

OBSERVATIONAL CINEMA AND EMBODIED VISION

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to discuss the notion of embodiment in respect of Merleau Ponty's philosophy of phenomenology and its relation to observational cinema. For this aim, this thesis dwells on the embodied nature of perception of seeing and its relation to epistemological approaches that understand the process of thinking and knowing either based on dualisms of body and mind, subject and object or interdependency of them. It is argued that phenomenological understanding of bodily experience provides a basis for the constitution of knowledge without a separation of thought and sensuous experience, self and other. Thus, when the cinema is considered as a way of thinking through images or producing knowledge via images, phenomenological perspectives allows us to understand filmmaking, film viewing and film experience in general considering embodied reciprocity between images of other's bodies and our own bodily experience in the world. Since the underlying idea is that language and body involve in each other within experience as being in the world and the body as the house of the language is the structuring structure of it by preceding it.

KEY WORDS: Embodiment, Phenomenology, perception, Observational Cinema, ocularcentricism, Embodied Visuality

ÖZET

GÖZLEM SİNEMASI VE BEDENSELLEŞMİŞ GÖRÜŞ

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Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar Yüksek Lisans Programı
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Bu çalışmanın amacı, bedenselleşme mefhumunu Merleau Ponty'nin fenomenoloji felsefesi ve bunun gözlem sinemasıyla ilişkisi bakımından tartışmaktır. Bu amaçla, bu tez algı olarak görmenin bedensel doğası ve bunun, beden ve akıl, özne ve nesne ayrımlarına dayanan yada onların karşılıklı ilişkisini kabul eden epistemoloji anlayışlarıyla ilişkisi üzerinde durur. Buna göre, bedensel deneyime getirilecek fenomenolojik bir yaklaşım, düşünce ve duysal deneyim, ben ve diğeri ayrımına gitmeden bilginin kurulması için temel oluşturur. Böylece, sinema imajlarla düşünmenin ve bilgi üretmenin bir aracı olarak düşünüldüğünde, fenomenolojik yaklaşımlar bizi film yapmayı, izlemeyi ve genel olarak film deneyimini diğer bedenlerin imajları ve kendi bedenimiz arasında karşılıklı ilişkiyi hesaba katarak düşünmeye iter. Çünkü, mesele şudur ki, dil ve beden, bedenin Dünya'da olmaklığı olarak deneyimde birbirlerini içerirler ve beden dilin yuvası olarak dili öncelemesiyle onun hem kurucu ögesi hem de kurulu yapısıdır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: Bedenselleşme, Fenomenoloji, Algı, Gözlem Sineması, görme-merkezcilik, Bedenselleşmiş Görsellik

To My Mother,

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the project that I involved called “Towards a Deep Understanding of Rural Europe”, we made a field research in order to observe rural life in Anatolia. It was a visual anthropology project and so we used camera in the field as a research method. Learning to use a camera to depict the life in villages is only one part of the process, the most important side of this experience was to live with villagers for one month in each village and participate in their daily life. In the second village, Soğanlı, I had a chance to observe how they relate to their environment and space that they experience. The old village that they had build in past was evacuated, and after that they began to live in another village consisting prefabricated houses. Any time I went to old houses with a villager or to their new houses, I had a chance to compare the image of evacuated buildings at that time to the memories of old village in their mind. After a while, I realized that not only for their relationship to architecture but also for their own spatial experience and consciousness, their body plays a fundamental role in the definition and also creation of space. I listened to their reflections on this old space and observe them in their new life and observed that this transformation resulted in atrophy in their understanding of space. This also helped me to see how body underlies the creation of place through the body's spatial orientation and movement, and its action in language, that is, how they reflect on their own life. The question was how I can show this to other people as a result of our field research. The first thing that I've learned that it is not easy to make visible an idea. After returning to Ankara, my first reaction was to focus on the perception of space and I gave a thesis proposal about the role of the body in the relationship between space and the consciousness of place. However, I realized that the

fundamental problem in the field research has remained unquestioned, that is, the possibility of communicating of an idea by means of visual material. Therefore, I changed the topic and decided on studying body within its relationship to cinema. The thing is that my reading list has not changed except for Kant. Phenomenology was still in the center. Since I've thought that Merleau Ponty's philosophy explains the body's relationship to world in respect of both perception and thinking without a separation of body and mind, subject and object, that is internal and external, I focused on his philosophy and other theories turning around it concerning the film experience. What's the matter with these dichotomies? I can answer to that question by saying that I cannot understand my bodily experience in the world without referring my body. It seems like a tautology but it is not, when we reflect on our perception of the world, we see what Merleau Ponty calls "perceptual faith" convincing us to believe that self and the world have separate beings. Thus, the subject can easily believe that the reality external to him can be objectified and so accepted as completely knowable and translatable into knowledge as if it is a transparent process of mind corresponding to the object external to it. As if my body is like a silent container of this knowledge. The thing is that as the history of documentary cinema showing us that film is a product of the interaction between subject and the filmmaker, perception and expression of this perception as knowledge cannot be understood by ignoring the reciprocity between them as well. In the same way as seeing is not prior to other senses; mind is not prior to body considering thinking, understanding and language. Experience precedes language. This point is my connection to film as an expression of experience. Thus, my thesis aims to reveal how the visual language that tries to produce knowledge visually in the case of observational cinema is rooted in our embodied experience in the world.

For this aim, I tried to examine views that separate mind and body, and Merleau Ponty's understanding of embodied perception in order to compare them first and then I emphasized on the embedded phenomenology in observational cinema by showing the connection between them. By this way, I showed that visual material can be a way of knowing, however, we should rethink and redefine what we understand of perceiving the world and thinking on that perception. It is not that only the mind is active when we are thinking visually or linguistically, body underlies all this process since our first encounter with the world is a bodily experience. Finally, we can say that visual material has the capacity of describing this encounter more than the ways of thinking based on textual tradition.

This thesis will dwell on the notion of "seeing" in the context of the relationship between perception and meaning via concentrating on three different areas of discussion on vision: ocularcentrism, phenomenology of perception and observational cinema. This engagement will evolve around three notions; body, image and perception that will allow us to explore the claim of observational cinema on the surface, but the problem of embodied epistemology in depth. In the following chapters, firstly, we will focus on the criticisms of Cartesian basis privileging of vision in Western thought and discuss the perspective that subordinates sensuous experience to mechanisms of intellect. By this way, we will refer to the problem of the relationship between vision and knowledge. This discussion as the core point of the thesis will help us to identify the difference of phenomenology in its understanding of epistemology and vision than other perspectives in the history. Thus, we will be able to have a better understanding of philosophical basis of the theory of embodied viscosity and its resonance with corporeal image in observational

cinema. On the other hand, this will bring into question the problem of the interference of text with image in visual anthropology in respect of that visual materials are reduced to signs, symbols and other domesticated meanings. Secondly, we will contextualize M. Ponty's philosophy considering his theory of embodied perception considering the relationship between perception and body. M. Ponty is a distinctive figure in phenomenology tradition by raising acknowledged subjectivity rest upon thinking with binary oppositions such as body and mind. From the perspective of newly revived phenomenology, subjectivity constitutes a mutual permeability and mutual creation of self and other. The theory of embodied visuality takes this as an example for cinema spectatorship in which self and world enfolds and it is an intensified instance of the way our perceptions opens up onto world (Marks, 2000:149). In respect of its resonance with phenomenology, I will focus on Vivian Sobchack's film theory exploring the embodied relationship between spectator and film and so the act of film viewing from a phenomenological perspective. Thus, this will provide the basis of third section in the thesis. In this section, we will show in which ways the form of seeing examined throughout this thesis relates to other senses and how it turns out to be an agency of whole body. Under the light of these concepts of embodiment, observational cinema will be examined in rest of the thesis. By way of this attempt, we will see how observational cinema deals with the problem of meaning production while intersecting it with visual sources for the sake of scientific knowledge. We will study in which points theories of embodied perception and visuality purified from dichotomies resonate with the idea of corporeal images presented by observational cinema.

The argument of this thesis is that “seeing” is an act of whole body without any separation of internal and external, body and mind, subject and object. Correspondingly, meaning is produced by whole body not only by conscious thought. In other words, meaning is not constituted only by intellectual conception; it embodies sensuous experience in the act of whole body as well. Images carry the imprints of body as corporeal images tell us, that is, they are the replications of the body’s activity within the consciousness intending to the world in a specific way. For this reason, images have a character transcending linguistics. Hence, the sensuous experience can give the knowledge of it. This transcending character is constituted by our bodily being in the world without a separation of senses and intellect.

How can cinema be closer to understand the lived experience of the body? To what extent can the viewer relate to the image? These questions are significant for this thesis in that the corporeal conditions of seeing underlie artistic creation and scientific concern about other. Grasping this foundation will help us to reformulate and maybe displace the questions about their methodologies and techniques. The problem of vision is discussed within film theory as well as philosophy along with the debate on subjectivity. It is not the aim of this thesis to give an account of how anthropology approach “other” and what its political or ideological reflections are. Neither to trace back all conceptions of vision throughout the whole history of philosophy and itemize them all. What we are concerned about here is the problem of whether embodied visuality can provide a new epistemology in its own right and in this case within from observational cinema. To that end, we will focus on theorizations within observational cinema offering an insight into a philosophical debate.

2. DISEMBODIED EYE

In *Aleph*, our fictional writer Borges (1998) puts forth his intentionality towards Beatriz with the desire of an unchanging self that he sets against the changing universe. This is the gist of the relationship between his love and the infinity. The feeling that is ‘there’ and that will remain there without a change is like it is guaranteed only with an unchanging self without consulting to God. Identified with infinity, love embodies an infinite here and now. The eyes seeing Aleph have such a self that it is the one keeping its unity within time, flowing ‘through’ time and attributing itself an externality with at least its spatial distance to Aleph within space. This self finds itself amazed as Aleph’s spectator against Aleph’s absence and presence. Aleph is like an eye, “the place where, without admixture or confusion, all the places of the world, seen from every angle, coexist.” (Borges, 1998: 144) This eye that is thought to be owned only by God promises to own the world’s knowledge at once, from the deserts of equator to the bones of a hand. Referring to philosophy’s ancient question, Aleph is “*multum in parvo*”; that is plurality in one or it appears as a question of mathematics: “one of the points in space that contain all points.” (Borges, 1998: 144) The fact that this simultaneity is improbable to express because of the language’s being systematic points out to the impossibility of lining of the units of an infinite index, which the mind comprehends at once by attaining a bodily existence. Here, it is possible to liken Borges’s seeing experience to Bergson’s ‘intuition’. In this context, Borges encounters a reality that intellectual is unable to express through language since the language divides the absolute grasped by intuition all at once. However, as a ‘seen’ thing Borges’s Aleph is still different from Bergson’s intuition (2004) because everything happens in the space; that is, it exists

with a materiality transcending the mind. In *Aleph*, Borges is on the basement floor of Carlos Argentino's house, the poet protagonist of the story, and he sees everything with its spatio-temporal existence from a hole. After all, this is the astounding thing for him; a huge incision that is opened up in the middle of the consciousness of the daily experience. Here, 'seeing' seems to have a different meaning. Seeing is an event that carries spatio-temporal materiality, which the daily conscious experiences through Borges's being 'here' in the basement, not an intuition. Borges both experiences an enworlded seeing and he puts himself as a spectator, an unchanging 'self'. "I saw endless eyes, all very close, studying themselves in me as though in a mirror; saw all the mirrors on the planet and none of them reflecting me." (1998:145) This self, which is not reflected on mirrors, is thus presented in a dual relationship that has a separate existence from the thing he looks. An unchanging mind against the changing material universe and an independent 'I' in the position of spectator against the object. Seeing as a perception still seems to be reduced to physical and/or psychological processes and all that secrets Aleph bestows remain to be mere images offered to the understanding of the intellectual. However Borges, as *res cogitans*, still discovers another thing about perception in the impossibility of the thing he sees;

The enumeration, even partial enumeration, of infinity—is irresolvable. In that unbounded moment, I saw millions of delightful and horrible acts; none amazed me so much as the fact that all occupied the same point, without superposition and without transparency. What my eyes saw was simultaneous; what I shall write is successive, because language is successive. (1998:145)

This time his eyes are also amazed at what he has seen. This point of view is, beyond its judgment about language, the product of this view: things in the world are perceived within their relational existence but *Aleph* in this sense offers an exception. It appears in an almost Newtonian absolute space without including the relationship

between things. It is a postulation of the space which is understood as separate from the things. Each object is infinite because they can be seen from all angles in the universe. *Aleph* operates as a machine that turns internals into externals; things display all their internality, now they are seen as things in themselves. Seeing thus gains a contradictory meaning in the story; Borges experiences a seeing practice through his being in the world and he depicts the material conditions of this event in his story but the thing he has seen is quite different from his own world. If we compare these two worlds, while on one side there is an existence within relationalities and a 'looking' at the world again within these relationalities, there is an unbound world and a seeing on the other. However, the interesting thing is that Borges, who puts himself as an unbound self, is astonished at Aleph's capability of providing a vision including all points of views. If being unbound from the world means to be also unbound from one's own body, why does the encountering of an absolute with another absolute amazes Borges? Shouldn't have the correspondence between the two been read only as a sign of the mind's power and efficiency? This 'I', which forms my internality by distinguishing me from other things in the world, becomes absolute as a separate self from its relational existence in the world, that is being in the world. Eyes are almost like windows to the world and seeing is a physical process that provides the internal's disclosure to the external. Or if we consider the reverse, eyes absorb the external to the inside as being transparent, wholly permeant. What recognizes the perceived thing and constructs the world of meaning is not the eyes or seeing but the already given thinking thing, which is 'I' the thinking self. Even if we do not call it the world of meaning, let's call it encountering with ideas, the result does not change much. There is something thinking behind my eyes and my eyes can only be a medium of this thinking. It is as

if this thinking happening inside hasn't got a surface. It is as if I am talking about an infinite power that I am carrying in a finite being. It is a lambent, a mechanism that is scanning the surfaces of the things when it sees them but it doesn't have a surface itself. Like an unreflecting mirror. Behind the eyes a seeing 'I', which does not get in touch with things, is defined. The eyes are reduced to the organs that provide data to senses and 'I' processes this data. The eyes are unworlded aliens in the world. What they see is guaranteed by the things they have seen before. The role of the memory is to fasten this operation and get rid of the undesirables. Like what Borges says in *Aleph*: "Our minds are permeable to forgetfulness; I myself am distorting and losing, through the tragic erosion of the years". (1998:147) Maybe it is not hard to conceive the whole, but it is difficult to keep it in mind. The thing astonishing Borges is the possibility of all the sights of the World to be seen in Aleph that his body cannot see from a limited point of view though he attributes an absolute self to himself, which vanishes when it is considered in the perceptual world. The emphasis on forgetting points at the fact that human beings are in the world and they will comprehend the world by being in the world. It is impossible to reach a competence where everything is conceived in an instant and the objects can be seen in every angle. Then, what makes us be in the world?

