

On the Era of Image: Photograph, Cinema and Narrative as Reality

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Abstract

This paper will explore characteristics of images indispensable to social realities in contemporary society. In so doing, the paper will examine five films whose theme is confusion of actual reality and image of reproduction. The question underneath this attempt is whether or not the "floating images" of contemporary society really own distinctive features. Does not it belong to the same old social signs or symbols? What if people's "new sense of freedom" derives not from real "free plays of images," but from unnoticed rigorous social restrictions?

Baudrillard's concept of "simulacrum" and Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" are the best-known arguments to deal with nature of signs in such a society. The characteristics of images that their writings tried to delineate, however, could be shed a new light when it was discussed from a point of view of sociology. Sociological thinking will focus less the image's "reality effect" made possible by a new reproductive technology than "social" foundation of reality constructed by images. From this standpoint, photography's power to produce "objective reality" comes not only from new technology of reproduction, but also from the potential gaze of other people. The photograph becomes "objective," because everyone looks at it internalizing others' point of view. This way of construction of reality is characteristic in modern society, where the subject is obsessed to gain a proof of reality by others. This is the hidden desire to make the confusion of copy and original. The paper will examine *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958), *Blow Out* (Brian DeParma, 1981), *The Conversation* (Coppola, 1974), *Blow-Up* (Antonioni, 1966) and *Proof* (Jocelyn Moorhouse, 1991). In all those films, the protagonists confuse image with "real" in various ways and levels. But all their confusion is resulted from the motivation to construct a coherent narrative from images. Regardless of the characteristics of narrative they try to construct, in such attempts the image of reproduction is not really distinctive from the images of any society. For image could be real when it becomes narrative to be shared by others. If the image in a contemporary society has really different nature, it will be found beyond such "social" foundation.

Keyword : image, reality, photograph, narrative, cinema, movie, simulacrum, gaze, others

Since 1980s the late capitalistic countries have entered into the new stage, consumer society. Various kinds of social media, including new ones, have enforced the growth of this new mode of society. In such a society, people's desire is not founded in actual reality, and is always changed, for example, by advertisement. Boundary between actual reality and "images" blurs. Sense of "play" can be found everywhere in society. Even sociology reveals that reality is mere a kind of fiction. Sense of reality varies depending on a standpoint. Everything becomes a game of image--love, economy, music, novel, cinema, and even news program on TV. To live in this contemporary society is nothing but to swim in this simulacrum, "a sea of images." One sociologist called this kind of society "cinematic society."

This phenomenon is most phenomenal and obvious in Japan, as many Western thinkers saw. Many of them found the end of history and pure snobbism in it. Some confused it with "postmodernism," partly because to them, Japanese culture looks lacking transcendental center. However, is this world of "floating images" a really new society? Is not it only a version of the old? Isn't this "new sense of freedom" just another name of new restriction after all? This paper tries to understand the social characteristics of image as reality through some cinematic representation.

A blind man picks up his camera and looks in the finder. The next shot shows what he would see through the finder, which, however, must not be actually looked by him because he is blind in the narrative. This point-of-view shot of the blind touches fundamental conditions of the cinema as a medium.

First of all, every point-of-view shot through the finder in general could not help but being an analogy to the shooting the very film itself. The shot of watching through the finder, which can be either through a telescope or a camera, places the audience in the same position as the camera man who actually took the shot.

In the case of *Proof* (Jocelyn Moorhouse, 1992), a film about a blind photographer, this self-referential effect is emphasized by the story setting. With the point-of-view shot of the blind, the nature of editing is called into question in relation to the narrative construction. Editing=montage is a "trick effect" in that bears the narrative by the

articulation of the shots. The narrative is born by the difference *between* the shots, not by the combination of the meanings *within* the each shot. It is this magical power of the editing that makes it possible to construct point-of-view shot. Generally, when we see the shot of a man watching and a shot of an object next, we cannot help constructing the narrative that the man in the former shot is watching the object in the latter shot.

