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[ACINEMA](#)

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"...Lyotard, by way of contrast, advocates an 'acinema' that does not trade in fixed identities (not even formal identities, of the sort involved in visual rhymes and repeated figured) and recognizable situations (that is, situations whose doubling existence repeats what we know of the world, to ensure that it can be folded back into the world)... It is a cinema of intense agitation. "Cinematography" means writing movement: in learning cinematography in film schools, one acquires a training in discriminating between "good" and "bad" movements: good movements are commodifiable movements, valued in a strict capitalist sense—good movement, Lyotard suggests in his article "Acinema" is deemed valuable "because it returns to something else . . . it is thus potential return and profit." Scenes that are "dirty, confused, unsteady, unclear, poorly framed, overexposed" are deleted—it eliminates all impulsional movement (whether representational or abstract) that escapes identification and recognition and will not give itself for reduplication. Against that, Lyotard's vanguardism advocates a cinema that does not depend on unity and balance, but on a constant movement of rupture. Lyotard's rethinking of Freud's dynamic model of energy rejected the privilege that Freud attached to the discharge of energy and the return to the homeostatic condition. Energy (arousal), for Lyotard, is delight, bliss—so he reconceived *jouissance*, taking it not as discharged, not as having as its objective to return us to the calmed state (that foretells the thanatic extinction of desire), not as a *retournement*, but, rather, as a pure activity, a *détournement* (cf. sublimation, in the literal sense) that misspends energy purposefully. Acinema, Lyotard notes, by writing with movements that go beyond the point of no return, spills "the libidinal forces outside the whole, at the expense of the whole (at the price of the ruin and disintegration of this whole)." Borrowing from Artaud's ideas on the theatre of cruelty, Lyotard suggests that the purpose of the acinema is to make victims of its spectators/auditors, by generating anxiety, agitation, or emotional turmoil—for it is on the side of intensity, on the side of life against death. Rather than good (unified and reasonable) forms, the dynamics of acinema, presented to the immobilized viewer/auditor, "give[s] rise to the most intense agitation through its fascinating paralysis." The excess of movement renders a cinema's medium opaque: it does not offer us that hope that one can see through it to that harmonious presence for which the conventional cinema, in its reactionary nostalgia, yearns. Thus, again, acinema is a savage cinema, for in it, the medium asserts itself, brutally, as its images and sounds relay unresolvable intensities. Attending to it, one comes apart, as by a knife, under its divers movements. Without identifying (naming) what is happening on screen, we sense it viscerally—feeling it in our muscles and our bodies."