2.1. Ocularcentrism in Western Thought

Philosophy is known to be developed in parallel with astronomy in ancient times. These are the times we constructed our knowledge about the universe based on the observations of celestial phenomena just visible to the naked eye. The demarcation of philosophy from "natural sciences" occurred through questioning of

this perceptual seeing itself, that is, doubting about appearances of things and paying attention to the ideas behind them. This was of course a beginning of a new epoch in which the reliability of sense data will be questioned and made distinctions between form and matter, appearance and reality as basic philosophical problems along with a strong belief in mathematical explanation of the universe. This refers not only an epistemological transformation but also means to talk about the ontology of the universe via reasoning rather than of sensuous experience. Plato's cave analogy in *The Republic* (1974) exemplifies this view; the light coming out of the cave is the light of the world of forms and the shadows reflected by the fire on the walls in the darkness of the cave are the objects in physical world. The eyes are condemned to see these shadows in the cave and philosophical enlightenment arises from the realization of the real light outside of the cave, that is, the knowledge of the forms and prisoners are unchained. The visible world and intelligible world are separated. The thing that my eyes see in the visible world is not the true reality but an illusion. The universal reason behind eyes provides the knowledge of reality beyond the perception associated with beliefs and imagination. Beliefs as commonsense are based on accepting the reality of sensory perceptions without the knowledge of their causality. The link between true knowledge and opinion derived from visible world is established by 'thinking', in other words, empirical generalizations of science through a comprehensive education of mathematics. Therefore, sensory perception becomes an object of examination of science by opposing the reason. Mathematics is the Aleph of empirical knowledge in the sense that everything can be clearly seen from every point on the universe systematically by the eyes of reason and this provides us to talk about 'things in themselves' that is the world of forms. Aleph becomes the door of the truth enlightened by the reason on the edge between the

visible and the invisible worlds. Hans Blummerz in his article “Light As a Metaphor for Truth: At the Preliminary stage of Philosophical Concept Formation”, in which he deals with the significance of light as a metaphor for truth in western metaphysics, says, “The metaphysics of light already has a metaphysics of light.” (1954:30) Beyond their metaphorical value, Light and vision basis the conception of truth, which reaches its widest sense with enlightenment, in the history of western thought since Plato. In Plato’s philosophy, there is a difference between the true light coming of Sun outside of the cave and the light of the fire inside of the cave. The light coming outside of the cave is an image of which illuminates and discloses the intelligible world. Seeing this light is the metaphor of seeing the invisible within the visible that is, seeing the forms behind the physical things through these physical things. Whereas the things, which are seen by human perception in the visible world, are merely illusions, the forms are true visions, which are seen and recollected by this resurrected soul. Seeing in Plato’s formulation becomes an expression of the nature of truth or an opening to a transcendence that leaves behind the physical world and its history. Therefore, vision is transformed into a world, which no more necessitates the human eye. Heidegger’s (1961) criticism on the history of western thought primarily focuses on “metaphysics of presence” and he traces back this idea to Plato. According to him, Plato’s philosophy shows that metaphysics of presence originates in the conception of seeing as a model for thought. In “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth”, the origins of such concepts *eidos*, *idea* and *theoria* are based on seeing:

The word *idea* means that which is seen in the visible, the aspect it offers. What is offered is the appearance, *eidos*, of what confronts us. The appearance of a thing is that wherein, as we say, it presents, introduces itself to us, places itself before (*vor-stellt*) us and as such stands before us...and ... is present, i.e., in the Greek sense, it is. This standing is the stability of that which has emerged from out of itself, of *physis*. But from the standpoint of man, this standing-there of the stable and permanent is at the same time the surface of what is present *through itself*, the apprehensible. In the appearance,

the present, the essent [*Seiende*], presents its what and how. It is apprehended and taken, it is the possession of an acceptance, its property (*Habe*), it is the accessible presence of the present: *ousia*. This *ousia* can signify both: the presence of something present *and* this present thing in the what of its appearance (*Aussehen*). (1961:154)

Plato's theory of ideas presents an ocular metaphysics of presence. The important thing is here the visibility of idea, which already exists as a priori, that is, before our experience in the physical world. David Michael Levin (1993) points out that this interpretation of ocularcentric generation of the idea refers to a common nature underlying of both rationalism and empiricism though they are different lines of thoughts. According to this, "they are both rooted in visual experience and share an ocularcentric genealogy":

According to empiricism, all our ideas either came directly from perceptual experience or are at least connected to ideas, which do have a direct perceptual origin. Thus, the idea is, in the most literal sense, an abstraction prized a way from the perceptual object that is its source and referent. An essent (*Seiende*) appears, presenting a face, an aspect. What is seen, perceptively, is a surface the sensible qualities of which constellate, in their abstraction from the object, an *eidos*, an idea of what the appearing object is. According to rationalism, however, the idea is always a prototype, paradigmatic for perceptual experience; it is the source of the possibility of perceptual experience and the referent for the illumination of the meaning that the perceptual object is given. (Levin, 1993:197)

According to Platonism as a rationalist tradition, ideas are eternal and they become reference point for perceptual world by having ontological priority. Thus, seeing as a component of human perception is removed from the area of thinking and knowledge. As Heidegger (1961) points out, *eidos* and *idea* suggest two opposite reality and the visible world is ensured by the ideas that can only be seen by the soul. Thus, seeing means to the light of reason and seeing as sensual perception is blinded under this light. The correlation between understanding and seeing as exemplified in Platonism forms a basis for ocularcentric ways of thinking in the history of western

thought. In *The Life of the Mind*, Hannah Arendt points out “from the very outset, in formal philosophy, thinking has been thought of in terms of seeing.... The predominance of sight is so deeply embedded in Greek speech, and therefore in our conceptual language, that we seldom find any consideration bestowed on it, as though it belonged among things too obvious to be noticed.” (Arendt, 1978 as cited in Levin, 1993:2) This basis which is subjected to discussions on ocularcentrism today not only gives priority to seeing among all other senses but also privileges the reason rather than sensuous experience. This results in an epistemology originated from seeing as a model of thought as Levin states, “our western culture has been dominated by an ocularcentric paradigm, a vision-generated, vision-centered interpretation of knowledge, truth and reality” (1993:2). Nietzsche who is one of philosophers criticizing visual formation in western thought influences Heidegger’s criticism of metaphysics of presence. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, (1956) he brings into question seeing in its literal meaning and philosophers in the history of western philosophy have a look, which is independent from our experiences in the world, too abstract and theoretical for him. Thus, they seek for constructing a scientific and philosophical language alienated from their being in the world as Heidegger points out. They have “an eye that no living being can imagine, an eye required to have no direction, to abrogate its active and interpretative powers.”(Nietzsche, 1956: 255) According to Nietzsche’s view, this refers not only to the fact that seeing is about human perspective but also to the problem of philosophies understanding the world independently from their senses and sensibility. Seeing which is blinded under the light of reason aims to objectify the world and make it absolutely knowable. Foucault accepts that thinking originated in seeing permeates into modern hegemony of vision, modern technology and modern forms of governmentality. (Levin, 1993: 21)

This does not simply imply that surveillance cameras surround us, but to the underlying idea of that the power to see means to power to control. For him, hegemonic vision is transformed into the *cogito* in modern episteme. As Flynn states “The language of the eye that dominated Western epistemology since the ancient Greeks, became the language of the “I” in the *cogito* and in the politics of possessive individualism.” (Flynn, 1993: 273) According to Descartes’ understanding, which separates mind from body, knowing subject sees only with the eyes of mind, which has a perfect symmetry with the all-seeing-eye of the God, contrary to bodily seeing which is merely reduced to illusions alienating the ‘I’ from truths.

2.2. Cartesian Understanding of Vision

In the context of illusions, Descartes (1994) agrees with Plato in questioning the beliefs based on sense data. Descartes finds the perfection of Plato’s forms in his conception of “thinking I” and favors “mental vision” rather than “ocular vision”. It is accepted that this vision is destined to make the reality all-present until it has no unrepresentable aspect. Even if the ways of making the being all visible has been changing during the history, the existence of “metaphysics of presence” remains unchanged. There are two opposite sides which are the reality existing independently form “I” and an unchanging self-examining this reality. This view underlies the claim of seeing the world clearly. “This was of course a familiar narrative in nineteenth-century histories of painting and visual arts; inspired by Italian Renaissance painting and its tradition, critics and historians found it easy to see art history as a progressive conquest of the world of appearances.” (Shapiro, 1993:130) “The empire of the gaze” (Jay, 1993:143) establishes and develops its mediums via

the help of technology for the sake of this ideal. This tendency is complemented with the historical discourse. To make all the occurrences in the world a part of the history is to make them visible. All the textual or visual mediums that try to illuminate the world coincide about the problem of representation. However, it is obvious for Descartes obsessed with having clear and distinct ideas that the mind is already nature's mirror, "in which subjective inner representations of an objective outer order are formed." (Pragmatism, n.d.) The idea of the genuine, geometrical order of world assumed in Cartesian method and optics agrees with the absolute perspective assumed by painting in that "color, depth, the intermingling of objects, and above all the complicity of the viewer in the scene beheld are excluded from this attempt to construe vision on the model of line drawings, diagrams and engravings." (Shapiro, 1993:130) Thus, seeing is reduced to a mechanistic process, which makes the owner of these eyes a passive bearer of it whose subjectivity is already given by reason schematizing the world. Cartesian doubt rejects ocular vision since the perceptual seeing is placed as illusion. Hereby Descartes' view leads to a change engraving the history; he relegates seeing for the sake of the autonomy of reason by changing the definition of seeing and develops a mechanistic, physiological, and geometrical account of vision. In his book *Eye and Mind* (1993) writes that Descartes relies on "the breviary of a thought that wants no longer to abide in the visible and so decides to construct the visible according to a certain model-in-thought." (M. Ponty, 1993:4) In this sense, it seems essential to trace discussions on ocularcentrism back to Descartes for undermining the thoughts which shape the modern world. Seeing is left in ambiguity within the inter-textual discussions on ocularcentrism. Seeing has a privileged position along with a philosophical and cultural hegemony, however, what kind of seeing is that we are talking about? Is our problem the privileged position of

seeing? Or does what is meant by seeing as it is defined within these discussions bother us? In this regard, Stephen Houlgate holds that “It may well be, as a study of Descartes suggests, that modern technological subjectivity rests not so much on the hegemony of vision, but rather on a certain narrow conception of thought.” (1993:88) An inquiry of what Descartes understands by thinking and seeing indicates that they cannot be understood independently from changing definitions of subjectivity in modern thought. From Plato to Descartes, the relationship between perception and thinking is established via mathematics that is transcending its object. This is related to both the ontology of the object and the constitution of the subject. In respect of theory of knowledge, Dewey (as cited in Houlgate, 1993:87) points out that the relationship between subject and object has been always problematic and he claims that the reason of this problem is the form of thinking and theory of knowledge oriented by seeing since ancient Greek. He calls this as “spectator theory of knowledge” which is the view that endstances subject and object in the process of knowing and so the consciousness seeking for the essence or form of the object can objectify it without any intervention. This atrophy of object rooted in the superiority of *theoria* to practice in ancient Greek provides “undistorted representation of what is independently real.” (Houlgate, 1993:87) By the privileging of a spectatorial vision in knowledge, to place subject in a position of spectator is analogous with reifying the object in a spatial distance that means to prior spatial existence of object to its temporality. Dewey suggests “participatory conception of knowledge” instead of “spectator theory of knowledge”. According to this model, the theoretical understanding of the world that provides the correspondence between the reality independent of human activity and the inquirer’s thoughts is abandoned. Instead, s/he operates and participates in generating the knowledge. If it is accepted that all the

knowledge emerges from experimentation, then the object of knowledge will not be fixed with “antecedent existence or essential being”, but will be seen to reside “in the consequences of directed action” in whatever field we are working, be it physics, chemistry, sociology, or psychology”. (Dewey, 1960: 23-214)

Heidegger criticizes this objectifying gaze, too. According to him, a pure theoretical “looking” in “the tradition of philosophy has been oriented from the beginning primarily towards ‘seeing’ (*Sehen*) as the mode of access to beings *and to being*” constrains the virtual existence of the things that generates differences and replaces it with “the uniformity of what is simply present before us” (*die Einförmigkeit des puren Vorhandenen*), that is, “to what is simply there, given as what it is in and by itself, without (apparently) any intrinsic relation to any space of awareness or disclosure. (Houlgate, 1993:91) To assume an object there present before my eyes or the eye of mind in the sense of conceiving the being as given means already to attribute objectivity to it. This is to look at the world from the perspective of Aleph that contains all the perspectives in the world; this is philosophy’s great claim for Heidegger. The conception of being as objective as placed before oneself has transformed the world into a picture as he says “the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture”(Heidegger, 1938:134) To see the picture provided by Aleph, for Heidegger, is to grasp that “the matter itself stands before us just as it stands with it for us” and things take place in the picture by the act of “placing whatever is, itself, before us in the way that it stands with it, and to have it constantly standing before oneself as placed in this way.” (Houlgate, 1993:91) This indicates the act of ‘objectification’ of the world itself not its picture in the sense of an image but in the sense that Things exist as placed before us, as objective and as present to us apparently. There is nothing mysterious or confusing about them, the

only task to do for the mind is to name the apparent properties of the present object. On the other hand, such objectivity demands a conception of subjectivity as the bearer of its own existence, as able to authorize what is to count as present and objective for it and as being the master over this objective reality: “representing is no longer the apprehending of that which presences ... no longer a self-unconcealing for...but is a laying hold and grasping of...What presences does not hold sway, but rather assault rules...(that is) the planetary imperialism of technically organized mankind... technical mastery over the earth” (Heidegger,1938:138) This “technological subjectivity”, which is equating knowing with mastering the world by accepting objects as available objects (*Vorgestellt*) at hand, can be overcome only by the openness to the way of being not to *the being*, which is thought to be the ultimate ground of life or the absolute being beyond *the beings* in the world. Thus, to be interested in the question of “how” things are should be differentiated from the question of “what” things are and we should lean on the first one to get into a real connection to beings in the world by “leaving them to themselves”. (Houlgate, 1993:119) This means not to use the claim of “truth” as base for knowing but to describe the world as in our relationship to it considering our “being in the world”, that is, to be already situated in the world. We understand the world in our relationships to it unlike the ruling “mind” of Cartesian model of thought, which is separated from “body”. The notion of subjectivity as discussed in Descartes’ philosophy maintains the objectifying and mastering gaze of the knowing subject for Heidegger.

Although M. Ponty (1993) as another phenomenologist in 20th century agrees with Heidegger on the abyss of traditional philosophy concerning “the hegemony of a

vision-generated paradigm of knowledge, truth, and reality” and the objectifying gaze as a result of this paradigm, he criticizes him for forgetting ‘body’ in his conception of being in the world. (Houlgate, 1993:119) For him, Heidegger’s “subject” still seems to be a bodiless being in the world. When he criticizes Descartes for his false conception of seeing from which ocularcentrism arises, he undermines the mind-body dichotomy first as the foremost figure in his philosophy. Descartes confines all the beings to a mental schematism that proves the scientific attitude estranging human being and the things around him/her by making inner models of these things to operate on them. M. Ponty, too, mourns for “a feeling of the opaqueness of the world” that classical science relies on, that is, to make constructions of things to get back into the world, as Heidegger holds that for the Pre-Socratic science the being was thought to open itself to the minds open to it. (M. Ponty, 1993:1) However, the modern science thinks “operationally” holding the absolute ‘eye’ of today’s scientists and the Cartesian model of thought contributes the constitution of this knowing subject by distancing it from the knower’s own body as “a being in the world” and the transformation of *theoria* as pure seeing in Greek into “observation” in the modern age. In the point Descartes conceived the world as being in front of my eyes, M. Ponty remarks that my eyes are *in the world* rather than confronting the world as against my presence into it, that is, things are not in front of me as an objective reality but they are around me, I’m *in the world*. For M. Ponty, to understand “being in the world” means to face with the actual existence of body as I live it; human experience as the combination of mind and body starts from this point so my knowing activity, too. He compares artist –especially the painter- with scientist and concludes that only the painter “draws upon this fabric of brute meaning which operationalism would prefer to ignore.” (M. Ponty, 1993: 2) The encounter of

the painter with the world does not resemble scientist's encounter, which is working with models of things in his/her mind. According to this differentiation, the conception of "seeing" in M. Ponty takes form on the base of his understanding of bodily being in the world, so he criticizes Descartes' understanding of vision under such concepts considering his background in phenomenology tracing back to Husserl's conception of "lifeworld". Therefore, Descartes' understanding of seeing as "a model of thought" makes it an extension of the mind just like the thoughts purified from lifeworld. This is what disembodiment of human vision is.