This process gives the audience the subjective sight of the character in the film. The audience is therefore exactly placed in the position of the character, who is in fact absent from the screen in the second shot. Watching the object *through his eyes*, the spectator identifies with the character at the moment, and get involved into the narrative, forgetting the materiality of the cinematic signification. This is, as Metz and Baudry examined, one of the ideological effect of cinema as a modern apparatus.¹⁾

However, in the case of *Proof*, the audience is forced to keep in mind that the blind man is not able to watch the object we watch. Therefore, the 'natural' identification with the character by point-of-view shot is prevented by the story setting. Because the source of the sight must not be the blind man, the point-of-view shot of him turns into no more than the shot of what the camera actually saw. This perception lets the audience be aware of the materiality of the cinematic signifier, and of the actual activity of film watching that they are actually watching what the camera saw before. That is usually hidden mechanism in the experience of narrative cinema. The blind man's point-of-view shot in *Proof*, therefore, makes the audience face with the cinema experience itself, revealing the actual position of the spectator's view.

Setting aside the self-referential effect of the point-of-view shot of the blind, *Proof* also questions the nature of more basic visual technology as a theme in the first place: the photograph. What does "a blind photographer" mean? In fact, the juxtaposition of "a blind" and "photograph" is not contradictory, but, here again, possible revelation of the very nature of the photographic medium.

As Martin, the blind photographer in *Proof*, says, the photograph can be a "proof" of the reality. When we look at a photograph, we are not merely watching and recognizing images on the photograph; we are seeing them as an objective truth. Due

to its mechanical and scientific chemical processes, a camera is believed that it reflects the sights much more precisely than the unreliable, emotionally affected human eyes.

For Martin in *Proof*, the photograph is a tool to give proof of his sense toward the reality he lives in. How can photograph be the proof, though, if he is not able to watch? This question leads us to the very secret of the photograph as a medium. As a matter of fact, what makes the photograph objective is not only its mechanical technology, but the potentiality of the other's gaze. Martin knows that the reason why photograph can become objective is that they could be seen by others. Our inner sense about the external world is guaranteed only when we know that others see the same things in a same way. Martin says to Andy, showing the photograph he had taken and labeling the description for it by Andy on the backside, "That (photograph) is proof that what I sensed is what you saw through your eyes, the truth." Of course, Martin cannot completely believe the other's explanation, either, as much as he cannot believe his own sense. However, this plot shows the Martin's notion that the things taken by the camera become the objective truth by the possibility that they would be seen as the objective fact by everybody. It is not only the fact about photograph, but the fact about everything in any society at any time that what makes the reality "objective" is this confirmation by anonymous others in the society. The photograph in *Proof* provokes this fact explicitly. Because one camera eye represents thousands of others' eyes which would later see the developed photograph, the camera can be the machine of the objective truth.

Therefore, what Martin desires by taking photograph is not watching the world, but the truth of the world. Watching is merely of secondary importance to him to access to the objective truth. That's why, most ironically for the photograph as a visual medium, Martin does not need to watch the photograph.

This attitude is characteristic of the modern individual, who gains the interiority separated from the objective exterior. Since internal self cannot be completely independent on its own, the modern individual has a neurotic obsession for the absolute truth to prove one's internal sense. Martin's obsession for the truth is even stronger because he lacks one of the abilities to sense the external world. But, actually, he can sense the

world more than the people who can watch. For example, Martin can recognize what is happening in the animal hospital's waiting room by smell and sound. Nevertheless, he has to take photograph, because he needs to prove that his sense of the world is "correct."

This firm objective plausibility of the photograph causes the reversal of the copy and the original reality. The photograph might have been the copy of the reality for the first place, being taken in order to preserve the moment of lived reality. The inversion occurs easily. Because the copy becomes more plausible than the real life as the objective truth, soon that makes people live in order to take, or, have taken their photograph for the memories.

For example, why Martin goes to the park? He is going to the park in order to do nothing but taking photographs. In other words, he is spending time to get the proof of the moment of reality, rather than to live the present moment.

