character who is very attentive to others (Zofia). In the ninth, the *pensive*

presence of an already known character (Ania) will have a window at the moment of the passage from the written word to the image. Let us note all the same that in these last two occurrences, The absence of a window does not exclude the building, as a frame for the overall picture, from which Zofia energetically emerges, opening up to her philatelic neighbor as Hanka stops and returns to the origin of her appearance. If the window, which had fallen in rags as early as the fifth episode, is gradually abstracted in the instances of the attentive or pensive gaze, a particular form of the frame remains, the dark and quadrangular mass of the building, ghostly, in a different role, which prevents neither the gushes out of it (exiting the building) nor the returns to the origin. Suppose we add to this the inclusion of the spectator in the film space and the desire to be together expressed by Kieślowski. In that case, we can consider that in these out-of-genre narratives, which are as much a part of the script as they are of the short story and which enlighten us about the authors' intentions, the window as *finestra* gradually crumbles, abolishing the limits between fiction and reality, presentation and representation. That is what the last first written sequence of the series, that of episode 10, "perhaps" says, which after having presented us with "the building where all our characters live" brings us without transition to "the interior of an apartment": metal cupboards, closed with solid padlocks, cover the walls of the room, no carpets, no kilim, no plants. Nothing but cupboards, a large table in front of the window, a bed, a stool as a bedside table and an aquarium where large goldfish float, belly up". The window mentioned here looks outwards; we are in the place of the character, it is no longer seen from the foot of the building or the outside, it has been turned around, and it is the spectator who haunts these places where death reigns, it is the spectator who is in the place of the character who takes the place left empty by the dead man in the episode which will be subtitled "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods." That is his life. A commandment that could just as well be addressed to the two authors, eager for the experience of others, and that this last episode, which turns the opening device of all the films upside down, brings into play in this very last shot where the two brothers, the artist, and the serious man, bend over three stamps while shouting with laughter « A series! ».

1.4.2. From *finestra* to the image dialectics

We have seen above that the presence of Ania at the beginning of the written account of

Decalogue 9 was converted, further on in the film, into a view taken through a window. We have deduced from this that this window, qualified as "pensive," was implicitly present in the written text, as the same modality of this appearance whose « raison d'être » was linked to Romek's desire for a child. Ania becomes visible on the screen only because she is seen by Romek, who is thinking of adopting a child. The visualization here brings to light the thought that accompanied the appearance of little Ania in the writing of the beginning of the ninth film. In the written narrative, the child only served as a link between the films, establishing by his presence a spatial and social continuity, that of the flow of life from one film to another, like the many discrete reappearances of characters, and link the films and extend the neighboring space where the stories take place. In the film, she appears at the moment when Romek, having decided to adopt a child, looks at the object of his desire through that long, thin opening that is superimposed on the opening of a window.

Interestingly, this little girl is observed without her knowledge by an adult desiring, precisely Ania, the character from *Decalogue 7,* whom her mother observed outside the school while playing in the courtyard. Romek observes Ania through the fine opening of the window, which implies that he has moved to see her, joining the gesture to the idea, to choose her and make her the object of his thought, in this reframing, or that she has entered by chance into the narrow field of his vision cut out in the image, like an idea arising in an impromptu way. In either case, this isolation of the object from their gaze and the narrowing of the lateral dimensions of the image give the child's appearance the consistency of an intimate thought, one that is given to oneself in a voluntary movement or one that is welcomed. It is a pure image of the child who occupies, as an inaccessible object, the mind of Romek whose sexual impotence disturbs fertility.

In *Decalogue 7,* Ania's situation is different, more concrete; Ania is Majka's real daughter whom her mother has "appropriated" to save her from a scandalous situation. Here she formulates the plan to kidnap her daughter, to "steal" her from her mother in the hope of (re)becoming the child's mother. Majka's hidden gaze is, thus, for the spectator who does not yet know all the elements of the situation, a predatory gaze, ashamed of his desire, or at the very least uncertain of the desire he hides and manifests at the same time. Foliage, then, serves to shelter her gaze in the space of fiction and allows to mediate it for the spectator who can only suffer, in this camouflage, the material constraints that weigh on

Majka's gaze as on his own. In his impediment, the gaze reveals itself; it is hidden and thus becomes present, visible indirectly through the viewer's third-party gaze in the object that is supposed to conceal it. The desired child, by his mother who has renounced being in *Decalogue 7*, by a man impotent person who will never be able to procreate, in *Decalogue 9*, thus becomes the object of a gaze, which a particular visual device qualifies, in an imprecise manner, by establishing a link between the desire of the looking subject and the fact that he hides his gaze. The slit that is superimposed here on the window, the *fissure* that affects and informs the *finestra*, makes the gaze an object whose peculiarity is to reveal itself by hiding itself. What the looking subject looks hidden is the object of a desire that is hidden, and the device of concealment, which could be considered jealousy, paradoxically makes the looking subject appear and disappear, like the transient origin of a gaze mediated by the object that hides it.

The *slit image* as formulated by Beuvelet will be the conceptualization of this double movement, sometimes operating a dissolution of the subject in what he sees hidden, sometimes a visible edge supporting a return to itself in the reflexive consciousness of the device. All the subtlety of the *Decalogue*, as we will see in the third part, will be to let the *slit image* emerge as a metadiscursive figure while also using it as a simple visual device. The lived slit becomes a thought slit. A comparison between these two hidden views of little Ania can make us understand. Indeed, the use of the slit differs here from the more straightforward use of camouflage in that the slit directly affects the shape of the image, its frame, and its framing work.

In contrast, camouflage rather affects its field and visibility without calling into question its structure and its frame, that is to say, in the background without ceasing to "hold" the image before the viewer's eye. If the two images seem to reveal a hidden gaze and testify to a desire to possess the hidden eye, the status of these images is, however, different. One is a visual device used by a character in search of phallic compensation; the other is a reflexive figure involving the viewer's gaze, who discovers this field before knowing who, in fiction, is looking at Ania. Spatial continuity is simulated by these leaves between the point where Majka and Ania let her look; the interposition of the leaves proves that whoever looks is indeed in the same space as what she is looking at and undergoes (or exploits) the material conditions to see without being seen. The plane being subjective, it is also the spectator who is in this same space, and his field of vision is hindered by these

more or less shapeless green spots that seem to hide him by depriving him of part of his field of vision. The representational illusion of a continuity desired by Alberti in the elaboration of his *finestra*, that is to say, a continuity that is not only a matter of the viewer but also of the spectator is also a matter of the spectator being in the same space and his field of vision being hindered by these more or less shapeless green spots that seem to hide him by depriving him of part of his field of vision. We call here *the phatic dimension* of the *finestra* (Alberti says: "on a uniform plane") perfectly operative. The camouflage plays on the register of the *finestra*, exploiting its phatic dimension without breaking with the quadrangular structure of the image. It is a performance that plays on the illusion of the continuity of space.

> In that place let there be the [point of] sight;(96) for me, that point, as it occupies the place itself toward which the centric ray strikes, let it, therefore, be called the centric point. The appropriate position of this centric point is not to be higher from the baseline than the height of that man to be painted. On this condition, both the observers and the painted things appear on a uniform plane. (Alberti, 2011, pp. 39-40)

In the case of the appearance of Ania from *Decalogue 9*, the spaces are divided into an interior in which the subject is looking, and an exterior in which the person looked at is standing, supported by a top and a bottom, there is no longer any question here of the same floor. But this discontinuity is both affirmed and abolished by the tightening of the frame, which closes off part of the field and creates intimacy, isolation, and a face-to-face, at the heart of the image, with what appears in the window. The window, here, is not the one that gives access to a spatial interior or exterior, built on the model of the *finestra; it is* an entirely different window, worked on both sides, it is long and thin, it is presented as a slit. It constitutes a form of opening for the gaze that will be the subject of detailed analysis in this work. We call here an image-slit, simultaneously a visual device used by a character and a figure inviting the spectator to question his gaze. Thus, for what we have already seen, the *slit image* highlights an affection for the *finestra* through the *fissure* it latently carries within it, and which corresponds to the desiring and fusional regime, that is to say, to the illusionist power of the *finestra*, which, in its original admitted principle, founds an ethical and subject-generating regime in the image. We see that we are here before the ambivalence of the image.

The *slit image* also presents itself as a type of image defined by its frame; starting from the model of the *finestra*, it affects its firmness, gnaws or dilutes its edges, and masks its

separating virtue. Thus, if the *finestra* corresponds to a solid, masonry-like, deliberate opening, whose dimensions we have listed above, the *slit image* itself appears as a shapeless hole, already there (it forces the looking subject to move or it surprises them) opening onto a neighboring space from which the looking subject cannot be seen while remaining under the threat of a third party's gaze coming from that space since the opening is considered real there. The *slit image* thus presents itself as a trend, an ideal structure that works the framed images formed on the model of the *finestra.* It could be said that the *finestra* contains an opening that it carries within it and which, over time, asserts itself in the field of mimetic images by drawing the images towards its model, which is based on these aspects of the slit that will give rise to its functions as an opening to the origin and a passage to the primary object. But before coming to a precise phenomenology of the *slit image* in *Decalogue*, we will first highlight the formal and ethical stakes of it by placing the polyptych in the creative path of its author, and in the reflection, he leads on the relationship of images to the world and the relationship to the world through images.

2. ETHICAL DIMENSION OF *DECALOGUE*

2.1. Question Of Ethics In *Decalogue*

Decalogue of Kieślowski is a set of ten television films, both autonomous and linked to each other, in the form of a television series of medium-length films of about fifty minutes each, produced by TOR, presented for the first time at the Venice Mostra in September 1989 and broadcast on Polish television every Sunday afternoon from 10 December 1989. Two of these episodes, 5 *(Thou shalt not kill)* and 6 *(Thou shalt not commit adultery)*, were first shot and edited into feature films for cinema broadcast and were both released in cinemas in Poland during 1988. Each episode refers to one of the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law. With no autonomous title at the outset, the films are initially presented in the form of a numbered series that forms in itself, in its extent, an eleventh film, a film with episodes, of about ten hours in all, which bears the general title *Decalogue* and which constitutes my central corpus in the elaboration of the concept of the *slit image.*

Therefore, the link between the episodes and the commandment they are supposed to illustrate is flexible, even broad. That is confirmed by Annette Insdorf, an American-Polish translator from Kieślowski, who reports the author's comments about the distribution of commandments in his *Decalogue* as follows: “Some of my actors who were religious didn’t want to act in the ‘Decalogue’ unless I told them which commandment it was about. But this is really not important. One can exchange the sixth with the ninth, the fourth with the seventh” (Insdorf, 1999, p. 71).

Episode titles, therefore, respond more to a journalistic demand to facilitate communication at the time of the first presentation of the films than they are genuinely enlightening elements; they relate to the context but should not imperiously guide the understanding that one may have of each episode.

The starting point is an idea more than raw material. The commandments used in the subtitles get lost in the meanders of the stories that are supposed to illustrate them and find themselves brought into play, here and there, according to various situations in the other episodes. Thus, Rahul Hamid, a researcher at Columbia University, proposed, in an

unpublished text from 1997, but partially taken up by Annette Insdorf in her book, a table of concordance between the episodes and the commandments, highlighting how the commandments are associated with each other through the films. It distinguishes the main commandments from the secondary commandments, which gave their titles to the episodes. It establishes that specific passages in an episode centered on a commandment refer to such and such a commandment highlighted in another episode. However, however relevant this table maybe, whose essential interest is to highlight the deep and reticular link between the episodes, Rahul Hamid does not use, in its formulation nor in its distribution of the commandments, precisely the one proposed by Kieślowski when the films were released, but carries out its distribution, giving episodes 1 and 2 the same subtitle: '*Thou shalt have no other gods before me'* and ultimately reuniting episodes 5 and 6, under the central commandment '*Thou shalt not kill'* without distinguishing their secondary commandments. We can thus count nine main commandments, whereas the total number of commandments (primary and secondary commandments combined) strangely reaches eleven. He adds a '*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,'* which does not appear at Kieślowski, neither in this nor in any other formulation. (Insdorf, 1999, pp. 214-215)[4] Now this commandment is what we will call here the ghost (phantom) commandment of the polyptych, the one that haunts the whole project but is never formulated.

Finally, since the commandments are brought into play in different episodes, and none is strictly attributed to a single one, the absence of the second passes into the background and does not constitute a real object of analysis, except in the interpretation of Véronique Campan. (Campan, 1993) However, this absence seems essential to understand the functioning of the polyptych as a whole, as we will try to show here. Rahul Hamid, for his part, in his distribution of the commandments involved in each episode, goes so far as to restore it; he makes the ghost appear and constitutes an eleventh commandment for the polyptych. He finds a trace of it, and rightly so, in the first and last episodes where idolatry is directly involved, episodes that thus draw limits, a framework that is both narrative - the beginning and the end of the narration - and conceptual, the warning against idolatry that is the object, precisely, of the second commandment and thus seems to open and cut

[4] See also Anna B. Draniewicz – Kieślowski Unknown: How Kieślowski's late films were influenced by his Polishness and his early Polish films (2017), pp. 45-46

the whole work.

Thus, what fundamentally distinguishes the Ten Commandments of the Jewish tradition from the Ten Commandments of the Christian tradition, whatever the formulations through the multiple translations into the vernacular (Draniewicz, 2017, pp. 40-44), is first of all this evasion, one could say this suppression, of the ban on images and thus of the idolatrous fusion. Now, if this absence of the second commandment in Kieślowski cannot be wholly dissociated from this Christian tradition, it cannot, either, be reduced to it on the level of the interpretation of its work. Indeed, this absence finds an essential meaning in the project of the series *Decalogue* because it is congruent with a series of ethical choices made by Kieślowski around this project. Thus, it can be explained on two levels, one on the poetic side, which relates to the urgent context of the appearance of the titles, and one on the aesthetic side of the approach to the work, which relates to a deeper intention that an "automatic" and precipitate choice would have inadvertently concealed. A simple and direct reconstruction of the vernacular starting point of the writing work undertaken with Krzysztof Piesiewicz (forgotten along the way in favor of the ethical structure of the Decalogue), this distribution does not testify to any particular intention of Kieślowski. However, this evasion, if involuntary, is no less timely and intriguing since the second commandment is the one that most concerns Kieślowski as a filmmaker, manufacturer, and great lover of images, engaged in an ethical reflection on the power and truth value of the images in his documentary films, which he renounces precisely at the moment he undertakes *Decalogue*. And is not the renunciation of the illusions of the documentary related to the second commandment, which aims at freeing man from the lures of idolatry? That is the question we will ask the polyptych and the entire work of the filmmaker. Both the *Decalogue* Kieślowskien and the Mosaic Decalogue are rooted to wrest man from his illusions and primary attachments. This commandment is the first injunction in the Hebrew version of the Decalogue. This position gives it considerable importance in the foundation of the monotheism that constitutes the Decalogue of Moses and in the *Decalogue* Ethics Project of Kieślowski. Thus, this commandment which is a ghost in *Decalogue* Kieślowskien, presents itself as the root of the Mosaic Decalogue in Freud's interpretation of it. In *Moses and Monotheism,* Freud presents the second commandment as follows:

> Among the precepts of Mosaic religion is one that has more significance than is at first

> obvious. It is the prohibition against making an image of God, which means the compulsion to worship an invisible God. I surmise that in this point Moses had surpassed the Aton religion in strictness. Perhaps he meant to be consistent; his God was to have neither a name nor a countenance. The prohibition was perhaps a fresh precaution against magic malpractices. If this prohibition was accepted, however, it was bound to exercise a profound influence. For it signified subordinating sense perception to an abstract idea; it was a triumph of spirituality over the senses; more precisely an instinctual renunciation accompanied by its psychologically necessary consequences. (Freud, 1939, pp. 178-179)

He adds a little further on:

> Under the influence of external conditions which we need not follow up here and which in part are also not sufficiently known it happened that the matriarchal structure of society was replaced by a patriarchal one. This naturally brought with it a revolution in the existing state of the Law. (…) This turning from the mother to the father, however, signifies above all a victory of spirituality over the senses, that is to say a step forward in culture, since maternity is proved by the senses whereas paternity is a surmise based on a deduction and a premiss. (Freud, 1939, p. 180)

It is indeed in a rejection of the radical separation from the maternal instance that the cult of maternal deities and idols, those frameless images that one can hold in one's hand, devoutly embrace and carry away with one, undoubtedly resides.

We can also add to these elements that if the distribution and formulation of the commandments of the *Decalogue*, provided by Kieślowski at the request of the critics, correspond word for word to those of the Polish Bibles, they are nevertheless the fruit of a choice that should be understood as a significant creation since these subtitles now accompany the films and often precede their discovery. Thus, wherever they come from, these subtitles exert a semantic framing work on the film's episodes; they guide the understanding of the film. However, they leave the second commandment out of focus, whereas the simple numbering chosen initially makes its absence less "present" and leaves it hovering over the entire project. Moving from a diffuse presence in the same way as the other commandments in *Decalogue* that did not specify its precise textual sources, the second commandment naturally became a ghost when it turned out that it was not present among the selected subtitles.

First of all, as we have already seen, Rahul Hamid widens the list of commandments, making an "eleventh" appear: *'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,'* which he places on his table as a secondary commandment to the first and last episode and which corresponds in the Jewish Decalogue to the famous second commandment. Yet this second commandment is crucial to understanding *Decalogue*. Kieślowski abandons the

documentary form to devote itself solely to fiction and thus marks a symbolic retreat in the making of images that change the regime of truth by cutting themselves off from the direct taking of the appearance of the real object but are more and knowingly present themselves as fictions, artifacts. *Decalogue* partially responds to the injunction of the second commandment, and it shifts the stakes of the truth of images and their relation to reality onto the terrain of fiction; it definitively substitutes false tears for true ones, it marks the renunciation of the illusion of an encounter with the real in the image, as we will see more in Chapter Four.

Perhaps, for this reason, Rahul Hamid restores it, without attributing a particular role to it, as evidence of the first and last film of the polyptych. It seems to have its natural place, even if the sum of the commandments does not correspond to ten.

In another register, the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek brings us another example of the return of the phantom (repressed) commandment. He responds to Rahul Hamid and those who admire the complexity of the relationship between commandments and films and proposes a "Hegelian" distribution of episodes, considering, in his chapter *Lacrimae Rerum*, that the commandments are rigorously shifted. He says as follows:

> How, exactly, does Kieślowski's *Decalogue* relate to the Ten Commandments? The majority of interpreters take refuge in the alleged ambiguity of this relationship: one should not correlate each instalment with a single Commandment, the correspondences are more fuzzy, sometimes a story refers to a multitude of Commandments. Against this easy way out, one should emphasise the *strict* correlation between the episodes and the Commandments: each instalment refers to only one Commandment, but with a 'shift of gear': *Decalogue* 1 refers to the second Commandment, etc., until, finally, *Decalogue* 10 brings us back to the first Commandment. This *décalage* is indicative of the displacement to which the Commandments are submitted by Kieślowski. What Kieślowski does is very close to what Hegel is doing in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*: he takes a commandment and then 'stages' it, actualises it in an exemplary life situation, thereby rendering visible its 'truth', the unexpected consequences which undermine its premises. (Žižek, 2001, p. 111)

In another place in his essay, Slavoj Žižek refers to this second commandment, but in a part where he mentions Kieślowski's refusal to continue shooting documentaries after the experience of the real tears of *First Love* (1974). He poses this essential question: "How, then, is Kieslowski's ban on real tears related to the Old Testament ban on images?" (Žižek, 2001, p. 74)

But this essential question, which involves the abandonment of documentary and the ethical awareness that accompanies it, through the evocation of the part of the Decalogue that is not officially illustrated, is not close to the polyptych and remains, too, a very

present ghost. But the *Decalogue* project, which Kieślowski was not originally intended to produce itself and whose images he will entrust to nine different cinematographers, is precisely the project that marks for him a definitive renunciation of the truth of images and the beginning of an international career as a fiction filmmaker. *Decalogue* then presents itself as the product of an ethical decision, of renunciation, as, in a way, a meditation on the stakes of the second commandment. However, in Slavoj Žižek, as in Rahul Hamid, this return of the second commandment is done unconsciously, as a piece of informal evidence, a symptom giving access to the living unconscious of the *Decalogue,* which is then conceived as a meditation on the two questions that this root commandment bears.

In *Dix brèves histoires d'image*, Véronique Campan tackles the question of the disappearance of the second commandment by making it a deliberate choice of Kieślowski. Refusing any direct illustration to the prohibition of representation, Kieślowski chooses to ask ten times the essential question of the limits of representation. (Campan, 1993, p. 65) In his Lucid Dreams, Paul Coates states that he finds Campan's view on the excision of the second commandment from Decalogue significant, naming it a "structuring" absence. (Coates, 1999, p. 113)

The truth about this absence in the films is complex and ambiguous, it is certainly not a deliberate choice of the authors, but nothing says that it has not been meditated upon, that it has not nourished the work. What I am trying to study here is how Kieślowski chooses to ask ten times the essential question of the limits of representation. If the phantom commandment is not openly illustrated, nor directly quoted in the list of ten words, it is perhaps because the whole polyptych takes it up. Or more exactly, that the whole *Decalogue,* relating to this Law broken down into ten "articles" of which Véronique Campan speaks, would, be a deployment of this second commandment, which would then pass from the status of a ghost commandment to that of a root commandment, thus regaining the founding place it occupies in Freud's eyes in the Mosaic Decalogue. This commandment is the first injunction in the Decalogue of *Exodus,* as in *Deuteronomy,* which necessarily gives it a founding role. It is the first commandment of the one God being born, to have only one God, but an invisible, unspeakable God, without material support. The prohibition of pictorial representation and the idolatry that it risks giving rise to would then be the essential prohibitions, those that establish and found ethics by

affirming the passage from the idol to the symbol, from the image to the word, from presence to absence and specifically in cinema, from sight to sign.

Those questions then come to work on this postulate, which we will push further in the analysis of the films to shed light on the ethical foundations of the *Decalogue.* What is the life and work of Kieślowski that allows us to consider *Decalogue* to be a stake in the second commandment? How were the filmmaker's ethical principles constructed? How are they integrated into his life as an artist that accompanies his work?

In the *Decalogue* itself, what is the destiny of this prohibition of representation which would be based on this commandment, which has become a root commandment, and in what way can each of the episodes be related to this second commandment? Finally, how does *Camera Buff* place himself in front of the *Decalogue,* ten years ahead of time, as a direct stake in the question of the cinematographic representation of reality and thus treat the second commandment in advance? These are the questions that I feel it is essential to ask to establish the ethical framework in which the elaboration of the dialectical image based on the *Decalogue* of Kieślowski will take root. Initially, in a necessary biographical detour, I will question the major ethical turning points in the life of Kieślowski, based on biographical elements often used by critics to enlighten his aesthetic choices and which are thus part of his work. I will focus mainly on his two significant renunciations; renunciation of documentary films, first, when he began *Decalogue,* and then of fiction films in 1994, only two years before his sudden death in March 1996. That constitutes his "legend" as an artist, integrating his work into an ethical approach that plays an essential role in its reception. We shall thus see how the trajectory of Kieślowski in the filmmaker's profession can be related to the questions that the root commandment carries: What is making images and what is there to see in the images? Then, each of the films of the *Decalogue* will be confronted with this commandment. We will then see how what is at stake each time, at the heart of each film, is an attachment of an idolatrous type that one of the characters will have to renounce to emancipate themselves, more or less happily, from an addiction or an alienating belief. It will not be a question of reducing the films to these aspects but showing that the second commandment, an emancipatory injunction, is at the root of the others. Finally, we will see, from the film *Camera Buff* (1979), in which Kieślowski uses elements of his own experience as a filmmaker and leads a pictorial reflection on the act of filming, that the illustration of this root commandment has been

taken up cinematographically by this feature film, which precedes the ten films of the *Decalogue* by ten years. *Camera Buff* can thus be put in relation with the *Decalogue* project, which he partly illuminates and situates in the metadiscursive dimension of his work where the dialectical image takes on its ethical size. At the end of these analyses, which are also intended to present what is at stake in the project, I will be able to turn to the question of the device in which the polyptych is inscribed, as well as to the process of signification operated by the frame that allows the image to pass from sight to sign.

2.2. *The Fright Of Real Tears*: Kieslowski's Ethical Itinerary

« Is, then, Kieslowski's point simply that wearing a mask should serve as a kind of protective shield, as the sign of respect for what should remain concealed? Or is it rather that Kieslowski is fully aware of the dialectic of 'wearing a mask'? » (Žižek, 2001, p. 74)

According to Paul Coates, Kieślowski's work is autobiographical on two levels: The first one is the films' elaborated themes' connection with Kieslowski's personal experiences and interests at the time when they were made. The second one is the emotional link, « which may be partly unconscious. » « Kieslowski's move to fiction films can be seen as an aspect of his interest in an examination of emotional experiences going back to his childhood. » (Hiltunen, 2005, p. 13) Kieślowski chooses its film subjects from his most immediate personal experience, as if he wanted to examine and understand them for himself. What is striking at first glance, reading the various books published on the life and work of Krzysztof Kieślowski, is that the work of the filmmaker and his personal life closely overlap and often merge, united in a kind of confrontation where vocation (compelling desire to make films and faith in cinema) and responsibility (concrete measurement of the effects of this desire and adequate posture) are nourished in constant dialectical tension. It will give birth to meditated work. A cinematographic approach often amended, in the balance between the desire to see and the choice not to see (as we will see in Tomek's renunciation of voyeurism in *Decalogue 6*), the desire to show and the intention not to display (as we will see in the decision to veil his film that Filip Mosz takes in *Camera Buff*).

It is a work and a life in which ethical decision is the keyword. The question of the internal conflict between vocation (intense work and creative frenzy backed by a fundamental

desire) and existence (responsibilities before others; filmed persons, collaborators, spectators, family) is also directly involved in some of his films - starting with *Camera Buff* (1979), where this problem is the main subject, and which we shall observe later - and in particular in episode 9 of the *Decalogue* where a young patient of the jealous cardiologist (Romek), a lyric singer with promising talent, decides to undergo heart surgery to be able to begin the artistic career her mother wishes for her, after having herself appropriated her mother's wish. This theme of the alternative between art and life will be taken up again in the same terms (choir *vs.* heart) and more widely developed in *The Double Life of Véronique (*1991), where Weronika, a lyric singer with a fragile heart, dies in the middle of a concert, having chosen her vocation to the detriment of her heart, of her organic life. Slavoj Zizek speaks on this subject of "an ethical choice between Mission and Life" after having specified:

> This choice, staged at its purest in *The Double Life of Véronique* – the choice between vocation (leading to death) and a quiet satisfied life (when/if one compromises one's vocation) – has a long tradition. The staging of this choice in the narrative of Kieslowski's films is clearly *allegorical*: it contains a reference to Kieslowski himself. Was not his choice that of the Polish Weronika – aware of his heart condition, he chose art/vocation (not singing, but filmmaking), and then died of a sudden heart attack? (Žižek, 2001, p. 137)

The life of the filmmaker and his sudden death following heart surgery in Warsaw when he was exhausted thus contributed to making his personal existence and his very organic life a kind of sacrifice to his vocation, perceived not only as of the fruit of an imperious desire but also, and above all, as the product of an ethical mission, a mission whose content is to be determined. In this work, placed under the light of the second commandment, I will consider that the quest for Kieślowski is similar to a quest for the real in and through the cinematographic image, and to the ethical doubt that inevitably accompanies it. More precisely, it corresponds to the search for an answer to the following question; how far and to what extent can cinematographic representation carry its object within it? The filmmaker thus makes certain films into personal questions about his work, such as *Camera Buff* (1979), where he addresses this theme directly.

In the hagiographical representations that are made of it, the life and work of the filmmaker are thus presented as being made of the same cloth; that of vocation; many testimonies evoke a Kieślowski absorbed by his work, directing and editing in a single continuous eleven-month period, the ten episodes of the *Decalogue* as well as the two

feature films that were made from them, and working at a frantic pace, in sometimes trying conditions. Let us also note that the filmmaker's work and life came to an almost simultaneous end since he died on March 13, 1996, two years after he officially announced his decision to stop making films during the Berlin Film Festival in February 1994. This coincidence then becomes a sign to be elucidated in the biography of a filmmaker who disseminated many of them throughout his work. In any case, it contributes to accentuate the effect of this renunciation, which has not had time to be denied by reality, nor to allow the filmmaker to become "something else" (or simply to live) by placing it as the ultimate act, the ultimate "production" of his career, which poses the questions of artistic creation radically: Is cinema worth living? Is there a cinematographic truth? Is cinema a language likely to reveal it? Thus, whether it is a question of studying his "Polish" period by differentiating it from his "European" (i.e., French) period, or of distinguishing his "documentary" period from his "fiction" period, or of comparing his scriptural collaboration with the lawyer Krzysztof Piesiewicz with his work alongside Hanna Krall, The life and work of Kieślowski, which predates *No End* (1984), follow each other closely, interpenetrate, change together and take on, one with the other, the allure of an informative narrative, of an "artist's life" which has the air of that of a saint whose quest for authenticity, for the truth about cinema or through cinema, seems to be the driving force. All the choices he had to make, whether related to making a film or organizing his life to make films, appear to be the fruit of an ethical path in which cinema is never isolated from its practice's material and social conditions.

The remarkable peculiarity of Kieślowski's career, as it is generally told and as it appears as a watermark in his films, is that it has revolved around the central notion of responsibility, the one he had as a documentary filmmaker and then as a director of internationally recognized fiction. Responsibility as a filmmaker, responsibility as an image showman; for him making films was never a purely artistic act cut off from the material reality that he used as raw material and gave a representation. On the contrary, he questioned at length the regime of the truth of photographic images (photography and film), without falling into either idolatry, which would consist in believing in their absolute truth, i.e., in the real presence of the object in its representation, or iconoclasm, which would consist in seeing them as nothing but a lie, an illusion, a manipulation. Seeking the path of an ethic to the detriment of desire, he has always tried to measure the

effect of his films on filmed reality and its representation in the minds of viewers. That is probably one of the reasons and one of the peculiarities of his initial faith in cinema, a dedication that he put on the establishment of doubt and moral criticism; material reality and, in a way, through it, reality as an eternally adjourned encounter, will always have been at the heart of his work, as the object of a quest that knew itself to be endless and never-ending. *Seeing* and *showing* the two gestures of imaging together in the photographic process from which the cinematographic medium originates, the elements of the prohibition carried by the root commandment have thus never been a definitively decided matter for him. On the contrary, he often questioned, in his films themselves, the relationship of his films to the approached reality, anxious on the one hand to measure the concrete effects of the diffusion of his films on the lives of the subjects he had filmed, and desirous on the other hand to represent as accurately as possible what the appearance of reality brings to light the intimate mechanisms of the human soul. Such is the crest line on which Krzysztof Kieślowski stood, between this responsibility towards reality and his immense desire to pierce the secrets of the intimacy of others; between morality and intrusive impulse, he sought the path of ethics in his errors and renunciations, like the character of the judge who spies on his neighbors and denounces himself, played by Jean-Louis Trintignant in *Three Colors: Red,* his last film.

Belonging to the so-called "Cinema of Moral Concern," (Haltof, 2019, pp. 220-228) Kieślowski is a member of it, from its earliest films, situated its reflection on the cinematographic means of representing reality as it is experienced, in the context of a totalitarian country where the reality represented must conform to dominant ideological discourse. First of all, it will endeavor to restore the link of authenticity to the film image in its relation to reality. It will not cease after that, from renunciations to contradictions, to seek to define the space of truth that can inhabit the film image, finding it finally in fiction, but in fiction very primarily based on real experience and documentary aesthetics. Thus, for those who love his work and seek to understand its inner workings, Kieślowski is often a moral conscience, a filmmaker intensely worked by the effects of his activity on the world, that is to say, his raw material, the real object from which he makes his images. Gradually renouncing the part of reality in the image, he will pass from a faith deeply rooted in the virtues of the documentary image to the making of fictions that are

more and more allegorical, with images that are less and less "open," even if illusory, to reality, and finally renounce the cinematographic image itself.

One of the current reading axes of his work thus follows this initiatory path "from documentary to fiction" However, this common conception of the author's journey, although it points to a clear and significant passage towards a suspension, at the end of his life, of the iconic representation of reality in favor of writing, does not correspond precisely to the validity of his work. On the one hand, he made fiction in their own right from the beginning of his career. First of all, at the end of his studies, at the Lodz Film School in 1966, where each student had to make a documentary and a fiction, and then when he directed *Concert of Requests (*1967). On the other hand, he often mixed documentary and fiction in works on this frontier, blurring it, notably in the early seventies when he "officially" seized the fictional narrative with *Pedestrian Subway (*1973). These works were then "documentary fiction," such as *First Love* (1974) or *Curriculum Vitae (*1975), in which he concretely developed his theory of "the dramaturgy of the real," making the narrative emerge from the facts considered real themselves. More than an illusory linear journey from the documentary to the fictional genre, it is perhaps better to see his journey as an exploration of the different ways of representing the reality of people in film images. In approaching fiction, Kieślowski probably seeks nothing other than the adequate and objective representation of the world, the truth of a visual statement he already sought in his documentary films. His renunciation of the documentary is to be understood more as an ethical choice to work with actors to create true images and go further into the intimacy of humanity, rather than as a loss of faith in the indexicality of photographic images or disillusionment with the documentary status of the film image. But doubt seems to grow over time, and the wicket in its use can express awareness of this failure to meet the real in the photographic image. His trajectory testifies to a long ethical understanding that will lead him to the ultimate decision to abandon the image for writing while keeping the same objectives. This is an apostasy like we find in other lives of artists who have long questioned the support of their creation in their works before giving up creating. However, it is appropriate to specify, at Kieślowski, the exact nature of this apostasy, which is not a complete rejection of cinema but rather a refocusing on its ethical part, its pure scriptural role, the writing of screenplays and editing. Kieślowski renounces filming, that is, making cinematographic images, without abandoning writing

images, that is to say assuming the allegory, the cutting of the sign and the putting into symbolism in the images that others will make. This position of withdrawal vis-à-vis the making of images is, moreover, part of the *Decalogue* project, since, at the origin of his scriptwriting venture with Piesiewicz, Kieślowski had planned not to shoot the films and to entrust their direction to ten different young directors, which he will not do, finally deciding to take charge of the director himself while maintaining his initial desire for withdrawal by symbolically entrusting the "image" of each of the episodes to a different cinematographer. Between his renunciation and death, Kieślowski had time to prepare with Krzysztof Piesiewicz a new trilogy, *Paradise, Hell and Purgatory,* of which only the first and second opus will be directed by younger directors, as he wished. He ended his life as a writer, fulfilling this symbolic passage from the image to the word and responding favorably to the demand of the root commandment.

Beyond the question of the respective possibilities of the two main categories of traditionally accepted films (fiction and documentary), the exploration of Kieślowski is based on the following points of research, of the aesthetic quest, of the search for a cinematographic truth, an expression to be understood as the truth of cinema in its symbolic relationship to the real world and the truth about cinema as a medium. This quest would have led him to seek to give an account, through the means of documentary and then fictional cinema, of the reality of human life, going deeper and deeper into the cinematographic representation of the springs of the human soul and being increasingly concerned with the effects produced by his films on the spectators and the real people filmed. We will also have the opportunity to see that this truth about the human soul essentially concerns its relationship to objects of attachment and images in particular. This question of the quest for the real in the image will be at the heart of the development of the concept of the *slit image,* insofar as it is an opening onto the real presence of the object in its representation. We will therefore come back to it in the last part of this work, in the course of exploring the implications of the motif, the device, and the figure of the slit, to approach images whose frame becomes fragile.

Nevertheless, we can already observe a recurring motif in the films of Kieślowski, capable of visually formulating its quest for the real in the cinematic image. It is the figure of the train leaving and the gesture that a passenger on the platform makes with his hand to catch it, in vain, or almost in vain, which will be the recurring and central motif of this complex

film that is *Blind Chance* (1981). We can understand here, in this account by one of his closest collaborators Hanna Krall, how much the failure of the monk who tries to catch his train to get on board could serve as a support for identification of the director and how much this failure could correspond for him to an actual loss of the object which leaves the subject in ineffable distress, a "terrible pain" she says. (Krall, 1992, p. 19) In the monk's experience, the doors of the train close, but he remains present, visible but inaccessible; the door's window gives access to the gaze, supports the caress but screens the desires of the man who can only touch the door. He sees but cannot enter. The train can embody the status of reality in the image, which can only be touched with the gaze without ever really meeting it. From the beginning of his cinematic career, in his first student film, *Tramway* (1966), Kieślowski portrays this situation in a different version. A student devours a young woman with his eyes on board a tramway but does not dare to approach her directly because she has fallen asleep. He approaches her, hesitates. She seemed to welcome his glances at the beginning of the scene. But once he gets off, he makes the gesture of waking her up by knocking on the tramway window, but the Tramway leaves while he has his hand on the second-hand screen and the young woman is still asleep. We will have the opportunity to rediscover this essential paradigm of the Lacanian *tuchè* as an adjourned encounter with the real in a study of the box offices in the films of Kieślowski, box offices that embody more precisely than train departures the place of this failure in the visible of the cinematographic image. But the situation of this monk, distraught in front of the spectacle of this train that is still there but will soon forget his touch, perhaps allows us to illustrate in a powerful image the cinematographic quest of Kieślowski. Let's not forget, by the way, that the train is commonly associated with the cinema and in a certain way; it is here the promise made by the realism of *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* that reveals itself as a vain promise in the inevitable departure of this train that we miss. The reality that the Lumière brothers' cinematograph promised to make accessible through the image thus escapes like the door of this train that closes and leaves the filmmaker distraught before this incomplete and therefore illusory presence of the object in its representation. The emptiness revealed by this awareness is muddled for the filmmaker who has given himself the mission of developing a "dramaturgy of the real."

This situation will moreover be the core of the film script of *Blind Chance* (1981), in

which Kieślowski proposes three possible outcomes to the race of his character, Witek, on a platform at Lodz station where he tries to catch his train to Warsaw. Each of these three possibilities, which the script links to an element of chance, gives a different version of the story that follows and of this character's life. Each time, the crucial moment in the scene is when Witek's hand is seen reaching towards the handle of the train in a desperate effort to grab it and pull itself to its side. The departure of the train one must take embodies reality here, as the passenger has no control over it, and there is no way to negotiate its presence or absence. The departure of the train imposes itself as a stop beyond which there is nothing more. You take it, or you miss it, the moment of its departure offers only a few seconds during which the potential passenger can reach it. How many times, in films, do we see a hand reaching out desperately to grab the handle of a train to board it? That is a cinematic topos on which it would be interesting to reflect in this perspective. It is perhaps not without evoking the haptic dimension of the viewer's gaze, which seeks to feel the real presence of objects in the filmed image. In a certain way, this train is the reality that always escapes from the hand that wants to grasp it, which both the spectator and the filmmaker want to reach in the image. This successful encounter, shown in the first hypothesis where Witek manages to catch the train, can only exist as one possibility among others; the following two assumptions, starting from the same scene, superimpose and reformulate the conditional the first one where Witek's hand grasped the handle of the train. However, in *Personnel* (1975), Romek's character, attracted like that of *Tramway* by a young girl he regularly meets on a train on his way to work, manages to get into a carriage after running behind the train. The young man's entry into the carriage is filmed from the train itself, thus joining the director and the spectator and, therefore, repairing the monk's failure evoked by Kieślowski to Hanna Krall. Under the effect of a genuine desire for contact with the young girl (the embodiment of the object of desire), he climbs into the moving carriage but remains silent in front of the one he does not dare to undertake. As if liquefied, suddenly he is content to look at her and suppresses his desire to touch, according to a "voyeuristic" posture which was that of the *Tramway* character and will be that of Tomek in *Decalogue 6*.

Let us note here that the success of Romek's operation, which effectively reaches its train, comes in the fiction film that is the closest, aesthetically and chronologically (one year later), to *First Love (*1974), the documentary film in which Kieślowski will go the furthest

in the cinematographic capture of the "dramaturgy of reality." One can see in *Personnel,* the first medium-length fiction film, a reaction to the intrusive excesses of *First Love,* in which Kieślowski replaces real people with actors, for the leading roles, but its cinematographic approach is the same, characters and real people blend, fiction insinuates itself into a documentary film frame. The unprepared viewer may hesitate before classifying the film as fiction. We can then see the meeting with the departing train (metaphor of the dynamic of the relationship to reality) as the expression of the illusion that this film represents for Kieślowski, who then believes he has found a film form that guarantees him to contact with reality in the image (documentary elements) and allows him to avoid intrusions into the intimacy of the other (acting instead of real emotions). As a documentary fiction, this film proposes a kind of compromise between the desire for reality in the image and the ethical modesty that has been imposed on him since his fear of the tears of *First Love.* This balance allows the author to achieve objectivity to restore the aura of the filmed image as a tool of knowledge. The "quite real" by which Kieślowski qualifies his "little drama" perhaps sheds light on the fact that Romek catches his train (the real one) in this fiction and ends up meeting the girl who attracted him. Kieślowski, in 1975, still believes that it can still capture the real in the film image, on the edge of documentary and fiction, in its "dramaturgy of the real." It would take him more than ten years of critical exploration of the possibilities of documentary cinema before the definitive transition to fiction, the threshold of which was marked by *Decalogue.*

Thus, according to our approach, this quest for the real in the image is the driving force and the very limit of the cinema of Kieślowski, whose journey, from its authentic faith in a "dramaturgy of the real" to its renunciation of filmmaking in 1994, two years before his death, is the surest witness. Initially believing in the capacity of cinema to offer him the possibility of touching and capturing the real to denounce and supplant with real images the repeated official images that mystified his fellow citizens who were subjected to the ideological representations of the regime, he gradually left the social and political field of reality, to turn his objective towards the interiority of his characters who have become fictitious, towards the invisibility of their desires and fears, on this terrain where reality has the texture of fantasy, before moving on to writing, in preparation for his last trilogy. The questions of seeing and showing, the only conceivable reality for a film, that of its condition of representation, such will be the rails on which he will pursue his quest on

and through the cinema, notably by putting the film image itself on the loom of his masterful work that is *Decalogue.*

By giving up filmmaking, Kieślowski radically answers the questions that he raised during his creative period, particularly those concerning the filmmaker's responsibilities, whether he makes documentaries or fiction films. And it is through the exercise of choice; he once again expresses his creative sovereignty. This choice is a creation. We have already seen to what extent the episodes of the *Decalogue* were based on this notion of choice. The narrative framework of each episode is based on the moment of a choice, more or less conscious, and on the consequences of this choice. The central theme of ethics, which is the mainspring of the project, of course, poses the problem of choice and action, and there are many films, outside the *Decalogue,* where characters from Kieślowski cut the Gordian knot, choose, act according to their desire and the moral contingencies that weigh on them. Thus, to give an example among the many decisive moments of choice populating his work; we can evoke Kieślowski's latest work, the trilogy of the *Three Colours,* which offers alluring examples of characters who choose, sometimes in a quick manner, to break with their previous life and move on to something else. In *Three Colors; Blue,* Julie decides to change her life after the loss of her husband; in *White,* Karol chooses to return to Poland to rebuild his life after the loss (divorce) of his French wife. Finally, in *Red,* Valentine makes the opposite journey and breaks up by reconnecting; suffering the absence of an invisible lover living in England, she decides to get closer to the Other represented by the character of the old judge spying on her neighbors and ends up meeting her double, younger, in the person of Karin, a young magistrate. The life of the latter seems to double that of the old judge. The choice, the responsibility of the act, whether it is caught up in the hazards of chance, in the remnants of the unconscious, or the fruit of an asserted will, or naivety, is thus a theme dear to Kieślowski, as part of the plot of his films, as an object of reflection. But that is not all; for Kieślowski, cinema is an art of choice in its very creative process. Choice of Vocation against Life first of all, as we have seen, but also the choice of an image against another image, choice of shot, framing, character, and interpreter. According to his practice, the director's work lies more in the art of choosing the images than in the art of making the images themselves.

This task is moreover entrusted with a blank check and excellent, if not total, freedom to

the chief operators in charge of the material preparation of the images. These images are nevertheless eminently Kieślowskian, if only because they were chosen and ordered by him during his editing supervision. Indeed, if Kieślowski does not sign the making of the image, but he signs its articulation in the editing and fully assumes his cinematographic purpose in the film. This is one of the main characteristics of Kieślowski's work and one of the essential data of the *Decalogue* project, since Kieślowski, renouncing the idea of entrusting the production of the ten episodes of the *Decalogue to* ten different directors, as it thought it would do at the beginning of writing the screenplay, finally decided to simply entrust the image to nine different cinematographers, reserving the role of the director it indicates at the same time; that of making the final choices, that of deciding on the image to be broadcast without making *it*. It can be seen as a way of negotiating the root commandment, of making images without making them, or at least of arranging them (choice, cut, editing) without being entirely the author, of stating them without shaping them, a way of making the responsibility of the filmmaker more diffuse, of redefining artistic authority and of withdrawing to the edges of the image, to the level of the frame, the limit, the cut, the decision. Thus, the director chooses the images, and it is therefore in the art of choosing what his cinematographers and actors bring him that his work as a director resides. From creator demiurge, he becomes receptacle, collects, or gathers more than he produces, in that he has remained a documentary filmmaker, contemplative, within his work of fiction.

Homology of the structure thus emerges from the two processes which, both of them, operate an act of framing designating an object taken from the flow of life, then isolate it as it is (the naming effect of the photographic framing and the titling of the readymade) and present it to the viewer. As with the readymade, for photography, it is a material reality that is the raw material of the work of art, and the latter, unlike the other arts, does not transform it but presents it in a certain way; it chooses it. This is what Siegfried Kracauer points out when he makes cinema an art form in its own right:

> Once you start from the assumption that the cinema retains major characteristics of photography, you will find it impossible to accept the widely sanctioned belief or claim that film is an art like the traditional arts. Works of art consume the raw material from which they are drawn, whereas films as an outgrowth of camera work are bound to exhibit it. (…) If film is an art, it is art with a difference. Along with photography, film is the only art which leaves its raw material more or less intact. (Kracauer, 1960, p. x)

It might be interesting to explore further the place of the art of choice in modern creativity and relate it to the arts that give a central place to the act of framing in their creative process. Still, for the moment, it is a question of this, to present how the choice is for Kieślowski the creative act par excellence, a choice whose modalities could have been explored but which will remain his gesture, an act of taking and arranging that is similar to the one the enunciator makes in the linguistic corpus when they formulate their statement. To be an act, a gesture must be definitive and clear, that is, decided. Kieślowski said on this subject:

> Second, I believe that if I do something in a film, sign my name to something, then I ought to stick to it and not change my mind because the situation may have changed. And that's what I do. For example, if I've agreed to certain cuts in a film – and I've agreed to cuts on numerous occasions – then I don't keep them in a wardrobe or under my bed counting on the fact that one day I'll be able to stick them in again and show the film in all its beauty. No, if I've agreed to the cuts and signed the version (if I've signed it, because there are many versions which I didn't sign and consequently the films were shelved for many years) then that's the final version. That's my ultimate decision. (Stok, 1993, p. 75)

The choice is, for him, always a cut and an irreversible cut. To understand synthetically the place of the choice considered as a cut and its relation to the framing, in the work of Kieślowski, we can refer to a particular plan of *Camera Buff* (1979). In this shot, we can see Filip Mosz *choosing* cinema rather than his life as a couple by performing a definitive act with different choices specific to the cinematographic act. His wife has just left him and is leaving the house with their child. Filip then makes the gesture of framing her with his fingers placed in a rectangle, forming right angles with his thumbs and forefingers, and placing them in front of his eyes in a quick gesture that he abruptly interrupts when Irka, his wife, turns around and "threatens" him with her gaze. The gesture of framing, the first degree of cinematographic enunciation, which echoes Alberti's "first" words, carries with it the act of choosing, that is, of pointing to and taking a specific portion of the entire visible field. This gesture of the filmmaker par excellence, particularly the documentary filmmaker, is, therefore, the sovereign choice of the artist, who decides what will be included in the film. In this scene, when his wife leaves him, Filip Mosz chooses his cinematographic vocation in this act of choosing a frame to transform this intimate scene lived in the natural flow of life into a possible show to be shown to his own eyes. Out of his life, Filip follows his vocation, desire, and reason for living. But at the same time, he holds Irka, grasps her in his framing, retains her, appropriates her, gives a haptic

dimension to her gaze. He moves on to another plane. The image is a separation and conservation, mourning, and reunion. This gesture of framing that is both aggressive and contactless, with no other contact than that of the gaze, is also, here, a gesture of cutting, since it seals the end of a love relationship, and cutting is the other side of choice since any choice effectively excludes other possibilities. Taking and cutting are thus the two paradoxical edges of the cinematographic gesture that allows one to choose the image more than make it in a contactless contact.

Slavoj Žižek gives an essential and founding place to a filming experience recounted by Kieślowski, from which he also took the title of his collection, *The Fright of Real Tears.* After placing the documentary approach in the context of an artistic reaction to the distortion of the representation of reality by the communist propaganda of the Polish regime, the philosopher writes:

> Towards the end of the documentary *First Love* (1974), in which the camera follows a young unmarried couple during the girl's pregnancy, through their wedding and the delivery of the baby, the father is shown holding the newly born baby in his hands and crying. Kieslowski reacted to the obscenity of such unwarranted probing into the other's intimacy by referring to the 'fright of real tears'. His decision to pass from documentaries to fiction films was thus, at its most radical, an ethical one. (Žižek, 2001, p. 72)

Kieślowski himself evokes this scene in his memoirs to explain his final passage to fiction; the sentence that serves as an epigraph for Žižek's essay is taken from it:

"But now I've got glycerine. I'm frightened of those real tears. In fact, I don't know whether I've got the right to photograph them. At such times I feel like somebody who's found himself in a realm which is, in fact, out of bounds. That's the main reason why I escaped from documentaries." (Stok, 1993, p. 86)

In *First Love* (1974), Kieślowski pushes its notion of "dramaturgy of reality" to the extreme of its medium's possibilities by following closely, over nine months, a young couple in love who are expecting their first child. Administrative steps to obtain an apartment, an official wedding, faltering studies, food work to support the future home, family daydreams in a square. These moments of "real life" are filmed and edited without commentary, in a concentrated flow of life filmed until the climax of the birth, filmed very closely by a small crew, while the young father himself has to wait outside the theatre. As he points out in his memoirs, the film is an opportunity for the filmmaker to implement the principles he had developed six years earlier (1968) in his final dissertation

at the Lodz School of Cinema under the direction of Professor Jerzy Bossak, entitled *Reality and the Documentary.*

> When I was finishing film school I wrote a thesis called ‘Reality and the Documentary Film’ where I put forward the argument that in everybody’s life there are stories and plots. So why invent plots if they exist in real life? You only have to film them. That’s the subject I invented for myself. Then I tried to make films like that but I didn’t make any – except for *First Love*. (Stok, 1993, p. 63)

Thus, in the aesthetic perspective that is that of the beginning of his career and his quest for reality through the camera, the filmmaker must keep a "chastely" distance from what he is filming, in a posture of invisible witness to grasp what, in the flow of life, can be put into history through the operation of editing and the juxtaposition of shots. The task is difficult and strewn with pitfalls. Thus, first of all, not seeking to replay scenes from the lives of his characters, thus avoiding the fictional limits of Flaherty's cinema, Kieślowski will have to intervene upstream, manipulate his characters, the artificially place them in situations of tension caused by him to film them correctly and at the right time. Thus, he evokes in his memoirs a passage from the film where a policeman comes to inspect the tiny room where the young couple plans to settle down with their child while waiting for an apartment.

> There was masses of manipulation in this film, or even provocation, but you can’t make a film like that any other way. There’s no way you can keep a crew at somebody’s side for twenty-four hours a day. (…) I had to manipulate the couple into situations in which they’d find themselves anyway, although not exactly on the same day or at the same time. I don’t think I ever put them in a situation in which they wouldn’t have found themselves if the camera hadn’t been there. (…) They had a tiny room at their grandmother’s and they decided they wanted to paint it violet. Right, let them paint it violet. I came to film them while they were painting and – this is clear provocation – I sent in a policeman, who arrived and complained that they weren’t registered, that they were living there illegally and could be thrown out. I deliberately found a policeman whom I thought wouldn’t cause much harm, although Jadzia was in her eighth month by then and the whole thing could have been quite risky – an unexpected visit like that could have induced labour. (Stok, 1993, p. 64)

The shots are unique and genuinely capture reality, as the events are not replayed but provoked more or less discreetly by the director. But this reality is "surprised" at the price of a manipulation that inevitably distorts it, following the example of Flaherty's approach in the staged documentary (even if here the staging is discreet and minimal). The image is not free of the filmmaker's intervention. Above all, this behind-the-scenes intervention turns the subjects represented into objects manipulated by the documentary filmmaker's

gaze according to the narrative he almost spontaneously makes of what he sees, excluding any subjectivity of the filmed subjects. The second limitation is the Vertovian dimension of Kieślowski's approach, which implies an impromptu shot that will have to be edited to make sense later on. Since the story he makes is not a long sequence shot, the editing takes precedence over the shooting to make it give back its substance according to the filmmaker's intentions. The sound project, let's remember, is to report a love story by keeping as close as possible to the emotions of its characters and thus to represent what they feel through what they are experiencing. To do this, he must make himself forgotten and at the same time grasp the emotions as they manifest themselves through the bodies, in the pathetic formulas, but also give access to the thoughts of the characters, which, on the other hand, usually are only accessible through subjective speech, through the testimony given by the subjects, outside of appearances. Therefore, it is up to the editing process to replace the invisibility of the thoughts to depict the last ones and make this story a love story and not a bitter sociological investigation into the beginnings of a young couple in Polish society in the seventies. (Beuvelet, 2012, pp. 128-129)

The cinematographic enunciation of the real utilizing the camera and the spontaneous ordering of the shots in the same filmed continuity remain utopian if they become the general mode of enunciation of a documentary film. That is where the idea of direct cinema, making the eye a brush or a pen capable of transmitting the gaze directly and spontaneously. Still, with the exception that in direct cinema, the filmmaker is visibly present in the space of the film, the movements of his body correspond to those of the frame, he is in interaction with the filmed subjects, to whom he speaks, he does not mime the omniscient narration (zero ocularization) of fiction films. The idea of Kieślowski in this project comes up against the limits that the presence of the filmmaker is visible through the jerks of the frame, the intentionality of the framing, and the intrusion of the microphones while being denied by the posture of a mute invisible man that he assigns to it. Except for the crucial moment of Jadzia's delivery, when she looks at the camera as the child emerges from her body, the filmmaker is here a bodiless witness for the protagonists. Still, he is present through the effects of his corporeality that we have mentioned above. Kieślowski's goal is unattainable, insofar as he wishes to film a true story with the elements and means of the falsifying rhetoric of fictional cinema, seeking to capture a "dramaturgy of reality" that exists only in the interpretive gaze of the

filmmaker, who consistently recreates it. In a way, he seeks to speak through the appearance of reality through its cinematographic representation. His defense and illustration of the "dramaturgy of the real" is based on the idea that the image will soon supplant the letter in the hierarchical order of communication, and that here he must invent a new language capable of establishing a new regime of truth in images.

