Caspar Stracke (Ed.)

Godard'ing

Artists on Godardian Conceptualism

Caspar Stracke (ed.)

Godard Boomerang

Artists on Godardian Conceptualism

previous page: 'Aceuil livre d'image' at Hotel Atlanta, Rotterdam, curated by Edwin Carels, IFFR 2019. Photo: Edwin Carels

(c'est) Pourquoi Encore Godard ?!

CASPAR STRACKE

INTRODUCTION

"Pourquoi encore Godard? A question I was asked many times in the course of producing this edited volume.
And further:
"Wouldn't this be an appropriate moment in history to pass the torch?"

Most likely there is no more torch to pass. If there is a thing to pass (a merit, a philosophy, an attitude), the questions would still remain: Passing it on to whom? To an individual? A collective? An entire movement? The latter would fit so much better into a time that has begun to successfully diversify and cross-reference contemporary thought, refusing to follow isolated key thinkers by de-magnetizing their rocky islands of ideology. Needless to mention, contemporary efforts to contest gender and geopolitical dominances also complicate any attempt to "return" to Godard.

And yet, many contemporary artists are still talking of (and to) Godard. Arguably, those of us who continue to advocate for the production of a contemporary cinema grounded in critical reflexivity can neither deny nor escape a certain boomerang effect of Godardian thought, aesthetics, and pedagogy, especially when we are haunted by the late sixties as many accounts in this book demonstrate.

The authors featured in this book are not concerned with mere Godardian *influences*. Nor are their contributions fully dedicated to particular aspects of Godard's oeuvre. Rather, they focus on investigating work by other contemporary (and historical) artists, and the ways in which this work relates to concepts developed by Godard. And here, the hope is to gently bypass all canonical appraisals of this "most influential filmmaker and thinker of our times" and similar bolstering eulogies that decorate the introductory paragraphs of countless writings on Godard. We, as a group, will rather follow the concept of theoretical companionship in order to further open up the field and give voice to critical positions in contemporary art.

The writings in this collection have – with the exception of one – been produced by practicing artists who encounter Godard from very diverse positions. Cinéasts and especially those with a special interest in Godard scholarship should therefore be advised that they will find here a very heterogeneous collection of academic and unacademic writing, which also includes personal accounts – some of which came to life as byproducts of research for a film project, while others relate to a particular artistic practice. Nevertheless, the body of existing scholarship on Godard functions as a frequent reference point for the featured artists, revealing how these parallel activities often create a fascinating evolution, one propelled by the complex interplay between art and corresponding theory. Godardian material becomes subject to theoretical writing, which inspires artists to produce new works, which, in turn, are engaged in new writings, and so on.
But reaction shots are not limited to cinema. Adventurous trans-disciplinary migrations of Godard's work can also be found in other areas, as demonstrated, for instance, by Yvonne Rainer's legendary 1963 dance score *Diagonals*, which was based on distinctive movements from *A bout de Souffle* (most prominently dying Belmondo's run down Rue Champagne-Première), which in turn became the subject of an essay by movement researcher John Cranahan.[1]
This perpetual exchange and metamorphosis between theory and artistic production was the topic of a small symposium I organized at the Finnish Academy of Fine Art in Helsinki in 2013, to which I invited an international group of artists to discuss how Godardian pedagogy (to cite Serge Daney's phrase, discussed below) has expanded into what one could now call Godardian conceptualism. This volume extends the original idea of that symposium into a collection of artist writings.

Wherever a work of art or cinema includes a Godard reference, its author is drawn via rhetorical gravity into the proliferating research on Godard. While these types of inquiries might range from working *with* Godard to working *against* and *beyond* him, they are all destined to succumb to the aforementioned boomerang effect – an acknowledgement that the mechanisms of particular cinematic concepts so often lead us back to the gigantic warehouse of conceptual methodologies unified under the brand Godard. The evolution of such branding in cinema is the central subject of Lee Ellickson's contribution in this volume.

The boomerang effect contributes particularly to the fact that Godard is known to be the omnipresent critic and commentator – a problem that has strongly concerned film theorists and their assertion that Godard scholars too often take up the master's voice and thereby "run the risk of becoming meta-discourses on Godard's own discourse about his films."[2] However, it is precisely this sort of meta-discourse that enables a stimulating metamorphosis for those who translate the presented arguments back into images. The outcome is a type of "ciné-philosophy" that relies on this co-dependence of two distinctive disciplines in endless dialectical exchange.

1 John Cranahan, Jean-Luc Godard and Contemporary Dance: "The Judson Dance Theater Across Breathless" in: *The Legacies of Jean-Luc Godard*. Douglas Morrey, Christina Stojanova, and Nicole Coté (Eds.) WIlfried Lurier University Press, 2014

2 Katerina Loukopoulou, "Godard Alone?" *Film Philosophy* 10.1, 2006, see also Tom Coneley and T. Jefferson Kline (2014).

As early as 1973, Serge Daney identified Godard's strategy of offsetting the discourses he incorporates into his films with their dialectical counterparts, or even with their true antagonists – manufacturing arguments as a way of presenting his viewers/listeners/readers with a more objective terrain on which to form their own opinion about a given subject.
Daney outlined Godard's methodology in the following way: "More than 'who is right? who is wrong?', the real question is 'what can we oppose to that?' Hence the malaise and 'confusion' with which Godard is often reproached. He always replies to what the other says (asserts, proclaims or recommends) by what *another other* says…"[3]

In this strategy lies the crux of the radical juxtapositions that are so prevalent in contemporary artistic practices, including those conducted by this volume's contributors. Indeed, the followig essays should be seen as extensions of Godardian pedagogy. In the course of bringing their own works into dialogue with Godard, the authors are at the same time dialoguing with other others.
The difference between film theory and artist's approach is that sometimes the latter suggests a triangular relationship: the inclusion of the individual artistic practice forms a third pole; observations on Godard are developed in a tightly knit and inextricable relationship with other individuals, but also with the artist's own work.
In this volume, Gareth James finds an appropriate voice of this other Other in Edward Said, while Francois Bucher turns to Jorge Luis Borges. Irmgard Emmelhainz engages with Hito Steyerl and Guillermo Gomez-Peña, and Kari Annala dialogues with Eija-Liisa Ahtila and Hito Steyerl as well. Similarly, Florian Zeyfang references Peter Wollen, David Rych FEMEN, Maija Timonen Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki, while Lee Ellickson compares the Godard "brand" with other resonating examples.

It is also symptomatic that this group of contributors focuses, for the most part, on Godard's late, non-fiction oeuvre. The heightened political climate in contemporary culture and the new era of political cinema certainly help to account for this preference, as well as for the renewed attention that has recently been given to the work of Godard's and Gorin's Dziga Vertov Group.
Georges Didi-Huberman's recent exhibition and publication project *Uprisings*[4] exemplifies the urge to map out any form of civil disobedience

3 Serge Daney: "theorize/terrorize (Godardian Pedagogy)" in Cahiers Du Cinema. Vol. 4 1973–1978 History Ideology, Cultural Struggle, edited by David Wilson, Routledge, 2000, p.118.

4 George Didi Huberman (ed.), *Uprisings* Editions Gallimard, 2016

that occurs in alliance with artistic expression, while also demonstrating the magnitude of a century's worth of artistic work invested in this topic.
But the contemporary interest in Godard's later work must ultimately be understood as an outgrowth of Godard's own return, some forty years after he began as a filmmaker, to political topics that remain prevalent today: Palestine; the fate of a divided Arab world; the role of the image in the imperial imagination; the failure of cinema to prevent war crimes and genocide.
The recent chain of power shifts, uprisings, migration movements and wars all over the world have brought forth new moving-image practices that have drawn from Godard's militant filmmaking period. In recent years, the latter has been rediscovered and analyzed more thoroughly than ever before. Nick Denes, Mohanad Yaqubi and Reem Shilleh conducted extensive research on Militant Cinema (as the collective *Subversive Films*), focusing on the state and region of Palestine. Similar research has been done by artists and researchers such as Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri, Eric Baudelaire, the Otolith Group, Tariq Teguia, Irmgard Emmelhainz, David Rych, Ros Gray, Nicole Brenez, among many others. (Emmelhainz and Rych both have contributions in this book).
In some cases, the extensive inquiries conducted by these artists and filmmakers took an unexpected, archival turn, one prompted by the sheer necessity to help save and preserve orphaned films and archives that have been destroyed or (worse) abandoned. For most of them, the incentive was certainly not to revive the techniques of Militant Cinema, but rather to learn from its failures in order to develop strategies tailored to the present while turning this research process itself into visual documentation.

David Rych has researched the relationship between the ideologies of Militant Cinema and the nature of its legacy, which continues to influence so many artist collectives working today. He also outlines the shift from filmmaking to performative action and how the latter find its way back to the moving image.
It seemed supportive to also invite Chto Delat to contribute to this volume. Their decision to republish their 2007 manifesto, "What Does It Mean to Make Films Politically Today?" speaks of their belief that this document remains as relevant as ever. (And indeed, it serves as a solid underpinning for David Rych's and Irmgard Emmelhainz' contributions, in particular.)

Furthermore, several contributions collected here reveal a very special

interest in a particular "militant" Godard film that is no doubt the most precious work of this variety, given that it was never realized as planned – *Jusqu'à la Victoire*. Four authors in this book trace the conditions and prerequisites of the production of this piece and its subsequent continuation as *Ici et Ailleurs* (with Anne-Marie Mieville). Whereas Rych, on the one hand, compares the genesis of this project to a proto-version of tactical media strategies within political struggles, Kari Yli-Annala, on the other, encounters the work through a semiotic analysis of Godard's film titles of this period, while Gareth James approaches it from the premises of an imagined encounter and speculative intellectual collaboration between Godard and Edward Said, whilst also ruminating on Said's "late style" theory as found in the careers of certain prominent artists. The central point of Irmgard Emmelhainz's essay is the decisive moment of anticipated victory in the Palestinian struggle and the terrorist turn the struggle took after King Hussein's Black September attacks in refugee camps in Jordan, leading to the demise of European support, coinciding with the dawn of socialist struggles worldwide (Chile 1973) and the dwindling of the 1968 student-worker movement effervescence. Emmelhainz did extensive research in Palestine where she lived on several occasions (2007–08, 2009, 2011) to retrace the steps of international solidarity in the 1960s and 1970s and of contemporary forms of global struggles in the occupied territories and Gaza.[5] She contributed an earlier version of this essay to the Militant Cinema conference, "Fire Next Time" at KASK, Belgium, in 2014. In her work, Emmelhainz demonstrates how the fading or abandoned concepts of internationalism and post-Maoist socialism were gradually eroded in ever-shifting political landscapes post-1968. In this regard, Emmelhainz is highly critical of "sensible politics",[6] a term coined by Meg McLagan and Yates McKee, and of the conception of democracy as redistribution of the visible.

Themed collections such as this volume are often marked by a notorious repetitiveness, with multiple authors inevitably touching upon similar details. However, the current authors' interpretations of *Ici et Ailleurs* are distinct in many ways, propelling the reader into multiple elsewheres. As the reader is invited to revisit the topic multiple times in the course of this volume, it is my hope that he or she will become an active participant in the research process in the same way that a crime novel can evoke an inquisitive itch.

5 This effort culminated in her recently published book on the relationship between aesthetics and politics that traverses Godard's oeuvre, centered on *Ici et Ailleurs*. Irmgard Emmelhainz, *Jean-Luc Godard's Political Filmmaking*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2019.

6 Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (eds.), *Sensible Politics -The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism* MIT Press/ Zone Books 2012

Two texts offer direct responses to particular Godard films. Both constitute re-contextualizations and were written to accompany related art works. The first, Constanze Ruhm's *La difficulté d'une perspective* (2014), is a photo series and a continuation of Ruhm's larger work cycle *X Character*, a series in which she imagines contemporary versions of iconic female characters derived from modernist cinema.

For more than two decades, Ruhm has produced conceptual works in which she occasionally uses scenes from Godard's films as references, or more precisely, points of departure. In *X NaNa/Subroutine* (2004), for instance, Ruhm "hijacked" Nana (referring to the recently-deceased cinema legend Anna Karina). By isolating Nana from Godard's rationale, Ruhm began investigating the troublesome relationship between a fictional character and a partner/lover in real life.

La difficulté d'une perspective, the project included here, follows the same strategy, similarly developed as a feminist critique of Godard's (and Raoul Coutard's) male perspective, represented through their use of camera framing. Ruhm revisited particular shooting locations from Godard's *Une femme est une femme* (1961). She first presents the viewer with the original framing of the scene, then reverses the viewpoint of Godard's camera and traces Karina's point of view at each respective location, calling it a "counter shot" (and not only referring to the cinematic definition of the term).

The earliest work of Constanze Ruhm that created such counter perspectives to Godard's camera was *Apartment* (1999), a computer animation that recreates a central scene from *Le Mépris*, in which Brigitte Bardot and Michel Piccoli have a devastating argument in their apartment. Once again, it was the position of the female protagonist in a macho all-male cast that caught Ruhm's interest. In this 3D animation work, Ruhm strips the apartment down to rudimentary white walls and replaces Bardot's point of view with that of a virtual camera.

Similar to Amie Siegel's interest in *Le Mépris'* location, the Villa Bonaparte (see below), another setting from Ruhm's work detects a peculiar agency in the featured architecture, which becomes a silent co-actor in the film – especially in the depiction of the couple's break-up.

Isolating camera movements and looking at the way architectural perspective becomes a field of projection, have long been a tool for film analysis as well as for artistic efforts to rethink modernist cinema. It is therefore not surprising that especially *Le Mépris* had been subject to many artistic reflections. Similar to Ruhm's first work, German artist Stephan Zeyen had

also engaged in this type of hyper-minimal re-enacment.[7]
Ruhm's methodology is also exemplary for setting forth the above-described tandem effect between film and theory. The artist not only based her first iteration of X Characters / RE(hers)AL (2004) on film actresses like Anna Karina, she also let the dialogues develop with friends and colleagues, including prominent female cultural theorists, adding another layer of criticality to the work. Ruhm describes her aim in this project as "the attempt to place feminist theory and practice in a productive relationship and shed light on historical and contemporary constructions of female representation in cinema."[8]

Mike Hoolboom's contribution to the volume focuses on Godard's two minute short film, *Je vous salue, Sarajevo* (1993). An experimental filmmaker of numerous essay films in short and feature-length form, Hoolboom wants to direct our attention to a part in Godard's oeuvre that often passes unnoticed: his seemingly infinite collection of short sketches, video letters, and commissioned trailers. *Je vous salue, Sarajevo* continues in the tradition of *Letter to Jane*. Both employ voice-over commentary to observe minutely a single photograph (displayed in various framings). Hoolboom deconstructs this visceral elegy while remaining in this very hermeneutical setting. His contribution consists of a personal letter from one essay filmmaker to the other, unpacking the powerful universality of Godard's definition of the relationship between cinema and fine art.

Like Hoolboom, Kari Yli Annala also follows this type of Godardian hermeneutics and develops his thesis from a theorem which expands like a set of Matryoshka dolls. Although his story incorporates a bomb that is about to explode, the comedic trope of frantically passing along a bomb with a burning black powder fuse may seem a more appropriate metaphor to describe this type of *Blast Theory.* The piece derives from a story about Alexandre Dumas' character Portos, as told to Godard by the French philosopher Brice Parain. Annala excavates this story yet again, to pass it on to contemporary artists and theorists. Through this intrepid framework, Annala re-thinks the catastrophe as a stimulating thought experiment within disruptive aspects of contemporary culture.

7 Stefan Zeyen's work, *About Contempt* (2015), does not reverse camera perspectives (and related question of gender), but it also reduces *Le Mépris* to camera movements and the neutrality of empty walls in which Zeyen simply recreates Courard's camera choreography.

8 Constanze Ruhm in *RE: Rehearsals (No such Thing as Repetition)* exhibition catalog, Kerber Verlag, Bielefeld 2015, p. 186.

Another sophisticated de-fusion – or even reversal – of the Godardian influence machine occurs in Amie Siegel's video installation and film essay, *Genealogies* (2016)[9], which traces various sources of Godard's screenplay for *Le Mépris*. *Genealogies* is a rhizomatic web of relations and historical markers of that time period, which Siegel elegantly traverses in a manner reminiscent of Rafil Kroll-Zaidi's famous *Harper's* column, "Findings". She creates a whimsical narration solely based on historical connections, which are freed from hierarchical order and cultural relevance to demonstrate a way of "flattening" history. By proceeding this way, Siegel deliberately veers away from Godard and *Le Mépris*, eventually giving them less attention than their surroundings.

Finnish artist and writer Maija Timonen hinges her essay on the infinite doublings of couples that connect the characters of Godard's *Le Gay Savoir* with its creators (JLG and AMM), and further traces them to yet another repetition in the artist-theorist couple, Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki, who unpack the psychoanalytical constellation present in the film. In search of the "genuine conversation", Timonen de-couples this heteronormative community from its historic context and demonstrates how the emergence of social media and smartphones have become the most dramatic disturbance – if not ultimate breaking point – for genuine conversations, love and friendship.

The project involved multiple time travelings. It began with the symposium in 2013. Some of the contributions are based on the original papers, the majority of them already written 2014 and 2015 and completed with additional texts in the next four years to come. It felt also very important to me to include in this collection references to previous projects with closely-related aims. This resulted in an extensive excravations in deeper strata. Most important was an exhibition and publication from 2001. In that year, the artists Gareth James and Florian Zeyfang, along with the former director of the Swiss Institute New York, Annette Schindler, organized the exhibition, *I SAID I LOVE: That's the Promise. The TVideo politics of Jean-Luc Godard*,[10] which incorporated TV works by Godard into a sculptural environment.
This project is re-visited here from two perspectives: one by the co-curating artist, Zeyfang, and a second by Jason Simon, who wrote the

9 Amie Siegel: *Genealogies,* 2016, HD video, 27 min. For this book, selected images of the film are juxtaposed with the transcript of the film's narration.

10 Which also culminated in a subsequent publication of the same title, jointly published by oe: Critical Reader in Visual Cultures , Copenhagen and b_books Berlin 2003.

original review of the show in *Frieze* magazine. Simon updated his article, some 16 years later, for the present contribution, and wrote a postscript addressing aspects that have dramatically changed perspective over the years, considering Godard's expanding oeuvre through a more refined 21st century lens.
At the same time, Simon's text is also a very personal account that comments on both artists' current work. Likewise, Zeyfang, who also recounts the Swiss Institute exhibition from his perspective, inserts the former as a side story into his imaginary letter addressed to the 35mm portable movie camera, Aaton 35-8, envisioned by the legendary and recently-deceased Aaton founder, Jean-Pierre Beauviala, that unfortunately was never completed.
These mediating elements create a historic umbrella, reminding us not only how often new generations engage with the same topic, but also how contemporary witnesses from different generations interact in mostly unnoticed ways through the backdoor of the collaborative project called historicity.

The small symposium at the Finnish Academy of Fine Art also had the aim of continuing the topics of a much larger conference which had taken place three years earlier at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, entitled "Culture Clash Continuum – Film and History in the Age of Godard". This brings us back to the initial question, what makes contemporary artists who combine political engagement with conceptual aesthetics, return ever so often to Godard?
In an attempt to expand upon this question, I invited artist, educator and curator Gabrielle Schleijpen, chief organizer of *Culture Clash Continuum,* to contribute to this publication by describing her motivation to center on Godard, as well as the broader *modi operandi* of her conference. In her contribution, Schleijpen provocatively defines the unfolding 21st century as one that remains an "age of Godard," and asks, "Are we nostalgic for the authority of the director as a mediator of the revolution because we are unable to deal creatively with the 'undisciplined' democratic power of the new media?" To which one could add, that it is the sheer pressure of drastically worsening political climates that prompted this volume's contributors to look back to the militant forms of filmmaking conducted in earlier periods: Third Cinema in Latin America; the then-undivided Underground Cinema in the US and Europe; the Black Wave in Yugoslavia; as well as many other formations that reverberate with these movements.