This inversion of the photograph into the actual life was expressed by Italo Calvino, an Italian postmodern novelist, in "The Adventure of a Photographer." In this short novel, Antonino, the protagonist, takes all the steps of the development of the art of photograph along with the every question that the history of photograph has been faced with. The attitude of Martin in *Proof* corresponds to the second step of Antonino in *The Adventure of a Photographer* (the first step is as to the selection of the moment to take photograph for the preservation of the reality). Antonino asks, taking photographs of his two girl friends, "You are living in the present, but the moment the scansion of the frames is insinuated between your acts it is no longer the pleasure of the game that motivates you but rather that of seeing yourselves again in the future, of rediscovering yourselves in twenty years' time, on a piece of yellowed paper (yellowed emotionally, even if modern printing procedures will preserve it unchanged). The taste for the spontaneous, natural, lifelike snapshot kills spontaneity, drives away the present. Photographed reality immediately takes on a nostalgic character, of joy fled on the wings of time, a commemorative character, even if the picture was taken day before yesterday. And the life that you live in order to photograph it is already, at the outset, a commemoration of itself. To believe that the snapshot is more true

than the posed portrait is a prejudice...”²⁾

When they have taken photograph, people are living not in the present moment, but in the future, and yet, the past in the future. The power of the photograph is this capacity to alternate the present reality into the dead image. The image is dead, because it is not the original one which is created anew at every moment, but nothing but the image which is already registered in our memory banks. We freeze in front of the camera to be framed in the same image as we already knew. That is not only when we are taken as posed portrait, but also when we try to be taken “naturally.” In this way, the photograph becomes not the tool of representation of the lived reality, but the apparatus which brings the reality into the simulation of the dead image. As Baudrillard defines, simulation of the dead image is “no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication” of the reality³⁾. The reality of the image, which the photograph produces, is exactly “a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real.... Never again will the real have the chance to produce itself -- such is the vital function of the model in a system of death.”⁴⁾ It is a second stage of simulation in Baudrillard’s schema; “it masks and denatures a profound reality” (a first stage is “the reflection of a profound reality.”)⁵⁾ It does not take long before this second stage becomes a third stage of simulation: “it masks the absence of reality⁶⁾.”

Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* (1957) gives us an example of the living in the absence of the referential reality even in the world without the technical medium like photograph. In the first half of the film, Scotti fell in love with Madeline. Actually, Madeline was acted by another woman, Judy, to help a man murder the true Madeline. To use Scotti as a witness, Judy pretended to be Madeline, giving an impression that Madeline was inclined to commit suicide. After all, Judy succeeded to deceive Scotti that Madeline killed herself. The second half of *Vertigo* starts when Scotti saw Judy without knowing the fact yet that Judy had been Madeline. He found a visage of Madeline in Judy and tried to change Judy’s appearance so that she looked closer to the image of Madeline he had loved before. As soon as he succeeded on making Judy precisely look as same as Madeline, he found that he had been deceived by Judy before.

In *Vertigo*, Scotti never reached the real woman. In the first half, he loves the image

of an non-existed woman. He is involved in the image which has no reference in the actual world from the first place. Judy is not a copy of Madeline, since she tried to give a false image of Madeline, and Madeline whom Scotti loves is this false image of Madeline acted by Judy. In the second half, he is looking for the woman he loved before, which is merely the image from the first place. He only loves the false image of Madeline through Judy. He is so indulged in the image of Madeline that he forces Judy a real woman to be the image he has harbored.

When he found out the fact that Judy acted as Madeline, it seems that he finally reached the real world. However, when Judy was killed exactly in the same way as Madeline, he was again thrown into the world of repetition of the image. At this moment of Judy's death, Scotti conflicted the world which the image turned into the actual reality. The title *Virtigo* is concerned in this maze of simulation of the image into the reality. Scotti can never get out from the reality in which the real and the image can never be distinguished.