In the famous sequence of tears that Romek sheds on the telephone when he tells his mother that he has just had a daughter, we can also see at work a figure of that visual rhetoric by which documentary cinema can spontaneously enunciate reality. Romek talks to his mother on the telephone, and the filmmaker, here a cameraman from the team, zooms in on the young father's cheek a few seconds before a tear appears and slowly flows down it, a decisive tear that will have a significant weight in the filmmaker's reflection. This spontaneous approach to the cheek where the epiphany of the young father's emotion will take place is both a natural movement of the gaze on the place of the event and an act of enunciation, a figure of cinematic rhetoric, which at the same time frames and names the expected tears. It is to the documentary filmmaker and his ability to visually express what he sees, as one would do orally, that the young person Kieślowski gives the task of inventing this new language. His "dramaturgy of the real" would then be an art of articulation—a narrative of the appearances of material reality formulated by the camera. But failing to grasp on the spot - and in the field - the opportunities of this articulation.

The intrusion into the intimacy of the filmed subjects and the modesty of the filmmaker, the ethical questioning, then become, jointly, the major problem of his cinema which thus highlights the fictitious part of our construction of reality. Although very chaste in comparison to what commercial television will later produce in terms of intrusion into the intimacy of the people filmed, this film brings an ethical issue to the documentary approach of Kieślowski and constitutes a turning point and an essential awareness in his career as a filmmaker. Arriving at the gates of the interiority of his characters, refusing in this film to interview them directly to remain within the framework of a purely cinematographic approach to reality, he finds himself caught in a conflict between his intention to probe the souls of these "real" young lovers and the difficulty of sticking to external appearances, to the outward manifestations of their love. The result of the conflict arising from this extreme attempt at an intimate documentary is that, in the film, the

cinematographic representations of this desire to intrude into the intimacy of the filmed subjects; close-ups of faces, long and thin microphones that enter the image like a spear captured tears and the presence of the filmmaker during birth also denote, indirectly, this intrusion by putting the spectator in a position that is itself intrusive. Jadzia's gaze at the camera during her delivery clearly questions the presence of the filmmaker and brings into play the spectator's gaze, and the intrusive presence of the microphone, sometimes entering the field as a weapon to "prick" and probe the real, is also a way of unveiling the device of image-making and physically manifesting the intrusive, even threatening, aspect of the cinematographic gesture. The theme of intrusion into the intimacy of the other is a recurring preoccupation of the fictional work of Kieślowski, which then presents itself, for one of its parts, as a metadiscourse on his career as a documentary filmmaker, as a reflection on the cinematographic representation of reality. It brings into play this dialectic of the desire to see (scopic impulse, investigative impulse) and the ethical responsibility of the artist who makes the images. This perspective will, be at the heart of my approach to the dialectical image and its relationship to the frame, notably through the question of the place of the spectator's body superimposed on that of the filmmaker, but here, to illustrate and understand the ethical concerns of Kieślowski, with its ethical vow of chastity, we can evoke the moments when the question of intrusion into the intimacy of the other is brought into play in his work.

In his very first fiction, *Pedestrian Subway* (1973), we can see staged a hidden scopic activity, a discreet observation scene in which the spectator is put in the place of the "voyeur." The two main characters, a separated couple who meet again, hide behind sheets of paper stuck on the shop's window where the woman works, installed in an underground passage in the center of Warsaw, to follow passers-by and observe a series of situations without being seen. One can then see, through a shapeless opening consisting of a tear in the paper, one of these passers-by knocking on the closed door of the shop, and one can see the expression on his face without him knowing he has been seen. We find here, the figure of the eye stuck to the opening, to the hole in the canvas, which will be repeated several times in his fictions and especially in the use of filters gnawing the edges of the images. It is, in a way, a prototype of the *slit image*, developed by the cinematographer and chosen by Kieślowski to bring into play, symbolically and physically, the presence of the spectator in front of the image. We can thus observe, in

this first fiction film, how Kieślowski's reflection on the cinematographic medium and his work as a filmmaker meet Slawomir Idziak's work of making pierced images, images with shapeless edges, torn images. *Camera Buff* (1979) is the film in which Kieślowski questions his practice of documentary filmmaking the most since it tells the story of the first steps of a filmmaker who discovers both the possibilities of his camera and the articulation of the shots in the editing and the responsibilities that fall to him during broadcasting. However, it is in a documentary, *Railway Station* (1980), that the question of intrusion is brought into play, notably with the staging of a progression from a documentary image taken on the sly (discreet or hidden camera) to a video surveillance image taken by a camera hanging on the wall and directed by a "guard" from his surveillance booth. Thus, the concealment of the voyeuristic eye that prevails in the documentary approach only ends in video surveillance (which does not hide) to assert its power of ownership over what it films. Video surveillance becomes the institutionalization of the supposed hold of the photographic gaze on the world taken unexpectedly. The documentary image is thus invented to establish a voyeur-type visual device that relies on the invisibility of the spectator's eye and sensor of reality to authenticate the documentary (indexical) aspect of the image. It is, of course, a document, a witness of its time and its object, only if it is presented as a pure sampling of any external intervention, an invisible witness of what happens when one is not present.

Decalogue 6 is entirely devoted to this question of the intrusion into the intimacy of the other since it tells the story of Tomek, a solitary young postman who observes Magda, who lives across the street from him. The intrusion here will take the form of an intimate caress, since Magda, sensitive to the scopic desire of her young neighbor, will invite him to caress her intimately, converting the haptic tension of her gaze into an erotic act, which will trigger in Tomek an involuntary ejaculation and a terrible shame that will end in a suicide attempt. In the extended version of episode 6, Tomek's scopic intrusion into Magda's intimacy is the starting point of a short, still, authentic love story. The young man's voyeurism is presented as an act of love, as a loving veneration of the image of the woman, and that the act of seizing the intimacy of the other gradually turns into Tomek's increasingly chaste love, to which Magda responds by becoming a seeker and then finally a voyeur. A space for loving play opens up, where places are exchanged. Far from confining the relationship to a predator/prey relationship, Kieślowski thus jointly works

on the interest in others and their manipulation by the gaze (or for the gaze) - her character subtly slips from one to the other - without ever adopting a definitive moral point of view. Love, compassion, and manipulation work together.

Another example of reflection on the intrusion into the intimacy of the other through the gaze, in *Decalogue 9*, Romek, having become impotent, spies on his wife Hanka, whom he suspects of cheating on him, which turns out to be true. He eavesdrops on her telephone conversations and even goes so far as to listen to his wife's lovemaking with her lover and hide in a closet to follow one of their encounters in an apartment in downtown Warsaw in person. The sequence that tells this scene opens with an exciting shot that shows us the two lovers talking, as Hanka has decided to end their relationship. The spectator is then directly put in the place of the jealous husband; without prior explanation, he discovers the scene from a recessed place whose two black margins of the image tell us that it is hidden. The image then takes on the appearance of a slit through which the scene is approached. Lateral movements of the camera allow the jealous spectator-husband to follow the couple's actions in the room; a movement to the left will enable us to see what is happening to the right and vice versa. These displacements are the trace of Romek's will, the fruit of his desire to see; they also establish an intermediate zone, made up of the dark uprights of the image, the doors of a cupboard like we'll find out later. These uprights develop an intimacy between the viewer and the looked at, excluding, as it were, the rest of the visible world; they tighten the contact by the operation of the physical device they establish. But beyond the effect of this narrowing and "verticalization" of the image surface, which brings it closer to the door (passage) than to the *finestra*, this slit also signifies an intrusion into the intimate space of the observed subjects. Thus formulating the ideal of the cinematographic process of sampling the appearance of reality, which presupposes the invisibility of the operator to authenticate the purity of the truth of what the image shows, the slit is here a mise en abyme of the very process of documentary cinema in which reality presents itself as independent of the source of the gaze that reproduces it by looking at it. At the price of an assumed and manifest dissimulation of its origin (its visual enunciator), the image acquires truth. In other words, it is because the spectator knows (believes) that he is not seen thanks to the dark margins of the image. After all, he sees his invisibility, his absence, and that he deduces from this that the filmed subjects are not in representation but "split," naked like the image, leaving access to their

interiority, to the truth of their desires, that the image becomes for him intimately and therefore true. Since the true image must necessarily present itself as independent of the one who sees it (or who films it), it is necessary to stage to visualize the disappearance of the origin of this gaze (filmmaker and spectator). The slit in the image then becomes a kind of rupture in the separation of spaces (the space of the representation where the gaze is carried and the space of the spectator / the object and its subject). Also, it manifests a rupture in the separation of bodies since the subject of the gaze finds himself without a body (thinks he is absent), a rupture that allows an intrusion into intimacy, as a visual consciousness without a body. But Romek's desire to see the intimacy his wife has with the young student will not be satisfied; the intimacy does not seem to lend itself to the sight, it is a dialogue of rupture between the woman and her young lover which will reveal her not to the eyes but the ears of Romek; beyond the forms and appearances, she is accessible only deprived of resemblance, in the cut of the verbal sign. This will be the great lesson of this episode, which concludes with a verbal reunion between the two characters on the telephone, the film's central element and narrative pivot. The phone itself is an instrument that separates the visible from the audible and thus allows the intimate to come to the fore. The actual encounter of the other and his intimacy, which is the object of Kieślowski's quest, is not played out in the image and the visible realm, where there is nothing to see but absence, reality slipping away the train leaving. Presence is in the spoken word, which, thanks to the telephone, essentially abolishes the "invisible," distances and separation of bodies. On this statement, episode 9 ends; on the phone, Hanka asks Romek if he is there, he answers: "I am here." (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 141)

The telephone associated with intrusive activity in the intimacy of the other is also very present in the latest film of Kieślowski, *Three Colours; Red,* where it appears as one of the springs of the plot. The character of the retired judge, Joseph Kern, spies on his neighbors using a system of telephone conversation hacking. Thus, he has access to his neighbors' most intimate concerns and knows their alcove secrets without even seeing them. The loss of sound or image, the loss of one part of the other and therefore symmetrically of one's own presence, such is the price to be paid for intrusion into the intimacy of the other, since it can only take place from a blind spot (telephone, distance from the lens, concealment in the closet) where the subject of the intrusion plays dead himself. The old judge will find himself before a court to answer for his intrusive actions

and it will be learned that he has denounced himself to the authorities. The final gesture of renunciation at the end of a practice of intrusion in which Slavoj Žižek does not hesitate to see "rather obvious self-portrait" of Kieślowski. He says:

> The Judge's 'sin' (secretly listening to the private phone-conversations of his neighbours) involves precisely the unpardonable act of anonymously penetrating others' intimacy, of 'trespass'. So is it not as if the judge is making documentaries which 'go all the way' and violate the barrier of intimacy? And, insofar as the judge is, up to a point, Kieslowski's rather obvious self-portrait, does he not stand for a temptation of Kieslowski himself? (Žižek, 2001, pp. 72-73)

We can also add to this series of works questioning the intrusion into the intimacy of the other, the situation of the couple formed by Véronique and Alexandre Fabbri, the puppeteer who manipulates her to bring her to him in a café at the Saint Lazare train station and then seeks to recount his experience of splitting up with Weronika, his Polish alter ego. The puppeteer is here like an allegorical double of the director himself, who seizes the life of a real subject and turns it into that of a character in his fiction. Véronique is a character for him. It is by grabbing her intimacy, this very intimate and ineffable relationship to Weronika, that Alexandre Fabbri, the narrator who pulls the strings of his life, will, in a way, cross the line. The staging of her life, her being seized by a gaze that, however loving it may be, remains radically foreign to the inner relationship she has discovered with this other person, herself living in Krakow, will bring the relationship to an end.

This form of intrusion by appropriation into a fiction of the elements of other people's lives is precisely what Kieślowski and Piesiewicz did when they wrote the stories that make up *Decalogue*, based in particular on cases that Piesiewicz had to deal with as a lawyer. This dramatization of reality differs from the "dramaturgy of the real" that Kieślowski advocated in his early years. He had tried to experiment within his documentary fictions such as *Personnel* or *First Love*. Perhaps, at the dawn of his international career and with the revival of this theme in *Three Colours, Red,* his latest film, the second and final renunciation of Kieślowski, the renunciation of fiction. This intrusive impulse, which he managed to tame by renouncing documentary, seems to him here to come back to the task of capturing the lives of others through the fictitious narration of the narrative weave of events experienced.

Let us first look at the problem Kieślowski has with the film's effects on the people being

filmed. The author was concerned about the laughter sometimes heard against his main character as a night porter during the first theatrical screenings of his film *From A Night Porter's Point of View* (1977), which he did not agree to broadcast on television to protect his main character from hostile public reaction and a celebrity experienced at the expense of the person concerned. The character is indeed very unfriendly and of a regulatory rigidity that makes him a fascinating incarnation of the regime; while letting him boast of his zeal and proudly demonstrate his innate sense of denunciation (his distraction is to denounce fishermen without licenses and children who do not go to school), the film draws an ironic portrait of this exemplary guard who proclaims that rules are more important than people. Kieślowski explains his refusal to rebroadcast the film:

> But in 1980, they really wanted to show it on television. And I did exactly the same thing as I had done before; that is, I absolutely disagreed because I thought that if the film was shown on television then it could cause the porter greater harm. His acquaintances, family, neighbours, daughter, son and wife would see it and would either make a laughing stock of him or humiliate him. I didn't need that, especially as I didn't have anything against him personally. I was against a certain attitude which he represented. (Stok, 1993, p. 75)

In the same way, the shooting of his documentary *Railway Station* (1980), on the surveillance devices of Warsaw's railway station, was the occasion of another awareness for the filmmaker:

> With a half concealed camera – we'd hide it a little with our backs or we'd shoot from far away using a telephoto lens – we tried to observe people's reactions to these lockers. (…) at four or five in the morning and the police were there waiting for us. They seized all the footage, all the negative, which we'd shot that night. (…) If I make recordings and promise secrecy or discretion and the film or tapes are stolen then I'm still responsible. (Stok, 1993, p. 81)

We can add to this awareness resulting from experiences in filmmaking, that of his cinematographic double, Filip Mosz, the character of the amateur filmmaker in his film *Camera Buff* (1979) who decides to veil the film of his documentary by exposing it to the day. He was working to denounce the misappropriation of a sum of money allocated by the state to a communal structure to rehabilitate housing for television games. Still, when he learns from his factory manager that this sum was used to rebuild the slaughterhouses and start building a nursery school, he renounces his film, which would then represent a threat to these actions, and veils the film already used instead of sending it to the laboratory. His director tells him to be careful, when he speaks, not to demolish anything, a warning that the reality here addresses to the filmmaker.

These excerpts from his memoirs testify to the attention paid by the filmmaker to those he filmed and illustrate how he should exercise his responsibility. Without a prescription, and linked to an initial commitment; he did not place himself in the hollow of the invisibility of the filmmaker, an innocent witness to the world, but stood, although sometimes hidden, before his responsibilities as a showman of images, wrapping the passage from filming to broadcasting in a series of precautions aimed at linking the film to reality in the least conflictual way possible.

He was thus concerned about the effects of the broadcast of the film *First Love* (1974) on the young couple he filmed and was reassured to see that their relative popularity did not disturb them in their daily lives and that the film had a very substantial interest of providing them with housing. This aspect of his work with his models is illustrated in *Camera Buff* (1979), where we see Filip Mosz, the double of Kieślowski, coming to the side of the worker he filmed to attend the broadcast of the film on television. It is probably this ethical requirement that will eventually make the practice of the very naturalistic documentary impossible - according to the principles of the "dramaturgy of the real," which was his at the time, insofar as this genre is based on the myth of the invisibility of the camera and the immateriality of the filmmaker's body, which has become pure visual awareness of the flow of life. It thus establishes, in a way, his irresponsibility or, more precisely, that innocence that would, in return, guarantee the purity of the filmed reality. Yet this idea of an innocent capture of material reality in its appearance does not resist the moment of diffusion and projection, which transforms the sample into an image enunciated by an imaging subject and thus the appearance of reality in the spectacle. What had taken place without a declared witness in the flow of life becomes a representation, the center of gravity of the action shifts from its purpose to its form, its visual appearance (the act becomes its representation when it is broadcast). (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 145)

But the effects of the documentary image are not only exerted on the filmed subjects who find themselves caught up in the broadcasting system and the narrative of the issue; they are also manifested in the relationship between the camera and the material reality it seeks to capture as it is to represent it truthfully. It is because, however discreet it may be, thanks to the light means of filming, the camera is not invisible, and the film's image is marked by the desire of the filmmaker, who thus weighs on the reality that they grasp. During the shooting, the film begins to exist as a project, and the protagonists' behavior is modified.

The night porter overplays his role, responding to the director's expectations, who has moreover made a selection of people for his film, just as a fiction director would do a casting. Kieślowski explains his preparatory work:

> When I started work on the film I knew who I was looking for. (…) I'd been reading all sorts of diaries which were published by the Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza (The People's Publishing Co-operative) in Poland but which few people read. (…) There were all sorts of titles, and in one of the books I found the diary of just such a porter. (Stok, 1993, p. 78)

Therefore, the reality on which the filmmaker's gaze is focused is not advantageous. Still, it corresponds to a scenario already chosen for its cinematographic virtues. In the context of a documentary film in which the director seeks to bring out of reality a dramaturgy imagined and written in advance, the guardian becomes an actor, aware that his attitude will become a spectacle. Slavoj Žižek points out this limitation in his essay on the filmmaker; after mentioning the fact that in role-playing games, the players are more authentic than in the fiction of their "real" life, he notes:

> As a proof of this dimension, one should evoke the uncanny feeling one gets when watching Kieslowski's documentaries: it is as if (real-life) persons *play themselves,* generating an uncanny overlapping of documentary and fiction; in Bentham's terms, they function as their own icons. When, in *From a Night Porter's Point of View* (1977), the factory porter – a fanatic of strict discipline, who extends his power even into his personal life as he tries to control everybody and everything – insists that 'rules are more important than people', he does not immediately display his innermost stance; it is rather that, in a reflective attitude, he 'plays himself' by way of imitating what he perceives as his own ideal image. (Žižek, 2001, p. 75)

Despite the founding myth of documentary cinema as a neutral and perfectly objective recording of reality, the film is an artificial image and not a mere sight. The filmmaker is therefore responsible for the pictures he broadcasts, whether or not he has made them materially, he is the origin, the primary cause, his expectations formulated with the operators and characters. He informs the images, and it is because he intends to show them that they exist, they are at the exact time sampling and representation, gaze and object watched. More than the author, he is the person responsible for it, the one who is accountable to others, and this is how Kieślowski has seen his career as the person responsible for the images he broadcasts. His various renunciations are part of this perspective of responsibility. Having set out very early on in a quest for reality in the image in the hope of re-establishing a truth in the face of the visual lies of state television,

he placed his faith in the documentary image and aimed for a total and transparent representation of reality through the reinvented means of cinema. However, this quest for truth in the image has been sprinkled with disillusions and observations that have led Kieślowski, to successive renunciations, which we can understand, at the risk of some simplifications that must be kept in mind, such as an ethical passage from the visible to the readable, from the image to the written word, from the idol to the symbol. He gradually renounced documentary in favor of fiction, political criticism of the images of the communist regime in favor of introspection, then renounced directing in favor of writing alone, in a movement that nevertheless never ceases to question, in and through his films, the relationship of the cinematographic image to the reality it represents (the question of illusion, idolatry, voyeurism) and, on the other hand, was concerned about the real effects of his films on the people filmed and on the spectators.

2.3. The Second Commandment: “Ten Times The Representation”

In the history of this exploration of the possibilities of the cinematographic medium constituted by Kieslowski's work and life, *Decalogue* thus represents a significant turning point, it marks the definitive abandonment of the documentary and the "dramaturgy of the real" and proposes a reflection on two levels; on renunciation itself as a manifestation of the ethical choice and on the idolatrous type of attachment that it is supposed to break. Kieślowski, taking ethics at its Judeo-Christian root, in the ten words that aim to orchestrate the passage, in man, from the immediate satisfaction of the impulse to ethical renunciation (or postponement of enjoyment), will put into the image, ten times, the renunciation of a form of idolatry understood as the belief in the real presence of the object in its representation, (i.e., more broadly, the belief in the truth of images and, beyond that, in the truth of statements) mourning, in passing, the capture of an object. The documentary of reality in the image was the great illusion of his first period. After having wanted to substitute a "true" reality for the "ideological" reality represented by the official Polish authorities, his work seems to have turned towards the real subject of his reflection; the need and conditions of a belief in images and how criticism of this belief leads to freedom through the exercise of ethical choice. His journey allows the viewer to

share his meditation on the questions that haunt the second commandment of the Mosaic Law: What is making images and what is there to see in the images?

Without making them (he makes each director the fundamental factor of the images) while making them (he remains master of the choices and the editing), with distance, he will make images that will teach their spectators, from narrative situations that themselves involve a process of mourning or renunciation, to let go of their seduction without, far from it, totally denying themselves to their gaze. The position of Kieślowski vis-à-vis his images in *Decalogue* is therefore ambivalent in that, on the one hand, he will often imitate the images in the documentary, seeking to give an impression of direct opening onto the space of representation, through the use of the *slit image* device. On the other hand, he will provide his viewers with the means to understand the *slit image* by letting it emerge as a metadiscursive figure. At the same time, a device and a figure, the *slit image*, is to be taken as a form that thinks of the cinematographic image in its relation to the material reality it represents and in its relation to the filmmaker and behind him, to the spectator. The *slit image* supposes within it a *finestra from* which it signifies, as a form, in the movement of a fall of the frame, of an end of the painting, a crumbling of the bodies' limits. Thus the work of Kieślowski on the image by the image is part of this ambivalence of a work that is entirely fable and fully imagined discourse on the images of the fable. Unlike his early fictions, such as *Pedestrian Subway* (1974) or *Personnel* (1975), which resemble documentaries filmed with a shoulder camera in a spontaneous visual enunciation, to the point that *Personnel* can be considered a documentary about real people playing their own lives, *Decalogue* offers a more stable image, which retains the documentary aesthetic of the interposed objects over which the gaze must pass to reach the object or character, and often uses the slit pattern (looks at the camera, doorways, images with margins, interposed objects, blinds, half-open curtains) and contests and questions the frame of the images, but takes a distance from the work of the slit by making it an object placed at a distance like these curtains which, running along with the frame's upright, open onto the pictorial representation. The *slit image* will thus make it possible to think about this process of unveiling and contribute to formalizing this mise en abyme of the device, which has haunted painting since the invention of the tableau.

We can thus see that, if in the documented fictions of its beginnings, the *slit-frame* is used in the first degree as a simple device to give the illusion of the presence of the spectator's

body in the space of the representation, to make one believe in a documentary image, in a certain way, in *Decalogue*, the *slit image* is used in the second degree, as a figure putting the device into the abyss, it is put at a distance by the work that the polyptych imposes on the spectator's gaze; by the mise en abyme of the other visual devices, by the movements of the frame that sometimes deceive the spectator's eye before disguising it, and by the position that he often assigns to it, on the threshold of the representation and in the place of the characters, in the manner of Velázquez's *Las Meninas*.

The *slit image* is here as much a device of monstration as a means of bringing the device itself into play; it shows and is shown simultaneously, which makes the *Decalogue* a visual meditation on the image and, in particular, on cinema. Appearing as a recurring pattern that brings into play the characters' gaze and thus puts the spectator's position in the abyss, the *slit image* already appears almost like a concept in the polyptych of Kieślowski. By this pattern, Kieślowski allows the spectator to carry out a purely visual reflection on the cinematographic device. In this respect, the use of different visual devices (windows, doorways, glass doors, various blinds, car windows, glasses, ophthalmological apparatus) and different supports (television screens, computer screens, photographs, posters, paintings, mirrors) is essential, leads us to think that a displacement of cinema towards these other forms of devices has been operated to bring into play not the letter - the concrete device of the cinematograph - but the spirit - the relational structure, (eye - surface/area of appearance - represented object) and the iconic texture. Kieślowski's work, initiated by the need to challenge distorted representations of reality, gradually questioned the medium he used profoundly. *Decalogue* is thus situated at the two careers of Kieślowski, that of a committed documentary filmmaker and that of a filmmaker who has become an "artist" preoccupied with the means and ends of his art is at the crossroads. In this approach, the *slit image*, as a softening of the rigidity of the frame, presents itself as questioned by the formlessness of the quadrangular shape that the frame fixes of the images, its reign over the organized field ("composed" in painting) for him, conferred to the image in perspective since Alberti. It will be interesting to see further how this disintegration of the limit also affects the subject's place, enunciating the image and, by conduction, that of the spectator. By using these frames that highlight the surfaces and uprights through which scopic activity takes place, Kieślowski gives its polyptych a metadiscursive dimension that makes it a great meditation on the gaze and

its attachments.

What haunts the polyptych as a whole and in its formal and ethical project is therefore the second commandment of the Mosaic Law - the ghost commandment of the polyptych, which is also the root commandment of the Mosaic Decalogue, the one that the polyptych does not directly illustrate - which is the diffuse object of all the episodes, if we are interested in what the images in the film say about film images. Thus, it is not exclusively in the subject matter of some of the stories where the scopic impulse is brought into play (*Decalogue 6* or *9*), nor by directly showing the gaze, that this meditation is carried out, but most often by guiding the viewer's gaze, by superimposing it on that of a character without clearly establishing this internal ocularization (credits of *Decalogue 6* and the closet scene in *Decalogue 9*), by losing it in the space of the film (glances through windows at the beginning of *Decalogue 4,* lateral connection through the dark and then the elevator scene in *Decalogue 9*) or by confronting it with images in which an essential element is left waiting and ends up being revealed elsewhere or later, revealing a hidden dimension within what was seen. It is a question of playing on the visible conceals of the unspoken yet visible and putting the verbs ‘see’ and ‘know’ in friction. To look then becomes to cast one's eye over a signifying gap and remain in a state of waiting for what the visible can mean in the familiarity it gains for our eye. Thus, each film opens with a shot or sequence that awakens the viewer's gaze, this way of beginning by diverting the viewer's attention to the images themselves, to their potential for meaning and illusion, to their place in the cinematographic device. Each time, it is a question of orchestrating an appearance differently. This appearance will awaken the viewer's gaze better to call attention to his relationship with the image.

The first episode thus opens with the main point of his plot; the melting of the ice covering the pond where little Pawel will die. It is precisely this frontier between frozen and trembling water, between fixity and fluid movement, that is put forward, showing us in advance the place of the disappearance and reappearance of Pawel's body, around this dialectic of fixity and mobility, life and death. When the spectator sees this precise point of the frozen body of water, he does not know its meaning, and it is only in retrospect that this foreground can make sense in his memory. The film image is a place of passage and an apparition.

The second episode opens on an enigmatic plane where hearing precedes sight in the

process of appearance in the field. The field overlooks a void; we see the large city courtyard where the episodes are filmed, and the sound of what can be recognized as a rake scraping the ground is heard before a gardener appears, emerging from the left edge of the frame, collecting dead leaves. The frame does not go towards its object, but it is the object that enters the field, posing from the outset a separation between the sound field and the visual field that we will often find in the polyptych. This foreground draws the viewer's attention to the work of the frame and to the role of its edge as the place of the apparition by showing precisely its passivity as a receptacle.

The third episode opens with a blurred image, resembling an abstract painting, where light spots appear slightly colored while the words of a song written by a probably drunk man are heard. The enigma posed by this first image is lifted quite quickly; it draws attention to the quality of the resemblance and to the capacity of the photographic medium to tend towards abstraction, reminding us that this process is not necessarily a faithful sampling of the appearance of things, but that it can also distort them to the point of shapelessness. The film image is a representation.

The fourth film begins by thwarting the spectator's expectations and thus discreetly announcing that he will later try to deceive him. Appearing in the semi-darkness of her apartment, Anna looks through a window equipped with shutters and seems to project her gaze outside. The next shot places us on the other side of the window. Still, contrary to what we might expect from this connection, we are not outside in front of Anna's face, but in front of a window overlooking an interior, a room where an older man appears lighting a cigarette and also looking out through the shutters. The next shot shows us the other side of the window. We thus remain inside, and the sequence of shots, accentuated by Anna's gesture of retreat, which subtly corresponds to the man's forward movement, gives the impression that they are each on one side of the same window (they are both on the right in the picture, however) and that there is no outside here. The spectator can then alert their gaze to the ambiguity of appearances and possibly prepare for the opposite, which will inevitably be done further on in the film; appearances are deceptive. The film image is an inner window.

The fifth episode opens with a mise en abyme of the very process of cinematographic representation. The sound completely precedes the image, which is presented as an illustration of Piotr's words, appearing, as Anna did in episode 4, coming out of darkness,

in the middle of the golden frame of a mirror that looks more like a painting. Here it is the very process of the appearance of movement within the painting itself and the use of the frame as a representation of the highlighted Law. The sixth episode opens on a plane that holds a great surprise for the viewer. He sees a woman, Magda, in profile and soon discovers, in the course of a slight panning to the left that follows her movement, that she is standing behind the window of a ticket office. An air hole appears in the middle of the screen that brings into play the haptic dimension of the gaze, as we will see later. That is the unveiling of the illusion due to the transparency of the support and the appearance of an opening in the film's image that draws the viewer's attention to the cinematic medium. The film image is a perforated surface.

The seventh episode begins with a traveling shot along the facade of a building in the city where all the stories take root. Once again, it is from the soundtrack that comes the questioning on this image, a child's cry is heard, and then one of the windows of the facade lights up, a reminder of the rule that governs the organization of the polyptych in the scenarios, relating to the desire of Kieślowski to go and see behind the windows of the building. The approach of the illuminated window at the opening of the episode then appears as a mise en abyme of the film itself. Whatever the degree of truth of what is shown, it is only ever shown through the intermediary of the *finestra.*

The eighth episode opens with an image whose status is precarious and uncertain. Filmed with a camera on the shoulder, the flickering foreground shows us, first of all, the grey floor of a building courtyard in a forward movement that takes us under a carriage entrance. Two hands then appear from each edge of the frame, that of an adult and that of a child, whom we follow without ever seeing the characters' faces. This shot is a memory, a reminiscence of the past, the event that will resurface in the plot since the child and the man holding his hand will be two characters in the episode. But at the moment when the spectator discovers this image, interspersed with the pages of the credits on a black background that breaks the continuity of the movement, he is unaware of these enigmatic images and finds himself carried away by the movement, taken by the hand like the child, he enters the space of the film and can thus question his relationship with the filmmaker, who takes him into the visible without giving him all the keys to understanding the images.

Episode nine begins with Hanka suddenly waking up in front of her mirror. At first asleep,

the young woman suddenly stands up on her bed and names her husband by looking at herself in the mirror in front of her bed. She becomes a reflection for herself when she names her husband, calling him out of what is easily thought to be a nightmare. The gesture of awakening, of the return of consciousness in the middle of the dream, of the charm of dreamlike images, refers in a certain way to the awakening of the spectator himself.

Finally, the last episode opens with a real idol. Artur comes running onto the stage; he's in the middle of a concert. A quick second shot shows us his brother Jerzy trying to find his way through the crowd of delighted fans and waving at him. Artur shouts out injunctions into his microphone, one by one repeating the prohibitions of the Mosaic Decalogue and inciting the listeners to transgress them. Idol against Law, it is here directly the ethos of the series formulated in the foreground. Each beginning of the episode thus invites the spectator to solve the enigma of a shot that opens the reflection on the image as an object of attachment and as the place of an adjourned encounter, the place of absence in the full appearance of presence. This process of bringing into play the device of the film image at the beginning of the fictional film had already been used by Kieślowski, in its first fictions, as a sign of initial awareness.

But it is more strongly present at the beginning of *Camera Buff* (1979), a film about cinematographic images. The first shot shows a hawk melting on a chicken that it devours in front of the camera, as in an animal documentary, before we discover in the next shot that it is the dream of Irka, the young wife of Filip Mosz, the character principal. The degree of truth of this sequence suddenly changes when the viewer discovers that it was a dream, that is to say, a lure of the mind whose impression of reality is no stranger to how the viewer's eye adheres to the image of the film, as Jean-Louis Baudry has shown. The actual killing of the chicken by the hawk, filmed in a documentary manner, thus became doubly fictional because it was presented as a dream, that is, as a scene that never happened, even in fiction, and because the following fiction shot retrospectively changed its status. Paradoxically, what presented itself as a documentary image quickly turned out to be nothing more than a dream in fiction. The irony is a montage figure that Kieślowski will often use in *Decalogue* to change the credibility regime of a shot retrospectively. Dreams and nature documentaries are thus happily linked by their effect on the belief they generate in the one who sees them. Thus, it takes on a particular significance in opening

the film, both as a premonition of a danger that may befall the couple and, as we suggest here, as a play on the medium itself by the image, which corresponds to the film's project. Kieślowski thus marks the beginnings of his first fictions as the threshold for him of a new reflection on the film image in and through the film image as well as an ethic of cinema, since it is then a question of conferring on the fiction film, through this reflexivity of the medium, a metadiscursive dimension and of placing under the spectator's gaze a kind of rule of the game that we find in different forms on the threshold of the *Decalogue.* However, the work of awakening the spectator's gaze carried out by Kieślowski throughout the *Decalogue* does not stop at the foregrounds of its episodes, which are there only for a cautionary tale. He irrigates each of the films in the form of a problematization of the relationship of the viewer's eye to the image of the film, starting from what lies at the heart of the second commandment, the rejection of idolatry understood here as a belief in the presence of the object in its representation and as a fusion of subject and object, which sometimes amounts to the rejection of fetishism for truth in favor of the ethical act, the one that protects life (*Decalogue 2*). It is developed in each part of the polyptych by questioning film images' status, texture, and relational dynamics. In this way, the second commandment, which is not officially illustrated, is brought into play ten times and gives meaning to the whole enterprise.

In *Decalogue 1*, in the beginning, a woman we don't yet know looks at a television screen in a shop window, the image of a child running towards the one filming it; he is in a building that looks like a school. The spectator does not know who she is or who she is looking at, and the tears that appear at the corners of her eyes remain enigmatic. The child approaches the camera and the viewer with a smile on the television screen, the image passing in slow motion. In the continuity of the first section, the shot returns out of the dramatic context at the end of this first episode and concludes it. The second occurrence of this shot is not a repetition of the same images but a repetition of the same scene. Following the first, which had been interrupted by a freeze-frame showing the child's face, he resumes at the end. He continues forward frame by frame so that the whole episode seems to stand within this shot, embedded between two still frames of this video film, the meaning of which the spectator has then understood. The child running is Pawel, the woman's nephew crying in front of the window. He was filmed in his school when the television came to report on the public health campaign offering a daily glass of milk to

every schoolchild, a propaganda film, therefore, which becomes the child's grave, his memorial. Indeed, Pawel killed himself by falling into the frozen water his father had allowed him to ice-skate. The viewer sees the same image again, but with a knowledge that allows him to see much more than he saw the first time. Here, the orientation of the reflection is twofold; it allows us to understand that an image takes on meaning in a context and that the visible alone fails to make itself understood without the intervention of a word that "frames" the gaze and subtly brings into play the subjective relationship to the image. To any passer-by, this child is just a child and this film, shown on a television set in a window, is just another promotional film. But for the woman who watches it, this image is about a ghost, the child who embodied life itself in this report on the benefits of milk becomes the specter of a dead person, and this image, an object of memory. The propaganda image thus finds a new value, and in a way, the whole episode contributes to giving this inaugural image its power of memory. At the end of the film, Krzysztof, desperate over the death of his son, goes to a church under construction and knocks over a makeshift altar on which an icon of Christ was enthroned. The image falls, and a candle just above it lets its wax flow over the eye of Jesus, who then seems to be crying. Krzysztof's revolt against idolatry and iconoclasm, who blindly believed in his scientific spirit, idolizing science (computer calculations of the speed of the melting of the ice and physical verification the night before) give purely visual life to the image. She weeps wax by a material coincidence that becomes a visual sign.

Another figure in this work of awakening the viewer's gaze is offered to us by the case of a passage from one image texture to another. In *The Decalogue 2*, a two-step approach to photographs hanging on a wall allows the viewer to become aware that he is looking at an image and at the same time to apprehend the photographic nature of the cinematographic image. At the beginning of the film, Dorota, the woman whose husband is dying and who is pregnant by her lover, listens to the messages on her answering machine. The shot begins on the camera and slides vertically along a wall where photographs of mountain landscapes are hung. At one point, during this upward movement, the frame of the film image corresponds to the frame of the photographic image it shows so that the latter occupies the filmed field and thus becomes what the film shows. Having no more part of the wall or the visual presence of the boundary, we are in front of this photographed high-mountain landscape that nothing, not even immobility

since there is camera movement in the seemingly unlimited field of the photograph distinguishes from a film image. It is here the photographic nature of the film image that is at stake; in the absence of separation between the field of photography and the wall, the illusion is complete, and the viewer finds himself projected into another place, while the movement shifts them again and makes the limit reappear. Later in the film, towards the end, the editing of Kieślowski establishes an image texture equivalence across a field/background, taking the viewer from a shot of Dorota to a shot of the photograph she is looking at that of a man with his face covered with a ski mask and goggles he is assumed to be her husband. Her gaze in the photograph is sharp and steady; she suddenly turns her head and looks out of focus so that the viewer expects someone to appear, but it is this ghostly figure (her husband is ill, and she thinks he is going to die) who is facing her. The frames of the film image and the photographic image are superimposed, but this time, without movement, in a fixed shot, so that the climber seems to be looking at Dorota as well. The presence in the image of Dorota and the enigmatic man is equivalent in visual terms, although the viewer knows that one is an image of an image while the other is a direct take. This knowledge, put in place by the shot mentioned above, which shows that the wall of Dorota's apartment is covered with photographs, allows the viewer to understand and recognize here the photograph placed, in equivalence, against the backdrop of the shot on Dorota's gaze, and also allows her to free herself from an illusion. Since the image of an image is like the image of reality, since a photograph fits naturally into a film, it is because the film's image is itself a pure representation, an image and not an opening. It is here the fetishism of truth that is distanced by ethical choice. Dorota wants to know the truth so she doesn't have to lie to her husband if he survives, so she is prepared to lose her child and any chance of having one in the name of truth, a refusal of lies. In the same way, the teacher, if he refuses to lie, if he is too attached to the truth, that is to say, to the relationship between the statement and the real, will find himself in the position of condemning the child. That is why, knowing that the sick person is recovering, he announces the opposite to Dorota, who is about to have an abortion, and urges her to renounce it. He thus saves the child's life, renouncing a form of idolatry of the truth. The ethical break is here, very clearly a source of life.

In *Decalogue 3, it is* the question of the lie and the fiction he creates that is brought into play as an illusion from which the characters and the spectator learn to free themselves.

Above all, it should be noted that the film's distribution system, as seen by the viewer for the very first time, has a very interesting aspect since the date at which is supposed to happen on Christmas Eve, 24 December, is the date the film was broadcast on Polish television. Kieślowski had insisted that the episodes be broadcast from December 10, 1989 so that the third film would be shown on the afternoon of Sunday December 24. This coincidence is crucial to understand the relationship of continuity, of openness, the gap that the filmmaker tries to establish between the real and the film, thus cutting the time limit between the space of the representation and that of the spectator who is in some way bathed in the universe and atmosphere of the film. However, this Christmas is only a representation, and it is precisely the art of staging and lying, the art of manipulating signs, that will be the film's subject. Ewa manipulates Janusz, her former lover, into believing that her husband has suddenly disappeared. Since they broke up, they have not seen each other, and Janusz does not know that Ewa has been living alone since then. She will stage and direct Janusz this evening to see them searching, through a deserted city, for a man who has not disappeared. Janusz is subjected to the illusion, but as a well-informed spectator, he quickly detects signs of the staging (absence of snow on the car's roof, a new razor in Ewa's bathroom). Still, he does not break the illusion of deceiving him in which Ewa finds herself who thinks she is keeping him in the illusion. The spectator's power is at stake here; his illusion is necessary to fiction, as the very support of fiction, without this adherence to false signs, fiction collapses.

In *Decalogue 4*, the spectator is directly put in the situation of exercising his gaze in front of images of fiction within fiction. The spectator is confronted with a manipulation of which he is the object as the character to whom it is addressed. This manipulation begins in the film's first shots, where we see a young woman and an older man playing with water on Easter morning in an apartment where they live together. When we notice the man's discomfort at the transparency of the young woman's wet nightgown, we sense that the bond between them is not the one that the images had first suggested. And we soon discover that they are father and daughter. This first discovery alerts the viewer to the ambiguities of the image and leads him to observe the folds of the implicit. During her father's absence, who had gone abroad for professional reasons, Anna discovers a sealed letter on which she can read: "To be opened after my death," it is a letter from her unknown, dead mother. Anna wants to open it, takes it with her, hesitates; we see her

trying to imitate her mother's handwriting. Then, on his return from the trip, she recites her mother's letter to the father without warning him in the flow of conversation in the airport parking lot. It is understandable that she finally opened it and memorized it. Her father slaps her and leaves, and she has just told him that she is not his daughter.

The lock of a real filiation between these two beings jumps; all that remains between them is the experience of their common history and the symbolic places they occupy. The whole film is based on this hypothesis, can they love each other? Is incest possible if fate changes places of each of the protagonists? The daughter will express the tenor of her love and provoke the father; the father will renounce the desire that he has nevertheless recognized, thus resisting the call of the appearance of this girl who has become a young woman under the effect of revelation. At the end of the episode, after having purged the depths of their unconscious desires and fantasies, Anna will tell her father and the viewer, who is also "abused," that she did not open the letter but wrote one imitating her mother's handwriting... with her taste for paradox, Kieślowski shows us that the written word can also be false, like an image, an imitation of reality. We discover that Anna's staging was not revealed in advance this time, fiction within fiction, "the authenticity of the fake." (Gagnebin, 2004) Moreover, it is by acting, openly and openly, this time, that Anna reveals her Oedipal passion; in the acting class she attends, when she speaks to her teacher, an older man, she manages to be right in her acting. With young people her age, she plays wrong.

From the beginning of *Decalogue 5,* the question of imitating nature, which lies at the heart of the Second Commandment, is posed in voice-over, on a black screen: "The law should not imitate nature, the law should improve nature," says Piotr, during the law exam. He is referring here to what will be the central motif of this bitter film, the equivalence, the symmetry, the resemblance, therefore, between criminal and legal homicide, between the savage and ancestral murder perpetrated by Jacek with a stone and the killing by hanging programmed and administered by the legal authorities. This symmetry is established in the very body of the film. The story unfolds in two parts of equal length that recount the process leading up to the execution of murder, without any transition. In the middle of the episode, just after the sequence of the murder committed by Jacek, the film switches to the second part, which opens with the departure of the jury just after the death sentence against Jacek has been pronounced. The second part and the

second homicide are thus the administrative reflections of the first. Contrary to what the young idealistic lawyer suggested at the film's opening, the Law has, here, imitated nature without improving it. The motif of reflection and the attachment to the imitation of nature is here the object of the learning to which the spectator is invited. The film opens with a series of reflections, through which the three protagonists of the story are presented. First of all, in the foreground, Piotr appears in a mirror, at first dark, in the middle of a golden frame reminiscent of a painting. He is alone on this black background, like a painted portrait, and in movement, he embodies this idea of cinema as animation of painting. The reinforcement of the golden frame, at the same time classical and strong, places him on the side of ethics, on the side of a controlled and rational relationship to the image. The second character crosses a reflection; it's the taxi driver, Jacek's future victim; he leaves his building and crosses the image of the buildings of the city that were reflected on the glass door of the hall from which he emerges. Here it is the superimposition of the door and the reflecting surface, flat image, and opening combined that opens the reflection on the consistency of the film image. In the previous case, reflection and the real body were separated by the golden frame, inherited from classical painting. It is the reflecting surface itself, barely designated as such by the first movement of the glass door, that opens and reveals a real body. The body is not itself reflected, but the fact that it emerges from the reflection makes it belong to the world of images that have become real, the world of ghosts and spectral apparitions. This confusion between reflection and reality, corresponding in this particular device of seeing oneself on a reflective surface, to a lack of limit between the image and the one who looks at it and sees himself as a represented object, is brought about by how the figure of Jacek, a victim of his idolatrous faith in the presence of the object in his representation, is presented to us. We first see him appear, in front of a glass pane, which has moved slightly - he has tried to lift it to take one of the photographs of the woman behind it - where his appearance is reflected in the form of a dark silhouette, and on which, on the left, in transparency, a large female figure appears to be looking at him. He suddenly turns his head in our direction, but as he is in the background, we do not know exactly what he is looking at. A clean-cut brings us to another, wider plane, where we see it, from afar, moving towards us and leaving this reflective surface that we then identify as the glass of an urban billboard containing photographs. He is walking towards us and seems attracted by our presence; as he

progresses, we discover that his image is probably a reflection without us being sure; spots appear on his surface, and a slight fluttering of his silhouette due to a slightly deformed glass makes us think that we are in the place of his reflection or behind a barred window to which he comes. In any case, and even if it is the second hypothesis that proves to be the right one, it is in the form of an image floating on the surface of a glass pane that Jacek comes to meet us, heading towards us as if he were heading towards his reflection in a window behind which we would be. For nothing tells us that he is not reflected in that glass and that he does not come to us thinking that he will meet his reflection, a reflection that only he would see. The viewer is thus placed, from the very beginning, in a frontal relationship with the main character of the film. This frontality is precisely the central motif of this episode since the second part devoted to Jacek's legal killing faces the first one that follows the sequence that will lead him to the murder. This superimposition of Jacek's reflection and the spectator's place is supported in the shot immediately following it, where we see the young man entering a cinema, the place where the spectator is. This image of a woman under glass and the window through which we discovered him were two showcases of this cinema, the woman's vision of the cinema, the place where the spectator is. the poster made him want to go to the movie. But once inside, another woman, the teller, turns him indifferently, telling him that the film is only played in the afternoon and that it is "boring." He will then ask her the taxi stand location where he will be going to find his victim. We will see later the value of the box office in the films of Kieślowski, for the time being, what will hold our attention here is the nothingness that Jacek is confronted with when addressing the cinematographic image, and in particular, the cinematographic image of the woman that he had seen on the poster. There is no presence for him in this image, the woman who runs the cinema does not even look at him while talking to him like the film spectator, ignored by the image; the empty image does not love Jacek. An analogy is then established between this observation made by Jacek and the one made by the spectator in the shot mentioned above, where Jacek approaches the glass and seems to look through it. This experience of invisibility made by the spectator corresponds certainly to the one made by Jacek. The film spectator is invisible, and there is nothing real in the cinematographic image, which is only a series of reflections. Leaving the cinema, Jacek begins wandering through the old town and comes across an image and its real model on a large square. A street cartoonist draws the

portrait of a little girl sitting on a chair; first, the image comes to us and then the real model, a little girl whose memory echoes we will discover later on in Jacek. This time, the draftsman invites Jacek by asking him if he wants a portrait like this one, and it is Jacek who refuses the image as he walks away, leaving the draftsman perplexed by the quality of his work. Jacek comes back in the corner of the field to ask him where the Royal Castle is that the box office of the cinema had indicated to him, the place where he must meet his future victim. Further on in the film, as he wanders through the city in search of his crime, Jacek goes to a photographer's home where he asks for an enlargement of a photograph of his little sister who died in a tractor accident (driven by a friend with whom he had gotten drunk). He asks for an enlarged reproduction of a photograph of his little sister. The photographer informs him that the scratches, time traces, and wear and tear on the image will not disappear from the copy. He then asks her if it is true that it is possible to see in a photograph whether the person is dead or alive, to which the woman replies that she has been told nonsense. Idolatry is thus clearly mobilized in this evocation of an animist belief in the photographic image's aura of life or death. Jacek is in search of a feminine presence in the image; he does not find it in the cinema where the ticket office turns him away, nor in the drawing of the little girl he meets in a square; his little sister is this lost object that the image is supposed to bring back to light, he wants to have it enlarged, but the photographer tells him that the image is free of this presence, that life and death are similar. It is perhaps because he is confronted with this nothingness of the images that mark out his criminal path and one by one evade his quest for presence, sending him back to the square of the royal castle where he will meet his victim, that he will destroy the taxi driver's face after having made him disappear under a blanket, accomplishing by himself this passage from presence to nothingness in the other.

Decalogue 6 is also an episode destined to become a feature film in the cinema, under the title *A Short Film About Love,* and this is perhaps the reason why, like the previous episode, it deals directly with the question of attachment to images by focusing on the haptic dimension of the gaze. But suppose the nothingness of the image, the emergence of pure absence at the very place where the subject (Jacek in the previous film) thought to touch the object's presence in its representation, leads in episode 5 to the murder of others, in *Decalogue 6.* In that case, it leads to a suicide attempt and poses the real

encounter with the object as a form of encounter with the nothingness of the image. The scene that highlights this failure of the encounter with reality in the image constitutes the crucial moment of the sixth episode. Tomek, who has been observing Magda for a long time, using his telescope, brings her to his post office by slipping false postal order notices into his letterbox to observe her through the hole in the window of his counter. And it is precisely through this hole that Magda passes her forearm to give Tomek her advice, thus entering her own space, that of withdrawal protected by the window of her counter. Transparency materialized and practically impassable, if not by this air hole at the visible heart. The gaze can go directly to the object and constitutes for us the point of origin of the reflection on the *slit image.* Following this intrusion, Tomek will reveal to Magda the game of voyeurism that he has been playing for some time. After a violent reaction, Magda takes an interest in the young man who loves to look at her so much and ends up inviting him to her home where she introduces herself to him, naked under a bathrobe, and offers him to caress her thighs. Tomek's hand enters Magda's body through the slit in her genitals, in a gesture symmetrical to Magda's own. This direct contact with the woman's real body, who was for him nothing more than an image protected by the glass of his window and that of his ticket office, like a cinema screen, provokes a strong physical reaction in the young man. Through the passage to the act represented by Tomek's gesture, the exchange, and more particularly the contact between the eye and the image, proves to be a failure, a dead end. It destroys the imaginary part of the image. The nothingness here lies in the fact that the illusionary power of fantasy and its images quickly dissipates in favor of a reality that carries much less promise than the image. If Jacek was confronted with the nothingness of the image by being subjected only to its dimension of reflection, appearance, representation, without contact with the thing (as he reluctantly learns, photography does not bear the trace of life or death of the photographed subjects), Tomek, for his part, encounters nothingness in contact with the very thing that haunted his desire to see; Magda's worldly genitals, the origin of the image, this original slit painted by Courbet[5], which makes the image disappear as a reflection, and dissipates the field of her promises in the concreteness of the desired body. We will see further on the implications of this aborted encounter and how the box office, in particular, as a perforated transparent surface, a recurring figure at Kieślowski, puts into the abyss the

[5] See Gustave Courbet's painting - The Origin of the World (1866)

postponed encounter with the real in the cinematographic image. For the moment, let us consider here, more simply, this movement of unveiling a transparent surface that suddenly becomes visible and leads the spectator to take a very concrete interest in the transparent support of the film image as an illusory perforated surface. For if there is the screen between the spectator and Magda, there is also a hole, a void that offers him the promise of a tactile encounter by inviting his hand, by soliciting the haptic dimension of his gaze. Thus, it could be considered that within the polyptych intended for recurrent broadcasting on Polish television, the two films that were converted into feature films promised for theatrical distribution (*Decalogue 5* and *Decalogue 6*) respond to each other in that they offer the possibility of a two-step reflection on the two dimensions of the support of the cinematographic image, the resemblance of the reflection (in the 5) from which the illusion is born and the delayed promise of an encounter with the object in its representation manifested by the slit, or more precisely, in this sixth episode, the hole that appears in the window. The reflection and the opening, the cinematographic image as mimesis and as an opening to reality, are precisely two motifs that often recur in the films of the polyptych, in the form of reflections on reflective surfaces (mirrors, windows, glass doors, etc.) or doorways and other "holes" in the surfaces. The polyptych's films are also often used to create a "mirror effect." (Baudry & Williams, 1974-1975, p. 43)

In *Decalogue 7*, it is once again the complex relationship between fiction and reality - and the illusions it can generate - that is brought into play. In this episode, fiction has become a reality that has long since been established for the characters, even though everyone knows it to be false. There is no deception in this film; on the contrary, it is the ability to deceive oneself under the effect of appearances highlighted here. Indeed, the roles have been redistributed in Majka's family. She is the mother of Ania, whom she had very young with her teacher. Ewa, her mother, decided to take her away from the city during her pregnancy and then made her believe, with the agreement of Majka herself, her father, and the teacher, that she was the child's mother. This fiction has been going on for several years, since Ania's birth, and has value as the reality for the child, who at first knows no more than the spectator. The question of representation here is about the appearances that the mind willingly allows itself to be taken in; Ewa does not want to lose her place as a mother, which she knows to be false, Majka cannot conquer the place of mother in the innocent gaze of her daughter. The latter sees in her only what she believes.