It is important to add that Schleijpen's writings reflect the perspective of 2011, long before Godard himself turned to the precise topics that her conference presented, as in works like *Adieu Au Language* and especially *Le Livre d'Images*. And his "return" to these topics also revived and reinforced the dramatic split between two opposing groups of Godard cinéasts – those who praised Godard's narrative filmmaking and those who are solely interested in his documentaries and essay films. In his latest turns, Godard revisits his earlier style of meta-filmmaking while also also returnig to violent conflicts in Palestine as well as elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa. Yet his decision to address the gruesome war aggression of the new century does not appear to have been a mere result of the historical events themselves. This shift may also have been prompted by the fact that the emerging forms of political filmmaking have found a new presence in the contemporary media sphere. Fragments of experimental films thus appear in Godard's work alongside new political imperatives.

Even as the contributors to this collection discuss Godard's influence on our practices, Godard's recent output may also indicate our collective influence on him, evoking Kierkegaard's notion (from the story of Abraham) of "giving birth to your own father".

The editor wishes to wholeheartedly thank the following individuals that have made this publication possible: Gabriela Monroy, Maija Timonen, Jan Kaila, Markus Konttinen, Pekka Ollikainen, Joshua Guilford, Linda Mayer, Monika Czyzyk, Florian Zeyfang, Volker Pantenburg, Stoffel Debuysere, Tom Zummer, Michaela Bränn and the administrative staff of Kuvataideakatemia, Helsinki.

Precursors

JASON SIMON

REVIEW

In 1999, I reviewed an exhibition of Godard's video works entitled "I Said I Love. That is the Promise", organized by Gareth James and Florian Zeyfang at the Swiss Institute, New York, when Annette Schindler was the institute's director (Schindler went on to run Plugin, the artists' electronic media space in Basel, Switzerland). My text was published in two different journals in only slightly varying forms, keeping to the review format, brief and service-minded. Asked by the editors of this volume to revisit that moment, gently, and finding James and Zeyfang

still at it here, I thought that the original review might introduce them, and I could introduce the review here with a bolster.
Godard is still at it too. Adieu au Langage might have carried the subtitle …et Bonjour Cinema: its 3D format requires that you actually get out to a theater to view it, like a sculpture, or a painting, which it most resembles, or to an art space for the Sonimage tapes, like in 1999, when my writing was spurred by the scarcity of the videos James and Zeyfang showed. It was hard to get to see those tapes then, and the opportunity alone added a sense of urgency. Fifteen years later we are immersed in video, but with a different, false yet attendant sense of scarcity, this time about the time it takes to watch them. Availability has morphed into ubiquity, making the technical term 'torrent' seem inspired, but mostly because we are alone when the torrent arrives. The wish to sort and recover the resonance of Godard's videos is what occupies me, so that viewing is split between what I remember from watching them before, among compatriots like Zeyfang and James, and what I see afresh.

I could never have predicted Zeyfang's and James's topics for this volume. Zeyfang invokes an image I remember captivated me in film magazines, of Godard's design commission with the camera maker Aaton, a cinematic dispositif before the video merger was a fait accompli. James's point of departure is the mutual absence, the silence, of JLG and Edward Said towards each of the others' works on Palestine. In the attention JLG and Said give to sound, however, James locates countervailing acousmatics, of JLG, Said and more recent artists, turning us towards the voice and its ethical proximities. The shared touchstones, the Dziga Vertov Group methods and the Sonimage technologies, and vice versa, are memorably linked for me: have camera will travel.

In 1986 I left New York for the University of California, San Diego, to study with Jean Pierre Gorin, and while a student there I wrangled a free loan of an Aaton camera from Panavision in Los Angeles to shoot a short film. Three years later I was equipping the Wexner Center's Art & Technology lab for its nascent residency awards and purchased an Aaton that is still being used by filmmakers there today. And what sent me to UCSD in the first place was my own exception to James's narrative: Said and Godard did meet for me, in the pages of the 1985 issue (numbers 7&8 combined) of *Wedge* magazine. Wrapped in the ambitious title 'The Imperialism of Representation/The Representation of Imperialism', the journal's editors included two film scripts: Said's Shadow of the West, for the BBC, and *Letter to Jane*, by Godard and Gorin. I had taken Said's comparative literature course in late 1983, wrote for him about the Costa Gavras film Missing, and was migrating towards art when Wedge pointed me West, towards Gorin and that Aaton. A magazine could do that to a student then.
Zeyfang also recalls Peter Wollen's essay, *The Two Avant Gardes*, a text

I associate with the ecumenical spirit of the Edinburgh Film Festival that reprinted it in 1976. Wollen's inclusive approach to avant-garde culture, embracing it all to mark its boundaries and factions, is limited by what he describes as the critical absence of a home-grown, Godard-like figure Stateside. With such a vacuum, he suggests, the U.S. art world dominated avant-garde cinema's mechanisms of validation and legitimation. But the U.S. did have its Godard: it was Godard himself, but in a different register. University and alternative education venues constituted a much larger market in the US than in Europe for radical cinemas. While Europe subsidized cinema as cultural patrimony distinct from the University, North American Education was a pedagogical economic infrastructure that combined lower but far more consistent royalties with discursive imperatives grounded in the classroom. A few years after 'The Two Avant Gardes' appeared, Godard was already preparing his Histoire(s), but in North American University classrooms, a third Avant Garde, of which I say, 'where else?...'

I said I love. That is the promise.
Sept. 9 to Oct. 16, 1999 Swiss Institute/ New York
by Jason Simon

It's never been easy to be a fan of the work of Jean-Luc Godard, not least of all for the fact that his films and videos from the last twenty-five years, falling into starkly contrasting groups and agendas, are hard to find. Recent work, like the 1997 *Forever Mozart,* might now be shuffled into a festival or curated by an intrepid museum programmer. But, the general absence of works by Godard tells us much more about the incapacity of the cultural moment than it tells us about the filmmaker or his work.

Nevertheless, his works are a litmus test of media culture; a new film is anticipated like a force of nature which fewer and fewer people notice. A lavish 1994 event at New York's Museum of Modern Art was both exceptional and indicative of the lengths taken just to run a decent print of a new film. Asked after the screening what he was working on, Godard mentioned an image he was pursuing: the "enemy alien" stamp placed in Sigmund Freud's passport when he emigrated to war-time London. While pursuing this micro-image of the state branding of Freud, whom Godard described as something like humanity's greatest advocate, he might not have found a better emblem for the current state of his own films.
This fall, the consistently effervescent Swiss Institute, New York, staged another tribute of sorts to Godard with the show: I said I love. That is the promise., an event that starkly contrasted the event staged five years earlier by MoMA. MoMA had made much of its seamless, high-tech presentation of both the film and video works in its movie theaters, which altogether formed

Godard's eulogy to his original medium in its centenary. In comparison, the Swiss Institute show looked like a recasting of Godard as a contemporary video artist who used to work in 35mm film.
The installation was an arrangement of standard television monitors, VCRs and headphones among elaborately strewn, stacked and balanced folding plastic chairs. A first impression upon entering the large gallery, expecting some kind of serviceable cinematheque, was that the installation was audacious bordering on piracy. Not simply a setting in which to gratefully catch up on a dozen or so very hard-to-see tapes, the installation staged a survey of Godard's work within the terms and conventions of contemporary video installation. The ingeniously frozen cascade of folding chairs begged the question of just where this history of Godard's work was being directed. On the one hand, the installation accounted for the unavailability of some of these tapes other than as low-resolution dubs. On the other hand, it placed an extraordinary claim on these films as an avant-garde history available for the re-education of contemporary video artists. Indeed, the overall effect invoked one of Godard's favorite and most used locations: the class room amok.

The curators, Gareth James, from England, and institute director Annette Schindler, who together designed the installation with Berliner Florian Zeyfang, have here pursued an idea about video – a sort of video ontology – using Godard as a pedagogical guide. The works were organized to present Godard's philosophy of video as it evolves through his films, television and video-tape works. Clearly, video served Godard as a palette free from the constraints of film financing and distribution, and continued to become his medium of choice for cinematic essays that will forever be associated with the more radical legacies of '60s French cinema. But the curators are not nearly satisfied with this sort of normalizing take on the oeuvre. Rather, the exhibition proposes to deconstruct the last twenty-five years of Godard's output through the varying traces of video throughout his work. The point is less to recast Godard's films as though they lead inevitably to the free-form of '80's video, than it is to redefine the short-lived genre of video art by way of Godard's evolving visual philosophy.
However, the surest sign of Godard's elusive philosophy of the image is the frequency with which it is instrumentalized towards a politics of the image. And it is this sort of nostalgic gesture that the exhibition takes pains to invigorate. At this point, we might assume that the exhibition is itself addressing some other issue, and my guess is that it is aiming Godard's camcorder at contemporary video art. If you're interested enough in Godard to have read this far, you are probably less interested in a lot of recent multi-channel installation work that has reduced explicit content to the drone of projector cooling fans. In fact, the obliteration of explicit content, whether issue-

oriented or narrative, draws the distinction between current multi-channel installations and the previous, second generation of single-channel video art. I said I love. *That is the promise.* is a multi-channel installation piece consisting of the greatest single-channel works from the history of video.

installation view at the Swiss Institute, New York, 1999

Postscript:
Since writing the preceding review, there has been an upswing in Godard sightings: a multi-CD and book set of *Histoire(s) du Cinema* has been published; Weekend and Soigne ta Droite had a short run at the Walter Reade Cinema, and The New Yorker ran an extended, if melancholy profile. In retrospect, the Swiss Institute show might have been seen as a small part of this sea change, but I also think the SI show would have been different in the context of what followed it in New York. The CD set alone is tempting to wonder at: it has a sort of 'Boite en Valise' appeal, offering the possibility of a readymade multimedia installation on disk, not unrelated to what was attempted at the Swiss Institute. Similarly, had Godard's and Miéville's recent film commissioned by New York's Museum of Modern Art, *The Old Place*, been available, the SI show might have been taken as a serendipitous parallel. As it is, the Swiss Institute project now looks like a retrospective survey that was ahead of its time.

Precursors

GABRIËLLE SCHLEIJPEN

CINEMA CLASH CONTINUUM

FILM AND HISTORY IN THE AGE OF GODARD

"Connecting one shot to another, a shot to a phrase, fresco, song, political speech, newsreel image or advertisement, etc., still means both staging a clash and framing a continuum. The time-space of the clash and the time-space of the continuum have, in fact, the same name: History. Disconnecting images from stories, Godard assumes, is connecting them so as to make History."

—Jacques Rancière: 'Godard, Hitchcock and the Cinematographic Image,'[1]

1 in For Ever Godard, London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007

Cinema Clash Continuum
Film and History in the Age of Godard
Amsterdam: Gerrit Rietveld Academie
28 March – 1 April 2011

Now that mainstream film production rules the waves on private flat screens and mobile players, and experimental cinema is increasingly relegated to 'black boxes' at biennials and other gatherings of the art world, we are wondering how we can understand a new generation's fascination with La Nouvelle Vague. Can we still learn from, or use, Godardian cinematographic techniques such as 'montage'? Does our nostalgia for the director's authority as a mediator of revolution stem from our inability to deal creatively with the 'undisciplined' democratic power of the new media?
We wanted to broaden the perspective on Godard's oeuvre by tackling the impact and influence of his work on contemporary artistic practices. 'Cinema Clash Continuum, Film and History in the Age of Godard' was our modus operandi for an extensive reflection on Godard's films and those of many others. Through this collaborative undertaking, we found a way to talk about the cinematic medium on its own terms and investigate its relation to history, memory, and politics.

Building the conference festival around but not strictly on the work of Jean-Luc Godard was an invitation and a provocation. Some of the curators we invited took oppositional stances, exploring Godard from the perspective of his adversaries. Others hardly mentioned Godard or film at all, referring instead to the theory or politics of Godard in a more subtle manner. The lectures, performances, installations, screenings and round-table discussions created an opening wide enough to allow a true discursive exchange among curators and guests coming from artistic, scientific, paranormal, theoretical backgrounds (among others).

It should be mentioned that this gathering was framed within the Studium Generale program of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie. Studium Generale is an extensive transdisciplinary theory program that addresses students and faculty across all departments and disciplines and regularly opens up to the general public. The 2011 edition was a week-long event, brought to life by 11 curators, 45 guest speakers from all over the world, and more than 1,000 students at the academy. Its ongoing aim is to understand how art and design are entangled with other domains (from the personal to the political, from the vernacular to the academic), how 'now' is linked with the past and the future, and 'here' with 'elsewhere'.

The lectures and performances in 'Cinema Clash Continuum' had a similar aim, especially those that asked where we can go from now. Cinema Degree Zero, a program developed by alternative film curator and cultural activist Jeffrey Babcock, "questioned the latest developments of filmmaking, its assumptions and its intentions." The Otolith Group, a research-based artist collective, spoke about their excavational/investigative methodology, while Belgrade-based theorist and curator Miodrag Šuvaković offered illustrative and pragmatic ways to develop work now. Babcock contextualizes the program :

The time is 1970, and Jean-Luc Godard has become notorious worldwide for his many works made during the preceding decade, progressively ripping apart cinema with films such as Pierrot le Fou (1965) and Masculine/Feminine (1966) and culminating in Weekend (1967), a movie which closes with the title 'END OF FILM/END OF CINEMA'. In fact, one could easily look at all of Godard's early work and see it as a determined dismantling of all of accepted definitions of cinema. But at this point Godard reaches a crisis, a dead end. Since he has arguably already negated all of the conventions of mainstream film, the question remains: Where to go next? Somewhere, he felt, cinema had taken a wrong turn, and the only way to get back on course was to go back to zero and rediscover the essence of film. What are its real inherent properties and possibilities? For the next decade Godard would totally abandon mainstream filmmaking and retreat into his laboratory in an attempt to re-understand images and sounds.

Other curators chose to begin their exploration of our current state from a counter-Godardian position. Writer and researcher Erik Viskil opened up the conversation from the viewpoint of the Lithuanian-born filmmaker Jonas Mekas, who is "totally against Godard politics: as a survivor of both Nazi as well as Soviet state terrorism, Mekas wants to embrace a more positive politics." Viskil asks: "What can we learn about cinema and history if we decide not to start from the intellectual militancy of Jean-Luc Godard, but rather choose a conflicting point of departure?" An exploration of Mekas' problematic relationship with his French contemporary highlights the two artists' divergent artistic strategies and their relation with the 'everyday'. P. Adams Sitney, co-founder of the Anthology Film Archives in New York and a close friend and collaborator of Mekas's, shared his analysis of Mekas's filmmaking in the lecture entitled 'The Poetry of Everyday Life'.

Generosity and exchange were the common threads woven throughout the entire conference. Resisting any homogenous perspective, filmmakers who were active in the 1960s took the stage alongside artists and curators born in the late '70s and '80s. Testimonials and recollections from the older generations drove home the point that artists still encounter similar problems and challenges. Notably, Jean-Pierre Gorin, who collaborated with Godard in the '60s and '70s, offered his advice and experience in a program curated by theoretician and writer Doreen Mende. Gorin spoke about the time he worked alongside Godard and recounted that what led him to their moment of separation, was the realization that, "You can't do what we've done forever." He likens the process of making a film to the act of liquidation or burning. But it was his fascination with the possibilities available to him in the essay-film and his belief in how narrative could transform content that led to his split with Godard. He advised students to take risks, make lots of mistakes and "do it wrong," explaining that "work should have moments when it doesn't score" so that it calls greater attention to the times it does.

Other well-respected artists and philosophers shared their experiences and working methods. In the discussion following his lecture entitled Your Life Was a Film, the artist Mark Lewis spoke openly with the audience about his creative process. For him, setting parameters is precisely what allows the 'everyday' to enter his work. The filmmaker, writer and curator Michael Uwemedimo also talked about his projects in the Niger River Delta, and how he wanted to keep space open between art, advocacy and the academy. He stresses that he not only wanted to make a difference but that he also wanted to understand difference. Within the context of artist and curator Martine Neddam's program, Tout va bien: Self-Reflexivity and Cinéma Vérité, Uwemedimo addressed the ways that reflexivity functions and what it does for us as spectators or makers.

Experimenting with the roles of viewers and artists was also one of the main interests of the Brazilian artist Helio Oiticica, who was active in New York during the 1970s. Through a clever 'reenacted appropriation', Inti Guerrero's program Quasi-Cinema: Deviant Forms of Representation brought to life one of Oiticica's 'Quasi-cinema' installations that were designed to place the viewer within an audio-visual-spatial montage. According to Guerrero, this would "challenge the traditional 'passive' relationship between the screen and the audience, thus instigating the other social, corporal and sensual relationships between the people and the films or artworks." Opening the day with the famous race through the Louvre in Bande à part, the curator politely greeted Godard only to leave him behind as quickly as possible to give room for the cinematographic

positions of directors who subvert traditionalist forms of representing gender and sexuality on the screen. A sense of camp, play and theatricality was the main element of the second part of the program, in which the artist Ming Wong presented his work on 'how to cross-dress the identity of film history'. Wong's recent video work perfectly complemented the earlier discussion by Marc Siegel on Jack Smith's 'Flaming Creatures' (1963) and Juan A. Suarez's talk on Bike Boys, Drag Queens and the Super-stars of Andy Warhol's cinema. Victor Manuel Rodriguez shared his extensive research on Oiticica, framing his work within queer politics and contemporary art.

In his strong analysis of the theorization of subversion in the arts, Miodrag Šuvaković insists on questioning the very notion of the 'everyday.' How can we know if something is subversive if we are not aware of existing value systems? Producing a spread-sheet titled "Modes of Subversion for Young Artists", Suvaković described five modes: Transgressive Art, Blasphemy in Art, Committed Art, Deconstructive Art and Destructive Art. Artist Jonas Staal's political analysis touched on similar notions of subversion, again underlining the necessity of being able to first identify existing systems. Stefan Majakowski, curator of the program Cinema and Society: Where have the subversives gone? asks whether "artistic practice can be critical and subversive while operating within the sphere of the conceptual, discursive and political?" Featuring a screening of Lech Kowalski's 'Born To Lose: The Last Rock and Roll Movie' (1999) and a discussion with the director, Majakowski addresses the state of filmmaking after Punk, wondering about Kowalski's identification with that particular counterculture. He questions whether the ease of making and releasing videos on the Internet and the availability of all types of films online "actually help to sensitize an audience to society's lost causes" or whether they go unnoticed.

Thinking along the same lines, and considering the changes brought about by television, recent viewing practices and new technology, the program entitled Cinema–This, Television–That investigates how "production and performance are articulated in cinema and in television." Developed by artist Wendelien van Oldenborgh in collaboration with If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, the program reflected on "temporal simultaneity, shared authorship, acting and being, presenting and becoming public or becoming image."

The curators write:
In the 1970s Jean-Luc Godard expanded on his ideas on television and its contextual and material differences with cinema in his work with his wife,

filmmaker Anne-Marie Miéville, in their Sonimage production company. They wrote on difference in spectatorship, addressing two very different public spheres:
A. In a cinema, people are many (together) to be alone in front of the screen.
B. In an apartment linked to a TV aerial, people are alone to the many (together) in front of the screen."
Numéro Deux (1975) was the first production in which video was deliberately used to develop ideas on these two modes of reception. The film's specific form draws attention to the process of its making, allowing the viewer to form associations between narratives that are presented simultaneously. Collapsing into spatial and temporal doubles, Numéro Deux centers on television's influence on the domestic life of a working-class family. The use of video suggests the private sphere, the real and the amateurish, even though we are presented with staged and acted scenes.