However, the issue of simulation of the dead image soon evokes a question of what the real is. From semiotic and phenomenological point of view, there is no objective, referential reality from the first place. As discussed above, the objectivity derives from the confirmation by the majority of the member of the society. The reality emerges to us only as an arbitrary constructed organization through the frame of the system of meaning. It is the language that provides the meaning to the world. The language is the most basic medium for the construction of the reality. The system of the language is a system of difference, which its meaning derives not positively from the word itself, but only negatively from the difference between the words. It is to say, then, if the language system preexists the subject, our experience is already within the simulation of the dead image which is mediated by the language system.

The media technology, such as cameras and tape recorders, enlarges this question about the relationship between the actual reality and the simulation of image. That is the theme of *Blow-Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966), and, according to Fredric Jameson, its "postmodern pastiches or sequels," *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974) and *Blow Out* (Brian DePalma, 1981)⁷⁾.

It is worth noticing that the earliest *Blow Up*, which is released in 1966, brings up more radical view toward the simulation of the image. Among these films I discuss here, the later films tend to stress more on the actual reality. *Proof*, released in 1991, deals with the theme of certification of the actual reality as discussed above. In *Blow Out* and *The Conversation*, the sound recording media are still used in order to decipher and approach to the true reality. In *Blow Out* in 1981 the film director needs the actual screaming as sound track in horror movie. *The Conversation* in 1974 deals with how the mediated image distorts the actual reality. On the other hand, *Blow-Up* inquires the media's role not as a reproduction of the actual reality but as a production of the dead image without reference in the actual reality. In the Baudrillard's schema, this is the final stage of simulation: "it has no relation to any reality whatsoever. It is own pure simulacrum."⁸⁾

The common theme in *Blow-Up*, *The Conversation*, and *Blow Out* is to read narrative for the reproduction of the reality. It is the desire for narrative in these films which makes the photograph or soundtrack come to real to the protagonists.

The most recent film among these films, and, which has the most strong confidence in the referential reality, is *Blow Out*. The protagonist, Jack, a sound effect man on a film production company, encountered an actual car accident when he was recording sounds of nature at night. His investigation began when he listened the sound of a gun shot recorded by his tape recorder. Most important scene in this film is the one that Jack made a film of the scene of the car accident. He combined sound he recorded and a series of still photographs on a magazine. Being made as a moving image with sound, the still photographs revealed the scene of the gun shot, which was not found when it was in the still photograph. This is the most impressive self-referential plot in this movie. This plot represents the movie as literally the movement, which exposes something what is not found in the still photograph. Again, the movie is not just a combination of the still photographs, but something *moves between* those still images.

However, all technologies in *Blow Out* are used as tools for reproduction of the actual reality, which is the first stage of simulation in the Baudrillard's schema. As a reliable recording and reproduction devices, the photograph and the soundtrack record

and reproduce the moment of the actual incident more precisely than the human experience so that Jack can surely get close to the fact what actually happened.

It is suggestive, though, that what involves Jack in the film is the desire to construct a coherence in the reality. It is this desire for a narrative in the film experience to make the audience get involved in the film. As Bordwell examines, the spectator's activity in the film watching is the construction of the *fabula* (story) by the film's *syuzhet* (plot) and style⁹⁾.

However, in a sense, the media for reproduction in *Blow Up* cannot reach the actual reality. Jack clearly heard Sally's screaming from the headphones only to recognize that she was in danger at the moment. Jack could not find out the location where she actually was. When Jack finally found Sally, it was already too late to save her. Only he could do was to put Sally's screaming he recorded, which expressed a real threat of death, on a film as a sound effect. That resulted in making the scene intensely realistic. It is ironical that the real scream is effective only in the medium of image.

In *Blow Out*, the relation between the actual reality and the reality created by the media can be distinguished each other. Jack never doubts whether the recorded fact is real or not. On the contrary, *The Conversation* presents a question of the plausibility of the actual reality. This film examines the simulation in the second stage of Baudrillard's schema; the distortion of the profound reality.