The false realities that are images thus end up becoming unshakeable truths.

In *Decalogue 8*, representation is raised in the strange phenomenon of the sliding to the side of a painting representing a landscape, which we addressed at the beginning of this work. Moreover, through the reflection he proposed, we entered into the polyptych and its questioning of the frame of the images. Let us return here to the threshold constituted by the analysis of the phenomenon and let us reflect on the link established by this fall of the frame between representation and ethics. Episode 8 is the one that deals most directly with ethics, as Zophia, being a professor of ethics at the University, is also a woman undermined by a decision she had to make when she was young during the Second World War. She believes she delivered a Jewish child to the persecuting zeal of her Nazi executioners by refusing to take her in secret to protect her resistance network, which she believed was threatened. As a professor of ethics to repair and redress her act, she will experience redemption thanks to meeting with her American translator, who is none other than this Jewish child who haunts her. As we saw at the beginning of this work, the framework represents and embodies ethics, in its separating and enunciative dynamics, in its movement from the impulse to symbolization, ethics is presented as what contains (limits) and allows a sublimation of the impulse. In the field of representation likely to generate idolatry in the spectator, the frame maintains the balance between believing and doubting, between adherence and cutting. The frame allows this play between the absence and presence of the object in its representation, and it reminds the eye of the illusory nature of the representation by bringing the spectator's consciousness back to the materiality of the image. It also marks the threshold of the represented area. It thus allows, by establishing an outside and an inside, to contain the effect of illusion. It embodies, as far as the *object-frame is* concerned, an intangible material reality when the canvas or image transfigures its materiality, making transparent what was opaque. In cinema, the frame is linked to the filmmaker's ethics in that it is the instrument of the filmmaker's work by which the filmmaker decides what will be made visible and what will not. He is the instrument of a cut of choice. It is also, as we saw in the first part, the very basis of visual enunciation in cinema, the equivalent of the opening of the mouth for oral speech, of the graphic line for writing; an indispensable material condition, or at least essential, since Alberti, for the formulation of a visual statement. Through the repeated play of the righting and falling of a framed painting, this episode draws the viewer's attention to the

presence and function of frames in the polyptych by showing, precisely in the film where ethics and the question of Law are directly at stake, a frame, representing ethics, which slides sideways and never keeps its place. This focus on the frame as an unstable object is repeated here as a symptom of the decline of "morality" in everyday life, as we mentioned earlier. It also allows us to broaden the observation to the entire *Decalogue* by focusing particularly on the appearance of frames as material frames, frame-objects, in the terminology of Jacques Aumont. (Sayad, 2013)

In *Decalogue 9*, representation is posed through that of the jealous gaze and the place it assigns to the spectator. It is thus the relationship between the jealousy of Romek, a doctor who has become impotent, and the blinds - various slits offered by the configuration of the place; shutters, doorways, the fine opening of a cupboard door, and also a telephone - that is brought into play in the episode. Episode 9 thus allows us to observe how a visual shaping of blinds is organized and, at the same time, a kind of jealousy of the spectator's gaze. Romek will follow the dictates of this troubled enjoyment and get closer and closer to the lovers, without being noticed, with the help of jalousies, he will disappear when he gets closer until the extreme scene of the apartment where he wants to become the frightened spectator of his own wife's frolicking, but will only witness a scene of rupture between the lovers before being finally discovered. Romek is searching the apartment where Hanka sees her lover for any trace, any physical evidence. This quest for the visible sign indicates the importance of the gaze in Romek's journey, which is driven by fantasy, from sound to image; to see his happy wife in the arms of the other, which would be for him to see himself forgotten, denied, absent, and on another scene, to discover a fundamental truth about his origin, a truth that will push him to disappear. Thus blinds are presented as a visual device that is used to see without being seen and to cast a shadow, that is to say, to make a subject disappear in his shadow. The whole film leads to this reunion in the spoken word, through a chassé-croisé in the visible in which the two characters never really found themselves together. In the elevator that takes them back to their apartment at the film's beginning, a broken light bulb delivers them to a game of eclipses and appearances that never brings them together.

From sight to touch, the characters look for each other in their bodies, in their appearance. It is precisely there that they are unlikely to meet. Thus, we see their bodies slipping away, appearing in turn, objects in the light and subjects in the shadow, in a visual and tactile

relationship from which intersubjective exchange is excluded. In the rest of the film, Kieślowski will show this impossibility of being together through the use of blurring when they talk to each other. This alternation of the lens's focus blurs the contours of one then the other, starting to erase it and thus insisting that they do not share the same space; they are not in the same place, caught in a kind of visual chiasmus. Another figure of this game of eclipse and appearance and the impossibility of bringing the two characters together in the image is the use of reflection. When they are brought together in an image, without any obstacle or third element likely to keep them apart, they are together only in a reflection, a specular image, that is to say, in an illusion of presence.

Kieślowski puts into the abyss the image's two dimensions: the real presence of a body in a field dug deep inside a frame, that of the open door, and the reflection of a body on a flat surface where it appears perfectly similar but without thickness. Yet Romek's body, reflected by the bathroom mirror, is less present than Hanka's, perceived directly by the camera. The latter will cross a threshold and come towards us by changing space, like the chamberlain of *Las Meninas* who stands at the threshold of the represented area while Romek is trapped by a flatness that condemns him to be only an appearance, a ghost. Thus, in addition to the fact that they are separated from each other by the constructive scheme of the image, whose vertical lines isolate each of the characters in its enclosed space, they are also separated by the very nature of their appearance, Hanka being more present than Romek, whose appearance is devoid of carnal consistency, following the example of what happens in his intimacy, where sexual impotence can also be understood as a lack of flesh, a defect of incarnation. Romek is a ghost when his wife fully disposes of his body. Thus, elsewhere, on another level, they will be able to find themselves. But before that, Romek will have had to experience the secret and unformulated expectation of his jealous eye attracted by the cracks of jalousies until the threshold of death.

The tenth episode leads us to a broader reflection on the issue of idolatry touches directly on the subject that the nine previous films have gradually worked on; as a kind of moral conclusion, it formulates things more directly, clearly bringing fetishism and irrational attachment to the image into play. *Decalogue 10* ends with these words spoken by Jerzy: "A series! ». He then leans over a table and looks at the two sets of worthless stamps that he and his brother Artur bought separately to ironically compensate for the loss of the valuable set of stamps their father left them when he died and which they foolishly let go

in the hands of a rival collector. The end of *Decalogue 10* reminds us that *Decalogue* is only a television series. It should not be idolized nor become too attached to it; what counts is between the eye of the spectator and the screen, it is the Law of the gaze in all its dimensions, the learning of this distancing of the attachment to the image is done here at the price of an organic loss, a kidney given to others in exchange for an image that will never happen. The film places these transgressive injunctions, which establish the Law as they undo it, at the beginning of the story, whereas they only appear in the middle, in the fifteenth scene out of thirty-five, in the published version of the script. It is a scene illustrating Artur's place as an idol of youth, with his brother arriving through the crowd to find him. This epigraphic setting of the reunion of the brothers and Artur's position as an idol gives a paradoxical value to the lyrics of his song. Negative repetition of the commandments (but we know that the unconscious ignores the negation) thus overhangs the last episode. It takes the value of morality that could almost be deciphered as a rebus. Since the idol sings the negative version of the Law, it is at the origin of a kind of anti-Law, and more exactly of a reversed version of the Law. One must not idolize the Law for fear of making it a negation of the Law itself, that is, precisely an idol. From the point of view of the idol, the Law is thus formulated upside down, which suggests that from the point of view of the idol, it is entirely turned against the idol. The enemy of the Law, less than its transgression, which formulates it and repeats it (even if negatively), is, therefore, idolatry, the excessive attachment to an object, a star, a stamp, or a series. The final reflection of the two brothers, which provokes this liberating and sovereign laughter, is precisely the expression of the sense of ridicule (contrary to idolatry) that saves them from their failure to possess the father's series fully.

2.3.1. *Camera Buff* and the second commandment

In *Camera Buff*, his fourth feature-length fiction film made in 1979, ten years before *Decalogue*, Kieślowski openly addresses the question of cinematographic representation and the filmmaker's ethics. This time he does so in the depth of his subject matter and not just in the thickness of his images, through an initiatory story about a young father who buys a camera for the birth of his daughter and who will gradually become an increasingly recognized amateur filmmaker in the world of the amateur film clubs that flourished in

Poland in the 1970s, encouraged by the regime through its Amateur Film Federation. We have already had the opportunity to approach this film in the course of this study. We will only come back here to the way in which it recounts Filip's initiation and the birth of his ethics as a filmmaker, that is to say, how it brings into play the second commandment of the Mosaic Law and thus relates to *Decalogue.*

First of all, the narrative weave itself is an uncovering of the initiatory process by which Filip Mosz will become aware of his responsibility as a filmmaker and will finally decide to turn the camera towards himself to become both the filming subject and the filmed object, that is to say, to begin to tell his own story in the first person, to speak out by assuming his purpose and being himself the object of the unveiling. The story of Filip, the amateur, is thus the story of a man who will gradually become a filmmaker aware of what he is filming and perhaps even a responsible artist. The film, based in part on Kieślowski's experiences and departing in part from them (he was never an amateur filmmaker and only approached filmmaking for professional purposes), thus follows a trajectory that will see Filip move towards his desire to make images from his spontaneous family practice to his attainment of the status of a first-person narrator, the most independent and "artistic" status a filmmaker can have. We can see the three main stages of his initiation and the serious consideration of his desire in the light of the categories that Roger Odin established concerning the field of amateur cinema. (Odin, 1999, p. 48) He thus defines three profiles[6] and three spheres of amateur filmmakers: the family filmmaker, the amateur filmmaker in a club, and finally the off-circuit artist, the independent filmmaker, which is what Filip becomes at the end of the film by turning the camera back on himself and becoming the narrator of his story.

Filip introduces his camera to his friends from the very beginning, gathered at his home to celebrate the birth of his daughter while his wife and the newborn baby are still in the maternity ward. He tells them that he will photograph his daughter month after month, and one of his friends tells him that she will be happy later when she sees him. Filip's initial project is thus linked to his role as a father and the desire to wrap his child in the images he will be able to make of her. It is interesting to note how this project is part of a critical continuity of the documentary work of Kieślowski; it could be a reformulation

[6] "L 'espace familial. (The Family Space), L'espace « amateur » (The amateur space), L'espace du cinéma « indépendant », du cinéma « autre » (Independent and auteur filmmaker). Le temps du brouillage des espaces. (Time of the blurring of the spaces)"

of the abortive project of filming the sequel to *First Love* (1974) by following step by step the evolution of Ewa, the daughter of Romek and Jadzia, whose birth he had filmed at the cost of inevitable intrusions.

It was through a colleague, his direct superior, who was present at the small party during which he presented his camera. The director of the factory where Filip works asked him if he had a camera and could film the day of the 25th anniversary of the factory. He also suggested that Filip create a film club in the factory and gave him the cultural budget of the establishment. Filip thus passes from the status of family filmmaker to that of an official amateur. His relationship to the image will thus be modified since he has to film to respond to a commission, to satisfy the desire of another. When he accepts this promotion as an amateur, he feels a natural fear of the director. This fear can be understood as a negative expression of his desire to film, which he will have to protect from the desire to portray from an ideological point of view.

Shortly after this proposal, on his way home, Filip experiences in his private setting the act of making a commissioned film and the conflict that arises between his desire to film and his newfound status as head of a film club and his family and especially his married life. When he offers to thank his friend Piotrek for transporting him and his equipment in his brand new hearse, Piotrek asks him to film him near his vehicle and to film his mother, who appears at the window at that moment. Filip executes and unknowingly shoots the last images Piotrek will have of his mother, who will die a little later. As he takes these shots of his friend, his wife asks him why his management chose him to film the factory's anniversary day. He replies that it is because he is the only one with a camera, to which she replies that she thought it was for her daughter. Her reaction shows the conflict that arises between Irena, the embodiment of the family, and Filip's desire to film beyond this frame. She reminds him of his vocation as a family filmmaker when he gets drunk in front of her of his status as an amateur filmmaker recognized by his company and entrusted with the making of a corporate film on the borderline between the professional and amateur worlds.

The reference to Lumière views is not insignificant here because, as we have already seen in the first part of this work, Filip films a factory exit through a window as well as fixed street shots of passers-by and family views, already present in the early days of cinema. In a way, he re-creates the journey made by the first Lumière operators and gradually

discovers the possibilities of his camera in capturing chance events taken from the appearance of material reality. In this first approach, Filip acts without being aware of the effects of his films; we see, from the tense air he wears when filming the anniversary of his factory, that he puts much more into it than his boss asks, and that he really wants to capture reality with his camera.

Filip wants to get as close as possible to the singer who brightens up the birthday party, he almost sticks to her, and she suddenly turns to him, in the flow of his song, to look at him smiling. This turning of the gaze towards him, although without aggressiveness on the part of the singer, is for him like an injunction, even a threat, and testifies to the scopic pleasure that Filip's practice gives him. The singer's gaze at the camera is not only a gesture that risks spoiling his shot, but it is also for him the end of the voyeuristic relationship since his gaze, mediated by the camera, returns to him in a flash. Once again, this is a limit that Filip came up against in the early stages of his initiation.

Another limit will appear later, as he films political leaders visiting his factory for his birthday. His director will ask him not to film the inside of a room where a meeting is being held, which will remain for Filip as well as for the viewer, the off-screen. Thus arrested on the threshold of the era he was about to film, Filip is demoted from the rank of filmmaker-director to that of the operator under the orders of a higher authority. Scopic impulse and censorship thus face each other on the threshold of a door and a field that is forever doomed.

The last phase of Filip's initiation begins with the arrival of Anna Wlodarczyk, head of the Amateur Film Federation. It was her director who discreetly registered Filip's club with the Federation in order to give it institutional visibility. Filip's film about the company's anniversary is of interest to the pretty young woman who comes to see it and select it for an amateur corporate film festival in Lodz. Filip senses the danger; desire immediately turns to fear; the woman is beautiful and self-confident, she is interested in her work, the step is taken towards an amateur career where her personality and talent will be at stake. He tries to decline the offer, but his director has, for the moment, an interest in Filip gaining recognition. Hence, he pushes him to go ahead by presenting him with his film while asking him to make the cuts he had previously suggested. The screening of his film, which has been stripped of the shots his director had asked him to remove, is an opportunity for Filip to gain autonomy from the authority that censors him.

Indeed, he shows the film without the censored shots but shows, on the director's back, the film remnants that he had to remove from the film, signaling to the young woman that this is a case of censorship. By making the gesture of cutting while pointing to his boss, Filip cuts with him. He places himself under a new tutelage that will protect him and accompany him on the new terrain he has opened up before him, that of independent creative cinema. From that moment on, he is in contact with film professionals and gives his work a much wider scope. That is the birth of the artist.

The last shot of the film is, therefore, a herald of the directions that the filmmaker's work will take in the future; it turns the film into a cinematic manifesto on the filmmaker's responsibility. It focuses the viewer's gaze on the relationship that cinema establishes between reality and its film image. As such, Filip's final gesture is symbolic and manifests his operation of subjective investment in the film. Indeed, as we have already mentioned above when discussing the beginnings of his fiction films concerning the beginning of the *Decalogue* episodes, the sequence that opens *Camera Buff* carries a reflexive dimension in it since, in the first instance, it presents a scene as a naturalistic representation of reality, a hawk melting on a chicken and killing it, before telling us in the second shot that it was a nightmare made by Irena. This concrete exercise in disguise, which plays directly with the spectator and his belief in the image he is given to see, is superimposed by a metadiscourse in which the first image, the one that shows a scene from the wilderness and thus presents itself as a documentary image, turns out to be only a dream image. What had all the characteristics of the Lacanian *tuchè*, (Lacan, 1978, p. 54) this chance encounter with reality, a reality that is particularly salient here in this attack by the predator that is the sparrowhawk, is revealed as an illusion, that is, as an adjourned encounter with reality. What cinema shares with a dream, this impression of reality on which documentary cinema is based, appears here. Thus, beyond the awakening of doubt that this inaugural sequence proposes to the spectator, this beginning of *Camera Buff* poses an equivalence between the documentary image supposed to contain or more exactly open to reality and the work of the dream. The whole film is then presented as the unfolding of this initial assertion, as the concrete realization of an original dream, and Filip's journey from documentary to self-portrait, from illusory objectivity to assumed subjectivity, from the real to the narrator, or more precisely to the filmmaker, is only the narration of this concentrate of dazzling signifiers that is the initial dream. The spectator

experiences it almost physically - he or she takes what is later revealed to him or her as a dream for happy money - before eventually being able to formulate it. We thus see two levels of discourse on cinema unfolding in this film, one, direct, the most apparent stands in the folds of the narrative considered in its emblematic dimension, the other, indirect, stands in the image itself in its capacity to bring its reality into play. In both situations, it is the second commandment of the decalogue that is brought into play through the question of seeing and giving to see. Kieślowski formulates the first questions of his questioning of the documentary image and the milestones of his autonomy as a filmmaker reaching a form of symbolic emancipation.

The dialectical image, which had corresponded to this documentary quest as a primary device, reaches a second degree in Kieslowski's fiction as a metadiscursive figure. Making and showing images becomes an ethical subject that engages the artist's capacity to find his Law and to accept renunciations; this is what will be more indirectly formulated by *Decalogue,* where one can follow a constant and masterful effort to make the direct and naively pierced view pass through the slot on the side of the reflexive sign. This operation is carried out to benefit from the elaboration of a complex device that, among other things, aims to show itself as a device.

2.3.2. *Decalogue*: a device of devices

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the shadow
T.S. Eliot – The Hollow Men

The treatment of the second commandment in *Decalogue* takes place at the level of the images in the field of the filmmaker's relationship with his viewer through the film. It is in a kind of awakening of the viewer's gaze, in the way that baroque trompe-l'oeil warn the spectator, in that they are not real eye traps but have the vocation of awakening the gaze by making it experience the illusory dimension of the image and by revealing to it the process by which it allows itself to be deceived, and by leading him to reconsider the

surface of the representation in the play of its opacity and transparency, that Kieślowski brings into play the visual device of the moving image in its polyptych. This polyptych presents itself as a particular device, a series of ten fifty-minute episodes intended for television, two of which will have been filmed for the cinema.

We will now come back to this dimension, considering the Mosaic Decalogue as the very model of the "apparatus" as conceived by Giorgio Agamben following Michel Foucault, (Agamben, 2009, pp. 1-24) show how the set of devices of *Decalogue* can be considered as a stake and in question(s), both of the device of verbal language as the architecture of the world (the ten words, the open letter, the letter engraved in stone) and of the device of visual enunciation (in painting, photography, and cinema) born of the Albertian *finestra,* considered here as a paradigm of modern representation. As we have already said, the *slit image* highlights affection for the *finestra'*s frame. It reveals its latent desire and thwarts its protection, and its *fissure* affects it to the point of modifying it and substituting itself as a new device. The *slit image* is thus a device born of affection for a device; it is thus a *symptom device,* (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 206) but it is also, as we shall see, a metadiscursive figure that leads us to reflect on the crisis that affects the framework of representation and on the desire that haunts the modern eye, this crumbling frame, which falls, in comics as in painting, in architecture as in cinema, like this painting by Zophia, the ethicist from *Decalogue 8,* from which we started.

Before showing the relationship that exists in *The Decalogue* between the device of the *finestra* and that of the *slit-frame,* after showing how each episode of the *Decalogue* brings into play (and highlights) what Jean-Louis Baudry called the cinematographic apparatus (Baudry & Williams, 1974-1975, pp. 42-46) (device producing an impression of reality), it is appropriate to clarify what we mean by the term device. We understand it here in the sense that it takes in the humanities following Michel Foucault's use of it, but also in the more precise sense that it takes in film theory following Jean-Louis Baudry's earlier use of it, i.e., both as a set of laws and properties that condition the gaze and as a set up of the gazing subject in a place from which to see a given thing according to the modalities of a subjective illusion (Baudry speaks of a hallucination) that Plato had already formulated in the dispositive of the cave. Jean- Louis Baudry says as follows: « The cinematographic apparatus is unique in that *it offers the subject perceptions « of a reality » whose status seems similar to that of representations experienced as*

perception. » (Baudry, The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches To The Impression of Reality in Cinema, 1975, p. 704)

The cinematographic device thus makes it possible to make the dreamer aware of his dream while dreaming it, as Christian Metz remarks at the beginning of his article:

> The dreamer does not know that he is dreaming; the film spectator knows that he is at the movies: this is the first and principal difference between the filmic and oneiric situations. We sometimes speak of the illusion of reality in one or the other, but true illusion belongs to the dream and to it alone. In the case of the cinema, it is better to limit oneself, as I have done until now, to remarking the existence of a certain *impression* of reality. (Metz & Guzzetti, 1976, p. 75)

We can thus consider that the set of cinematographic rules aiming at protecting this impression of reality constitute, together with the concrete device of projection that Jean-Louis Baudry tells us, determines a "state of artificial regression" (Baudry, The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches To The Impression of Reality in Cinema, 1975, p. 703) in the spectator, our understanding of the term "device." It will thus be at the same time an abstract element, a set of implicit rules weighing on the gaze, and a concrete element, a given installation (or rather an arrangement of optical devices) of the spectator in front of the film image of the *Decalogue*. The film series of Kieślowski thus presents itself as a device that brings into play rules, values, frames of thought and action, and at the same time, as the concrete principles of an arrangement of images under the viewer's gaze.

We should also note that the evocation of this conceptual imprecision is itself part of the habits linked to the use of this term that Foucault put forward in *The History of Sexuality*. (Foucault, 1978, p. 23) In addition to his inductive and deliberately broad approach, the definition he gave then, in his reflection on what organizes and governs, "disposes" of relations qualified as "sexual," is marked by its heterogeneous and cumulative aspect. The device would thus be an active, operating structure, a concept that would not only be interested in the essential architecture of a phenomenon (which could be reduced to its structure) but would also include the space it organizes and the volume it delimits, as well as the inhabitants of the places and their economy. The cinematographic device is to be understood as a network (as Foucault understands it) that unites the relations between the viewer and the animated photographic image on the one hand and the animated photographic image and the material reality it represents on the other, where one can

distinguish the regime of fiction from that of the documentary, regimes that, without affecting the functioning of the device, modify its fundamental principles; fiction is supposed to tell whereas documentary is supposed to inform, the one never totally excluding the other.

> In the definition of the dispositive (…) Foucault addresses the question of heterogeneity as one of the defining qualities of the dispositive. He starts his definition by emphasizing that a dispositive is a 'decidedly heterogeneous ensemble' (Foucault 1994 (1977): 299) and then lists possible elements of a dispositive as discourses, institutions, architectural structures, prescriptive decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral or philanthropic propositions, in short: words, but also what is not expressed in words. (Foucault 1994 (1977): 299)5 (Caborn, 2007, pp. 113-114)

In this sense, the cinematographic device is not only the concrete formula for the diffusion of films, adopted by Antoine Lumière under the inspiration of Emile Reynaud (projection in a dark room in front of spectators assembled as in a theatre and have paid for their ticket) but it is the set of rules that underpin the credibility and interest of films for spectators and ensure the psychological conditions for their reception. These rules, whose aim is to protect the impression of reality that Jean-Louis Baudry presents as the satisfaction of the desire for cinema, are constantly being elaborated and re-elaborated throughout the medium's history. According to the technical evolutions and the economic springs of the diffusion of films, they refine the device to increase what Jean-Louis Baudry calls the *ideological effect.* The ban on looking at the camera is here one of the fundamental elements of the cinematographic device, the invisibility of the operator as well as the 180° rule, as well as the modalities of the temporal ellipse and all the other editing effects, from the crank stop of the first light shots to the parallel editing. In this perspective, the cinematographic device corresponds to an "economy," a set of rules and practices governing the "cinema" house, i.e., the cinematographic representation of the world.

Here, the Mosaic Decalogue, as the first economic device of the monotheistic era, with its fundamental ban on the representation and worship of idols, joins the *Decalogue* device Kieślowskian as a metadiscursive meditation on the cinematic device. The economy that organizes the ten narratives thus joins the economy of the ten mosaic words that govern social life; it is an emanation (and not an illustration) and aims to make its paradigmatic edges felt. But the laws mobilized in the films are laws brought to light by

the event more than laws applied by characters, and the films bring into play in the present what the words formulate in the future, addressing not the man who hears them but the man he will become after hearing them and experiencing them. Thus, it is not so much the Law itself, once reified, as its birth (its unveiling) constantly relived individually, at the moment of the experience of choice, and formulated retrospectively in the future, that the episodes of the *Decalogue* show us at work. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 210) This retrospective aspect of cultivating the laws at stake in each episode is important because it leaves a prominent place for the spectator to perceive them. Let us not forget here that subtitles in the form of commandments came to the knowledge of the first spectators after the films and that they never found a place in the credits. They are not part of the films themselves. They cannot be considered as titles and are consequences, sequels, possible conclusions of the episodes.

The formula exists as a law, as an economic rule established in an ideal future, but it is only potential in the present. It is embodied in the negative and the positive, and from this perspective, we can say that, like the unconscious, the Law ignores the negative. That is what the last episode reminds us of when the formulas are repeated in a rock song in the form of immoral injunctions, which are nonetheless ways of formulating the Law. Thus, the characters' experience brings into play, negatively or positively, a set of laws whose relevance is left to the viewer who, like the characters, is not guided in its interpretation. At best, the viewer is alerted, from the moment the second commandment comes into play in the project as a whole to the illusory part of the medium and the need to seek to bring the device itself to light. We can thus say that the *Decalogue dispositive* is a visual bringing into play the cinematographic dispositive through the figure/device of the *slit image*, itself a symptom of the fragility of the mosaic Decalogue dispositive, the very foundation of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim ethics.

In his book, *What is an Apparatus?* Giorgio Agamben states that the term *dispositif*, which gave rise to the word dispositif, is the Latin translation of the Greek term of *oikonomia* developed by the Fathers of the Church to found the relationship between the three substances of God. He says this:

> The "dispositifs" about which Foucault speaks are somehow linked to this theological legacy. They can be in some way traced back to the fracture that divides and. at the same time, articulates in God being and praxis. the nature or essence, on the one hand. and the operation through which He administers and governs the created world, on the other. The term

> "apparatus" designates that in which, and through which, one realizes a pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation in being. This is the reason why apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject. (Agamben, 2009, p. 11)

The dispositive as we conceive it in this work is here, in the last resort, what will produce a subject, which will be brought back "to the fracture that divides and articulates," through the dialectical game of *finestra* and *fissure*, sight and sign, fusion and cut, of designation and signification.

The first device in or through which the spectator of the *Decalogue* is placed is thus the material device of the series, a series of television films broadcast on Polish television every Sunday from December 10, 1989, after having been presented in September of the same year in a film festival: the Venice Mostra. Although it is a product intended for television, Kieślowski does not fundamentally distinguish its work for television from its work for the cinema; the technical means, the artistic requirements, and the actors are those of the cinema in a country where the standards, defined by the State, between one and the other, are not as far apart as they can be in liberal economies so that it is challenging to consider *The Decalogue* as a pure television work. The director says:

> What is the difference between films made for television and those made for cinema? First, I don't think the television viewer is less intelligent than the cinema audience. The reason why television is the way it is, isn't because the viewers are slow-witted but because editors think they are. I think that's the problem with television." He goes on to say: "I don't think people are idiots and that's why I treat both audiences equally seriously. Consequently, I don't see any great difference in the narration or style between films made for television and those made for cinema. (Stok, 1993, p. 153)

However, suppose the work belongs entirely to the cinematographic genre because of its intrinsic qualities and origin. In that case, it is at the level of the concrete conditions of reception of the films, at the level of the device in its narrowest sense, that Kieślowski establishes the break between cinema and television, he says:

> The difference between the cinema and television audience is very simple. The cinema-goer watches a film in a group, with other people. The television viewer watches alone. (…) Personally, I think that television means solitude while cinema means community. In the cinema, the tension is between the screen and the whole audience and not only between the screen and you. It makes an enormous difference. That is why it's not true that the cinema is a mechanical toy. (Stok, 1993, p. 154)

From this point of view, *Decalogue* is thus a television series for those who received it

on their screens from December 1989 and a cinematographic work for those who discovered it in cinemas. Moreover, although they have a certain number of links with each other, as we shall see later, the films in the series retain a great deal of independence from each other. They do indeed constitute ten autonomous narratives, ten films, ten units. Kieślowski states as follows:

> So television films have to be narrated in a way to satisfy the viewers' needs to see their friends and acquaintances again. That's the general convention, and I think that's where I went wrong in *Decalogue*. *Decalogue* was made as a number of individual films. The same characters reappear only now and again, and you have to pay great attention and concentrate very hard to recognize them and notice that the films are interconnected. (…) That's why wherever I had any influence on how the films would be shown on television, I always asked that they be shown at least two a week, so that the viewer would have a chance to see what brings the characters together. But that means I made an obvious mistake in not following conventions. (Stok, 1993, p. 155)

Kieślowski further identifies a second "mistake" since he did not sufficiently take into account the television dimension of the initial reception of its work:

> When you go to the cinema, whatever it's like, you always concentrate because you've paid for the ticket, made a great effort to get on the bus, taken an umbrella because it's raining outside, or left the house at a certain time. So, because of the money and effort spent, you want to experience something. That's very basic. Consequently, you're in a position to watch more complicated relationships between characters, more complicated plots, and so on. With television, it's different. When you're watching television, you experience everything that's going on around you: the scrambled eggs which are burning, the kettle which has boiled over, the telephone which has just started to ring, your son who isn't doing his homework and whom you have to force to his books, your daughter who doesn't want to go to bed, the thought that you've still got so much to do, and the time you have to get up in the morning. You experience all this while watching television. Consequently – and that's another mistake I made with *Decalogue* – stories on television have to be told more slowly, and the same thing has to be repeated several times, to give the viewer who's gone off to make a cup of tea or gone to the loo a chance to catch up with what's happening. If I were to make the films again today, I still probably wouldn't take this into account even though I consider it a mistake. (Stok, 1993, pp. 155-156)

Thus, although intended for television and presenting itself as a series where a specific chronology is inscribed, where certain characters return, *Decalogue,* in the author's mind, is only weakly televisual*;* it would be a faulty television series. But by emancipating itself from the basic codes and conventions of the television series, based on an attachment to the characters and the recurring rhythm of their appearances, *Decalogue* corresponds more to the idea, original in this case, of a film polyptych than to that of a television series. An expression that would more clearly signify the synoptic aspect of the whole,

much more than a series that would essentially be spread out over time, *Decalogue* develops in a space enclosed by these bars of Warsaw buildings. It delivers its stories simultaneously, a window by window, but in a synoptic presentation whose overall aspect is the first element of continuity in this assemblage of fragments. The first element of continuity in the series is, in fact, the unity of place where the ten episodes are inscribed, more or less firmly, and which constitutes what we will call the habitat of the film, that is to say, the space of the representation, hollowed out and held by the uprights of the frame that is this city arranged in a square, the home of the project, the place where the story takes root. The housing estate where most of the characters live is located in Warsaw, in the Dzika district, chosen for precise photographic reasons. It is, therefore, for visual reasons and, in particular, a question of framing. To create a realistic setting, that is to say, a fence within which each story will take its place as much as a typically Polish setting, this city was chosen to house the characters. But this consistent framework, where we find the initial idea of placing all the stories in the same building, is the occasion for multiple variations, within the particular setting of each apartment and outside, in the city itself, or the forest surrounding it (episode 7).

The Spatio-temporal framework of the *Decalogue is* thus based on a habitat common to all the narratives inside and outside of which the different narratives will set their particularities, occupy their own space, their frame, in the way that each square of a polyptych can occupy its place and provide the whole with its figure. We should recall here that one of the sources of inspiration for the series, one of its starting points and probably its visual matrix, in Krzysztof Piesiewicz, who first had the idea for this project, is a medieval German polyptych from the 15th century which was in the Medieval Art Gallery in Warsaw and came from the basilica in Gdansk where it was relocated in 1992.

> Piesiewicz was in part inspired by a Gothic altarpiece in the National Museum in Warsaw displaying the Ten Commandments in ten different scenes. In the altarpiece, the sceens are placed symmetrically. One might detect a similar symmetry in the *Decalogue* series when you consider the fact that after the first five episodes, the style and tempo are somewhat different; there is also a framework of violence in the first and fifth episode, which mark that part of the series apart. (Haltof, 2004, p. 76)

This vertical representation in ten equivalent squares, constituting a sort of sociological facade of the period based on a play on each of the ten words of the Decalogue, can be associated with the initial idea of placing the narratives in a single building where each

"chosen" window, from which the scriptwriters had decided to start each narrative, could be considered as the "square" of the medieval polyptych. This starting point certainly explains the high degree of independence of the different episodes, which are linked to each other more by the device to which they belong than by the plot of the stories. Kieślowski speaks of a cycle rather than a series, moreover, when it refers to the initial conception of the project after Krzysztof Piesiewicz had convinced him: "So I thought Piesiewicz was right, but filming the Ten Commandments would be a very difficult task. Should it be one film? Several? Or maybe ten? A serial, or rather cycle of ten separate films based on each commandment? This concept seemed closest to the idea of the Ten propositions, ten one-hour films" (Stok, 1993, p. 143).

Much more than a narrative fragmented into ten episodes, *Decalogue* is a set of ten independent stories, given all together - each of which is directly accessible - offered to the viewer in the manner in which the tables of the Law, traditionally arranged five to five-under two arches, offer the ten words of the Mosaic Decalogue, in the form of also how the initial polyptych has each of its boxes, and finally, how the facade of a building with illuminated windows presents together different environments, different intimacy, different problems, all offered to the same view that can embrace the whole.

Each time, regardless of the degree of interaction between the main characters of the episode and those who come back or appear before their turn in the series, these appearances have no consequence on the story. They pass by, exchange a few words, and could each time have been someone else. Each square of the polyptych is thus like one of those apartments where (or near which) the stories of the *Decalogue* begin. The polyptych in question presents, for each square, exterior landscapes or interior scenes in which architectural elements serve perspective through their checkerboard floor and partitions represented according to a still awkward technique, and divide each square into two parts where an angel appears on the left and a tempting demon on the right. This dichotomy between the territory of the angel and that of the demon within each box of this polyptych is also based, sometimes, on a distinction between the outside and inside of habitat or between two rooms separated by a partition (or a simple fence) within the same habitat. It is thus possible to establish an associative link between the habitat as an architectural envelope separating the interior from the exterior and serving as a container for a purpose, and an enunciative device, such as speech, which is at the root of these representations.

Everything comes together in *Decalogue*; the episodes are adjacent to each other and thus draw a page, a panel, a table on which each of the ten boxes proposes its story. One could thus perceive, in the device itself, a general framework composed of particular frames (boxes) whose function is to name an object, a word - admittedly difficult to determine - which would be that of each episode.

2.3.3. On the crossroads of visual and verbal enunciation

Decalogue 1 offers us an example of the optical device of the dialectical image that brings into play the same device of the polyptych as a visualization of a speech. A character, here the son, Pawel, arranges to place his gaze, sliding it between the parts of a slide projector, in order to look at his father, Krzysztof. The latter is giving a linguistics course at Warsaw University. A first shot *(field)* on the child's eye shows him focusing, like a filmmaker, closing his right eye and opening his left, adjusting his eyelid precisely to obtain a tight and precise framing that the next shot *(counter-field)* will reveal. This second shot is a subjective shot whose subjectivity has been affirmed by the previous shot. That is what the child sees through the opening that he has placed at the heart of his space. This process allows us first of all to know what Pawel looks at is the equivalent here of the internal focus in the novel, the character's gaze is presented to us in the foreground, it is in terms of film narratology of an internal ocularization. Then the next shot shows us both what he is looking at and what constitutes his center of interest, the portion of the visible that he grasps in his makeshift frame and which he thus names by designation: his father, and more precisely, his father's hands. His father's speech passes over his head. At the same time, his hands, the hands of this intellectual, interest him more, perhaps because they are here the instrument of an intimate expression. They formulate what concerns the son, especially in what the father says. It is also known, notably thanks to the *Annunciation* paintings[7], that the hand of the speaking subject plays an essential role in visualizing speech.

The frame can isolate an object from the whole of the visible to which it is attached by designating and "defining" it (in the sense also of image definition, that is to say, the sharpness of its contours), thus giving it an autonomous existence that recalls that which

[7] See Fra Angelico – Annunciation (1443)

the verbal signifier operates on its referent through its signified. The device installed by Pawel at the heart of his space in order to perceive his father, who speaks precisely of the problems linked to the impossibility of translating the affective charge of words, their familiar materiality, their opacity. The frame thus manifests what Lacan calls the "separating power of the eye."

> Indeed, there is something whose absence can always be observed in a picture—which is not the case in perception. This is the central field, where the separating power of the eye is exercised to the maximum in vision. In every picture, this central field cannot but be absent and replaced by a hole—a reflection, in short, of the pupil behind which is situated the gaze. Consequently, and in as much as the picture enters into a relation to desire, the place of a central screen is always marked, which is precisely that by which, in front of the picture, I am elided as subject of the geometral plane. (Lacan, 1978, p. 108)

Framing an object is thus, by isolating it in a plane, to name it, one could perhaps return the formula by asserting that naming is about framing a portion of material or immaterial reality. The signifier "hand" is thus a container whose content is as isolated from the rest as that of an image specifically framing a hand. In naming, it is the closed line on itself of the contours of the hand that constitutes the frame that, in the image, locks these forms into a larger space, but both give a material skin (perceptible surface and contours) to the representations, sound in one case, visual in the other, but whose signifying cut, contour and separation are the common principles. This rapprochement between the signifier (in its role of appearance of the signified) and the frame that makes the image appear as a sign, as an object on which an interpretative gaze must be cast, in their function of selection and mediatization, is moreover suggested by the very content of the linguistics course that Krzysztof gives at the same time as Pawel frames it.

While Krzysztof is discussing « aesthetic potentials for computers and the problem of translating what might be untranslatable, » the frame is placed on the face of Pawel, who also tries to choose by trying different positions to see his father through the device that serves as a basis for his visual enunciation; *the device produces its subject*. However, here the whole dialectic of *finestra* and *fissure* is summed up in the child's gesture of framing his father with an opening. He names his father's hands while tearing the support with the shapeless contours of his makeshift device, which is more a *fissure* than a *finestra* with clean edges. It is that speaking of the serious and rational framing of the translation of foreign words, always unsatisfactory (but Krzysztof believes in perfect translation

software) the father only interests the child by his warm hands, which the child looks at according to the device of a *finestra* affected by his *fissure* of desire.

To frame is to choose, and to frame through a slit is to choose the intimate, the fine, the detail, and to put oneself in the position of a discreet witness with a clinical view of what one is observing. The slit is not prepared for the gaze, it is always fortuitous, and the borrowing of its opening by the gaze is, therefore, a choice and an intrusion. Here, this field/counter-field through the slits of this camera allows the child's gaze (which here is similar to that of the filmmaker) to be brought into play and at the same time places the viewer's gaze in the same place, as he also observes the child through these slits. He is then in the position of this filmmaker-witness who works on his gaze, squints his eyes, uses his hands to draw a frame, as will Magda, the character in *Decalogue 6* who composes abstract tapestries in her apartment. Filming is thus choosing to look, through a slit, at the intimacy, the human secret of the characters.

However, framing also means naming. It means delimiting the subject's habitat. The one who is enunciated in the field built by the frame refers in his back to the one who enunciates in the counter-field. They are born jointly from the relationship established between them by the bi-frontality of the framed image; the structure of the field/counter-field, establishing between the spectator (here Pawel) and what he looks at/ visually enunciates (here his father) an intersubjective relationship, the object becoming the subject and vice versa. The subject is the point of origin of the field; it is thus always the counter-field invisible to the other but which stands as enunciated in the visible field, which becomes the signifier of its existence. The enunciating subject of the plane is the one from which it enunciates by disappearing, existing only in flight, according to the model of Lacanian *aphanisis*; “There is no subject without, somewhere, aphanisis of the subject, and it is in this alienation, in this fundamental division, that the dialectic of the subject is established.” (Lacan, 1978, p. 221)

We can thus say that the subject disappears in the darkness of the reverse field when the field he enunciates appears. It is in the invisible origin of the field, an origin with which the spectator can quickly identify since, as Hubert Damisch says, the point of view in the framed image corresponds to the vanishing point. Thus, Hubert Damisch, about Brunelleschi's famous experience in front of the San Giovanni Baptistery in Florence, says:

> The experiment was also intended to reveal, by reflectively turning the structural disposition back on itself, nothing less than the premise of its own efficacity: namely that a painting constructed in perspective (…) must be seen from one specific spot (*uno luogo solo*), governed by a system of rectangular cartesian coordinates distributed across three axes, two of them on the picture plane and the third perpendicular to it. (…) What Brunelleschi's experiment demonstrates, in effect, is that the point we today call the « point of view » coincides, in terms of projection, with the one we call the « vanishing point » (Damisch, 1994, pp. 119-120)

This point of view of the spectator, corresponding to the point of flight and thus to the hole drilled in the painted panel representing the baptistery (so that the painter looks at his painting from the very interior - the point of flight - of the latter) is also the point of view of the subject who enunciates it, and who enunciates it in a flight, in a disappearance (the Lacanian *aphanisis).* It is a point that sees, a pierced point where an eye appears that only the mirror can grasp in this initial reflexive experience. Seeing and disappearing are thus posed as equivalents and reunited together as a condition of the subject who thus comes to appear for himself as a painting at the point where he disappears as a constituted body. He is reduced to a point which, in the dispositive of this inaugural experience, is physically a hole, a void, a slit where any eye can stick. That is what happens with the camera that states on one side (field) the shot as an expression of the subject, and the other (counter-field) makes it vanish, or rather, opens it, pierces it, makes it vacant, that is to say, available to any presence. Any spectator can thus become virtually the subject enunciator of the shot since both look out of the window and are at the same vanishing point.

It is thus at the level of this subjective conduction from the point of view of the imaging subject that the question of the ethics of framing arises. Since the imaging subject determines, through his open subjective point of view, the point of view of the other subject, who is his spectator, which he contains in a way in his own invisible body, it is appropriate to ask oneself where he places himself and how he shows him, starting from the *finestra*, the visible on which his framing comes to make a statement. The question of the ethics of framing thus comes down to asking oneself about the subjective freedom that the imaging subject is going to leave the looking subject. Consequently, it will be a question of seeing appearing in the gesture of framing itself, a form of otherness, of cut, of contradiction, or reflexivity, likely to separate the place of the spectator from that of the enunciator. The ethic of framing is thus here in proportion to the space left to this

other, who is partly himself (the spectator) by the subject of the image, it is, in short, his withdrawal, his capacity to make the transition from direct, illusory sight to the visual sign, It is a question of creating intersubjectivity between two subjects who nevertheless share the same point of view, and it is the transformation of the view into a sign by a framing effect that operates this passage within the plane. The frame plays a central role here in that it cuts the image off from the rest of the visible and isolates it, making it a sign. The ethical question that then seems to arise for the filmmaker concerns the way in which he or she makes this signifying cut that takes the image from the status of a view to that of a sign, from the visible to the readable, a passage that would lift the viewpoint of the enunciator of the image from that of his or her viewer and thus lay the foundations for an intersubjective relationship. However, by its erasure, by its crumbling on its edges in the untimely movement of the camera that transforms the firm limit of the Albertian *finestra* into a porous border, a zone of exchange between the field and the off-field, but also, between the body of the spectator and the body of the image, the frame becomes a *fissure,* a slit.

Like the Flemish painters of the 17th century who installed windows, niches, or doorways to mark the uprights of their canvases and give their paintings a metadiscursive dimension, Kieślowski brings the cinematographic device into play in its use of the *slit image.* The *slit image* is thus a device that places the spectator, in terms of sensory perception, in a relationship perceived as direct with the represented object. However, it is also a figure in the cinematographic device, as an identifiable recurring motif, and is then placed on the level of meaning, as a formulation of the desire embodied in the images, and film images in particular; *opening, passage* and finally *origin* and contact with the *primary object*. These three elements will constitute the three main parts of our analysis of the dialectical image. The viewer's eye thus oscillates between adhering to the view and cutting off the sign. The passage from one to the other is mainly done around the frame of the image.

Going back to the very origins of ethics, to the root of the work of postponing the enjoyment and separation of the material thing and its term (the name that designates it and thus encloses it) as it operates in verbal language, Kieślowski places here on the same plane the act of framing a portion of material reality with the help of a camera (or any other visual device) and the act of naming an object with the help of the lexical apparatus.

It also links framing and translation in Krzysztof's work, a link that could be based on the idea of the passage of a flow through the opening of the letter. That is a very interesting point that could highlight the scriptural and verbal dimensions of the framing of images.
Alberti's insistence on the airy dimension (transparent as air) of the surface of the painting can be understood as another way of making figures of words composed of elements, as she rightly does. However, it can also be seen as an approach to figures painted as oralised words, that is, as invisible signifiers whose *finestra* would be only the lip and the letter simultaneously. To frame is then to name as orally on the side of the poïétique, but on the side of the aesthetics of reception, the mouth becomes the rectilinear edge of the letter for the one who looks at/reads the image. Thus, if Alberti projects the model of the spoken word on the whole of pictorial activity, according to the reborn movement of a return to writing, he does so first of all from the *finestra*, which marks the passage from the open mouth to the written letter, from the view (*fissure)* to the sign (*finestra),* from the visible to the readable. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 230) The figure seen would be the equivalent of the word oralised when the frame would be the trace of his writing, of his inscription: "First I write on the surface to be painted" says Alberti.
Finally, the presence of ethical reflection in *Decalogue* can also be seen in the way Kieślowski proposes, more or less consciously, a theory of the image as a gap between two spaces. This dialectical image is called a *slit image* in Beuvelet's terms, in its dimension of the visual device and metadiscursive figure.

3. *DECALOGUE*: DIALECTICS OF THE IMAGE

3.1. Dialectics Of The *Slit Image*

"Kieślowski, too poor to buy a ticket, climbed up to a roof and watched part of the screen from a vent." (Insdorf, 1999, pp. 5-6)

Taken from Annette Insdorf's book, this short excerpt links the slit motif to an experience of the director. It is perhaps possible that this youthful experience sealed in the filmmaker a taste for the cut of the field and the oblong opening that we find in his approach to the frame of the filmed image. He evokes this in *Camera Buff*, where, when Filip Mosz goes to the amateur film festival where his first film is screened, he watches from outside the theatre what is happening inside through the fine opening of a door. But this concrete, initial, or initiating slit is not necessarily an original slit. Suppose by chance (or another instance) Krzysztof Kieślowski discovers cinema through a slit. In that case, it will only be a happy heuristic encounter in his journey and for him the acquisition of an experience that will be put, in his work, at the service of symptomatology of the cinematographic subject, which goes far beyond it.

Thus, this initial experience of discovering cinema through a slit cannot go beyond the relevant anecdote and biographical anchoring framework. What interests us, on the contrary, is how the slit, as a motif, device, and metadiscursive figure, is more or less consciously integrated into the filmmaker's ethical approach and incorporated into his major work *Decalogue* to make it as much an essay on the place of ethics in the contemporary world as a film unveiling (conscious or unconscious) of the unconscious stakes of the cinematographic image itself.

But before coming to these considerations, which constitute the core of my conception of the framework and the matter of this research, I will begin this exploration of the dialectic of *finestra* and *fissure* by describing the symptom through a phenomenology of the aperture and the *slit image* in *Decalogue*. The *slit image* is the generic name Olivier Beuvelet has given to the dialectics of a series of meta-cinematographic figures that take up the motif or visual device of the slit in whole or in part in *Decalogue.* It is also and above all the name of a heuristic concept, elaborated here in a fourth and fifth part, that seeks, in this, first of all, to highlight and understand the metadiscursive dimension of

specific images; images that give themselves both reality and the image itself as objects and which take on their full scope in *Decalogue*. Let us recall here that the *slit image* considers the film image in its relation to the *finestra*, which it affects as an internal *fissure*, while at the same time illuminating its unconscious desire for the real presence of the represented object, in its relation to the material reality that it aims at and misses each time, in its relation, again, to the spectator's desire and, finally, in its relation to the cinematographic metadiscourse that the polyptych develops. As a visual manifestation of the fall of the Albertian frame, as expressed in the repetition as a symptom in *Decalogue 8*, and thus of the end of the reign of the *finestra* over representation, it releases all its power of illusion and reveals two essential dimensions that we will find in the Albertian image. The image is conceived there as an opening, the image is open to the passage of a body-eye, and finally, this passage of the body-eye leads to the origin of the image itself, that is, to the object of which something remains - at least for the eye - in the representation. The supposed opening of the *finestra is* then constituted as a path to the origin.

From these three dimensions, the concept of the *slit image* brings to light and constitutes a desirable combination of the *finestra* that it may be relevant to approach the study of this device which has become a reflective figure in *Decalogue*. Indeed, there is no shortage of openings, passages, and origins, forming the elements of a network of discourse on the film image. These three dimensions are then brought together and illuminated by an approach to the *slit image* as a primary object since it is an operative slit of spatial continuity. The image can be constituted for the viewing subject as a trace of the relationship to the primary object. But before getting to the heart of this concept, it is perhaps necessary to define precisely what constitutes the field of what we understand as the *slit image* through its various occurrences in the polyptych; from the camera's glances to the horizontal slits of the shutters, through doorways, through the interposition of objects, or the use of uprights and other internal fences as the margin of the image. This phenomenological step will allow us to uncover, in a second step, the structure of the *slit image,* which, through various operations involving the edges of the images, becomes the central figure of the metadiscourse held by *Decalogue,* concentrating in it what it iconically formulates of the relationship of the eye to the film image and the film image to the material reality that it both shows (designation) and represents (meaning).

Initially spotted in *Decalogue 6* and *A Short Film About Love* around the post office counter behind which Tomek, the romantic "voyeur," works, the *slit image* later proved to be present in numerous films on Kieślowski and different forms throughout the polyptych. We have thus made it the heart of our interpretation of the metadiscursive purpose of the *Decalogue* and the essential tool in the ethical meditation that it constitutes.

The *slit image* is not, strictly speaking, an image that is simply a slit or has the formal and plastic characteristics of a slit; an oblong and irregular opening, sometimes shapeless, reminiscent of a tear in the surface. It is, first of all, a pierced image whose edges do not constitute a frame with regular lines and are composed of four sides, but above all, an opening with irregular contours and distinct from the "real" frame of the image. It is sometimes a redefinition of an irregular frame or an obstructed field (cropping or over-framing) or vertical (a doorway, broken wall or glass, image with black margin); sometimes, a single line with rounded and vague shapes that shows a tear. However, it may be in the shape of a hole with regular contours as in *Decalogue 6* with Tomek's famous hole in the wicket, which will serve as a landmark and a place to move from one dimension of the *slit image* to the other.

The *slit image* is a device situated within the frame of the image. It disturbs its edges, redistributing its contours to highlight the breakthrough it offers to the gaze in the direction of the material reality represented in the image. As such, it is not a particular image endowed with characteristics that would make it a real slit, but it brings into play the idea of the slit as a shapeless opening, like a tear, in the image. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 267)

> Unlike mere possibilities, which can be considered from a purely logical standpoint, potentialities or capacities present themselves above all as things that exist bur that, at the same time, do nor exist as actual things; they are present, yet they do not appear in the form of present things. What is at issue in the concept of potentiality is nothing less than a mode of existence that is irreducible to actuality. (Agamben, 1999, p. 14)

In *Decalogue*, the *slit image* takes on different aspects, tracing networks of repeats throughout the films, making the long, narrow slit opening a recurring and identifiable figure. Without it being possible to establish a particular order of appearance nor a

gradation in the occurrences, since - since the films do not follow one another narratively - there is no real order in the sequence of episodes of the *Decalogue* that can be watched, like the panels of a polyptych, in random order. The direct figure of the slit or crack at the heart of the image weaves its web across the entire range of the films through different types of occurrences; from the figuration of the slit alone as a form inscribed in the image to the bringing into play of the idea of the slit as a shapeless opening, it haunts the images of the *Decalogue* as a visual device and figure, so that it becomes the place where the specular surface of the metadiscourse developed by the polyptych is established.

The metadiscursive figure of the *slit image* used by Kieślowski in an openly reflexive approach to the film image puts into the abyss the visual device of the *slit image,* used by the characters to observe other characters and allows the emergence of a concept that will help us to understand the stakes of the perspective image through the three media, painting, photography and cinema.