3. EMBODIED EYE

In the first chapter, we tried to explain that the ways of thinking, which give priority to seeing, are nourished by the discontinuity between mind and body that reaches its peak with Cartesian philosophy and that at the same time seeing is subordinated to mind by being reduced to a kind of mechanical process through mentioning ocularcentric ways of thinking. In the second chapter, we will dwell on the new ways of seeing and thinking by emphasizing the phenomenological approach, which can be suggested as being on the opposite side of these views. We will touch upon the idea of ‘embodied eye’, which can be an alternative to the notion of ‘disembodied eye’ that is in the center of the first chapter, and M. Ponty’s philosophy which conceives the relationship between seeing and thinking within mind and body continuity. Then, we will try to understand how this view forms a tool for understanding viscosity by paying attention to the theory of embodied viscosity which is gained by phenomenology.

3.1. Phenomenology of Vision: Maurice M. Ponty

M. Ponty, in his almost every work where he mentioned seeing and thinking, criticized at least for once today’s ways of doing science which he put against classical science, even when he talks about painting in his book *Eye and Mind* (1993), which becomes prominent with his references especially to Cezanne. Science, says Ponty, re-forms the generality of things with the models it takes out from the things, as if the world is a laboratory of the things that need to be explained before our eyes, and then attributes these constructs an absoluteness which is

independent from the things. The relationship of this 'surveying thought', which is the thought of the object in general, with the world of experience, does not go beyond just an encounter from distance. It also brings along the faculty of manipulating things at the same time (M. Ponty, 1993: 5-6) Knowing, through which classic science sees the being as revealing itself; that is, the fact that world's closedness can only be understood by constructs, has nothing to do with today's understanding which acknowledges these constructs as given realities. M. Ponty sees this as a problematic in the ways of thinking, which are penetrated into the methodology constructed on the basis of the observer and the observed dualism, and therefore a problematic in the ways of seeing. Then, it is necessary for us to re-evaluate and re-learn how to see. The world is exactly what we see but the thing is whether we match the thing we see with the knowledge or not. Ponty says that it is hard to learn this without understanding the knower and how to know, or in other words without knowing the act of seeing itself or the perception in general (M. Ponty, 1968: 4) Although M. Ponty leaves this task to philosophy, his criticism is like an invitation to today's sciences. Because, in describing the work of the philosopher Ponty says by emphasizing the relationship between words and things that knowing is not to produce verbal substitutes which will replace the world. On the contrary,

It is the things themselves, from the depths of their silence, that wishes to bring to expression...It is for philosopher the only way to conform itself with the vision we have in fact, to correspond with that, in that vision, provides for thought, with the paradoxes of which that vision is made, the only way to adjust itself to those figured enigmas, the thing and the world, whose massive being and truth teem with impossible details (M. Ponty, 1968:4)

M. Ponty's theory about seeing is based on explaining the paradoxes of seeing and he primarily starts presenting his view by negating the illusion or the dream

arguments of the past, which question the things we see. He suggests that if we did not know what the right thing was once, we would not have known the wrong one and if we can speak of the wrongness of the dreams we should have the experience of the truth (M. Ponty, 1968:4-5) The experience of the truth for him is my being sure of the table that I see, “that my vision terminates in it, that it holds and stops my gaze with its insurmountable density.” (M. Ponty, 1993: 7) The fact giving me this certainty of the knowledge of what being in the world means comes neither from the naïve idea of being in itself nor the correlative idea of a being of representation; rather a being for the consciousness comes from a being for man. That is, I am facing neither an object, whose existence is wholly determined by its being in itself and whose intrinsic properties are known by the pure thought, nor a poor appearance of which I own only the reflection, that is the representation of it. However, science constructs its object exactly on these presuppositions. Science, from the very beginning, leads off with the ‘perceptual faith’, which offers itself an absolute overview that is tangent to the world and this causes science to work by conceiving an absolute subject and object beyond all the variables and relativities. The scientist, against this inarticulate skeleton structure on which he can work through modeling on, establishes himself in the position of the absolute spectator. Because this perceptual faith occurs by attributing a huge gap between the absolute spectator’s internality and externality and when it places perception into the subject, the perceived becomes the physiological manipulating reason for the perception which is wholly independent from the subject. As from the developmental process of perception, perceptual faith impels me into developing the beliefs that firstly my perception goes to things themselves, that is it gives me the sensation of a flesh and bone concrete physical reality, and that secondly the perception exists when it is

sensed, that is perception is mine and that I can perceive on condition that my organs exist. However, according to M. Ponty, perception is something that is both inside and outside of me. This mutuality of perception which does not contradict in direct experience, when science reflected and verbalized, has created two poles: a perceiving subject on one side and a perceived object on the other. Because modern epistemology, by taking this belief a step further, has created the ontology of the being in two different fields, which are objectivist attitude and subjectivist attitude. In the end there appeared an understanding of perception that is completely based on constructs. However, the problem is that science, by forgetting that this is a construct, is not conscious of the fact that it works with the presupposition which perceptual belief takes with. It attributes them an ontological reality. In this respect, the objectivist attitude understands sensation as a sum of certain qualities of the object of knowledge. The purpose is to save the object and its perception from all uncertainties and make it knowable. According to this, perception is over and done with and knowing subject re-establishes the process of perception by taking it into an analytical analysis; now he is constructing the ontology of the object which he takes before himself. All the data of the object that are its knowable and primary qualities in general, which is the data that can be mathematized, have become the reality of the object. On the other hand, in the subjectivist attitude, the sensation of the object is the clashing of the impressions, as a point and an instant effect, with the object outside. Here, most of the work belongs to the mind because it is the one measuring the consistencies of the objects outside. When the sensation is understood in this way, it becomes the field of absolute terms, not of the relationalities. Mind is a self-evident entity; its relationship with the object is determined not with the determinations of the object but with the unifying power of reason.

In the light of these criticisms, M. Ponty in his book *Phenomenology of Perception* (2006) accuses subjectivism and objectivism for ignoring intentionality of the consciousness. Intentionality is briefly the fact that the consciousness is always a consciousness of something. Consciousness cannot be understood as a thing-in-itself but it has the faculty of reflecting on itself. Thus, phenomenology on a point, which is in contrast with the understanding of self-evident subject in Western history of ideologies, establishes the understanding of being on the constant relationship of the subject with the object. The opposite view refusing intentionality, which M. Ponty calls 'intellectualism', although by differing from experientialism and finding the properties coming from experience insufficient it searches for a priori conditions of experience, it puts its idealism not to the object but the subject this time and establishes its understanding of knowledge with regard to the same conception of sense. Looking from the eye of the philosophy of science, we witness the fight between the pure subject and the pure object. The understanding of consciousness, where the world is seen as disclosing in perception, is the common point that the tradition of Husserl and M. Ponty meet. This common approach opposes to the classical epistemology, which sees the world as a world free from all the ambiguousness and consisting of pure and absolute objects. Knowledge is not the compiling of certain aspects of the object. Science, having idealized its object, constructed its subject with the same artificiality. Science, with the knower subject which is free from his being in the world, has moved away from the life-world that Husserl (1970) emphasized, has lost its reality and it has almost been reduced to taking the world's photograph. The perceived world loses its reality which is equivocal, is suspended, slippery and is open to be determined by the context. M. Ponty's solution is clear:

Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to the "there is" which precedes it; to the site, the soil of the sensible and humanly modified world such as it is in our lives and for our bodies—not that possible body which we may legitimately think of as an information machine but this actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and my acts (M. Ponty, 1993: 2)

Here with the emphasis on 'there is', M. Ponty differs from Heidegger's 'being in the world'. M. Ponty understands perception by putting the integral relationality of experience in Heidegger's 'world' into bodily mediation. The point he differs from Husserl is that he presents the impossibility of a wholly philosophical reduction. Because the point reached in the last level of Husserl's phenomenological method is the transcendental ego. However, according to M. Ponty, inhabitation in the world is not an encompassing idea that will consist of all the ideas; that is, it is not a transcendental field of consciousness which will watch its immanence from a bird's eye view and construct it. Rather, M. Ponty in his book *The Visible and The Invisible*, (1968) tries to reunite the internal with the external, the consciousness with the world. According to him, if we understand what the body is, it is not hard to reunite consciousness with the world because these two are actually interdependent, the phenomenological description of the body teaches us this:

The body unites us directly with the things through its own ontogenesis...It is the body and it alone, because it is a two dimensional being, that can bring us to the things themselves, which are themselves not flat beings but being in depth, inaccessible to a subject that would survey them from above, open to him alone that, if it be possible, would coexist with them in the same world (M. Ponty, 1968:136)

In the understandings of seeing, M. Ponty puts forth spatiotemporal dimension of distance of the depth against Descartes' two-dimensional universe and continues on by adding the simultaneity of the past and future to the body's presence now. Owing

to this depth, I experience things at certain distances but both inside and outside myself at the same time and the possibility of this takes M. Ponty to a new ontology: flesh. Ponty, by taking Husserl's view of engagement of consciousness in the world a step further, separates the existence and thought of existence from each other and says that existence itself is just the totality which incarnate consciousness prepossesses. This pre-reflective situation is the experience's embodied inseparability and unity before the consciousness reflects by turning on its own act and questions the 'how's and 'why's. M. Ponty says that if this unity did not exist, nothing will be knowable and thinkable. That is, he describes a state of consciousness which exists before language without the language; this consciousness means the unmediated relationship of the body with the world.

The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term 'element' in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. (M. Ponty, 1968:134)

Thus, M. Ponty makes the intelligible ideality and sensible, between which exists a huge gap in Platonism, closer to each other and emphasizes on the fact that they are made of the same fabric:

Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is one of them. It is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrustated in its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the very stuff of the body. (M. Ponty, 1993:3)

Flesh is the one which is the body's relationship with the world, the ontogenesis of the body, one that makes us be in a multidimensional world here and now, one that gives the being a thickness. As a means that provides our setting up a relationship

with the world, flesh is a thing to which ideality is not alien but on the contrary to which this ideality brings itself a depth, axes and dimension. That is, it is defined as the idea as the invisible of the visible (M. Ponty, 1968:152) According to M. Ponty, phenomenological field is not a state of the consciousness, not a psychic phenomenon; that is, it is not a kind of reflection of the external world into the internal world but is on the contrary a state of intertwining of the two. This is the intertwining and reversibility of the sensate and the sensible. He establishes the ontology of the flesh in the details of perceptual faith, which exists in the pre-reflective level, with the example he gives on the basis of touching and seeing. The moment that will enable subjectivity happens when my right hand touches my left hand. The encroachment between the touching and touched includes an immanent reversibility instead of a dualism. Therefore, my body that I can touch can never feels at the same time it's touching and is being touched, there is a gap between the two that is not grasped in the direct perception; there is a noncoincidence between ourselves as touching and as touched: "either my right hand really passes over into the rank of touched, but then its hold on the world is interrupted, or it retains its hold on the world, but then I do not really touch it" (M. Ponty, 1968:148) Because touching and touched are not the two different layers of being in the world and that they are reversible, body has the capacity of being both the perceiving and the perceived. This means that we cannot touch to ourselves or to another body without recognizing our tangibility or the fact that we are touchable by others. Thus, we understand that every differentiation made in the context of the artificial separation between the touching and the touched in the history of philosophy until now disregards this spontaneity experienced on the pre-reflective level and the spatio-temporal simultaneity and understands our being in the world via dualities. In a more

accurate way, it disregards our being in the world and approaches to the world from absoluteness of either the touching 'subject' or the touched 'object'. However, embodied subjectivity that M. Ponty presents exists neither in the tangibility of the body nor in its touch only, rather it appears thanks to the intertwining, the chiasm, of these two sides, on the point where these two overlap. This is also an emphasis to the fact that the chiasmic relation does not bring an identity because the touching and the touched are never the same thing; they cannot be reduced to each other. M. Ponty, by emphasizing on the chiasmical relationality between them, breaks up the dualities of mind and body, self and world, and idea and sensible and associates them with the embodied flesh, suggesting that:

Does not mean that there was a fusion or coinciding of me with it: on the contrary, this occurs because a sort of dehiscence opens my body in two, and because between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is overlapping or encroachment, so that we may say that the things pass into us, as well as we into the things (M. Ponty, 1968:123)

This encroachment emphasizes on the fact that the world has the capability of changing us as well as our capability of changing it. There is mutuality; that is, the understanding of a subject who has the chance of making choices and whose rationality is prioritized remains behind for Ponty.

At this point, it is needed to understand better what is said so far about touching in order to understand seeing, which is the subject of this thesis, because Ponty says that there is also a kind of encroachment relationship between these two.

We must habituate ourselves to think that every visible is cut out in the tangible, every tactile being in some manner promised in the tangible, every tactile being in some manner promised to visibility, and there is encroachment, infringement, not only between the touched and touching, but also between the tangible and the visible, which is encrusted in it, as, conversely, the tangible itself is not a nothingness of visibility, is not without visual existence. Since the

same body sees and touches, visible and tangible belong to the same world (M. Ponty, 1968:134)

Then, we are not talking about a situation for Ponty where seeing is prioritized over touching or other senses and even thinking and feeling. He refers to the chiasmical relationship of the senses. He says that touching and seeing are not superimposed but at the same time in experience they cannot be separated with precise boundaries from each other. The thing making them meet on a common point is body, which is in a reversible relation with the world thanks to the embodied flesh.

Just as the sensuous comes from a common source, the source from which the seeing and other senses come is the same pre-reflective unity. When I reflect on the pre-reflective unity of the perception, all the elements of the perception which I feel densifying at certain locations on my body become an inseparable unity in my direct experience. M. Ponty's is such a design of the world that it is on the edge between the visible and the invisible, as boundaries transcending each other, as the reversibility of external and internal and as modes of flesh. From this point, we can conceive seeing in M. Ponty better. Because we hold a view about the ontology he constructs through not producing seeing from within but through starting from the seeing, the senses. He describes this idea in his book *Eye and Mind* well:

The enigma derives from the fact that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the "other side" of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself. It is a self, not by transparency, like thought, which never thinks anything except by assimilating it, constituting it, transforming it into thought—but a self by confusion, narcissism, inherence of the see-er in the seen, the toucher in the touched, the feeler in the felt—a self, then, that is caught up in things, having a front and a back, a past and a future.... (M. Ponty, 1993: 3)

Thus, by emphasizing that body is perceiver and also perceived and this is the condition of perception, M. Ponty rejects the views that separates subject and object. Now we can clearly conceive on what kind of ontology he bases his criticism of Descartes. Descartes' object is constructed on the similarity between the object outside and its the mirror image as the reflection of this external object; it is only an external denomination, it belongs to thought. (M. Ponty, 1993: 7) The relationship between these two is again an external causality and mind already has this causality as a model-in-thought. The thing that Descartes sees is only an externality, not a flesh (M. Ponty, 1993:46); it is the idea which constructs the similarity between the image and the mechanics of the object and is also this idea whose relationship with the body is broken.

Vision is not the metamorphosis of things themselves into the sight of them; it is not a matter of things' belonging simultaneously to the world at large and a little private world. It is a thinking that unequivocally decodes signs given within the body. Resemblance is the result of perception, not its basis. Thus, the mental image, the visualization which renders present to us what is absent, is a fortiori nothing like a breakthrough to the heart of Being. It too is a thought relying upon bodily indices—this time insufficient ones—which are made to say more than they mean. Nothing is left of the oneiric world of analogy.... (M. Ponty, 1993:8)

The object constructed with intellectual images is defined with the externality of the object. Then, these images are the substitutes of the objects that show space where no space exists. However, according to M. Ponty thinking is not enough for seeing because vision is a conditional idea, it emerges via the thing happening on the body and it is pushed by the body to thinking (M. Ponty, 1993: 55) We can suggest that thinking for M. Ponty starts in the first relation we establish with the world. However, it has not recognized itself yet. The moment when it realizes this, it tries to formulize the thing experienced and theorizes it. The problem in Western metaphysics is the fact that we are mistaken by presenting the constructs, which we

have theorized from our experiences with the world, as the reality itself. It does not matter whether these constructs move from within internal to external or from external to internal, it is making the idea conform to different identities' syllogism by separating the two from each other. When Descartes was saying that the laws of the mind exist in nature, he implies that judgments come before the senses. However, it is a matter of construction of the perception within the judgment but this construction is not a priori to the perception but arises from it. In the sense, there remains some part which cannot be reduced to being the perception of the object, as it is in the irreducibility of the biological realities to mathematical physical variables. Therefore, Descartes reduces seeing to a mere mechanistic operation by conceiving it according to a model-in-thought.