Harry in *The Conversation* gets involved in the media's world as same as Jack in *Blow Out*. However, while Jack in *Blow Out* acquired a personal friendship with Sally, who was in the actual accident which Jack was trying to resolve, Harry in *The Conversation* had nothing to do with the people whom he tried to grasp their story. What drove him to understand others' conversation was only his desire to find out the meaning, to construct a narrative from the conversation he eavesdropped. Harry as a professional wire-tapper listened the conversation he secretly recorded again and again until every piece of the conversation became meaningful to him. He paranoiacally elaborated to make the missing words audible, making the best use of audio technology, even that was not the part of his assigned job for money.

In *Blow Out*, the media technology reveals the moment of the gun shot. That the

medium reveals something more than what cannot be seen in the actual world happens in *The Conversation* in the scene of Herry's close investigation of the tape. The audio equipment brings him the visual scene of speech. The film shows flashbacks again and again along with the speech Herry listens. These flashbacks are Herry's subjective point of view, but they represent Herry's condition that the sound image makes Herry not only listen to the conversation, but also see the visual image of the moment of the conversation.

Moreover, as Herry tried to save the persons by his understanding from the conversation, he actually saw and experienced the terrible murder, which was never occurred in real. The incident seemed to actually happen as he had imagined by his narrative construction from the conversation. However, it turned out to be merely the Herry's illusion. When Herry recognized that his interpretation of the conversation was his misunderstanding, though, Herry could not make out if the murder which he had seen was merely his illusion or not.

More radically than *Blow Out*, Herry never approaches to the actual world. He is living in the simulation of the sound image. Even when he tried to save the people, only he did was trying to eavesdrop them. But what is characteristic in Herry's case is that he not only tries to construct a narrative from the image as Jack in *Blow Out*, but also be trapped by the narrative he constructs.

Because Herry is living in the other's narrative, he is empty in the actual reality. While Herry is specialized in wire-tapping of other's conversation and construction of the narrative of their lives, he is so much afraid of telling his story to others that he can never talk about himself even to his lover. He asked a question to a woman why he had to talk about himself to the other. The woman answered, "How people know your feeling, if you do not tell it?" It suggests that even the personal communication is to narrate and to be narrated, and to construct a narrative of the person from these narrations. What Herry is afraid of is this communication; to narrate about himself and to be read by the other. Because he is so sequestered in his own construction of the narrative, he cannot communicate with the real world. He is only trying to construct the narrative, and rejecting to be constructed. Therefore, at the last scene, when he

received the phone call that informed that he was watched and listened by an agent, Henry's world is completely destroyed. His position was reversed from a tapper to a victim who was listened.

Although Herry's position was reversed, it does not mean that he encountered the real world. He is now trapped by another narrative that he is watched by someone. It can be both true and lie that he is actually watched. However, most importantly, the bit of information that Herry is watched has a power to change and destroy his whole world. Herry's world shows that the narrative construction is such a fragile process that it is changed and destroyed by a piece of different information.

Narrative construction through the medium goes to the extreme in the case of Thomas in *Blow-Up*. Like *Blow Out* and *The Conversation*, there is a murder incident which Thomas finds out through the photograph he had taken. We see the dead body in the park. Thomas finds the corpse in real, but that is the most unreal object in the film, as Fredric Jameson says¹⁰. And even the corpse disappears before Thomas gets involved in the solution for the murder case. As David Bordwell pointed out, it is one of the most unsatisfactory narrative if it is seen as a detective film¹¹. The film provides no information about the dead person nor the reaction of the people to the him.

It is almost impossible to classify *Blow-Up* as a detective film. Although Thomas finds a dead body, there is no plot developed by the corpse. Rather, *Blow-Up* is a film about the simulacrum of the dead image. Like Jack in *Blow Out* and Herry in *The Conversation*, Thomas in *Blow-Up* discovers something in the photograph what he cannot find in the actual reality. Thomas even takes photograph of the photograph, and magnifies it until he reaches to the image of the dead body in it. This is what Jameson calls "clearing," the narrative process which produces Being from the vacant ground¹². When Thomas actually went and discovered the dead body in the park, it is as if his photograph made the corpse in real. As Jameson pointed out, this dead body is "already on its way to image- or simulacrum-status."¹³ Therefore, what is special of Thomas is that he produced something anew from the simulacrum of the dead image. This is the biggest difference from other films such as *Blow Out* and *The*

Conversation. In the case of *Blow-Up*, there was no actual incident from the first step. Thomas was examining the photograph without clear expectation that he could find any traces of the murder case. The corpse was almost his creation from the close reading of the empty scene, of the dead image.