Godard and Miéville argue that the viewer also helps to produce the real, a thesis Doreen Mende expands in her curatorial statement for the program The And: Place of Action:

The imaginary public, looking at images and listening to sounds, is co-producer of that which is exposed. Besides Jusque à la Victoire/Ici et Ailleurs (1970/75), also Le Gai Savoir (1968), Changer d'Image (1982), Passion (1982) and Lettre to Freddy Buache (1982) are further collaborative projects by Godard and Miéville that expose the impossibility of 'making something public'. It is the filmmaker, the artist, the curator, the architect and the writer who are editing the real. How can we complicate the conditions of this production? What are the means to unpack the idea that "The true place of the filmmaker is in the AND" as movie critic Serge Daney wrote? 'Making something public' is a struggle, situated between withdrawals AND flash-ups, exhibition AND inhibition, between You's AND Me's.
The AND is a place of action to unfold the temporalities, conditions and contradictions of exhibiting.

Taking yet another view on how reality (and film) is produced, Patricia Pisters's program Give me a Brain! (a reference to Gilles Deleuze) asks how "digital culture forms a clash/continuum with our 'new brains' if we consider Godard's frayed DIY aesthetics and Resnais's non-linear narration as the avant-garde of democratized Youtube culture?" With guests including Mexican hypnotist Fernando Flores and Dutch neuropsychologist Franz Verstraten, Pisters opened up a space for a cross-disciplinary conversation, questioning how "cinema has developed as brain screens in a clash/continuum with films from the French New Wave" and investigating "our changed relationship to the brain as neurocinema, neuroaesthetics and neuropower in conjunction with digital screen culture." We are still searching for the artist, searching for the subversive and trying to find ways to deal with generational and technological changes. How does culture function in view of these changes? Flores asks us directly: "What makes something real?" referring to the paranormal in terms of perception: we can only see what fits with our model of reality. Just as we need to be able to identify the 'everyday' in order to recognize the subversive, we also need to open ourselves to perceptual possibilities before we can recognize what is 'real'.

The urgency to find connections between the political and social consequences of the student movements of 1968 and our current age of global unrest was the focus of Boris Buden's vigorous talk, Waves in Space and Time. As part of the program curated in collaboration with Solange de Boer, Buden asks how the French New Wave influenced the so-called Yugoslav Black Wave which had its Golden Age in the 1960s. Reflecting on parallels between France and the former Yugoslavia, Buden cites the Black Wave classic by Živojin Pavlović When I am Dead and Gone (1967), released one year before the student protests in Belgrade, as an example of how political and creative waves were being generated in both landscapes. He points out that the political meaning of the films is, unfortunately, historical, which means that they can only be grasped culturally, as traces of 'cultural heritage' and film history. This leads us to question whether or not they can still be political, because, as Buden says, we are "intrinsically blind for certain meanings for certain pictures" and therefore unable to reconstruct the original meaning. For Buden, this is a call for translation (in Walter Benjamin's sense of the term) as a way of breathing life back into the films and helping them survive into the future. He resists the "tidal wave of memorializing," a reference to French historian Pierre Nora's metaphor of the tidal wave as a way of explaining major changes in the way we see the past. Buden views this memorializing as an obstacle to approaching political meaning.

We see Buden's criticism of the 'tidal wave' as a strong argument for resisting uniform readings of Jean-Luc Godard's oeuvre or any cinematic history for that matter. Cinema Clash Continuum was an experiment custom-designed to deal with this outpouring of interpretations and radically differing perspectives. Jeffrey Babcock reminds us that, "Today we are also in a severe crisis, but one which is simply covered

over with slick production design and digital make-up…[we are] searching for possible starting points for a new language in cinema." We acknowledge all starting points and stances, but we value most highly the ones that let us find new translations, ensure the future of film, and help us approach political meaning across generations and geographies.

The conference was initiated by Gabriëlle Schleijpen and organized in collaboration with Bert Taken for Studium Generale Rietveld Academie.
Report: Marianna Maruyama / Gabriëlle Schleijpen

CCC

CINEMA CLASH CONTINUUM: FILM & HISTORY IN THE AGE OF GODARD

The program from day to day:

Monday, March 28:
CINEMA CLASH CONTINUUM: A Space To Move In
Lectures & launch of two publications about Serge Daney
Curated by Gabriëlle Schleijpen in collaboration with Solange de Boer
Guests: Pieter van Bogaert, Boris Buden, Mark Lewis, Eyal Sivan

Tuesday, March 29:
TOTALLY AGAINST GODARD POLITICS!
Rewriting History With Jonas Mekas And The Underground Cinema
Curated by Erik Viskil
Guests: P. Adams Sitney, Gideon Bachmann, Pip Chodorov, Sarah Payton & Chris Teerink
CINEMA–THIS, TELEVISION–THAT
Curated by 'If I Can't Dance I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution'
in collaboration with Wendelien van Oldenborgh
Guests: Jean Fisher, Sven Lütticken, Ruth Noack, Snejanka Mihaylova

Wednesday, March 30:
CINEMA AND SOCIETY: WHERE HAVE THE SUBVERSIVES GONE?
Curated by Stefan Majakowsi
Guests: BAVO, Lech Kowalski, Jonas Staal, Miško Šuvaković

TOUT VA BIEN: SELF-REFLEXIVITY AND CINÉMA VERITÉ
Curated by Martine Neddam
Guests: Annie Abrahams, Josephine Bosma, Calin Dan, Michael Uwemedimo

Thursday, March 31:
GIVE ME A BRAIN ! Clash Continuum Senses of Cerebral Screens
Curated by Patricia Pisters
Guests: Warren Neidich, Frans Verstraten, Sarah de Rijcke, Joachim Rotteveel, Krien Clevis, Gert de Graaff, Niels Tubbing, Abel Minnée, Jay Hetrick, Bregt Lameris, Jennifer Kanary Nikolova, Fernando Flores

QUASI-CINEMA: DEVIANT FORMS OF REPRESENTATION
Curated by Inti Guerrero
Guests: Victor Manuel Rodriguez, Marc Siegel, Susan Stryker, Juan A. Suarez, Ming Wong

Friday, April 1:
CINEMA DEGREE ZERO
Curated by Jeffrey Babcock
Guests: Lee Ellickson, the Otolith Group, Miško Šuvaković

THE AND: PLACE OF ACTION
Curated by Doreen Mende
Guests: Filipa Cesar, Jean-Pierre Gorin, the Otolith Group, Catarina Simao

Counterparts

GARETH JAMES

NOT LATE. DETAINED

Part I.

Each of us can readily supply evidence of how it is that late works crown a lifetime of aesthetic endeavour. Rembrandt and Matisse, Bach and Wagner. But what of artistic lateness not as harmony and resolution but intransigence, difficulty and unresolved contradiction?

Edward Said, *On Late Style*

It's difficult not to think of Jean-Luc Godard when considering Edward Said's question. Edward Said, however, did not. At least, if he *did* think of Godard, he remained silent about it. On one level, there's no reason why Said should have done otherwise: Said once remarked that "just to think about the visual arts generally sends me into a panic," and *On Late Style* (which borrows its title from a short essay written by Adorno in 1934 about Beethoven) is comprised of a handful of unfinished essays concerning his favourite subjects – music and literature – that Said was working on during the last few years of his life before succumbing after a long struggle with leukaemia.[1] But for Godard's supporters, habituated to offering apologies on his behalf, pleading for indulgences, and generally mediating the predictably high levels of aggression in and around Godard's work since the 1970s, it would take a great deal more than Said's silence on the subject of Godard to get in the way of adopting *On Late Style* a few years later in order to provide a compelling intellectual, not to say ennobling and moral account of what was widely rumoured to be Godard's last film. After all, we would be hard pressed to come up with a more succinct description of the general reception of *Film Socialisme* than Said's definition of Late Style as the moment "when the artist who is fully in command of his medium, nevertheless abandons communication with the established social order of which he is a part, and achieves a contradictory, alienated relationship with it. His late works constitute a form of exile."[2] The fact that *intransigence, difficulty* and *unresolved* contradiction were Godard's calling cards long before things got *biographically* late for him, however, is the first obvious sign of trouble. A less obvious problem concerns what we might characterize as a disagreement between Godard and Said that proceeds in silence.

As a Palestinian-American intellectual, a key theorist of postcolonialism, and a significant figure in the political field in Palestine itself, it could not have escaped Said's attention that Godard's expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people arguably lent greater visibility to the Palestinian cause than did the work of Jean Genet, about whom Said wrote extensively. Godard initially travelled to Palestine in 1970 with the Dziga Vertov Group (DVG) through one of the various programs of invitation to Western artists and intellectuals operating in the 1970s, a trip that brought about only the misery of an incomplete film (*Jusqu' à la victoire*), the traumatic collapse of the DVG's methodological certainties and the dissolution of the DVG itself. But the outcome of this collapse, and of the unedited film shot, was one of the most important examples of the *essay film*: Godard's collaboration with Anne-Marie Miéville, *Ici et ailleurs* (1976)[3].

Histories of the essay film frequently provide it with a genealogy almost as old as film itself, pointing out precursors in both documentary and avant-garde films. But the essay film is increasingly understood from the 1940s onwards as more than yet another mode for novel formal experimentation. It becomes specifically that mode through which existing filmic forms are rethought, and retooled[4] with an emphasis on literary forms of conveying political and intellectual thought. The films of Chris Marker are central to this history, and it is in a review of *Letter from Siberia* (1958) that André Bazin gave the essay film its vocation. "Generally, even in politically engaged documentaries … the image … effectively constitutes the primary material of the film …. With Marker it works quite differently. I would say that the primary material is intelligence, that its immediate means of expression is language, and that the image only intervenes in the third position, in reference to this verbal intelligence. […] Here, a given image doesn't refer to the one that preceded it or the one that will follow, but rather it refers laterally, in some way, to what is said."[5] In other words, if the essay film operates with a thinking subject determined by the forms of literature, then Godard and Miéville's essay film surely presented only the most minimal intellectual barriers to Said engaging with it.

Godard was not just some intellectually and politically inclined filmmaker whose work might have slipped past Said's attention but one who once claimed that his "soul is Palestinian," who was frequently accused of anti-Semitism because of his support for the Palestinians, and whose effect on the resuscitation of the Palestinian film industry occurring at that moment (the entire film apparatus was completely destroyed in the Nakba exodus of 1948) is difficult to ignore, even if exaggerated on occasion. So Said's silence is at the least conspicuous. Returning the favor, Godard, has still to date been unable to find the occasion in an interview - let alone a film - to refer to the work of Said, who, along with Arafat and Mahmoud Darwish, was one of the three most prominent global agitators for Pales-

1 W.J.T. Mitchell, "The Panic of the Visual: A Conversation with Edward W. Said," *Boundary 2*, Vol. 25, No. 2, (Summer, 1998), pp. 11–33; Edward W. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006); Theodore W. Adorno, "Late Style in Beethoven," *Essays on Music*, (Berkeley Los Angeles, and London: U of C Press, 2002).

2 Said, *On Late Style*, p.8. Several commentators on Film Socialisme made Said's essay central to their analysis.

3 The best and most exhaustive consideration of the history of *Ici et ailleurs* is in the work of Irmgard Emmelhainz, *Jean-Luc Godard's Political Filmmaking*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2019

4 See Timothy Corrigan's *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

5 André Bazin, "Bazin on Marker," trans. Dave Kehr, *Film Comment* 39.4 (2003), pp. 43–44.

tinian sovereignty.[6] In *Notre Musique*, released shortly after the death of Said, Godard takes this silence to deafening extremes, in a long section in which Darwish elaborates on ideas around narration and representation that are, if not indebted to, then at the very least *thought* in companionship with Said. So this is where I choose to begin an essay about contemporary art after Godard. It's not that I'm *disappointed* that there's no relation between Said and Godard, it's that I'm utterly convinced that there can not *not* be one.[7]

One of the most difficult things to contend with in writing about Godard is the fact that almost every major philosopher of the late twentieth century with even the most cursory interest in the image has already had something to say about his work, a fact that confronts each new essay with a domestic economic consideration as to the value of throwing yet another log on the fire. Thus to find someone who *ought to have written* about Godard but did not, and moreover one who *ought to have been the subject* of Godard's critical attentions but was not, inevitably draws our attention. More than being a considerable relief (although it is that too, that there are still lacunae in the reach of discourse and global networks) it enables us to ask whether Godard and Said might still provide a service to one and other, not in spite of their silence but because of it. To draw our attention to their mutual silence, is not to present this silence as a key to unlocking a secret – something *known* but withheld from view – but to suggest that silence ought to be considered as one of the *modes* of thinking and interrogating, rather than as the absence of those activities.

The trope of the "missed encounter" serves as an example: it has been used to describe the painful meditation in Godard's *Histoires* on the way in which Cinema falls short when it fails to produce images of the concentration camps. But the pathos of this conceptualization is intensified, not banalized, each time it is recalled that the cinematic trope of the missed encounter also means nothing at all, a mere function in the plot line of a thousand romantic comedies. There's a comic aspect to Godard in interviews of recent years that illuminates something about this apparent paradox. Never an easy subject to interview it seems nonetheless, that the questions launched at him (in a fashion that frequently displays such eagerness for recognition as to be aggressive) are increasingly deflated more than answered. Some find this deflationary attitude a pretentious affect, an insult hurled from on high by the master, a sad intellectual decline, but it's just as plausible to consider it the artless and sincere response of someone whose capacity for being interviewed is exhausted. What Godard and contemporary art share in this respect, is that one of the most compelling actions within a culture industry that abhors an absence of meaning (just as Aristotle once said nature abhors a vacuum) is to resist the collapse of meaning, knowledge and signification with tactical countermeasures. That artistic works do not operate in some direct unmediated relation to a field of truths, but immanently within historically situated and overdetermined forms, is forgotten all the time, perhaps more in response to Godard's work than most.

The practice of the countermeasure is one place to begin in enumerating all that drove Godard and Said apart, when so many other aspects of their work and lives seemed to bring them inexorably together. Yes, we can find shared formal and hermeneutic conventions through which questions of narration, death and representation are addressed in almost identical ways.[8] Yes, *Ici et ailleurs* destroys the implicitly private basis of discourse associated with the essay film, and in its place installs a public condition for speech consonant with Said's advocacy of the public role of the intellectual. But *Ici et ailleurs* has a singular relation to the essay film because it simultaneously proceeds on the condition of the mortification, a second time around, of the very revolutionary aspirations of politicized modernism invoked by taking Dziga Vertov's name, along with a powerful reaffirmation of the potential of the essay film – but only under the condition of the subordination of discourse to practice. The fact that the soundtrack is dominated by a dialogue between Godard and Miéville should not be mistaken for the primacy of the discursive. The valuation of practice above discourse was properly a realization of the DVG, but it retains its determinative power in the interrogative mode of Miéville's critique.

To this point, I have allowed the discrepancies between Said's understanding of Late Style and that of Adorno to go unmentioned, but it needs airing out before I can proceed to Part II. "Late Style," Said

6 See Salah D. Hassan's essay "Passing Away: Despair, Eulogies, and Millennial Palestine," *Biography*, Volume 36, Number 1, (Winter 2013), pp. 27–50.

7 When I made the mistake of thinking about late style for this essay, I presumed that Said and Godard must have engaged with each other's work at some point, so I set about finding evidence of an explicit connection between them only to discover, after several months of searching, that none existed.

8 In particular, Said's essay "On Jean Genet," included in *On Late Style*, focuses precisely on the same ethical issues in the construction of images of resistance, given the irreconcilably different stakes involved for the author of such representations and the represented. Genet's account of his time in Palestine, *Prisoner of Love*, was published posthumously, whereas Godard practised a form of self-mortification in the collaboration with Miéville. See also: Edward Said, "Permission to Narrate," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Spring, 1984), pp. 27–48.

writes, "is *in*, but oddly *apart* from the present"[9] not because death encroaches upon and disfigures living forms, but because it is the mode in which it becomes possible to "endure ending in the form of *lateness* … *for itself*, its own sake, not as a preparation for or obliteration of something else. Lateness is being at the end, fully conscious, full of memory, and also very (even preternaturally) aware of the present."[10] For Adorno, on the other hand, Late Style is emphatically *not* a condition experienced by a human subject. Rather, Late Style is a *conditioning* of the work of art. To mistake Late Style for the former, is to "relegate" late works to "the outer reaches of art, … It is as if, confronted with the dignity of human death, the theory of art were to divest itself of its rights and abdicate in favour of reality."[11] What Adorno perceives in late Beethoven, is the abandonment of the normative agreement between aesthetic forms and the rules of their subjective inhabitation. The "psychological interpretation" of Late Style (that which forces art to abdicate its rights in favour of reality) misses the point because death is not imposed on works of art except in a refracted allegorical way.[12] Said admitted that his own ill-health initially made him receptive to Adorno's essay, but it is his activist's interest in how methodologies are initiated (as his second book attests) and his commitment to a humanist project that characterizes Said's inquiries into how a subject activates a mode of enduring the end.[13] For Adorno, on the other hand, Late Style is a historical achievement within the field of music contingent on subjectivity's departure from its forms. As such, *all* art following late Beethoven is subject to the objective fact of his Late Style, whether

9 Said, *On Late Style*, p. 24

10 Ibid., p. 14. It is this line of inquiry that Herman Asselberghs develops in situating Godard within Agamben's thoughts about messianic time. Herman Asselberghs, "Late, Latest, Last: Afterthoughts and Footnotes on Godard's Film Socialisme," *Afterall*, Issue #26, 2012.

11 Adorno, *Essays on Music*, p. 564

12 Adorno explains that the psychological interpretation "recognizes the explosive force of subjectivity in the late work [but] it looks for it in the opposite direction from that in which the work itself is striving; in the expression of subjectivity itself. […] The power of subjectivity in the late works of art is the irascible gesture with which it takes leave of the works themselves. It breaks their bonds, not in order to express itself, but in order, expressionless, to cast off the appearance of art. Of the works themselves it leaves only fragments behind, and communicates itself, like a cipher, only through the blank spaces from which it has disengaged itself. Touched by death, the hand of the master sets free the masses of material that he used to form; its tears and fissures, witnesses to the finite powerlessness of the I confronted with Being, are its final work. Hence the overabundance of material in Faust II and in the Wanderjahre, hence the conventions that are no longer penetrated and mastered by subjectivity, but simply left to stand. With the breaking free of subjectivity, they splinter off. And as splinters, fallen away and abandoned, they themselves finally revert to expression; no longer, at this point, an expression of the solitary I, but of the mythical nature of the created being and its fall, whose steps the late works strike symbolically as if in the momentary pauses of their descent." Ibid., p. 566.

13 Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, (New York: Basic Books, 1975). I find myself torn between a preference for Said's capacity to defer political inertia on the one hand, while being persuaded, albeit in a miserable way, by Adorno's analysis, on the other. I suspect that a similar dilemma exists for Godard.

it observes fidelity to this achievement or not. In Badiouian terms, *Late Style* ought to be taken as the name for a generic truth that appears within art, the *old Beethoven* or *Sonata Op.110*, as names for the traces of its local actualization.

Having squandered half my allotted word count to bring us to this point of possibly nothing at all, I ought to explain myself. Just as Said subtracted an image of Adorno's thought on Late Style that his own commitments were capable of registering, we too will inevitably subtract from the material named Jean-Luc Godard, an object that describes the capacities of contemporary art better than it describes Godard.

Part II: It should be all downhill from here, JLG.