3.2. Embodied Vision and Its Epistemology

Phenomenology proposes understanding the existing perceptual conditions before this object is constructed by science. On the other hand, by perceiving these conditions as intellectual entities either as independent from the thinking self or as the a priori conditions of the experience, the objectivist point of view constructs its object with an approach that is not condemned to a subjective point of view. In this respect, objectivity is seeing the object from all the points of view. It is also the reason for the eye, the look and the seeing occupying a privileged place in epistemology or the formation of the idea since the understanding of that an object is purged from its temporality and given with its spatial coordinates is dominant. The only sense which is able to solve these geometric codes is the eyes because the eyes are the windows from where a given rationality opens to externality. And their only

task is to perform a physical operation and function only as a conductor. Science is in search for Aleph, the all-seeing eye will at the end reach the object's being as thing-in-itself. However, according to M. Ponty, the beliefs that our perception is over in objects or in non relativistic realities, along with the understanding of truth independent from the subject, arises from the natural attitude which we produce in perception that is our primary relationship with the world. In the history of thought, the biggest step of reality like the one abovementioned is the discovery of the idea that human mind is able to reach truth independently from its object. M. Ponty draws attention to the fact that a looking factually without a perspective is not possible in perception. My body's being here and now includes my looking at the world only from one angle. Ponty describes seeing with two aspects of it: its spatiality and temporality. The phenomenological field where looking emerges appears primarily within a figure-ground relation. When my consciousness, which always exists as a consciousness of something, is directed at an object, the ground becomes vague. Because I experience this process from one point of view that my bodily existence in the world brings along, internal horizon of the object becomes clear when my looking is focused on the object; thus, I can discover it from different perspectives and this is only possible with my body's moving around the object. Therefore, my ability to see the object from different points of view and to synthesize all the sights operates depending upon my ability to do, that is "I can", before my ability to think. Another thing for the differentiation of this object from the other things around it is its external horizon. Things existing in the external horizon of this object also watch this object along with me. The seen and the unseen will always remain as the two different faces of perception. Therefore, I think that I can perceive this object, which I perceive as differently from other things, by putting my looking into angles

different than mine although I do not see it from all angles. My tendency to think of the object which is not actually seen since it exceeds a certain point of view, in other words, as the thing-in-itself or the objective reality seen from infinite perspectives is supported by the fact that my looking can put itself to everywhere and replace all of the objects, that is, the spatiality of look. “ The construction of the idea of ‘thing in itself’ presupposes a temporal synthesis that generates a feeling as if we can sum up all the perspectives provided by mobility of the body in the present moment” (Direk, 2003: 41). Temporality, on the other hand, with the time’s movement of holding the past and foreseeing the future, provides the content of perception being embedded into the time between the past and the present. Owing to the temporal horizon, my perception is no longer a factual now that flies away and it becomes a point of objective time which is constant and identical. However, this synthesis not only constructs the invariability of the content of perception but also brings a visibility from all temporal perspectives, a fictional eternity. Thus, the thing-in-itself which can be seen from all perspectives becomes a thing that can be seen from all times. On the other hand, my relationship with other is primarily a spatial one since on the level of my bodily feelings and intentions I face it as a matter of ‘being in the same world’ with another. The other is another I since I know that I can replace it, thus I know that it is also a spectator like me. Because the science’s absolute object demands being visible from all angles, it has finally been made a total of a set of qualities by the empiricists. These qualities are thought as things existing permanently against a look that arises from nowhere. And this takes us to the construct of the thing-in-itself which we cannot escape. However this state of disregarding the condemnation of the body to a point of view is actually the body’s itself to be pushed to a position of a mere object among other objects. In this way, the way for subject-object distinction

is paved for. The thinking self is separated from the living self and the living self turns into a cover around the knowing ego. In this respect, M. Ponty proposed an 'existential' approach with Husserl's (1970) *Lebenswelt* "the world of our lived experience" understanding by taking the 'intentionality' concept a step further and returning the transcendental bases of his philosophy to the practical. In Ponty's existential phenomenology, meaning is in every situation a combination of subjective and objective experience. And this synthesis can never be understood by differentiating the body from its lived experience. However, Husserl accepts the fact that the essence of the things caught up in the conscious experience with the transcendental reduction, which is the last level of the phenomenological inquiry, is universalized with a total bracketing of the existence. Ponty refuses this idea. According to him, with the concept of intentionality Husserl revolutionized in the Western thinking, which objectified the consciousness as a thing-in-itself, but he equals subjectivity to intersubjectivity and makes it objectively available to any existence thus the concept of *Lebenswelt* contrasts with the notion of universal ego. Intentionality, the fact that the conscious is always a consciousness of something, is an invariant correlative structure of the acts of the conscious but this consciousness always belongs to an embodied subject rather than a disembodied and transcendental subject. Because it is embodied, existence is lived, situated and in motion all the time and thus always produces unfinished relationality. This materially and historically situated and finite lived-body subject is condemned to meaning since the consciousness exists as an intended flesh as long as the body lived. This is a continuous disclosing and completing process of the meanings and thus these meanings are experienced in a state of disclosure that I attributed to my body and made it mine. The thing forming the unity of the meaningful experience is not the

body's being merely an object in the world but its being a subject also; it is perceptively subjective and it engages with the world owing to its objective modalities as an expression of this perception. M. Ponty expresses this in this way: "Every perception is a communication or a communion, the taking up or completion by us of some extraneous intention or, on the other hand, the complete expression outside ourselves of our perceptual powers and a coition, so to speak, of our body with things" (M. Ponty, 2002:373) Thus, perception should be understood my being in the world that provides me to reach to the world rather than being a total of the senses or a psychic phenomenon, since the expression of perception is the gesture of the perception.

From its first breath, the lived-body constitutes both an intrasubjective and intersubjective system in which being is both understood and signified as significant -that is, as intentional. In that every lived-body is both the subject of perception and expression and an object for perception and expression, every lived-body lives the commutation of perception and expression in a simultaneously subjective and objective modality. And because intentionality is articulated in existence through the agency and activity of the lived-body being-in-the-world, every conscious lived-body is semiotically and hermeneutically component in its ability to commute perception to expression and back again." (Sobchack, 1992:41)

Language, according to M. Ponty's philosophy, can not be understood as the subject of the linguistics or by separating into syntaxes and semantics. The body itself with its being in the world is the one that constructs the basis for language. Language and communication do not emerge since my body is an instrument of the perception; it has already been communicating with the world due to its own structure since my body in itself is actually perspectively and intentionally engaged with the world. The perception itself is already an experienced expression. In the highest level of expression there is speaking, then is writing but it is experienced in the body before

that. The body is not a transparent transmitter of the ideas that these speeches include but is on the contrary the source as the producer. In this respect, M. Ponty says:

By these words, ‘the primacy of perception’, we mean that the experience of perception is our presence at the moment when things, truths, values are constituted for us; that perception is a nascent *logos*; that it teaches us, outside all dogmatism, the true conditions of objectivity itself; that it summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action. It is not a question of reducing human knowledge to sensation, but of assisting at the birth of this knowledge, to make it as sensible as the sensible, to recover the consciousness of rationality” (M. Ponty, 1964b:25)

These sentences refer to the fact that analyzing the perception shows us how it forms the basis of significance and semiosis as the field of experience in other words as the world of consciousness before putting itself as the world’s consciousness that is as the world which the consciousness expresses to itself. Thus, it tells us that language is not a thing that can only be understood in the relationship of signifier and signified, that the relationship between the two is always mediated with the body and in this way it forms a multi-layered unified system of differences. If body did not exist, then the thoughts would not exist. Thus, in order to understand the thoughts and their ways of being formed, we need to look at how the relationality of the body with the world, which starts in perception, is constructed. Then, how will a kind of knowing that the thoughts existing on the basis of this bodily existence may cause be constructed by the existential phenomenology? First of all, it is clear that M. Ponty is not worried about reaching the essence of the things, which can be understood as their being in themselves. According to him, there is a three-level reflection process possible: the phenomenological description, the phenomenological reduction and the phenomenological interpretation. Firstly, we focus on the pre-reflective perception that is the immanent unity of the body with the world in the living world, what is

immediately present to our consciousness. We focus on the perceptual faith mentioned above, which is our natural attitude and we bracket it. Here, the function of bracketing is not to ignore the natural attitude in the next level but to see its place and function within our experience from a reflective distance. Our presuppositions, which do not exist in the pre-reflective level but which we own when we start to reflect on our experience, are included in the natural attitude. This reflection here shows us that the world continuously exceeds my perception and also all of the expressions that I produce on my perception, which means that a description of the phenomenological world is not a process that can be completed. That is, it is not possible for me to make a whole reduction, in contrast to what Husserl states. In short, the field of experience is a continuity whose definition always slips from my hands. Thus, the road departing from the understanding of the world of the things-in-themselves to the reality of experience is such a complicated one. On the other hand, with this description I learn that the pre-reflective embodied experience, which existed before speaking and reflecting, is the basis of my all reflections and expressions. “Phenomenological description returns us to the speaking subject who, from the first, is engaged in expressive acts that literally and figuratively ‘lend interest’ to that ‘acquired fortune’ by drawing upon it and investing it in a particular, personal existence” (Sobchack, 1992:44) In this way we get to understand that language is as embodied as the one speaking it because we do not produce words to substitute reality by speaking but conversely we expand the enworlded experience and move the body beyond its situated state. Secondly, we thematize the phenomenon by reflecting on the consciousness itself to identify the structural existence in a particular embodied consciousness. The way of this kind of reflection is to use of free imaginative variation “that contextualizes features of the

phenomenon within the whole and that allows for comparison and contrast of the phenomenon with other phenomena like and unlike it, a pattern of experience emerges, and with it emerges also the shape of the phenomenon as it is intended in the experience” (Ihde, 1974 as cited in Sobchack, 1992: 49). What this level will teach us is that all our judgments we produce on our conscious experience and our conventional vocabulary, which we use for the expression these judgments, are embodied in our pre-reflection existential speaking. Lastly, phenomenological interpretation allows us to understand the meaning, which is the intentional correlation between consciousness and the phenomena in the particularity of the lived-body’s own existence. Thus, the relationship between the described experience and thematized consciousness is clarified and we find the embodied value relationship between them. As Sobchack points out; “You need to experience and describe before you start interpreting, before you analyze and theorize, before you abstract” (Sobchack, n.d.) The reason for a short inclusion of these methods here is to clarify how all our existence is embodied if we are to look at the world with the phenomenological method. Phenomenology, in this sense, develops a different way of knowing along with presenting a different ontology. Because the subject of this thesis is the role of seeing in acquiring knowledge, we are coming closer to understanding the conditions that makes seeing embodied and the potential of this situation to change our point of view in terms of knowledge. It is not an easy process to obliterate a deep-rooted epistemological tradition, which tries to understand the phenomenal world by separating the thought from the body. Moreover, here we will try to examine what this subject in terms of the film experience means. When considered also in terms of film theories, the situation regarding the creation of problematic dualities is not much different from the problems existing in the

understandings that have formed the Western history of thought. We believe that phenomenology will help us to find ways to overcome these problems on one hand and help us to understand and describe the existential and emotional sides of the film experience beyond a semiotic analysis done through sticking to the texts on the other hand.

When considered within the scope of the understanding of perception given in the previous two chapters, it is seen that vision contrasts with the understanding of vision which is handled in ocularcentrism. The understanding of perception exemplified with M. Ponty above all differs with the understanding of sensation that the classical science puts against rationality. With the science's interpretation, the subject and the object seem to be two different poles escaping continuously from each other with a Cartesian separation and science on the other hand seems to be continuously in a hurry to fill in this gap. However, existence in M. Ponty's philosophy is first known for its intentionality and the connection between the two poles is set up from the start. After all, we are talking about an existential experience in that subject and object cannot be separated from each other. If seeing is considered in this sense, vision as a modality of perception has a gestalt structure and is in common with perception in its intentional nature. Vision is intentional due to its structure. It always acts in correlation with an object, it is always *seeing of*.

Like intentionality, vision is directional in structure... Vision is always directed in function. It informs embodied existence as a finite and yet reversible motility. Thus, the movement of existential vision acts to diacritically differentiate and mark the visible from the invisible, the figure from the ground, the seen from the seer; and yet it also acts to transform each to the other or inform each with the other (Sobchack, 1992: 86).

Invisible side of the experience forms the basis for the visible but not as a formal condition but as also determining its content. We can say that invisible is not a result of a mind's reasoning but it is as empirical as the vision itself. Therefore, when seeing things, we are in an act that structures the world as well as obeying a structure. Sobchack defines seeing as followed: "It is an activity of existential and semiotic choice in which the visible is inscribed in that *syntagmatic combination* called "visual field" as a process of *selection* from the invisible, those *paradigmatic possibilities* offered by the world as horizon." (Sobchack, 1992:87) Considered in terms of spatiality and temporality of perception, we mentioned that internal and external horizons of the objects are disclosed through vision. However, this horizon does not only point to a physical process but also processes the gestalt structure in terms of the world of meanings. According to this, we do not discover a given reality existing outside of us by going towards it; we are in an act of continuously constructing and selecting the meaning of the world for us. After all, the invisible always accompanies the visible. Then we can say that although the seer can fix the things that s/he saw in the visual field, on the edge between the visible and the invisible, with now, this now both includes the past that determines the intentions and the future that is foreseen. My body is a fold as both spatially and temporally. What makes vision existential is the fact that it always embodies the unknown as already being a fold. M. Ponty, for this reason, calls vision and the act of viewing as a modality of perception a 'wild signification', because vision has not yet divided itself in the pre-reflective state of experience. When the 'natural attitude', which we mentioned before, is not yet aware of the fact that it is the one seeing, that is when the unseen is not directed to the originator of the act in a way as how a baby or a cat sees the world, the vision merely intend to the seen world. Their vision is only from

within experienced. However, just as the consciousness has a structure of returning back to itself and thinking about it, vision also returns back to itself and recognizes itself. “It can reverse its dominant and natural directedness toward the visible world back to world its own directed and invisible activity of making the world visible”. (Sobchack, 1992:88) Thus, vision transforms into my own vision breaking apart from anonymity and invisibility, and the consciousness finds its origin in my subjective body that saves it from this anonymity. This is what M. Ponty calls as ‘vision as thought’; that is, the consciousness’ thinking itself as body-subject and becoming personal. We observe here that the consciousness functioning operatively at natural attitude can make deliberate choices from now on. “Seeing, in this reflective and reflexive turn expresses itself in perceptual existence as the deliberative intentionality that emerges from a body lived as a visible subject” (Sobchack, 1992: 98). In this way, vision not only provides us the access to the seen and unseen world but at the same time it provides us to see ourselves as both the seer and the seen, as visual subjects. Then, at this point it is worth to remind the point that is continuously repeated throughout this thesis: vision has a central role at the level of constructing of the self and the other in M. Ponty’s philosophy but that understanding of vision is experienced not as a product of a movement from an external world to the inside but as an act of seeing ‘from the inside out’ because above all it will be the product of the mutual relationship of the internal and the external.¹ Self is both positing and the posited. That is, it is the subject of the vision so it is not merely a direct object of the visible. “The self therefore, is the subject of vision as well as the visible Other’s direct object of vision” (Sobchack, 1992: 99). At

¹ As in Lacan’s view: Lacan says that self is formed when I see my own image in the mirror phase but that image is something coming from out of my body.

the same time, self is not a transcendental thing as a product of a Cartesian questioning or as a product of a judgment of only the mind by breaking up from the sensation. Self, a thing understood rather than a thing-in-itself, emerges in its relationship with the empirical world. Seeing leads to speaking; it is open to see the world by recognizing itself and expressing the things it sees at a higher level. With this part, we are getting closer to understanding the ‘visual thinking’, which is one of the arguments of this thesis. Thinking is a process starting in the body, not a thing that starts and finishes in the mind. It bears the traces of the relationships established with bodies and this reflective act is rewriting, speaking and rethinking of the bodies. We see, think and express the experiences with the other and this will always be filtered from the self as being the embodied subject.