This night scene of the park is standing up from the rest of the film by its unrealistic corpse and the difference of the color used. Contrary to the colorful image in the rest of the film, this scene looks almost black and white, as Thomas's black and white photograph. However, at the same time, this is also one of the most realistic scenes in the film. As seen in other works by Antonioni, the trees are shaken by the wind. Citing the words about the wind and the leaves' movement by Lumiere and Griffith, Jameson claims that "the fascination with leaves and their relationship to motion seems to have marked photography (and film) from their beginnings."¹⁴⁾ Nevertheless, this realistic movement also becomes nothing but the simulation of those images in *Blow-Up*¹⁵⁾. The leaves' movement and the wind appear in *Blow-Up* not as a realistic representation of the movement, but as one of the cliché of the film language.

Thomas is taking fashion and porn photographs as a professional photographer. The stylistic photograph is also the simulation of the dead image, since the models in front of the camera are taking postures as they learned from the photographs from the first step. However, Thomas is impotent with those models he is taking photographs, and always irritated by them. The scenes of taking fashion photograph have flourish colors, contrary to the other black and white photograph Thomas takes in the past time.

His private life is also in the simulacrum of the dead image. For example, he is a collector of antiques. That he bought a propeller without any purpose is the evidence which shows that he indulges in the dead things. The scene of antique shopping is also taken in a realistic manner. The long moving shots which show the scenery of the city through the car window punctuate the film by their documentary like atmosphere. However, these realistic shots could also be the cliché of Italian neorealism, which Antonioni is the part of. It is significant to notice that in *Blow-Up* in 1966 neorealism is already used as one of the clichés of the film.

In this simulacrum of the dead, the only thing Thomas was attracted was to “read” the narrative through the photograph he took at the park. At first, it was just a photograph of a secret rendezvous of a couple. However, as he tried to look at the photograph more closely, the dead corpse emerged from it. Jameson paid attention to the plot procedure that Thomas discovered the dead body right after he had sex with two young girls. Jameson saw the links between sex and death in it¹⁶). Actually, the desire for the photograph is often told as an analogy to the sexual desire to possess the object. When one takes photograph of somebody stealthily, this voyeuristic drive is explicitly sexual. Having taken photograph, the lived object turns into the dead image which can be controlled and be in possession of the other. This is Celia’s desire in *Proof*. While the Martin’s photograph is for the proof of his sense toward the reality, Celia’s photograph represents her sexual desire for Martin. Because he is blind, Martin is free from the desire to watch and to be watched. On the contrary, even when she is not taking photograph of Martin, Celia can look at him stealthily, because he is blind. She also wants him to take her photograph, although he has no intention to use photograph for the sexual device. When Thomas in *Blow-Up* takes photograph of a couple, he is driven by this voyeuristic desire. The photographic desire can be based on the sexual desire for the possession of the other and being possessed by the other.

However, what involves Thomas in that particular photograph of the couple in the park is also the desire for narrative construction of others’ lives. The crime case tends to involve people in the decipherment and construction of the narrative coherence. According to Jameson, the narrative is the crucial part that makes the reality real¹⁷). Then, in the midst of the simulacrum of the dead image, Thomas finds something real to him, and, astonishingly, finally makes it possible to emerge the corpse in the actual reality.

No other person pays attention to his discovery. His narrative cannot be shared by anybody. As discussed before, to make the reality objective, the reality should be shared by people. Thomas’s discovery fails to attract the other people so that he was not able to confirm whether the corpse in the park was real or mere image of him.