While, as we saw in the previous section, the rectilinear frame of the image, the "quadrilateral at right angles" Alberti talks about, is the place where the passage from sight to sign in the image takes place; the line of the frame reminds the eye that considers it of the representational dimension of the image, the *slit image* if we consider its facet as a figure of a mise en abyme of the device of the film image itself, is situated at the level of the metadiscourse. It formalizes and represents the relationship that the spectator's eye has with the material reality represented by highlighting the eye's desire to which the painting and its successors respond. We thus have, around the frame and its revealing disorder, the *slit image,* three levels of reading by the eye, three statuses of the edge of the image. The frame forgotten by the eye, the image is a direct view of the object designated by the device, which is not for the subject looking at a represented object, made artificially present, but the object itself, really present in its representation. The frame does indeed exist as an index pointing to the designated object. Still, it does not operate as a closure and therefore does not create separation around the representation space. When the frame becomes present in the gaze of the looking subject, the image is then more or less strongly separated from its environment; it becomes an individual body and becomes a sign, separated from its referent by the enclosure of the representation that isolates it from the rest of the world. It no longer designates the object but organizes a quotation to appear; it signifies it. Therefore, the paradox of the *finestra* is that it is only

an open window if we forget it; if we think about it, it becomes a "plank" again, (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 269) as noted by Dayan in his article on the concept of suture:

> For the spectator who becomes frame-conscious, the visual field *means* the presence of the absent-one as the owner of the glance that constitutes the image. The filmic field thus simultaneously belongs to representation and to signification. Like the classical painting, on the one hand it represents objects or beings, on the other hand it signifies the presence of a spectator. When the spectator ceases to identify with the image, the image necessarily signifies to him the presence of another spectator. The filmic image presents itself here not as a simple image but as a show, i.e., it structurally asserts the presence of an audience. The filmic field is then a signifier; the absent-one is its signified. (Dayan, 1974)

The *slit image*, in its dialectical relationship with the *finestra*, is situated between these two poles and thus enjoys a double status; considered as a view, by the emphasis it places on the two dimensions that we will observe first; the opening and the passage, which place it as a real shapeless opening leading to the represented object, it is also a figure, even a sign, whose referent is precisely the film image itself taken to be signified by the signifier *slit image*. It is, in short, the disappearance of the Alberti's frame that has become visible. It represents the crumbling of the *parergon* line, the loss of the signifier in the image in favor of the illusion of presence. But for the extra, it takes a certain distance from the phenomenon of the frame's disappearance; it signifies the designation in the film image, and at the same time, it designates the meaning. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 269)

The question then concerns how the *slit image*, which physically presents itself as a shapeless, and above all, fortuitous opening, can become a reflexive figure. Set within the ethical framework of the *Decalogue*, in this visual meditation on the mechanisms of ethics where the question of representation - the ghostly commandment that haunts the polyptych - is finally posed ten times, as we have already seen, the *slit* image - particularly because it recalls the aesthetics of the documentary films and early fictions of Kieślowski and because it becomes in itself a recognizable figure - appears itself as ambivalent. On the one hand, as a shapeless and fortuitous image, it is part of an aesthetic of the impromptu shooting, without any particular preparation, as a spontaneous view, transposition of the documentary technique and its immediate contingencies into the field of fiction where, in principle, everything is mastered by the director, it thus appears as a "natural" visual device. On the other side, as a recurring and thus locatable figure, in the

context of a "mise en jeu" of the gaze and the visual devices in the image as the subject of the film, the *slit image* becomes the very representation of the slit, doubling the primary device of vision of a secondary device of reflection of the device. At the exact time representation of the real slit and representation as a slit, it oscillates between the view, the sign, and the *meta-sign* considered as a sign that signs itself and thus allows us to envisage, on a perceptual and theoretical level at the same time, the breakthrough that, within the image, would lead to the real without ever reaching it. It is thus in the image of the Lacanian *tuchè,* which presents itself as a constantly adjourned encounter with the real and whose visual treatment of the counters by Kieślowski is a visual game.

The transition from the representation of the slit in *Decalogue* to the *slit image* as a mise en abyme and metaphor of the film image takes place here in the same way that doorways were used as metapictorial elements in the painting of the mid-16th and early-17th centuries. The opening of the slit thus constitutes a kind of image within the image, just as the doorway of a door, a window, or the ledge of a niche could contribute, in a 17th-century painting, to drawing a frame within the frame and open the painting to a meta-artistic dimension; the *slit image* opens the plane to the meta-cinematographic dimension. But by doubling the border in a non-mimetic way, that is to say by affecting its regularity and rigidity, it holds, in addition to the simple representation of the representation (simple mise en abyme), a visual statement on the visual device that it affects and of which it shows the affection as a symptom. Thus, the *slit image* is a pattern (picture within a picture) and a symptom, i.e., an expression of affect with its movements and desire. Alberti's window and the door of the interior painting that Stoichita analyses are also metaphors, but the latter seem to play only on the formal analogy between the image frame and their quadrangular form, their function or semiotic structure not often being brought into play in their use, and even more significantly, in their interpretation. The window is a fence, and the door has a threshold. "walled" in its pictoriality. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 270)

Window or door frames and picture frames are, of course, too close together for it to be easy to feel more than a formal revival in their use as a way of putting the picture into the abyss. Thus, we often stop at the evidence of the formal analogy and perhaps do not ask ourselves enough about what a door is. Thus, for example, the invitation to pass through represented by the doorway is not addressed by Victor I. Stoichita sees it essentially as a

matrix of interior images, the door frame being common, for us as spectators in houses, a place for the appearance of objects standing in a separate, hollowed-out and delimited space. The fact that this space is also porous, even open to our coming, is a point that has not been sufficiently addressed, to our knowledge, except for Hubert Damisch's work in *The Origin of Perspective,* to understand how the embrasure works the viewer's gaze and brings into play the passage of his body to the other side, into the space of representation.

"While we are inside in the world of culture, the window offers a view towards nature outside; with the door, however, we can stay within the world of culture, of domestic space. That's why Stoichita states that the door opening is the matrix of interior and genre painting" (Blom, 2010, p. 92).

In the same way, the *slit image* brings into play a specific visual device with its own characteristics and the particular effect that this device has on the viewer's gaze. We hypothesize that it is a figure of desire that haunts the spectator's gaze, his scopic appetite for the framed image which, from the beginnings of the *finestra* to the digital technologies of 3D, can satisfy this imperious desire to place his gaze within the frame of the image and to play with the edge, oscillating between sight and sign, presence and absence, in the manner of this child who, in Freud's work, plays with the presence and absence of his mother in the famous article in which he introduces the notion of Fort-Da. (Freud, 1922) The *slit image* is then the figure that captures the desire of the eye working the edge of the *finestra*.

It is possible to distinguish three types of *slit image* occurrences in the polyptych, corresponding to three different degrees of mobilization of the slit characteristics: the pattern of the slit or crack - which is not a *slit image* but rather an image of the *slit* - the *slit image* as a visual device which places at the heart of the framed image another image perceived through a slit in a subjective cropping operation carried out by a character, and finally the metadiscursive figure of the *slit image.* That is to say precisely the cases where the *slit image,* directly refers to the device of the filmed image by directly affecting the edge of the image. What then distinguishes the metadiscursive figure from the simple visual device is that in one case, it is the arrangement of a slit operated by a character and preceding an internal ocularization, in the form of a field/counter-field, most of the time,

in the other of a direct mise en abyme of the cinematographic medium. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 272)

3.1.1. Slits as patterns

In cases where it appears as a pattern, the slit (we cannot yet speak of a *slit image)* does not appear as a visual device with its own qualities affecting its contours and its way of presenting the visible, but as a visual object in itself, placed at the heart of the image, often in insistent shots that draw the viewer's eye to the presence of a fine opening or a crack. It is then a question of bringing into play the motif that appears as a simple drawing, a representation, of the form that haunts, according to our hypothesis, the whole polyptych in its capacity to think about the relationship of the film image to the material reality it is supposed to preserve and to the eye that is drawn to it. That is the case, for example, of these two occurrences in episode 9, an episode that deals mainly with the use of the window blind slot.

Slit figures arranged in the middle of the shots as their central object only dispose under the viewer's gaze of the slit pattern, as a break in a chromatic continuity where the camera follows a white line on a road. The tape here breaks the image, cutting it into two separate parts, more than it splits it. Still, one can undoubtedly see in it an evocation of the embrasure and the formal approach to the pattern of the oblong opening that one will later encounter. In the second instance, the gap is the opening between the two lanes of an overhead highway. Seen from below, the opening allows the sunlight to pass through, and the brightness of the sunlight bites a little on the inner straight lines of the slit. With an additional dimension compared to the previous occurrence, this occurrence shows us the pattern associated with the idea of a real opening; the slit here is a real narrow slit through which the fluid that is sunlight flows. Related to the context of this film where the gaze is often brought into play in the process of jealousy that deeply and dangerously affects Romek and often borrows the visual device of *jalousie,* the slit that hides the sun that cannot be seen, the object that burns the gaze, is here presented in an allegorical dimension.

In *Decalogue 2*, the image of a crack in the hospital room wall where Dorota's husband, Andrzej, who is suffering from a severe illness, is the occasion to draw the viewer's

attention to the motif of the crack, which other occurrences will later reinforce. Thus, we see it here affecting the dividing wall of a white wall that acts here as a screen and becomes a projection surface concretely for the spectator. We could then, by transposing this seemingly meaningless close-up cut into the realm of the film's reflexive approach to itself, see in the water flow, in this reume, both a visual staging of the fluidity of the film image that glides over the surface and an evocation of its potential to touch us, to wet us. This insistent shot gives a face to the cracked surface, gives it a subject dimension, and transforms the appearance of the cracks into affective signs questioning the viewer's gaze. The patient's gaze is directed towards the wall, which naturally reflects the affects that run through his face. But here it is neither a slit used as a visual device in the field of fiction nor a slit representing the frame of the film image itself; the slit is flush with the image as a natural motif and the association that can be made with the screen on which the film image is projected is only justified in relation to the whole polyptych in the context of a more detailed interpretation of its metadiscursive dimension. That said, taken in its immediate diegetic context, this white wall does indeed constitute a screen. Because Andrzej projects his gaze and his suffering face onto it, this close-up, considered subjective, becomes specular and therefore "speaking" for the viewer. The weeping slit is an expression of the affect felt by the character. The assembly of the slit (there are even several visible ones on this shot, which is a vertical traveling shot down the wall) and the flow, involving the passage of a fluid through the surface, exposes to the viewer the fragility of the walls, their inability to prevent the passage of fluids, while allegorically formulating the effects of Andrzej's illness and flight from the life of the body-body-envelope which seems to die on his hospital bed. A projection of the patient's body on the wall of his room thus establishes an analogical relationship between the architectural envelope affected by slits through which worrying water flows and the carnal envelope of the sick figure, sweating on his bed under the effect of the fever.

The slit thus appears as a real opening and a place of passage; it is a structure and functionality that can be associated with the approach that we will make of the *slit image* in the continuation of this work. Let us recall now that the issue at stake in this episode is whether Andrzej will live or die, Dorota being pregnant with her lover and wondering whether or not she will keep her child. In the case of Andrzej's death, she would keep him, but if he were to survive, she would have an abortion. Therefore, the flow of water

through these cracks in the wall is also at the heart of Dorota's body being used as an origin. An organic dimension is thus conferred by the place and the stakes of the film to these flows along the surface of the wall, all the more so as the shot ends on the leaves of a fat plant that the spectator saw Dorota nervously stripping the leaves previously, evoking by this removal of leaves, by this tearing from the trunk of her plant, the gesture she was about to make towards her potential descendants.

Another type of slit pattern is found in shots that present a kind of rupture both visually and semantically within the image itself, drawing the viewer's attention to a form that evokes and visually corresponds to that of the slit without constituting one in the space of the representation. In *Decalogue 4*, as Anna is about to open the letter, her mother left her, and in which she probably confides the name of her birth father, a character appears, getting out of a small white boat and putting it on his back, he carries it and passes by Anna. The latter stares at him and interrupts his gesture. The character who crosses the space where she is standing is the famous enigmatic character of the *Decalogue*, played by Artur Barciś. He passes in front of Anna, holding a pair of scissors and is about to open the envelope, looks at her intensely, and leaves without uttering a single word. After he leaves, Anna gives up opening the envelope and goes home. The long, tapering boat that he carries on his back for no apparent reason is a sort of anomaly in the diégesis and presents itself as an enigmatic sign to be interpreted, on the one hand, because there is the appearance of this character whose status must be established, and on the other hand because this canoe, whose shape is strange, seems to appeal to the sagacity of the spectator. It is possible to see, here again, the reason for the slit. Its diamond shape with sharp points and its position in the image, in the heart of the field, may resemble a tear in the medium, a kind of slit made on the surface of the image in the manner of Lucio Fontana's slits.[8] Dark against a background of the pale sky in the first occurrence, it appears white against the background of the darker forest in the second and thus constitutes a chromatic break. Anna is in the process of returning to her origin by trying to open the letter that contains, at least she thinks so, the name of her progenitor, of whom she suspects and secretly hopes that he is not the one who brought her up from birth. Seen from this perspective, the tapered shape of the canoe in the second instance could be seen

[8] See Lucio Fontana - Spatial Concept, Waiting (1961-1964)

as an opening of the image surface onto a material nothingness that of the bare surface of the screen appearing in white as if there were an image defect at the location of the slit. What is very interesting for our interpretive work is that it is precisely this enigmatic character, who comes back under different identities and who therefore does not belong to the fictional world of films, that bears the crack.

Another occurrence of the slit pattern is the opening of a toilet bag into which a hand dips. In *Decalogue 4*, Anna looks for an image of her potential father in her mother's toiletry kit, which Michal, the man who raised her as a father but about whose paternity there is doubt, has kept in the cellar. She pulls out an old photograph of her mother surrounded by two men and a woman, two men who probably include her genetic father, but she doesn't know it yet. The framing adopted for this scene places the opening of the kit at the heart of the image and creates a waiting effect for the spectator. Anna takes out various objects that belonged to her mother, a handkerchief, a bottle of perfume that she inhales with emotion before seizing the photograph. The spectator's expectation then comes to an end with this epiphany of image and origin, of the image as an origin. It is her mother's body, embodied by metonymy in this cover, which is here opened to reveal its secret, allowing us to replay in this operation of extracting the structural elements of a birth; intervention of a midwife, the passage of a body from an interior space to the exterior. But here, Anna gives birth to the origin itself; the encounter she makes is that of her origin. The bag's opening thus opens onto another space where objects are waiting to be seen, particularly this uncertain image of the father. The pattern of the slit is here treated as an opening allowing a passage and a passage to the origin (the *Mater certissima* and the *Pater incertus*)[9]; opening, passage, and origin.

From these occurrences that cross *Decalogue* as a kind of emblematic presence of the form that haunts the polyptych, it appears that the slit, as a motif, whether it is a simple oblong shape or a tear towards another space, often allows itself to be crossed and thus constitutes an opening and offers a passage to a fluid substance, whether it is light or a liquid. This aspect of the slit as an opening/passage is crucial for our analysis, as this opening and passage are the two main elements of the *slit image* considered a device. As such, the *slit image* is first and foremost a formless opening for a potential passage. When

[9] "The mother is certain, the father is (always) uncertain."

the element (the fluid) that borrows this passage is the gaze, as will be the case in the occurrences we will now observe, the slit becomes a visual device entirely.

3.1.2. Slits as visual devices

Before discussing the different types of slits used as a visual device by characters throughout the *Decalogue,* it may be helpful to note the many situations in which characters are led, often by their desire to know, to look at space off-screen through a camera or a device of chance, found on the spot, which allows them to modify their presence as the origin of the gaze. The vision devices are at the forefront of these stakes in the gaze of a character in the polyptych.

In *Decalogue 2*, the doctor Dorota is talking to observes her sick husband's cells with a microscope, so he must discover the exact nature of his illness and decide his fate. The microscope, which opens the gaze to the infinitely small, situated in an off-screen, yet internal to the image, thus becomes a device that predicts the future, allowing us to see beyond the immediate (etymologically: which requires no medium).

In *Decalogue 4*, Anna experiences a loss of visual acuity as she watches a plane take off. She goes to an ophthalmologist who installs a device on her face to assess her vision and has her decipher a series of letters; f, a, t, h, e, r. The letters are getting smaller and smaller on the board, but Anna manages to say them all. Intrigued by the ease with which Anna pronounced the letters one by one, the doctor asks her if she didn't guess them at the end of the exercise; Anna answers "yes," and in a remark that sounds like a deep awareness, she adds: - "My father was on that plane." The sequence closes with this statement; the passage through the camera allowed her to fully see the oedipal cause of her visual acuity loss: his relationship with his father. Paradoxically, it was not by deciphering the letters that she could see the origin of her disorder but by guessing the word "father." The device also allowed the subject to know the state of invisibility in the field itself, not her loss of visual acuity, visible by the halo of imprecision in which she wrapped objects, but the very origin of this visual disorder. The device appears as a visual device that acts as a revelator allowing us to see what cannot be seen at the very heart of the visible, the unconscious mechanisms, as well as the physiological micro-mechanisms.

Another type of device is brought into play in the *Decalogue* episode, which deals specifically with the gaze and its pathological attachments. To look at Magda from his window, Tomek uses a telescope that allows him to approach the object of his lust with his eyes. With the help of his telescope, Tomek will bring his gaze to Magda, drawing her visually towards him by turning the wheel of his lens, thus developing, in a literal way, the haptic dimension of his gaze and testifying to his temptation to touch Magda's body. This close-up device brings Tomek's hand into play in two ways, and that this bringing into play illuminates the desire that his gaze conveys; a desire for contact and grasping. At the end of this episode, which retraces a voyeuristic relationship that gradually becomes amorous, Magda becomes a watching subject from an object being watched, in a symbolic reversal that will play out around Tomek's post office counter. Watching for the return of the one whose gaze she misses, she grabs a pair of binoculars to observe the window from which she was being watched. From being an instrument for grasping and approaching, the device becomes an instrument for surveillance in Magda's hands.

We have already discussed the sequence from *Decalogue 1* in which Pawel looks at his father Krzysztof giving a lecture on translation at the University of Warsaw. We have already seen how the child used this device to select what interested him, the physical translation of his father's words through the play of his hands; he was framing his father's words at the very moment when the latter was talking about the difficulty of framing the meaning of a word by translating it into another language. The use of a visual device thus made it possible to put the child's desire, or at least the child's interest, into the abyss by placing an improvised device between his eye and the object of his gaze, thus making it possible to take the gaze as an object while at the same time bringing into play a *slit image* in a counter-field thus established: the *slit image* is the fruit of the meeting of a desire to see and a device that allows it to express itself, to formulate itself visually, one could say to project itself. The device Pawel uses here is precisely a slide projector. Pawel's gaze, shown through the slide projector, is a simple internal ocularization (the narrator bending totally to the immediate conditions of the character's vision even if an allegorical dimension was born from the use of over-framing in his relationship to the theme of translation. However, we will see further on that this narratological distinction between internal ocularization and zero ocularization, both being forms of subjectivization of the film image, will make it possible to distinguish the *slit image* as a visual device (internal

ocularization) established by a field/counter-field that shows the gaze of a character followed by what he sees, from the *slit image* as a metadiscursive figure (zero ocularization) where it is the frame of the filmed image itself that is affected by the emergence of the viewer's desire: “either a shot is anchored in the regard of an instance internal to the diegesis – what we have called “internal ocularization” – or it is not so anchored, and is, therefore, a case of “zero ocularization.” (Jost, 2004, p. 74)

In *Decalogue 7*, another type of occurrence in which the *slit image* is thus brought and established by implementing an internal ocularization can be noted. It is the moment when Majka, at the beginning of the film, observes her daughter Ania in the playground of her nursery school. But in this instance, it is first what she sees that is shown in a lateral panoramic shot that runs the width of a playground where young children are playing and ends with a group of children gathered together. The counter-field then shows us Majka's character, in a lateral movement that extends by connection in the direction of the previous panoramic; she is adjusting her glasses.

The inversion of the usual stages of the introduction of internal ocularization initially creates confusion for the viewer about the status of the foreground, which thus appears to be the external point of view of the filmmaker, situated behind the sheets which here act as interposed objects. The frame of the filmed image itself is affected by the symptom of this foliage invading the field. Insofar as this gaze is not taken up by a character that would have been presented before, the spectator understands that it is the filmmaker himself who is hiding and, by the effects of the subjective conduction of the framing which places him within the limits of the filmmaker's virtual body; it is also the spectator who is looking through this foliage. The presence of this hiding place presents the image as a slit, a concrete open field, not preformed and not prepared for the organizing gaze of an imaging subject, a chance image on which the architectural power of the *finestra to* spread out and clarify does not seem to weigh. It is indeed a *slit image*, and one might think since it seems to be taken in charge by the filmmaker (and not by a character), it is here a figure that affects the frame of the *finestra* and represents the desire for the invisibility of the spectator-eye. The beginning of a metadiscourse is then established since it becomes surprising and questioning for the viewer that this image attributed to the narrating instance of the filmmaker is thus anchored in the concrete of the filmed space (zero ocularization) and invaded by leaves that obstruct the field (concealment).

According to a reasonably common editing habit in *Decalogue*, Kieślowski frees the viewer from confusion about the meaning of a shot by giving him the key to what he has just seen without knowing it. The counter-field on Majka shows her hiding behind the foliage, adjusting her glasses to see the child better. Without knowing precisely the nature of his desire or the nature of his relationship with the child, the spectator then changes his questions and is no longer interested, consciously or not, in the metadiscursive meaning of this first *slit image,* but more precisely in Majka's motivations. The question is anchored in the subjectivity of the character. We are then faced with a *slit image* that is no longer a metadiscursive figure but returns to the level of a simple device in the fictional space of the film.

We can still see in *Decalogue 9* how the conscious use of a device by a character can reveal essential elements of his gaze. Romek, the jealous husband of this visually important episode, uses his car's sun visor to conceal his gaze when approaching the man he suspects to be his wife's lover. The use of the sun visor is practically superfluous; it is too late to hide. On the other hand, this use probably has a psychic function for Romek and, beyond his case, a symptomatic function for the spectator. The *slit image* as a visual device is here a means for the character to play with his gaze and feel the effects of his disappearance in his field of vision. In a way, he chooses jealousy rather than dialogue with his wife and then engages in a secret investigation into her relationship with the young man. The visual device here acquires an interesting figurative dimension without being reduced to a metadiscursive figure. Indeed, it does not comment on the cinematographic device itself but gives a constitution to Romek's jealousy by establishing this jalousie. It is therefore not the film viewer's gaze nor his desire that is brought into play by this image, but rather the unconscious desire of the jealous person who seeks, through the establishment of this blind spot at the heart of the image, through this self-dissimulation that leads to a loss in the field of vision, to erase himself while seeing himself absent. The visual device of the *slit image* serves here to put into image the link between the feeling of jealousy and the visual device of the jalousie, which can be a visualization of it. Still, it does not involve the film image itself. However, because of the structural proximity of the two devices, because of the hidden place of the film viewer and the possible desire for a disappearance that may haunt his gaze, like that of the jealousy, this device of jalousie is part of the stakes of the gaze, in the polyptych, stakes

that often, in one way or another, whether it be Romek's jealous gaze or Tomek's greedy gaze, also concern the field of the reception of cinematographic images.

The voluntary and conscious use of a makeshift visual device by a character who thus finds the means to hide his gaze, to tighten his field of vision and/or to play with his desire, indicates the intentionality that then inhabits the *slit image* insofar as the affection of the frame by the visual element that makes the slit is not fortuitous but adopted consciously. The character's intention thus orients the slit. It remains a visual device internal to the narrative. The film image itself is not brought into play, if not indirectly, considering the establishment of this visual device as a mise en abyme of the film image.

As a visual device, the slit image is thus an indirect evocation of the cinematographic apparatus, just as was, even more indirectly, the slit pattern. But these stakes in the form, and more often in the characters' gaze, draw a network of repetitions and insistences, of reference to scopic activities, of work on the edge of the image, which progressively establishes the gaze and the opening of a device as essential elements of the film's subject matter. Yet these elements remain in the folds of the implicit, all the more so as cinema is rarely evoked in the polyptych, except in episode 6 where it is precisely the scene of a failure that will lead Jacek, the young urban wanderer, to commit his crime. Cinema is thus in *Decalogue* like the author according to Flaubert, "present everywhere but visible nowhere," (Nelson, 2015) it is the ghost of the polyptych, its essential and secret inhabitant. That is how the ethics of the *Decalogue* of Kieślowski, based on the second commandment of the Mosaic Law - the ghost commandment of the polyptych and the root commandment of the Mosaic Decalogue - is deployed in the stakes of the gaze and the slit that refer back to the two fundamental questions that haunt it.

But the occurrences of the *slit image* that will hold our attention the most are not those where it is the direct result of an intention of a character who would use a device found there to see through it the object of his attention, but those that directly affect the frame of the image. They are of two types: we can note, on the one hand, those that show us the vision of a character without the latter voluntarily using a visual device and rely on elements of the decor that obstruct his view and appear naturally in the image, such as doorways, interposed objects, shutters, car doors. And on the other hand, those that are not subjective and have a margin, a decorative element, a pillar, a tree, an obstacle to

vision, which suggest that vision at such and such a site is fortuitous, anchored, focused but not ocularized (zero ocularization) since it is not attributable to any known eye. This second type of *slit image*, in which we can see an affection for the frame of the cinematographic image and an involvement of the viewer's gaze, that is to say, a meta-cinematographicity is the very heart of our thesis, the one that gave its object to this research work because it is at its level that the passage from the view to the sign takes place. The *slit image* is a figure of the cinematographic view. It represents the film image itself affected by the figurative marks of its quadruple desire for opening, passage, origin, and return of the primary object. Sometimes it is perceived as the hallucinatory realization of these desires; sometimes, it is only the expression of them (which is in itself a realization since the aim of the desire is to express itself rather than to be realized). (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 290)

3.1.3. *Slit image* as a metadiscourse

The *slit image* as a metadiscursive figure peculiar to *Decalogue* finds its fullness in those occurrences where the slit is not a simple pattern of the crack of a surface, or the fruit of a visual device used voluntarily by a character, a vision duly established by an internal ocularization, but when it directly affects the device of the film's image frame. Corresponding either to an unintentional internal ocularization because without manipulation of a visual device (apparatus, foliage, etc.) used knowingly by the character to narrow the field of his vision, or to a zero ocularization presupposing disembodied, impersonal vision, The gaze it affects is not only that of a character who lends his place and his eye to the viewer, but also that of the viewer himself, the recipient of the film, and the comment he makes through it on the cinema, with no other assigned place than that conferred by the framing and through it the ethical relationship that the filmmaker establishes (or not) with him. The *slit image* then acts as a trompe-l'oeil, a complex device that could just as well be applied to the *slit image*: « the most realist of artistic projets and the most ironic of antirealisms (…) seeks to hide the fact that it is a flat canvas, covered with paint, and pretends to be something it is not. » (Levine, 1998, p. 367)

This *slit image* is no longer simple cropping operated by the eye and the desire of the

character within the fictional space of the film, but rather an over-framing, in the tradition of meta-pictoriality:

> What is meta-painting, then? Metapainting is the self-staging of painting in painting. If the definition sounds too hermetic and nearly tautological—which it is not—I can propose a more articulated one: metapainting is the whole gamut of pictorial devices through which painting stages its fictiveness. Painting achieves this goal by different means: by partially uncovering its materiality; by hinting at, depicting, or putting on view its maker or making; by involving the beholder as an active or even indispensable component of the image; by incorporating a painting—or an image with an equivalent status—as an object of representation. Put this way; it may seem that meta-painting, through one or another of its functions, does what painting usually does: it plays with fictiveness. (Pericolo, 2015, p. 12)

This *slit image* thus carries within it the elements of a very enlightening meta-cinematographicity since it brings into play the relationship of the spectator's eye to the space of representation. Indeed, what it brings to light indirectly by affecting the frame and framing of the filmmaker is the desire of the spectator, himself considered as an instance both internal and external to that of the filmmaker, he is the other subject who haunts him, in whose place he puts himself by performing the initial and indispensable act of seeing in the imaging processes linked to the photographic medium. He is thus, at the same time, the one to whom he addresses his image. At the same time, a virtual enunciator of the image from the point of view that is its origin and the recipient of the image, he is also the one to whom he addresses his image. In the image, the spectator finds himself in ambiguity concerning what he is looking at while desiring, as the recipient, to see the represented object; he is also led to see the representation itself as a double of its enunciator. Each time an external element works on the frame, each time the frame remembers, the view of a represented object becomes a sign; depth becomes flatness, openness becomes a screen, and transparency becomes opacity. We will see here that the *slit image* is, in *Decalogue,* next to the reflections, an essential instrument of this thinking of the image through the image itself.

In the context of the *Decalogue* and the importance it gives to the invisible act of looking, the gaze at the camera is a very effective means of bringing into play, under the gaze of the spectator who is then put into play and becomes conscious of his own gaze, the illusion of the transparency of the medium and the possibility of a passage between the two spaces. We will see a little further on that this question of the passage of a part of the spectator's body to the other side, in the space of the representation is essentially the fact

of his gaze considered then as a body, for the moment let us observe the metadiscursive stakes of the occurrences of gaze to the camera in the polyptych.

First of all, because the spectator assumes or pretends to believe that there is an opening in the image, the look at the camera can be considered a *slit image*. In its occurrences in *Decalogue*, the gaze at the camera often borrows the fine opening of a slit or is associated with this device, except for the first occurrence, at the beginning of *Decalogue 1*.

Note here that it is not essential to see the polyptych in the numerical order of the episodes, each of them being autonomous in terms of narration. Moreover, a polyptych is a synoptic device, which does not imply a hierarchy or a progressive ordering of themes. It is essential to note that the first episode (and thus the whole series that initially appeared, week after week, in numerical order, on Polish television) opens with this enigmatic character and that the first gesture of the whole project is an act of gaze and more particularly a look at the camera that immediately engages the spectator on the path of reflexivity. The character who thus opens the polyptych by fixing his gaze on the spectator is precisely the one who will return under various identities throughout the films and whom we will call here the character-eye, considering that he embodies the corporality of the gaze present in the space of the representation, in the polyptych as a whole. He addresses from the outset a sustained gaze to the spectator and that we can consider that he thus establishes the meta-cinematographic dimension of the film. This is what Kieślowski makes happen from the beginning. “According to traditional approaches, the look at the camera has a double effect: it foregrounds the enunciative instance of the filmic text and attacks the spectator's voyeurism by putting the space of the film and the space of the movie theater briefly in direct contact.” (Vernet, 1989, p. 48)

This character with an indeterminate identity, appearing here as an ancient shepherd or a wanderer, plays the role of the storyteller, integrated into the heart of the device; he is foreign to the story, as he will be in most of the sequences where he will appear, under various identities whose only common point will be to be played by the actor Artur Barciś. He invites us to take a more precise interest in the film's subject and presents himself instead as an intermediary, a go-between. He is in the role of the admonitor evoked by Alberti; he points us to the object represented, and the object represented here is our gaze. He writes as follows:

> It seems opportune then that in the historia there is someone who informs the spectators of the things that unfold; or invites with the hand to show; or threatens with severe face and turbid eyes not to approach there, as if he wishes that a similar story remains secret; or indicates a danger or another [attribute] over there to observe; or invites you with his own gestures to laugh together or cry in company. (Alberti, 2011, p. 63)

Indeed, by looking the spectator in the eyes through the virtual opening of the *finestra*, the admonitor shows us what is happening, and what is happening is precisely, here, a look. It is not yet through a slit that this glance at the camera reaches us, we are only at the film's opening, and it is still the *finestra* that allows us to access the space of representation. Still, it is a *finestra* whose surface is torn open, opens up from the beginning, and it is a film whose device reveals itself, or more precisely, reminds us of our consciousness.

There is perhaps a metaphorical link between this opening in the image surface and the very first images of the film (first 20 seconds) that precede it and show a close-up of the frozen and melting surface of a body of water. The icy water forming a hard surface and the simmering water is thus juxtaposed from the very beginning in what can be considered a double announcement: at the diegetic level; we can assume that this juxtaposition prefigures the causes of the ice skating accident that will cost the life of Pawel. On the level of the metadiscourse to which the camera gaze of the character that appears next quickly invites us, we can see the dissolution of a surface and simultaneously the passage from fixity to fluidity in the image; two characteristics of the *slit image*. Indeed, a dialectic is established between fixity and mobility, within the image itself, in the same plane, the two states rubbing against each other. The blades of dry grass are caught in the ice while the water trembles on the right side, drawing a cut in two-thirds of the image, a cut that constitutes the place where the two states of water separate and mix. Dialectic of movement and immobility is at the very heart of the film image. It is essential to underline that these two states are the same material. Just as the film and photographic images are of the same texture, we also know how much water and fluidity are themes dear to cinema from the first views of light and in the first films, which indeed saw in the waves, rivers, and various flows, an object that only the film image could capture fluidity, movement: ruptured surface, fluid passage. Thus, in this inaugural shot outside of the diegesis, and therefore put into epigraphy, Kieślowski has chosen to present us with two states of water, fixed and mobile, which could well be metaphorically represented, the photographic image as a reflection of the real (it is also one of the qualities of water as the myth of

Narcissus tells us so well), the cinema is focused in this primordial water, we find there indeed the two states of the photographic image that photography and cinema share. Still photography / animated photography. "… the inventor of painting was, according to the opinion of poets, that [famous] Narcissus who was transformed into a flower.(7) As the painting is in fact the flower of all the arts, thus the whole tale of Narcissus perfectly adapts to the topic itself." (Alberti, 2011, p. 46)

The admonitor's gaze at the camera thus directly experiences this erasing of the surface, this opening of the frame of the *finestra* in a trompe-l'oeil, whose primary function is precisely to disguise it, and to indicate to him what is happening, the essential stake that is the gaze in the work he is about to look at. According to their addressee, we can then distinguish the occurrences of camera glances in the polyptych. Most of them are addressed to other characters in the film with whom the viewer identifies by virtue of the subjective conduction of the framing. The gaze at the camera is then only partially a crossing of the open surface of the image. Since if we refer to the diegetic space, it finds its object in the character's own space and does not come out of it. It is addressed to the fictional counter-field and not the technical counter-field (apparatus) or the spectator counter-field (room). However, each of the glances at the camera directed at other characters allows for nuances in the intentionality of the exchange of glances. Each time, the spectator experiences a new form of visibility and, depending on the context, a new position as a looking subject. He is sometimes questioned, sometimes threatened, sometimes disengaged, sometimes stared at by these glances towards the camera. Through these metadiscursive devices, Kieślowski thus plays on the lability of the gaze, its ontological indeterminacy and the slippage of the impressions of the one who is in turn sick, on the verge of transgressing a ban affecting the origin, looked at by a voyeur, or flushed out in his jealous scopic activity.

In the first occurrence, in *Decalogue 2,* the doctor arrives at the hospital and goes to the room of Andrzej, the seriously ill husband whose wife, Dorota, asked him if he would live. He half-opens the door and looks into an interior that the viewer has not yet discovered. It's to him that this gaze is not precisely directed. The spectator is thus seen before he knows where he is, but the context does not suggest a glance at the camera directed at the room, and it is in the counter-field of this shot, which is not long in coming, that he discovers himself. He was in the couple's place, the bedridden patient and his wife

who looks at him but turns her back to the door and thus to the doctor, whose place the spectator then occupies. There is, therefore, a hiatus between the two shots of this field/background since the spectator, imagining himself in the place of the character looked at by the doctor, discovers that the latter two are not looking at him, so that he is then sent back to his own gaze, considering that he has seen without the character (without internal ocularization) in the place of the character. An invisible body floating in the space of the representation, here he is not seen by this glance at the camera but has experienced its slight stinging to the eye.

A similar situation can be seen in the following occurrence, where the looking person, getting out of his boat and carrying it on his back, crosses the space where Anna is standing, about to open the letter written by her mother to her and revealing the name of her birth father. He then stops and looks at the young woman, where the spectator finds himself disposed. The gaze towards the camera then occurs addressed to Anna, who is about to open her mother's letter with a chisel. Still, it is first of all the spectator who receives it, with her, he is once again the object of the gaze of this character whom he has identified without being able to give her an identity; he is thus himself looked at as the one who is about to commit a transgression towards his father but not towards his mother since the letter is addressed to her and concerns her in the highest degree. She thus seeks to see her paternal origin formulated by the *mater certissima, who* is the only one who can designate the birth father and possibly free Anna from the guilt she feels in loving the one who brought her up with the love of a young woman.

In the first two occurrences of camera gaze from *Decalogue 6,* Tomek and Magda look at the viewer who is respectively situated in the place of one and then the other. Here we have two types of *slit images* associated with these glances at the camera. The first is an object placed in the foreground that doubles the edge of the frame and creates a "parapet" or "cornice" that the eye must pass through to access the character. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 299) Romek is not seen by Magda but by the spectator (zero focus), who sees the young man noticing a character that must be behind his back (behind the spectator) and therefore approaches to look at him. In this foreground of the sequence, the spectator does not yet know who is looking at Romek, but he is pierced by the young man's gaze, who sees through him, an object that requires his full attention in the background. It is, of course, Magda who has just entered the supermarket but has not seen Romek, whom she does not

yet know. This particular quality of looking at the piercing camera is, like the previous ones, ambiguous, since it is not the camera as such that is looked at, nor, through it, the spectator, but another character with whom the viewer can identify by the subjective conduction of the framing. The slight movement of the camera is decisive here. At first, the viewer is outside the gaze; Tomek, who strolls through the supermarket shelves, has not yet seen Magda. Suddenly, when he sees her, he steps forward as his gaze intensifies; in a slight camera movement, the spectator catches his gaze and finds himself facing him head-on, indicating in passing that it is indeed his gaze that is the object that the frame is trying to point to. And it is after having captured his gaze that the shot is cut cleanly and leaves the place to the counter-field, which shows Magda moving in the supermarket without having seen that Tomek is looking at her avidly. The spectator experiences here his two forms of invisibility, the one that characterizes him when he is facing the character's gaze (field) and the one that marks him as a looking subject (counter-field) when he momentarily takes his place.

The *slit image* here is open and closed open because it leads to the viewer's eyes. The spectator's gaze is stung by the character, "the prince of the rays," Alberti talks about, the central ray, touching him directly. But it is also closed because the spectator knows - he was on his side when Tomek marked his gaze with a bodily attitude - that it is not he who is being watched but a fictional character who must be behind him, yet he does not hide it from his body. The contact between the two spaces is thus established in an in-between shared by illusion and awareness of illusion, a knot of presence and absence, which allows an oscillation of the gaze, on the model of the Fort-Da.

With the second occurrence of looking at the camera from *Decalogue 6*, we can spot another *slit image* discussed above: the hole in the wicket. At the end of episode 6, Magda, who has become dependent on Tomek's gaze, in a twist that has played out around the counter, returns to the post office where he works and looks at him through the hole in the transparency of the window. It is then she who turns from an object being looked at into a subject being looked at, and it is indeed Tomek whom she looks at intensely in this shot that concludes the episode and thus opens the spectator's reflection. The spectator is here progressively challenged by the image, which takes on an allegorical thickness because of its duration. Therefore, Magda looks at Tomek and the one who was watching her with him, as the analysis of the first sequence will show us. It is, of course, the scopic

impulse of the spectator that is challenged by this gaze supported through the concrete opening of the window at the very heart of the transparency. So rather than considering that the image puts the spectator in Tomek's place, in a classic process of identification of the spectator with the character who is looking in internal ocularization, it is Tomek who takes the place of the spectator, who presents himself as having been his double in the story. The glass surface of the box office becomes the representation of the transparent surface of the cinema screen.

In the third occurrence from *Decalogue 6*, Magda points to Tomek when she is in the middle of her lovemaking with one of her lovers and knows that the young postman is watching her. She calls him to invite him to do so in a burst of exhibitionism that will reveal his voyeuristic side in the end. The young woman's outstretched finger here manifests the gaze towards the camera since the width of the shot does not allow for easy identification. The spectator, then confused with Tomek, both at the ocular and theoretical level, is thus denounced in his voyeuristic scopic activity, set in play by the young woman who has lured him into a veritable trap.

The two occurrences taken from *Decalogue 9,* dealing mainly with the jealous gaze, thus work on the same pattern; Hanka looks twice at her husband Romek hidden in a closet with half-open doors from which he was able to follow the scene of the break-up she was going through with her young lover. The first time, she sees him through the narrow opening of the slit through which he has just observed her. The sequence opened directly from the subjective point of view of Romek looking at his wife through the slit; the viewer could follow the slight movements of his head playing with the slit to see the scene better. The slit in the middle of a black screen thus created an intermediate space in the foreground, neither in the room nor in the space of the performance, since it was also a space from which one could see, a transitional space, therefore, a camera obscura where the movements of the camera corresponding to the supposed movements of Romek's head created the impression of the presence of a body shared between the character and the spectator, a body that the image indicated to us as being hidden. When Hanka plants her gaze in the opening of the slit and thus flushes out her husband, who is surprised in his jealousy, in the truth of his jealousy since it is to an original scene that Romek had come to assist by hiding in this closet, the spectator is himself surprised in his jealous relationship to the image of the film; the body that he shares with the character of Romek

has himself become visible, which brings into play his presence and reinforces the idea that the slit in the image is a real opening. The dark parts of the image tell him that he is invisible, but Hanka's gaze reminds him that this invisibility concerns his body but not necessarily his gaze. In the last instance of this type, Hanka's gaze is directed at her husband (and towards the spectator) who is always in the same place - he has just been spotted, and he is full of shame, through another way, that of a small skylight on the side of the cupboard where he is. The opening through which she is looking at him is no longer strictly a slit but a frame within the frame, a skylight over the top of which the leaves of a green plant fall like sharp teeth. The over-framing then evokes the contours of a devouring mouth capable of visualizing the oral impulse that haunts her gaze. Thus, according to this interpretative hypothesis, after the slit expressing the desire to see one's own absence as the driving force of jealousy, the devouring mouth enveloping the field would be here the highlighting of the orality that inhabits Romek's gaze in Hanka. Beyond that, it is, of course, the orality of the spectator's gaze, « like a mouth sucking the breast, » (Jeong, 2013, p. 88) that is at stake here in terms of metadiscourse. The dark closet space that this second occurrence spatializes with a front and a side becomes a black box, identifiable with the darkroom.

The other type of look at the camera is in line with the one that opens the polyptych, which addresses the spectator directly, independently of any contextual justification. In *Decalogue 4*, it is a deep gaze from Anna who, leaning against the upright of an interior door, between two spaces separated by a frame, facing her boyfriend who has just kissed her belly as she tells him she does not like to be away from her father, turns slowly and glances at the viewer. Anna's gaze to the camera here is a real gaze towards the camera; it is the spectator that, through it, the young woman calls out to, taken as a witness at the moment when she seems to perceive the true nature of the feelings that bind her to the one she considered her father until then. Interestingly, this look at the camera, which is itself the transgression of a cinematic ban, often accompanies the transgression of a ban or its idea. Here, when she stands on a threshold and thinks of her father, Anna turns to the camera to look at her. This transgression that brings together spaces could be incestuous; the look at the camera is a turning of the eye on its origin. The gaze at the camera is a kind of affirmation of an unspeakable truth of a confession and an awareness. We can also add to these glances at the camera addressed to the spectator, this last

occurrence from *Decalogue 8*. We see the character-eye looking up at the spectator during a lateral tracking shot that reveals the theater's entire width where Zophia teaches her ethics lesson. In the space of fiction, no one is supposed to be present in the counter-field, and it is the spectator who receives, alone, this pensive address. The character-eye is here himself in a position of the spectator within the represented space; he follows Zophia's course and integrates the film's spectator in a spatial continuity that makes him present, in a physical way, to the philosophical remarks of the professor of ethics. It is a crucial moment of didactic exchange, and it is essential to observe that this character directly solicits the viewer's opinion for the second time since the second plan of the first episode. These two occurrences of looking at the camera being addressed to him by this character with a labile and uncertain status occur at critical moments that can be linked. At the beginning of the polyptych, he puts the spectator's gaze in play and invites him to remain conscious of his presence in front of the image and his gaze on it. In this second instance, coming from an instance that is not anchored in the fictional universe of the film (we recognize the actor, who often appears under different social identities) but always constitutes a crack, a flaw in the coherence of the representation, his gaze to the camera calls out to the spectator.

You only have to look back to the beginning of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* to see that the gate, as a threshold device, a border area for trade and passages, is an excellent way of highlighting and orchestrating in the image the continuity between the two adjacent spaces of the performance and the spectator, while at the same time shouting their distinction through the edge of the image, considered as the edge of an opening. (Beuvelet, 2012, pp. 305-306)

> In *The Self-Aware Image*, Victor Stoichita makes an interesting division between door and window openings (Stoichita 1997, 47–68). In early modern painting, the window opens the interior to the exterior, permitting light to come in and offering a view towards the outside. That is how we see windows often represented. Much less often, we encounter examples of watching through a window towards the inside while standing outside. Doors mostly do not have that visual function. You can pass a door either towards the inside or the outside. Still, doors can also function as a kind of window, in the Albertian sense, when they offer us a view of the space behind the door. Not only can they offer a view from inside to outside or from outside to inside, but, while we remain inside, they can also show us another space, beyond the door. The open door thus connects two adjacent spaces. (Blom, 2010, p. 92)

The door as the opening from which or through which the body spouts out is the first figure the cinema has given to show itself born, probably without being aware of it. The

bodies held for so long in the immobility of the canvas, then in that of photography, found there the opportunity to cross the threshold of what Foucault calls the represented area in his analysis of Velázquez's *Las Meninas,* life flowing like the Deleuzian reume through the frame, like the flow of workers' bodies that leave the factory in abundance and leave the field, this time crossing the threshold of the image.

> The tall, monotonous rectangle occupying the whole left portion of the real picture, and representing the back of the canvas within the picture, reconstitute in the form of a surface the invisibility in the depth of what the artist is observing: that space in which we are, and which we are. From the eyes of the painter to what he is observing, there runs a compelling line that we, the onlookers, have no power of evading: it runs through the real picture and emerges from its surface to join the place from which we see the painter observing us; this dotted line reaches out to us ineluctably and links us to the representation of the picture. (Foucault, 1994, p. 4)

But suppose the threshold is conducive to emergence. In that case, it is also an invitation to the passage. Thus, in *Decalogue,* the embrasures establish a threshold for the spectator's gaze and naturally invite them to pass through. The passage towards a "matter of images" that we will name *origin* in the following section. The embrasures that establish thresholds can play the desire to enter the image in the pastoral mode highlighted by Michael Fried. They also solicit, through their delimitation of an opening specially made to let the body in, the haptic dimension of the spectator's gaze in its relation to the painting.

> What makes *woman at the Window* one of Friedrich's most revealing paintings is that the painter sustains such a relationship between an ordergiving figure and a corresponding landscape in a context where the landscape at issue barely comes into view. The natural landscape in the painting, in fact, is obstructed almost entirely in a manner that mounts like a conspiracy against our desire to see. (…) The world out there on the other side of the window simply *is* felt to be the locus of the woman's longing and of our own suppositional frustrations with having our line of vision blocked and thus being so concretely left out of what the painting itself posits is really worth our regard. (Ostas, 2018, pp. 184-185)

The embrasure thus presents the frame of the painting as an opening and a place of passage available only to the viewer's gaze, which is then considered a body. Already, in 17th-century painting, the open door is an element of over-framing used by painters to signify an interior scene and to highlight the frame of the painting as an opening to a deeply carved interior space. However, with the fine embrasure, the narrow, vertical slit

and often the oblique angle through the door openings provide a fortuitous opening, capable of highlighting the intrusive and hidden dimension of the viewer's gaze. Thus, unlike the frontal view of the doors, as if to dramatize and scribe the process of the monstration, the fine doorway of the *Decalogue*'s doors precisely avoids this intended frontality of the painter's door and replaces it with a fortuitous obliquity. The *slit image* thus constituted as a metadiscursive figure highlights the relationship between the viewer and the film image and enlightens him on his desire to *see* and enter through it.

We can thus distinguish three types of doorway play, each of which in its own way emphasizes a relationship between the body of a character and the frame of the image. The first is using the body of a character on the threshold of a door, with one or two jambs that tighten the image. The second is the view through the doorway or the distant and hidden character's view in another room. The doorway is then a narrow and vertical opening that forgets the spectator or shows this oblivion by staging a looking subject that is not seen by the object being looked at. Moreover, as is the case at the bottom of Velázquez's painting, *Las Meninas,* which makes the stakes of painting visible and where one can see the chamberlain « in flesh and blood (…) on the threshold of the area represented. » (Foucault, 1994, p. 11), the embrasure can be associated with a mirror and bring into play the dialectical relationship between flatness and depth of the image and, through it, between reflection (appearance) and presence ("in flesh and blood," Foucault specifies). Finally, we will see that the embrasure, as an opening, is also associated with the caressing hand, thus introducing the haptic dimension of the gaze.

Most of the *slit images,* consisting of a doorway, are used in *Decalogue* to bring into play the presence of a body on the threshold of a door in a more or less distant face-to-face encounter with the spectator. This face-to-face encounter is not unlike the appearance of the chamberlain in Velázquez's *Las Meninas* or that of the workers in the first Light view, which serves as a first film.

Very common in *Decalogue,* the appearance of the face of a body on the threshold of a door creates a frontality between the film space and the space of the spectator, thus establishing an internal ocularization that the door jamb reinforces and recalls. The spectator is faced with a door frame that doubles that of the image and then sees the character's body as potentially ready to cross the threshold and join him. Thus in

Decalogue 2, the spectator is in Dorota's place when she meets the doctor who is treating her sick husband; he is standing on the threshold of the door of her apartment, just as, later, her husband will present himself on the threshold of the doctor's office when he recovers from his illness. The threshold designated (visualized) by the door frame is by definition the place where the body appears in space; here, it orchestrates the advent of the image in its frame. It makes it possible to highlight the power of the image, as a visible body, to make the represented body visible, giving it a place from which it will be seen, as well as its capacity to bring it into play in a visible in-between, in an inter-surface between two spaces; the inner space and the outer space, that of the representation and that of the spectator. The body appearing on a threshold is endowed with the characteristics of the threshold itself, altogether the body of the threshold and threshold of the body, the image of the body is an indecisive place of exchange between two spaces, an area of contact, that of interiority and that of exteriority. The body envelope and the door frame thus respond to each other, as a designation of space between the outside and the inside, they can be associated with the frame the image itself, which constitutes both the threshold (which allows entry) and the body envelope (which creates the silhouette) of the image.

According to Serge Tisseron, « image works as an envelope for the viewer, who can then inhabit the image. » (Martin & Pape, 2012, p. 10) This power of containment and envelopment of the image thus has, a relationship of material correspondence with the material frame of the image. We can say that the material frame of images supports their capacity for envelopment. We can go so far as to affirm that the *finestra*, as an abstract concept, is the corporeal constituent of the image, that is to say, at once its flesh, its silhouette, and the threshold that separates its interior from its exterior. In this perspective, the appearance of a character's body in the doorway of a door would be a visualization of the process of appearance of the image itself; a mise en abyme of the advent of the visible by it, in its image body. The chamberlain appeared on the "threshold of the represented area," in Velázquez's work; it is the visibility of the image itself shown, its condition as a body whose cultural role is to make bodies appear.

If the threshold can be the place where the represented body appears, it can also be the place where the looking subject stands, that is, then, the place from which the gaze comes. Thus, thresholds are used to pose the camera to look into the room, whether by looking

at oneself or the body. Placed from the internal point of view of a character, Dorota, at the bedside of her sick husband, is seen by the doctor who has just arrived at the hospital - or from the external point of view of the filmmaker, where the gaze is not taken in charge by any character serving as a point of origin for an internal ocularization. In these two cases, the amount of the door that designates the threshold enters into material correspondence no longer with the body that appears at its level but with that of the looking subject, invisible to the image, since the frame limits and determines the field of the image just as the body limits and defines the field of vision of the subject; the very presence of this limit to the image is the reminder of the corporeality of the instance at the origin of the gaze. He is then the material representative of the spectator's body. Every material image has its frame, just as every gaze has its body. In a way, we can say that the door jamb gives body to the presence, on its threshold, of the body of the subject, looking at the threshold of the image, whether it is the figure of the doctor or more generally, that of the filmmaker. The embrasure, in these two types of appearance of the body in the door frame, constitutes a bringing into play of the image within the image, and in this sense, it is presented as a *slit image* with a metadiscursive value; it highlights the threshold of a place of appearance constituted by an opening that allows (or proposes) a passage of the body through the very body of the image enveloped by the frame. The doorway of the door, depending on whether it reveals the body of a character or allows the spectator's body to emerge, is a threshold of the image.

We can still evoke the embrasures seen from afar where a character appears verbally exchanging with another character in the foreground. In this case, the spectator is situated on the inner side of the representation space since the space on the threshold of which the character standing in the embrasure is standing is ignored and pushed out of the image. The arrangement of the squares covers with his gaze the entire field as far as the virtual surface of the image. This "enclosure" of the field by the threshold of a distant and open door on the back wall, the stop of the gaze, mirrors the other opening on the field, the one through which the spectator's gaze enters the image, the opening drawn by the frame of the image itself, which constitutes a second door, opposite the first. This arrangement underlines the relation of the spectator's eye to the film's image, in a kind of mise en abyme whose mimicry supports an identification. The door frame is then the limit of a screen where the body of the other subject appears. The fact that the latter stands on the

threshold (or in the doorway), the fact that he leans on the upright, in a gesture of physical relaxation, indicates that he is posing, standing, settling in this place between two spaces. He is there permanently for the time of the exchange, obviously refusing to enter and leave; he is like Velázquez's chamberlain, an embodiment of the desire to enter the space of representation.

Another form of *slit image* playing on the presence of a doorway in the field consists of what can be called the distant or through a view. In this device, the doorway is not linked to the presence of a body on the threshold nor to a verbal exchange between two figures. Still, it serves as an opening to a second space (a sort of double-bottom) that appears as the one where the object represented by the image is standing. Here, the embrasure makes it possible to narrow the field in the width direction to isolate a character, which is thus particularly wrapped up within the image itself. The slit here is mainly defined; it is a narrow vertical opening that offers the viewer a portion of neighboring space. By opening only a thin portion of the entire surface of the image, this type of slit dialectically connects the material flatness of the image with its illusory depth; the viewer's gaze, which strikes the surface of the image, may suddenly have the impression of crossing it. Here again, as in the series of box office occurrences in the work of Kieślowski, the opening of the film image is brought into play by the visualization of an illusory void within the image, the embrasure orchestrates the passage from a flat surface, that of the wall, to an open field, that of the embrasure, through which the viewer's gaze is forced to pass.