3.3. Phenomenology and Film Experience

The phenomenological approach that M. Ponty presents has taken the attention of film theoreticians and especially the spectatorship studies since the 1980s. However, it can be stated even today that Hollywood cinema and even commercial films changed their relationships with the senses, and even they are so devoted themselves to create new bodily codes in the scale of desire politics that they produce, the approaches concerning bodily experience still have a very limited appeal within film studies. Vivian Sobchack’s book *The Address of the Eye* (1992), which is focused on in this thesis, is one of these rare studies of body. Sobchack, in this sense, was our focus since she presented a wide scale study that would be helpful in understanding film experience in terms of its relationship with language and thinking, in other words, since the context of the thesis is not only the relationality of seeing with other

senses and sensuous experience of cinema but also its epistemological position in social sciences as we will see in the next chapter. When she started her studies about phenomenology, Sobchack suggests that film theories are under the influence of mainly two views: psychoanalysis and neo-Marxism. These two theoretical paradigms worth appreciation in terms of understanding the productive function of language between the psychic and the social life, that it brought in a new horizon to structuralism. However, according to Sobchack, these theories remained lacking in understanding the experience in its embodied conditions although they made the internal and external processes of the human experience come closer to each other. The experience they define is not the embodied experience I live as mine. In this respect, the following words from Sobchack worth quoting:

A libidinal theory of the subject based on sexual difference and unconscious, pre-rational experience, psychoanalytic theory has performed its own sexual objectifications that mutilate the simultaneous integrity, mutability, and sensuous materiality of the lived-body subject and dissect, abstract and fetishize certain body parts as if they had a life of their own, as if they determined or were the whole of a person. A rational philosophy of history grounded in objective, concrete, social praxis, contemporary Marxism (if not Marx) has neglected the pre-reflective, pre-rational, libidinal life of the body-subject and has elided certain experienced aspects of concrete praxis –losing Marxism’s original dialectical power by obscuring the sensuous materiality of the lived-body subject and by objectifying and reducing material existence to “materialism” and sensuous experience to “commodity fetishism.” (Sobchack, 1992: xvi)

Her move is “to describe and account for the origin and locus of cinematic signification and significance in the experience of vision as an embodied and meaningful existential activity”. (Sobchack, 1992: xvi) According to her, film is “an expression of experience by experience”. (Sobchack, 1992: 3) M. Ponty uses the same expression to emphasize the material and carnal basis of language: “In a sense the whole of philosophy...consists in restoring a power to signify, a birth of

meaning, or a wild meaning, an expression of experience by experience, which in particular clarifies the special domain of language” (Merleau Ponty, 1968:155) Pre-reflective experience is the side of the experience that has not been verbalized or expressed in written language yet. Phenomenology tries to describe the experience but this description is something starting with reflection. The consciousness puts this to the oral or written language by reflecting on itself, which is the ‘formal significance’. In this sense, language can constrain the experience into a limited universe because the experience can get caught to the habituations or the institutionalizations of the reflective knowledge, but experience flourishes owing to language. This incomparability leads us to find new ways to express our experience better and refresh our language. Phenomenological description can be one of these ways for Sobchack since it introduces us a new language constituted by the immanent unity of our experience with the world, that is, “with the living exchange of perception and expression, with the sensuous contours of language, with meaning and its signification born not abstractly but concretely from the surface contact, the fleshly dialogue, of human beings and the world together making sense sensible” (Sobchack, 1992:3) This is the “reversibility between perception and expression” and this reversibility can also be applied to the film experience. The semiotics here is not a linguistics that reifies the subject but it is the catching of the speaking subject in the act of speaking. If the body-subject intends to the world as the expression of its intentionality, then it signifies this intentionality; that is, the human body becomes a source of the communication even because of a reason that arises from its physical existence. When trying to understand the film, it is like we are expressing to ourselves a thing that we have already known. Sobchack talks about a pragmatic language of embodied existence that is common to filmmaker, spectator and to the

film itself. The film perceives as I do and the common characteristic of the perception coming from the body's existence can be applied to these two bodies, they are both the embodied subjects that try to express their perception by intending toward the world. They differ in their material but for both of them 'the perceiving mind is an incarnated mind'. The film object is neither a mere 'expression-in-itself', as the formalist film theories accept, which is a sole bearer of the meaning from the construction of the film, nor it is a purified transparent window to the world from its subjective extensions as the realists accept. In epistemological terms, this brings us to the same mistake, which M. Ponty criticizes as we have mentioned before, that intellectualism or the 'subjective psychologism' and 'objective empiricism' falls into respectively. Film should not be understood merely as a visible object. Film is also a viewing subject that has intentionality and that performs the act of viewing. Spectator views the film but at the same time the film also views. It is both the seer and the seen. Then, we can talk about the body of a film that "the film no longer merely contains sense, significance, and meaning. Rather, it possesses sense by means of its senses, and it makes sense as a 'living cohesion', as a signifying subject. It is this signifying subject that it existentially comes to matter as a significant object, that is, can be understood in its objective status by others as sensible and intelligible" (Sobchack, 1992:23). Just as my body is both the subject and object of vision, then film is. Just as my body does not exist only as an object among the objects in the world, then film is not an object that can only be viewed. That is, both the film and the spectator is embodied and also mutually enworlded. They both have unique lived bodies and intentional projects formed according to these bodies, and "each act of perception visually realized as viewing-view and visibly expressed in the production of a viewed-view" (Sobchack, 1992:261). It is not to say that a film is a subjective

one because it is produced by a subject. Even this view still presupposes the film as only an objective object of vision. Rather, this means that the film also has a lived body and although its materiality is different from the human's, they both have a reflex of developing a reflection intended to their pre-reflective experiences. Thus, "both can and do transcend the immanence of their immediate bodily experience, generalizing and using their lived-bodies and concrete situation in the world to imaginatively prospect the horizon for the future projects and possible situations and to re-member experience retrospectively" (Sobchack, 1992:261). Sobchack terms this transcendence as the 'address of the eye', which means "a visual address always housed in a situated body experienced as mine and yet always also able to extend itself to where that body is not" (Sobchack, 1992:261). The contemporary film theory turns the spectator into a passive body and turns the film into a mere disembodied visual screen by making a Cartesian differentiation. Thus, the meaning becomes something coming out of the screen, taking the spectator under its influence and alienating it. When considered in terms of the spectator, there is most likely Lacanian identification but it causes "the formation of the subject's own ego from an image at a distance...structures all human knowledge as paranoid" (Joan Copjec, 1983: 43). Thus, the film turns into an apparatus that the ideology, which causes a destructive effect on spectator's identity, dominates. The problem is not the emphasis made on the determining role of the film between the psychic and the social but it is the turning of the spectatorship into an unintending body-object because the autobiography of the lived body-subject, which determines its whole intentionality, is left out of the theater. It is somehow invisible in the film's body perception and in its expression of this perception, and then the spectator erroneously takes this invisible one as his own perception. However, here the fact that the embodied beings are

always active is ignored; my vision is as active as the film's. After all, the thing giving vision its thickness is the subjective experience as being the invisible side of vision because my bodily existence continuously informs me about how and what I will see. Sobchack corrects this view as followed: "I do not merely receive the film's vision as my own, but I take it up in my own, and as an addition to my own" (Sobchack, 1992:271). Sobchack in her book *The Address of the Eye*, sets up to describe the film experience by using the method of the phenomenological reflection and describes the bipolar but the transitive relationship between the spectator and the film.

I'm not a mere bodily receptacle for the film's visual address, but rather a hospitable host, allowing this other visual address temporary residence in my visible address in my body. My visible hospitality however, in no way denies my own visual address, my own possession of the premises we both presently share so as to significantly negotiate meaning. Thus, although generally I appear to be a polite visual "listener" who seldom visibly and audibly interrupts or argues with my invited guest's narrative unless I am encouraged to do so by the form of her discourse, I am nonetheless actively engaged in an invisible and inaudible comparison of the guest's experience and performance with my own (Sobchack, 1992:272).

If we look from this point of view, the assumption of the contemporary film theories that liken the spectator to a blank page on that is written by the film comes to nothing. Sobchack describes film experience in such a way that I may see what my guest sees in the sense of the visual address of the film. "As my interest in my guest's narrative or argument increases, the intentional direction and terminus of my consciousness locates itself there, in what my guest sees" (Sobchack, 1992:272). Thus, my address and the film's address coincide with in the same direction but still I am here with my own body. Or it can be in this way that while the guest is talking I may interrupt and comment on it as the talk inside that is 'inner speech' or outside. Or maybe I can focus on my hunger because I am not interested in the thing my

guest's intention is intended. It is not much different than how we intend towards the things in normal life. What determines our directedness and interests is something about our being in the world and the style of our bodily existence determines. I see or do not see what my guest sees but still there is a mutual absorption and one way or the other they both experience a mutual experience that will unite the visible and its significance. Moreover, the only thing I perceive does not have to be the only thing that the film perceives; at the same time in both situations I can intend the film's expressive activity and perceive that. The thing here is our understanding the relationality existing between my perception and the film's perception and the list of these variables can be extended. However, it is important to understand this point; the identification of the spectator is not his replacing himself into any thing in the film. The identical thing there is the spectator and the film's directedness toward the same intentional object. Thus, in the film experience example my vision forms a dual layer. Here, subjectivity in the dialogic experience in the film experience is lived either as the 'inner speech' or as a vision both intrasubjectively and intersubjectively as doubled speech or vision. "Therefore, the engagement of two body-subjects (spectator and film) capable of perception and expression through speech or vision is a dialectical as well as dialogical process of making sense" (Sobchack, 1992:274). At this point, if we are to see the body with an acceptance that it is in an activity awakened with all its senses, there appears a multidimensional meaning of this emphasis. The thing is not the integration of my body's perception with another body's, it is participating wholly to its experience. Because we know from M. Merleau-Ponty that the sense of seeing is not separate from the other senses and all the senses inform each other within the embodied experience. Along with each of them having a difference unique to themselves, they provide the unity of the flesh in the wholeness

of experience. It is not possible to differentiate them with certain lines in the pre-reflective experience which is grounded in the life-world. Touching, taste, smell and others all feed seeing and vice versa. According to M. Ponty, the biggest evidence of this mutual experience lies in understanding the semiotics of bodily gesture:

The sense of gestures is not given, but understood, that is, seized upon by an act on the spectator's part. The whole difficulty is to conceive this act clearly without confusing it with a cognitive operation. The communication or comprehension of gestures comes about through reciprocity of my intentions and the gestures of others, of my gestures and intentions discernible in the conduct of other people. It is as if the other person's intention inhabit my body and mine his. The gesture, which I witness, outlines an intentional object. This object is genuinely present and fully comprehended when the powers of my body adjust themselves to it and overlap it. The gesture presents itself to me as a question, bribing certain perceptible bits of the world to my notice, and inviting my concurrence in them. Communication is achieved when my conduct identifies this path with its own. There is mutual confirmation between myself and others (Merleau Ponty, 2002: 97)

In this sense, for M. Ponty the relationship we establish with the world is above all a mimetic one. The gestures which are the expressions of body's affections provides the communication between others and me, thus, the communication does not mean an artifact of language system but it embodies a meaning within the life world. Since I do not conceive my perception of other as separated from its intentional project, gestures creates an intersubjective commonality between two bodies. Thus, this is not a mimetic process that is based on merely the relationship between copy and model; rather it is creative process that necessitates my body continuously to adjust the things around in its relationship to the world. Understanding the body, as the common ground shared with the others, with its gestures is important for us to understand the constructive characteristics of the intersubjective relations between me and the others. Sobchack accepts the film experience as experiencing the other's

experience. Within this framework, this study of the film theory may be inspiring for understanding the lives of other bodies and cultures, which we will dwell on in the next chapter, and understanding the observational cinema, which is regarded as within the documentary cinema that tries to produce knowledge from here. Sobchack says that there is an 'interworld' that I and the other, that I and the film share. It may sound as if the eye of the film is swallowing our vision but the main thing to be understood is the fact that the seeing here includes our sensual project as well as the film's sensual project.

It may be helpful to summarize Sobchack's arguments before passing to the next part. First, film watching is an embodied act and requires a doubled embodiment relation and this relationality forms at the same time its own hermeneutics. Second, expression and perception have a dialectic relationship. This dialectic between them is experienced in the lived-body with an intrasubjective and intersubjective quality. Finally, the experience of film watching is dialogic; that is, it is a bilateral process of seeing and sign production. In short, according to Sobchack's theory, the spectator is no longer a passive recipient of the optical information reflecting on the screen and is perceived as a bodily being. This body-subject is surrounded with the sound when watching film and it is senso-motorically, somatically and affectively attracted to the film's visual texture and communicates with it. If the individual and social affects of the cinema is to be spoken, let's talk about it in this way. Because maybe this paradigm will reveal that cinema is an 'influencing machine' that is bigger and more complex affecting larger masses in a longer time periods when compared to the one today's contemporary theories assume. However, at least in the light of a

philosophical study about how this machine-body worked, we can now open the ways to find how we can dominate the apparatus itself.

Thus, either be it in M. Ponty's philosophy or in Sobchack's film theory, we refreshed our minds to understand better how the theories, which try to understand seeing, subject and object, body and mind and the external world and the internal world by separating them from each other, create predicaments at which points. Understanding the world in the relationality of the bodies is like a revolution for the history of thought. However, we need to produce new conceptual tool-boxes in order to exemplify these understandings in practice. Yet this paradigm itself is the precursor of the fact that these concepts will come out from the exact experience but not only from intellectual capacity of mind. The process of producing meaning and knowledge is not far from this conception and points to an epistemological change as M. Ponty explains the instructive spontaneity of the meaning making process: "To the extent that what I say has meaning, I am a different "other" for myself when I am speaking; and to the extent that I understand, I no longer know who is speaking and who is listening" (Merleau Ponty, 2002: 185).

4. FROM IMAGES TO IDEAS: OBSERVATIONAL CINEMA AS A WAY OF NON-WORD-BASED FORM OF KNOWING

“A person I have filmed is a set of broken images: first, someone actually seen, within touch, sound and smell in the darkness of a viewfinder; a memory, sometimes elusive, sometimes of haunting clarity; a strip of images in an editing machine; a handful of photographs; and finally the figure moving on the screen, of cinema itself.”