> Historically, philosophy and art are paired up like Lacan's Master and Hysteric. We know that the hysteric comes to the master and says: "Truth speaks through my mouth, I am here. You have knowledge, tell me who I am." Whatever the knowing subtlety of the master's reply, we can also anticipate that the hysteric will let him know that it's not yet *it*, that her *here* escapes the master's grasp, that it must all be taken up again and worked through at length in order to please her. In so doing, the hysteric takes charge of the master, "barring" him from mastery and becoming his mistress. Likewise, art is always already there, addressing the thinker with the mute and scintillating question of its identity while through constant invention and metamorphosis it declares its disappointment about everything that the philosopher may have to say about it.
>
> Alain Badiou, *Art and Philosophy*[14]

If we recollect that in response to the admonitions of Maoist praxis, JLG commits himself to effectuating the transitivity between politics and film principally through actions rather than representations, then Badiou's description (my favourite Rom-Com staging of the missed encounter between art and theory) suggests that Lacan will be instructive in this regard. Lacan demonstrates[15] how speech *acts* within a topological space

14 Alain Badiou, "Art and Philosophy" in *The Handbook of Inaesthetics*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p.1.

15 Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre XX: Encore*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, (Paris: Seuil, 1975).

organized both geometrically and algorithmically. Lacan's matheme of the four discourses (those of the Master, the Hysteric, the University and the Analyst) conveys how the shift from one discourse to another is determined by an action – the famous quarter turn. The matheme does not produce *representations* of any subjective movement across discourses, since discourse for Lacan is transindividual in nature. It is instead a diagrammatically composed symbolic object, a *pedagogical* device, that monstrates (as has been claimed of Lacan's use of topology in general) "*the Real of structure itself, structure with grammar peeled off it.*"[16]

Although in *The Author as Receiver*,[17] Kaja Silverman arguably gives less priority to Lacan than she does to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in her analysis of *JLG/JLG: Autoportrait de décembre*, Lacan's diagrams play a crucial role. Silverman not only directs her theoretical speculations through a geometric reversal of JLG's authorial position from producer to receiver, but also by pressuring the unspecified nature of the diacritical mark around which the initials JLG twice appear. The two "JLG"s of the title function much like Émile Benveniste's distinction between the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the enunciated: the act of speaking splits the subject into the "I" who speaks (the individual doing the speaking) and the grammatical "I" of the sentence. In this context, we might extend Silverman's argument to add another acronym, AMM, to account for the third authorial condition given by Ann-Marie Miéville, as another algebraic symbol rotating through the available positions given by the /-mark. Not only do textual and typographic games of indeterminacy proliferate in JLG's work with the advent of video text generators, the relationship between *any* given image and the apparatus in which it is produced and circulates can also be illuminated by such topological and algorithmic diagrams. This will be of relevance shortly, specifically in terms of a consideration of sound, and the relation between ethics and politics.

The premise of *this* book forces the hands of its contributors to make some generic claims about contemporary art after JLG (a welcome provocation, given how acceptable it is to foreswear such things today)

16 Ellie Ragland and Dragan Milovanovic, "Introduction: Topologically Speaking" in *Lacan: topologically speaking*, (New York: Other Press, 2004). p. xix.

17 See Kaja Silverman, "The Author As Receiver," *October,* 96 (MIT Press: Cambridge Massachusetts, 2001), pp. 17–34; and my own interview with Silverman in Gareth James and Florian Zeyfang, *I Said I Love. That Is the Promise: The Tvideo Politics of Jean-Luc Godard = Die Tvideopolitik von Jean-Luc Godard*, (Berlin: oe & B-books, 2003).

in order to *turn* the structure of our line of inquiry to ask "What capacities might contemporary art need to possess in order to be capable of registering the objective historical achievements of JLG?" This essay will not focus on art's interrogation of the subject – an important interrogation certainly, but one that has been underway long before JLG. Instead, it seems to me that the three most significant capacities of contemporary art over the past decade or so, all of which register something significant in JLG's films, are concerned with how contemporary art operates in relation to materials, money and pedagogy. Contemporary art has opened an attempt to *be* the thought of materials (against the long-standing dominance of both aesthetic form in art and the primacy of signification since the linguistic turn), but the critical acumen of materials has, to my mind, already been blunted (we can blame the premature incoherence of Speculative Realism for that). And the recent interrogation, not of images *of* economics but of images *as* an economy, is surely grounded by the extraordinary analysis of *Ici et ailleurs*, but I've spent a lot of time on that elsewhere.

Which leaves me thinking more about the transformation of attitudes toward pedagogy (from an institutional appendage to an immanent concern of art) and about two recent artworks that do not directly address pedagogy, but draw our attention to the relation between knowledge and power in a manner that recalls central key aspects of JLG's work from the late 1960s onwards. One makes the claim that there is no knowledge to be acquired from images about oppression, while the other performs the dead labor of the task of rote memorization. Each of them tries to make a contemporary sense of the political dilemma famously posited in its prohibitionary form by Deleuze (in conversation with Foucault), as "the indignity of speaking for others," and further interrogated by Gayatri Spivak in her essay, "Can the subaltern speak?"[18] Sticking my neck out, I will say that any attempt to address this dilemma within art today is subject to the historical achievement of *Ici et ailleurs.*

The primary political and aesthetic operation to which The Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum* (2008) commits itself is precisely stated in a conversation between The Otolith Group and Irmgard Emmelhainz: "Eshun: I would suggest that in *Nervus Rerum* the idea of speaking truth to power is suspended in favor of the idea of turning one's back

18 Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected essays and interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 205–17; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), (1988), pp. 271–313.

on power. Sagar: We did not want any testimonies. Instead we wanted to ask, hypothetically, what might happen if one turned one's back on power in order to ignore its operations."[19] The aesthetic tactic of "turning one's back on power" is attributed to a Reece Auguiste film concerning police brutality against young Afro-Caribbean men in London in the 1990s, but the epistemo-political demand that grounds Eshun and Sagar's use of it, is Édouard Glissant's "right to opacity."[20] This is an important distinction to make, because we will find aesthetic and political convictions and strategies overlapping in ways that are often necessary, unavoidable, but also problematic and confusing in the discourse that surrounds *Nervus Rerum*. The effect of these problems are found in an otherwise fine essay by T. J. Demos[21] that expands on the question of opacity within *Nervus Rerum* at greater length than The Otolith Group do themselves in their conversation with Emmelhainz. Demos' essay is written backwards (like Kracauer's essay *On Photography*) in so far as it is saved by the heterogeneity of its concluding paragraphs when it would have been better served by beginning with them. As for The Otolith Group, Eshun opens his contribution with two statements: *Nervus Rerum* is shot and edited "in order to produce an opacity that seeks to prevent the viewer from producing knowledge from images. The film does not offer an ethnographic shortcut to empathy." However, the stated effect (of blocking empathetic shortcuts) does not necessarily follow from the aim, (of preventing viewers from producing knowledge from images). One might make the counterclaim that affects are the only thing produced by images when the possibility of producing knowledge is blocked. What is left out, in this reductive view of the epistemological and ontological conditioning of the image, is the fact that when we look at images, we don't just produce knowledge, affects and opinions about whatever representational content circulates within its frame, but knowledge, affects and opinions *about* that frame and beyond.

There are any number of discussions we can invoke to help think this through (concerning the problem of the exemplum in Agamben's essay

19 Irmgard Emmelhainz, "A Trialogue on Nervus Rerum," October, 129, (MIT Press: Cambridge, 2009), p. 129–132.

20 Auguiste was a member of the Black Audio Film Collective, whose work The Otolith Group identify as a crucial influence. Édouard Glissant, "For Opacity," in *Poetics of Relation*, (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1997).

21 T.J. Demos, "The Right to Opacity: On the Otolith Group's Nervus Rerum." *October*, 129, (MIT Press: Cambridge Massachusetts, 2009), pp. 113–128. I will lean heavily on the reader looking up Demos' essay to provide the description that I have no room for here.

on the paradigm; to the problem of tactics and audience relations in Gregg Bordowitz's work on video production in the AIDS crisis; or Roy Bhaskar's concepts of *detotalization* and *illicit fission*), but Judith Butler's response to the images of torture at Abu Ghraib and her critique of Susan Sontag suggests itself here, since there is a direct correlation between Sontag and The Otolith Group's resistance to images. "For Sontag there is something of a persistent split between being affected and being able to think and understand, a split represented in the differing effects of photography and prose. […] in Sontag's view, when sentiment crystallizes, it forestalls thinking." Butler on the other hand, insists on the distinction between representation and representability: "… we cannot understand the field of representability simply by examining its explicit contents, since it is constituted fundamentally by what is left out, maintained outside the frame(s) … the image, which is supposed to deliver reality, in fact withdraws reality from perception."
Thus one cannot simply affirm opacity, against transparency, since it too is *always-already* subject to highly *successful* actions within the field of representability that restrict access to the field of representation, which in turn determines: "whose life, if extinguished, would be publicly grievable and whose life would leave either no public trace to grieve, or only a partial, mangled, and enigmatic trace? […] In particular, the norms governing the 'human' are relayed and abrogated through the communication of these photos; the norms are not thematized as such, but they broker the encounter between first-world viewers who seek to understand 'what happened over there' and this visual 'trace' of the human in a condition of torture. This trace does not tell us what the human is, but it provides evidence that a break from the norm governing the subject of rights has taken place and that something called 'humanity' is at issue here."[22]

In other words, when asked to choose between, on the one hand, sophisticated practices of opacity, and on the other, those documentaries disparagingly named "Pallywood" with their naive belief in transparency, our first question ought to be "To what end would we agree to answer?" Or putting it differently, "To which norms governing the field of representability will any answer be complicit?"
Sharon Hayes' performative device of "re-speaking" in *Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) Screeds #13, 16, 20 & 29* makes the body itself less an image, a surface of inscription, than a frame inside a moving image. A frame as the relay for this trace (between a composition and

22 Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009). p. 70-78

a determinative outside), this vague kind of index (something called "humanity" is at issue here).

> If, as I have argued, norms are enacted through visual and narrative frames, and framing presupposes decisions or practices that leave substantial losses outside the frame, then we have to consider that full inclusion and full exclusion are not the only options. Indeed, there are deaths that are partially eclipsed and partially marked, and that instability may well activate the frame, making the frame itself unstable. So the point would not be to locate what is "in" or "outside" the frame, but what vacillates between those two locations, and what, foreclosed, becomes encrypted in the frame itself.[23]

We've *seen* a body like this before:

> *You see, at first she seems / happy to do this little work. // I find her beautiful. // Since she doesn't know how to read, // she is quite pleased / to participate in the struggle, // even by just repeating a text. // But while this repetition proceeds… // she seems more and / more morose, bored.*[24]

Hayes's body is cropped more closely than the Palestinian woman AMM describes at the beginning of the final section of *Ici et ailleurs*, but the flat affect is the same, the surface occasionally disturbed by sharper feelings of excitement, pleasure, resentment or consternation, but never so much as to suggest taking over. In relation to Butler's speculation, however, it is not the images of a body that concerns us here, so much as the voices that determine them. It is the voice that will allow us to think *Nervus Rerum*, *SLA Screeds* and *Ici et ailleurs* together, the voice in film that carries the encrypted principal of "vacillation" between locations and subjects. Sound, speech and listening are keystones of *Ici et ailleurs*' self-interrogation. When we first hear AMM, her voice shares the same discursive function as JLG's: both voices provide information about where the images being shown were filmed, and under what circumstances. But when we hear AMM again in the final section from which the above quote is taken, a significant shift has

23 Ibid., p. 75

24 Subtitles from *Ici et ailleurs*.

taken place in her voice: not in tone or affect, but a shift in the way it is bonded to the film, a quarter turn, that is registered in film theory as the shift from *voice-over* to *voice-off*.

Sharing JLG and AMM's inversion of the conventional understanding of sound as a supplement to the filmic image, Mary Anne Doane described how sound suppresses the objective heterogeneity of cinema's means by conjuring a unified, *phantasmic* body. The least surprising example can be suggested by considering how in classical narrative cinema the viewer willingly conjures a body for a voice, when the image of a character is *out of frame*, but not out of the diegetic space: the process of imaginary identification enables the viewer to restore unity to the fragmentation of image and sound. Thus, Doane argues, the voice does not merely serve to render narrative continuity: the voice *organizes heterogenous spaces*. It organizes the relation between in- and out-of-frame *within* the diegetic space, the relation *between* diegetic space and the screen and with the architectural space in which the viewer is positioned. Furthermore, in organizing these spaces, the hierarchical relations between them are frequently suppressed. Thus in our classical example, the existence of screen-space and architectural space is suppressed in favour of diegetic space. In documentary film, the voice-over commentary is evidently presented as outside of the diegetic space:
"it is its radical otherness with respect to the diegesis which endows this voice with a certain authority. As a form of direct address, it speaks without mediation to the audience, by-passing the 'characters' and establishing a complicity between itself and the spectator - together they understand and thus place the image. It is precisely because the voice is not localizable, because it cannot be yoked to a body, that it is capable of interpreting the image, producing its truth."[25]
It would appear that not being "yoked to a body" is one of the conditions of possibility that, in film at least, induces the indignant presumption to speak for others. This would seem to suggest that The Otolith Group, far from preventing empathetic shortcuts, in fact produce powerful imaginary and affective identifications – both with themselves, as well as with the historical personae of Genet and Pessoa whose seamlessly stitched quotes constitute the voice-over – while the bodies of Palestinians are little more than the voiceless opportunity for this phantasm. The structure of this paradox would need to be examined at

25 Mary Ann Doane, "The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," *Yale French Studies*, No. 60, Cinema/Sound (1980), p. 42.

greater length in relation to a pervasive tendency of the past 20 years to substitute ethico-aesthetic epistemes *for* political ones, as well as the affective conditioning of this substitution. Timothy Bewes's recent book, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*[26] suggests one way of doing so. Bewes describes a series of problematic tendencies that derive from the attempt to observe Deleuze and Spivak's injunctions: the tendency to substitute "an abyss of epistemological *méconnaisance*" for historical and political process, to fetishize incommensurability, and of allowing affects such as shame "to take the place of a more robust political understanding." For Bewes, shame is not the *result* of an ethical failure, a problem requiring a solution, or even a theorizable concept. Shame is conceived as an immanent condition of the process of constituting oneself as a speaking subject under colonial and postcolonial regimes, a process that begins with an intolerable separation of the self precisely from the other in front of whom that self wishes to speak.

The notion of the *acousmatic* voice, a voice one hears without seeing its source, originates in the pedagogical technique of Pythagoras. His disciples, the "Acousmatics" were obliged to silently follow Pythagoras' teaching for five years while he sat hidden from view behind a screen. In his later work, concerning technologies of the self, Foucault not only analyses the acousmatic authority of Pythagoras' proto-cinematic pedagogical scene, but also (in a manner resonant with Barthes' birth of the reader) perceives the positive conditions for the acquisition of truth in developing the art of listening. This art, Foucault suggests, is crucial for distinguishing between "what is rhetorical truth and what is falsehood in the discourse of the rhetoricians. Listening is linked to the fact that the disciple is not under the control of the masters but must listen to logos."[27] AMM, as the one who listens before speaking, brings the body of JLG/DVG's acousmatic voice out of the obscurity in which it was hidden by using its own shame like a dark light. As her voice shifts from voice-*over* to voice-*off*, AMM offers a discursive bond distinct from that of JLG/DVG.

At this point it may begin to become clear that I've absolutely no interest in claiming that *Nervus Rerum* fails where Hayes succeeds – the worst kind of school judgment. It requires saying that the playing field is unfairly levelled: *Nervus Rerum* is more influenced by Marker than JLG or Brecht so it unsurprisingly diverges in its effects. In a moment astonishing for its simplicity, the acousmatic is picked apart in a key edit. As the camera

26 Timothy Bewes, *The event of postcolonial shame*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011).

27 Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984. Vol. 1, Ethics: subjectivity and truth*, (New York: New Press, 1997), p. 236. Mladen Dolar's *A Voice and Nothing More*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006) offers an excellent Lacanian extension of aspects of Doane's argument beyond film.

winds its way through the narrow streets of the camp, we suspect that we hear the diegetic sound of a windblown instrument joining Teague's composed soundtrack (which as Demos observed, consists of "meandering harmonic progressions without tonal centre"). Shortly afterwards, this suspicion is confirmed by a J-cut that brings the image (and its viewers) into synch with what we now see is a recorder being played vigorously by an inhabitant of the camp. Recalling the fleeting moment in *La Jetée*, when the diegetic narrative and the very condition of film momentarily align, only to be lost once more, *Nervus Rerum* achieves something quite remarkable. It has nothing to do with turning one's back on power, or preventing the production of knowledge from images, but something closer to what Eshun states in offering a definition of what the ethics of opacity means: "intimacy without transparency." I don't know if a J-cut is short, but it *is* a cut, one that touches.

In "The Therrorized (Godardian Pedagogy)" published shortly after the release of *Ici et ailleurs*, Serge Daney claimed that one has to leave the cinema, "(to leave behind cinephilia and obscurantism)," and go to school, "the good place which removes us from cinema and reconciles us with 'reality' (a reality to be transformed, naturally)."[28] For Daney, school provides a structure within which different things, *transformative things*, might be done with representations and knowledge:

> Now there was a *sine qua non* for the Godardian pedagogy: never questioning the discourse of the other, whoever he is. Simply taking this discourse literally, and taking it at its word. Concerning oneself only with the already-said-by-others, with what has been already-said-already-established in statements (indiscriminately: quotations, slogans, posters, jokes, stories, lessons, newspaper headlines. Etc.). Statement objects, little monuments, words treated as things: take them or leave them. The *already-said-by-others* confronts us with a *fait accompli*: it has in its favor existence, solidity. By its existence it renders illusory any approach which would try to reestablish behind, before or around it a domain of enunciation. Godard never puts to the statements that he receives the question of their origin, their condition of possibility, the place from which they derive their legitimacy, the desire which they at once betray and conceal. His approach is the most anti-archeological there is. It consists of taking note of what is said (to which one

28 "Le thérrorisé (pédagogie godardienne)," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, (January 1976), pp. 262–3. Translated into English as "THE T(H)ERRORIZED (GODARDIAN PEDAGOGY)" by Bill Krohn and Charles Cameron Ball. See: www.diagonalthoughts.com/?p=1620

> can add nothing) and then looking immediately for the *other* statement, the other image which would counterbalance this statement, this sound, this image. "Godard," then, would simply be the empty place, the blank screen where images, sounds come to coexist, to neutralize, recognize and designate one another: in short, to struggle. More than "who is right? who is wrong?," the real question is "what can we oppose to this?"[29]

There is a danger, in our contemporary moment, of reducing the *already-said-by-others* to a simple cultural act of appropriation, a game of signification without citation, and thus missing entirely the deep political-pedagogical issue at stake - one which we might grasp a little better by considering how Foucault's analysis of Kant's notion of *unmündigkeit* relates to his own lengthy analysis of *parrēsia*.[30] The term, *Unmündigkeit* employed in Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?" denotates both "minority of age" and "legal or civil immaturity,"a designation that gathers together children, women of any age, the mentally ill, indeed anyone deemed incapable of representing themselves in legal proceedings and consequently requiring a "curator" (Kurator), a "proxy" (Stellvertreter), or a "guardian" (Vormund) to represent them in their place. Kant's use of *Unmündigkeit* was far from innocent in the way it carried the connotation of these mediating characters. Writing under the rule of Frederick the Great, Kant hoped to shore-up his Sovereign's enlightened commitment to devolving the freedom and responsibilities of thought to his subjects. While Foucault found an adequate substitute for *Unmündigkeit* in the French term *minorité*, it was the extended connotative range of *Unmündigkeit* in the context of Foucault's broader analysis of what it means to teach and to learn, that permitted the English translators of Foucault to elect *tutelage* rather than *immaturity* as the most relevant, the least innocent choice of words in English.