The *slit image* is presented here as a metadiscursive figure as it plays on the edge and the object being viewed, which appears in its opening as the visible on the screen. The dialectic between the mobility of the filmed character and the fixity of the embrasure, which belongs to an architectural element of the filming locations, accentuates the impression of autonomy of the field concerning the frame of the image. What the viewer sees is therefore not prepared for his gaze, it is a godsend that this embrasure offers him, and he can feel both his "luck" and the fear of losing it by seeing the body visible behind the wall disappear. The *slit image* imposes itself here as a tear in the bottom of the image, a type of opening that corresponds most precisely to the idea of an unexpected opening; it makes the image a torn surface, a kind of sheet split between two spaces. This tearing of the background of the image gives the viewer access to a hidden space where the object of the representation (opportunely) stands and sometimes finds its counterpart in the

presence of a mirror, close to the doorway, which offers access to a reflective surface on which the backdrop of the image can be seen. That was already the case at the heart of *Las Meninas*, where the chamberlain we have already met stands near a mirror reflecting the royal couple in place of the spectator. Here Velazquez relates the presence of the chamberlain, seen directly in the door frame, to that of the royal couple, seen indirectly in their reflection on the flat surface of the mirror. This contiguity stages and corresponds to the presence, considered real, of the body that appears through the doorway and the accuracy of the reflection on the mirror. Foucault emphasizes, moreover, a difference in density of presence between the reflection of Philip IV and Marianna and the appearance of the chamberlain; « He is indubitable – not a probable reflection but an irruption. » (Foucault, 1994, p. 11)

Even though *Las Meninas* indicates that the painter needs the presence of living models to create his canvas, we see here, at the heart of the painting, that he competes with the natural reflection of the mirror that precedes him in the realization of the painting, and that he separates these two questions, that of resemblance and that of presence, which his medium cannot distinguish. Painting a reflection or a presence is precisely the same thing, whereas photographing a reflection or a being, directly, is not technically the same thing, even if the result, and this is the great limit of Barthes' "it has been," is precisely the same. Kieślowski often plays with this process of unveiling degrees of presence in the photographic image, filming reflections or photographs without showing them initially and revealing them as such later on.

The two dimensions of the photographic image thus rub shoulders, in a latent state, at the bottom of the image of images, where Michel Foucault sees "as the representation of classical representation" whose photography marks both the end and the culmination. Here we have the two essential dimensions of classical representation; the opening onto the image surface of the neighboring space and the reflection of the appearance, each presenting the image surface as torn (or more simply open) in one case or as reflective in the other.

In the two occurrences, a body appears through the doorway of a door and is put in relation to another body that appears as a reflection. In the first, the doorway's opening is placed between the physical body of the doctor's cleaning lady and her own reflection, while in

the second, they are side by side and share the image equally. In the first case, the image is constructed in the direction of the width if one follows the path of the reflection of the woman's real body, on the left, towards her reflection in the mirror, on the right. This horizontal and lateral axis that follows the surface (just like the reflection) is cut off by the doorway that plunges us into the depth of field towards the doctor's body. The slit thus appears as a break, a tear, within the very work of the reflection; on the right, the reflecting surface could well be that of the film image, a purely flat surface where the reflection comes to life under the effect of a real body. The narrow slit in the embrasure cuts this relationship between the body and its specular image. It opposes the flatness of the reflection to give access to a distant body, but whose density is precisely measured by its placement between the directly perceived body and its reflection on the surface of the mirror.

In the second instance, the beginning of the plan does establish the presence of Romek as being that of a reflection as we can see him getting up from the edge of the bathtub where he was sitting to open the door to his wife and leave only his reflection visible as he goes to sit down again out of sight. The rise of his wife in the door frame thus takes on a particular thickness when Romek sits down and withdraws.

That is the only way to make the field "physically" appear as a reflection in the field. This association in the same framing of embrasure and reflection is a concentrated formulation of the dialectic of presence and appearance that runs through the entire polyptych in the form of the *slit image* and reflection.

In an attempt to distribute what comes back to the slit and what comes back to the reflection in the polyptych, we can already argue that the reflection is a figure of consciousness of the cinematographic illusion. In contrast, the slit is the expression of the search for this illusion, an illusion that is defined as a belief in the presence of the object (or part of it) in its representation. The *slit image* with metadiscursive value is the mise en abyme and the awareness of the search for this illusion through it. In the immediate term, two useful considerations, therefore, emerge from this association, whose theoretical dimension takes on its meaning in the general perspective of the questioning of the film image that runs through *Decalogue*. On the one hand, the film image appears as the reflection and presence of a body that has appeared; the contiguity of a "direct" view of a body in the doorway of a door and a body appearing as a reflection on a mirror,

even though nothing directly concerning them makes it possible to distinguish them at first sight, highlights the two material conditions essential for taking a photographic picture. The presence of a body in front of a lens and the preservation of its appearance at the back of the camera obscura, in a reflection that will be the very constituent of the image when recorded chemically or digitally.

On the other hand, this association shows us that the degree of presence of the body is then not the same; the body appearing through the embrasure embodying the presence is more intensely present (in theory only, but this counts for the eye) than that of the reflection embodying the resemblance (which presents itself as an image of image). But it is an association of these two dimensions of the mimetic image that plays on presence and resemblance that leads us to perceive the *slit image*, corresponding here to the embrasure, as an opening onto the presence of a body situated beyond the threshold of the image. The *slit image* is then the name given to this desire and the illusion it produces of feeling the object's presence in the image. Thus, there is a kind of intensification of the presence of the represented bodies in the opening of the *slit image*. This intensification can be visualized by the use of touch in the appearance of the doorway, notably with the help of a hand that, crossing the threshold of the door, somehow enters the represented space of the image and can thus ensure the presence of the object (re)presented.

As we have seen in the previous part, concerning the initial desire to catch, to touch reality, manifested by Krzysztof Kieślowski at the beginning of his career, through his theory of the "dramaturgy of reality," the entry of the hand into the field can be seen as an embodiment of the haptic desire that haunts the eye of the filmmaker and, by virtue of the subjective conduction going from one to the other, that of the spectator who comes to ask the filmed image to give him access to the reality that it would contain.

The hand is either associated with the door jamb from which it seems to emerge to meet their face to be caressed or integrated into the field by the presence of a figure who goes to the front of a face to caress it. In both cases, the doorway is associated with the idea of contact by the gaze through the opening then presented as the "real" of the door. The hand presents itself as an extension of the gaze, embodying the invisible contact of the eye with the visaged surface of the image that the uprights of the doorway present as open.

In the first instance, the hand is not directly that of the looking subject; it belongs to Dorota, who, standing behind the door jamb, looks at her husband and caresses his face

in a gesture that is precisely that of blessing. The Christic face of Andrzej, her husband, who will experience a true resurrection at the end of the episode, is here in a half-presence due to his illness. Dorota's hand is here searching for his presence; it also seems to be pointing to her eye, the seat of the individual's presence. In the absence of Dorota in the image, her hand can be considered as a relay of the spectator's gaze; it serves to bring into play her own desire to verify the presence of the being (re)presented in the doorway. This type of association is quite common in the cinema of Kieślowski, which more often proceeds by the suggestion that by way of symbolization. More than symbols, it places before the spectator's eyes, not just signs but objects that become signs. Thus, Dorota's hand, perfectly integrated into the fiction space, becomes by allegorical displacement under the effect of framing, the embodiment of the tenderness and desire for contact that inhabits the spectator's gaze. And it is through a kind of internal framing, of placing the hand in the center and isolating it, that it gives it an intensity, an obviousness, which transforms it into a sign. The role of the limit of the image is essential here in this already spotted passage from view (*slit image* / embrasure) to sign (metadiscursive dimension of the hand as an allegory of the haptic dimension of the gaze).

In the second instance, Artur's face appears in relief in the doorway and offers itself to the caress of the nurse, who is also one of his fans. She makes this caressing gesture to ensure that Artur is a pop icon, which she has wanted for some time. Her gesture is precisely that of a loving confirmation of the real presence of Artur's body; the fantasized object is very real, the icon is embodied in the opening of this embrasure which is the theatre of this epiphany. We can add here an excerpt from *Decalogue 6*, the most accomplished on the question of images and the use of the gaze, where Magda, after hitting Tomek's head when he came to deliver his milk, crouches at his height to look at him and holds his face. She tells him everything by manipulating it with herr hand. This meeting took place on the threshold of Magda's apartment, and it was the opening of her door made it possible. While the essential issue of this scene is the reversal of Tomek's voyeuristic gaze on Magda from his window, Magda, who is placed under the patronage of Mary Magdalene, who wants to verify by touch the resurrection of Christ, enters Tomek's contemplation, becomes the manipulative looking subject, by going directly to touch the young man. It is certainly not insignificant that this tactile encounter takes place on a threshold through a doorway. As we have already said, it is the privileged and natural

place of the appearance and reception of the body in the domestic universe.

Doorways cut out frames in our natural space where images of bodies may appear, but bodies that can be touched, kissed, and crossed over the threshold. The hand associated with the doorway is a way of recalling this haptic dimension of the gaze. The embrasure is thus a *slit image* because it presents the surface of the image as open, conducive to contact. It constitutes a narrow opening that can widen to allow a body to pass through, it plays on this double membership of the thresholds, which are at the same time architectural places linked to the solid frames of the doors and situated on the symbolic site of the verbal dimension of the frame, but also gaps of the possible, places of passage and, as we have just seen, places of contact between the bodies looking and the bodies looked at.

As an extension of the doorways arranged as *slit image* figures in the polyptych, we can add the "images with margins," which offer a form of cropping without leaning on a door or a particular type of architectural element, but offering more broadly an opaque panel on the left or right edge of the image. These images, cut widthwise by the appearance of a black or simply dark margin consisting of a section of wall or a tree, offer the spectator's eye a play on the double dimension of the images on the contradictory axes of flatness and depth and transparency and opacity.

The dark side, on the side, brings the eye to the surface of the filmed image, presenting it as flat and full, the screen is then considered in its primary sense as what obstructs the viewer's gaze, yet it is to it that the image is addressed. Not being, of course, the result of clumsiness or a technical problem, this dark side takes on a particular significance in the context of this visual meditation on ethics and the question of representation. It confronts the flatness of the image, which it recalls physically without signifying it, with its illusory depth, which it highlights.

This surface acts as a "screen" for his eyes. A shady, flat, and opaque presence, it brings the image back to its material condition of illusory representation, affirming in substance that there is nothing to be seen in this image (everything that appears in it is fundamentally absent from it since the screen is a flat and opaque surface) and at the same time accentuates the effect of transparency of the part covered by the image. The surface then seems to be cut, torn in the height direction. Not over-framed with the help of an architectural element, the black section is here like a symptom, a lack of iconic material,

a discursive rupture of the image that passes from the real space of the screen to the fictional space of the film. Like these failed photographs where a dark spot appears on the side, a badly trained portion of the film where the chromatic impression has not worked, and where we see the film "burnt." By reinforcing the edge of the image, this opaque margin scans the edge cut and accentuates the openness of the field, its depth, and the illusory transparency of the medium. It is a passage from the invisible to the visible within the image. We also consider the role of margins in writing, that of another form of expression, another conceptual space.

We can on our side see in the work of this inner edge on the view and the support; a means to put in contiguity the two dimensions of the film image, dimensions between which the eye of the spectator goes and comes in a movement that oscillates between the illusion of presence and the presence of illusion. Here we are in front of what makes the ambivalence of the *slit image* and constitutes its metadiscursive trompe-l'oeil dimension, both effect and mise en abyme of the effect, device, and unveiling of the device. By giving the impression that the image is not prepared for the viewer's eye, by giving the impression that it is a direct view, "badly framed" and resulting from a cut in the opaque screen, the image with margin makes the viewer believe that it is pure sight, a pure tear in the invisible. But, at the same time, it shows the fundamental opacity of the film image, its material surface very concretely. The black margin "comments" on the illusion of the viewer's view by recalling the materiality of the medium while offering a place to the spectator. A place from which they can inhabit the image as a film viewer and not simply as a subject looking at it without a body, as the film image would have them believe. The margin is thus a space reserved for the spectator, who may feel hidden by this dark side which could well be a wall behind which he would spy on what is standing in the depths. The margin of the image is thus the place of the subject of the gaze in its invisible and hidden dimension, as in the process of seeing jealousy, its concealment leads to a loss of the field, or more precisely, its disappearance at the point of origin of the gaze (repression of its presence) makes a return to this amputation of the field, the black zone, which makes visible its own absence in the place where it wanted to make its presence invisible. This process of concealment/loss is inscribed in the arrangement of the interposed objects, which belong to the iconic field of the *slit image*, as well as, of course, in that of the shutters or other jealousies arranged in the polyptych.

When he definitively switched to fiction, on the occasion of the *Decalogue,* Krzysztof Kieślowski largely retained the filming procedures he had developed or used as a documentary filmmaker. Since this passage corresponding to the ethical necessity of not involving real people in the narrative constructions that he developed through his documentary films, did not directly concern, at first, the aesthetic questions of the making of images, which remained within the field of the documentary approach to the material reality filmed. This documentary approach is based on a central principle: the de-theatricalization of scenes by putting the spectator's body in the field of the image. In that case, we could say that in breaking with a theatrical relationship (a spectacle given for the spectator), Kieślowski has opted for an anti-theatrical relationship (a spectacle ostensibly forgetting the spectator in the primacy of absorption) and, in a way, pastoral, integrating the spectator into the field, inviting him to stand within the represented space. This approach integrating the spectator into the space of the film is that of the fiction film by general, conceived after the aesthetic, narrative, and technical contributions of Griffithian editing, which abolished the theatricality of early films in favor of integrating the spectator into the fictional space of the film by shifting the point of view.

Kieślowski will insist on integrating the spectator into the film space by using, from the perspective of fiction, the filming methods specific to the documentary. As a documentary filmmaker who has now moved on to fiction, he is part of the director cinéma-vérité movement, initiated in the 1960s, and widely used among Polish filmmakers of his generation, anxious to give a truer image of "real" Poland in the face of the lures of its official representation. He will be among the first to transgress the limits between fiction and documentary, between the spectacle and the experience of the witness. In *Personnel* (1975), he had already disrupted these limits by giving his film the aesthetic aspect of a shoulder-to-shoulder camera report, hiding behind objects or pans to film scenes where real people sometimes crossed paths in their professional activity and actors playing their roles. In *Decalogue*, using the sets as if they were real, unexpected, and unprepared, he places the camera and the viewer in this space as would a documentary filmmaker working under constraining material conditions, to give an impression of "taken on the spot" to scenes shot without the usual pressure of documentary filmmaking. The filmmaker's use of the sets is a matter of the camera and the viewer's perception of the space. In the cinematic fiction that constitutes *Decalogue,* one of the significant aesthetic

characteristics of this integration of the spectator in the film space is the arrangement of objects interposed between the source of the gaze and the being or object filmed. This object arrangement has two crucial effects on the viewer.

On the one hand, it gives him the impression that the image is not prepared for the film, not theatrical, not for him, the spectator, and therefore that it ignores him, that he is invisible, without a body, or perhaps hidden behind the interposed object, but in any case that he does not control the field or at least that his presence does not influence its organization by the imaging subject. On the other hand, it creates a threshold, sometimes consisting of a shapeless zone, sometimes of a rigid architectural element that acts as a barrier or pillar (thus many pillars in *Decalogue 3*). This threshold separates the field in which the object or being looked at stands from that in which the spectator stands and offers the possibility of a passage from one to the other by presenting as open the surface of the image whose presence it marks. The object in the foreground sometimes seems to be "stuck" to the surface of the image itself; it applies like a protective grid or barrier, or even a gel or paste-like cream to the "glass" of the image. This material presence between the source of the gaze and its object thus establishes a zone of passage; even if it is made impossible for the body by the material obstacle, it is open to that of the gaze whose body is different. *Decalogue* thus places us in an armchair installed in the characters' homes that Krzysztof's camera Kieślowski scrutinizes as close as possible to their (intimate) absorption. The interposed object then testifies to the discomfort of our gaze in the filmed space. Now the latter, obliged to cross an obstacle to touch its object, sees itself partly reflected by this object, it returns to itself in a feeling of light shame provoked by this object which materializes, as a threshold to cross, the voyeuristic intrusion that the gaze makes in the field. It is in this sense that we can confer a metadiscursive dimension, in the context of the ethical project of the *Decalogue, to* what was direct and hidden data of the conditions of discreet observation in the documentaries of Kieślowski. The interposed object, if it allows the viewer to appreciate this faculty of intrusion into the intimacy of the characters, also offers him the opportunity to see his gesture of intrusion materialized by the indication of his virtual presence in the film space and by the effort he must make to cross the obstacle placed by Kieślowski on the threshold of the image. Thus, he has the possibility of feeling and perhaps considering the relationship that the director establishes between himself and the filmed image and the relationship that the latter maintains with

the reality that it represents (signifies) by pretending to show it (designation).

It is, of course, in *Decalogue 9* (dealing specifically with the jealousy of an impotent husband and linking the "love" pathology with the visual device of jalousies) that the question of the *slit image* in its forms of view through shutters or jalousies placed at random in the place is the most illustrated. But beyond this episode, which tackles this question head-on, we can see that these visual devices, which find in *Decalogue* a metadiscursive dimension, are very often present as a means of qualifying the characters' gaze. Shutters are often associated with the expectation and desire to see or know what is beyond what is visible in the characters, whose gaze is thus filtered by the visual device that is imposed on them (we do not see them setting it up). This filtering of the gaze has the peculiarity of hiding them from the eyes of others and offering them a partial view of the field, a cut-off view which, as we have already seen concerning the jalousies of *Decalogue 9*, is precisely cut off from their presence that has become visible as an absence. But shutters are most often used to underline the presence of a character behind a window, posted as a sentinel, on the lookout for the secrets of others, like the filmmaker himself and through him the spectator who, particularly in this polyptych, are the "spies" of the intimate truths of the characters.

In *Decalogue 2*, Dorota hides behind the shutters of her apartment to watch for the appearance of the doctor attending to her husband in the hospital. This visual device tells us the "predatory" nature of her gaze; she waits for him to draw information from him that will be decisive for her, but for the reason that he will be difficult to reveal. The blinds that stripe the field thus indicate her desire to see without being seen, showing us that she desires to know while wanting to remain in the secrecy of her thoughts. But the sequence from which the photogram is taken presents an interesting particularity on which it may be useful to stop. As she approaches her window to watch the doctor move away towards the hospital, her sight appears to be streaked by the blinds by an internal ocularization very common in the polyptych to establish a visual device. However, when the image has returned to her, which we see destroying a plant, her gaze is again turned outwards. The doctor she is following with her gaze then appears without the striations of the louvers through which she is looking at him, and in a tighter shot, as if she had gone through the device to get closer to him. This forward thrust and this removal of the louvers' blades is here manifested as the result of the expression of her disorder on the

plant. One could thus see a dissipation of the louver symptom under the release effect on the plant. No longer looking at the doctor from a concealed position and thus starting his point of view, she accompanies him beyond the louver barrier.

Thus, in *Decalogue 3*, Ewa looks at Janusz at home through the shutters he has lowered on his windows. The streaks of the shutters thus reveal the desiring content of Ewa's gaze, which enters through this filter into the family intimacy of her former lover. At the same time, a sign of predation and desire of the object, the shutters highlight the presence of a glance at the absent body, pure cut vision expressing in this way her own guilt. Later she will drag him into the night in search of her ex-husband, who has allegedly disappeared; he will visit the hospices and approach through the window a drunk tank where drunken vagrants are sprayed with ice-cold water by a sadistic employee. Through the fences that enclose them, Janusz and Ewa see the naked bodies of these men. The *slit image* created by these jealousies opens up to the intimate. *Decalogue 4* opens with a subtle play of glances through shutters, with Anna's looks, and her father, Michal, himself, is seen through shutters on the next shot. These two inaugural shots are thus linked in the order of the meaning operated by the montage - the daughter seeks to know something about the father - without the two actions being able to be linked in the space of the apartment, we are in a kind of theoretical prologue, and the shutters play an essential role in it. In *Decalogue 9*, finally, Romek is on the phone with his wife's young lover, who has just called to speak to him, and he answers very politely, without showing his jealous confusion. Yet he sees her passing in the street, through the shutters of his window. The association of the idea of absence with the vision through the shutters marks here the failure of the jealousy device that Romek is then putting in place in his relationship with Hanka. At the same time, "here" in the image and "not here" in the real relationship, the shutters scratch Hanka from her presence in Romek by hiding Romek from Hanka's potential gaze. Hiding to see is also to make the other unreachable, absent.

Beyond the question of concealment and the loss it implies, the striations of the blinds indicate this permanent oscillation of the gaze between the awareness of absence (white stripes) and the impression of presence (slits). In contrast to the *slit image* in which the slit is central, which expresses more directly the desire for contact and reality in the image, and which only takes on its metadiscursive dimension in a certain context of use - here the ethical framework of the *Decalogue* project - the blinds, which present slits in

quantity, and which are singularly more perceptible and therefore more questioning, allow a more direct involvement of the spectator's gaze. The recurrence of the shutters also contributes to making them a singular object, often spotted by the spectator. Behind the shutters, the spectator is also on the lookout for the intimacy of the characters, condemned to lose his place and to see himself diffused in the air like an invisible gas, to be able to carry out his sometimes jealous, sometimes benevolent approach. Whether he is looking through the slits in the shutters or through the *slats*, he is either in the picture or cut off from it. The oscillation of his gaze between sight and representation is thus visually manifested by this kind of *slit image* which constitutes an aesthetic and ethical form emblematic of Kieślowski's cinema.

One can add to these different types of *slit images*, the trembling and fragile frames of the camera carried on the shoulder and following the action in the manner of a seeker's head, widespread in the direct cinema Krzysztof Kieślowski practiced when he explored the possibilities of documentary and later in his first documentary fictions. A very telling example of this can be seen in his documentary film *Hospital* (1976). The director tries to portray the conditions in which doctors work in the emergency department of a Warsaw hospital in the most natural way possible. Jacek Petrycki, who is the operator of this film, follows the comings and goings of the on-call teams through the doorways. The camera never stops moving, and the viewer is moved in the film (and the hospital) through the filmmaker's body, which is all the more strongly inhabited by the filmmaker's ongoing movements.

Similarly, in *From A Night Porter's Point of View* (1977), it is the wavering of the frame of the image that testifies to the filmmaker's physical presence in the filmed space in which he is advancing; in a training sequence for the watchman where an arrest is staged to oil the procedures, the shoulder-mounted camera follows the watchman into a wasteland that "expresses" his bumps by making the frame of the image made this time by Witold Stok shake sharply. These "imperfections" of the framing taken from the heart of direct cinema, accentuated at a moment of directing, are what contributes to "perfecting" the effect of reality. It should be noted here that realism is not only based on the resemblance in the fullness of the image, the correspondence of shapes, and the conformity of colors but also and above all on the resemblance of the movements of the gaze and the conditions of vision. The effect of reality produced by the filmed image is

not fidelity to the visible forms of reality alone but rather how it explodes the frame and dissipates the real presence of the room around the viewer. As in a dream, the sensation of being there sustains it.

With the handheld camera, all types of *slit images are* natural, since the filmmaker makes the viewer feel, through the weight of his body and the very limits of his movements, that he is really in the filmed space, that this space is not a scene and that through the subjective conduction that characterizes his position concerning the viewer, the latter can only feel firmly integrated into the filmed space. Moreover, through its continuous movements, the frame is weakened and moves from a solid boundary between spaces to a border zone of current exchanges between the field and the off-field. It is here that the gap between the spaces is formed. The carried camera is a *slit image* because it abolishes the frame. But the metadiscursive value of this figure is not as easy to handle as in the case of the other figures studied previously. It is an effect so complete, so totally implied for the image, that it seems difficult to produce the effect of distancing and mise en abyme of the image frame necessary to establish the metadiscursive dimension.

Through their objectification of the surface and the boundary of the film image, as the edge of an opening, the look at the camera, the doorway, the image with margin, the interposed objects, and the shutters are formed into signs. With the carried camera, as used by Kieślowski in his documentaries and early documentary fiction, the slit is gaping, and the illusion of presence is purely a matter of visual effect and not of signaling the visual effect. It appears that in working on *Decalogue*, Kieślowski has abandoned this corporeal approach to the field of vision and thus to the immersion of the spectator's body-eye, except for the beginning of *Decalogue 8,* where Andrzej Jaroszewicz's camera can be seen following the arrival of a person holding a little girl by the hand and entering a building. But this image is presented in a paler chromatic tone, close to black and white; it is a distant scene, dating back to the Second World War, outside the chronology of the *Decalogue*. It is the only sequence shot whose framing is truly mobile and ostensibly made "shoulder camera." It is also the only image that is not integrated into the contemporary temporal framework of the polyptych. The most realistic part of the polyptych, by its framing, is perhaps a dream or a memory, a psychic production rather than a visual perception.

It may be interesting to see here that the filmmaker's first fiction, *Pedestrian Subway*

(1974), made for television, had been entirely turned over in one night, the camera on the shoulder, after being filmed for the first time, in a more classical way. Kieślowski also asked the actors to improvise more on the canvas of the script to give the film a more robust realism as it ventured for the first time into the realm of fiction. The stylistic synthesis between documentary aesthetics and the ethical choice of fiction, which he will then succeed in achieving, is found in this decisive act of creation, during the tenth and last night of the shooting, to turn the film around like a documentary about fictional events. He returns to the spontaneous grasp of material life after taking more posed shots of it, and it is precisely in this first fiction film that he is interested in the question of the gaze, of intrusion, and the role of framing. This film also proposes a matrix of the *slit image* and the reflection it bears on the film image in the work of Kieślowski.

This abandonment of the handheld camera is perhaps the clearest sign of the transition from documentary to fiction. Without affirming with certainty that this is a conscious and deliberate act on the part of the director, we can nevertheless consider it to be at least a clue and perhaps even proof, if any were needed, of the ethical dimension of this passage and of Kieślowski's concern to offer viewers opportunities to reflect on the conditions of their gaze. But suppose the carried camera has become more stable and "calm" with *Decalogue*. In that case, it lets the other forms of *slit images* take their place at the very heart of the image, in the middle of the frame in a movement of mise en abyme, a meta-cinematographic reflexivity. This presence of the filmmaker's body in the space of the image has thus moved from the experience of the gaze shared with the spectator to the visual highlighting of its formal characteristics: they gaze at the camera that makes happen the body and the presence of the spectator by pointing to the enunciative device; the doorways that establish the threshold of the appearance; the images with margins that manifest the loss of totality represented by the incarnation and dissimulation of the filmmaker in the film space; the shutters or jalousies that play on the same register and manifest the shadow of an absence whose scope has been previously observed; and finally the interposed objects that testify, by their obstruction that has become visible, to the place and limits of the spectator's body in the represented space.

Finally, rejected in a dark and distant past, outside the spatio-temporal framework of the film, in the field of reminiscence or dream, fields of hallucination more than of representation, this pale sequence with an unstable frame appears precisely at the

beginning of the episode which will deal head-on with the question of ethics through the character of Zophia, a renowned ethicist formerly confronted with a tough choice. That is also the episode where a recalcitrant picture frame systematically refuses to maintain the stability that the two women will successively try to impose on it. Thus, at the very origin of the film, there is a problem of frame stability in this episode on ethics. The sequence in which the handheld camera is shown thus appears to be a dream in which the desire to enter directly into the image is expressed, a desire repressed by the ethical framework of the *Decalogue* project. The carried camera of direct cinema being beyond the *slit image,* what could be called a *slit image,* a natural and direct opening on the field where the iconic quality comes second after the presence of the filmmaker's body, and behind him that of the spectator, in the field itself. It is precisely the part of direct cinema, the "dramaturgy of the real," as it is called, too heavy with responsibilities and consequences in reality, that Kieślowski wanted to leave by taking an exclusive interest in fiction in *Decalogue*. He was no longer afraid of losing that effect of reality that had made him turn the shots of his first fiction film upside down, or else he had decided to repress it by moving definitively to fiction, leaving at the same time the ethical and formal ambiguities of documentary fiction. It is therefore also understandable that this repressed desire for presence should return to the very place of its repression, in an episode devoted to the question of the ethics of choice.

Thus, from this point of view, the cinematographic image is often presented in *Decalogue* as an open slit between two spaces, that of the spectator and that of the representation, and whose three main structural characteristics are openness, passage, and origin. And beyond, all three are found together in the trace of a relationship to the primary object. The opening corresponds to what constitutes the slit, the passage to what it allows, to its use by the spectator, the origin to what it unconsciously brings into play in the spectator. Finally, the primary object offers an interesting matrix for thinking together, through the slit, the spatial continuity between two bodies, and the solicitation of the hand and the mouth in specific images.

The *slit image*, as a metadiscursive figure, comes, in a double game, to make us experience the three significant semiotic components and warn us of their very limitation, of their representational limit as illusions. The image is, of course, not open; it offers no possibility of passage and leads to no origin. This representational reality of the image,

which is fundamentally ambivalent, is revealed to us by a metadiscursive figure, declined in different concrete forms, which reminds us that the film image only offers an eternally adjourned rendezvous with the real, everything is only representation, whereas everything appears to be presented. At the same time, a vehicle for the eye's impulse to merge with the universe or the object of representation and a limitation of this impulse by the ethical reminder of the vanity of illusion, the *slit image* often plays the role of a meta-sign. It brings into play the efficiency of the film image while operating a reflexive shift. At the same time, it designates and signifies, shows the world, and holds discourse on its way of showing the world. This ambiguity has been present since the introduction of the *slit image* as a visual device in *Decalogue* since the role of seeing and showing is brought into play by the ethical device of the polyptych, but what justifies the distinction between the *slit image* as a visual device and the *slit image* as a metadiscursive figure is its belonging to a series, making a figure, giving rise to a recurrent rhetorical figure. The *slit image* is thus an image which on the one hand tends to be forgotten as representation, seeking to pass itself off as the thing itself, by clearly attacking its framework as separation, but also, in the same movement, within the *Decalogue* and in the perspective of the ethical project we have tried to bring to light. It makes it possible to become aware of this illusion, becoming part of a network of meaning and drawing the eye to the frame it is attacking. Thus, the *slit image* is a dialectical image, if we put ourselves in the perspective of Walter Benjamin's definition of it, at the same time presence and representation, sight and sign, it brings into play the confrontation of the scopic drive and its restraint by the limit and notably by the partial obturation of the field it constitutes, which both cuts into the field and reinforces the illusion at the same time. Therefore, we can apply to it what Walter Benjamin says about the dialectical image:

> Ambiguity is the appearance of dialectic in images, the law of dialectics at a standstill. This standstill is utopia and the dialectical image, therefore, dream image. Such an image is afforded by the commodity per se: as fetish. Such an image is presented by the arcades, which are house no less than street. Such an image is the prostitute - seller and sold in one. (Benjamin, 2002, p. 10)

As such, it is more the sign of a frameless framing, the sign of a fortuitous view than a fortuitous view itself, and the passage from view to signing is made precisely through the network of stakes of the gaze through different devices, notably, at the heart of *Decalogue 6* and through Kieślowski's entire work, through the device of the window, which we

shall see can present a theory of the *slit image*, that is to say of the film image, insofar as it is the place where, in Kieślowski, the feeling of failure of the encounter with the real in the image that is probably at the heart of his desire to film and of his ethical concerns is affirmed. I will now turn to the four dimensions of the *slit image*. In a fourth, rather a phenomenological and psychoanalytic part, I will approach its opening and its invitation to pass through, in a fifth, attached to bringing to light the unconscious foundations of this concept, I will study its relationship to the origin and finally, subsuming the first three characteristics, its passage to the primary object.

4. THE FUNCTION OF THE DIALECTICAL IMAGE

4.1. Slit As An Opening

« I might suppose that the Operator's emotion (and consequently the essence of Photography-according-to-the-Photographer) had some relation to the «little hole » (stenope) through which he looks, limits, frames, and perspectivizes when he wants to « take » (to surprise). » (Barthes, 1981, pp. 9-10)

The dialectical image brings into play the illusion of presence in the relation of the eye to the photographic nature of the filmed image. In its quest for reality in the image itself, in its desire for a *real* encounter with the object, the viewer's eye plays with this photographic nature as a guarantee of presence, even if it is aware of the fictional dimension of the image. The essential conflict that the *slit image* then brings to light as well as the fundamental ambivalence it illuminates between presence and absence of the represented object, are articulated with the presence of a hole at the heart of the image, through which something of the represented object itself would pass, making its presence haptic.

It is interesting to look at a common aspect of the two episodes of the *Decalogue* that Kieślowski has shot for the cinema, *A Short Film About Killing,* and *A Short Film About Love*: both are built around a hole. While the hole is located on the surface of the image in *Decalogue 5* and *A Short Film about Killing,* cut by the use of a filter that creates an iris with black and uncertain edges, the fruit of the ingenuity of a cinematographer who has often collaborated with Kieślowski, Slawomir Idziak, in *Decalogue 6* and A Short Film about Love, it is around the hole in Tomek's window, a transparent and pierced surface, that the essential action of the two versions will take place; the turning of the gaze back to its origin.

This hole in the surface of the box office and thus of the cinematographic image, by the reflexive displacement mechanism of the mise en abyme operated by the *Decalogue* project, is the starting point of this work and the very origin of the *slit image* concept. First of all, the dialectical image is this transparent image from the Albertian *finestra* to which is added the fantasy of a real opening of the representation, making painting a fiction (the Albertian *historia)* documentary (the window is open). It finds its full measure in the photographic image, which is the unconscious horizon of its

"opening" from the earliest times of the metapictorial uses of the Albertian metaphor. Particularly in the baroque image that repeatedly stages the passage through the frame, or above the frame, the continuity between the two adjacent spaces is a constant in the search for a truth in painting, a truth that is easily identified with the presence, considered as the life of the object. The dialectical image thus brings into play the opening of the film image, its uncertain edge, and its photographic transparency: In one case by bringing into play the opening of the support itself, of which the iris of *Decalogue 5* is here a visual figure; in the other by showing the photographic transparency itself as pierced by a void, through the window of *Decalogue 6*, leaving an aerial continuity, "continuity of matter," between the two spaces, bringing a graft of reality into the image.

Thus, if in the classical painted image, any view through a window or a doorway stages the theoretical opening of Alberti's *finestra*, the cinematographic dialectical image rests on a "photographic" knowledge that establishes, between the image and its referent, a link that André Bazin presents with some nuances, such as essentially ontological, that Rosalind Krauss, following Bazin and in support of Peirce's theory of the sign, qualifies as "indexical" and that Roland Barthes - speaking more specifically of the relationship of the eye to the object through its photograph - qualified as "umbilical."

Indeed, the first question raised by an approach to the dialectical image as an opening from the *Decalogue* is that of the indexicality of the photographic medium. In this connection, cinema is only a particular form of rendering (as indicated by the initial expression "animated photographs") and narrative articulation (editing). It is therefore by questioning the photographic image, the very matter of the film image, as Bazin does in his famous article *Ontology of the Photographic Image*, that the film image should be approached with skepticism, that is to say, without idolatry of the photographic presence or trace, this ontology that he proposed, which was taken up by Rosalind Krauss in support of Peirce's linguistic theories and which is condensed into an almost magical number in the "it has been" by Roland Barthes. André Bazin, without any ambiguities, placing himself on a more psychological than philosophical level, writes:

> Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation, a kind of decal or transfer. The photographic image is the object itself, the

> object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored) no matter how lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model. (Bazin, 1967, p. 14)

We can thus question the relationship that photography has with what Siegfried Kracauer calls the "material reality" on which it feeds and maintains its luminous appearance. André Bazin, in his famous article, also writes that:

> The objective nature of photography confers on it a quality of credibility absent from all other picture-making. In spite of any objections our critical spirit may offer, we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re*-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. Photography enjoys a certain advantage in virtue of this transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction. * (Bazin, 1967, pp. 13-14)

This notion of the transfer of reality constitutes the decisive stage in the construction of photographic knowledge that establishes the foundation of our relationship to photography, far beyond resemblance, it is according to Bazin the knowledge that the looking subject has of the "genesis" of the image that gives it its value of truth. We all know that if there is a photograph, it is because an object has reflected the light it received on a sensitive surface through a "lens" without the human hand appearing to have contributed to the elaboration of its resemblance; without the human hand having properly fabricated the image.

> Originality in photography as distinct from originality in painting lies in the essentially objective character of photography. [Bazin here makes a point of the fact that the lens, the basis of photography, is in French called the "objectif," a nuance that is lost in English.-TR.] For the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent. For the first time an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man. The personality of the photographer enters into the proceedings only in his selection of the object to be photographed and by way of the purpose he has in mind. Although the final result may reflect something of his personality, this does not play the same role as is played by that of the painter. AIl the arts are based on the presence of man, only photography derives an advantage from his absence. (Bazin, 1967, p. 13)

Indeed, in the photographic process, as we noticed at the beginning of this work, everything leads us to believe that the *finestra* is really "aperta", that is to say that there

is a physical continuity between the object and its representation, since a real passage of luminous fluid takes place between the field where the photographed object stands and the interior of the camera obscura where its appearance will come to be "deposited" and "seized". Photographic knowledge tells us that the entire photographic process rests on this "entry" of the image of the object into a neighbouring space, arranged to receive and preserve it. The frame of the window is wide open and we can consider that what often serves as the first photographic image is a play on this opening since we can see an open window that doubles the opening of the lens of the recording camera. This real opening of the Gras window is a staging of the opening of the *finestra*, a fiction of the opening of the support at the very origins of the photographic process, allowing us to consider that the space of the imaging subject and that of the object are in continuity in this physical contiguity which serves to establish the indexality of photography. This is precisely what makes Roland Barthes say in his semiological meditation on photography:

> Painting can feign reality without having seen it. Discourse combines signs which have referents, of course, but these referents can be and are most often "chimeras." Contrary to these imitations, in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past. (…) what I see has been here, in this place which extends between infinity and the subject (*operator* or *spectator*); it has been here, and yet immediately separated; (Barthes, 1981, pp. 76-77)

Thus, a link of the order of a carnal co-presence exists in his eyes between the photographed object and the subject looking, through photography, inducing a real opening, the possibility of a contact, a continuum of air between the two spaces, as suggested by the device of perforated transparency staged by the use of the counters in the work of Kieślowski. But this link, as we will show, only exists in the state of noème, as a known paradigm of photography, in the photographic knowledge of the subject who looks at the image. Knowledge and paradigm that Barthes' famous "it has been" sums up.

As we will see later, and although he was not a practitioner of photography, Krzysztof Kieślowski often evoked photography in his films, and always in his relationship to the presence of the photographed being, to his return, even to his resurrection (disappeared, absent, reunion.) One can in this respect consider that there is in his relationship to the

photographic and thus cinematographic image a consideration of this power of resurrection of the image considered as an imprint.

However, an object reflects light, the latter (photography) only "emanates" from it in the figurative sense, and it does not strictly speaking diffuse its appearance or its image, this light only becomes an image in the interpretative perception of a subject looking at it with the help of an adjusted optical device, eye or camera obscura, equipped with a lens or an adequate position (pinhole).

Thus, in reality, on the one hand the appearance does not enter the chamber but is reconstructed by the chemical process from recorded light information and on the other hand this reconstructed appearance in no way guarantees the real presence of the object to which it is normally attached. There are several examples of this in *Decalogue* when Kieślowski directly films a photograph without revealing its edges, in *Decalogue 2*. It is then difficult, at first, to distinguish what is presented as the real from what is presented as an image of the real (the photograph). As a reconstitution of an appearance, photography is simply the materialized and visualized consequence of the presence of a looking subject (or of a light recording device) for whom, and only for whom, the appearance can exist. Barthes' "it has been" can be converted into an "I have been there", the only guarantee of the truth of the image. The photograph is a sure sign of the subject's intention, which can be seen in the choice of framing, the choice of lens and camera, in short, in all the technical data of the shooting device. The force that leads us to believe in this opening of the image, in this magic of the imprint, would then be to relate it to the need to mourn the object, which would then have to be repaired while losing it. The index finger and the doubt that haunts it would be in a way the theoretical expression of this desire for the image to adhere to its origin; a holding of the object in an "illusionary" surface, capable of allowing the play between real absence and psychic presence, accredited by the maintenance of appearance, as in a form of embalming.

It is with these reservations and in the perspective of understanding a desire for presence linked to the mother's grief and her conditions that we must approach the "it has been" that Barthes situates as the noème of photography; it is no longer to be interpreted as an objective criterion of the truth of the photographic image but rather as the condensed formulation of photographic knowledge that accompanies any look at a photograph.

Something did indeed stand in front of the lens, but it can only remain in the state of an indeterminate "it"; was it the object itself or only its appearance? Or was it the "it" of the desire of the looking subject? For a connoisseur of Freudian terminology such as Barthes, the use of the word "it" cannot be free of an impulsive content. "It has been" may well mean, for example, "a desire for presence has been". But what is certain is that the referent of this "it" remains obscure; the photographic process can affirm nothing more.

Incidentally, it may be interesting for our approach to try to understand what this indiciality reveals about the regime of belief in the photographic and then cinematographic image that it establishes. This belief system is at the beginning of the "dramaturgy of the real" at Kieślowski and will be constantly questioned in the course of his work through the figure of the *slit image*. Although it may be appropriate to understand a desire for openness of passage and origin that appeared with the *finestra* itself, and is present in painting, and particularly in Baroque painting, the term *slit image* finds its depth and fullness in the advent of photography, which has posed as real the openness, the aerial transparency of the image support, relying in particular on the absence of intervention by the human hand in the area of the image itself. We saw at the beginning of this work that it is in fact on the frame and in the framing operation that the latter folded up to make the image photographic, however, considering only the plane of the surface where the image appears, the fabrication of the resemblance seems to be acheiropoietic.

With Bazin, as with Krauss or Barthes, the photographic image is a true imprint; it makes itself without the intervention of man, and it is this precise point of its genesis that gives it most of its objectivity and credibility. The photographic image is thus an acheiropoietic image. It is not by chance that it is the Holy Shroud of Turin that Bazin, a fervent Catholic, chose to illustrate in his article on photographic ontology. (Bazin, 1967, p. 14)

Bazin says on several occasions that it is the automaticity of the fabrication of the image that gives it its credibility:

> The fact that a human hand intervened cast a shadow of doubt over the image. Again, the essential factor in the transition from the baroque to photography is not the perfecting of a physical process (photography will long remain the inferior of painting in the reproduction of color); rather does it lie in a psychological fact, to wit, in completely satisfying our

> appetite for illusion by a mechanical reproduction in the making of which man plays no part. (Bazin, 1967, p. 12)

He adds further: « For the first time an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man.” (Bazin, 1967, p. 13) Finally, he insists on this point: « All the arts are based on the presence of man, only photography derives an advantage from his absence.” (Bazin, 1967, p. 13) The next page of his article is occupied by a photograph of the Holy Shroud of Turin, next to which he still writes: « A very faithful drawing may actually tell us more about the model but despite the promptings of our critical intelligence it will never have the irrational power of the photograph to bear away our faith.” (Bazin, 1967, p. 14)

To establish itself as a contemporary aesthetic paradigm based on the photographic model, it is an equivalence between the appearance and presence of the object, by recollating, through the notion of imprint, the iconic dimension (the mimetic appearance of the object in relation to itself) and the indexical dimension (the luminous imprint that is photography). A total fusion of the reflected light and the appearance, shapes and colours of the object thus leads to a contact between the object, which has become a material body in the light it reflects, and its image, which is then considered as its "physical" imprint. We find this conception of the acheiropoietic imprint where appearance and its supposed luminous materiality merge in Roland Barthes in this famous passage from *Camera Lucida*:

> It is often said that it was the painters who invented Photography (by bequeathing it their framing, the Albertian perspective, and the optic of the *camera obscura*). I say: no, it was the chemists. For the *noeme* «That-has-been» was possible only on the day when a scientific circumstance (the discovery that silver halogens were sensitive to light) made it possible to recover and print directly the luminous rays emitted by a variously lighted object. The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. (Barthes, 1981, p. 80)

And this emanation materializes into a real body of appearance that can be printed on the sensitive surface. It is moreover just after this remark that he speaks of the "umbilical link", that is to say, organic and of a skin shared with the person who has been photographed. « A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my

gaze. » (Barthes, 1981, p. 81) And it is only a little further on that he also mobilizes the Shroud of Turin when he evokes his astonishment at the certainty that what he sees has indeed been:

> Perhaps this astonishment, this persistence reaches down into the religious substance out of which I am molded; nothing for it: Photography has something to do with resurrection: might we not say of it what the Byzantines said of the image of Christ which impregnated St. Veronica's napkin: that it was not made by the hand of man, *acheiropoietos*? (Barthes, 1981, p. 82)

It is interesting, moreover, to see that the "emanation" referred to in order to explain the imprinting value of the photographic image refers in its operation to a kind of sweating which is like the emanation, a magical exhalaison, of resembling substance out of the body. The Shroud of Turin, for its part, is a shroud and not a sudarium like Veronica's. This generic appellation applied to all the acheiropoietic images of Christ refers to this process of emanation/sweating by which the image naturally forms on a surface in contact with which it is placed.

For these three authors, the credibility of the photographic image is a matter of belief, which is based on the notion of the "non-man-made" image (acheiropïetos) introduced by Saint Paul to distinguish idols from images of Christ and Christ himself as the image of God. Here we are not far from a definition of photography that derives its aura from the supposed initial contact between the model and her image, even through its mechanical reproduction, as George Didi-Huberman has shown, amending the Benjaminian formula on the loss of the aura:

> The photographic negative revealed what one had never hoped to see on the shroud itself. As the photographic "evidence" objectified an aspect of the shroud, it became proof of a miracle. Not only did it sanction an unprecedented sort of expository value for this relic heretofore hidden from view, it reestablished the *aura* of the shroud, investing the object itself with a counterpart to its semiotic status. The holy shroud became the *negative imprint* of the body of Christ, its *luminous* index miraculously produced and miraculously inverted in the very act of resurrection, henceforth to be conceived of in photographic terms. (Didi-Huberman & Repensek, 1984, pp. 65-66)

And he continues on the effect of aura, evoking The Shroud of Turin and quoting Blanchot:

> "Getting near involves playing at getting farther away. The game of far and near is the game of distance," writes Maurice Blanchot.18 Elaboration makes the detour possible. The detour involves distancing. It calls forth its own return; it invokes the story of something rising up from "the depths of time," something that fills up a period of waiting. Something unique and far away, however near it may be.'9 In this game of near and far, therefore, there is an effect of aura, involved in the surface of the photograph itself (the shroud of Turin reproduced on film realizes the delicious paradox of glorifying its cultural value). There is finally, in this game of near and far, the ubiquitous presence of the Christly body, which is in the shroud, there without being there, doubly absent, as dead body and body brought back to life, and present in the terrible signs of its Passion. So it is that the power of narrative is grafted eternally to seeing. (Didi-Huberman & Repensek, 1984, pp. 71-72)

The negative-positive reversibility shared by the physical imprint and the photograph is a fundamental characteristic of the imprint and thus confers on the prints their "umbilical" value, in a chain of forms and counter-forms linked together by a series of contacts.

Thus, what brings these three thinkers closer to photographic indexing is the central idea of their adherence to the principle of the Index and thus, according to our approach, to the real opening of the *finestra* allowing this "continuity of matter between things and images", is based on an initial confusion between light (index) and appearance (icon), or more precisely on a belief that the luminous matter reflected by an object corresponds ontologically to its appearance, constitutes it and therefore "emanates" directly from it more than it bounces off it and reveals it in passing. Appearance would thus take shape in the photons of the light that reveals it, which would allow it to come and physically form an imprint that would then become part of the long tradition of images by contact and by virtue of a process of emanation or sweating, from the Roman imago to the Shroud of Turin via Veronica. Appearance would be effective in itself, it would possess a material body capable of leaving its imprint.

Here we are not far from an incarnation of the image which is not without recalling the Pauline discourse on the body of Christ. Considering that the light reflected by the object carries the form within it and that, at the same time, the appearance materializes within it, Rosalind Krauss' Index finger bears a strange resemblance to the index finger that Saint Thomas thrusts into the slit in the wound of Christ in Caravaggio's famous painting.

> As distinct from symbols, indexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referents. They are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms, or the actual referents of the shifters. Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects. (Krauss, 1977, p. 70)

The Index theory is here formulated in its very essence as the fruit of the quest for a truth of the image, an effort to recover the ontological power of the acheiropoietic image in the times of science. “An index can be like a finger pointing or a demonstrative expression such as “this.” The index points to its object and thereby empties itself of all but this referentiality.” (Singh, 2015, p. 250)

By inserting his index finger into the slit at the side of Christ, Saint Thomas, substituting his index finger for his eye in a haptic movement of the gaze, seeks to rediscover the origin of the image, the human body of Christ, and thus to answer the question of the corporeity of appearance. His index finger signs the presence of this resurrected body, not only by contact but by an entry into the body of his appearance, by a verification of the presence of the body under the "garment" of appearance. The equivalent slit, placed by the same author on his garment at the level of Saint Thomas' shoulder, could well be a formulation of this detachment between presence and appearance, between indicialitity and iconicity, a slit between the body and its garment of visibility, through which doubt has intruded. That a slit is the access to the origin of the appearance that is the real presence of the body is a very interesting element in the elaboration of the heuristic concept of the *slit-image*, which we are trying to lead here. The slit presents itself on the body of Christ, which is in the Pauline conception an image of God, as an opening, a passage and an origin.

Thus the death of Jesus is what makes visible what was previously hidden from the Jews; the presence of God on earth, the Holy of Holies. It is by dying on the cross that Jesus becomes the Christ, and that his tortured body becomes an image, a corpse, that is to say, an absence made present. “He resembles himself. The cadaver is its own image.” (Blanchot, 1982, p. 258) Hans Belting writes the following in *An Anthropology of Images:* « The scandal of death lies in the fact that a body suddenly turns into an image. (Belting, 2014, p. 130)

By dying on the cross, Jesus reconciles mankind with God, the veil is torn, and his image-body becomes an opening between the two worlds (the visible and the invisible). We can thus go further and see in the body of Christ, a new formulation of the veil of the temple, but a torn veil, a veil that indicates but does not prevent seeing. In the Gospel of John, where there is no reference to the veil of the Temple, it is directly his body that is pierced (torn) by the spear of a legionary (Longin) who wants to verify his death, and thus makes his blood gush out mixed with water, and it is precisely by plunging his hand into this wound (tear) that Thomas will believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and will thus access the Holy of Holies, the presence of God on earth: 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put11 your finger here, and examine12 my hands. Extend13 your hand and put it14 into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief, but believe.”15 20:28Thomas replied to him,16 “My Lord and my God!” (Gospel of John, pp. 20:27-28)

The slit is linked to the passage of the fluids and the flow, to the flow, to the smoke, which characterizes so well the texture of the filmic image. It is thus first of all linked to the orality of the Eucharist which is literally a way of eating the image, eating the image-body by virtue of the process of transubstantiation. But it is also the place where the index finger of St. Thomas passes through, which comes in a second time to verify the corporeality of the apparition, the materiality of the appearance.

It is remarkable that in Jesus' words, seeing is the equivalent of touching to verify presence, that seeing is therefore a means of verifying presence, definitively eliminating any doubt about appearances, Christ establishes a very interesting equivalence between seeing and attesting presence. It is this shift from touch to see, and therefore from seeing to seeing as a certifying contact, that will be taken up again in the theory of the Index (which is aptly named). This view presented as "direct" offered by photography derives its value of authenticity from the index that the eye of the spectator passes through its frame to go and touch "directly" the represented object, due to the transparency of the support. As we have seen above, the transparency of the photographic support becomes a real opening, allowing a contact in the *slit image.*

By inserting his index finger into the slit at Christ's side, Saint Thomas seeks to relate appearance to its origin, the body. The slit is thus the natural way to the origin, as we will see later, it gives shape to the origin. Here, it is presented as a tear in the surface through

which the finger-eye, the tactile eye of the haptic impulse, can penetrate the body of the image in search of its very origin, since as image and as body, the corpse is a readymade. As a real opening allowing a passage for the gaze into the interior of a body, the slit, transposed into the body of the filmed image, is what theoretically allows the photographic knowledge on which it is based in the field of documentary and its naturalistic aesthetics, to establish this "umbilical" link between the gaze and the object. The *image-slit* allows us to understand the path that the gaze travels in order to take the opening in a passage towards the origin, namely the reality that it believes it encounters in photography. This journey, Kieślowski has done so in one of his documentary projects, the only one where he appears personally, conducting a filmed investigation.