The group of pantomime suggests the fact that the objective truth is not the actual

fact but which are shared by the members of the society. As they play tennis along with the rule they all share, the shadow tennis becomes real to them so that they can see the tennis ball. Even the camera follows the invisible ball. This reality is merely constructed by the fact that all the member share the pre-existed rules. If the rule is shared, the invisible ball can be an objectively real ball for them. This can be analogies to many other facts in the actual world. Thomas's discovery cannot be objective, only because he cannot share that fact with anybody. At the last scene, he is totally at a loss, facing with the absurdity of the world. If the true reality is merely the matter of the shared narrative, how Thomas could catch "the real"?

Blow-Up suggests that the simulacrum of the dead image still has a possibility to produce something more real than the actual reality, without any reference to the actual world, even it cannot be shared with the others to be the objective truth. It can be said the cinema is a simulacrum, an assemblage of the dead, still images from the first place. However, the cinema is something emerges beyond the mere assemblage of the still images, as described in Hisaki Matsuura's afterwards in *Slow-motion*: "Slow-motion is fictional speed. That is not the time naturally lived in an actual life, but is the fake delay which is arbitrary made. Nevertheless, sometimes, it reveals the very real fact of the life. ... It is paradoxical that an artificial trick discloses the truth of the life. ... Slow-motion is an ambivalent motion, which is "present" and, at the same time, always deviates from the "present"¹⁸⁾.

Proof in 1992 can be read as a film about how to reach the real. The real in *Proof* is different from the actual incident in *Blow Out* and *The Conversation*. As the latest film, *Proof's* real is not natural reality, which is thought as something objectively external to the individual. *Proof* suggests something real which goes beyond the dead image.

The pivotal point of the film is the scene when Martin takes photograph of a leaf. He says, "I took photograph of everything in the park. Nothing reminds for me to take." Andy suggests "There is a leaf under your foot." After Martin took photograph of the leaf, he was delighted saying "I took photograph because I believe in your word." However, when Andy warned that Martin should not believe Andy, Martin affirmed

that if there was really a leaf under his foot or not. Significantly, Martin touches the leaf to confirm Andy's words. This attitude that affirms the world by hands is what Martin used to do in his childhood. Touching is Martin's way to sense the world. Since touching was prohibited by his mother, his world was split into his own sense by touching and other's view to the world by watching. This prohibition gave him the distance to the world and the anxiety about the truth of the world. Then he started getting proof of everything. However, this touching after taking photograph is Martin's restarting to believe in his own senses.

At the last scene, Martin finally quits trying to find the absolute truth in the world. To understand the world as an absolute truth is to reduce the multiplicity of the world to a static, abstract, and dead image. Martin decided to jump into the world of uncertainty, believing in his own sense, not caring about whether his sense could catch the objective truth or not. The last shot of *Proof* is an imaginary flashback of Martin's childhood. Martin touches the windows with full of sensitivity toward the external world. This can be the final analogy to the cinema itself in this movie. It is as if Martin is touching the cinema screen. Unlike still photographs, the cinema cannot be possessed as a still image, it can only be touched. If the cinema cannot be possessed as the dead images, it is more appropriate to be close to the cinema by throwing away the voyeuristic gaze which objectifies the lived moment, and watching the screen as if one is touching on it. The cinema would then reveal the real, lived moment. The movie *Proof*, with self-referential elements, as a conclusion, seems to suggest how to approach the real in the movie.

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- 2) Italo Calvino "The Adventure of a Photographer," *Difficult Loves*, trans. William Weaver (London: Secker and Warburg, 1983), 44.
- 3) Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 2.
- 4) *Ibid.*, 2.

- 5) Ibid., 6
- 6) Ibid., 6.
- 7) Fredric Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 194.
- 8) Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 6.
- 9) David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 48-53.
- 10) Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 195.
- 11) Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 54.
- 12) Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, 193-4.
- 13) Ibid., 195.
- 14) Ibid., 196.
- 15) Ibid.
- 16) Ibid., 195.
- 17) Ibid., 193. "What causes it to come into visibility, however, can only be narrative itself.."
- 18) Hisaki Matsuura, *Slow-motion* (Tokyo: Shicho sha, 1987), 324-325. trans. here Hisakazu Kakeba.

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