–David MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*

4.1. Theoretical History

In his book *Film Theory: an Introduction through Senses* Thomas Elsaesser investigates the question of the relationship between the cinema, perception and human body, and discusses the earlier distinction between two theoretical approaches to the cinema as formalist and realist film theories. Formalists focus on the form of the film in terms of construction and composition whereas realists emphasize on the transparency of filmic medium allowing for a direct relationship to reality (Elsaesser, 2010:3). Although they call attention to different aspects of film experience, for Elsaesser, these two positions resemble each other in their treatment of vision as disembodied because of its reduction to visual perception (Elsaesser, 2010:8). For formalist view, reality is ‘framed’ whereas realists look through a window. “The cinema as window and frame –the first of our seven *modes of being (in the cinema/world)* –is ocular –specular (i.e. conditioned by optical access), transitive (one looks at some-thing) and disembodied (the spectator maintains a safe distance in a dark auditorium)” (Elsaesser, 2010:14). Actually, by making this differentiation, Elsaesser also gives the historical background of how the film experience has been

understood for a long time in the history of cinema. The spectator does not have a direct involvement in the filmic event and also the filmmakers construct the structure of the film with a consciousness of producing a theatrical vision. Film is not more than a thing which can be contemplated. Thus, seeing by being reduced to an optic mechanism becomes the instrument of the mind, which can connect images to each other and can form their memory rather than being an extension of the body. Further, Elsaesser includes even Vertov's *kino-glaz*, who is a formalist, to this tradition. "Vertov (with his "cinema eye") celebrated the technological dissociation of filmic seeing from the insufficiencies of human perception, i.e. the absolute, triumphal (optical) victory of film over the limitations of human senses and the world they perceive" (Elsaesser, 2010:85). This revolutionary change in the history of cinema that the appearance of the camera in the streets and so its gain a movement with an attribution to the relativity theory cannot still escape from the ocularcentric paradigm which accepts vision by breaking up its relationship with other senses and prioritizing it. Even the emphasis that the feminists of 1960s and 1970s put on voyeurism, fetishism and exhibitionism was not enough for challenging this understanding of 'seeing' that has been the basis for these theories for a long time. The 'film truth', which Vertov called as *kino-pravda*, overshadowed the body under the pursuit of a panoptic film understanding. When making cinema the tool for thinking, seeing is perceived only as an organ of the visual perception and constructing the world of meanings is again subdued to a process inside the skull. *Kino-glaz* wishes for an Alephian seeing; the camera seeing the world from all angles will liberate us from the single-angled vision of the body. Thus, the reality will be captured through frame as much as possible and the captured objectivity will fall down on the spectator's head as a hammer. The language of the film will be presented as having

been constructed before the spectator sees it and minds capable of solving the codes will contemplate a given idea. This idea is not much different from the representation theory that Descartes pioneered. We are still in pursuit of a correspondence relationship between the objects and their mental images. The spectatorial distance between the seeing eye and the seen object is still preserved. Cinema in this sense embarks on a scientific quest with a Cartesian perspective. Vertov believes in the objectivity of cinematographic apparatus, which is a cinema that takes as its subject the 'factual' that is purged of fictional elements. Although the idea of 'Life caught unawares' emphasizes on constructiveness of the film with the help of 'the theory of interval' and he accepts film as an imaginary construct, it still creates a realism in itself. However, Vertov's realism is different from André Bazin's that in Bazin the capacity of the image to give an unmediated, transparent and objective truth is intertwined with a kind of naturalism. By replacing the human eye, camera provides the true vision of reality. This approach established on the idea of a pure cinema differs from Vertov's understanding of cinema as something constructed. As Barthes says: "All this shows that 'reality' is deemed entirely self-sufficient, that it is strong enough to deny any idea of 'function', that its enunciation has no need to be integrated into a structure, and that the 'having existed there' quality of things is a sufficient principle of language activity" (Barthes, 1978:134). Thus, Bazin positions film on the basis of its direct relationship to the world of reference and montage in this relationship is accepted as evil. We watch the world, as a window disclosing over reality, with a transparent eye that vanishes in our perception after some time. The reality reflecting on the screen disguises itself into a pragmatic shape that passivates the spectator; the world is documented but by being fed from the belief that the gaze watching the world from across has for the objectivity myth. The

problem is not different from Vertov's, a disembodied experience is described. Although the film as being merely a visible object takes the life-world as its subject, participation of the spectator is left outside at the point where the intellects are active, where they construct the meaning world of the film. The spectator becomes as a mere recipient; he is now the reader of representations. Here Cartesian separation is at work; with Vertov the constructing I, the knowing eye and the seeing eye is blessed and with Bazin the reality existing outside of me independent from me is blessed. The 'interior' world is crystallized with Vertov and the 'exterior' world is crystallized and becomes absolute with Bazin. The common thing in both is the fact that the film is capable of providing the true vision of reality.

Naive realism in documentary cinema, until the development of the sync sound technology in 1960s, imposed itself not only on cinema but also on the social sciences, which tried to turn the documentary cinema into a scientific method. The fragmented structure that montage created was avoided, depth of field was blessed and it became the very thing for the long take more scientific which is realistic document. Until the scientific methods of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson that were combined with the technology of cinema saved the film from the ambiguities caused by the fiction film and other traditions of the literature of imagination, especially the intention of anthropology was not respected by the dominant cinema. However, the ambiguity between the fiction and nonfiction availed to the consolidation of the classical theories of social sciences and thus for a long time the use of visual material as scientific tool was refused. Until Mead saw the camera as a research tool in a field work in 1930s, film was seen only as an illustration of already observed, analyzed and defined scientific data through the field work before. That is,

the images were seen as the explanatory examples of the introduced theory. The images could not move ahead of the objective conceptualizing of science. With Mead, film was used in order to describe the things escaping the ethnographer's notice during direct observation and the social phenomena that remain without conceptualization in language and is eluded. However, the Mead effect was not different from the Bazin realism and it had a kinship with the dominant theory of visual anthropology "to reduce the subjectivity inherent in any conceptualizing, to reveal more reality" (Guynn, 1990:37). In this way, science would double its reality effect by avoiding the subjective intervention and objectifying. There is on the one hand a direct connection which the film provides to reality owing to the ontological claim of the photograph creating a material presence and on the other hand a scientific discourse with the unerring absolute eye reinforced by the written language. Thus, the raw material that cinema presents for science is abstracted, verbalized and translated to statistics with the methods like the ones applied to other data. With the revolution in portable sound equipment, the world of the documentary film heard for the first time the voices of authentic cultures themselves on which films were made since that day. Until this technological improvement, the general method was to explain the things through voiceover with third-person commentary, which is a method still used today. The discovery of a subjectivity existing outside the commentator became one of the things that are dug under naïve realism. Films are directed from the public to the private, from the general to the private and from the typical to the unique and the social phenomena, which the analyses understood by continuously dividing, gained autonomy along with the spatio-temporal unity. Jean Rouch was the one bringing the freshest interpretation to this change with his reflection on subjectivity in his films that he made during this period. He refused the

cinematographic observation methods and he criticized the beliefs of realism and the traditional ethnography that transparent images of a positively knowable world can be produced. Thus he introduced the relationship of the subjects with the filmmaker along with the discovery of the speaking subject who was the subject of these films. On the other hand, by making the ethnographic film a political issue he criticized the voyeuristic look of the ethnographer, which supports the dominance of his ways of thinking over other cultures: “When you indulge in such an exercise, you end up very often with a feeling of disgust, the very fruit of that intellectual imperialism which comes from the fact that we can only see others with our own eyes and with our concepts” (Rouch, Jean, 1990:40). Acquiring this ethical position for a desk worker social scientist seems hard when the methods he uses are considered. It seems even harder for the positivist approach, which is used to reducing the life-world to statistics and to linguistic generalizations lost among the surveys, to understand this. The reasons for this can be searched either in his laboratorized studies or in the fact that the scientist’ life is already laboratorized. Rouch’s refusal is also a criticism directed at ethnography. Rouch digs under the approach what Dewey calls as ‘the spectator theory of knowledge’ clinched with the technology of cinema. The idea of observing the world without the intervention of the subject is combined with the belief to the camera technology’s being a neutral tool of observation. Mead’s method was increasing the level of neutrality of camera by keeping the camera at a fixed position and by using a tripod without allowing any intervention. Cinema could only reach the objectivity of science in this way. The formation of the visual anthropology in America after Mead happened by way of teaching the same method. The camera’s gaining the characteristics of moving required the changing of its subject and relationship but this required the changing of its understanding of subjectivity. This

would also change the definition of the scientific observation because it functioned as the alienating domination of the Western gaze on the authentic cultures as an extension of the colonial mind until then. As Trinh T. Minh- Ha once pointed out that this will teach us “speaking not about, but nearby” the objects we are filming (Min Ha, 1982:3). The developing of the consciousness that indigenous communities, which had been a mere object of analysis until then, are ‘human’ as living beings as the Western people, has taken a long time. After all, the thing making the Western mentality think that native people, who were the subjects of films, were also ‘thinking’ beings was their being able to hear them talk with their own voices. In this sense, this was the domination of speaking to the existence. The fact that this approach, which considered seeing a priori to other senses, at the same time finds the written language more scientific and acceptable than the visual language are closely connected to each other. It was believed that images are incapable of presenting a logical system within themselves and that they lack a drive for clarity. Visuals did not have meanings in themselves unless they are situated in a written theory. Because thinking has been understood as a separate universe disconnected from its object which is reduced to the codifications of the written language until a very recent time. This situation was the dominance of the logocentric system of thinking and at the same time a tyranny of written discourse along with the disbelief against senses at the level of information production. Ignoring what it could not conceptualize became the crisis of social sciences because enlightened way of seeing that saw the world as ultimately transparent and knowable always needed a material which it can marginalize. The existence of other lives, which establish similarity with the knowing subject by breaking apart from the evolutionary line, encouraged a reflexive way of thinking in science. Cinema Vérite,

which adopted the observational method by distinguishing themselves from the expository style of documentary film making in the history of documentary cinema, did not abstain from including the interaction between the 'truthful cinema', the filmmaker and the subject. The direct cinema that found supporters, on the other hand, by hiding the realism of the observational method and the presence of the camera from both the subject and the audience, thought it will reach cinematic truth. The 'fly on the wall' effect of direct cinema was criticized by Cinema Vérite because the problem was not to show the audience that truth was reached but on the contrary to problematize the accessibility of the truth.

The notion of observation seems to be the centre of the problem when the history of cinema, which turns around realism, is considered. The connection of realism to the notion of truth was going arm in arm with the will to make the world clearly visible, which Gary Shapiro called 'the empire of the gaze'. Because as long as reality is seen as an entity independent from the intervention of the subject, it would cause 'technological subjectivity' that Heidegger emphasized and knowing would mean mastering the world. Realism perceived the things as objects as available at hand, which Heidegger also stated, by accepting the reality as given outside of me. As mentioned in the first chapter with M. Ponty's point of view, assuming an object there present before my eyes is, after all, attributing the object objectivity from the start. The only thing that needs to be done was to embed the technological system, which will give the true vision, in the best way to theory. In this way, I would be reaching its knowledge. This knowledge would be the core of the object of knowledge. In short, this understanding is interested in the whatness of objects, not in how they are. When Rouch tried the participatory method in making his films, he

tried to describe the world as in our relationship to it instead of taking the truth claim as the basis in order to know. This resonates with Dewey's proposing the participatory conception of knowledge against the 'spectator theory of knowledge'. Although the method of participatory observation is disputed since Mead, it could get an importance only after 1980s. The effort of observation to diverge from the spectatorial distance, visually or not, was shaped as sharing the daily experiences of people by entering into their natural environment and getting closer to the perspective of the subject as much as possible despite their outsider positions. This, at the same time, became the initiator of self-reflective thinking and was seen as a way of having a more humane point of view. Big-brother type of vision gave way to more distributed points of view and caused the revelation of the mutual intertwined relationship of the subject of the film and the film making; that is, a revelation of the knowing subject which always remained invisible behind the camera. The observing eyes watching the world without intervention from where they stand, realized that they produced films as being a part of the thing that they take as their subject in the world, in other words they realized that they construct knowledge. Rouch says that "Cinema allowed intervention into time, for the first time ever, permitting the construction of a wholly different object. It is this that has always appealed to me most about the film" (Rouch, 2003, as cited in Taylor 1997:17) Under this assumption lied the changing definition of seeing; as M. Ponty indicated, objects are from now on do not exist before me as things present before me but they begin to exist around me. I have to trust in my body's motility as the increasing trust in the camera's mobility. I take around the camera on the surfaces of the objects, on another's body or in the details of an event. But this happens because of the fact that I work not to see these more true and more perfect but I work in reference to the

distances that the changing affections between us determine. Within the observational cinema, which set about to produce tools that can be used to break the subject-object differentiation of the surveying thought, the attention was taken to the process of production itself. Because they began to understand the practice that they thought to be lying within theories when the problem turned out to understand the subject and object interaction. David MacDougall is one of the leading people in this field. Doing his first field work with his wife Judith MacDougall in East Africa, he has produced texts on the observational method with the experience that his films he made until recently earned him. His privilege in being a subject of this thesis is the fact that the epistemological perspective, based on his understanding of seeing within the theory of cinema, resonated with phenomenology. In the previous chapter, we saw that film viewing challenged the classical film theories at points, where the body is considered, when looked at a phenomenological aspect. MacDougall, on the other hand, calls attention to film making activity itself from a phenomenological perspective by taking the body to a central point within the theorizing efforts of the observational cinema.

4.2. Epistemology

MacDougall in his book *The Corporeal Image* (2006) makes a phenomenological description of the images and image making; his aim is to emphasize on their corporeal aspect. He takes this idea to developing a general understanding of ontology with his point of view. His emphasis on the pre-reflective experience resembles in M. Ponty's philosophy of phenomenology. According to him, before we reach more general abstractions and meanings, direct experience precedes these

meanings. These meanings are closely related to the material existence of experience until we are separated from these physical encounters within this experience. He does not term this process with the differentiation of pre-reflective and reflective but his whole description is coherent with M. Ponty's understanding of the embodied unity of pre-reflective experience. Just as M. Ponty constructed his ontology with the flesh in this phase, MacDougall also calls this state being. It is clear that he is in an effort of going against a world where thinking is separated from the matter. Because he talks about a phase of thinking which is lost among the abstractions in the next phase of thinking but before which matter and feeling are bound up. In short, as in M. Ponty, there is a consciousness that had existed before the conscious reflected on itself and produced linguistic thinking. And for him, the act of knowing starts at this point. He terms this phase as such: "The microsecond of discovery of knowledge at the birth of knowledge" (MacDougall, 2006:1). MacDougall says that when my consciousness reflects on my being, it does not represent itself with an image on its own; that is, consciousness is not a field of representations. On the contrary, it requires priority of my bodily existence because the trace of the first experience I lived is a 'feeling'. This feeling is the performing of my body with all of its senses including seeing as the disclosure of being. Thus, seeing gives us the being of things along with the appearances of them. Here, MacDougall emphasizes on the existential side of seeing rather than their being as physical processes. Similar to Sobchack, he sees science and art as the efforts of understanding the others living with us. Seeing for him is equivalent to making science and art; then, he suggests that first we should understand what seeing is otherwise it is not possible to do these. However, in this effort, meanings form the necessity conditions that shape our seeing experience but

on the one hand these meanings can also turn into the prejudices that prevent our understanding the world.

Meaning guides our seeing. Meaning allows us to categorize objects. Meaning is what imbues the image of a person with all we know about them. It is what makes them familiar; bringing them to life each time we see them. But meaning, when we force it on things, can also blind us, causing us to see only what we expect to see or distracting us from seeing very much at all. (MacDougall, 2006:1).