Of course Foucault was interested in Kant whispering in the ear of his master: his preoccupation with the genealogy of *parrēsia* – that form of speech in which a subject is compelled to fearlessly speak truth to

29 Ibid.

30 Michel Foucault, "What is Englightenment?" *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, 1954–1984. Vol. 1, Ethics: subjectivity and truth. (New York: New Press, 1997); Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" translated by James Schmidt in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-century Answers and Twentieth-century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt, (Berkeley: U of California Press), 1996. For an extended discussion on the translation of Unmündigkeit see Schmidt's blog, http://persistentenlightenment.wordpress.com

power – constitutes something like a late style for Foucault. Kant declared that man is subjected to a "self-incurred tutelage" not for want of knowledge, but for want of the courage to make use of his understanding without direction from others, a declaration that indicates that even for Kant, the historical conditions for the emergence of reason were understood to be not self-sufficient, but inextricably connected to something else, to an ethos, or what Foucault would call an "attitude." What fascinates Foucault is the way in which Kant offers a counter-normative definition of the private, as he clarifies the specific conditions of the public use of reason: "Yet it is here that Kant brings into play another distinction, and in a rather surprising way. The distinction he introduces is between the private and public uses of reason. Yet he adds at once that reason must be free in its public use and must be submissive in its private use. Which is, term for term, the opposite of what is ordinarily called freedom of conscience."[31] The private use of reason is *not* the subjective cogitations of an individual, sheltered from the scrutiny of the public, but the use man makes of reason when he is a "cog in a machine" (when he plays a role we would conventionally think of as being public – as a soldier, a taxpayer, a civil servant or a priest and so on). In such roles, the subject has accepted a contract with an institution, and by virtue of that contract, must in good faith accept the imposition of the particular ends of that institution upon his use of reason, making a free use of reason impossible.

Clearly JLG and Said both speak, fearlessly, in the publicity of *parrēsia*, but Kant's cleaving of the private impacts them in an asymmetrical fashion. Said's commitment to the intellectual and philosophical project of humanism would, I think, regard Kant's equivocation of the private ultimately as a type of sophistry if it were to be applied to our own contemporary moment, a way of obscuring political problems with linguistic ones. The critical political project of the intellectual is to clear away any attempts to condition, defer or delay the passage of any individual to their majority.[32] But this equivocation, that straddles the conventional separation of private and public and renders a third agonistic space between individual and institution, has more traction for JLG, even while it sets him implacably against Kant, because of the extremely negotiated nature of truth in the field of the image. I suspect that it is this aspect of the image that produces what Said described as "panic." At the very

31 Michel Foucault, "What is Englightenment," p. 307.

32 Edward Said, *Representations of the intellectual: The 1993 Reith lectures*, (New York: Pantheon Books,
1994).

least, the asymmetry it introduces between JLG and Said demands that we consider their silence no longer as a matter of choice (as though the discursive conditions were available but not chosen) but as an effect of the objective fact that JLG speaks from a position that is occluded for, or simply not recognized by, Said. Johann Georg Hamann, a friend of Kant, voiced his concern that what was being presented in Kant's essay as the emancipation of the *Unmündigkeit* was in fact the surreptitious installation of a new form of guardianship.[33]

To assume one's majority, and to index that assumption with the public use of reason on the condition of surrendering one's autonomy in civic life to the Sovereign, could only be a regressive return for JLG to the function of the auteur, a position he had worked so hard to abdicate. Thus for JLG, Kant's critique of the private use of reason and of the self-incurred immaturity of man is accurate—useful even—but he draws opposite conclusions: it will be necessary to have the courage to learn with, not free from the guidance of others. Thus we ought to rewrite Kant's maxim for Godard, *Sapere aude! Have the courage to use the understanding of others!*

As Daney suggest, for JLG, it is not the task of film to police the appearance of authentic identities (how could it be when in its late condition, subjectivity has abandoned its forms, its s*tatement objects and little monuments,* and left them in ruins?) but to transform subjects through what, following Laclau and Mouffe, we might describe as an agonistic process. School is not the good place because it offers an escape from the problem of power (far from it, one is detained there), but

> because there it was possible to retain the maximum number of things and people for the longest possible time, the very place of *differance*. For *retenir* means two things: "to retain" (hold onto) but also "to detain," "to defer." To hold onto an audience of students in order to delay the moment when they would risk passing too quickly from one image to another, from one sound to another, seeing too quickly, declaring themselves prematurely, thinking that they are done with images and sounds when they don't suspect to what extent the arrangement of these images and sounds is something very complex and serious, and not at all innocent. School permits us to turn cinephilia against itself, to turn it inside out, like a glove, and to take our time about it. So that Godardian pedagogy consists of unceasingly returning to images and sounds, designating them, repeating them, commenting on them, reflecting them, criticizing them like so many unfathomable enigmas: not losing sight of them, holding onto them with one's eyes, *keeping them*.[34]

Do JLG and Said productively detain each other in this *therrorized* way? This is not to ask whether JLG or Said consciously determined to give each other the silent-treatment: neither strike me as passive aggressive or patient enough. Rather, their silence can be objectively described as a necessary condition of the screen, the frame or cut that separates them at the same time as it borders them both – the only shared attribute between the two otherwise incommensurable compositions of their discursive bonds and locations. Only silence, that is, not words, can move across that border without generating incoherence on each side in the process. One is detained when waiting for an answer or for an idea to form, but receiving the silence of another, may also be the experience of being detained in the limits of one's own argument. Subjected to silence, to the silent return from the other side of one's own argument, one might take that time to revise one's commitments, to bide one's time until the experience of the limit recursively transforms one's own argument from the presentation of a position to be defended to a decision to be undertaken. If the cinematic voice for Doane organizes heterogeneous spaces, silence holds that organizational form, extending it through time, and like a pose held too long, that form may become painful, inflamed. Instead of answering silence with a simple repetition of what one already stated (perhaps it merely went unheard?) it might be that answering silence means allowing oneself to be detained by it, detained in the space in which subjectivity can be decoupled from its forms, taking it up all over again, beginning anew.

33 J. G. Hamann, "Letter to Christian Jacob Krauss," translated by Garrett Green in *What is Enlightenment?* ed. James Schmidt. *op. cit.*

34 "Le thérrorisé (pédagogie godardienne)," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, (January 1976), pp. 262–3. Translated into English as "THE T(H)ERRORIZED (GODARDIAN PEDAGOGY)" by Bill Krohn and Charles Cameron Ball. See: www.diagonalthoughts.com/?p=1620

Counterparts

FLORIAN ZEYFANG

DEAR AATON 35-8

Dear Aaton 35-8,

I am writing to you from the distant future, from 2014. You don't exist anymore – maybe you never really existed the way you were imagined and described by one of your brainfathers, Jean-Luc Godard. But even today, you remain the dream of the independent filmmaker, and of the artist filmmaker, called forth when we see those images from the time you were first tested. The slim, silver metal body with hard edges – you were not painted yet, and the magazine was still missing. The lens and the viewfinder in contrasting black, made of different materials. In the image: JLG, lifting you up with one hand – unthinkable for a 35mm camera before – holding you to his cheek. You look like a silver beast sitting on his shoulder. Your inventor, Jean-Pierre Beauviala, had already been responsible for a series of inventions that resulted in "the cat," a nickname for the Aaton 16mm camera. And now this!
They later found out you were a failure. But before this happened, expectations were high: You would be a "director's camera" – lightweight, easy to handle, very noisy perhaps, but producing images that were meant to be as good as those shot with the huge, heavy Arri or Mitchell cameras. In contrast to them, you would "fit into the glove box of a Toyota," as JLG is often quoted as saying; or into the basket of a bike. You would still be able to produce footage that would match that of large cinematic productions – all the while being shot by just a single person, no tripod necessary, no crew.

The idea of creating a new film camera came up in the late 1970s, long after the invention of portable video technology. Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville were on their way back to filmmaking, having spent some years experimenting with television. In moving to TV, they had tried to find different modes of production to realize their ideas. Just before that, JLG had left Paris, and his Maoist times, the Groupe Dziga Vertov, and the film world as such. Anne-Marie Miéville and he founded the production company Sonimage; they moved to Rolle in Switzerland, and introduced a video-editing studio into their life. They would no longer need big filmmaking budgets, so they hoped. Smaller teams would be able to do the work. New distribution channels would make possible communication with a completely different audience: that of television.
This move underlined their wish to be independent from the methods and money of the film world, even if JLG had tried to use the industry's budget against itself in the preceding years, openly revealing such

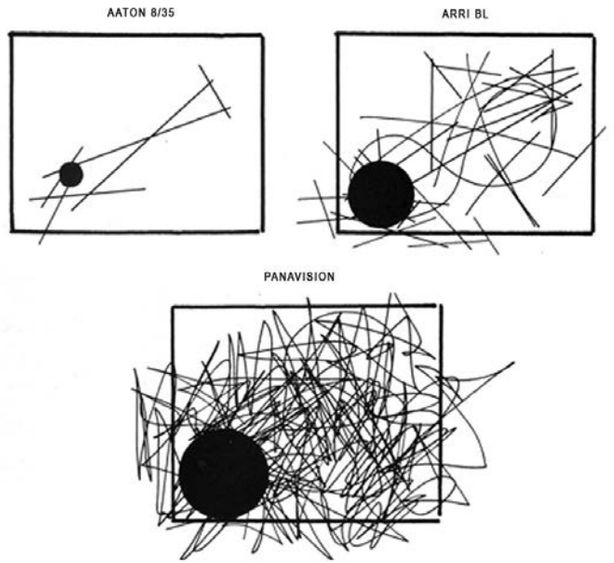
methods in the famous opening sequence to *Tout va bien* from 1972, for example, his last project with Groupe Dziga Vertov co-founder Jean-Pierre Gorin. Here, we see checks being signed and counted, as the love story background for the workers' struggle is introduced. A step further, in 1976 came *Ici et ailleurs*, a montage of footage from Palestine conceived by Godard and Miéville, an undoing of the ideology of the Dziga Vertov period. Right after, Miéville and Godard produced two TV series: in 1976, *Six fois deux/Sur et sous la communication*, consisting of 2x6 episodes of 50 minutes, and in 1977 *France/tour/détour/deux/enfants*, made of 12 "movements," totaling 312 minutes. Already since 1968, Godard's connection to television had also been a financial one, as Colin MacCabe points out: "All but one of the Groupe Dziga Vertov-films were financed by television, and Sonimage has received its major commission from French and Mozambique Television."[1] Television channels from France and Germany had also financed *Le Gai Savoir* in 1968, which was supposed to be screened on French national television, but was rejected upon completion and released in cinemas.

We see directors trying to scale down the process to include only actual filmmaking, cutting down on the technology, the team, the budget. And still there is an apparatus, an industry with ideas on how TV should be made. The assumption we take from commentators looking back at the invention of Aaton 35-8, is that it was meant to be a director's camera: a direct, individualized instrument of expression in the hands of the person who had the idea. For Godard, this meant movie making with a small crew and small budget, since that was the only way he could see himself not being condemned to making "big pictures." The challenge for the lightweight camera would be to allow filming somewhere *other* than places normally prescribed by traditional cinema. Otherwise, the *mise-en-scène* would always be determined by equipment and crew and all the habits these people bring from their usual work: routines that serve film production well, but which in this case obstruct the search for new images, new angles, different stories. Routines would also change in the studio, on the film set, transforming the nature of work in these places too. In a conversation between JLG and Jean-Pierre Beauviala in *Cahiers de cinéma*,[2] some of the most interesting arguments are about how crew-life influences filmmaking, about the use of available technology, and how a new small camera would alter this scheme. In the con-

1 Colin MacCabe, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (London: BFI/Macmillan Press Ltd), p. 138

2 "Génèse d'une caméra (1er épisode)," in: Cahiers du cinéma 348/349 (June/July 1983) and 350 (August 1983), reprinted in "Godard par Godard," p. 519-557. An English translation of the first part was printed in *Camera Obscura Vol. 5*, No. 13/14 (Spring-Summer 1985), p. 163-193.

text of the discussion, Godard illustrates the differences between camera types with drawings. In the first, a chaos of lines describes the way a film team operates in the space between camera and actors for a shot with a Panavision camera. The same shot (13/1 from *Prenom Carmen*) looks much less strenuous when using an Arri BL. And finally, with only 4 lines, Godard demonstrates the effortless moves of the crew working with an Aaton 35-8.



It is an intriguing idea that a new camera might change filmmaking so dramatically. You were not only a mobile camera, an instrument for shooting immediately *in situ*, you would also have made new films possible, not least through a formerly unthinkable option: a camera that can change hands. This certainly was another aspect, if a theoretical one, of Godard and Miéville's TV work, if we follow Colin MacCabe and his analysis. They tried to give the camera away. Since the struggle for free speech has in four hundred years created an awareness of what it means to speak for oneself, MacCabe attests that "the existence of TV professionals denies that there is any question whether we should be able to use our own images." Consequently, the protagonists within *Six fois deux* find the request odd, to "provide images to express their thoughts or positions."[3]

3 MacCabe, p. 144-145.

We find Godard addressing the question of sharing the camera in MacCabe's book, in the interview parts. He recalls, "when I began to make movies, only the camera operator and the director were authorized to look in the viewfinder. The other members of the crew couldn't. It was like the Middle Ages."[4] As early as 1967, he had tried to use one of the first video cameras in *La Chinoise*: "I wanted the characters to film themselves and then use the footage for self-criticism, but it was too new as equipment then […] It was movie equipment and there was no law." No law, self-implied, or through tradition, on how a camera should be used. No law on how a team works together. Godard's interest in video technology came about through similar interests, mainly of how to "free yourself from the photographer as the sorcerer who knows the magic that you don't know" and how to extend that freedom to the whole crew, so that all "can learn, can begin to learn" by sharing the equipment and "all the social things."[5]
All this concerns shooting with actors. I am also interested how you are used "on the go." Again I see JLG and his small crew parking the Toyota on the highway during the shoot for *Lettre à Freddy Buache*, trying to film the clouds in that very light then and there, being forced by the police to leave the spot. This could have been done with video – but video image was poor at the time, compared to even the most undersized film stock. In the discussion with Beauviala, mentioned above, Godard had outlined what you would be used for: "You're in Holland, out in the country, and you see a windmill that is completely motionless… You take the camera out of the glove compartment, you shoot, and you get a 35mm image with the highest resolution possible in cinema or television. Suddenly you think of *Foreign Correspondent* (the sequence when the windmill turns the wrong way). Or something else. Because you already have an image, once you have an image, you do something else with it. And if Ingrid Bergman's there, I shoot Ingrid Bergman. That's the idea; that's why this camera was made."[6]

Godard could have been wrong here, as he had been before, as Peter Wollen recounts in his famous essay, *The Two Avant-Gardes*: "In *Le Gai*

4 Jean-Luc Godard interviewed by Colin MacCabe, ibid., p. 133.

5 MacCabe, p. 134. It would be interesting to find out where the limits of the Godardian pedagogy lie when working in his team, as he also says: "People discover that it's much more difficult to work with me in a small crew because […] you're just obliged to invest. You're not just a hired professional who can escape." p. 133.

6 Cited in the introduction to "Genesis of a camera," Camera Obscura, Vol. 5, No. 13/14 (Spring-Summer 1985), pp. 163–193.

Savoir, Juliet Berto says towards the end that half the shots are missing from the film, and Jean Pierre Léaud replies that they will be shot by other filmmakers: Bertolucci, Straub, Glauber-Rocha. We can see now how wrong Godard was in some of his judgments – the shots missing from his film could be supplied by the other avant-garde – and its not clear that he has ever realized this."[7] For Wollen, *Le Gai Savoir* was Godard's "most revolutionary work," yet he insinuated that it held a certain blindness towards the other avant-garde he places next to the *auteurs*: the artists making film. Or was the ignorance reciprocal? "At the extreme, each would tend to deny the others the status of avant-garde at all. Books like Steve Dwoskin's *Film Is* or David Curtis' *Experimental Film* do not discuss the crucial post-1968 work of Godard and Gorin, for example. And supporters of Godard – and Godard himself – have often denounced the 'Co-op avant-garde' as hopelessly involved with the established bourgeois art world and its values." Since artists these days go out and make movies that win Oscars (even if they are movies that might not have been considered "avant-garde" before), this is no longer conceived as an eternal conflict. But there used to be a schism between the auteur filmmaker and the people who entered moving image making from the art side.

It was the German experimental filmmaker Birgit Hein who introduced me to Peter Wollen's text. After attending a lecture of mine, she had pulled up a chair, turning it around and setting it down in the middle of the seating rows, and had stated that she had always disliked Godard. She then invited me to her class at Braunschweig Art Academy to present the book *I said I love. That is the promise. The TVideo-politics of Jean-Luc Godard*, which I had edited together with Gareth James. Part of the reason for her disapproval were the images from Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's TV series I had used to illustrate my presentation: they were third-generation VHS copies that were more like "video impressionism," since the source material was in pretty bad shape to begin with.

Back in 1977, Birgit Hein's criticism was much more fundamental, and she had worked it out in relation to Godard's use of video in *Numéro Deux*, his and Miéville's film from 1975. She argued that Godard's use of form, and the way he offers us information about the sources of his images, is only symbolical. "Godard misses the essential: that the mode of information transmission is part of its information."[8] She judges that, in this movie and in film in general, the methods and the use of aesthetic forms are never truly analysed, never compared with the work of other contemporary artists who use the moving image. "In this form-content combination of the films of Godard, Straub or Eisenstein, the formal work is degraded to a supporting function. It provides forms, which only become concrete when they are filled with narrative content. Furthermore, it is exactly the formalism of the works of Godard, Straub and Eisenstein, which becomes problematic, if you believe that a broad understanding of information is also necessary in political work." Referring to the assumed elitism of art film, she does not waste energy defending her own radically formal approach; instead, she claims that the other side is not that different: "Straub as well as Godard have only a very limited audience which in comparison to a real mass audience is only marginally different from the elitist art public which is interested in the formal avant-garde."

We might think that Straub or Godard were never even close to the synergies imagined by Peter Wollen. At least not on the level of form-content. But certainly on the level of technology! You, Aaton 35-8, were actually made for the *artist-auteur*, or so I imagine; for those who wanted to close the gap. It was just that your inventors did not know that. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen might have wanted to have a camera like the Aaton 35-8. In their most famous film, *Riddles of the Sphinx* from 1977, there is a shot towards the end in which the ever-spinning camera is caught in a mirror, together with the camera-women. What we see is a huge 35mm.

Where, in the landscape mapped out by the *Two Avant-gardes*, did Peter Wollen see himself and Laura Mulvey? Closer to the *auteur* filmmakers, I should think. Like them, they too are writers. But the strict concept of *Riddles* contains a structural approach that constructs a trail leading to artist filmmakers. The film starts like a book, literally showing the pages of a book being turned, and then a content page appears, followed by an introduction. It also ends with a summary, which is perhaps the toughest part: to see Mulvey replay parts of her introduction on a small tape recorder. Rewind, play, rewind, play, listening, as if she were considering whether the film had attained the thesis outlined in the beginning, reflecting on the process. Between the introduction and the postscript, each chapter, each movement of the film, is defined by

7 This and the following quotes: Peter Wollen, "The Two Avant-Gardes, " *Studio International* vol. 190, no. 978 (November/December 1975), pp. 171–175.