Indeed, in a short documentary film *The Photograph* dating from 1968, Kieślowski, is filmed, with a handheld camera and often appearing microphones in hand according to the rules of direct cinema, an investigation he undertook based on a famous photograph from the Second World War in which two children carrying weapons appear. (Kickasola, 2004, p. 95)

The project of the film is to go back up the thread of the making of this photograph to finally meet the two children, fifteen years older, following in a certain way the path of the "umbilical link" between the looking subject that he is and the children. that he's literally going to touch. A return to the origin. The resemblance no longer matters here, what counts in this verification of the indexality, according to what Atilio Avancini says, is the index link. “Thus the confirmation of the fact occurs through the connection between index and referent. It is a unique quality of photography, which therefore belongs to the level of track, mark, trace and record.” (Avancini, 2011, p. 51)

He thus attests to the existence of these two young people linking the image to its models and visually materializing, in an investigation whose various stages we follow, Barthes’ *"it has been"*. At the end of the film, one of the two young people remembers the shooting session by looking at the photograph, the starting point, the origin, on which the film ends. A double loop is thus closed by this end, one that goes from the photograph to the photograph through a return to the model, and the other that goes from the beginning of the investigation to the beginning of the investigation, always through the photograph. It is not insignificant to note that the film opens and ends with a direct shot on the

photograph, (tracking) whose edges are absent from the image. This type of superimposition of images, of images of images without the border of the frame alerting the eye to the fact that the filmed object is only an appearance in itself and not the referent itself, is quite common in the work of Kieślowski. We have already met some of them (television in *Camera Buff*, photography in *Decalogue 2*) these images of images invite us to two reflections. On the one hand, they show how the disappearance of the frame's upright acts on our perception through a naturalization of the filmed image that naturally substitutes itself for the film image. Thus, there are never two images, one being that of the other, but on the contrary only one, that of photography or that of television, although the blue colour and the veiled texture of the latter clearly distinguishes it from the rest of the film. It is necessary to wait for the reappearance of the rigid edge of the frame for the two layers of images to peel off and then there are two distinct layers, the one that is filmed within the film itself.

On the other hand, this superimposition also shows, very precisely, the limit point of the process of recording the brightness of things, what the film shows is only the appearance and not the object, and there is nothing at the beginning of the shot to identify it. The material of the photographic image being the same as that of the filmed image, the eye cannot distinguish between them, and therefore cannot see that it is a filmed photograph. Although this process is less effective with the television image, is no less similar in its effect, the TV screen filmed by Filip in *Camera Buff does not* appear to us to be a filmed screen, but it is on the film screen, and this despite the fact that we have previously seen Filip leaning towards the TV set equipped with a camera. Indeed, despite this internal ocularization, the television image becomes the very image of the film, it is mounted directly at the level of the other images of the film, being of the same texture. What we see then is a concert of classical music through a deformed and veiled transparency, but not a television set broadcasting the concert. The effect is clear and corresponds to what Filip is looking for by approaching the set and framing the screen without its margins; an immersion in the illusion of being there. The film then plays on this illusion of a permanent hole and thus on the "continuity of matter" between the subject looking and the object being watched.

The hole in the visible exposed to us by Tomek's wicket, which is at the heart of the understanding of the open dimension of the dialectical image, is the incarnation of this

grafting of reality that the photographic dogma of indiciality operates on photographic images. As if it were the navel of the photographic image, he questions this link.

It is an "umbilical" link between our eye and reality through the photographic process, but we will also see that it expresses its illusory quality. The counters are generally places of refusal and disappointment.

After having looked at the *slit image* on its edges worked by the dissolution under the effect of this desire that we will have the opportunity to specify further on, it is thus advisable to look at its center, the hole in the visible, this illusory point of contact that Kieślowski has admirably arranged before our eyes in various films and of which it made the heart of episode 6. This hole in the filmic surface of the appearance of things, this hole for the mouth and hand, is the visual device of the administration office that provided him with it, right from his first documentary film at the end of his studies at the school in Lodz. We will begin by taking the measure of what this box office device, used several times by Kieślowski in its work and particularly developed in *Decalogue 6* and *A Short Film About Love*, which we will consider as the structural matrix of the *slit image*, we will then continue with the analysis of *the* iris in *Decalogue 5* and its cinematographic version *A Short Film About Killing.*

At the beginning of *Decalogue 6*, a panoramic shot offers us a remarkable opportunity to visually apprehend this supposed hole which, in the filmic image, presents itself as the promise of a real encounter with the object, which will remain forever postponed.

Magda, a film reprise of Mary Magdalene in this episode where it is about seeing and touching, is seen in profile and seems to get impatient waving a sheet that looks like a money order notice. She takes a step forward, to the left of the screen, and we then discover a hole in the air, at the height of her gaze, as she pans slightly. This round hole reveals to us that it is behind a glass that we quickly identify as being that of a window. From the appearance of this circle of empty space at the heart of the supposedly "open" window of the filmed image, a concomitant full, that of the transparent and invisible thickness of the glass surface that separates the administrative space of the counter (on the spectator's side) from the public space of the post office (field of representation) is thus born. This arrangement of the counter is then superimposed on that of the film and thus reveals its potentialities. (Kickasola, 2004, p. 219)

This glass reminds the viewer, still on the threshold of this fiction, that what he or she will see will be seen through the flat, transparent surface of the support of the filmic image, a surface that is called a screen, that is to say a projection and protection area. What was directly perceived as "real" is thus put at a distance, "placed behind", presented as separated from the viewer's eye by the thickness of the screen (glass). But at the same time, the visible hole, the local and circular absence of this transparent thickness, appears like a promise, revealing a virtuality of the image; the support is perforated, the screen has an opening, the surface of the filmic image allows an exchange.

It is the very material of this hole, its texture for the eye, as a promise of a "real" presence or contact with an element whose status remains to be determined, that constitutes a very interesting object of reflection in trying to understand how the *slit image* brings into play the relation of the eye to the film image, in its quest for a contact, constantly postponed, with the real, that is to say with the material presence of the represented object. Presence of the object that the film image carries within it while masking it, covering it with its appearance. (function of the screen)

Thus, with the appearance of this hole, the purely transparent image of the film, which was supposed to show us directly the real reknown as fictitious (but materially existing ; the post office is not a virtual setting, but it had become a sign by being filmed), according to a combination of the perspectival principle of the opening of the *finestra,* and the photographic process according to which the window is really open, turns into an image, always transparent, but whose surface is really perforated, that is to say open to the real directly accessible from the filming location. While the beginning of the shot places the eye in front of a virtual opening that opens onto a conventional, purely virtual (here fictitious) "cinematographic" real where Magda (the character) appears, the end of the shot and the appearance of the hole suddenly places the eye in front of a more real place, directly accessible through the opening of the hole, a place no longer just fictitious taken from the story but the real place of the moment of shooting, the "real" that fiction covers with its signs, the place of the presence of the actress in living flesh. It is thus the real hair of Grazina Szapolowska, Magda's interpreter, that is accessible to us through the opening of this box office and not simply that of the fictional character to whom she lends her appearance. The hole tears up the fictional texture of the film, its fantasy dimension, to give, at the very heart of the fiction, access to the reality that it conceals by staging it.

(Badowska, 2016, p. 153) In a certain way, from fiction, the image moves here to documentary, tearing the representational convention of the world to go to the new and surprising encounter with a fortuitous reality, at the chance of the shot. The effect of surprise is important here, the hole captures the consciousness of the spectator, putting into abyss a visual device.

The hole in this window appears as a graft of reality (emptiness, contact, passage) on what we previously considered as the virtual reality of cinematic fiction. A surplus of potential presence and contact at the heart of conventional illusion, an even more direct access than that of the fictional image to the bodies re-presented since it is no longer the artificial space-time of the narrative but the here-now of the presence of the bodies. A survival of the documentary approach, dear to the author, at the heart of his fiction.

Appearing on the surface of the image, precisely where the viewer's gaze touches it, at the interface between the two spaces, this hole also represents the virtual opening of the medium and testifies to the capacity of the film image, based on the virtues of the photographic capture of the real, to give direct access to the space represented. What you see does exist, the image tells you that you could almost touch it, or at least invites you to desire to do so, to do so in a certain way, with your gaze. You only touch with your eyes. It is a possible reformulation of Christ's warning to Mary Magdalene,

> Noli me tangere scene, named after Christ's words, examines the deceptive nature of sight and the problematic desire to touch.43 An encounter with the resurrected Christ had to be as untouchable for the viewer as Christ was for Mary Magdalene. (…) In Augustine's opinion, when Christ asked Mary Magdalene not to touch him, it was not meant to be a rude repudiation, but rather an invitation to touch him in a different way - in a more figurative sense, not limited to his physical human form. Bartolomeo Montagna's picture superbly demonstrates this paradoxical form of touching without bodily contact. (Grave, 2009, s. 65-67)

"Noli me tangere", a warning that seems to have been the paradigm of this episode of the *Decalogue.* Indeed, Tomek, the postman-voyeur in whose place this foreground places us, lives opposite Magda's house and spends long moments looking at her through his window, using a telescope. It is he who brings her to his post office counter by slipping false postal order notices into his mailbox. He tries to get as close to her as possible

without really trying to reach her, his gaze establishes with her a kind of an asymptotic relationship that is superimposed on the haptic tension that the hole establishes at the heart of its privileged device (wicket) as well as at the heart of the image. He seeks to touch it without any real contact. Thus, Tomek often borrows the orifice of his wicket to touch it with his gaze, as shown in the shot immediately following the first one.

Seen in a semi-subjective shot from Magda's back, Tomek, slightly hidden by reflections, places his gaze precisely in the opening to devour Magda with his gaze. The hole then acquires an oral dimension (the real destination of this orifice, which is placed at the level of the mouth to allow the verbal exchange between the teller and the person being served), which, by the way, expresses the substitution of the scopic for the verbal in the mute relationship of the fascinated spectator to his object. The mouth haunts Tomek's eye as much as his hand, but it is not a mouth that speaks, it is a mouth that "sucks" the screen (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 302), the hole offers both the possibility of virtual sucking and caressing. « Cinematic tactility occurs not only at the skin or the screen, but traverses all the organs of the spectator’s body and the film’s body. » (Barker, 2009, p. 2)

One day, Magda, annoyed by the fact that there is no money order waiting for her at the post office when she comes in, will put her hand through the opening of the counter and thus intrude into Tomek's space. The photogram below shows us a real passage from one space to another, what the gaze leaves in a virtual state because of its immateriality, Magda's hand accomplishes it, it crosses the screen. Thus, against all expectations, it is not the hand of the spectator that crosses the threshold of the represented area, but it is Magda's hand that bursts into Tomek's space, forcing him to come out of his withdrawal, and later bringing him into real contact with her. Having invited him to enter her home, the young woman will incite him to slip his hand between her thighs, a real contact with the phantasmatic origin of his desire which will instantly provoke the death of the young postman as the invisible source of his gaze; he will flee and attempt to kill himself by slitting his wrist veins. Having survived this mutilation aimed at cutting himself off from the possibility of contact (it is the hand of the eye that is attacked), Tomek will return to his counter but will say "I am no longer observing you" to Magda who is lost because she herself has become a seeker of his gaze. The episode concludes with this reversal of gaze and this exchange of places that makes the film viewer placed on Tomek's side, the object

of Magda's gaze in this look at the camera where the role of the hole in the box office as a graft of reality in the image is highlighted once again.

It is thus a virtual exchange between the space of the representation and that of the spectator that is brought into play by the appearance of this hole, an exchange that is impossible, really, but to which it is nevertheless possible to lend life. Not being sure that this exchange is a real thing, the spectator is also not sure that it is only a representation; the fictitious space of the film is a virtual reality for the eye that can penetrate it in its gaze, which has become a body for itself in an immaterial field. If the actress is not present, Magda is fully present, and her gaze is also present, as real as if the hole were a real hole. For the gaze is in any case visible and invisible, present and absent as a motionless gesture, contactless contact. What the viewer sees in the above photogram is Grazina Szapolowska's gaze, invisible and yet present, crossing the surface of the image and coming to touch it directly at a degree of reality which is - to take up Bergson's definition of the image at the beginning of *Matter and Memory:* "Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images'. And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*, - an existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation' (Bergson, 2010, pp. vii-viii)

This midway existence of raw matter and its appearance visual could be precisely the texture of this hole, the image par excellence, which manifests the existence of a virtual contact; not a represented contact, not a real contact, but a represented contact perceived as real. Or more precisely, this hole would reveal the virtual nature of what acts as an encounter with the real in the filmic image. For if there is one real thing that this shot (as well as the two previous ones) manifests, it is the reality of this hole, which, without bringing more visibility to Grazina Szapolowska's face, makes it closer than the rest of her body behind the glass surface of the window. It is in the depths of this virtual exchange that the hole makes possible; as if reality were saying to us in substance: of course there is the screen between you and me, but at the heart of the screen, the hole of the image, its virtual power that brings us closer together.

Let us note here that the power of this image depends essentially on the way in which it plays on its photographic nature, on the photographic knowledge that accompanies it. It

is because the spectator is supposed to know that Grazina Szapolowska really exists, elsewhere, and that she really stood in front of this hole, that the filmic image of her appearance acquires a particular strength that would be that of a real contact, of a preserved imprint. Indeed, as we have seen above, it is from the belief in a real entry of the luminous appearance of a body into the camera obscura, where its imprint would be preserved by contact, that the image of the film is constituted, according to the photographic process and its knowledge. It would be a real opening of Alberti's window, embodied by the photograph, which would let the object paint itself, by immaterial but real contact, just like the one of the gaze on the surface of the image. All the strength and magic of the cinematograph, in its early days, rests on this miracle of a photographic representation of life in movement, which takes place without the intervention of the hand, an acheiropoietic image, and which is based on the presence and the spectral entry of a real body (the luminous appearance) into a space destined to receive it. As we saw in the first part, the first photographic image was taken by Nicéphore Niépce through an open window, indicating in passing, as in the rebus of a dream, that photography is born in the real opening of the window. The first photographic image is thus the representation of a "hole", of an opening that puts into abyss the process that led to its constitution; the supposedly real entry of an appearance into an enclosed space where the eye stands.

Taking up the same phenomenon of exchange between spaces, the opening of the counter establishes, at the heart of the transparency of the medium, the possibility of an encounter with reality. But this encounter, the founding myth of documentary cinema, is characterized by failure. For this exchange between spaces exists only in the interpretation that the human eye, directed by the cultural paradigm of photography, makes of this imaging operation. The object is no more present in his photography than it is in his drawing, painting or even his word. Here we have the terms of a quest for the real in the image and a renunciation that perhaps explain the ethical choices of Kieślowski.

Magda comes here to ask for something that she will not obtain - we do not know what - from the authority on whose side this plan places us, on the side of the teller, that is, on the side of the one who has the power to refuse or to accept, that is, to *act* and to give substance to Magda's desire. Now this desire to obtain an object is never satisfied, the wicket and its hole offer only broken promises. (Badowska, 2016, p. 153)

One may then wonder how much importance should be attached to the fact that it is a wicket that serves as a visual device for the awareness caused by this hole in the heart of the image. For the spectator, too, this hole and this wicket are promises that he knows will not be kept, but which, all the same, he likes to believe in. In a certain way, the wicket device is a figuration of the relation of the spectator to the filmic image, it expresses the demand for an encounter forever postponed with the real presence of the object in its image. A demand on which the building of the cinematograph is partly based. Kieślowski would lead here a pictorial reflection on the spectator's demand, comparing the screen to a sort of window to reality, giving rise to a hope that it would be incapable of truly satisfying, like most of the windows that appear in his films.

Indeed, if you look closely, the work of Kieślowski is browsed through many box offices that are as many places of disappointment and failed encounters for the people (documentaries) or characters (fiction) who confront each other there.

From his early days at the film school at Łodz, Krzyzstof Kieślowski used the box office as a visual device. His second student film even focuses entirely on what happens around a counter; *The Office* (1966) showed snippets of verbal exchanges recorded on both sides of a counter of the administration in charge of distributing retirement pensions on images of citizens waiting in line for an answer. Filmed on both sides of the counter, the film was a fairly accurate representation of the separation into two spaces that can be seen at the beginning of *Decalogue 6.* In this six-minute short film, Kieślowski sought to capture the intimacy of the plaintiffs, their solitude before the invisible gaze of the administration, the hole was the manifestation of this desire to know, to touch the reality of these existences, and the wicket the place of the failure of this encounter, which in many ways recalls that of the end of *Decalogue* 6.

In *Refrain* (1972), the box office once again occupies the space of the film. Kieślowski filmed the life of a funeral home where citizens come to declare the death of their loved ones and carry out the funeral procedures. (Kickasola, 2004, p. 96) The camera of Kieślowski does not exploit the frontality with the surface of the wicket pierced by a hole, however, it appears in a lateral shot where the hole takes on a mysterious and deep dimension. The hole thus appears in negative, at an angle so that it looks like an oblong slit, on a glass surface whitened by the light and which is thus not transparent, it seems to

substitute itself for the head of the teller's interlocutor, and above all, it gives onto nothingness. Entirely turned towards the members of the administration, this single view of the counter seems to indicate that there is no beyond the counter for the representative of the State; the other is a black hole, despite the efforts made by individuals to humanize the place, the counter's mechanism, which is extremely important in the context of a totalitarian state, is irremediably the place of an encounter with nothingness.

Two years later, in *First Love* (1974), the box office naturally appears in this new aesthetic stage for Kieślowski, which continues its visual exploration of the relationship between Polish citizens and their administration, as well as the possibilities of the film image in its quest for truth. Krzysztof Kieślowski tells in his memoirs that this film allowed him to "accomplish something useful". In fact, noticing during this poorly staged sequence that the time to get an apartment was about five years, he mischievously wrote a sequel project to the film, focusing on the early years of the unborn child at the time of the sequence, and presented the text on television, which was very powerful in Poland at the time, and which showed great interest. He then suggested that for the convenience of the project and to make the film look more optimistic, it would be a good idea for the young couple to get an apartment fairly quickly, which they did.

> I think that something positive came out of this film. (…) With the help of its influence in various places – the Party, the council or whatever, I don't care where – Television found a flat for them. Suffice it to say that when the little girl was a half a year old, they already had a flat. A large, decent, four-roomed flat. (Stok, 1993, pp. 67-68)

This experience, which is peripheral to the film itself, shows in a lateral way, on which axis the filmmaker finally got this encounter with reality in the cinema. While he sought it primarily in the image itself, as his constant questioning of reflective surfaces and of the cinematic medium in its photographic texture shows, wanting to free the image from its propagandistic instrumentalization, it was above all at the level of the relationship with the filmed subjects, in the register of responsibility, that he grasped the real and was able to act upon it.

In *Railway Station* (1980), there are many ticket offices. The interest of this short documentary is to put the counter system in relation to the invisible eye of video

surveillance, which gradually takes precedence over the filmmaker's camera to the point of replacing it in the editing at the end. The documentary filmmaker acting without the filmed subjects' knowledge is thus implicitly compared to the *guard* who watches the station through his screens and directs the cameras. One year after *Camera Buff* (1979), Kieślowski continues its critical reflection on the documentary image, this time exploring the dimension of the filmmaker's power of control over the filmed. The counter establishes a power relationship between the teller and the citizen, a relationship that Kieślowski perhaps underscores by showing the reverence that travellers make when they speak to the teller. They can be seen bowing their heads to formulate and, above all, hear what is said to them, since the hole is at the bottom of the window, at the height of the counter.

In *Blind Chance* (1981), the counter still plays a central role in our perspective here. *Blind Chance* is a film that proposes three hypotheses from the same starting point. It is possible that the film is a revival of his virtual lives, articulated here in the act of taking a "student" ticket to Warsaw, and rushing to catch his train. The wicket can be guessed here at the hole that occupies the bottom of the screen, initially hidden by the head of the wicket-maker, it ends up being cleared and serving as an axis, a point of passage, for Witek's waiting gaze. This hole grafts an idea onto the surface of the filmic image, an idea that perhaps should be understood as being above all the idea of an encounter. The conventional reality of the cinema, that is to say, the film as a network of signifiers, as repetition, as habit, as *automaton,* one could say, using the Aristotelian categories borrowed by Lacan in his *Seminar XI,* becomes the bearer of an opening, an opening similar to the *tuchè,* precisely at random, to what cannot be foreseen. The *tuchè,* Lacan tells us during the session of his seminar of February 5, 1964, “The function of the tuche, of the real as encounter—the encounter in so far as it may be missed, in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter.” (Lacan, 1978, p. 55)

But he adds during the following session, February 12, 1964:

> What I will articulate next time fvill show you how to appropriate to this statement tlie admirable fourth and fifth chapters of Aristotle's Physics. Aristotle turns and manipulates two terms that are absolutely resistant to his theory, which is nevertheless the most elaborate that has ever been made on the function of cause—two terms that are incorrectly translated as chance and fortune. It is a question, then, of revising the relation that Aristotle establishes

> between the automaton—and we know, at the present stage of modern mathematics, that it is the network of signifiers—and what he designates as the tuche—which is for us the encounter with the real. (Lacan, 1978, p. 52)

This hole is the manifestation of this encounter with the real content in its appearance within the image, which we quickly understand will be essentially missed, or at least eternally postponed. But here, the failure is not directly due to a refusal from the ticket office, which satisfies Witek's first request, which quickly goes away with his train ticket to Warsaw. Rather, the failure lies in the deployment of the three hypotheses, which side by side constitute what Slavoj Žižek calls "alternative realities" in his essay *Lacrimae Rerum.* (Žižek, 2001, p. 152). Running behind his train, Witek stumbles upon reality, seems to meet it for real, beyond the ticket office, when his hand grabs the train.

Other windows, notably in *Decalogue,* are places of disappointment, failure and impossible encounters. In *Decalogue 5,* Jacek goes to the box office of a cinema that he is refused entry to. He has been wandering around the city for hours, agitated by a look of object sickness, but the box office tell him that there is no film to see before the afternoon and that the film he wants to see is "boring". She sends him back to his unfulfilled request for a visual presence and even tells him the station where he will meet the taxi driver, whom he will violently kill a few minutes later. The failure here is heavy in consequence and the aborted meeting unleashes a violence that resided in power in this young man devastated by the loss of his little sister, whose photograph he keeps as a relic.

On the one hand, the exchange is refused, the young woman does not look at Jacek nor at the spectator that the image places on her side - we will never go to the other side of the window of the counter - the hole of the counter establishes a one-way relationship that locks the future killer and the spectator in their position of invisible witness, as in the photogram of *Decalogue 6* where we can see Tomek plunging his eye into the hole to devour Magda with his gaze while she is not looking at him. But whereas in *Decalogue 6* the spectator was witness to an exchange to which he was a stranger, here he is returned to his solitude and his condition of invisibility. He does not exist for the image, which, instead of giving him the illusion of a presence and that of the possibility of an exchange, however virtual, sends him back to his failure, to the failure of his encounter with the real

in the image, and paradoxically, confronts him with the real of the image, as absence, as emptiness, as a hole.

This is what the second interesting aspect of this plan tells us. The hole in the box office is combined with the hole that the black edges of Slawomir Idziak's image draw in the film. The use of the iris establishes an analogy between the perforated surface of the window and that of the screen, superimposing a hole on a hole, the filmic image is thus presented as a window overlooking a void. The image (like the wicket) does not look at us. It is precisely this failure that constitutes the reality of the image; and this was probably the last hope of Jacek, who had gone to a photographer to ask for the enlargement of the photograph of his lost little sister, who is visibly in search of a lost object.

In *Decalogue 7*, the wickets twice oppose the wishes of Majka, the young woman who is trying to reclaim her child (Ania) that her mother (Ewa) "took" from her at birth to "save" her from the scandal of too early motherhood. At the beginning of the film, Majka goes to a government office to obtain visas and prepares to flee abroad with her own daughter, whom she plans to take back from her mother. The teller issues a visa in her name but refuses to give her one in Ania's name, because only the child's official mother can apply for this, and for the administration, she is only Ania's sister. Here again, the ticket office is a place where the real disappears, disappears behind the illusion of administrative appearances. While Majka comes here to find a passage to her right and legitimacy as a mother, she finds only a wall without an opening, a reflection in which it is difficult for her to see herself as the mother of her child. The young woman sees her legitimate right to the very name of protecting her own rights slipping away.

At the end of the film, as she flees with Ania whom she has just kidnapped, Majka takes refuge in the ticket office of a train station, she takes refuge behind the counter who agrees to welcome her, immersed in the reading of *Madame Bovary*, and dozes off with Ania while waiting for a train that is due to arrive two hours later. Her parents, who are on her heels, arrive at the ticket office and ask the teller, who always reads *Madame Bovary*, if she has seen a "young girl with a child". The teller pretends to be thinking. And then, looking behind the counter, Ewa sees Ania and can pick her up in front of Majka's eyes, powerless to fight against her mother and the order of appearances imposed by her imperious desire for putative motherhood. This passage is very interesting because it

formulates in a negative way this failure of the encounter with reality, which is represented by the box office device in the films of Kieślowski, by staging the success of an encounter with illusion. It is thus in the fact that the virtual mother finds her virtual daughter behind the counter, despite the surprising complicity of the counterwoman, who this time is on the side of Majka and the truth but without knowing it and in the name of a romantic solidarity, by formulating a request that is also based on a false testimony, that lies this failure of a true encounter with reality (here the recognition of real generational links). Majka is no longer a "young girl", but in reality a woman, a mother, like Ewa. However, going to the wicket in search of an illusion, her illusion of being Ania's mother, Ewa is satisfied in her request, while her own daughter, the real mother of the child, loses forever her real daughter and the reality of her status as a mother.

Thus in this film, the box office distributes virtual realities to those who ask for them; entirely devoted to illusions, it can only satisfy the desire of those who lie and are satisfied with these illusions. The virtual mother leaves with her virtual child while the real mother, dispossessed of her daughter, is stripped of her reality.

In Kieslowski's work, the window is the place where the failure of the desire for the object is observed, which haunts the impulse of the gaze towards the transparent image, that is to say the image that rests on perspective and thus on the transparency of the support. We will now see that this hole in the transparency of the window corresponds to the opening of the black-edged iris that can be seen in *Decalogue 5* and to a lesser extent in *A Short Film About Killing.* Each time it is the opening of the medium and the possible encounter with the object that is put into play there, but whereas the hole in the window allegorically promised a loving encounter with the object of amorous desire (and of the scopic impulse), the hole in the iris, within the film's medium, announces the deadly radicality of this failure.

If the hole in the window as a metaphor for the "indexical" opening of the photographic image is also the expression of a desire that can be associated with the Freudian notion of Eros, the hole formed by the iris in *Decalogue 5,* and to a lesser extent in its cinematographic version *A Short Film About Killing*, can be associated with that of Thanatos.

> With the discovery of narcissistic libido, and the extension of the libido-concept to the individual cells, the sexual instinct became for us transformed into the Eros that endeavours to impel the separate parts of living matter to one another and to hold them together; what is commonly called the sexual instinct appears as that part of the Eros that is turned towards the object. Our speculation then supposes that this Eros is at work from the beginnings of life, manifesting itself as the 'life-instinct' in contradistinction to the 'death-instinct' which developed through the animation of the inorganic. (Freud, 1922)

The former, in the solar clarity of its transparency, offers the eye the illusion of a material enjoyment of the represented object. The second, shady, nocturnal, partially hides the image and makes it a glaucous glow surrounded by darkness. Archaic sexuality in one, ancestral murder in the other, dead life and living death, each of the two feature films from *Decalogue 5* and *6* presents its version of the postponed encounter with reality that the filmic image proposes. Once in the mode of deceptive Eros, it is then the face of presence in the image that is brought into play, another time in the mode of Thanatos, it is then the face of absence in the image that takes precedence. When the illusory presence becomes real, death occurs, when the postulated absence becomes real, it is also death that occurs. Basically, it would seem that in these two films, death arises when the image leaves its fundamental ambivalence, when it stops dancing between the absence and presence of the object, between transparency and opacity, when it dies as an in-between.

In *Decalogue 6*, the physical encounter with the object of desire, Tomek's hands on Magda's thighs, lead to death, in *Decalogue 5*, it is the impossibility of this encounter, or more exactly perhaps the encounter with emptiness; a failure in front of the hole of the wicket (of the cinema) that had previously allowed the contact (post office counter) that leads to death. The real contact in the image, with the object or with its absence, basically the end of ambivalence, corresponds to the death of the image, and leads to the death of the subject, who seeks to commit suicide by cutting off his guilty hand, thus removing the desire for contact from his gaze. The failure of contact, the encounter with the emptiness of the image, leads to the death of the other, after having hidden his face from him, that is to say, after having erased the visual contact with the other subject. In both cases, it is the death of the virtual in-between that provokes violence. Tomek kills himself because he loses the image in the object, Jacek kills because he loses the object in the image. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 387)

If *Decalogue 6* explores to the threshold of death the question of scopic desire and the fear of carnal contact with the forbidden object, *Decalogue 5* is entirely devoted to the work of death as the reverse side of an annihilated Eros on the threshold of a movie theatre. Moreover, it is exclusively in *Decalogue 5* that cinema - as a meeting place with a presence in the image - is explicitly brought into play in the polyptych. We speak of cinema only to evoke the failure of the encounter that Jacek seeks from the beginning of his wandering. The triggering moment of the story in the two versions of the screenplay (*Decalogue 5* and *A Short Film About Killing*) is precisely that of the aborted encounter between Jacek and the feminine presence that he seeks and that cinema could have provided him with in a love film. We have seen above that, from the very beginning, it is the cinema ticket office that dissuades him from going to see a love film by telling him that he is a *"pain in the ass"* and then, innocently, points him to the taxi stand where he will find his victim. At this precise moment of Jacek's request and failure that tipped the young man towards his death wish - the other escaping in its illusory presence in the image - the hole in the already analysed wicket doubles as the hole in the iris. The illusory amorous contact is surrounded by death, Eros and Thanatos sharing the stage, superimposing their holes. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 388)

Jacek's crime seems to have the same meaning as Tomek's fake suicide, the former killing a man after failing to see the origin in the feminine image of the poster, the latter punishing himself for having brutally become aware of the nature of his desire for contact with this feminine (maternal) origin of the image. Jacek came to the cinema box office pushed by the face of the actress he saw on the poster of the film. Like Romek, he is looking for love, first of all the love lost from his little sister, who died because of him (crushed by one of his friends with whom he got drunk) and whose photographic image he keeps preciously, like a relic. And then that of Beata, the young girl he is in love with and for whom he will commit the taxi robbery, absurdly and gratuitously. It is indeed a quest for a feminine presence in the image that Jacek initially leads through the city of Warsaw, as shown by a number of stages where attempts to meet take place, each time ending in failure. First of all, it is the face of the actress in a film on the poster that attracts him to the cinema where he addresses the box office. He sticks to the window that protects the image and even tries to force it. But he does not succeed in doing so, and seeks in the cinema the possibility of getting closer to this presence. The hole in the cinema box office

is then doubled by the hole in the iris which underlines the first, isolating it from the rest of the visible and reinforcing the impression of perforation in the eyes of the spectator. But this feminine presence that is the box office girl also turns her away. He then wanders around Warsaw and stops in front of the portrait of a child that a street artist is making. He looks at the little girl and then at the cartoonist who looks at him in turn. A misunderstanding sets in. He goes on his way. Later, he enters a photographer's house with a photograph of his dead little sister. He wants an enlargement of it. The photographer warns him that the wrinkles on the surface of the image cannot be erased, so he asks if it is true that it is possible to see in a photograph whether the person depicted is alive or dead. He asks whether there is an organic, "umbilical" link, as Barthes would say, between the photograph and its model. (Wilson, 2016, p. 192)

As this link does not exist, he resumes his wandering and stops for a coffee in a downtown cafeteria, a stone's throw from the taxi stop where he will find his future victim. There, sitting behind the window, he looks out into the street, two little girls who stop without seeing him. He throws the coffee grounds on the window and attracts their attention. They smile, he smiles like a child, then they leave and squeeze him under the formica table of the café the cord with which he is going to commit his crime. The visual reunion with the image of his deceased little sister is only fleeting and the black marc spread over the thick glass of the window reminds him of the fundamental separation between the two spaces. The surface is impassable. And the coffee ground, which is also a shapeless material in which some people read the future, is perhaps an involuntary or indirect reminder of the fatal dimension of this radical separation as much as a visualization of the shapeless and dark thickness of the reverse side of his scopic impulse. By catapulting the coffee grounds onto these girls, Jacek gives form in the formlessness to his transmuted scopic impulse, immediately after the disappearance of the object - the departure of these girls who remind us of his sister - into a death impulse.

Thus, here again, the opening promised by the image turns out to be a decoy, the hoped-for emptiness is a full, a glass, or more generally a materialized transparency, which offers the object to the eye and at the same time subtracts it from the hand that the opening itself has solicited. The hoped-for full is a void. There is no object. The image is an empty object. As these stains of coffee grounds spread out on the window, revealing the presence of the impassable surface, expose it, the scopic impulse of the gaze comes up against an

impossibility... and the shapeless roundness of the coffee grounds on the glass indicating the tragic destiny of the desire to reunite the gaze in front of the image corresponds exactly to the circle of air that opens the next episode and will indicate to us on the contrary the opening of the support. Both of these circles indicate in their own way the two forms of imbalances that can affect the gaze of the subject who refuses to play with the in-between - the ambivalence - of the images. One, Jacek, visualizes with this dark spot that doubles the black iris, the opacity and closure of the support and the irremediable observation of the absence of the object in the representation. It is this impossible encounter in the image that leads him to murder. The other, Tomek, visualizes the transparency of the support and its virtual opening, and it is precisely the real encounter with the object, beyond the image, that leads him to suicide. Neither has been able to stand halfway between absence and presence, transparency and opacity, closure and closure. Refusing to dance in front of the image, refusing to change feet in order to remain in balance, each has followed the path of fusion with one aspect of the image; its nothingness for Jacek and its incestuous origin for Tomek. Impossible passage in one case, unbearable passage in the other, the stake of the passage through the image, the *slit image* as passage, is at the heart of what this concept brings to light of the relation of the eye to the image.

4.2. Slit As A Passage

The *slit image* is first of all an opening, an aperture which, by its fortuitous aspect (embrasures, shutters, makeshift devices, camera glances) and its shapeless (in *Pedestrian Subway*), circular (the hole in the ticket office), trembling (the carried camera) or blurred (the interposed objects) contour, presents itself as a tear and an apparition. Something appears in the tear of a masking, veiling support, which thus loses its continuity and through which the gaze passes *towards* this object. We are then in front of a form of passage, made possible by the idea that the *finestra* is open, that it is not just a theoretical templum but a real slit. In Alberti's words, no longer a window "from which" the story represented can be considered, but a window through which the represented object, which is no longer a narrative fiction, can be touched. The *slit image* thus carries the passage within it, affects the *finestra* on its edge, and makes the image no longer a framed, delimited area but a rift in invisibility. It constitutes the neighboring space not as a space conceived by the subject enunciating the image but as a space barely revealed by the

fortuitous tearing of the support. Thus accrediting the autonomous existence of the neighboring space, it makes a passage possible. The question for us is to know what kind of body the *slit image* offers this possibility of passage. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 400)

A Short Film About Love presents the same process of looking back as the long version of Episode 6 of the *Decalogue*. At the beginning of *Decalogue 6*, Tomek sees Magda through the window pane without the viewer perceiving the presence of the glass wall. The shot is subjective, no mediation is used to bring us to Magda, the viewer's and Tomek's points of view merge, so that the voyeur's and the spectator's activities also merge, they are marked by the absence of reflections on the glass; the separation, the flatness of the surface of the representation are "forgotten", by their glances. The hole that will appear will, among other things, retrospectively symbolize the transparency of the screen perceived in the first photograms.

In the following shot, two elements in the composition of the image allow the spectator to become aware of the presence of the glass, a way for the director to show that Magda's gaze, which corresponds to this point of view, is a conscious gaze of the mechanisms of representation, and in particular of the irrevocable separation between the two spaces; both between the counter and the post office room and between the three-dimensional space of the filmed image and that of the projection room. Thus, a reflection appears on the glass surface. The plane is semi-subjective (appearance from the viewer's back), which distances the viewer's gaze by imposing the presence of a relay, a mediator. His point of view is then shared, he has in his field of vision a person seeing. In a millimetre-long staging, Tomek has planted his gaze right into the hole in the box office, showing that he is trying to slice through the surface of the performance to reach the other side by standing completely in his gaze. The wicket device thus allows us to distinguish two qualities of gaze that will be reversed in the rest of the story. (Badowska, 2016, p. 149) A gaze conscious of its limits and therefore of the surface on which the reflections appear, and an absolute gaze, absorbed in what it "touches". Tomek's hand is facing an orifice just like his two eyes. The rest of the body remains separated.

Magda will become dependent on Tomek's gaze in the rest of the film. She will end up putting herself in the observer's position, forgetting his gaze, losing herself as a subject absorbed in his scopic activity. Tomek, for his part, will conclude the film by telling her

that he no longer observes her. The exchange of roles is attached to the actual meeting between the two characters. After Magda has put her hand through the hole and handed Tomek a form, she takes him out of his observation post. His hand will appear in the spectator's space and invite him to cross the wall of the transparent screen that separated them physically and visually united them at the same time.

Just before this meeting, when Magda enters the post office to present two postal order notices that she found in her box, she is filmed in a semi-subjective shot, which indicates a distance between the viewer's gaze and Tomek's. The awareness is done and Tomek's gaze becomes a conscious relay for the viewer's gaze. We can add to this that the round opening recalls the wall's presence. The surface of the representation is indeed present in the gaze of the character who begins to emerge from his silent fascination. The spectator is then brought closer to Magda's point of view, since he sees Tomek through her point of view in a subjective plane that puts him concretely in his place in the administrative exchange that follows.

The reflections are always present, Magda's face appears, ghostly, floating above Tomek's face, who is staring at her while she is standing off-camera. The reversal of roles seems to be in progress and the spectator remains on the side of the one who loads his gaze with a request, a hope. Here the demand is all the stronger because the postman has made sure that the person he wants comes to ask him for something, that she waits in vain for some money from him. He arranges to be looked at to see her better. Following this intrusion into his space, an intrusion that could be likened to a splash, a bursting of the real object in the space of the spectator, Tomek will go to join Magda in the street to confess to her that these warrants are fake, that he is the author and that he did everything he could to get her to come to the post office. "To see her." He then tells her that he watches her regularly from his bedroom window. She physically pushes him around, slaps him, pushes him away and tells him to get out of there. They will meet again later to have a drink together, then at Magda's house in the famous crucial scene that is particularly interesting for our approach, which we will have the opportunity to see again later on. But first, let's see how the box office works in turning the gaze around and moving from one space to another, in the rest of the film.

After the disappearance of Tomek, who was hospitalized after slitting his veins, the long

version of the story, *A Short Film About Love,* reveals a plan that is not found in Episode 6; Magda returns to the post office to see him again and apologize, and this is what she finds. The closed window shows the obsolescence of the device and the end of Tomek's observations to bring Magda in. The wicket as a visual device in the service of Tomek's desire is obsolete, the game is over. At this point, the two versions differ and have different ends, but both put Magda in Tomek's place.

At the end of *Decalogue 6,* in an epilogue where the turning of the gaze is completely accomplished, Magda returns and finds Tomek at his post one last time, he is cured, at all levels, she approaches him. Tomek is then seen in a semi-subjective shot, the reflections are barely perceptible, the frame follows Magda who advances towards the window, a subjective counter-field adopting Tomek's point of view shows us that he is looking at her from the front, she brings his gaze close to the hole in the glass wall, and slides it into the initial slit, a counter-field then shows Tomek behind his window. Magda sees him through the hole, "directly perceived", the wall has disappeared from his field of vision. Magda's gaze has thus taken the path that Tomek's gaze took at the beginning of the film, it is now she who uses the passage to go and see her discreet spectator; the surface of the representation that holds the spectator in a space separate from that of the representation is "forgotten", Magda seeks to see the one who was observing her as she had been seen. She adopted this direct, « haptic visuality » (Marks, 2000, p. xi) of the gaze. Tomek then proudly tells her that he no longer observes her.

Decalogue 6 then ends with a look at the camera in front of which the spectator has taken Tomek's place. This glance at Magda's camera, which borrows the circle of air that underlines its passage on the spectator's side, the one who is looking for a hole in the image, completes the play of the *slit image in* this episode. By taking Tomek's place as a looking subject, Magda puts Tomek in his place as a looked at object, and by this complete reversal of point of view, the spectator also finds himself in the place of what she is looking at.

There is the window of the counter, the screen, the filmic image, and the mystery of the character's presence, of his direct contact, at the heart of this image. We have seen above the question of the gaze of the camera in what it opens and uses a passage in the surface of the image, abolishing the absorption of the characters in their actions and melting,

paradoxically, the credibility of the cinematographic (and pictorial) artifice. If the camera's gaze hits its target, it is because the image is open and allows a passage, even if it is that of a gaze. It is the metacinematographic dimension of the *slit image* that is emphasized here.

Through this reflexive mechanism, Tomek and the spectator are thus associated in their function as discreet observers who become visible, unobtrusive. Still, they are not reduced to each other, whereas Tomek is absolved by the woman's request to be watched, The viewer's gaze is then washed of the stain of his perversity by the fact that he no longer violates any prohibitions, that he no longer lifts the veil, the spectator's gaze, in this last shot, is left to itself on the threshold of an interrogation that it will moreover be able to share with the filmmaker himself. Indeed, in this last shot, Magda looks at Tomek in the "counter-field" of the fiction, she looks at the filmmaker - the technician representing Kieślowski - in the technical "counter-field" and, of course, at the spectator in the "counter-field" of the screening venue.

The film followed the turning of his gaze, his passage from the place of the object being watched to that of the subject watching; the *image-slit* is an opening between two neighbouring spaces, it opens on both sides and leaves a passage, this is also what the gaze of the camera reminds us of, which, far from denouncing the cinematographic device as an artificial installation, on the contrary establishes an authentic link between the two spaces. The circle of air that opened the film as a promise of access to the woman's body for Tomek's gaze, closes it as a place for a concrete exchange between the two spaces, since it has the same value on the other side. Each of the two characters took the place of the other to experiment this modality of the gaze that could be described as idolatrous, as a search for a real contact with the object, a real presence in appearance, a fusion with the object through the gaze.

Each has come concretely into the space of the other, Tomek comes to Magda's house in a sequence where she asks him to caress her, which will have tragic consequences for the young man. Magda, after the drama, will come to Tomek's room, where his landlady will reveal the close-up vision device he used to observe her. The exchange of roles will find its fulfilment in the shots where Magda will watch, with the help of theatre binoculars, for Tomek's return, having become dependent and surely curious to discover what the

voyeur's gaze conceals.

The allegorical richness of the film lies in the way Kieślowski does not isolate the voyeur's gaze from other possible gazes. *Decalogue 6* is not a film about voyeurism, but about seeing for seeing's sake, with all the nuances that this use of the eye can conceal. Tomek started to look at Magda because the friend he is in charge of the room, the son of her landlady, had told her that Magda was a pretty and light woman. He initially looked at her like a voyeur watching a woman making love, but his perverse game has evolved, he gives up in one sequence of the film to observe her in an erotic moment and even goes so far as to prevent her from making love with one of her lovers. He will also explain that he has stopped masturbating while observing her. His direct sexual impulse has turned into a kind of love fetish; his gaze is labile. He seeks the encounter in the slit represented by the hole in the wall. He is exclusive and manipulative, but caressing and tender, sometimes empathetic. More than an observation of the psychological springs of voyeurism, the film invites us to reflect on the mechanism of the gaze.

Let us add that the different ending of *A Short Film About Love* where the look at the camera through the hole in the box office does not exist reinforces this interpretation by adopting more Magda's point of view. In contrast, this reversal is lived since Tomek's in the episode. In this respect, the feature film makes a clearer digetic reversal since what appears at the beginning as Tomek's story becomes Magda's story and her lack at the end. In a final sequence, Magda enters Tomek's room, where it all began in the first sequence, and she grabs her telescope to look towards her own apartment. And in a fantasy sequence, she sees herself entering her own apartment, as Tomek saw her at the beginning of the film (taken from the same shot) and sees herself crying on the kitchen table, giving herself up her privacy Tomek saw her.The exchange no longer consists only in seeing as Tomek sees but in seeing herself with Tomek's eyes, expressing here the kind of narcissistic attachment she can have with the gaze of her "voyeur". In a final shot, to confirm this interpretation, Tomek appears in her home, as if in a dream, and comes to comfort her. He has then completely passed into her gaze, he has walked in the spectrum of her field of vision to her and her pain. He has completed this passage from her body into her gaze and it is Magda herself who formulates it.

Decalogue 6, like *A Short Film About Love*, shows a passage through the air pocket of

the ticket office, a passage through Tomek's eyes and then through Magda's hand, her body, which comes to look for him, to hit him, and finally to caress him. The stakes of the film are thus situated around the device of the window and its hole in the transparency of its surface, the stakes are the passage of the body as a gaze and jointly of the gaze as a body.

In the next sequence of *Decalogue 6*, the opening credits sequence after the prologue to the box office, a glass pane shatters, out of focus, and falls in a myriad of glass flakes that crash into a floor near which the camera is standing, plunging. We are in a gymnasium, as shown by stairs at the top of the frame, on a basketball court as we will discover later, a white line comes to draw a right angle like the corner of a frame. The only object filmed here is the boundary of a playground. It is, moreover, on this real limit that the shards of glass that are the metonymy of an intrusion of the limit, of the glass of a window as the limit of a space, come to fall on this real limit. Screen broken, the wall of invisible glass has shattered, we cannot avoid thinking then, in the perspective that is ours here, of the window of the counter of the previous shot, of the surface of the image; communication between spaces can take place, Tomek will accomplish physically what the hole allowed his gaze in the opening shot of the film to pass to the other side.

The boundary that is drawn on the ground and that separates an interior from an exterior will be crossed. Indeed, a few seconds later, Tomek appears, falling from the off-screen at the top of the frame, having jumped from a skylight in the semi-darkness of the gym. He has broken into the space where he landed, his feet just on the edge of the white line that defines the inside and outside of the sports field. Very quickly, his foot crossed the line, he then moved inside the white frame, took a few steps, turned around and, leaving the sports field, disappeared into the doorway of an open door at the back of the room. He thus enters three times inside a frame; the one that delimits the field, the one that delimits the field and the one that opens in the depths towards a back world unknown to the spectator. These threshold crossings can metaphorically mean that he has taken action in his scopic quest (the break-in takes the place of an act because of its irreversible nature), that he has physically entered the image, and has taken a step, fulfilling it his desire. In a single shot, the spectator thus witnesses three passages from one space to another, three crossings of the threshold of a frame and thus the entrance - one could say the ascent - of the body of the postman voyeur - and beyond the looking subject - into his own gaze.

First of all, the entry into Tomek's field from the off-field is accompanied by falling pieces of glass indicating that a wall has been broken. In a logical sequence, it is probably the window of the ticket office that we have just seen shattered. That which separated him from the object of his gaze, that which shielded his desire for contact with that object, was abolished. He abolishes the transparent surface that only let the gaze pass through and is right in the space where his gaze was plunged. It is precisely after breaking the glass wall that Tomek enters the field, the entry of his body into the image of the film thus corresponds to the crossing of this now abolished separation.

At the end of this allegorical shot, Tomek disappears, crossing the threshold of a door that appears as a luminescent slit opening a passage to the off-screen on the dark background of the room. He enters with his whole body into a new space pushed by the appetite of his eye, as we will discover later, since he comes here to steal a telescope that will allow him to better observe Magda. This new crossing of the threshold brings him entirely into the neighbouring space where his gaze is directed; he first passes his head to see before advancing into the field of his gaze.

What does Tomek come to do in this place that seems far from the universe where the spectator met him in the previous sequence? The rest of the sequence will tell us that he has come to steal a telescope from a storeroom in the college where the gymnasium is located, he has come to steal a small cylindrical tube equipped with magnifying lenses that holds both the viewfinder for the camera and the telescope. A materialization of the gaze and a phallic symbol. As soon as Tomek disappears on the other side, through the doorway, a sharp cut leads us to the next shot which shows Magda at home, seen from the outside by Tomek himself, she appears in the rectangle of light drawn by the window of her kitchen; the right third of the picture being blocked by the wall of the building. What directly follows Tomek's entry into this unknown room is precisely the field of his gaze on Magda. The contiguity of these two planes - Tomek disappearing in the rectangle of the door leading to the other side and Magda appearing in the rectangle of the window from his point of view - creates a visual echo (continuity effect) that suggests that Tomek has passed to the side of what the viewer sees next. He has entered entirely into what he is looking at; he is standing in the field of his own gaze.

The sequence of the search and theft of the object that follows Tomek's disappearance

through the doorway is then interspersed with plans showing Magda at home, still seen from the outside through the narrow, vertical 'slits' in the windows of her apartment in the façade of her building. She is looked at from Tomek's house, according to the angle of view that will be that of the observation sessions that will follow. Still, if we follow the logic of the alternating montage, at the moment she is at home, Tomek is stealing the close-up material, the logic of the proximity of times and the distance of spaces, peculiar to the alternating montage, showing simultaneous actions in two different places, leads us to think that Tomek is not at home. It is therefore the spectator who looks at Magda. At the beginning of the sequence; through the work of the montage, the spectator is left alone in front of Magda's apparitions, he is once again in a hidden activity of observation. It is only at the end of this alternating montage that the two spaces meet, Tomek manipulates his telescope and Magda continues to walk around her apartment in light clothing.

After the evocation of the passage of Tomek's body through the opening of the door, it may be interesting to return to a type of *slit image* already evoked and present on numerous occasions in *The Decalogue* and which takes on particular significance if we consider it in relation to the theme of passage; doorways. Their abundance is first of all linked to the fact that a large number of framing works were carried out in fairly cramped apartments and that framing through a doorway is an imperative, both semantically and technically. It is necessary, on the one hand, to signify the narrowness and intimacy of the premises, the influence of the walls on the bodies of the characters, and at the same time, to adapt to the fact that no recoil - no depth - is technically possible without filming the characters in another room, through the doorways. (Stadler, 2016, p. 85)

As we have seen above, it is also a question of staging the appearance of the body in a frame, the projection of the visible on the surface of the transparent expanse defined by the frame (which acts as a canvas or screen) and of visualising the places where the speech in the film takes place. Thresholds are places where things are said, because speaking is a form of appearance in relation to the other, an appearance that the door frame arranges and underlines. Thus, doorways are first of all slits that intensify the appearance on the one hand and on the other hand, redouble and thus underline the intrusive effect of the gaze in the other space. Respecting their Janusian nature in this way, they are at the same time an entrance for the gaze and an *exit* for the bodies given to be seen. They are an

indication of the place where appearances and gazes meet on the surface of the image. However, the embrasure is not only a metadiscursive figure, it is not only a *image-slit,* but it is and presents an important feature of the *image-slit as a* heuristic concept. The embrasure is above all a place of passage between two spaces that it connects and separates at the same time. In this, beyond its formal reflexive role, the embrasure is above all a place of passage between two spaces that it connects and separates at the same time. Any image constructed from the *finestra* is potentially a door that opens to the gaze conceived as a body capable of crossing its threshold:

> In early modern painting, the window opens the interior to the exterior, permitting light to come in and offering a view towards the outside. That is how we see windows often represented. Much less often, we encounter examples of watching through a window towards the inside while standing outside. Doors mostly do not have that visual function. You can pass a door either towards the inside or the outside. Still, doors can also function as a kind of window, in the Albertian sense, when they offer us a view of the space behind the door. Not only can they offer a view from inside to outside or from outside to inside, but, while we remain inside, they can also show us another space, beyond the door. The open door thus connects two adjacent spaces. (Blom, 2010, p. 92)

It thus presents itself as the expression of a desire to enter the image. It is at the same time an ancient metadiscursive figure, and the expression of this invitation to enter into it, launched by the *fessura* that haunts the *finestra* and works it to the edge. But to enter is to make the doorway disappear behind you, to cross the threshold is to abolish the doorway:

> Conceived of as a visual text, the painting thematizes the off-text through the representation of thresholds: frames, parapets, windows, doors, niches, and even nondescript apertures generate embrasures and recesses embedding objects or pushing them to the fore. Centered or off-center, through alignment, imbrication, or juxtaposition, in harmony or discord, these metaphoric thresholds are the vehicles of a powerful and unsettling hybridization of pictorial genres. Through these fictional openings, the accessory morphs into the primary, the object usurps the preeminence of the human figure, the religious yields to the secular, and the structured space of landscape or architecture turns into the focus of attention and linchpin of an encrypted discourse on art. The marginal coalesces within the high and noble, unsettles the traditional hierarchy of the genres, and opens up unexpected insights into the then-experienced real. The whole panoply of thresholds listed and analyzed by Stoichita act as framing devices. (Pericolo, 2015, p. 23)

To be more precise, let us say that the doorway, as a threshold, carries within it the

function of passage which is the second attribute of the *slit image* concept. The passage originates from the notion of *finestra,* itself heir to Brunelleschi's experience, which serves as the original myth of construction in perspective. In his essay *The Origin of Perspective*, Hubert Damisch writes about Brunelleschi's experience that the famous view of the Baptistery, which is generally considered to have been made as if through a window, might as well have been a view through a door.

> If, to use Alberti's metaphor, a painting can be construed to resemble a window piercing a wall through which the spectator can look into an interior, it was not unreasonable for Filarete, pushing this figure to the point of redundancy, to specify for the plane of projection a square format that would subsequently assume the status of a principle, if not an archetype. And yet it must be admitted that, in the context of the myth of the origin, the prototype could have been other than square, could have correlated more with a door than a window. Whereas the image of the «window » implies a solution of continuity between the ground supporting the observer and that upon which the representation sits, this does not hold for a *door*, even when its threshold is preceded by a few steps or opens onto a sunken interior, as is the case in Florence today for, respectively, the cathedral and the baptistry. (Damisch, 1994, p. 102)

Hubert Damisch shows that Brunelleschi was able to stand, not in the frame of the (closed) door of the cathedral facing the Baptistery, but inside the building itself, slightly set back, thus using the uprights and the threshold of the door as the base of its square, and tracing in the air the top line of the *Quadro* « stamping itself against the sky, well below the lintel. » (Damisch, 1994, p. 102)

The door, behind whose frame Brunelleschi would have stood to look at the Baptistery with the aid of his device, in fact offers the possibility of framing the field of vision from the floor, on which, in many paintings, paving stones are used to create depth and thus to dig out the three-dimensional space in the painting.