At this point we can make such a conclusion that according to MacDougall meaning is not a product of an inner talk of intellect that consciousness does itself. As both a determiner and a result of the experience they are formed in the experience. All the meanings coming from our subjective history are determined within our embodied encounters and sometimes despite them. Then, meanings are not things which exist there with its being in itself outside the consciousness and to which the consciousness goes to and accepts as true at the time when it corresponds. Meanings come out of the experience but not as a ‘conscious thought’ only. That is, MacDougall talks about a world of meanings outside the linguistic categories that the academic language was used to until then. According to him, our conscious experience is not arranged by resembling to language; that is, it includes thinking and thoughts of different kinds that are not merely a result of reasoning. Accordingly, images may include or cause the thinking resembling language but they contain more things than these thoughts. MacDougall says; “It is made up of ideas, emotions, sensory responses, and the pictures of our imagination” (MacDougall, 2006:2). Therefore, how we use, create and understand the images maybe is not something we can understand by using the words. Here, this question can be suggested: as the thing what MacDougall calls as thoughts extending the language can be understood on the basis of M. Ponty’s reversibility between perception and expression, at the

same time MacDougall by limiting the thoughts to the mind's realm with the conscious thought differentiation, may be separating the thought unlike to the language from that on the basis of this dualism. The reason is, M. Ponty in the end tries to understand the basis of every kind of thinking by founding it on the embodied experience; in his theory higher language such as speaking and writing are in the end based on the bodily existence. But the things he suggests on seeing, how he understands seeing point to the fact that he tries to make the conscious thinking with the other kinds of thinking exceeding this thinking as M. Ponty did. What is more, this closeness is an ontological one as it is in M. Ponty. Here, a M. Ponty's philosophy resonates within the scope of the reversibility of the internal and the external on the basis of the thoughts in embodied experience. MacDougall tries to diverge from the understanding which accepts thoughts only on the basis of the impressions that the external object create on us. Images, for him, are the most obvious indicator of this. Along with seeing, we see that images draw a different line in the forming of knowledge:

By treating images –in paintings, photographs and films –as a product of language, or even a language in themselves, we ally them to a concept of thought that neglects many of the ways in which they create our knowledge. It is important to recognize this, not in order to restrict images to nonlinguistic purposes –this merely subordinates them further to words –but in order to reexamine the relation between seeing, thinking and knowing, and the complex nature of thought itself. (MacDougall, 2006:2)

He tries to understand the images constructed on the basis of perceiving the experience of the other as material presence and as thinking being. However, in order to do so we need to go beyond the mental facility that language provides us. That seeing is predetermined both shows the knowledge we acquire with the other senses as well as seeing are mainly organized and draws attention to the fact that cultural

and neural conditions of seeing are determining factors. Because it has neural conditions does not change the fact that when we see, we at the same time see conceptually, metaphorically and linguistically. MacDougall connects seeing to the tension between two things: the tension between consciousness of meaning and consciousness of being.

As we look at things, our perception is guided by cultural and personal interests, but perception is also the mechanism by which these interests are altered and added to. There is thus an interdependency between perception and meaning. Meaning shapes perception, but in the end perception can refigure meaning, so that at the next stage this may alter perception once again. (MacDougall, 2006:2)

In this way, MacDougall opens the way of extracting knowledge from within the experience via images as realization of consciousness of its own act by means of its double reflection, which M. Ponty calls as 'radical reflection'. I can canalize my perception for knowing because when I direct my consciousness on my perception I do not observe it functioning as a transparent window disclosing to its object at all. My perception directed at the world is closely related with my subjective history for the meanings inferred from this encounter as well as the direction when it is directed. Moreover, my consciousness shows me in this relationship that other is also a body subject and it has intentionality, too, in the sense of the embodied nature of the experience. The interdependency relationship that MacDougall finds between perception and meaning is directly in parallel with the reversibility relationship that M. Ponty constructs between perception and expression. Perception is after all, a bodily expression in its origin. The invisible is always a determiner of the visible and the vision but has a relationality that will never be completed. The invisible extends, expands, shrinks and creates a pattern with the expressions of incomparable value by means of the visible. Therefore, arguing that images should not be reduced to the

field of linguistics means to extend the meanings by allowing every kind of way of expression. Doing science, knowing no longer means to work only with words. Along with the changing meaning of seeing, the meaning of thinking also changes and extends. If we consider for the film experience, it cannot be limited merely with 'seeing' the images since then we have reduced seeing to an ocular mechanism and have considered the film merely as a visible thing. The same thing is relevant for the act of filmmaking itself as well as seeing the images that others produced. MacDougall says that meaning is a product of the process of experience, which our body participates as a whole; it is not just a product of conscious thought. Thus far I understand the thoughts which MacDougall referred with the conscious thought and which M. Ponty called as the reflexivity of consciousness; that is, I understand the thoughts which the consciousness creates by reflecting on itself. Then, I infer from here that MacDougall comes to terms with M. Ponty with respect to the unity of the experience in bodily dimension at pre-reflective level.

4.3. Corporeal Image

Under the light of this information, MacDougall states that we see with our bodies and the images that we make are the productions of whole body since they carry the imprints of our bodies. (MacDougall, 2006:3) Thus, they carry the traces of the world of meanings resulted from our intentionality of being of the world. Image making is an artifact of our intentionality toward the world.

They are, in a sense, mirrors of our bodies, replicating the whole of the body's activity, with its physical movements, its shifting attention, and its conflicting impulses toward order and disorder. A complex construction such as a film or photograph has an animal origin. Corporeal images are not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world. (MacDougall, 2006:3)

MacDougall understands film making in its relation to the wildness of being as Sobchack describes it by referring M. Ponty's notion of 'wild signification' that is the prereflective embodied nature of language in a similar vein. Filmmaking is an activity that has its own intentionality with the participation of the technology of apparatus which is the black box as Flusser says and it is a bodily experience standing on the edge of the visible and the invisible until the consciousness reflects on it. In fact, even if the consciousness reflect on itself and produce a reflected thought, if we look from the perspective of phenomenology, bodily encounters underlie this reflexivity in any case since for phenomenology it is not possible to understand our existence without consideration of our being in the world. Even if we intend to link two different ideas and consider their psychic status, we should remind ourselves that these ideas origin in the engagement of our bodies with the world. M. Ponty states that when we reflect on our existence, what we encounter is not a thought at first but we see 'I can' considering my bodily structure and interaction with the world. This idea provides a rich conceptual ground for MacDougall as well as Sobchack. With this strong intuition inspired by phenomenology, Sobchack thinks that thoughts and language centers film viewing as an activity of body and MacDougall accepts that thoughts and language underlie holding a camera and directing it to the world as a structuring structure. It should be noted here that experience precedes language. MacDaougall accepts that looking with and without camera can never be the same. (MacDougall, 2006: 7). Even if camera mimics human vision, images produced by it are different from the experience itself , i.e. their materiality. MacDaougall has a different understanding of image than Bergson since he thinks that images are always about something but the reality is not, that is, they are always images 'of' something considering their intentionality. Images are

ways of framing the world. We signify the world, describe and even judge the world by framing MacDougall says. The frames organize our visions, they operate alike gestalt structure stated in Merleau Ponty's philosophy. The frame of the camera focuses on something and zooms it by extracting it from the background. Assume that you see a pair of shoes in a film similar to Heidegger's peasant shoes. The camera directed to a group of peasants is intending toward a pair of shoes belong to one of peasants and fasten on them. This opens up a horizon in my frame that is more promising than listening his opinion on what their life is like via an interview. A horizon about peasant's lifeworld that can provide me his subjective history of bodily experiences. These shoes are transformed into figures in our perception within their material presence and if you prefer, a story about rural life with its socio-economic reflections on the subjective history rings in our minds at the same time. The thing is that, this story does not communicate with me only with my vision, I find my body in shoestrings and their form of tie; on a piece of mud or a hole; or a pair of shoes that is glossed. I touch, sense and feel with my eyes. My eyes do not operate on their own. I participate in this process with whole my body as Bergson once said "memory is embodied in the senses." (Bergson, 1988:131) Before reflecting on my intentionality, the dialectic between subject and object, perception and expression has already started to take place from the first moment of my encounter and the horizon of shoes' meaning has already established itself within experience. Thus, framing becomes a new language with the things that are included and not included within it. Yet this language depends on the materiality of its own, filmmaker and also the subject to which the camera intended. If the shoes do not see me, I can not see them. My hands see these shoestrings much more than my eyes, which ties them everyday. They already have this gesture in my body's memory. Tactile informs

vision. Film's existential character provides us to see figures coming into focus with their relations to other things within the frame, that is, commonalities among them and the details escaping my notice in the case of seeing without a camera. Framing makes clear not only the visible world but also the invisible world that is beyond framing such as intensifications and reinforcements on the perceived thing based on perceiver's intentionalities and sometimes in spite of framing i.e. impatience of the person who holds the camera. MacDougall points out that "films, for their part, testify to bodies that were present before the camera." (1999:27) MacDougall does not want to leave the examining of how our body relate to other bodies to aesthetic, psychoanalytic or political theories since films can not be reduced to the systems of signs and symbols. This would be ignorance of our sensuous relationship to films. Film allows the body of spectator to speak and this can be applied to filmmaker's and film subject's body as well. This view based on this premise "the subject is part of the filmmaker, the filmmaker part of the subject." (MacDougall, 1999:29) This relationship does not leave the spectator's body out "The film subject has a multiple identity –as the person who exists outside the film, in his or her own being; as the person constructed through interaction with the filmmaker; and as the person constructed once again in the viewers' interaction with the film." (MacDougall, 1999:29) For MacDougall, filmmaking is not only a process of reception rather it is "a form of extension of the self toward others" parallel with the idea of "pragmatic language of embodied existence" emphasized by Sobchack. Since he thinks that "if other bodies influence ours, we also reach out and enrich them with our own responses." (MacDougall, 2006:21) Thus, the knowledge emerging from the interworld among self, other and film can not be "told" through abstracting it rather it can only be "shown". This showing is not an illustration of words depending on the

idea that experience is privileged to explanation. For this reason, Macdougall's conception of film is based on the idea that film proceeds by implication rather than demonstration, that points to a different form of thinking. Film already includes the filmmaker's intervention into its subject and also the film's content is formed by film subject for observational cinema alike self is bounded up with the world. Ethics and aesthetics are interdependent in the film since the aesthetics is the expression of filmmaker's ethics. (Taylor,1999:3). Our perception of ourselves and other are interconnected since we have commonalities as living beings in the same world. This is the intersubjective structure of perception as M. Ponty says. We are not face with selfhoods infinitely separated from each other. Thus, by reason of subject is both seeing and seen, there is a mutual constitution between self and other. MacDougall criticizes that the conception of naive realism makes this relationship unidirectional. He emphasizes key position of body:

Our bodies provide certain metaphors for what films do... the filmmaker's gaze touches –and it is touched by –what it sees. A film can be said to look and to touch. Filmmaking requires interactions of the body with the world in registering qualities of texture and shape, which do not exist abstractly or independently of such encounters. The world is not apart from, but around and within the filmmaker and viewer. Touching is not a one-way process but reciprocal, in the sense that an equal pressure is applied to what is touched and what is touching. (MacDougall, 1999:49-50)

MacDougall gives direct reference to Sobchack's idea of 'the address of the eye' that film necessitates doubled embodiment relation between film's vision and spectator's vision. He just adds the filmmaker's vision to that view. According to this, film experience depends on that we have a parallel sensory experience with other bodies as being intersubjective condition of experience. One of the most preliminary ground for this intersubjective experience is gesture as M. Ponty emphasized. There is a reciprocity between our intentions and other's gestures and this relationship can not be reduced to a cognitive operation. Similarly MacDougall thinks "the subject is

given (gives itself) to the viewer, inviting particular emotions of commitment and potential exchange” (MacDougall, 1999:51) For him, human face is a good example for that. Face is like theater of body. When we recognize a face, we witness to other’s individual inner life and also his/her biologically and culturally predetermined life. Eyes, hands and voice transmit other’s experience to us. “We reaffirm our identity not only through other’s responses to us, nor merely by seeing ourselves as others (as Lacan’s account), but in the light of other’s equivalent consciousness.” (MacDougall, 1999:52) It is worth quoting at this length from M. Ponty:

No sooner has my gaze fallen upon a living body in process of acting than the objects surrounding it immediately take on a fresh layer of significance: they are no longer simply what I myself could make of them...I say that it is another person, a second self, and this I know in the first place because this living body has the same structure as mine. I experience my own body as the power of adopting certain forms of behaviour and a certain world, and I am given to myself merely as a certain hold upon the world: now, it is precisely my body which perceives the body of another person, and discovers in that other body a miraculous prolongation of my own intentions, a familiar way of dealing with the world. Henceforth, as the parts of my body together comprise a system, so my body and the other person’s are one whole, two sides of one and the same phenomenon, and the anonymous existence of which my body is the ever-renewed trace henceforth inhabits both bodies simultaneously. (Merleau Ponty, 2002: 353-54)

For MacDougall, the synchrony between the viewer and the film subject is mediated by filmmaker. While we view a film, filmmaker intention’s direction coincides with mine and we participate in other’s experience. MacDougall emphasizes on gestures that allows us to imagine an action through the feel of it. He calls this as “the kinaesthetic dimension of thought” which can only be translated in physiological and biological level just as lexical thought can only be observed when it is verbalized. In her book *The Skin of The Film* (2000), Laura Marks says that body is source of not only individual but also cultures.

MacDougall thinks that it is like a trance to film a subject for the filmmaker and for the spectator it is a trance too to view other's bodies in the film. In this point, he differentiates 'looking' from 'seeing'. According to this distinction, "if seeing implies a passive form of vision that scans a subject or preserves it in some impersonal sense, looking implies a more selective, intentional activity, a search for an investment of meaning." (MacDougall, 1999:242) Thus, the idea here criticizes Mead's methodology that places camera on a tripod and to depict events from a certain perspective. This is not an attentive look. This criticism suggests to look in a humane distance rather than ubiquitousness of the camera in space. Thus, filmmaker see the filmsubject from a social distance as a result of an interaction with it. MacDougall points out that film is a form of looking before expressing ideas in a form of communication.

When we look, we are doing something more deliberate than seeing and yet more unguarded than thinking. We are putting ourselves in a sensory state that is at once one of vacancy and of heightened awareness. Our imitative faculties take precedence over judgement and categorization, preparing us for a different kind of knowledge. We learn to inhabit what we see. Conversely, thinking about what we see, projecting our ideas upon it, turns us back upon ourselves. So, simply to look, and look carefully, is a way of knowing that is different from thinking. (MacDougall, 1999: 7)

Here, MacDougall suggests a different epistemology of the mutual relationship between observer and observed, of which description is difficult linguistically and so it can only be 'depict' by a camera. This is the ethical position that documentarist can teach social science. The knowledge is lived before entering the system of linguistic categories and becomes the product of this lived experience. Thus, MacDougall says that "it is quite possible to see without looking." (MacDougall, 1999: 6) The reason for the ignorance of attentive look is too much conceptualizing of the world for MacDougall. This can be applied to filmmakers as well, many people can not have

an unconditioned look at things. MacDougall says that this is because of “our fear of abandoning the protection of conceptual thought” or our interrupted perceptions shaped by the conventional techniques of cinema. Therefore, MacDougall’s emphasis suggests to learn looking by going beyond the limited education of the eyes.