8 All quotes are from Birgit Hein, "The Avant-Garde," presented 1977 in Edinburgh and published 1978 in *Millennium Film Journal*, Vol. 1. No. 2, p. 23.

the camera's 360-degree pan. Starting somewhere close to the bodies, later becoming more generous, always playful, not least when the camera rotates inside a car driving through a roundabout at the same time, doubling the circular movement, until the camera catches the protagonists who are riding in a car passing the one transporting the camera.
Would Godard/Miéville have used such a structural composition? Does it conform to Birgit Hein's standards of formal use? The theme of *Riddle'* is similar to what drove JLG and AMM: the role of a woman in society, left by her man, post-family, challenging her employers with a demand for child care, seeking a new job, finding support in the women's movement. And somewhere in the film's narration/documentation, the protagonists are at an opening of an art exhibition: It is Mary Kelly's work, and the show features her *Post Partum Document*, a landmark piece, a six-year exploration of the mother-child relationship. When it was first shown at the ICA in London in 1976 – the shots might have been taken there – the work provoked tabloid outrage because it incorporated stained nappy liners: a form-content provocation. *Riddles of the Sphinx* could be a manifestation of future collaboration between competing avant-gardes.

You, Aaton 35-8, could have been another one. Big cinema insists on a general homogeneity of production, reception and representation. Both of the two avant-gardes wanted to break this homogeneity, and both were always in need of smallness, of accessibility and methods that would adapt to any given situation. That's where you would have come in. *Lettre à Freddy Buache* could have been shot using the 35-8. But you were not finished then. And when you were finished, you just did not look or work the way JLG had expected.
He had invested a considerable part of the budget of three of his films into the development of Aaton 35-8 – between one-fifth and one-quarter of the budget, he says in the conversation with Beauviala mentioned above. During *Sauve qui peut (la vie)*, shot in 1979, a prototype was tested, but in the end could not be used. *Passion*, from 1982 – this is the only film that contains images shot with the prototype. They are the ones right at the start, showing clouds and condensation trails in a blue sky. But it is *Prénom: Carmen* (1983), in which a discussion about its failure emerges. "Sauve qui peut could still be made with the Arri. *Passion* could be made with any old camera. *Prénom: Carmen* couldn't. The film changed!" we read Godard shouting at Beauviala. And we remember his drawings of the team moving between camera and actors, and imagine how radical that change might have been.
Beauviala responds that Godard should have held on to his ideas instead of listening to his team, since it was his DOPs who talked him out of using the 35-8. The focus…the shutter…the noise of the camera… The whole encounter is mainly about the failure of this camera – and about who is to blame. It is a complex discussion, and one gets the impression that both men failed to support the idea behind the camera at different moments.
By that time, there existed a functioning Aaton 35, but this camera turned out to be too big, for many reasons. The discussion between her inventors – the first part, a second followed in the next *Cahiers* – concludes with a collage, made by Godard, showing a man looking through a camera on the left and a donkey on the right, and a typewritten text in which the man mourns the misconception of his brainchild-camera:

for this shot
you would have had
to be able to
put the 8/35
in the glove box of a Toyota
under the seat of a DC 9
and in the basket of a bike
before finally
discovering
without looking for it
in Tralee
in Ireland
like Cartier le Bresson
at the right hour
minute,
second,
and frame.
but here you are:
the Aaton 35 has lost its 8
like a clarinet without its C note
and this shot is impossible

Dear Aaton 35-8, you did not make it, either to Jean-Luc Godard or to the other avant-garde. The minor films, the minor stories, you would have been the perfect tool for them. Other technological utopias drove filmmakers in the 1970s, in parallel with the new magnetic recording medium. For example, Hellmuth Costard tried to professionalize Super-8 with his inventions, including direct-tone and larger film cartridges. You were Godard and Beauviala's utopia.
Today, we have cameras that have a metal look similar to yours. Some of

these cameras convey a retro feeling when we look at them, even if we have never seen you. They look like time machines. They do what you were supposed to do: deliver next-to-perfect images. But not without additional attachments, gadgets, cables, so that in the end they are not very small anymore. They are available to all artists and filmmakers for just a little effort. Well, a budget is needed, of course.

Nowadays, the images artists produce are getting cleaner, the productions more expensive. Huge budgets seem to have become a value in and of themselves. The content, or the amount of visible reflection and formal discussion, does not always match the monetary input. Meanwhile, Jean-Luc Godard's films get cheaper and dirtier; he uses video footage of the poorest quality, as in *Film Socialisme* from 2010, or homemade 3D in *Adieu au langage* (2014) in order to splice up frame and story. We may read this as a gesture of distinction.

FRANÇOIS BUCHER

I'M YOUR FAN

A game of shifting mirrors

I

In 1934, two years after he published it initially, a man named Mir Bahadur Ali re-edits his original book *The Approach to Almotásim*. The overwhelming praise of the local press has led him to it. The title of the second edition is *A Conversation With The Man Named Almotásim*, "beautifully subtitled" with the phrase *A Game of Shifting Mirrors*. I use quotation marks for this banal epithet only to stress that the words are not mine. But from here on, I will refrain from using them (for such a purpose), since the message of this text is their inevitable erasure. The epithet is in fact from a short story by Jorge Luis Borges in which he merely describes a *pre*-existent book.[1]The book, as the reader might have gathered, is also non-existent. Borges's short story takes its title from the first edition of that fictitious book – *The Approach to Almotásim*. The short story is written in 1935 in Buenos Aires; the book and its second edition are said to have been written in Bombay. The task set by the Argentinean writer for himself is to compare the editions and to "review the reviews" that the book has merited; an inspiring exercise, even if the book doesn't exist, or its multiple critics.

Borges reports that two of these critics identify the genre of the book as detective story and note its mystical undercurrent.[2]He also states that, even if he hasn't held it in his hands, he intuitively knows that the 1932 version is superior to the re-edited one. This is due to an appendix in the second version, according to which the "man named Almotásim" in the 1932 version is more of a symbol although he doesn't lack idiosyncratic, personal traits. Unfortunately, says Borges, this good literary habit doesn't persist and the 1934 edition decays into allegory.

It is necessary here to describe the story described by the story told by the book. The best way to start is perhaps to make another trip to the prologue in *The Garden of Forking Paths*, where Borges gives a shorter synopsis of the plot.[3]To introduce his new account, he describes the mathematical synthesis of yet another plot in which the narrator seeks to know if A or C have influenced B. According to Borges, *The Approach to Almotásim* is analogical to this structure as it foreshadows or guesses through B the very remote existence of Z which B hasn't met.

In less abstract terms, the story is about a student who ends up living amongst the most detestable people. He discovers, suddenly, in one of these hateful characters, a mitigation of the infamy, something tender, an exaltation, a silence. It is as though a third speaker had entered the dialogue. The student determines that this expression of decorum doesn't belong to the man he sees in front of him, it must be a reflection of a friend of his, or that of a friend of a friend.[4] Rethinking the problem, he soon comes to a mysterious conviction: "In some place on earth there is a man (or woman) from which this clarity proceeds, in some place on earth there exists the man (or woman) that is equal to that clarity."[5] The student decides to devote his life to finding this person. The general argument is already apparent: an insatiable search for a soul through the delicate reflections it has left in others, beginning with the tenuous imprint of a smile or a word and ending with diverse and growing splendours of reason, imagination and goodness.

Addressing the author of this detective-mystic plot, Borges points out his obligations. To properly execute such an argument, he says, the writer needs to include a number of prophetic traits in the story, yet the hero prefigured by these traits must not be a mere phantasm or convention. The character must not give us the impression of being a sum of disorganized, insipid superlatives.

Since the book does not exist, what we have when we read these words is a set of instructions an author gives to himself for the treatment of a story; to his "self" as the author within the book. The "I" that is an "other".

1 In the prologue of The *Garden of Forking Paths,* the bold assertion is made that to compose vast books is delirious, laborious and impoverishing. The argument is that the five hundred dreary pages needed to develop an idea can be perfectly summed up in a five-minute oral exposition. What is a better procedure is to simulate that those books already exist and to offer a review, a commentary.

2 According to Laura Mulvey, Oedipus may be seen as the first detective. She in turn takes on the Freudian interpretation of the Greek folk myth and uses it to decode cinema; she becomes a detective in her own right, using the Freudian view as a kind of manual, a "thread" that leads her through the labyrinth of "symbolic order" to the disclosure, in most cases, of issues that concern a feminist perspective. Speaking of labyrinths in her book on *Citizen Cane*, Mulvey quotes Borges from his very early review on the film, written the same year the film came out. In the article titled *An Astounding film* (*Sur* magazine #83, August 1941), Borges says that the film is a "Labyrinth without a centre", much like the story about the story of approaching "a man named Almotásim", who is ultimately never reached. When he wrote this piece, Borges had just seen the film. He concluded that it wasn't an intelligent but rather a *genial* film "in the most nocturne and Germanic sense of that bad word". As a kind of footnote, allow me to mention here Borges's attack on Bahadur Ali, the made-up author of T*he Approach to Almotásim.* He objectively states that Bahadur is incapable of sidestepping the bluntest of the temptations of art, that of being a genius. As a Borges fan, I accuse him of the same.

3 Borges always concocts fabulous enrichments of his stories, which he offers (as desserts) on the outskirts of the texts, in prologues and epilogues that pop the balloon of the rounded plot. In this particular prologue, he asserts that his own story is from 1935, as if to suggest that it is actually the third edition of the text, thus insinuating that he is that other author from Bombay. "Talking about" is of course re-editing, rewriting; a form of *approaching* the other author. As does the character in the story when he approaches Almotásim. But we aren't there yet. Will we ever be?

4 To borrow the terminology of Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse, The Approach to Almotásim* is an expression of *Atopos*, one of the arguments of the lover's discourse: "…but I had had, two or three times, occasion to read in his eyes an expression of such an *innocence* (no other word) that I persisted, whatever happened, in setting him, so to speak, aside from himself, outside of his own character."

5 Jorge Luis Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths.*

II

In 1963 Godard makes a film about a film about a book. The name of the film is *Contempt* and its subject is a prominent master text of Western culture: *The Odyssey*. A discussion takes place between a diegetic [6]director – Fritz Lang, played by himself – and a hardcore American producer, played by Jack Palance. In the middle of the discussion stands a pusillanimous French writer (Michel Piccoli), who has been hired to rewrite the script, and his too beautiful wife, Brigitte Bardot. The discussion is about translation: how can the text be translated into film, and which version will prevail, Lang's notion of the individual's fight against circumstance, or Palance's more frivolous emphasis on Penelope's infidelity. Like Borges with his invented writer from Bombay, Godard too places a director in his own position, so that the plot of *The Odyssey* is separated from us one step further (a text by a Greek bard translated by a French pop play writer, directed by a German director). As with the book about the student and his endless approach towards Almotásim (and its flawed second edition), what becomes the issue in the film, the matter so to speak, is a plot in which it's the main character is the text itself; a plot that has another plot as its protagonist. The impulse is analogical to Borges's operation: to show the camera, as Godard does in *Contempt,* is equivalent to setting the story within another book. It is to draw the boundaries of a diegesis so as to be able to refer back to it. The story, as Godard has insisted throughout his whole career, is what is least important; it is that which can be done without; it is the excuse to start talking about cinema. This mirrors Borges's desire to simulate the previous existence of the book in order to make the story be the engagement with the previous (or non-existent) text, with storytelling, with fiction (and its double). In this sense, the beautiful twist in *Contempt* is that the text reveals itself by being "translated" through the characters who are searching for it.[7] Piccoli and Bardot become the translation of Ulysses and Penelope, the ancient gods are brought back onto the scene.[8] What is revealed is that the text was always already present; that the performances of the man and woman were already dictated by the text, that they were both basically drawn from it. Since the film about *The Odyssey* does not exist, what we have when we witness the discussion of the characters within the diegesis is Godard's conversation with Hollywood regarding the treatment of a master text in film.[9] The discussion is about language and it takes place on several different levels. Jerry Prokosch (Palance) sees himself as a 20th-century equivalent of Zeus, as Kaja Silverman also notes, and thereby he points towards the Hollywood idea of mastering the production of images. This notion implies a meta-language, the notion of scripting the film *completely*, of producing a highly referential language that overdetermines, defines, closes in on the matter, and offers the illusion of a unilateral direction. This, at last, is the idea of a correspondence between the signifier and the signified, the notion of absolute control over the discursive direction of an image or a text.

III

The repeated but insignificant contacts in James Joyce's *Ulysses* to *The Odyssey* still receive – according to Borges – the admiration of all kinds of critics. He claims not to understand why. This dismissal occurs when he mentions that *The Approach to Almotásim*, the book by the Bombay author, had been the locus of much of that kind of critical analysis. Borges lists the critics who have conjectured what the book behind the book might be. Then he offers his own (humble, he says) hypothesis concerning a possible precursor: a cabalist from the 16th century who professed that the soul of an ancestor can enter into the soul of a suffering person to comfort him/her. This late mood of the story – its self-analysis in the light of other texts – gives us a more ample sense of its metaphor: we are getting nearer to a text that leaves traces in other texts. The text is always already there in an indistinguishable form, as in Godard's film. This is analogous to the student approaching his master, Almotásim, through the reflections of his soul in others. It also expresses a recurrent Borgesian idea, the existence of a sole author, which implies the death of all authors, or to put it in another way, the death of their fatherhood and authority over the text. On the fictitious planet *Tlön Uqbar Orbis Tertius*, no text is ever signed, there is only one author, which is the same as *no* author. The death of the author is, as Roland Barthes would spell it out much later, the birth of the reader. And the reader cannot ultimately shirk his responsibility of reading himself as the subject to be read, since he

6 From Deleuze's *The Time-Image*, the term refers to what is within the narration, inside the constructed fiction. It is by no means the only time he does this, *Passion* is another very good example. Jerzy Radziwiłowicz acts as Godard's surrogate, playing a man obsessed with light and storytelling (or the undoing of it); a director who can't find the story when the story is all around him; an artist bound to capital-lettered Art History, striving to find the perfect light for his tableaux.

7 …one of these levels being the "flawed" translation of the interpreter, Francesca. She sometimes changes the meaning of what has been said completely, sometimes she translates what hasn't been said yet. The copy produces the original. This is beautifully pointed out in Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki's book *In Search of Homer.*

8 Godard indicates this by painting the statues of gods with primary colours and by travelling around them literally, making them come into kinesis, into cinema.

9 Borges offers plenty of strategies of this kind. By showing the edges of the fiction, by revealing the contingency of the writer, the text is made to exist in a condition of constant flux: between the suspension of disbelief and the topography of that suspension.

is, so to speak, written by the book. The possible identity of the searcher and the searched in the Almotásim story (another conjecture Borges throws us in a casual footnote) is a manifestation of this. It is here also that the detective and the mystic merge into one: the search ends up revealing, more than anything, the searcher's faith or his desire. Here is a great paradox: the authors who visit this mysterious site where they seek to annul themselves, end up having to take on their "selves as authors" as the very subject of their investigation: *Borges and I* by Borges, *JLG/JLG* (JLGodard par JLGodard), *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*. There are of course innumerable examples of this.[10] It is simply a certain turn that certain ideas have. Homi Bhabha's project, for example, of a text that tries to find out, in his own particular biography as a Farsi in India, what made it inevitable for him to engage in the reflection on cultural hybridity. Godard asks the same question in *JLG/JLG:* what has driven him to make films? Borges on the other hand revisits a younger self and contemplates his own potentials and lacks in the light of the books he had read at the time, and the ones he was yet to read.[11]This has nothing to do with narcissism (maybe a little), it is just the inevitable turn of a reflection that states that "it must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel," as Raymond Bellour quotes from Roland Barthes in a text about Chris Marker's CD-ROM *Immemory*. Marker also comes to the same conclusion: "All I can offer is myself".To consider the world as writing, and to consider the writer as text, that is the question.

IV

The conversation about language that Godard sustains with Hollywood can also be said to mirror Borges's aim when he talks about those parasitic books that situate Christ in a boulevard, Hamlet in the Cannebière,

10 Yvonne Rainer transposed this idea into dance when in 1999 she performed *Trio A*, her famous choreography from 1972, but including an on-site viewer, a young man who sees her perform, sees Yvonne Rainer, the iconic experimental dancer performing variations, thirty years later, on her iconic dance.

11 Bob Dylan has a hilarious song in which the naïve character that he often portrays, engages in a communist hunt in his own house, completely taken over by the McCarthyist paranoia. After he can't find any (or they get away, as he says), he decides to investigate himself.

or Don Quixote on Wall Street.[12] Even if Godard is replacing ships in the Aegean Sea by red convertibles in contemporary Italy, he does not measure up to Borges's dismissal. This is because he is actually introducing the same question about how this "translation" can actually take place in a way that sets the metaphor in motion instead of mindlessly repeating its form.

V

A current that offers easy navigation is helping the text here. It moves into yet another story by Borges and involves a new encounter with Homer. In *The Immortal*, we are asked to believe that the story has been written by Joseph Cartaphilus who drinks water from the river that gives immortality. He then spends years lying next to a group of lethargic troglodytes. One day, when they are all awakened from their languor by a summer rain, he finds out that they are actually the immortals whom he had sought for so long. One of them – whom he had tried to teach to talk and had named Argos, after Ulysses' dog – was actually Homer himself. When asked by Cartaphilus about The Odyssey, Homer says he can remember less of it than the poorest rhapsodist. This story, we are asked to believe, is written by Cartaphilus, a 20th-century antiquarian, who analyses his own text and finds that something is wrong. He determines that he cannot be the author of those words, that they clearly belong to another man. Thus he discovers that the text of *The Immortal* is written by Homer and not by him. "When the end approaches, no images of memory remain, only words subsist. It isn't strange that time should have confused those that represented me with those that were symbols of the destiny of he who kept me company for so many centuries. I have been Homer, in short I will be Nobody, like Ulysses, in short I will be everyone: I will be dead." *The immortal* metaphorically suggests the idea of the one and only author. The immortality of Homer is in the very texts that all others ceaselessly repeat; even this text.

VI

In *Alphaville*, Godard quotes Borges: "Time is the substance of which I am made, it is the river that drowns me but I am the river; it is the tiger that mutilates me but I am the tiger; it is the fire that consumes me; but I am the fire". Then in *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, he quotes from his

12 This is written in *Pierre Menard Author of The Quixote* (Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths*), an allegorical short story of a man who educates himself to write a couple of chapters of *Don Quixote* all over again, line by line. The messages of that monumental text of Hispanic culture acquire an entirely different meaning based on the author's new context. No assumption of "talking about" is possible. Menard has to *become* Cervantes, just as Godard has to *become* Homer. The new context must perform the metaphor, not just consider it as an exchange value.

own past (the same past as that of cinema), by using Lemmy Caution, a character from his early mock sci-fi film, as the man who exposes the new state of the affairs. Curiously, Lemmy Caution becomes a footnote of the personage he was before. With Caution, we visit the nation through the texts by which it was constructed. The text becomes architecture; when referring to the Berlin Wall, Godard observes that when an idea becomes prevalent in the masses, it soon acquires a material form.

VII

The habit of quoting, coming from another text, repeating a gesture, are all acts that perhaps reflect the same drive as that of a teenager who tries to reproduce the movements of his idol. It is a drive that not merely wants to *reproduce* the other's gesture, but to *become* or incorporate the other, so that the gesture will *produce* itself naturally. The game may become somewhat baroque here: what if one is a fan precisely of those who are passionate fans of others? Those who go on to turn the mirror on themselves when they themselves have become part of that colossal book of the culture?

Borges has a short text on this matter where he makes a distinction between himself and Borges. He notes that his personal tastes are quiet and unpretentious when he experiences them, but turn into an ugly subject of pedantry and vanity when they belong to Borges.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MAKE FILMS POLITICALLY TODAY?

Once Godard made the claim that it is no longer enough to make political films: one must make films politically.

01. Old Questions
All those who understand that aesthetics, politics, and economics form a vital nexus believe that art can reveal with particular force the most acute problems of social development. History is a clash between different groups who defend not only their right to speak out, but also their vision of the future. If we wish to continue the political project today we must first pose the old question: Who is the subject of historical development and knowledge? And we must actualize the simplicity of the old answer: the struggling, oppressed class itself (Benjamin).