Through the pavement, by looking at the threshold, the image is hollowed out and the surface opens up. Far from being a window, the frame here looks like a door. The *finestra* would thus correspond more to the conditions of the canvas itself, the *Quadro*, the quadrilateral that Alberti inscribes on the surface to be painted and which will be for him "like an open window from which the story represented can be seen" and to the painting on a wall (fresco or painting) rather than to the only device that allowed the image to be captured. We could then consider that it is a question of putting behind a window, (or in a window) since the frame is still hung to what it shows and is the support, the limit and

the geometric base, which has been seen through a door, (since it would seem that one paints from the ground and not from the sky, while standing in another space), which could partly explain the abundance of paving in the perspective paintings, The latter being more visible in a view through a door (or at ground level) than in a view through a window which is more eye-catching at human height, as well as the abundance of the motif of the open door in the classical paintings, a door which appears, depending on the angle, as a long, narrow slit in a wall, opening onto an adjoining space.

Indeed, the fact that this experiment was probably carried out through a door frame could indicate a desire to build a new house in the subject of the image. the perspective image from a device that would make possible, at least in the idea, a passage through, on the other side, a virtual entry into the represented space. But impossible for the body, this virtual passage would only materialize at the level of the eye. In Brunelleschi's device, appears in a small hole in the heart of the painted image, reflected by the mirror. The eye is flush with the point of flight which, in this monocular perspective, corresponds to the point of view, in a kind of spatial integration of the spectator, reduced to his point of view, in the represented space. The big difference between the window and the door is that the window is made to let the gaze pass, whereas the door is made to let bodies pass. The window is a door for the gaze. The gaze is the body that can cross the threshold of the window. "There are two types of opening, one for light and ventilation, and the other to allow man or object to enter or leave the building. Windows serve for light; for objects there are doors, stairs, and spaces between the columns." (Friedberg, 2006, p. 30)

And it is precisely in this function, precisely as an invitation to enter the canvas, to unite, without any solution of continuity, the space of the representation and the space of the spectator, that the motif of the door, in painting, perhaps expresses an expectation that the cinema will satisfy, when the doors of the Lumière factory open and the bodies of the workers leave. We can also notice that the device set up by Louis Lumière during this first experience of animated photography, testifies to this complementarity of the door and the window, in the joint act of looking and representing which is the characteristic of resembling painting, as heir of the Albertian perspective, he opens the window of an apartment on the *historia* and frames this doorway which for centuries exposes and holds the bodies of the represented characters. In a certain way, in doing so, he turns the device upside down, places himself in the frame (of the window) and films the entry of different

characters into a frame as his own entry into the space to be represented. The light operators will not belong in "stepping" over the window to come into the middle of the filmable space to film it, quickly enough experimenting with the conditions of the filmmaker's presence in the filmed space. Not yet a bodiless gaze, the filmmaker is often seen, and he is watched by the "little agile characters" that populate the views. One ostensibly avoids him, one looks at him, one stops in front of him, he is there, with his body visible. His gaze is still attached to his body, he has not yet joined the fiction of his invisible presence in the filmic space.

Tomek's body, by disappearing through the doorway just before the credits show Magda returning home, filmed in a framing of the window opposite could thus reach the space of the representation, the one where his gaze is projected when he observes Magda. The slit here allows the viewer's body to go where his gaze escapes, that is to say into the neighbouring space, the gaze becoming an extension of the body capable of slipping through the opening of the slit. The looking subject is thus at the origin and at the end of his gaze, he scratches, caresses, pinches the image without ever touching it other than without contact. While the *finestra* keeps the spectator's body at a certain distance by assigning it a precise place, thus confirming its existence as a visible and incarnated body, the *slit image* ignores it as a visible body and sees it only as a visual consciousness, a disembodied eye. Whether in the case of looking at the camera, at blinds or shutters, at the camera carried or at doorways, the *image-slit* assumes an eye stuck to the opening, or more precisely an absence of recoil.

The *finestra* is presented as a device in which the spectator's body is taken into account and kept at a certain distance, in a place assigned to him by an image made for his eye that occupies the point of the visual pyramid whose frame is an interruption, an image constructed from the uprights of the frame and thus opening onto a space attached to this frame. Far from being an opening to an autonomous space, the *finestra* is in fact a fence. The perspective construction as described by Alberti does not in any way proceed from a cut, but from the determination of the field that will be said to be that of the painting as it adjusts to the perspective device. A field from the outset strictly defined in its (rectangular) shape as well as in its limits: its opening merging in fact with its very delimitation. This model is fully reflected in the device of the veil held by a frame and divided into square sections, which Alberti called the "intersectoral veil" and which had

to be placed between the painter's eye and the bodies and objects to be represented so that the painter only had to copy, section by section, what appeared on the surface of the veil (a sort of window). Alberti's window is above all a comparison, the text says "*like an* open window", it is a technical operating procedure more than an opening to the gaze, which would be more evoked by the notion of the *slit image*, which carries within itself this idea of a fortuitous opening for the gaze and this autonomy with regard to the represented space. (Beuvelet, 2012, pp. 417-418)

The *slit image* then no longer appears as a window intentionally opened in an inaugural gesture, but presents the edge of the image as a simple, fortuitous opening, in front of which the spectator's body would be without a place assigned since it is totally ignored and therefore solicited in its desire to come closer and enter. Indeed, by pretending not to see it, the slit invites the spectator's body to come closer in complete safety to stick his eye to the opening and to find himself entirely in his gaze again, on the other side, conquering (or waiting for) the off-screen. The gaze enters the slit-like a body through a door. But this gaze is an unassailable, untouchable, guiltless body. Eternally whole since it is without flesh. The gaze is a body of completeness. Devices that present the image as a slit abolish or blur the distance between the eye and the projection surface, photography and cinema require the imaging subject to stick his eye through a viewfinder.

The use of a viewfinder is a common practice in photography and cinema. As for the spectators, if they look for the place assigned to them by the painting, they choose their place in the cinema more randomly. The film is not meant to be seen from a specific location because, in its condition as a reproducible work, it never has the same dimensions and does not have a specific location. Photographs and films are slits in real space, they exist not as singular objects, but as a field of vision. Both photography and film expect above all an eye that has become whole and cut off from the physical body, which is useless, and not an embodied spectator who can move in front of the painting. They are the privileged mediums of the *slit image*. The eye and the slit merge, so that the *slit image*, as a visual device, corresponds to the eye of a witness, but of a discreet witness, invisible to all, including himself. This *slit image* would thus allow the fusion of the looking subject with the looked-for space by absorption of his body after its reduction to a pure gaze, as in Brunelleschi's experience, who, according to Damisch, sheltered his body in the entrance of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore to slide his eye into the hole of his

device and look at the Baptistery through the doorway. Thus, in front of the image conceived as a slit, the spectator is an invisible seer, dispensed from assuming his gaze, he exists only in the body of this gaze, as if there were no solution of continuity between the image and his body, which allows us to speak of fusion. In the *finestra*, the spectator is taken into account, the image being constructed in such a way as to give it a place, the frame then acts like a stage, it indicates the place of the performance. It addresses the spectators' gaze, which then exists as the subjects of a work of interpretation. While the *fissure* absorbs the spectator, the *finestra* and its structuring frame fixes him in his position as subject.

The gaze, the gazing body, stopped in its scopic activity, in this immobile and invisible gesture that is the act of looking, is very present in *Decalogue*. The characters look at each other, observe each other through the slits, windows, jealousies, embrasures or bay windows that chance places in front of them. These discreet witnesses, like anonymous film-makers, source of the internal ocularization in *Decalogue*, are thus the characters themselves, who offer the spectator a subjective view (marked by affects such as jealousy) on the story. Posted as sentinels, they guard the place by opening fields that they charge with their desires, fears, and hopes. But all their gazes are anchored in the fictional space-time of the film, they have names, professions, they are characters whose gaze is exposed, they weave in the polyptych a network of fields of vision that is the consequence of their existence, but not their raison d'être. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 420)

Now, in eight of the ten episodes of the *Decalogue*, a person (played by the actor Artur Barciś) appears recurrently, without ever saying anything, whose only function is to watch, to stare at the characters or the spectator. He is not strictly speaking a character, since he has no known identity, he is a recurring extra if we consider the term to designate both the secondary actor and his minor role in the film. However, he is often present at an important time or place in the lives of the people he meets, and if he never intervenes, he can still have an impact on events. That is the case in *Decalogue 4*, where he gets out of a canoe after crossing a river, starts walking with it on his head, and stares at Anka just as she is about to transgress her father's prohibition concerning her mother's letter that she should not yet open. The intense exchange of glances between them seems, at first, to make her give up. Appearing in situations that may be reminiscent of those in which Hitchcock appeared in his films, he is often integrated into the situation as a simple

passer-by *(Decalogue 6 and 9*), an intern or a nurse in a hospital (*Decalogue 2*), A road worker (Decalogue *5*) and in the same episode a painter in the prison where Jacek is incarcerated (*Decalogue 6)*, a tram driver (Decalogue *3), a* philosophy student *(Decalogue 8),* or even under the guise of this intriguing character who carries a canoe on his head (*Decalogue 4*). An involuntary witness to the action, this character changes his social function, dress, and attitude. It is only the body and face of the actor Artur Barciś that serve as a reference, that serve to identify him. This hiatus between the role and the body creates a gap in the fictional universe of the small Warsaw city where the characters are supposed to live. It does not completely denounce its facticity but opens a passage out of diégesis between the episodes, it manifests a heterotopia that splits the coherence of this fictional universe and establishes another plane at the very heart of this stale universe. If his role is integrated into the situation, although sometimes mysterious (*Decalogue 4*, *Decalogue 6*), the fact that he is easily recognizable and that it is precisely the naked body under the garment that identifies it so obviously, leads us to wonder about this body. What does it embody?

As we have already seen, it happens that other characters are found from one episode to another, as simple silhouettes. Still, in each of their various appearances, it is the character who reappears and not only the actor's body, he is in a situation and then wears clothes and accessories that easily identify him and thus serves as a thread, a link, between the different episodes. A coherent continuity is thus established from one episode to the next, drawing the landscapes of a cinematic human comedy whose different compartments communicate. However, this person who appears in the middle of the characters seems, on the contrary, by the implausibility of his case, he is outside this universe where she nevertheless occupies concrete functions. The hiatus between his recognizable body (Artur Barciś with its thin and sharp face) and his different social functions opens up to questioning his actual role.

In the polyptych, the person-eye embodies this ability to perceive the ethical stakes of situations and, as we have seen, to identify, through his role as an admonitor, the moment when an idolatrous attachment will make (or break) its work of merging the subject with the lost object. He is thus the embodiment of ethical choice, as an ability to mourn continuity, as an invitation to discretion (in all senses of the term), as a gaze from the other, a gaze that comes from the other and in particular from the other side, that is, from

the spectator's side. Here lies its first dimension; the "angel," the "mute observer," is our emissary in the diegetic space of the *Decalogue.* He is more exactly our incarnated gaze, he does nothing else but carry this gaze that he showed us at the very beginning in the very first square of the polyptych. At the same time, he is the non-deceived consciousness that wanders the world and points the index finger of his gaze at the idolatries of the men he meets, he is also the fruit of our own idolatry, the result of our desire to penetrate the body of the image, to see in it a trade with the origin. He is a person-eye, that is to say the visible body of our gaze as film viewers integrated into the diegetic space of the film. Acting in this way like the trompe-l'oeil often present at the beginning of episodes, he uses our scopic impulse to teach him to distrust himself, to detach himself from his attachment to origin.

Like an eye hidden in the anonymity of the subordinate functions that he discreetly occupies, he is there only to see, to be the incarnation of an invisible gaze of pure spectator of the action, this evanescent gaze that takes flesh, here in the universal eye of the different witnesses that he embodies and that chance disposes in the surroundings of the characters, at the crucial moments of their choice. He questions the moment. We see it at the moment of the choices or disillusions that present themselves to the characters, and especially at the beginning of the series, in the very first shots of *Decalogue 1*. It is precisely he who opens the series, he is the first human being appearing in this fictional universe and his gaze at the initial camera, while the spectator does not yet know that he will see him again and again and under different social identities, throughout the films of the series, marks the scene with an ethical depth that will be established in retrospect. In the first episode, he directly questions the film viewer's idolatry, his attachment to the image and his ability to resurrection. Pawel's aunt is watching her nephew live on the television screen even though she has just learned of his death.

Very present in the first film, idolatry is brought into play by the initial camera gaze. It is indeed the relationship of the spectator to the image of the film that is the subject of the polyptych. In other cases, it underlines the moment of choice or disillusionment. When Tomek runs in the courtyard of the city dragging a cart loaded with milk bottles, he seems to warn him with his eyes of the risks he is taking in this illusion he is feeding on, in this lactation of Magda's image. In *Decalogue 9*, he meets Romek twice, when the latter learns of his impotence and has just thrown his car onto the side of the road, then at the end,

when he rushes headlong on his bicycle towards an unfinished bridge. The character-eye accompanies this idolatrous gesture of choosing suicide, total suppression of oneself so as not to have to endure the suppression of the part, accepting one's own castration which here takes shape in a manly failure. Idolatry, it will have been understood, by its fusional character with the maternal in the quest for origin, is presented as a refusal of incompleteness and thus as a rivalry with the paternal omnipotence, and particularly that of God.

He is also present with Dorota, in the second episode, when in the hospital, she looks at her dying husband and wonders whether or not she will be able to keep the child she is carrying within her that is the fruit of her adulterous relationship. She also does not want to accept the loss, her share of suffering. Either her husband dies and the child will live, or her husband lives and she has an abortion. Two mutually exclusive totalities seem to offer themselves to her choice, and the in-between of suffering and possible loss of her husband's love seems impossible to her.

In Episode 3, it is still at the moment of a suicidal impulse in Ewa's mind that the staring character, at the controls of a tramway, appears in front of the vehicle where the former lovers are standing. The car will deviate at the last moment, and Janusz, at the wheel, will ask Ewa if that is alright, if her taste for death is satisfied. Ewa is an idolater, she cannot give up on her former lover, whom she has carefully crafted into a fiction as her last hope before a planned suicide.

In the fourth episode, Ania holds a fetish object that appears to be original in her hands, in the form of a letter from her mother supposedly indicating the name of her real father, at the moment when she is going to repair this lack, to find her complete identity, necessarily illusory, the "angel" looks at her and she renounces it. In the end, with the agreement of the one who raised her as a real father, she will burn the letter and thus renounce her idolatry of the origin and of identity.

In the fifth episode, Jacek is in the taxi, behind his future victim, when the character is looking at him. He then appears in the position of a surveyor, a road worker, holding instruments in his hands. He looks in the direction of the young idolater who refuses to let his little sister be present. Confronted with the nothingness of the image, as we have seen, he will literally kill the imageless presence of the driver after taking care to hide his

face under a blanket where thick, dark blood will be spattering.

In *Decalogue 7*, the character-eye is barely present, is seen from afar on the platform of the station at the precise moment when Majka has to get on the train that will separate her permanently from Ania, her daughter but also her sister according to the family lie. She then renounces this idolatry which consists in claiming to be able to possess a being; she renounces this phallic restoration which would have represented her ideal reunion with this object that her own mother had taken from her. In the eighth episode, a student of ethics, he stares at the spectator during Elzbieta's testimony, as if to indicate to him that ethics should not be idolized either.

This character could be the projection of any spectator, as an anonymous passer-by, in the film, he could also be an incarnation of that *body-look* that the image draws into the neighbouring space. A spectator absorbed by the film, but conscious of his desire to be absorbed, an enlightened spectator in short, who would play with the image, like a child with a spool of thread, and would be aware of what is at stake in his amusement. Once again, Krzysztof Kieślowski cannot be counted on to provide an official and definitive meaning to the presence of this enigmatic figure. With the art of doubt and the art of proposing forms without encircling them with a theoretical author's gloss, Kieślowski lets his theory follow its path in the images, alone. He simply says about the presence of this character-eye:

> There's this guy who wanders around in all the films. I don't know who he is; just a guy who comes and watches. He watches us, our lives. He's not very pleased with us. He comes, watches and walks on. He doesn't appear in number 7, because I didn't film him right and had to cut him out. And he doesn't appear in film 10 because, since there are jokes about trading a kidney, I thought that maybe it's not worth showing a guy like that. But I was probably wrong. No doubt I should have shown him in that one, too. (Stok, 1993, p. 158)

The first episode, like a kind of incipit, brings us into the spatio-temporal framework of the series. It also introduces us to the rhythm of the narration and establishes a type of relationship with us; it will be a matter of taking the time to look carefully at the signs, and the very first is the initial camera gaze of this character-eye.

It is thus important to note that the person-eye in its very first occurrence is associated with the coexistence of ice-cold water (immobility) and fluid water (mobility). We have

seen above that it is possible to see in the opposition between these two states of water an equivalence with the opposition that resides between the two states of the photographic image, frozen, as is often said of its paper, in photography, and fluid in cinema. Between these two media of a common nature lies the question of the appearance of bodies and their possible exit from the field by crossing the threshold represented by the frame. Now, in the narrative, the very first image of the *Decalogue* presents us with this hiatus between icy water and fluid water, like the first crack, the first perceived flaw, and it is precisely this ice that will be the site of a terrible drama in the rest of the film. It will split under the weight of Pawel and his friend, during a slide on ice skates. Their bodies, which have disappeared into the flowing water after finding an unfortunate passage through the ice surface, will be pulled up one by one under the spotlight of the firemen, who will give the scene the appearance of a film set. But this image of the bodies exiting through the crack of the broken surface will be the complete inversion of a birth and, perhaps, the negative mise en abyme of the desire to enter the living water of the filmic present that inhabits the viewer's gaze. The appearance on this well-lit stage is that of the dead in the image, of the corpse as image. If we continue the comparison in the manner of a dream interpretation, we can say that death is born of the image. It is here its face of absence that is at stake. Death, as the opposite of birth, could then replace, through displacement, another form of the opposite of birth; the return to the origin, the fusion with the mother who haunts the idolatrous eye.

The first glance of the character-looker also accomplishes a passage, he searches around him, in the void and turns towards the spectator, in a sustained look at the camera that seems to ask a question to the one who is looking at him. In this way, he establishes a link with the viewer, uncovers the cinematographic device from the very beginning and turns his gaze, this *body-gaze* that he embodies, back to its source. The spectator is thus invited by this first glance through the slit that the screen constitutes in the wall, to consider his own gaze as one of the "characters" of the film. We can thus consider that this character-eye is the incarnation of the spectator, the fruit of his absorption in front of the film, he is also the reflective figure, the admonitor. Having become a body in his gaze, he is at the heart of the filmed space which unfolds in all directions around him, and he sometimes tries to forget himself, we see this in his absorbed gaze, he also sometimes takes himself as the object of his own gaze, in a typical moment of awakening, as the camera gazes of

episode 1 and episode 8 lead us to think. This astonishing character invites us to consider the modalities of the passage of the spectator's *body-eye* into the neighbouring space, which is able to envelop the space of the projection room and to retract, through the play of cutting and particularly of the figure of the field-counter-field, the spectator's body which is thus "reduced" to an invisible eye. However, this desire to enter the represented space is not peculiar to cinema, it is linked to the use of the *finestra,* insofar as it is also a *slit image* in the making, the *fissure* working it from its invitation to openness, passage and origin.

In the previously formulated hypothesis of a *person-eye* regarded as the embodiment of the presence of the spectator as a gaze in the space of representation, we find the idea that is at the root of Michael Fried's analysis of the French pictorial tradition in the work he deploys through his essays on the relationship between the spectator and the painting. In the first work of the series, he develops from Diderot's writings on painting, in his reviews of salons, the thesis that the painting of characters absorbed in activities such as prayer, contemplation, reading would correspond to the assertion of a fictitious non-existence of the spectator, the painter thus seeking to erase the theatricality in the painting, with a goal which remains to be determined and which we can think could be to better make people believe in the autonomous existence of the characters. Secondly, it is the absorption of the spectator in the painting, through the work of his own gaze and the opening of the canvas to the presence of his wandering eye (pastoral landscapes, secondary characters) that is the object of his reflection, without this regime being directly opposed to the first. The two absorptions (or rather the absorption of the character and the absorption of the spectator by the painting) do indeed come together insofar as what is at stake is the place of the spectator and the way in which 18th century French painting seeks to dislodge him from the place that perspective assigned to him, to evaporate him, to retract his body, to make him a pure visual consciousness. Work of the desire to see, that the cinema, and its cutting which takes the spectator into the diegetic space, willfully accomplish. Michael Fried writes as follows:

> I now suggest that there coexist in his *Salons* and related writings not one but two conceptions of the art of painting each of which has for its ultimate aim what I earlier termed the de-theatricalization of the relationship between painting and beholder. The primary or *dramatic* conception calls for establishing the fiction of the beholder's nonexistence in and through the

> persuasive representation of figures wholly absorbed in their actions, passions, activities, feelings, states of mind. (As we have seen, increasingly strong measures came to be required in order to persuade contemporary audiences that a figure or group of figures *was* so absorbed.) Wherever possible that fiction was to be driven home by subsuming the figures in a unified compositional structure, thereby giving the painting as a whole the character of a closed and self-sufficient system. The secondary or *pastoral* conception, which in the end is probably best understood as an offshoot or even a special case of the dramatic, calls for establishing the opposite but in important respects equivalent fiction of the beholder's physical presence within the painting, by virtue of an almost magical recreation of the effect of nature itself. (Fried, 1980, pp. 131-132)

The spectator is thus, in one way or another, "displaced", he must leave his position as subject with a critical gaze, he must see himself forgotten by the painting or forget himself in the painting, but in any case, he finds it impossible to remain the point towards which everything converged in Renaissance perspective painting. He is artificially erased by a painting that thus gains further autonomy and thus credibility. In order to believe in the representation, it is necessary to erase its theatricality, to put the spectator no longer in front of a window but in front of a one-way mirror and to exclude the spectator's point of view from the composition of the painting. Michael Fried thus evokes the compositional processes by which the pastoral genre allows the spectator to enter the painting.

Thus, the spectator's entry is favoured by the multiplication of points of view, by the abolition of synoptic unity and by the presence of a *relay personage,* taken not for what he is, but for the action he accomplishes. Here we find some of the elements that make up the person-look of the *Decalogue*. However, at Kieślowski, the question of theatricality is not posed in the same terms as it is for painters. The means of cinema have responded to the aspirations of painting in the areas of inclusion of the spectator as a pure gaze and his exclusion as a material body. The spectator's only body is thus his or her own gaze. If we look here at Tomek's journey in *Decalogue 6,* we can see the passage from a fascinated gaze, a gaze absorbed by his object to a gaze liberated by the words, the very words he addresses to Magda at the end of the film "I no longer observe you." This final renunciation marks Tomek's access to ethical behaviour.

On the one hand, the complete adhesion of the eye to the image, the oblivion of the gaze, the idolatrous fusion, the absorption of the spectator by the image, which is facilitated by the form of the *fissure, which* presents itself as a fortuitous opening onto an autonomous space where the gaze alone, the eye being "glued" to the separating wall, can become a

body in the space of the representation. On the other side of this axis on which the images stand, the clear and visible separation of the eye and what it is looking at, the distance set by the subjectivizing device of the *finestra*, which enhances the frame, makes it present in the spectator's eye, strengthening the limit between the space of the representation and the space where it takes place and transforming the viewer's consciousness, the sight into a sign. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 430)

The *slit image* highlights this process, first as a new visual device, then as a metadiscursive figure and finally, more generally, as a heuristic concept. At the basis of this process, *finestra* and *fissure* do not radically oppose each other and do not correspond to models designed as a single unit. Of course, they each carry within themselves their opposite. These two ways of thinking about the images placed before the spectators' eyes are never completely distinct from each other and are intended to reflect the relationship that is established, through them, between the spectator and the image they are looking at. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 431) However, it is possible to find in most images a dialectical relationship between the *finestra* and the *fissure* that supports and determines those of absence and presence, flatness and depth, opacity and transparency, surface and openness, and finally, the image as view and the image assign. We are talking about the place of origin, as the represented object as well as the unconscious object of the representation, in the viewer's gaze. The Peircian icon and clue touch the origin by the power of appearance or by that of the imprint, while the symbol, and even more so the Saussurian verbal sign, establishes a cut but also a seam between the signifier and the signified. It is perhaps in a play between the absence and presence of this emptiness, this space where the operation of signification takes place, that the frame of the images intervenes, depending on whether it is presented as a shapeless opening allowing a passage towards the origin (*fissure*) or as a solid architectural structure belonging to the Letter and its emptiness (*finestra*). (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 431) In any case, it seems that what we commonly call the frame is the element that orchestrates the relation to the origin that is played out in any mimetic image.

4.3. An Opening To The Origin

While examining the slit patterns/images in their heuristic dimension, by heuristic dimension, we mean the slit images' potential to account for a desire that haunts any image based on the model of Alberti's *finestra.* (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 434) Having explored the "open window" and the passage as this window's potential to be a door or a threshold, that only the gaze as a real extension of the body can cross, it is now appropriate to observe where these openings and passages lead.

Yet, its relation to the origin lies at the heart of *finestra,* when it leaves the pictorial realm to produce a photographic representation of material reality. The origin of an image is the represented object, both presence (preservation) and absence of it. The necessity of leaving the object while preserving it, in that in-between is so well defined by Bergson:

"Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images'. And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing,* - an existence placed halfway between the 'thing' and the 'representation'. (Bergson, 2010, pp. vii-viii)

As the myth of Dibutade reminds us, which evokes so well the object's departure at the origin of the making of the image, it is, of course, the work of the absence of this origin, made present through the mimetic image, that is brought into play. In Agamben's terms, "melancholy offers the paradox of an intention to mourn that precedes and anticipates the loss of the object" (Agamben, 1992, p. 20)

> The painting is only roughly based on Pliny's text, which reads, (…) modelling portraits from clay was first invented by Butades, a potter of Sicyon, at Corinth. He did this owing to his daughter, who was in love with a young man; and she, when he was going abroad, drew an outline on the wall the shadow of his face thrown by a lamp. Her father pressed clay on this and made a relief, which he hardened by exposure to fire with the rest of his pottery; and it is said that this likeness was preserved in the Shrine of the Nymphs until the destruction of Corinth by Mummius.14 (Frasca-Rath, 2020, p. 6)

The framed image becomes a slit when the object becomes a presence in favor of a visual or psychic withdrawal of the frame itself in the consciousness of the looking subject. Only the object itself remains in the illusion of its appearance, but above all of its "indexical" presence, a gaping origin in which the eye abolishes the tension of separation. "As Derrida will develop, this provides a model of the graphic line – or *trait* – as both a traced outline and the mark of an affect or intention. The Plinian origin of drawing is thus essentially

and acutely melancholic, in the sense that, as Giorgio Agamben succinctly defines it" (Gould, 2021, p. 7)

Our hypothesis here is that the photographic relationship to the object, as Rosalind Krauss formulated it as a "modern" dogma of the image and art, is precisely the paradigmatic expression of this desire to return to the origin in the image that begins with the Albertian *finestra* and haunts it inconsistently. Just as illusory as the pictorial image in its relationship to the represented object, the photographic image, which can be seen as an exploration of the possibilities/potentialities of the *finestra*, benefits from a much greater belief system since the dogma of indiciality, the Barthesian notation of "it has been," or « paradox of a presence seen as past » (Krauss, 1977, p. 65) prompts us to consider that it is genuinely open to its origin. It is, according to Barthes, capable of establishing an "umbilical" link between the viewer's gaze and the object photographed. We could draw the following axiom from this, the more open the image appears, the more the origin appears in it.

If there is an origin in the image, it is none other than the separation from this origin. The image is therefore both a separation from its origin, its point of departure, that is to say, probably the object, and at the same time finds its origin in this need to make the origin that is made absent present in it. We thus see the play of presence and absence proper to the oscillation of framed images being put in place at the origin of the production of images. At the same time fusion and separation, direct view and sign, the image is elusive, between the reality of absence, to which it escapes in part by its illusion, and the imaginary of presence, to which it does not entirely belong thanks to the work of frame and meaning. The elided real remains in a condensed way in its representation, which makes possible an *illusionary* return to its real origin whose image marks and conjure separation and loss.

> The image belongs neither to being nor to the void (*non-being? nothingness)*, neither to the realm of truth nor to the hell of the false; it is neither truly real nor really absent. The image is the present's unreality (*true unreality of presence*). (…) From this point on, seeing the image is equivalent to detecting, in the visible, the presence of an absence. Any discourse on the image is nothing but an interminable oxymoron in which presence and absence, but also shadow and light, finitude and infinity, temporality and eternity, corruptibility and incorruptibility, passion and impassivity are constantly switching their meaning and changing places. Seeing the image means gaining access to something that, within the visible, both overflows and empties it at the same time. The visible does not contain the image, just as finite does not contain the infinite: the visible is a trace, a vestige of an incommensurable presence. The visible is deserted by what it shows. Seeing an image means gaining access to

> what gazes out from within the visible itself; it means offering the immanence of an absence to the gaze. (Mondzain, 2010, pp. 309-310)

"Perhaps the child's first doodles are this gesture by which the confused image of the mother who inhabits it is 'excorporated' on the paper - where her gaze embraces it -, before being objectified - that is to say, named and constituted as a detached object." The image here is at once the result of a distancing from the matrix whose subject must move away to constitute itself, in a gesture of symbolization that puts it on the path of language, and at the same time the means of a return, through visual contact, to this origin, forever established in a kind of present absence. For Serge Tisseron, the image is like a mother's skin; it has the power to touch us, to contain us, and to calm our gaze. It acts as a balm. The ambivalence of the image is, therefore due to the fact that it is both a sign of this separation since the real is elided from it, but also a new substitute object, a reality in itself, capable of formulating and soothing the lack through the play of a consensual illusion. The real object is absent from its representation, and the image that keeps it in the visual field, which constitutes its new flesh, acquires a balsamic power; a kind of reunion of the separate that is the source of idolatry, that of the illusion of the real presence of the object in its material representation, the power of the image over and against which the field of the Western gaze has been built.

> These are the very gestures by which the baby is separated from the mother's body or from any other adult whose contact he may have sought. They are consequently away for the child to stage the mother's coming and going -really her frequent absences- so as to tame and master the experience in the imaginary, as an early form of kinesic symbolization. The earliest markings, the inscriptions of those gestures, are a form of kinetic symbolization which guarantees the transfer from the kinetic realm, the realm of visual representation. … The child traces his first markings with a gesture he does not yet control, and it is only later that he visually discovers its p-oduction. In other words, with the fort-da game, the time of visual reunion follows a muscular action, whether it is throwing the spindle or drawing a mark. In the time when he carries out the marking gesture, the child identifies himself with the departing mother; later, considering the outcome of his gesture, the child identifies with the trace which this movement leaves behind. Simultaneously, however, the child is free to be the one who also rejects the mother, as the trace which he sees becomes the mother separated from him. In this transaction, it is clear that what is at stake is the structural relationship rather than any of its representations, a structure which is organized around separation. The drawn mark is the first mode of image production in the individual's history, actually the first in the history of humanity. It stages the symmetrical separation process from beginning to end: the child passively separated from the mother who pushes him away from her, but also the child coming away from her by pushing her away. This whole scene is paralleled by the corresponding mental separation, even if verbal language cannot yet express it. (Tisseron, 1994, pp. 33-34)

It is in this perspective that the study of the articulation between the gaze and the image

brings into play the role of the frame, essentially as a guarantee of a balance between confidence and mistrust of the image, as a manifestation of the circumscription of the image and as a protective authority for the subject of the gaze. The frame could then be seen as a kind of symbolic extension of the functions of distancing and staging the power of images, present in the primitive sanctuary of the cave and the medieval religious building. Let us say, to stick to what can enlighten our approach, that the building has the two dimensions of the *finestra* (it is a solid frame that can hold at a distance) and the *image-slit*, one enters it through an opening. One enters it to find an origin, since the power of religious images comes precisely from their relationship to this origin.

The role played by the frame in the relationship that Western man has with images would then allow a controlled entry into the image, into the mother's body. of the image which, from the Renaissance onwards and the development of the *finestra* device, would concern only the bodiless eye, at the vanishing point, of the subject which had become evanescent. The tension between the device of the *finestra* leaning on the frame and that of the *fessura,* tending to erase it, would then correspond to that which crosses the ambivalent relationship of Western man to images; a desire for a return in the visual field towards the origin, as a "presence in appearance" on the side of the eye tempted by idolatry and a reminder of consciousness to be placed in absence in the image, a reminder of separation on the side of the sharp frame.

> Lacan says that the Imaginary subject is never alone but is always captured by the Other's gaze – just as it seeks to grasp the Other in its gaze. In fact, the whole logic governing the presence and absence of the object of desire is captured in this dance of being seen and not seen, of what is captured and what escapes the gaze. (Stein, 2010, p. 70)

In the work of Kieślowski, this original relationship is often present in the context of a reflexive questioning of the cinematic medium through different kinds of more or less conscious involvement. We have already had the opportunity to observe how jealousy and jealousy were associated in *Decalogue 9* to highlight the impossibility for the subject to see his origin outside of these anachronistic reiterations of the original scene that are the jealous visions. The stake of the jealousy device is then to allow the subject to see his origin and it allows us to envisage what is at stake in depth in what we call here the *slit image.* Thus, to see in the phallic jouissance of his wife his own absence, to see that he is there in the hollow, that he is the negative, the slit, is indeed what Romek seems to seek

and to fear in the setting up of the visual device of jealousy (eavesdroppers, slits, blinds) which would aim not at making visible (or audible) what happens when he is not there, but rather at seeing himself not being there, feeling absent, eluded.

Episode 9 thus invites its spectator to probe the expectation that haunts the eye of the jealous, a presence as an absent person at the heart of the scene whose desire for his wife irremediably excludes him and that we can consider as the original scene. This fiction comes to occupy the place of the origin. Thus, in the search for a real vision of this love scene where his spouse replaces him with one or another, where he is missing in his place, where he sees himself in the shadow of his present absence in his initiated field of vision, the jealous person perhaps finds, in a painful enjoyment, the impression of seeing himself existing as *absent* in his origin, the original scene taking shape in the scene of adultery by common characteristics. In this way he would remedy the pain of not even having been absent in its origin, since only the things that exist are absent. But after the discovery, it is the fall, the jealous one not being able to bear this truth that he has however ardently sought. He thus believes he is repairing his origin, reunifying himself after a division. In contrast, deep down he will only encounter his impotence to be, the place of his origin in the other. Thus Romek, by "choosing" the device of jealousy while wanting to be a perfect image in the eyes of his wife, is perhaps seeking to see, while punishing himself, the original scene from which he would like to feel absent, this image that is established between him and his origin, an origin that escapes him, that is situated in a sub-space of his life to which he will never have access, that does not look at him, that he cannot look at.

In support of this interpretation, two shots in the film place the viewer in the position of a child observing this type of scene. In the foreground, it is halfway up, this does not seem to be the point of view of an adult (the bed is too high) and looks at the other side, in the room, the embrace of Romek and Hanka for whom the sexual act is excluded. Kieślowski thus voluntarily places him in the skin of a local inhabitant who, passing through a corridor, would observe a scene in an adjacent room. But a closer look reveals that it is still a reflection, an illusion that shows them together, because in reality they cannot make love. In the background, the spectator is taken to task by Hanka, who looks at him in pain while her lover makes love to her. This impression of pain and aggression is reminiscent of how the original scene is usually experienced by the subject who fantasizes about it or

sees it.

Moreover, the apostrophe thus made to the spectator places him at bed height, i.e. low enough to be the size of a child who would be here a helpless witness of his mother's "torment". He is thus questioned by Hanka, who is staring at him, about the expectation of his own gaze. When we have added that this love scene is heard by Romek who is hidden on the landing of the building where the child's mother is "tortured", he is asked about the expectation of his own gaze by Hanka who is staring at him. It may be clearer that the vision Romek is looking for is similar to the original scene. The spectator is in the child's position that Romek becomes here again by going to spy on his wife, he anticipates him in the realization of his fantasy. So for Romek, marking this moment of his absence might already be there, his place assured. But it is his place, fragility, and powerlessness to *incarnate,* which anguishes him. This approach to the crucial moment of the terrible spectacle of his wife with her lover to be can only be done in the end at the price of her disappearance.

Decalogue 9 takes us back to the supposed origin of the desire to see jealously, that is to say, through jealousy. This visual device relies on the figure of the slit, a real opening with no fixed form, which conceals the looking subject and amputates his field of vision. The use of the slit thus sets up a jealousy between the spectator and the space of the representation, both a reflection on a flat surface and a depth of field, an opening that also invites the spectator to a form of disappearance as a present body and, at the same time, to a physical presence as a gaze.

As we shall see, this visual figuration is found even more explicitly in *Decalogue 6,* where we see Tomek attempting suicide after touching Magda's thighs. After putting his hand in the slit, he runs home to cut his wrists. It can also be seen in a crucial scene in a film that was a turning point in his career, the famous scene of Jadzia's delivery in *First Love,* at the end, he films the tears on Romek's cheek. The filmed childbirth is moreover, from Dziga Vertov to Denis Gheerbrant, a recurring figure in cinema ("direct" or "truth") that tends towards an encounter with reality. Finally, for cinema, this original relationship is a relationship to photography, and it is interesting to observe the place it holds in the films of Kieślowski, from his first short documentary on the issue – *The Photograph* 1968 - to its role in *Three Colors : Red* (1994), his latest film.

The work of Lucio Fontana, through his slit canvases, entitled *Spatial Concept* (1949-50)

may provide some clues to the answer to the question of the original relationship in the index. By opening the canvas after having renounced the conventional representation of reality, the Italian artist invites the viewer's gaze to actually pass through the thickness of the support, through the frame of the *finestra*, and thus brings out the spectator's space within the painting itself.

Space is no longer represented there, it is indeed really present. The image is then treated as an opening, but the slit is at the same time a *modus operandi* and an *opus operatum*, a spatialization process and a visual motif. It is place of passage and sign. What is very interesting about the Fontana slit is that it is the representation of a slit, since being presented in a frame in a work of Art that remains a painting, it appears to the viewer as the representation of a slit, and it is also a real slit, since it truly opens the medium. Fontana's slit fuses the signifier and the signified through the perfect indiciality of the process, as is supposed to be the case in cinema or, more generally, in photographic processes where the object would deposit, according to the founding dogma of the current belief system, its luminous imprint. However, in the case of the Fontana slit, the object is actually present in its representation.

Fontana is thus concretely accomplishing, through the establishment of the *fissure*, the opening of the *finestra,* which we had seen as a germ of the Albertian system and its subsequent developments. The paradox undoubtedly lies in the fact that, wanting to "free himself from the legacy of the Renaissance" by introducing a real space instead of a space represented artificially by means of perspective, Lucio Fontana fulfils the ultimate desire, going beyond the photographic effort, he inscribes within the work the "umbilical link" between the thing and its image. Having renounced resemblance through the sign, he tears the surface to replace it with the notion of space, abolishing at the same time the classical dichotomy between the two neighbouring spaces and substituting the thing itself for its representation. It is interesting to note here the analogy established between the exit of the painting from its frame and the exit of the artist's soul from its carnal envelope, evoking an ecstasy in which interior and exterior spaces would be abolished. We can see that the confinement linked to the window, its spatial enclosure and its frame is opposed by the infinite opening of the slit which "pierces the envelope"; the surface and the frame.

> As “trace,” drawing shares in the dual and hybrid quality of Fontana’s holes: Productive of the plenitude and richness of the surface, it is simultaneously voided. As a demonstration of

> the conditions for the possibility of artistic practice, moreover, drawing is superseded and effaced by painting. As such, Fontana's act begins to look doubly regressive, at once pulling painting back to the atavistic matrix that renders it possible, and then indulging in the painterly gratification of bright colors and vibrant surfaces. On the other hand, it marks painting's origin—that is to say, drawing—as an absence. Understood in relation to artistic practice, a gesture is simply an act resulting in a mark over a surface. And yet, owing to its indexicality, the binding thread of causality connecting it to a point of origin and inception, the artistic gesture has accrued a set of values through the history of painting, and particularly modernist painting, as a deliverer of presence and authenticity. The gestural mark emerges as the singular space where the object opens onto an individual, a maker. The ideology of transparency between maker and viewer, hand and eye, interior and exterior… (Mansoor, 2008, p. 150)

Fontana's slit semantically opposes the window that is supposed to contain it, breaking the enclosure in the sense of depth and transforming the relationship that the frame establishes with the spectator. The slit "abolishes" the constraining and limiting power of the frame and catches the viewer's eye. The viewer is no longer disposed by the frame, which tended to place him at the top of a visual pyramid whose four sides would form the base, at an ideal distance dictated by its dimensions. The space on which it opens is only accessible to an eye glued to the canvas and curiosity drives the spectator, the one who wants to see, to slide his eye into the slit. The actual slit breaks the frame as a square letter instituting a process of signification that creates a space of connection between signifier and signified, even if iconically, within the pictorial sign. "Visitors to the exhibition remarked that the forms appeared not to be solid objects but rather open and spatially diffuse. More significantly, as the art critic Guido Ballo noted, 'The gallery was transformed … [the spectator] did not contemplate a detached form before his eyes, he entered into the pictorial environment'." (White, 2005, p. 46)

As with Fontana, the film's turning on itself creates a "new" sense of authenticity. sort of indexical purity since, as in the readymade, the print is the object itself, the film represented is the film seen. Starting from this notion of the image as an *object of origin,* we will see how Kieślowski, and other authors, have sensed and formulated the original relationship played out in the mediums that are the heirs of the Albertian *finestra.* In a sometimes crude, sometimes more condensed way, the origin appears there as the finality of the play of the slit, not as an impulsive stake aiming at a sexual accomplishment, but as a scopic stake whose goal appears to be the fusion with the object. This fusion is appended to the unconscious relationship within the mother's womb as the primary object. It thus relies on the two sensory channels of this primary relationship, orality and touch, palpation. Drinking, sucking or grazing the image, caressing it, holding it in one's hand,

and palpating it are the two great impulses that structure the scopic drive. The hand and the mouth being the two stowaways of the gaze. At the end of this exploration, we will see how the *slit image* allows us to apprehend the gaze's two dimensions, haptic and oral. The most intense moment in the relationship between Tomek and Magda in *Decalogue 6* and *A Short Film About Love* is in a scene described as tragico-erotic. Tomek is seduced by the one he has been watching for so long. After having accepted his invitation to enter her home, he comes to caress her, at her request, in a moment when the haptic dimension of her gaze is realized in physical contact.

Tomek's hand touched Magda's thighs, it entered Magda's body through the path which is also that of the origin, that *origin of the world* which Courbet had painted in a gesture of great pictorial frankness, and which has the particularity of presenting the female genitalia both as an erotic object (image) and as a forbidden object (title evoking birth and childbirth). This slit, an archetypal slit, effectively opens onto another space, an interior and original space, without separation, a fusional space; the body of the mother, whose subject perhaps retains, through her impulsive life, a certain nostalgia. The impulse can be seen as a powerful attraction, an irrefutable need to suppress the distance to the object. Gustave Courbet's radical and frank painting formulates in a very direct and clear manner this movement of return to the origin through the image, a displacement of an incestuous desire, which lies in the idolatrous attachment to images.

This contact of Tomek's hand, a visible and concrete manifestation of his uncovered gaze, brought to light, with the object that is at the very heart of his impulse, the genitalia of the woman who suddenly, in a typical moment, becomes his own origin, will bring about a cataclysm in him, which will manifest itself first by an involuntary orgasm, a sudden and humiliating purely psychic discharge for him, and then by his flight. He then returns to his landlady where he slits his wrists with a razor blade after locking himself in the bathroom. We can then see the blood flowing out of his open body through the slits he has just made in a basin that he has taken care to fill with water. His eyes open to the void, frozen in hebety, are dry. It is his hands, which have become an extension of his gaze, that "cry", that once again let a bodily fluid escape. In this violent gesture, which will have no tragic consequences, Tomek punishes himself in the manner of Oedipus, (the child will be punished bodily) in a kind of castration of the gaze, of the incestuous dimension of the gaze, a dimension residing in its capacity of contact with the forbidden

origin. He tries to cut off the haptic function of the gaze. He has replaced the presence in appearance proper to his idolatrous relationship with Magda's image with an unbearable presence, he has replaced the scopic, invisible and secret act with a passage to the act, frightening, if we consider that he has become too brutally aware of the nature of his desire to see Magda.

As the epilogue of the film will show us, this gesture of cutting will have an effect on him, the bloodletting will have made the evil go away, he will be able to say to Magda: "I am no longer observing you".

Thus, without stating it clearly, the film makes us think that what fed Tomek's impulse was a search for fusion with the origin through the image through the gaze.

Courbet's realistic eye wants the raw truth of photography, it will have the original slit. Thus, following this idea, we can consider that this neighbouring space towards which the *glance-body* tends through the *slit image* device could be the inner, intra-uterine universe of the mother's body, this space where the body floats in an absence of reflexive consciousness, without separation, without the ramp on the frame. The aqueous, fluid dimension of the cinematographic image, its capacity to absorb the spectator's body, to put his eye in a state of floating, without reflexive consciousness, in a state of absorption or regression, could then be similar to this unconscious desire to return to the origin, the image being the territory where the relation to the present absence of the mother, of the maternal envelope, in the subject's consciousness is elaborated. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 449)

Krzysztof Kieślowski has reached the limit of his quest for reality through the images he could give of it after filming a close-up of a tear, zooming in on the cheek of Jadzia, the happy young bride, or, worse, on the cheek of his companion Romek, while he is on the phone announcing the birth of his daughter to her mother. This thing of tears, as Slavoj Zizek reminds us, will have been for him like a bitter splash and an unpleasant return to his own presence as a watching, intrusive subject. It is the starting point for an ethical awareness and a gradual abandonment of documentary cinema for the filmmaker. He will then symbolically substitute glycerine for real tears, fictional representation for real emotion filmed. Therefore, it was a decisive moment that this filmed birth with its emotional consequences in the subjects who really experienced it. From our perspective, it is not insignificant that this awareness took place during the filming of a childbirth according to the principles of direct cinema. One could then see in the quest for origin

through the image some trace of this very origin of the image, to separate from its origin, the reality of birth, by replaying it, the image being then a birth, a childbirth; reproduction and separation all together. In *First Love*, it is perhaps Jadzia's gaze at the camera that manifests this encounter with reality in the film. Parturient in the middle of work, she turns to the camera and looks at it fixedly. While the birth itself remains in the off-screen, the camera of Kieślowski is focused on Jadzia's face, the appearance of the child is done in voice-over and it is this look at the camera that suddenly manifests this epiphany, this appearance, the encounter with reality as the origin of the image, it is the look at the camera that embodies it. Here, in the context of this glance at the camera that allegorizes birth, the voyeur seen, who would find his body, would be reborn to himself, in the conflagration caused by the sudden intrusion of the third eye.

We can add to this mention of origin at the heart of a film at Kieślowski, the example of Filip Mosz, the character who plays his double as an amateur filmmaker, in *Camera Buff*, and who starts filming at the time of the birth of his daughter. Although he does not directly film his wife's childbirth, it is quite clear in the film's plot that his relationship to reality, his ambition as a documentary filmmaker to show the world as it is as opposed to Epinal's images of official propaganda, this attachment to the founding and contesting principle of cinéma-vérité, are linked to the birth of his daughter and the discovery of her paternity. Thus, becoming a father, he discovers the origin, of which he symbolically holds the keys as well as an ethical relationship to the representation of reality.

Childbirth is by definition the most important moment of origin, the very origin one could say, in that a passage is made there, a passage of the body through the slit, a coming to the visible. Much more than any other moment in human existence, childbirth and birth are moments of truth when reality emerges on the foundations of expectation and desire. Whether by metaphor - the birth of a work or a thesis - or more concretely the birth of a child, childbirth, as the gift of the day, is a work of realization. Marked with the seal of appearance and, together with that of separation, childbirth can manifest the energetic drive of the image, as a union and a break with the origin, while constituting an image that is difficult to show. Direct cinema, like cinéma-vérité, cinemas that reject fiction in favour of an exploitation of the dogma of photographic truth as a guarantee of the authenticity of images, seems to have had a predilection (thought or unthought) for this figure.

Thus, it is perhaps childbirth that is replayed in a certain way by *Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory in Lyon* as the first film in the myth of the origins of cinema. Photography comes to life and naturally, the living bodies in gestation in the immobility of the pictorial and then photographic space, come out, cross the threshold and flow towards the off-screen. Photography appears here as the origin of cinema, particularly cinema, whose vocation is to capture the real, to speak the truth against the "paintings" of the fiction or official narrative images. It is in this process of unveiling the real that the "dramaturgy of the real" of Kieślowski, mixing direct cinema and cinéma-vérité, attempted to represent Poland at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s. It has, moreover, often questioned photography in its films, often taken in its relationship to illusion and the real and introducing the question of origin.

Like the box-office, which plays an important role in his work and was the exclusive subject of one of his first films, photography, in its various forms, is very present in all the films on Kieślowski and gave rise to one of his first documentary films in 1968, entitled *The Photograph*, which we have already mentioned about photographic indiciality (as an opening of the *slit image*) and which it is useful to mobilize again to highlight, this time its original link.

In the 1968 medium-length film entitled *The Photograph*, the director sets out to find two children photographed with weapons at the end of the Second World War, who became men at the time of shooting twenty-three years later. In doing so, he completes the journey that connects an old and now emblematic photograph to the reality that it has *retained*. In so doing, he discovers the space and time that separate the photographed beings from the image itself. This film, one of the first made by the young filmmaker, testifies to his interest in photography as part of his documentary work, since the ambition of this project is precisely to question the photographic truth of an Epinal image of Polish history and the Warsaw Uprising at the end of the war.

This return to the origin of the image in a spatio-temporal continuity, that of the film and the investigation, which links the image of the film to the image of the photograph, therefore to the reality that informed it, also amounts to measuring the separation that exists between the children photographed and the men found by Kieślowski. It is thus a return and the observation of a farewell at the same time. Return to the real body and farewell to the appearances of the moment. However, despite this double orientation, this

original oscillation of the image, it is indeed the link that Roland Barthes describes as "umbilical" at stake. The whole film follows him in the form of an investigation. The director himself gets involved since we see him in the picture, holding out the photograph to his interlocutors and collecting their impressions with a microphone according to the direct cinema techniques. He goes in search of an encounter with the object through photography.

The film begins with a vertical panning over the photograph that will be investigated, without revealing its edges, the two images are superimposed and only the movement of one on top of the other allows them to be distinguished in a layering of images of the same texture. Animated photography of a photograph, the foreground, as will be the case in other films from Kieślowski leads us to question the very matter of the cinematographic image from the photograph. Without the appearance of the frame, it is impossible to detect a photograph because an opening on an opening cannot be seen. Thus, the origin of the photographic image, this reality in pursuit of which Kieślowski sets out in 1968, naturally becomes that of the film image, which appropriates it, without the viewer's eye being able to detect it by its nature.

The filmmaker's fascination for the "umbilical" link with the real origin of the image will manifest itself throughout his filmography, as we will try to show, and will also be found in his latest work, *Three Colours; Red,* from the beginning of the credits. We can indeed see this umbilical link in the telephone wire that becomes an underwater cable connecting the character of Michel, the lover who is in England to his mistress Valentine who is a model and lives in Geneva. This sound device of the telephone and its wire which connects materially, without break, can then be considered as a metaphor of the indexality, i.e. the direct aspect and open from the photo shoot. Putting aside the question of appearance and the gaze, he insists on the idea of the only "umbilical" link here materialized by the thread itself. Put in relation to the use that Kieślowski makes of telephones in its films, and in particular in *Decalogue 9,* which we have already studied, it is possible to understand that this is a way of installing a more "secure" device of indexical presence than that of the photo-cinematographic "truth". The voice, the speech, carried by the telephone, thanks to its wire, are the places of the true presence, which does without appearance. The search for this presence, this link between the sign and its referent, which he sought in the *slit image of* direct cinema, which he questioned from an

ethical point of view, through the *slit image* as a metadiscursive figure, in *Decalogue,* he seems to find it in this last film, finally, in the telephone as the end of *Decalogue 9* could suggest.

Between these two moments that limit the references to photography in the work of Kieślowski, photography is mobilized on several occasions, often to bring to light the question of the origin, and the photographic origin of cinema in particular, as well as that of truth. In *Personnel*, Romek looks at photographs on a wall in the theatre with one of his much older colleagues, who gives him the meaning. He tells him the history of the place and points out the presence of the director in all the pictures, a way of showing that the images on display in the corridor are propaganda images. However, pointing to a small, unrecognizable figure, he indicates his presence at a decoration award he received. The sequence presents two elements that are particularly interesting for our approach here.

On the one hand, the entry into the photograph is made directly, without the mediation of a situation setting. The montage takes us from a shot outside on the railway tracks to a black and white view of the inside of the photograph where we can easily recognize the theatre hall. Here again, according to a process that Kieślowski had used in *The Photograph* and that it will often repeat, the edges of the photographic image are absent, the field of the film is directly embedded in the photograph that only black and white and a horizontal offset reveals as exogenous. Once again, the matter of the image is deceptive since it is always, at the bottom of the photograph, a direct view. When his colleague points to where he is in the image, Romek and the spectator attend an autoscopy session where the indexical link is materialized by the photographer's finger on his own photographic image. A loop is then established between the representation and the reality it represents. The possibility of seeing oneself in duplicate, often supported by mirrors, showcases and other fortuitous sources of reflection, in the films of Kieślowski, is presented here through photography, which appears as a kind of mirror with memory. Travelling again and in the opposite direction to the path taken in *The Photograph* between the image and its real models, the finger of the photographed person comes to see himself by affirming "Look, this is me", thus establishing no distance between his photographic representation and his real body.