4.4. Text vs. Image

The problem is here not actually privileging of conscious thought, rather it is ignoring prereflective form of thought as if the world of meaning is not established on the relationship between the world and our bodies. Films call us to look at the world through them, we engage in the world via filmmaker’s vision. We see that the things we have never seen are familiar to us. Because as MacDougall emphasizes, images reawaken our prelinguistic bodily habits sinking into oblivion within us and so we can engage in a cultural world unknown to us before. The thing that makes us to understand them is primarily our embodied existence rather than conceptual tools that we develop to understand them as M. Ponty says that understanding acts along with the imagination and the senses. (Merleau Ponty, 2002: notes. 231) Film does this by merging into its subject rather than an statistical analysis at a distance. Films encourage our the power of imagination since for already the most part of our perception of reality is derived from imagination as MacDougal points out. He states that “sound and image together can generate powerful synesthetic responses, creating a heightened sense of space, volume, and texture. What we see and hear taps into our prior experience of the world and stimulates the imaginative capacity that most of us possess to fill in the gaps left by the cursory acts of perception.” (MacDougall,

2006:42) MacDougall's indicates that films generate a form of thinking through bodies by blurring the line between imagination and reality. Hence, the ways of scientific inquiry based on the textual tradition becomes the target of his criticisms due to their ignorance of imaginative forces. He complains about that even if they use different voices in their texts, the writings of social scientists especially British ethnographies do not provide any component which can stimulate visual imagination while they are describing social phenomena. For this reason, even if they describe material surroundings of the cultures subjected to their inquiry, their description does not go beyond an arid list of components. Text lacks of multisensory context. For MacDougall, this has been inherited from the enlightenment. The mentality of enlightenment that tries to make all visible the world purifies its language by sorting out all the sensual details since it aims to achieve clear and distinct ideas in the highest level of expressions. The scientific discourse imposes an optic seeing in the sense that it has no temporality and organic engagement with world. According to MacDougall, the most significant common characteristic between descriptive writing used by science and cinema is to create sense impressions on spectator or reader and to leave the rest to imagination. They have also common methodologies in that they create fragmented realities. Even though some scientists dream of panoptic image of reality, "the camera can record only a single perspective at any time" says MacDougall. Thus, film has a fragmented structure too by means of changing perspectives of the camera and juxtaposition of different images through editing. MacDougall emphasizes, "as in writing, the filmmaker must therefore proceed, analytically, constructing a new reality out of fragments, seeing it as much with the mind as with the eye" (MacDougall, 2006: 34) It should be noted here that M. Ponty emphasizes on the fact that human vision is limited to the perspective of its situated

bodily being in the world similar to MacDougall's account of camera's vision. However, we can operate by taking place of the perspectives other than ours thanks to spatiality of perception just like the camera can change its position accordingly filmmaker's intentions. It is left to the spectator's imagination to associate these fragmented realities in film. Both they have linearity in that sense. However, whereas writing gives the coordinates of another world by progressing cumulatively, the content of the film is constituted as compositely. MacDougall thinks of film that "we grasp objects and events in their complexes and continuities, and it is the interrelationship of these that are often more important than the components of the images taken separately" (MacDougall, 2006: 37) This refers to a main difference of film comparing to text, that film makes us to experience the events simultaneously as we experience it in daily life, however, we do not feel in such a way while we are reading. MacDougall says "like a train journey, linearity in writing tends to project a sense of movement in the direction of completion (of a sentence, of a narrative), which in academic writing assumes the magisterial quality of a movement toward truth." This systemic way of thinking in Western thought may be related to the emphasize on the quest for causality in the world. For this reason, scientific description is linear and deals with causal narratives of the things subjected to the examination rather than their existential nature. This scientific description is not what M. Ponty suggests in his method of phenomenological reduction rather it is the method of science obsessed with objectification of the reality. Thus, it does not concern for the knowledge contains the subject's intervention into the object of examination considering its inherence in knowing. For this reason, Macdougall suggests to use the word "depiction" for film rather than "description" since "rather than telling us, in a voice of a writer, a film presents us with a series of scenes.

Unless there is a spoken commentary, the narrative of a film is always something unsaid, something implied.” (MacDougall, 2006: 48) According to Italo Calvino, visibility in text begins with Da Stendhal and Balzac considering novel. MacDougall adds to this idea that scientific texts have no visibility within them until very recently. For him, social science inherits visibility from cinematic conception. W.J.T Mitchell² has called this as “pictorial turn” in Western thinking. (Mitchell, 1994, as cited in MacDougall, 1999:49) MacDougall thinks that films have led to question existing theory of knowledge constituted in writing and so this turn has raised scientists’ curiosity to find new ways of expressing sensory and social experience. Before this change in social science, images are reduced to codes of textual language in scientific discourse as we mentioned above. The beginning of the raising interest in using images for scientific purposes can be understood as “a reaction to the intense linguistic focus of post-war structuralism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, and semiotics.” (MacDougall, 1999:60) Furthermore, anthropology’s self-criticism on its methodologies and the shift in research topics has indicated the inadequacy of descriptive techniques. Anthropology’s axis has shifted from the culture in general to the experience of individual and so the research areas such as the role of the senses and emotions in social life and the cultural construction of gender and personal identity has become effective. This should not be understood as just a formal shift in its methodologies. This is also foreshadow of an epistemological paradigm shift. The relationship of social scientist to the subject has been changed at first. Thus, the interaction between them has been accepted as one of the components of knowledge and no longer a problem for science. Film making is not simply a note taking as in field research without a camera. It requires to participate the experience of subject.

² You can see more about “pictorial turn” W.J.T Mitchell’s book *Picture Theory*.

That the bodily encounters become a variable of knowing by changing the form of knowledge supports the claim that our knowledge of the world is something to be constructed. The change of axis in Anthropological ways of seeing and knowing turns the representation itself into a problem of science. Thus, the science of future requires to make more research on representational systems of film, video, and photography. For instance, although that the visuality has the capacity of metaphor and synesthesia has been institutionalized long time before, it takes time for social sciences to take advantage of these qualities. The reason of that is the regimes of thought which seeks for an objective view of the world purified from creativity in scientific discourse refusing aesthetical points of views. Yet as MacDougall emphasizes it “metaphor in film can be the concretizing of the self and experience in other things, not as simile or analogy but as bodily extension” as in life. (MacDougall, 2006: 222) Thus, metaphor is understood as something to provide the interdependency between self and world, body and mind and images have the power to reveal it since the world around us associated with our feelings, actions and mind. In this respect, if film frees itself from the demands of textual tradition, it can develop its own language.

4.5. Observational Cinema as a Medium of Ideas

The development of visual culture in social sciences is closely linked with becoming of the body a site of meaning. After social scientists have started to participate directly to the experience observed rather than playing an intermediary role, the language of social sciences has accommodated itself to this and accordingly Passive voice has been transformed into active voice and the past tense into present tense.

This applies to disappearance of body-mind dichotomy as well as the redefined meaning of subject-object dichotomy. Thus, this transformation has animated the subject matter of social science of which emphasis shifts from subject's being to that they are living as well as its language and ways of thinking. This is embodiment of knowledge. Since as MacDougall points out that science dehumanize the study of humanity when it separates itself from lifeworld. In the case of film, this shift applies to include the relationship between observer and observed as well as the presence of the camera in the film and to consider that the knowledge coming out of the film will be an output of this relationship. Image is "a reflection of thought" since it is both the evidence of this experience of intercommunion and a denial of all other possible images. We witness to the reciprocity of filmmaker's and film subject's intentionalities and it is included both the knower and the known in the knowledge and we have also a chance to observe how it is included. Besides the material presence of the subject in its representation adds value to the content. On the other hand, a door left open to the spectator for subjective participation and interpretation to the extent of his/her intentions. In contrast with observational cinema that couldn't escape from the observers' perspective that see themselves as the agents of universal truth in 1960s, MacDougall's suggestion of "participatory cinema" as a cinema beyond observational cinema indicates the transformation of cinematic language and also epistemological paradigm in scientific discourse. This attempt of theorization in observational cinema is significant in respect of showing the ways of thinking and knowing through images. If we understand images as "sensuous thought", we encounter with the prelinguistic world of thought which is not reduced to codes of language. Thus, we see that thought is something emerging from experience underlying reflected thoughts. The world is the plane of immanence consisting

bodily realtions, expressions and perceptions intertwine within experience and so there is neither transcendent thoughts nor a transcendent self . The world is not a given reality rather it is the thing we experience. The expressions of our experiences emerge from this plane of immanence, they are not products of only a mental process. The body is the house of memory and establishes our relationship to world with the things which is visible and also invisible to us. The perception never gives a knowledge purified from memory. Thus, it always includes our subjective experiential history. The world or the other will never be completely knowable. However, as long as we believe the possibility of this, the world will be an uninhabitable place for human beings. MacDougall's conception of "attentive look" is a forgotten call owing to the fact that today's technological subjectivity makes the world completely knowable. Merleaus Ponty makes a similar call with his phenomenological approach. The world of experience is transformed into a closed circular system of informations today. Both of these philosophical approaches imply the need of a fresh look that will make us think of our ignorance about the qualifications of our bodies and the potential of images. Objectifying gaze of western thought leads to a form thinking that transcends its object and the eyes that can criticize this transcendence is blinded by this form of thinking itself. Images can prompt us to turn back to the object even with a ground that allows for rediscovery of our unique subjective lives. Understanding of other is not something possible without a consideration of body that is the network of perception, senses, emotions and thoughts. As Ulus Baker³ once said that a visible affection is not something other than an idea. If we understand images in that way, films can be another way of thinking, feeling and communicating with other bodies.

³ See his writings on <http://www.korotonomedya.net/kor/index.php?gundem>

5. CONCLUSION

The research question of this thesis has been the possibility of thinking and knowing through images. For this aim, I have focused on phenomenological approaches that allow us to examine film experience in respect of perception and the relationship between thought and body. I have believed that we would not understand the cinema that tries to think and produce knowledge through images without turning our attention to seeing as senseous perception related to the first moment of our encounter with images. By concentrating on the film theory of observational cinema, I have tried to figure out epistemological paradigm shifts with respect of their reflections on understanding of images. This axis has included not only theoretical aspects of image making and the act of viewing but also their practical constitutions intertwining with these theories. According to the study of cinema from a phenomenological approach, film forms a multisensory pattern constituted by the bodies in the film, the filmmaker's body, the body of the film itself and the spectator's body. Film is not something only audio visual just as my body that is not consisted of only eyes and ears. The film's sensory pattern does not prevent it from bringing about thinking, reflecting a thought or thinking by itself. On the contrary, when we talk about thoughts, we already in the area of our embodied experiences consisting our all bodily encounters within the lifeworld. This suggests to understand thoughts via bodies without enclosing them into only intellectual activity. Ideas do not lose their connection to their bodily origin in prereflective dimension even if they are linked to each other and constitute a montage. When they are expressed and communicate with us, they connect us with the other subject-body expressing his/her ideas by means of the mutual bodily relationship between them. Correlatively, it is

my body first to welcome film as a reflected thought in its relationship to me. Thoughts and perceptions are interdependent. The priority of knowledge immanent in experience rather than the idea of transcendence of truth claim in our epistemologies will reconnect us to the lifeworld. In respect of this, the approaches based on unity of subject and object, mind and body has been the focus of this thesis.

In the second chapter, I have aimed to give a sense of what disembodied vision is by means of an analogy to Aleph as all-seeing-eye in Borges' short story. I have argued that the knowing eye understood as disconnected from its bodily being transformed into the eye of intellect by means of Plato's rationalism and therefore sensuous experience is subordinated to mind. This kind of knowing based on the distinction between perceptual and intellectual worlds underlies a certain understanding of seeing though it lowers sensuous experience, that creates an understanding of reality that is completely knowable and so can be controlled by bringing about an ocularcentric interpretation of the world. This view privileges seeing comparing to other senses because of its interconnection to the intellect. I have pointed to Cartesian philosophy as the peak of this understanding because of the fact that this view of seeing as the eyes of mind is intensified in the subject transformed into self-knowing autonomous agent by cartesian body-mind distinction and leaves sensuous experience out of the door.

In the third chapter, we have mentioned M. Merleau-Ponty's criticism of Descartes, which indicates that Descartes' understanding of seeing is originated in thought so he does not leave the platonist tradition of rationalism. By emphasizing on intentionality of consciousness, M. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology understands perception within mind-body

continuity and accepts seeing in its relationship to other senses. Objectivist and subjectivist approaches seem to be far from understanding the place of the body in the field of experience because of the fact that they attribute absoluteness correspondingly to the object or the subject itself considering perception, thinking and producing knowledge. His philosophy provides an existential ground to understand perception and thought, which accepts existence as being in the world. The relationship between self and world or other emerges as a product of bodily affections and mutual relationship of them. The body unites consciousness and the world. The unity in the prereflective dimension of experience and the consciousness, which has the capacity to reflect on experiences and its own activity, underlies thinking and knowing. M. Ponty emphasizes on intertwining between perceiver and perceived by describing a state of consciousness in absence of linguistic. He unites self and world, idea and sensible via the notion of embodied "flesh". His epistemology derives from the ontology of flesh; he overcomes the understanding of subject of which rationality is given priority by accepting a mutual relationship between them. Whereas seeing is understood as a model of thought and reduced to a mechanistic process for Descartes, it gains existential meaning and accepted as an embodied experience for M. Ponty. For him, our bodily existence is lived, materially and historically situated and finite. Lived-body subject condemned to meaning since the perception itself is a lived expression. Thus, for M. Ponty, thought as an expression emerges from the first moment of encountering with the world. The language can not be reduced to a psychic process, it derives from the body's engagement in the world. Thus, M. Ponty manifests his rejection of the views separates thought from body. The method of reflection in his philosophy shows us that the field of experience is something of which description is never completed

conclusively. The world is not a place of closed meanings and the truths which generate them. Therefore, he rejects the understanding of seeing, which is originated in ocularcentrism and associated with classical science that separates reason and sense experience, and accepts that vision emerges from the relationship between the world and the body which is both seer and the seen. Under the title of “Phenomenology and Film Experience”, I focused on Vivian Sobchack’s “theory of embodied visibility” which tries to understand film experience by following M. Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception. In this way, I have emphasized on the act of film viewing as a result of an embodied relationship between the viewer and the film for I have believed that this can provide us a conceptual ground for a better understanding of observational cinema from a phenomenological perspective. According to Sobchack who tries to describe and account for the origin of cinematic signification and significance in the experience of vision as an embodied and meaningful existential activity, pragmatic language of embodied existence creates an interworld among the filmmaker, the spectator and the film itself. Film is the expression of the body-subject’s, which is to signify intentionality directed to the lifeworld. Thus, film is a perception which is already expressed and for this reversibility between them is originated in the body, the body becomes the source of thinking and communication. My body is both my vision’s object and subject, similarly film is not only a visible object, it is both seen and seeing and it has intentionality as well. Film experience with its world of meanings is product of this reciprocity, both film and spectator are embodied and mutually enworlded. By describing film as “an expression of experience by experience”, Sobchack shows that we establish a mutual relation with other bodies by means of film and participate their perceptions and intentions.

In the forth chapter, I have examined observational cinema as a breakthrough in documentary cinema and ethnographic filmmaking that aims to undertand other's experience and produce knowledge from it. I have argued that this style has an embedded phenomenology in it and it resonates with M. Ponty's and also Sobchack's views on perception in its understanding of both film viewing and filmmaking. I have dwelled on the problems of observational style from the perspective of phenomenology in the first place and then focused on David MacDougall's epistemological insight within the theoretical framework of both cinema and the social sciences. MacDougall thinks that we see with our bodies and the images that we produce carries the imprints of our bodies rather than being a product of only concious thought. His idea that meaning is produced by whole body resonates with M. Ponty's and Sobchack's views. The idea of that images are not only images of other bodies but they also consist of intentions of the body behind the camera confirms what Sobchack says about the interworld among the filmmaker, the spectator and the film itself. Images lead us to a dimension that can not be reduced to linguistics. In this respect, MacDougall suggests participatory cinema beyond early examples of observational style, which provides a new epistemological insight for social scientists. For him, knowledge based on bodily experience consisting of interactions of bodies, that is, the interaction of subjects and objects. The moment of arising of knowledge which is what MacDougall calls "microsecond of discovery of knowledge at the birth of knowledge" is understood within a framework that the meaning emerges from experience and consists the interconnection of matter and feeling before they are abstracted. This refers to the origins of thinking and knowing which M. Ponty describes as prereflective thoughts unreduced to linguistic

categories. Cinema neither an opening to objective reality independent from the subject as realists assume nor a panoptic image of a disembodied eye as formalists accept. Images are not only an object of vision; they carry traces of emotions, bodily memories and reflected thoughts.

As a result, I have tried to clarify the subject matter of this thesis by synthesizing theories from different research areas though they deal with similar problems after analyzing them in detail. The initial question of this thesis is whether it is possible to have a different conception of thinking through images or not. In the course of this study of phenomenology, I have pointed out that returning to body and understanding it with its existential being can provide this difference and this conception can form a basis for reexamination of the process of knowledge production. Phenomenology is often to blame for naturalizing human perception and consciousness. However, I believe that returning to phenomenology with an attentive reading can lead us to reevaluate this argument. Since I believe that the attempts of theorization that get lost within reflected thoughts and intertextual researches ignore that there is a wild site of human experience originated in the first moment of body's encounter with the world. The entering of camera to our lives is significant for not only showing us inaccessible things to human eye and so making visible the invisible but also how we perceive the world and think.

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