Contemporary political art strives to be consonant with the search for this subject, not with the mythic subject of previous social revolutions. As in the mid-19th century, we are once again hard pressed to say what this subject will be like. Nowadays we should, rather, speak of a fidelity to the old answer. This doesn't mean that filmmakers, intellectuals, and artists should personally keep faith with the current anti-capitalist movement. They should remain faithful, rather, to the space of subjectivity that gave rise to the movement.

It is this space where one affirms that making films politically means striving towards a historically concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development. The artist/filmmaker should discover himself in the process of becoming-"proletarian." He should use his work to further the becoming-artist of the "proletariat," via the participation of the masses in different forms of creativity. The question remains the same, then. It is a question of the artist's political position: Whose side are you on?

02. The Position of the Speaking Subject
The main difference between the art of cinema/video and social journalism is that the artist cannot naively affirm that he is giving someone else a voice. It is always the filmmaker who speaks. Thus, alienating reality through a constant interrogation of the process of film production itself and the power institutions underlying production/distribution isn't something external to the film's formal organization, but an integral part of its structure, a method for making it. The truly political film (the thoroughly politicized film) isn't a film about politics. It is a film that problematizes the privilege of the speaking subject by revealing his social and class ties.

03. The Collective Nature of Filmmaking
Filmmaking is always a collective endeavor. This might be eclipsed by the personality of the director, who fashions his auteur's message by appropriating the creative resources of professionals and amateurs.

The making of a film, however, can be a model for the fullest unfolding of the entire collective's creative powers, with each participant acting as an equal co-creator. The process of "making film politically" should engender its own artistic soviet or council—a collective decision-making body that lends legitimacy to the aesthetic utterance. Its task is comparable to those faced by structures for political self-government—soviets—which are supposed to make concrete decisions by combining representation (during the making of a film, a particular task would be delegated to the directing group or the camera group) with participatory democracy. Delegation arises from extensive collective discussion, from the articulation of a common position.

04. Realism
Cinema and video are manifestations of the realist current in art history. The new technological and media forms of documentalism are the latest avatars of this line. They are heirs to the realistic tradition in art and cannot be understood without analyzing it.

From its emergence, realism set itself the task of uncovering the meaning of reality in its development. This task, however, is also a political task.

Documentalism helps us rethink the problem of mimesis that has plagued traditional art forms like theater and painting (this rethinking began with the Brecht-Lukács debate) and tackle the problem of authenticity at another level.

As Brecht proved so precisely then, authenticity has nothing to do with the "simple photographic reflection of reality." Authenticity is based on the work's construction, for even in the most "faithful" documentary film "there is no material that is free of organization." Authenticity, the principal quality of a realistic work, is always a formal construction. It enables us to "extract" reality from the authoritative subjective interpretations proffered by false consciousness.

05. In Search of the Typical
Realism becomes such when it depicts not the concrete and particular (which is the case in mainstream contemporary art, where identity politics is hegemonic in representation), but the typical. As Engels famously put it, realism's principal task is "the truthful reproduction of typical charac-

ters in typical circumstances." The typicalist approach allows us to think and embody the problematics of contemporary society as an integral system rife with contradiction and in need of transformation. This take on reality is essentially cartographic. It rejects the bourgeois fetishism of difference, choosing instead to reflect the similarity in situations of oppression, exclusion, and resistance.

06. The Problem of Form
Traditional realism is characterized by its content. Today, the formal problem is solved not by coming up with new, eye-popping stunts (we'll leave that to Hollywood), but by constructing the film in a principally different way.

This construction can be based on a careful investigation of a situation that, for all its historical uniqueness, can lay claim to typicality or universality.

Nowadays, it is difficult to list the formal aspects of the truly politicized film. We can, rather, define these qualities by negating the dominant language of commercial art and film. This language is based on the aesthetics of sensation, seduction, and intoxication. It is the language of fragmentation and clever montage, and bombards the viewer with sound effects. We are well aware of the populist appeal of these devices and strive (not always successfully) to resist it.
These type of films are minimalist not because of its low budget, but because it consciously embraces a reduction: it rejects the culinary approach. The language of the contemporary politicized film is the language of a consciously adopted visual asceticism. We once again remember Godard's famous preference for a ten-dollar budget.
This doesn't mean, however, that these films reject involving the viewer aesthetically and emotionally. This rejection is sometimes a serious deficiency in many contemporary works. The tradition of political cinema has evolved a whole set of means for exerting ideo-aesthetic pressure; it suffices to mention the alienation effect. The process of "making film politically" leads to construction of a multilayered composition that combines emotional effects and total intellectual analysis. Paradoxically, we must learn to touch the viewer's heart without entertaining him.

07. Teaching/Learning
It is a common opinion that contemporary political film is a film that teaches. Is it true? Whom does it teach? It is easy to say that it is open to everyone. I do not think that it works today.

"Make film politically" means to address to those who already have the experience of political development and are looking for ways to grow further. The task of truly political films is not just documentation and agitation: this task we can leave to social journalism. If there is as yet no place for such films in the media, we can clear a path for them into culture. But let's not confuse social journalism with art. I think that there is another role of understanding political process. It, rather, is to show the complexity of political subjectivization. "Cultivating the political instinct" means revealing all the difficulties and pitfalls of the becoming-political. It doesn't mean pretending that everything is simple and you have an answer to every question: we'll leave this stance to the parties and trade unions. Brecht's method of "learning plays" is once again important. This method calls on us to refuse the media's hierarchical and manipulative strategies. Instead, each time we strive to include collective, participatory practices in the film's making and thus seek new ways to exit the dead ends of political life.
"Make film politically" does not mean to make simply teaching films. It means to show us the learning process itself.

Succeeding Militant Cinema

IRMGARD EMMELHAINZ

MILITANT CINEMA: FROM INTERNATIONALISM TO NEOLIBERAL SENSIBLE POLITICS

I think maybe if I walk the streets where someone was afraid, where an entire city was afraid, I'll maybe understand the fear a little better. This is the grand fiction of tourism, that bringing our bodies somewhere draws that place close to us, or we to it. It's a quick fix of empathy. We take it like a shot of tequila, or a bump of coke from the key to a stranger's home. We want the inebriation of presence to dissolve the fact of difference. Sometimes the city fucks on the first date, and sometimes it doesn't. But always, always, we wake up in the morning and we find we didn't know it at all.

Leslie Jamison, on walking around Tijuana in 2010 at the peak of the violence, in: *The Empathy Exams* (2013), p. 59.

In the 1960s, militant filmmaking sought to enable the sharing and spreading of strategies and tools for political struggle across the world. As Jean-Luc Godard put it: "A [militant] film is a flying carpet that can travel anywhere. There is no magic. It is political work."[1] *Ici et ailleurs (Here and Elsewhere*, 1969-74), the film Godard filmed with Jean-Pierre Gorin under the frame of the Dziga Vertov Group, and edited with Anne-Marie Miéville, is not only an example of vanguardist political filmmaking,[2] but a self-reflexive account of the outcome of revolutions here and elsewhere, of militancy and engaged filmmaking and their demise in the mid-1970s. Aside from positing film as a politicized space, *Ici et ailleurs* is an interrogation on the conditions of the possibility of representation – in the sense of speaking in the name of others politically and aesthetically – centered on the figure of the engaged filmmaker within the framework of *tiermondisme* or internationalism.[3] The film also lays out a politics of the image based on a critique of images circulating in the mass media, a political practice that Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin inaugurated in the last film they made together in 1972, *Letter to Jane: An Investigation about a Still*. Godard and his partner Anne-Marie Miéville explored their politics of the image further in their Sonimage videos in the 1970s, calling it "audiovisual journalism." In what follows, I will focus on three elements that are part of the legacy of militant film in general, and of *Ici et ailleurs* in particular: First, the lessons we can learn from the ordeals of sympathizing and speaking or imaging political processes of others, elsewhere – (including how Hito Steyerl's *November* takes up the legacy of militant filmmaking). Second, the problem Godard posed in films subsequent to *Ici et ailleurs*, what I call "the mediatization of mediation," as the form of activism that followed the demise of Marxism–Leninism. Third, the not unproblematic transformation of Godard's politics of the image or audiovisual journalism into post-political "sensible politics," a niche in contemporary art and image-making that has taken up the task of "encoding (unstable) political acts into medial forms"[4], transforming political action and speech into a matter of expression.

Ici et ailleurs was originally a commission by Yasser Arafat through the Information Service Bureau of Fatah (or Palestine Liberation Organization) to the Dziga Vertov Group (DVG), the collective formed by Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, to make a film about the Palestinian revolutionary movement.[5] The voice-over to the film narrates the story: In 1970, the film was called *Jusqu'a la victoire* [*Until Victory*] and was to be assembled from footage shot in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria during a three-month stay in the spring of 1970. As *militant film-makers*, Godard and Gorin aimed not at "making a political film," but at "making a film politically." "To make films politically," is a famous slogan coined by Godard and Gorin which means: to let the production command the distribution and not the other way around, to use films as tools, and to emphasize the process of inquiry and study of the concrete situation – in this case, the Palestinian Revolution. To make films politically also means to step aside from "traditional" militant or political films, which are founded on the assumption of a viewer who either approves without reserve or disagrees with the content of the film.

Before finishing the film, Godard and Gorin planned to return to the Palestinian refugee and training camps to show the footage they had filmed and to discuss it with the Fedayeen (Palestinian freedom fighters). This was before the Black September massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan: because many of the actors in the film were killed, and

1 A version of this essay was presented at "The Fire Next Time" conference at the Royal Academy of Arts (KASK)/School of Arts at the College University in Ghent, Belgium, on April 3, 2014.
Jean-Luc Godard, "Manifeste," in *Jean-Luc Godard Documents*, edited by David Faroult (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006), p. 138–140.

2 Militant cinema encompasses films that constituted subjects seeking political self-determination, and it has two strands: one that privileges political efficacy in detriment of aesthetic function, and the vanguardist one, which equates formal with political revolution.

3 Or *Thirdworldism*.

4 Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (Eds.) Sensible Politics -The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism, MIT Press/ Zone Books 2012, introduction

5 For accounts of both, *Ici et ailleurs* and of Godard's militant films see my essays "Between Objective Engagement and Objective Cinema: Jean-Luc Godard's "militant filmmaking" (1967-1974) in *e-flux journal #35* (May 2012) and *e-flux journal # 36* (June 2012), and "From Thirdworldism to Empire: Jean-Luc Godard and the Palestine Question" in Third Text 09/2009; 23: 659–656. For an analysis of montage and what Godard coined as "*Images de marque*" in *Ici et ailleurs*, see "Trademark Images and Perception: Godard, Deleuze and Montage," in *Nierika, revista de estudios de arte*, Vol. 4 (January 2014).

because the political conditions of the Palestinian struggle had changed, Godard and Gorin could not finish the film as they had planned, and they decided to put the footage aside. It was not until 1973–74 that Godard, in collaboration with Miéville, decided to finally edit and complete the film, and they called it *Ici et ailleurs (Here and Elsewhere)*.

A kind of self-reflexive degree zero of documentary, the last version of the film is composed of heterogeneous materials of expression: documentary, diegetic, didactic. The images filmed in Palestine are "objective" in style, akin to photojournalism or documentary – mostly still frames, very few pans, and they appear with diegetic images of social types: a French working class family and three workers. The family's diegesis is about their relationship to the media, their familial problems and the father's struggle to find work. The French family is depicted in the domestic gathering, watching television in the living room, and thus becomes the allegory of the *mediatized social space*, the site for the shared sensible (the sensible is made up of the visibilities and discursivities shared by a community in space and time, also called "Infosphere"), portraying the French as a public of spectators who are part of the community of viewers constituted by the televisual screen. We note that the living room is decorated with Palestinian *tatris*, tapestries and rugs. The shared sensible that is present in the artisanal souvenirs and in the televisual screen appears as the only means available for the family to have access to the Palestinian state of affairs from "here" (France). In the film, we also see the frequent appearance of the word *ET* ("and" in French) carved out in Styrofoam and placed like a sculpture on a pedestal. "AND" is the glue between the images, and becomes a provisory zone in which one cannot discern the images' signifiers, which allows for simultaneous readings of the images. It allows for movement between here and elsewhere, a movement made up by a complex montage that simultaneously presents different temporalities and sensibilities, images and sounds from here and elsewhere.

The Elsewhere and Internationalism

In the 1960s, the term "Third World" designated a group of countries that did not belong to the clique of industrialized capitalist and socialist countries, and some of which were fighting revolutions characterized by armed struggle and a national (de-colonizing) socialist or communist projects. For the French Left, Internationalism was a movement, a project, an ideology which was essential to their imaginary: it was the means to catalyze issues of slavery, past and present colonialism, socialism and revolution. Internationalism was inspired by Mao Tse Tung's revolutionary call to unite with the Third World against the "Paper Tiger" of imperialism, his emphasis on the revolutionary potential of the Third World's proletariat and *lumpenproletariat*, and by Che Guevara's call: "¡Hasta la victoria! Crear dos, tres... muchos Viet-Nam!"

Third World struggles sponsored visits by official Western intellectuals to places like Cuba, Vietnam or Palestine. Artists, writers, journalists and filmmakers produced accounts speaking for and about them. These interventions blended the genres of documentary, travel diary, photojournalism and reportage. A few examples are Michelangelo Antonioni's *Chung Kuo Cina* (1972); Agnes Varda's *Black Panthers – Huey!* (1968); *Loin du Vietnam* (1967), made collectively by Varda, Godard, Joris Ivens, William Klein, Claude Lelouch, Chris Marker, and Alain Resnais; Chris Marker's *Cuba Sí* (1961), and others. Most *tiermondiste* works are self-reflexive inquiries on how to account for foreign struggles within the frame of state- or militia-sponsored visits. Aware of the dangers of blind naïve identification, objectivity becomes multiply problematic: Is it possible to go beyond the ideological veil imposed by the framework of the official visit? How can one account for one's position as an external observer? Can the political emotions of sympathy and enthusiasm suspend the subject from the conditions of viewing and open up an objective point of view?

Contrary to Sylvain Dreyer's assertion that solidarity with Third World struggles was either a pretext to identify with exotic revolutionary causes while concealing the impasses of the French political movement, or empty slogans coupled with a superficial fascination with and mystification of the elsewhere,[6] we could draw a parallel between Europeans sympathizing with revolutionary processes, elsewhere, and the enthusiasm of German spectators for the French Revolution: according to Immanuel Kant, enthusiasm provokes the external observer to express universal yet disinterested sympathy for one set of protagonists over their adversaries. This is based, according to Kant, on the moral disposition of humans.[7] In a way, sympathetic expressions of solidarity with foreign nationalist-revolutionary movements elsewhere took the form of the political real, which made it collapsible with aesthetic practice. In this sense, enthusiasm is not unproblematic; as an "accepable"

6 Sylvain Dreyer, "Autour de 1968, en France et ailleurs: Le Fond de l'air était rouge" in *Image & Narrative*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2010) available online: http://www.imageandnarrative.be/index.php/imagenarrative/article/view/54/35.

7 Immanuel Kant, "The Contest of the Faculties," in *Kant: Political Writings* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1991), p. 182–183.

form of political action, it is linked to the role of the spectator that is detrimental to political action. Nevertheless, internationalism could be considered a reassessment of how the West interpreted and produced new discourses about the "other" that went beyond racism, constructed as they were in the light of Europe's post-colonial identity crisis and the ideological scission of the world during the Cold War. Internationalism is thus a proto-global imaginary cartography characterized by a division of the world into First and Third, and by ideological alliances with Marxism as the common code. Films, art or writings produced under this frame were inspired by ideological kinship – which is the Marxist–Leninist belief in the revolutionary potential of Third World peasantry, coded through a global Western Marxism translated into local specificities.

Ici et ailleurs is part of the corpus of internationalist works. It encompasses both the historical peak and the demise of Maoism and anti-imperialism as containers of revolutionary politics. It therefore registers the major political and epistemological changes that were prompted in the seventies by the demise of nationalism, internationalism, socialism and communism as ideological vehicles for revolutionary politics. The last five minutes of the film are devoted to a shot of four Fedayeen discussing a failed operation in the Occupied Territories. In a text he wrote in 1991, Palestinian intellectual Elias Sanbar (who had been the Dziga Vertov Group's translator and native informant in the Middle East) remembers being present during the filming of this scene in Jordan.[8] Godard had asked him to translate a statement of account of a commando unit that had just returned from an operation in the Territories that he was going to film "live." Sanbar describes the four Fedayeen covered in sweat, showing bodily tension, on the verge of a breakdown. Two members of the commando unit had been killed and the rest were venting their anger at the commander. After that, Sanbar tells us, they sat down in front of Dziga Vertov Group's camera to discuss their operation in supposedly self-critical terms. Sanbar further recalls being at the side of Godard's editing table two years later, translating for him the conversation between the Fedayeen: "Vous êtes des inconscients, notre ennemi est féroce et ne prend pas les choses à la légère (comme vous). Cela fait trois fois que les unités de reconnaissance nous font traverser le Jourdain au même endroit et cela fait trois fois que l'ennemi nous y attend et que nous perdons des frères . . ."[9] Then, they insulted each other, an action far

8 Elias Sanbar, "Vingt et un ans après," *Traffic no. 1* (1991), p. 115–122.

9 "You are completely irresponsible, our enemy is ferocious and unlike us, they take things very seriously. It has already been three times that the 'recognizing' units make us cross the Jordan River at the exact same spot and every time the enemy is waiting for us there... Now we have lost our brothers." Ibid., p. 116.

removed from Marxist–Leninist self-critique, contrary to how Godard had wanted to frame the scene. Going over this material two years later was shocking for both Godard and Sanbar; For Godard, because he realized (as we hear in the movie) that he had not "listened" to what the revolutionaries were saying, wanting to shout "Victory!" instead. For Sanbar, as he writes, because he realized he had been deafened by theories and unfaltering convictions that caused him to idealize the struggle in spite of the Fedayeen's discussion being in his own language. In other words, theories, enthusiasm and convictions had covered up what the Fedayeen were saying and that their dialogue was a matter of life and death. It is true that in the euphoric eruption of revolutions and the enthusiasm they ignite we forget the stakes and sacrifices that need to be made, and that political struggles are in reality a matter of life and death.