In *The Scar*, the photograph is used from the beginning of the film by a government

representative, which wants to convince its interlocutors of the need to build a factory to help the inhabitants of the Voivodeship, who live in very precarious conditions. To support his argument and convince his interlocutors, he takes photographs from a report with a naturalistic aesthetic close to that of a Robert Frank. "See how people live in our homes," he says, and the photographs circulate as irrefutable evidence of the poverty of the region's inhabitants. The photographs are large, you can see them circulating in the foreground but they never take up the whole frame. The photograph is taken here for its documentary value, it attests to what the official says, it shows a material reality with the precision and force of truth that a staff card can have. Its strength of proof is directly linked to its link, however illusory and theoretical, to its origin in reality.

An interesting use of photography can be found in *No End* when Urszula, the young widow, spreads out a series of photomatons she found in her husband's wallet on a table in front of her. She places them in an order that quickly appears as a chronological order since the portraits represented seem to grow in age. They are portraits of her husband at different ages, from the little blond head to the man in a suit. A life photographed and put in series shows us the evolutions of the body and the features in a single frame. Here, the memory capacity of photography is evoked, its vocation to preserve time, a life itself, that the end of the series abruptly interrupts. These vignettes placed on the table are as many traces of an identification of her husband by the state administration and, at the same time, they draw in their very alignment, the thread of an individual existence in this very rigid framework, following the evolution of his face. Antoni, the deceased, was a lawyer who defended political defendants during the years of the state of siege. Moreover, photography is mobilized here in its relationship to death and its power of resurrection, in its capacity to revive the dead, here in its duration. “A particular genre of image-making resists loss and preserves the memory of one who is absent.” (Singh, 2015, p. 248) “Everything framed is unreal, and every frame is marked by a trace or memory of the real it has left in its wake.” (O'Rawe, 2011, p. 5)

In this respect, the arrangement of photomatons in series in the sense of time could also be a kind of decomposition of the cinematographic image in its relation to its photographic foundations. “the diagram of the going beyond representation is an integral part of the theory of representation of the resurrection figure, supposed to testify to the upsetting character of the experience of the presence granted by the photographic

medium, belongs for a long time in his intellectual arsenal, under the species of the consoling function of the portrait" (Gunthert, 1997, p. 7)

We have already observed the essential role of photography in *A Short Film About Killing* and *Decalogue 5, in* which it plays the reliquary role we have just mentioned in relation to the photomatons of *No End.* In *Decalogue*, photography is also mobilized on several occasions. In the second film, as we have already observed, she is mounted, without her frame, directly in a face-to-face between Dorota and her absent husband, who is not recognizable because he is wearing a balaclava. Irony of the visible that delivers appearances but no certainty about their supposed truth. Photography presents itself all the same as a presence that escapes, by one means or another, and it is this aspect of the photographic image that seems to come back in the approach that Kieślowski has to it. It was, moreover, on this resurrectionary virtue of photography that Piotrek's joy in *Camera Buff* was based, when Filip Mosz showed him the images of his mother at the window, the last traces of his mother's life. As an animated photograph, cinema from its very beginnings manifested the power of its struggle with death, as recalled by the use of the verb "to photograph" by a journalist who attended the first screening on December 28, 1895. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 466)

The link of the original photograph also appears very clearly in a sequence from *Decalogue 4* where Anna will find an old photograph in her dead mother's bag. Here she is trying to identify her real father in a photograph in which two men who might be her real father appear. The irony of the approach to photography comes here, once again, from the relativity of the elements of identification. Just as the theatre crowd in *Personnel* or the multiplicity of photomatons in *No End*, referred the photographic truth to the knowledge of its observer, here the truth is outside the photograph, remaining silent on the visible that it exposes. The origin thus appears as a partial enigma, its mother is clearly visible in the photograph but the father is potential, illustrating the consecrated formula of the *pater incertus, mater certissima* which could correspond, in terms of photographic indiciality, to the certainty of the presence of an object and the uncertainty about the identity of this object. The "umbilical" link attached to the photograph does not guarantee anything about the identity of its contents. In other words, there is always a mother body in the photograph, but we do not know its father name in turn. "'pater semper incertus

est', while the mother is 'certissitna',1 the family romance undergoes a curious curtailment: it contents itself with exalting the child's father, but no longer casts any doubts on his maternal origin, which is regarded as something unalterable" (Freud, 1909, p. 239)

It is really in *The Double Life of Veronique* that photography plays a central role in a Kieślowski fiction. A photograph taken by Véronique at the beginning of the film, under the eyes of the spectator whose point of view is close to that of Weronika, returns at the end, on a contact board watched by a third party, revealing the backdrop where Weronika, Véronique's Polish double, is standing. The discovery of this little photograph that Véronique had never really looked at triggers in her a deep emotion that brings her to tears, she had indeed the intuition to be "here and elsewhere" and to know what she had to do. She met her double and this experience of autoscopy leads us once again to measure the distance that can exist between a photograph and its model. Clothes do not make the monk, photographic appearance does not make the person. Increasingly distrustful of the photographic image that is the origin (often repressed) of cinema, Kieślowski has different types of distortions that can disturb the "umbilical" link that would connect the gaze to the object through the photo- cinematographic opening. It is here the mantle that carries this otherness, Véronique sees herself differently. If appearances are deceiving, the habit here undoes the monk. The Rimbaldian expression that founds a modern and Freudian conception of identity; *Je est un autre, (I is Another)* finds here its full visual expression in the disquieting strangeness that grips Véronique when she looks at Weronika. Lost in the middle of a board covered with other images barely looked at, this vignette constitutes a slit towards the mystery of internal otherness, of the other in itself, which is the hallmark of an oscillation in which, we will try to see in conclusion, ethics can originate. By becoming aware of this internal otherness that allows her to know things before she has lived them, Veronique (the true image) reaches an ethical level of existence, that of conscious, free, responsible choice. The arrangement on a contact sheet indicates here the importance of choice and chance in the relationship to photography. One certainly finds there the taste for editing -choice of shots- which was for Kieślowski the real place of cinematographic writing, but also the operation by virtue of which the chance of the shots delivers its sap of contact with reality (the origin) and of happy encounter. But here the truth is specular, the reflection or double that haunts the

filmmaker's entire work finds its meaning; it is about experiencing the other in oneself. Once again, as in *Personnel* or *The Double Life of Veronique*, a character puts his finger on his own photographic image. It is a question for him to recognize himself, to designate and choose himself, in the same gesture. A process in which the Index plays a role close in its intention to that of Saint Thomas in Caravaggio's painting, but paradoxically reversed in its result. Immersed in the image in search of the body beneath the image, it is itself the material and is excluded from it, remaining foreign to it. Irene Jacob's finger being here the real matter of the flesh represented photographically, he shows us here how the surface of the image closes itself off to the haptic desire of the looking subject who then realizes that there is only a closed surface. What exactly does this point to? On one side of this surface stands the illusion of flesh, on the other the flesh itself. The subject is forever alien to himself in his specular relationship to his own value as an object.

This impulse of the hand, of the index finger, of the subject towards his or her own image reveals to us the consciousness, which is highlighted here, of the part of narcissism and attachment that haunts the gaze on the photographic image. Holding, kneading, keeping, retaining and swallowing, drinking, devouring, swallowing, such are the gestures that the framed images - the frame being itself a "handle" for the looking subject, the edge for the hand - resemble, whose indexity, more or less scientifically established (presence of the model, light recording), constitutes a link. The "umbilical" between the looking subject and the represented/looked at object.

The oral dimension and the haptic dimension of the gaze; the play of the mouth and the hand in the establishment of a relationship to the image and in particular to the film image from its photographic texture, this nourishing milk of the indexical presence. These two dimensions will lead us to see how the image brings into play the relationship to the primary object.

4.4. A Passage To The Primary Object

Another prose piece, called "The Larder," begins: "My hand slipped through the crack of the barely opened cupboard like a lover through the night. Once at home in the dark, it felt around for sugar or almonds, for sultanas or preserves. And as the lover, before he kisses her, embraces his girl, my sense of touch had a rendezvous with them before my mouth tasted their sweetness" (Benjamin, 2006)

That seems to support, on the one hand, the scopic impulse in what Lacan calls. “How

could this showing satisfy something, if there is not some appetite of the eye on the part of the person looking? This appetite of the eye that must be fed produces the hypnotic value of painting." (Lacan, 1978, p. 115)

In the "appetite of the eye", in the viewer eager for images, it is the relationship to the primary object; the maternal breast, which presents itself to the infant's eye as a slit object from which springs, under the pressure of oral and sometimes manual contact, sucking and kneading, the nourishing milk that provides him with his first ecstasies of completeness and satiety. At the same time a coil that returns, an object for the mouth and the hand, and the visual presence of the object bringing reassurance, the breast is also, for the child, the first *slit image*, the one through which comes to him the satiety of a regained continuity with the maternal body, that is to say, a reassurance linked to the visual presence of the mother and the haptic and oral dynamics that are linked to it.

We could then say that any look at the representation of an object, any appearance of a screen openly offered to the gaze, solicits in a more or less clear and more or less supported way, the part of mouth and hand that haunts the eye of the looking subject when he listens to his appetite, his scopic impulse. Milk is that real, unmistakable thing, with a recognizable taste and texture, which passes through the nipple slot and works in the infant's body. The maternal breast can thus be assimilated to the screen, or more precisely to the *slit image* whose shape of the *fissure* haunts and affects the *finestra*, in its capacity to nourish the viewer's eye, giving the illusion of continuity and fluid exchange between the reality represented and the reality that surrounds it. Milk is thus this "continuity of matter between things and images » that nourishes spectator with its realistic illusion and his "photographic" knowledge, establishing this "umbilical" link between Roland Barthes's gaze and the body of his mother photographed in the conservatory. "Something real remains in all photographs, but it is significantly distanced, since one never has access in photography except to its effect. But at least the continuity between the real and the photographic image is not totally broken;12 it barely persists, but it persists just the same." (Garcia, 2016, p. 9)

The *slit image* is the name of this nipple that is flush with the image and which illusively but effectively ensures this flow of time and space through the *finestra*, whose edge is forgotten, trimmed, attacked, eroded, to feed the eye with the food that is essential to it; the presence, perceived as real, of the object. Following a reflexive approach that aims to

put the photographic image into the abyss, photographer Tony Ward has perhaps visually formulated this conception of the *slit image* as origin as a fusion with the maternal womb, in his photographs of nipples that send the viewer back to his scopic expectation. The slit here is this opening of the body that allows the passage for a return to the womb, not in the incestuous relationship of a physical and painful return to this origin of the world, as evoked by the conflagration that Kieślowski stages in *Decalogue 6*, but in the oral relationship of nutrition that abolishes bodily limits in favor of the flow, from one body to another, of nourishing fluid. The frame-slit relationship then becomes a separation-fusion relationship. The return to the origin takes place through the illusory establishment of this "continuity of matter between things and images," a continuity that abolishes the objectivity of the image, *de-objectivizes* it, and thus allows, based on the "continuity of matter," the "continuity of matter between things and images." (Beuvelet, 2012, pp. 471-472)

The breast seems to present itself as a projection screen where the thwarted fantasy of an (incestuous) return to the primary object manifests itself differently. It is indeed Bertram D. Lewin who mainly thought about this dreamlike destiny of the breast in the entire sleep that follows breastfeeding. In his famous article entitled *Sleep, the mouth, and the dream screen*, Bertram D. Lewin considers the breast, the physical support of the first periods of sleep of the infant, as *the screen of the dream. White of the dream* as he could spot it in some of his clinical experiments. He states:

> When one falls asleep, the breast is taken into one's perceptual world: it flattens out or approaches flatness, and when one wakes up it disappears, reversing the events of its entrance. A dream appears to be projected on this flattened breast—the dream screen—provided, that is, that the dream is visual; for if there is no visual content the dream screen would be blank, and the manifest content would consist solely of impressions from other fields of perception. (Lewin, p. 421)

The breast thought here as a cinema screen (projection support) and, beyond that, as a painting for the gaze (it only speaks of visual dreams) would thus be the first canvas with which the dream would be realized in the psychic life from this experience of breastfeeding. Better still, this maternal breast would provide the very possibility of dreaming (hallucination of objects) as the desired horizon of sleep. "The baby's first sleep is without visual dream content. It follows oral satiety. Later hypnagogic events preceding sleep represent an incorporation of the breast (Isakower), those that follow occasionally

may show the breast departing. The breast is represented in sleep by the dream screen. The dream screen also represents the fulfillment of the wish to sleep" (Lewin, p. 433).
By regaining the screen of our dreams on which credible images are projected, we would thus regain the archaic contact and desire for sucking. Paradigm on which the cinematographic device can be grafted as we can see with Jean-Louis Baudry in his famous article where he compares the cinematographic device to the myth of the cave and concludes his reflection from the theories of Bertram D. Lewin. He says as follows:

> First of all, that taking into account the darkness of the movie theater, the relative passivity of the situation, the forced immobility of the cine-subject, and the effects which result from the projection of images, moving images, the cinematographic apparatus brings about a state of artificial regression. It artificially leads back to an anterior phase of his development – a phase which is barely hidden, as dream and certain pathological forms of our mental life have shown. It is the desire, unrecognized as such by the subject, to return to this phase, an early state of development with its own forms of satisfaction which may play a determining role in his desire for cinema and the pleasure he finds in it. Return toward a relative narcissism, and even more toward a mode of relating to reality which could be defined as enveloping and in which the separation between one's own body and the exterior world is not well defined. (Baudry, 1975, pp. 703-704)

He then comes to formulate a hypothesis that finds an echo in our approach although it cannot be summarized:

> It is evident that the dream screen is a residue from the most archaic mnemic traces. But, additionally, and this is at least as important, one might assume that it provides an opening for understanding the dreamer's « primal scene,» which establishes itself during the oral phase. The hallucinatory factor, the lack of distinction between representation and perception -representation taken as perception which makes for our belief in the reality of dream- would correspond to the lack of distinction between active and passive, between acting and suffering experience, undifferentiation between the limits of the body (body/breast), between eating and being eaten, etc., characteristics of the oral phase and borne out by the envelopment of the subject by the screen. (Baudry, 1975, pp. 701-702)

Suppose it appears that (in heuristic means) the *slit image* reflects this desire for cinema as a wrapping of the subject in the film image through the establishment of continuity of matter between the image and real space, which could be likened to a hallucination of the object. In that case, as Christian Metz reminds us, we must not omit to specify that the film viewer knows that he is not dreaming, unlike the dreamer. He is aware of the existence of his desire, even if he does not necessarily formulate it and that he is therefore in an intermediate position, in the form of oscillation between adherence to the image as reality and the cut due to the consciousness of the representation. The screen of the

dream/mother's dream postulated by Lewin could thus be the privileged terrain of this oscillation, vital support for the dreamlike process whose very corporeality he ensures; the dream forgets it as it is overlooked by the creativity of artists who practically never represent this element. This lactation responds to a desire to appear, to the image's appearance. The eye is thus literally nourished by the appearance itself. What Maurice Blanchot, theorizing the relationship of the object, called "bringing it closer by distancing it" (...) "Getting near involves playing at getting farther away. The game of far and near is the game of distance," writes Maurice Blanchot." (Didi-Huberman & Repensek, 1984, p. 71)

This "game of far and near" would then be an exact formulation of what the gaze is in its double movement of projecting the subject's body into the space of representation since it is an extension of it, an invisible part of the body moving in an imperceptible gesture, and of maintaining distance in a very particular form of contact without contact, of touching without touching. Through the gaze, a body projects itself, quickly discovering its immateriality, and reveals itself all the same as being in contact. A game of going back and forth between presence and absence is then established, close to what happens in the Fort-Da (Gone-There) (Disappearance and return) described by Freud in his famous 1920 article, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which is a means of taming absence and of playing with a return of the object that is forever incomplete, but which establishes the game itself as presence. The image in its frame is in a way the playground (or rather the screen of play) where we find, in the dialectic of *fissure* and *finestra, the* oscillation of the gaze between sight and sign, illusion and awareness of illusion, which the heuristic concept of the *slit image* brings to light: « the first act, that of departure, was staged as a game in itself and far more frequently than the episode in its entirety, with its pleasurable ending. » (Freud, 1922, p. 16)

The pictorial motif of Flemish artists' *Lactation of Saint Bernard*, just like the delicate exile of the breast on the shoulder or under the armpit of the Virgin, would be ways of putting the breast at a distance, of making it a symbolic object and support of reverie for the gaze, to the detriment of its purely anatomical part, to ensure a displacement of the physical contact in the field of the gaze considered as a body without a body. Milk then becomes this real, efficient substance whose gaze activity is nourished by the visual contact of the origin by the optical illusion of mimetic painting that is reinforced by the

supposed transparency of the photographic support and its "umbilical" link. “Some depictions of Saint Bernard’s lactation transform the Madonna’s jets of milk into rays of light aiming for his eyes, stressing the interchangeability of materiality and visuality as modes that were expected to facilitate and/or authenticate miraculous appearances of the Madonna” (Sperling, 2018, p. 868).

We could add here to these displacements of the white screen of the dream, the motif of anamorphosis, which we mainly observed in *The Double Life of Véronique,* which attacks the very support of the image to modify its texture and form. It is possible to see there the fruit of a kneading process, the anamorphosed image would then be kneaded by a hand that deforms it like a soft dough, and its deformation could also be considered as liquefaction of the image, transformation of the solid into a fluid that could then solicit the orality of the viewer's gaze. Thus, touched in its very texture and Matter, the anamorphic image could thus embody the screen of the dream as a maternal womb, as an object to be drunk and kneaded.

To those who asked him why the characters in his *Decalogue* so often drank milk, Krzysztof Kieślowski generally replied that there was no particular meaning in it; he drank milk quite often, and this was only an autobiographical element. He added: “A bottle of spilt milk is simply a bottle of spilt milk. And that’s cinema. Unfortunately, it doesn’t mean anything else” (Stok, 1993, p. 195).

However, this answer is not entirely satisfactory and leaves the interpreter the possibility of seeing something else and going much further through deeper links « which may be partly unconscious. » Milk, in *Decalogue 6,* is not just a realistic prop. It plays an essential role in the economy of the story since Tomek will become the milk-deliverer of the woman he spends his time observing. The nourishing maternal substance thus resonates with the theme of the greedy gaze, which is the very heart of this episode.

Also, without taking on board the psychological interpretation that Kieślowski wants to ignore, that of a desire for nutrition or a lack of motherhood in the fictitious subject Tomek, - it is not our approach here to probe the psychology of the character or even to engage in a psychoticism having as its object the unconscious mechanisms of the author - what will interest us here are the modalities of the relationship that the spectator maintains with the film image.

We are therefore going to look at the symbolic place occupied by milk in this episode of

the *Decalogue* as well as in other parts of the polyptych, and then broaden the reflection to two other major cinematographic works in which milk seems to us to be present as an element of a mise en jeu of the gaze. This approach will allow us to understand how these lactations shed light on one aspect of the relationship that unites the film viewer to the very substance of the filmed image, that is to say to this luminous and moving image that rubs against its frame and flows into his eye or splashes with its presence.

We can easily observe that on several occasions in *Decalogue 6*, milk bottles occupy an important place in the framing and narrative. As a symbol of a visual appetite, milk accompanies the process of inversion of the positions of subject and object of the gaze between Tomek and Magda, who ends up putting herself in her place to look at it in turn. We can thus consider that the maternal nutrient serves to indicate which side is the one that feeds on the other's appearance through the gaze, the milk symbolizing what, in the subject's field of gaze, constitutes the object of an oral impulse that would use the channel of gaze to reach its goal.

Thus, in the beginning, milk accompanies the figure of Magda as Tomek and the spectator look at her. From the foreground, when she goes home. Having returned to her place, her home, she puts her pumps on the table, goes to look at the tapestry she is making through the opening of a frame formed by her fingers, returns to her kitchen where she drinks milk and places the bottle near her pumps on the table. She then takes the bottle with her to the room where she goes to work on her tapestry, always under Tomek's gaze. The milk she ingests, the milk she keeps with her, which accompanies her appearance in the field open to Tomek's gaze, can be seen as the signifier of the satisfaction derived from Tomek's scopic activity. The image of Magda nourishes Tomek's gaze, who "drinks" it with his eyes.

When she arrives home, Magda first goes to the picture she is making to look at it between her fingers, forming a frame, and then goes to drink milk before coming to work on her picture. A link of association by contiguity is thus established between the act of looking intensely and feeding oneself (with milk) on the one hand and between the object looked at and the maternal nutrient on the other. But Magda, through her gesture of reframing her work with her fingers, in the manner of a filmmaker who opens a frame between her two joined hands, can feed on what she sees, just as she can renounce it, remain sober, separate herself from it and contain it, with the help of the hand she can place on the

visible.

At the beginning of the sequence, the combination of milk and pumps relates the fetish object of the gaze to the metonymy of the breast as milk. It may be interesting to consider the associations proposed by the image and to consider this combination of objects placed on the table as speaking since it is the result of an iconic formulation, an enunciation of the visible through the filmmaker's gaze, whose frame is the trace.

Thus, according to this highly articulated rebus, this comparison, this montage of objects, Tomek's gaze, and that of the spectator are nourished (milk) by the appearance of the fetish object (pump) in the visual field. Better still, the pump and the milk are exact. The relationship of the spectator to the cinematographic image is related to Tomek's scopic activity (we do not know exactly who is watching, the spectator and Tomek; the points of view merge) and is thus articulated to an oral impulse that the image of Magda drinking milk to excess clearly expresses the pump, a fetish object par excellence, recalling the origin of this attachment.

For Magda, the return to her home is a return to the mother's womb, the presence of the fetish object in the gaze, be it the gaze itself or a pump, is also a source of appeasement of the "appetite of the eye" that Lacan spoke of in relation to painting, rest on the screen of the mother's womb, in front of the image contained in and by a frame. Moreover, Tomek looks at Magda at fixed times; he even sets his alarm clock when she must return home, inscribing her voyeurism in a regularity, a repetition that may recall that of meals, the milk revealing the part of drinking in the seeing. We can see him watching Magda accompanied by a cup, like the many viewers who have become accustomed to eating food in front of the television.

Later, Tomek observes Magda over the shelf of a grocery store where they buy their food; she is at the store's checkout and holds a bottle of milk she has come to buy against her breast. The way she holds the bottle and the affection she shows for it makes it a precious object in the eyes of Tomek, who then tries to become a delivery boy.

This decision, which brings Tomek closer to the object of his fascination, will also provide the opportunity for a symbolic reversal of roles since the young postman will become the one who provides Magda with her milk, that is to say, the one who "feeds" her at the same time as he will become the one she watches. By becoming a delivery boy, he will come into direct contact with her, entering her space. Until then, he had only

approached her through the pierced window of his post office counter. The passage from the state of voyeur to the state of the object seen played out at the post office window thus corresponds to a simultaneous passage from the nourished state to the nourishing state. By becoming a milkman, Tomek shows that it is he who gives the woman he observes his nourishing quality, it is he who gives Magda's image this maternal dimension which he feeds on through his gaze, and symmetrically, at a more concrete level, it is he who becomes Magda's wet nurse and thus appears to her. His body appears in the field of the other, so it is by delivering a bottle of milk that he will be surprised on the threshold of her door and seen, finally, by the one who knew she was looking at him without seeing him.

During this delivery, Magda brutally opens her apartment door and hits Tomek's head, who drops the bottle of milk. The liquid escapes, flows out of its container and spreads out on a flat surface for the second time. In the two planes where this phenomenon occurs - when Magda comes home after an argument with one of her lovers and spills milk on her table and during this delivery - the liquid is released from the container and spills on a flat surface. The flow of milk is associated with very intense scopic activity; in the first case, it is Tomek (and the spectator) who looks at Magda, in the second, Magda, discovering Tomek's face up close, stares at him, thus formulating the inversion of roles, she begins to see him as he saw her, she feeds off his image and his presence in her visual field.

But, whereas in the first scene, the milk comes out through the spout, passing through the tiny air circle surrounded by glass (figure of the hole in the wicket) without breaking the container, leaving the two spaces (interior/exterior) intact and thus maintaining the separation, in this second instance, the milk escapes and spreads as a result of breaking the container. The separation between an inside and an outside has been shattered, as in the credits scene where Tomek rains glass on the gym floor before disappearing through the doorway. There is a fusion of spaces, an abolition of separation; the danger is great. It is not insignificant that it is by opening a door that the milk bottle has shattered. As we have seen above, the motif of the door calls for a passage of the body and a reunion of spaces, direct and physical contact that Tomek prefers to maintain at the level of the haptic dimension of the gaze, that is to say at the level of a touch at a distance or a "optimal distance" as Maurice Bouvet puts it. (Kesel, 2009, pp. 19-20)

In the second instance, Magda's gaze is direct; the two figures are joined together in the field, in the same space, underlined at the end of the shot by associating the two profiles and the two gazes in a window frame. In the first one, Tomek is not seen looking at Magda; the two spaces are separated, which can be underlined by the passage of the liquid through the opening of the spout, which would then reformulate this hole in the visible (like that of the wicket, the slit), the promise of purely visual contact, through which the image splashes and nourishes the spectator with its milk.

Suppose the milk flowing from the neck of the bottle evokes maternal nutrition. In that case, the milk spilling into the broken glass, the cutting glass, evokes another form of relationship with the mother in which the risk of a cut, or castration, is inscribed. When Magda touches Tomek, when she caresses his cheek after pronouncing the sentence mentioned above, Tomek gets up and flees towards the end of the corridor, feeling in the real contact with the object of his lust, a loss, and danger that will be formulated at the end of the film, in a tragic gesture of cut. When she joins him in the window frame against a backdrop of light, she asks him if he wants to kiss her or make love to her, ready to satisfy her desire, but Tomek tells her that he wants nothing and leaves. The merging of the spaces, the breaking of the wall, and the meeting in the frame terrify Tomek, who risks losing his position as a fascinated spectator playing with the slit and the frame.

Thus in *Decalogue 6*, milk is not simply the visual expression of a lack of motherhood in Tomek's character; it is instead a symbolic element expressing the nature of the relationship of the spectator to the image he is looking at, an evocation also of orality, of the scopic drive and the nourishing dimension of the appearance of the object of desire in its capacity to reiterate that of the primary object.

Since milk has the liquid quality that we have associated with the fluid image of the cinematograph and the maternal quality of its manufacture, it constitutes a symbolic element that is deep enough articulated to constitute a shared metaphor, a recurring figure in the substance of the animated photographic image. In the scene where Magda spills milk on her table, she draws with her index finger shapes in the thickness of the small puddle of milk, thus making the very Matter of a pictorial form that could very well illustrate Gaston Bachelard's statement about material imagination: “matter is the unconscious of form” (Bachelard, 1999, p. 50) Milk would thus be the unthought of the cinematographic image. And one can then associate this gesture of the index finger with

the one we have seen on several occasions in characters from Kieślowski who thus pointed out their presence in a photograph. The milk of the image is the Photographic Index. In support of this interpretation, it should be added that the association of the presence of milk with the activity of the gaze is also found in other places in the polyptych. In the other three shots where milk is used or highlighted, the characters are absorbed in scopic activities. Reading the newspaper, in *Decalogue 1* or *Decalogue 2*, is an activity that engages the subject in a visual connection with a familiar, everyday object, the use of which may constitute a ritual in which seeing and drinking mingle, and which thus presents itself as a moment of satisfying an appetite. One often drinks something while reading one's diary.

Indeed, the act of seeing is replaced here by the act of reading, which implies an absence of the image and the mediation of written language; the appearance and the proximity between the signifier and the signified properly to the iconic sign are eluded, but the reading of news may very well constitute in itself nourishment for the eye. One might think that there exists in the act of reading the fresh news of the day, a satisfaction that would belong only to the exercise of the gaze and the everyday work of the eye, work that would be akin to a reassuring suck. In the milk associated with these scenes, there is perhaps an appetite for a visual object that can turn the subject into a spectator; in this contemplation of the world through the eye channel, the eye is nourished.

In *Decalogue 9*, Romek is watching Ania, a little girl playing on the sidewalk below his apartment, as he pours the contents of a bottle of milk into a saucepan. Here again, the milk is present in a moment of contemplation, of absorbing a character in what he sees. Romek looks at the little girl through the fine, vertical opening of his window; the slit here reinforces the intensity and intimacy of the relationship that the subject establishes with what he is looking at; one can imagine that he observes there the desired child that his sexual impotence prevents him from having with his wife, a slit that mediatizes his own gaze, erases his body and puts him in the position of a "voyeur," the all-seeing one - which is what he will be in a scene where he observes his wife with her young lover. The child jumps and plays in the street; she is as mobile and lively as Romek is immobile, fascinated by what he looks at. The milk he is preparing to heat reveals to us an appetite that the passage of his gaze through the crack of the window will satisfy, direct and distant contact with the inaccessible object of his desire.

In these two cases, reading a newspaper and fascination in front of a slit open to another space where present beings move, the two maternal aspects of the film image; on the one hand, the sensual and distant contact with the Matter that constitutes the oral dimension of the gaze, the visual relation to the familiar object and on the other hand the direct opening of the image considered as a slit open to an adjacent space where beings stand as in their direct perception. As a *slit image* making the subject a being all-looking, an animated image of a presence, the flow of milk through the channel of the gaze, the film image can provide a soothing effect similar to that of an infant who associates the appearance of the mother's breast with the satisfaction of an appetite.

To complete this approach to the symbolic uses of milk at Kieślowski, we can also evoke *Camera Buff* and the place given to milk. The oral impulse seems to be very important in Filip, who tells Irena, one night, when he is taken by a sudden urge to eat, that he liked to get up at night to eat as a child at the orphanage. We also see him drink a bottle of Pepsi-Cola after receiving the award or, on another occasion, just after an argument with Irena, take a jar of liquid yogurt and pour a small amount into a cup to drink and then spits it out by throwing the container on the kitchen floor. The milk suddenly becomes bitter (spoiled) after an argument caused by her young vocation as a filmmaker.

Filip is in a conflicting relationship with the origin. This confrontation with the origin that is childbirth and birth has given rise to both a passion for filming that he experiences as an impulsive drive towards the visible, and at the same time, in the course of the shots and the observation of their consequences, a necessary restraint, an awareness of his own drive and of the need to put a brake on responsibility, or at least a frame. That is how its ethics are born. Thus, the bitter milk he drinks after an argument with his wife due to his passion for film becomes indifferent to him when, in the last sequence, a fresh milk delivery man rings his doorbell. Filip empties the previous unfinished one into the sink, a way of showing that he has detached himself from this maternal nutrient, and gives the empty bottle to the delivery man in exchange for a new bottle filled with fresh milk, which he negligently places on a coffee table in the living room of the apartment deserted by his wife. He then turns to his camera and films himself, telling his own story. His taste for the real in the image, his thirst for the truth of images, his cult of the authentic gaze, which can be considered as a link with the real as the origin of the image, then gives way to an introspective practice that sees him renouncing filming reality to draw some truth from it

in favor of an intimate narrative that would assume his subjectivity.

Milk, as a symbolization of the nourishing part of the image, which often accompanies scopic activities, is here the figure of the original part, of the indexical link to the origin, which resides in the image, and in the photographic image in particular, as a guarantee of a metonymic presence in the imprint. This original part is precisely linked to an illusion, that of presence.

This conception of the film image as a living memory of the mother's womb, as a container of a liquid and nourishing substance can be found in different forms, in the work of different filmmakers who have taken the art of filmmaking and the love of its images very far. At Kieślowski, where we started, milk manifests the oral dimension of the scopic impulse and the maternal dimension, nourishing the film image. This dimension is cut off from the viewer's gaze, confused with that of the "voyeur," when the walls, we could say the frame, which is a sign of separation, split or burst into a thousand pieces. In this case of lactation that brings into play the relationship of the spectator to what can serve as cinema - the window frame and the confusion between the spectator's gaze and Tomek's gaze at Kieślowski, the film image is presented to us as a maternal substance that a principle of cutting and framing comes to contain. In *Decalogue 6*, we can consider that the strong frame of the window opening onto a "milky" light formulates this conflicting relationship between the fluidity of the image and the fixity, the cut, of the frame. If *Decalogue 6* brings into play the role of orality in the visual relationship to the world, we will now see that *A Short Film About Love*, its extended version, offers an exciting opportunity to take into account the haptic dimension, the part of the hand in the gaze. Opening with a game of hands between three characters, the film could be entitled *Brief history of hands*. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 501)

4.4.1. Haptic dimension of the gaze: hands of *Decalogue 6*

While *Decalogue 6* deals mainly with the gaze and voyeurism in its mechanism of reversal of positions and inversion of roles between the voyeuristic subject and the object seen, *A Short Film about Love* further develops the sensual relationship and feelings between Tomek and Magda, losing in symbolic value what it gains in sensual poetry, to the point of making the game exhibition/voyeurism, a love relationship based on concern for the other. That is how the hands play a significant role in the feature film, more critical

than the one they already play in the short film, because they carry here all the sensuality of this love, its tactile intensity, its corporeality, and therefore the loving dimension that inhabits Tomek's gaze, and then Magda's gaze.

The opening shot on this game of hands will find its place in the narrative, towards the end, we will find it in its context, and we will then understand its diegetic, contextual meaning, but for the moment, in the beginning, out of the nothingness preceding the film, and preceding a dream of Tomek asleep, this game of hands submitted to the viewer's gaze is an epigraph that covers with its shadow the whole film subject matter, and enlightens it. It is a physical and visual formulation of the tension that runs through the film; between the scopic impulse and the haptic impulse that works it, between the image and the body it calls out, between the gaze and the hand it solicits. Let us also note that the fact that Magda's hand has not been touched thanks to the *Noli me tangere* of her landlady allows Tomek to remain asleep and to pursue his dream of voyeurism, thus subtly indicating to us that the absence of touch assures the vision, and to the dreamlike hallucination, its omnipotence, its limitlessness, and that the glance without contact, therefore without the body, is an ideal object for the voyeur's impulse.

The film repeatedly portrays the behavior of Tomek as a spectator in front of the image of Magda's desirable body, and it is very often a hand that embodies, in the image, the desire for contact that haunts Tomek's gaze and the mode on which this gaze plays.

We will thus see four functions of the hand that haunts the gaze, corresponding to four modalities of the haptic relationship of the gaze with the image conceived as original territory, as the maternal womb. First of all, the hand as an instrument of control, which manipulates the object, grasping it, bringing it closer and moving it away, then the hand that embraces, palps, caresses, then the hand that strikes, rejects, penetrates and finally the guilty hand, which punishes itself, which seeks to cut itself, to extricate itself from the gaze and thus reformulates the *Noli me tangere* in its illusory wish to separate the gaze from the touch. (Beuvelet, 2012, p. 503)

The manipulating hand of the gaze is the first of the gaze functions in this film, where it is a question of a game of glances, of hidden vision. From the beginning of the film, in Tomek's dream, a margin consisting of a section of wall and a curtain, to the right of the image, hides Magda, letting out her hands and her hair, and indicates to us that Tomek's gaze is itself hidden, it is in a position to see without being seen, according to the device

of voyeurism, and only Magda's face and hands appear. A bottle of milk, on the left, testifies to the oral dimension of this contemplation for Tomek. Here we find these three elements presented at the beginning, the hand and the mouth as invisible passengers of the gaze, and Magda's activity, manipulating the cards, arranging the rectangles with each other under her gaze, according to a rule of the game, is a mise en abyme of the filmmaker's own game, which delimits, manipulates and organizes the images for the spectator's eye, that is, first of all, his own.

Here we are in front of a work of manipulation that a plan will show a few minutes later. With his hand on his telescope, Tomek brings the building closer or approaches it; depending on how one interprets this zoom in, he grabs, seizes, the object and carries it towards his eye, his body is thus brought into play in the image, in this forward movement, this impulse towards, which translates his impulsive drive and his haptic desire to seize the object. But this manipulation takes on a new twist when Tomek uses his phone to intervene on the stage he is observing. Kieślowski then highlights his hand in the foreground, a firm hand with the index finger raised like an angel of the *Annunciation,* placed on an instrument of verbal communication that is dear to him, it is a question of manipulating reality in the manner of a director, by voice and gesture. Tomek becomes the director of Magda's intimate life; he calls her without speaking to her, at first, to hear her voice, to push the volume of his own presence in the field he observes. In a way, it is real contact, a mise en scène, presence where the body pushes itself (through its breath) into what it sees. Later, he will call the gas company and make it look like a leak so that technicians come and interrupt Magda in her frolic with one of her lovers. Tomek then puts himself in the position of a director, confirming the superimposition of glances in the shot where Magda is playing cards; his position doubles that of Kieślowski, he stages reality and contemplates the show.

The "short love story" that brings together Tomek and Magda thus begins with manipulating the other through the gaze; it is by putting his hand on the visual device that Tomek manipulates Magda, beginning to make his own body emerge in the image. Recall that he slips fake money order notices into her mailbox to bring her to his post office counter from where he can observe her, again using a visual device (the counter) that combines sight and touch. The glass surface has holes in it, allowing the bodies to find each other. The long blond hair, a tactile attribute of Mary Magdalene in many

performances, is here slightly advanced in front of the hole, allowing the spectator to become aware of the extra presence or proximity (closeness to the body) that settles between his eye and the body of the actress. At the opening, Magda is accessible by hand. Moreover, this shot of the film's beginning formulates a call to contact and hand, which will be honored later on. As we will see, the hole will be the means of meeting the two adjacent spaces, that of the spectator (Tomek) and that of the image (Magda).

The hand could also be a caressing one. Magda and Tomek are in a restaurant; Magda asks Tomek to caress her hand. The caressing hand, the tangle of fingers are the first forms of direct expression of this desire for contact. But observing how these caresses are accompanied by a sustained gaze, in most of their occurrences, we can deduce that the caresses correspond to a particular state of desire, formulating a hypocoristic statement in which the gaze is embodied.

The accompaniment of the gaze by the hand is a haptic gesture of recognition, holding, grasping, awareness. The other becomes real through contact. Thus, the caress accompanying a glance constitutes an awareness of the other's body. The coalescence of gaze and contact is, in fact, the modus operandi of the knowledge or recognition of the object, the clinical gaze is a palpating gaze that names, in the image of this identification of textures attesting to the nature of the object that Saint Thomas plunging his finger into the wound of Christ fully accomplishes.

The sequence in which Magda discovers Tomek's face up close after Tomek has confessed his secret passion, constitutes a turning point in the film. Magda, from the object seen, becomes a seeing subject and here becomes aware of her desire to see by turning Tomek's face towards her with her caressing hand so that he sees her seeing him and thus establishes her as a conscious subject of his vision (and the reversal of the impulse). Therefore, the discovery of Tomek's visibility and beauty is naturally accompanied by a caress on his cheek. This gesture wants to reposition his face to see him better and, above all, to be seen. The moment when the eyes touch (we say "their eyes met") is a moment of truth. Tomek runs away from it. Magda's gaze here becomes amorous in this gesture of the hand; it finds its corporality to affirm the entire presence of the other but also to assert its hold on him.

Another form of caress appears in the film. It is the caress by identification. When the voyeur sees a caress of a lover's hand on Magda's body; more erotic, this caress is that of

the power of the impulse, that of the act, it is no longer a seizure but a pressure on the beloved body that corresponds to Tomek's thrust in his own gaze. In front of this caress that so crudely formulates his inaccessible desire; making love normally with Magda, Tomek has a violent reaction from his hand; he cuts short his voyeurism session by brutally folding down his telescope, an obvious sign of cut and castration in front of the forbidden caress, a clean cut of the hand that haunts his eye, a response to the Noli me tangere. Here is the real contact of the hand of this lover on Magda's hips, in front of or formulating the one that haunts his eyes that causes this reaction. His gaze is in contact with Magda, it leads him towards a real encounter that threatens his omnipotence, he risks losing something by converting his gaze into a caress, the virtual into the real, but the thrust of his loving body in his gaze continues to manifest itself as an "I" of an identification.

The identification is thus a thrust of the spectator's gaze, which becomes his invisible body in the world of the image, in the neighboring space. Thus, the hand gains an intrusive dimension. One shot in the film shows Tomek breaking into a gymnasium and smashing a window whose thousand and one pieces crash on the floor of the sports field at the very spot where the white line delimits the playing area, making a right angle reminiscent of that of a frame. He is looking to steal an approach telescope, the same one we will see him use later. This sequence of intruding a space tells us two essential things about the look and the body's involvement. By entering the gym in this way, Tomek shatters the glass wall that separates him from the other space, the forbidden space of the performance, the one where his hand must not enter by the ban on contact from the beginning of the film. Yet he penetrates, by his gaze, into this other side, which the box-office will indicate to us in one of the first shots of the film. Thus, by anticipation, the window of the box-office breaks, and the separation between the world of the gaze and that of the image is abolished. On entering, he walks in his gaze; his body is moved by a scopic impulse and moves forward in the spectrum of his field of vision; he penetrates the image entirely. It is precisely with this telescope of approach that he has just flown by violating this closed space that he approaches the façade of Magda's building by his gaze. The use of the telescope of approach indicates that the stake of her voyeurism seems to abolish the distance between her eye and Magda's body, without knowing a real contact, the object of the prohibition formulated at the beginning. The gaze then presents itself in

this game of voyeurism as a contact without contact, an act without an act, a body without a body, the ideal tool for an ethical compromise between the impulse to grasp (by hand or mouth) and the prohibition of contact. But this ethical tension of the gaze rests on a fragile equilibrium, and Tomek cannot resist the temptation to push himself more and more into the field he is looking at while holding his body back. His approach to Magda's body is constant, and the violent and intrusive gestures of the hand multiply.

Thus, after having called the gas company into Magda's apartment in an emergency when she was making love, that is to say, after having manipulated, staged what the object of his gaze was, he exploded and broke the door of a cupboard to his left. This violent break-in, which response to the break-in he has just committed in Magda's private life, is reminiscent of the broken glass from the earlier burglary that allowed him to steal the telescope. A force seems to be pushing his body into what he is looking at. But if the thrust comes from his side, it also responds to Magda's advances, which he manipulates and brings into his post office to see her up close through the hole in his counter.

As a visual expression of the desire for contact and assurance of the possibility of this contact, this photograph is particularly interesting. It arranges the eyes and hands very balanced way, following a vertical translation. While Tomek looks through the counter opening to look at Magda directly, with intensity, the characters' hands are in a continuous space, without separation, at the level of the counter opening, through which documents, receipts, notices, money, letters are exchanged. They are close to each other; the contact is latent.

The transparent surface, materialized by the reflection of the surface of the cinematographic image itself, has two holes, one borrowed by the eyes - it is, in fact, a hole for the voice, therefore for the mouth, and besides Tomek devours Magda with his gaze instead of speaking to her - the other for the hand allowing him to operate a physical exchange with the other side. These two openings in the surface appear here, in their superimposition, an equivalent between seeing and taking or touching. But the wicket separates them; the channel of seeing and the channel of touching are separated; seeing requires only transparency, touching an opening.

But Magda will turn everything upside down when, in the middle of the film, she slips her hand into the top opening to hand Tomek one of the fake postal order notices he sends her to bring her to the box office. This intrusion of the hand takes place at the level of the

hole provided for speech, the hole for the mouth through which Magda's hand passes. But this is precisely the hole through which Tomek had been able to see Magda directly in the previous photograph, a hole that opened up precisely to the haptic and oral dimensions of his own gaze. She responds to his request beyond all hope by coming into his space. She uses the channel of the gaze to come to him and, at the same time, seems to introduce her hand into his mouth since this opening officially has an oral dimension. Once again, Magda, like her evangelical model, is the one who makes the gesture of touching, unbalancing the fragile equilibrium set up by Tomek, to touch without touching and to walk a hand without flesh over Magda's body.

Following this transgression, the young postman leaves his counter and catches up with Magda on the other side of the street, only to confess to her partially his little game. The reaction will be brutal; she will throw her hand in his face. Then, in the evening, back home, tempted by the game, she will signal him to call her through her apartment window and allow him to look at her when she receives her lover, which he will do.

After seeing Magda crying on her way home, Tomek sits on the edge of the bed of his landlady lying down and talks with her about the reasons for crying. We learn from this conversation that Tomek was abandoned by his mother and had not been crying for a long time. He goes back to his room and plays a game with a pair of scissors.

Here the guilty hand is confronted with the cut; Tomek's dry eyes find their equivalent in the hand he is trying to cut. And while there are no tears from his eyes, drops of blood are beading from the end of his hand. He cuts off his finger, punishing himself for not crying about his mother's disappearance and for wanting to touch Magda so severely, here he punishes his dry eyes. The oedipal dimension of his desire to see as a desire to touch the origin manifests itself here for the first time, especially when he brings his hand to her mouth and sucks the blood that flows from it, literally sucking his hand, that is, the very body of his gaze, taking his gaze itself as the object of the satisfaction of his desire to suck. The contiguity of this plane with the next plane where Magda draws in the milk here illuminates the value of the blood, both the tear of the eye and the milk of the gaze.

A little later, we will find the motif of a tear of blood beading in his hand instead of a tear in his eye. At the end of the film, after being invited to Magda's house, which will lead him to touch her, as we will see later, Tomek, very disturbed, goes home, settles down in the bathroom, and tries to commit suicide in a way that teaches us a lot about what

interests us here.

The eye is dry, but the hand cries, color the water. The liquid escapes from its container, the body is emptied of its substance. At the bottom of the basin, we can see the presence of the razor blade, which embodies both the cut, the opening of the wrist, which corresponds to the cut of the hand, and the slit itself, its result on the symbolic level. The razor blade is split, thus constituting an object that manifests both the tool and its result. The cut made by Tomek is quite similar to castration of the gaze, to the gesture of removing from the gaze its unbearable desire touch. (The *Noli me tangere* partly takes on its meaning, the image of the adored being, as a maternal body, can only be approached free of any desire for contact and grasping, the Christian image wants to distinguish itself in this way from the idol or fetish and their sensual dimension, by putting the eye at a distance, by cutting it off from the body). Like Oedipus, Tomek punishes himself for having had to contact Magda's body at her request and for having thus understood, in an explosion, what the real stakes of his desire were.

It is the image of Magda as a fetish substitute for the "maternal body," substituting herself for the maternal womb whose appearance solicits the hand, the eye, and especially the mouth of the infant. That is the true nature of her attachment to this image of Magda's loving body, who pushes Tomek to punish himself, not by directly gouging his eyes out, like Oedipus, but by cutting off his hand, by making him "cry" his blood, because it is this hand of ambivalent desire that he wants to exclude from his gaze.

The crucial scene in this deconstruction of the idolatrous gaze was shown just before. It brings into play all the dimensions of the appearance of the hand as the embodiment of the gaze in this film.

Manipulation, caressing, intrusion, and finally cutting. Tomek's body is overflowing. It touches the very heart of his desire, the return to the origin, and meets with full force the injunction of the *Noli me tangere*, which perhaps aims, deep down, to dissociate touch from sight to establish a purely visual, ideal contact, a "distancing approach" with the object without risking a fall, thus making the body pass from the body to its image in the order of the visible, and thus establishing an equivalence between the two. And so it is with this hand, greedy for flesh and presence to manipulate, to feel to penetrate, which haunts his eye, that he seeks to separate himself in this circumcision of the gaze that reveals the depth of Oedipus' gesture.

Oedipus, to redeem himself for having touched the origin, for having in his turn taken the path of his father, deprives himself of any image. Tomek, more subtle, deprives himself of any desire to contact the image; he tries to take his hand out of his eyes. The hand represented here is the forward point of the gaze, which only dreams of feeling the pressure of the object seen and reassures itself that it cannot do so. Tomek, unable to bear the in-between to which the images invite us, having touched the origin and having thus lost his fantastical omnipotence, having become conscious of his desire, punishes himself, mutilates himself, cuts off a part of his body.

The avant-garde of the body next to the other, the hand represented, is for the spectator like an eye covered with skin that comes forward in contact with the object being looked at. It embodies that end of the gaze at the end of which a bodiless touch is possible, in a fragile equilibrium that the scopic impulse on one side and the surmoic work of the frame on the other threaten to break if one or the other takes over.

Thus, in the light of the work of Kieślowski and particularly *Decalogue 6* and *A Short Film about Love*, the dialectical image, as the origin and primary object, is based on the articulation of the oral and haptic impulses, traces of the first contact (visual, oral and haptic) with the primary object during an infant's first breastfeeds. This trace is probably at the origin of the mouth's solicitations in the illusionist painting founded by the Alberti's *finestra* and succeeded in the arts.

CONCLUSION

> What is at stake is the specific function of the image and its eminently historical character. There are a couple of important details here. First, man is the only being who is interested in images as such. Animals are very interested in im ages, but only to the extent that they are fooled. You can show a male fish the image of a female fish and the male will eject his sperm; you can fool a bird with the image of another bird, in order to trap it. But when the animal realizes it's dealing with an image, it loses interest completely. Now, man is an animal who is interested in images when he has recognized them as such. That's why he is in terested in painting and why he goes to the cinema. A definition of man from our specific point of view could be that man is a moviegoing animal. He is in terested in images after he has recognized that they are not real beings. (Agamben, 2002, p. 314)

The cinematic polyptych we reviewed allowed us to take a visual approach to seeing and making images, the questions that haunt the second commandment of the Mosaic Law and the filmmaker's entire oeuvre. The object of my reflection was the visual passage from the edge to the opening, regarding the spectator's gaze in front of a painting, a photograph, or a film screen. I approached film as an image, embracing a discourse of framing since the famous 'framing gesture' of *Camera Buff* (1979) constituted the core of my analysis.

Rather than seeking a general formulation of Kieslowski's work, I tried to uncover the unconscious stakes of the representation, particularly the frame affected by its symptom. In Kieslowski's oeuvre, the dialectical image manifests itself in his faith in the "truth of the image" and "dramaturgy of the real" at the beginning of his career. And towards a secondary metadiscursive elaboration in *The Decalogue*, it becomes a statement held on the image.

At the beginning of my work, I have elaborated on the different characteristics of Alberti's *finestra*, the crucial part of which is when *finestra* becomes a new representation device, constituting its negative, the fissures, and thus establishing a dialectic relationship with the spectator's gaze. The enunciative dimension indicates the act of formulating the visual purpose of the image; it is "the origin and the first line." A choice of a story, subject, movement, or frame is both the instrument and the sign of the visual enunciation. Baudry's deconstruction of perception and representation highlights this enunciative dimension of the frame. When the frame ceases to float on the visible and seizes an object, it enunciates it; thereby finding the subject of this enunciation. The frame offers the spectator potential of feeling themselves as the subject of their own gaze.

Then, the phatic dimension corresponds to its opening, the contact between two spaces (of the represented object and the spectator), and contact with the Other. In painting, the phatic dimension of the frame is directly related to its potential to make itself forgotten as a convention and act as a mere edge of a hole. In the photographic field, the phatic dimension is about indexicality and the notion of imprint, which ensures a presence in the image illusory way and enables one to keep contact with the lost object.

The bodily dimension of the finestra can be read as Derrida's parergon, "the drapery on statues," "ornamentation" of the images, "which simultaneously adorns and veils their nudity," "hors d'oeuvre clinging to the work's edges as to the body represented, but not a part of the representative whole." The dissolution of the frame of the finestra can then be understood as a sudden appearance of the naked body, or rather the nakedness of the relationship of the eye to the framed image. If we take the case of cinema, the bodily dimension is at the service of the fusion of spaces and bodies, absorption of the body-eye in the darkness, and immobility of the room. Embrasures veiling the presence of a body and the voyeur's outstretched hand can be considered allegorical expressions of this dimension, as in the case of Magda and Tomek. Crumbling of the edges of the finestra leaves a hole in it like the wound Saint Thomas plunges his index finger into or Lucio Fontana's slit-canvas, thus making the image an opening where the looking subject loses themselves. The device produces its subject, and the bodily dimension becomes closely related to the reflexive dimension.

When Kieslowski stages the dialectical image as a visual device, he installs a character's gaze around a fortuitous opening, highlighting the act of seeing through a slit without the spectator's gaze and the cinematographic device being directly involved. Ethical stakes of the polyptych and identification process lead the spectator to question the stakes of their own gaze. However, reflexivity depends more on how the image frame is treated. In the painting, analyzed by Stoichita, it is the over-framing that produces metapictoriality; in Kieslowski's work, shaky camera, interposed objects, images with margins, and embrasures can be counted as reflexive elements. This reflexive dimension marks the passage from the visual device to the metadiscursive figure. The device places the spectator in the position of one of the characters by internal ocularization. While internal ocularization corresponds to the dialectical image as a visual device, zero ocularization

corresponds to the dialectical image as a metadiscursive figure. One is about the desire of a character, and the other is the supposed desire of the spectator.

The architectural dimension is closely linked to the enunciative dimension and supports the presence of the word as the incarnation coming to organize and structure the world. Thus, the finestra in its architectural dimension is like the column, a pillar whose straight lines and solidity order the habitat. The image itself is this habitat for the eye.

Finally, the ethical dimension lies in its function of selection and cut that establishes a separation between the subject of visual enunciation and the representational world resulting from it. Framing operation testifies to a subjective choice anchored in a particular taste, which proposes a balance between the scopic drive and its restraint. The ethical dimension acts as a container inclusive of the other dimensions. In the question of ethics, the dialectical image can be a trap for the eye if used as a simple visual device that favors the illusion of the presence of an object in its representation, staging "the continuity of matter between things and images." However, it can also become a source of freedom for the spectator when it becomes a figure of desire that pushes them to see and leaves room for distancing in the closeness a fissure induces.

Kieślowski's creative process lies between documentary and fiction, relying on the truth of images and renunciation of them, intruding into his characters' lives and suspension of this desire; just as the spectator's experience oscillates between adhering to the view as a sight, thus continuing the illusion, and realizing the solid edges of the frame and the presence of its enunciator. The dialectical image consists of its potentialities as an opening and passage for the gaze and the hand and the void, nothingness it offers the spectator in return.

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