According to filmmaker Masao Adachi (who in 1971 also made a film with Koji Wakamatsu about the Palestinian revolution called *Red Army/PFLP: Declaration of World War*), one of the most important aspects of Ici et ailleurs is the fact that Godard evokes

> […] The spirit that was shared with comrades all over the world, mobilized as we were by the march towards the creation of a new world. The film recounts the shadows of the historical time and space as we lived it back then. It is an account that demonstrates the painful road travelled by those who marched without halt in the middle of those shadows, toward a confiscated goal.[10]

In the voice-over that accompanies the last scene, Godard reiterates the fact that "his" voice as a Maoist had covered up the voices of the men and women they had filmed, denying and reducing them to nothing. *Ici et ailleurs* thus ends with a revelation of the limits of aesthetic practice grounded on the politics of the signifier and the signified. The politics of the signifier could be defined as formal Modernism, an ontological reflection of images tied to the reflexivity of the cinematic apparatus, whereas politics of the signified implies a coding, decoding, and recoding of images through ideological self-critique. We must remember that, after Black September, having been attacked by King Hussein's troops in Jordan, the Palestinian forces found themselves facing a sudden change in the con-

10 Masao Adachi, "The Testament that Godard has never Written," (2002) published in French in *Le Bus de la revolution passera bientôt pres de chez toi* edited by Nicole Brenez and Go Hirasawa (Editions Rouge Profond, 2012) translated by Stoffel Debuysere, Mari Shields, available in English online: www.diagonal-thoughts.com/?p=2067

ditions of their struggle. The stakes were huge, involving a reworking of the strategy of the liberation of Palestine, forcing Godard to completely rethink the movie. The PLO's change in politics (the adoption of terrorism) created a gap between their point of view and Godard's: in 1972, a Palestinian commando broke into the Olympic Village in Munich and kidnapped 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team and held them ransom for the release of Palestinian political prisoners. Masao Adachi recalls how TV stations interrupted the broadcast of the games and showed instead the building where the guerillas had barricaded themselves with the hostages.[11] Toward the end of *Ici et ailleurs*, Godard and Miéville evoke this event and state: "We think that something else could have been done… we find it stupid to have to die for one's own image… it scares us." This last scene points at the need to show and to listen to images of Palestinians, just as Godard and Miéville draw a line in their engagement with their cause. Like other Western sympathizers, they condemn and lament the wave of terrorism that followed the Black September massacres of the Fedayeen and refugee bases in Jordan. Along similar lines, Silvere Lontringer wrote: "In 1974 we were in the last gasp of Marxism and I knew the terrorists were right, but I could not condone their actions. That is still the way I feel right now."[12] For humanitarian reasons, terrorism lies beyond the laws of war which was why engaged intellectuals drew a line in their support. Sketching out the links between resistance, revolution, television, cinema, and journalism, vouching for a kind of non-violent way of achieving visibility, they make a plea in the film: "Show these images [of Palestine] from time to time [on Western television]."

The years 1973–1974 in France marked a disavowal of the revolutionary subject and project as well as a wave of anti-totalitarianism, giving way to a new humanism and, by many accounts, a new reactionary period in general.[13] By 1978, Internationalism was dismissed as a sort of aberration of decadent Socialism. A new form of emancipation of Third World peoples emerged, leading to the substitution of politics by a new ethics of intervention, prompted by the perceived failure of many Third World revolutions and their transformation into to terrorist or corrupt movements or dictatorial states. Internationalism had been a universal cause that give a name to a political wrong: for the first time, the "wretched of the earth" emerged for an historic period as a new figuration of "the people" in the political sense: the colonized were discursively transformed into political figures: the Algerian immigrant worker, the Chinese barefoot doctor, the revolutionary from elsewhere.[14] Yet, a new "ethical" humanism (or humanitarianism) substituted revolutionary enthusiasm and political sympathy with pity and moral indignation, transforming them into political emotions within the discourse of pure actuality and emergency. This led to new figures of alterity in the 1980s and 1990s, the "suffering other" who needs to be rescued and the post-colonial "subaltern" demanding restitution and recognition, under the presupposition that emancipation would be followed by visibility within a multicultural social fabric. The urgency of the state of exception elsewhere, prompted morally interested observers to bring the precariousness of life to the fore in the most direct and realistic way possible, led to an explosion of visibilities of "wounded subjectivities" demanding to be rescued or recognized.

Furthermore, in the 1980s, the colonial distinction between center and periphery, North and South, became irrelevant: cultural production and capital began to celebrate decentralization, rendering the distinction between First and Third Worlds obsolete. With its ability to transcend national divisions, the globalized market integrated First and Third Worlds, forcing certain areas of the Third World to "develop," creating pockets of wealth and cultural sophistication within the Third World and areas of destitution and misery within the First. In retrospect, we could think of Internationalism as the last Utopia in the sense that Utopia means "new land." The ephemeral frame within which the term "Third World" was coined – the Cold War – has disappeared, and the new frame that replaced it (human rights, development and economic growth, cultural intervention, wars in the name of democracy, even social responsibility) has failed, just as Internationalism, to highlight the pressing issues that are at stake: the incredible polarity and massive dispossession and displacement brought about by the globalization of free market economy, the financial structural crisis of capitalism and the hegemony of ideological neoliberalism. At the beginning of the 21st century, while the Other has been rendered transparent thanks to a series of discursive mutations brought about by the free market, ethnography, journalism and tourism, global connectedness has rendered the "elsewhere" immediate. For example, Congo (and even an "ethical" relationship to Congo) may be in the "free trade" coffee you sip every morning, Colombia is in the coke I snort at a *vernissage*, even Nigeria, when we re-tweet the Bring Back Our Girls campaign. Facilitated by the democratization of tourism, culture and information, encounters with the Other have been substituted by en-

11 Ibid.

12 "Introduction: The History of Semiotext(e)," in *Hatred of Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), p. 10.

13 See G. Deleuze, "La gauche a besoin d'intercesseurs," in *Pourparlers* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990), p. 165.

14 Kristin Ross, May '68 and its Afterlives, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: The University Press, 2002), p. 11.

counters with *different forms of life* (which are different in the quantitative sense: they are more or less equal), now mediated by business and marketing, by aesthetic or humanitarian interventions and non-governmental politics. As Godard and Miéville put it in a visionary way at the end of *Ici et ailleurs*: "The *Other is the elsewhere from our here*."

At a moment when the Utopia of freedom of speech in cyberspace has been desiccated by NSA global surveillance, some of the questions that arise under this New World Order are: How to see the differences between *different* yet coexisting life worlds and how to account for their interaction? Is the *outside* of gated communities – now a cliché in Hollywood films such as *Upside Down, World War Z, The Hunger Games, Elysium* (all from 2013), etc. – the actual paradigm of the inequality of different forms of life and the current basis of political engagement? Have the figures of the *favelado* or immigrant, and the activist-cultural producer, replaced the working class and revolutionaries and the vanguardist intellectual, respectively? How to forge links of solidarity amongst them, and politicize them?

The Mediatization of Mediation and Audiovisual Journalism

Ici et ailleurs has been interpreted as Godard's epiphany and repentant Maoist discourse, signaling a turn in his work away from the political. Debatably, after "things exploded" – due to the Black September Massacres, the wave of terrorism in Europe and the Middle East, the demise of Maoism, the fact that, for them, their activist voices imbued with Leftist ideology had become noise – Godard and Miéville's political compass for action was reshaped according to changes in political engagement and struggles. As I mentioned above, they called their post-Marxist–Leninist politicized practice "audiovisual journalism" practiced under the framework of their production company, Sonimage. Their films from the 1970s typically devote considerable amounts of screen time to analyzing images from the mass media and to how they function. In their view, two new problems had emerged: on the one hand, the propagation of Leftist doxa by Leftist discourse turning into information – as exemplified by their critique of the newspaper *Libération* in *Comment ça va?* (1975). On the other, they challenged the *mediatization of mediation*, which implies that, in line with the Leftist Utopian belief in the emancipatory potential of the media, representation (in the sense of speaking on behalf of others and their struggles) was mediatized.

In this regard, Miéville and Godard would agree with Baudrillard's 1972 critique of the Leftist Utopian view of the media, according to which unlimited democratic exchange is possible through communication. Such a position, however, overlooks the fact that, in essence, the media is speech without response. Even if efforts are made to resolve the problem of the idle, passive reader-consumer whose freedom is reduced to the acceptance or rejection of content, such efforts are futile because mediatization implies that messages need to be coded to allow information to be transmitted over distances, and therefore the very nature of the apparatus precludes any possibility of feedback. As Baudrillard put it, with the media "speech is *expiring*." Baudrillard compares the media to voting, to referendums and polls. For him, all three share the logic of providing a coded state of affairs with which we must either agree or disagree, without having any agency on the content ourselves.[15] Bearing this in mind, in the films they made together, Godard and Miéville sought to break away from the dichotomies of producer/consumer, transmitter-broadcaster/receiver, addressing those dichotomies in terms of the transformation of knowledge and communication into information (or codes), constituting a problem of cinematic voice and address. Furthermore, Godard addressed the issue of the expiration of speech in the script for an unrealized film, *Moi, je* (1973), in which he wrote that information is "an illness that needs to be urgently treated."[16] In the same script, Godard challenged Jean-Paul Sartre's, Bernard-Henry Lévi's and Pierre Gavin's notion of the "New Political Man,"[17] which they coined to highlight the potential for mediatized political action in the light of the wave of disappointment that had drowned Maoist enthusiasm for revolutionary causes, here and elsewhere. Synthesizing Maoist activism (without the ideology) with intellectual and political practice, Sartre, Levi and Gavin devised the tools for this new political figure: critical awareness, persuasion, and action in the public domain of the diffusion of information. In short, the mediatization of mediation translates into urgent public debate undertaken in the mass media by engaged journalists or intellectuals. Traditionally, the function of intellectuals on the Left had been to give France her universal values. The paradigm of intellectual intervention in the media in France is embodied in Émile Zola's famous open letter to the French president, "J'accuse," published on the front page of the Parisian newspaper *L'Aurore* in 1898. For Godard and Miéville, working in the context of the early seventies, the paths traced by information had changed: communication had become a market of the visible in which

15 Baudrillard, "Requiem for the Media" (1972) in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St. Louis Mo. Telos, 1981).

16 *Jean-Luc Godard: Documents*, edited by David Faroult (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006).

17 Another branch of the New Political Man is, of course, the New Philosopher. See: Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives,* p. 176.

the free circulation of images must not be hindered. The deregulation of the icon thus led to the obsolescence of the traditional model of engagement represented by Zola, *as the form and the space of inscription* of the "J'accuse" had changed.[18] In this context, Godard and Miéville took up the task of exploring the new preconditions for the inscription of J'accuse in relationship to activism and intellectual engagement, in dialogue with the post-'68 forms of activism that emerged. In this way, Sonimage marks a shift in Godard' work from "militant filmmaking" to "journalism of the audiovisual," and *Ici et ailleurs* can be read as purporting both of those endeavors and as the passage from one to the other. Thinking about the mediatization of mediation from the perspective of Snowden's 2013 revelations, which may have marked a symbolic closure of the "new media" era, what are the stakes in this situation, when cybernetics has been integrated into all aspects of life, and the values of decentralization and peer-to-peer – rhizomes inherent to Internet communication – are now instruments of surveillance and accountability?[19]

The Time of November

Hito Steyerl's *November* (2004) is a reading of our neoliberal Restoration present from the perspective of the past that persists in the contemporary world, exploring specifically the legacy of internationalism as it plays out in the Kurdish struggle for independence from Turkey: a leftover, isolated, relegated, peripheral yet ongoing struggle. Pitting itself against the normalization of neoliberalism – as Steyerl puts it in the voice over: "What used to be called internationalism once, is now called terrorism" – November explores the persistent wish and need for the militant image alongside the question of how we should understand militant practice and the militant image today. In its mood of revolutionary hangover and nostalgia, activist defeat and angry melancholia, and in its inquiry into the means and channels of circulation of signs and images, Steyerl's video is an offspring as much as it is a homage to *Ici et ailleurs*. It could also be posited as an epilogue to *Deutschland im Herbst* [Germany in Autumn], a 1977 film by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff and Alexander Kluge. *Deutschland im Herbst* is a collage of documentary and fiction that seeks to come to terms with German society at the time when the era of RAF terrorism came to the end. The action of the film takes place in the week after 18 October 1977. The documentary images it shows are: the state funeral of Hans Martin Schleyer (kidnapped and murdered by the RAF); the minutes of silence in the Daimler-Benz Factory in Stuttgart to commemorate Schleyer (worker co-opted by the corporation: split between terrorists and workers); and images of the funeral march for Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe in October 1977. The subject of the film is the aftermath of the war waged in the 1970s in Germany by the corporate State against revolutionaries/terrorists. The episode signed by Fassbinder mirrors the hysterical atmosphere of Germans during this period. As an analogy of the crisis in German society prompted by the events, the filmmaker, playing himself, is portrayed as having a crisis with his boyfriend. We also see him fighting with his mother, criticizing her political conformism and her right-wing view of the events (she stands for the Auschwitz generation whose position before the events was: "The state was right to murder them"). If in *Deutschland im Herbst* the revolutionary ideal that holds together the opposition against the State and corporations is about to die and is collectively mourned, in Steyerl's video, like in *Ici et ailleurs*, the mourning of revolutionary failure takes place on a personal level.

Steyerl's *November* tells the story of Andrea Wolf, Steyerl's best friend when she was 17, was shot as a Kurdish terrorist in Eastern Anatolia in 1998. The video incorporates footage from a feminist martial arts film that the artist made together with Andrea in the early 1980s. In light of Andreas' death, the film had become a document, and in *November*, Steyerl juxtaposes this old footage with Andrea's image as a Kurdish revolutionary and a martyr, an image that had become a traveling icon of resistance. Steyerl's use of reflexivity on the constructedness of militant gestures and image, as well as the historical narrative in the video, both links *November* to and sets it apart from political films from the 1960s. In the voice over, Steyerl says: "November is the time after October, when revolution seems to be over and peripheral struggles become impossible to communicate." According to film critic Pablo La Fuente, *November* is centered on a *politics of the image* and *of the sign* as they are articulated with other signs and images. In his account, *November* focuses on how meanings change through the displacement of signs, and how the mobilization of signs may contribute to the destabilization or mobilization of people by providing tools that enable the articulation of specific political goals. In this regard, *November* can be linked to Godard and Gorin's *Letter to Jane – An Investigation about a Still*, which is a study on how an image is constructed through framing, camera angles, facial expressions and by the text that accompanies it, and how the image is charged with

18 Jacques Derrida, *Ecographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 24.

19 See Geert Lovink, "Hermes on the Hudson: Notes on Media Theory after Snowden," in *e-flux Journal* # 54 (April 2014), available online: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/hermes-on-the-hudson-notes-on-media-theory-after-snowden/

meaning by the context of its production and circulation.[20] However, with its interweaving of document, documentary, fiction, memory and propaganda, it could be said that Steyerl's central preoccupation in *November* is disembodiment. On the one hand, disembodiment in the film is tied to the current emptiness (and futility) of militant gestures – as Steyerl points out when we see her marching in a pro-Kurdish march. On the other hand, it is linked to the fact that Andrea's body was never found (nor searched for), and that what came back to Germany was not her but her martyr poster. Steyerl thus posits the problem of politicized images as the proliferating circulation of empty, disembodied images: today what matters is not the content in images but their momentum because they acquire their meaning from being shared and reproduced rather than from being contemplated and analyzed. Here is how Godard put it in *Ici et ailleurs*: "Pauvre con révolutionnaire, milliardaire en images d'ailleurs" [Poor revolutionary idiot, millionaire in images from elsewhere]. In her piece, Steyerl discusses the current conditions of visuality and visibility, and posits a paradox: when people disappear without trace, "they are scanned and over-represented by an overbearing architecture of surveillance." How does this happen? Is it because people hide amongst the myriad of imagescirculating in the Infosphere?[21]

In our post-political era, when communication and speech (termed the grounds for political action in Hanna Arendt view) have been transformed into codes, the main objective of much of contemporary politicized images is to achieve visibility of given struggles or injustices perpetrated here and elsewhere. Premised on the idea that moving images can provide a "common language," a new form of literacy, to be used as political tools, or on the belief that showing stories differently may bring about change, not only have art and culture become inseparable from social movements, but contemporary politicized aesthetic practice has also become a niche or a genre called "sensible politics." One of the problems this raises is that people are now more interested in how social conflict and political processes are represented than analyzing the issues themselves. Following Steyerl again, the framing of these issues tends to be generic and tinted by ideological and commercial mandates.[22] Therefore, inasmuch as they perpetuate the framework for conflict, most current

20 Pablo LaFuente, "For a Populist Cinema: Hito Steyerl's *November* and *Lovely Andrea*," in *Afterall Journal* (Autumn/Winter 2008), available online: http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.19/populist.cinema.hito.steyerls.november.and.lovely.

21 Hito Steyerl, "Interview // Hito Steyerl: Zero Probability and the Age of Mass Art Production," by Göksu Kunak, November 19, 2013, in Berlin Art Link, available online: www.berlinartlink.com/2013/11/19/interview-hito-steyerl-zero-probability-and-the-age-of-mass-art-production/

22 Ibid.

politicized images function as compensatory devices to offset the ravages caused by neoliberal reforms implemented worldwide in the past two decades. Insofar as museums, biennials, exhibitions and film festivals are part of the global military industrial complex (having become direct battlefields themselves),[23] neoliberalism is evidently a *pharmakon* that offers the poisons of destitution and destruction along with the "cures" of development, human rights, social responsibility and support to cultural and academic production. Perhaps *visibility* has become a problem.

From the Militant Image to Sensible Politics

According to post-workerist theory, semiokapitalism is the current stage of capitalism in which the main source of surplus value is the production and dissemination of signs. Can film become a potential space for political relations in the context of our current form of capitalism? At the peak of the Fordist factory era, film screenings were considered to be film-events in which workers could learn from anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles and revolutions elsewhere. Screenings thus instrumentalized film for the purpose of bringing about political change. The films shown were by filmmakers like Chris Marker and SLON, or by the Dziga Vertov Group. The screenings included Third Cinema filmmakers such as Glauber Rocha, Fernando Solanas, Octavio Getino, Santiago Álvarez, León Hirshman, William Klein, etc. These films were not only part of an Internationalist solidarity network addressing urgent struggles, they were also vehicles for learning from other revolutionary struggles and for expressing solidarity with them, as well as platforms conveying new forms of cinematic exhibition, production, distribution and pedagogy.

Today, militant cinema films are sometimes shown in academic contexts, film clubs or museums to privileged audiences, but never to workers, immigrants, guerrilla fighters, or subjects of humanitarian intervention. (Although I did attend a screening of Godard's Marxist–Leninist films in a working class neighborhood in Paris nine years ago, followed by a discussion led by David Faroult; there were seven people in the audience and only two stayed throughout the event, including me). What could this be a symptom of? Steyerl observes that films have actually never left factories: museums are now lodged in disused factories, incorporating viewers into the "social factory." The "social factory" is a post-workerist key thesis which argues that the mass worker is central to the processes of production and reproduction by projecting the shadow of social life

23 Ibid.

into the factory of cognitive work. The "social factory" of the museum transforms everything it exhibits into culture and viewers into cognitive workers.[24] Thus, today, museums embody the neoliberal notion of culture as commodity because they are tied to the chains of cognitive production, while they contribute to the saturation of meaning in an already overloaded sensible realm or Infosphere. Shown as petrified documents of a bygone era, we must not let militant films keep us in the winter years, disenchanted with the illusions of counter culture; with the failure of the working class to become the motor of history; with the masses' zombification and lack of spontaneous energy or of a global discourse to unite all struggles, as Internationalism used to do; rather, we must learn the lessons they carry within themselves.

Moreover, we should take into account the changes which have taken in the past 45 years or so in the form, purpose and discourses of political action: yesterday's revolutionaries are today's activists engaged in social movements that are intrinsically part of semiotic and cultural production instead of political revolutions based on armed struggle. A term has been coined to define the new hybrid of cultural activist who takes a new approach to political struggle: "artivist," someone who "uses her artistic talents to fight and struggle against injustice and oppression by any medium necessary."[25] In an era when social movements think of themselves as a social network, they may be linked through artivism, with technology as their main tool.[26] The problem is that these practices tend to devolve into politics where action and speech are preceded or taken over by expression and communication; moreover, activists today enact antagonism in an attempt to attain rights democratically, which is a battle of visibility and of human rights – and as such lies beyond the field of the possibility of freedom of political self-determination based on human dignity and freedom from the yoke of corporations and organized crime.

Thus, under semiokapitalism, as images have become a form of power and governance, carrying information without meaning and automating thought and will, political action has migrated to the mediascape: a form of politics in the realm of signs, a reductive version of Jacques Rancière's assertion that "Politics is first and foremost an intervention upon the visible and the sayable."[27] "Sensible politics" presupposes that art can bring about a different way of looking and thereby disrupt the "normal" relationships between text and the visible; it is also a form of non-governmental politicization that operates by encoding unstable political acts into medial forms. Examples would include Trevor Paglen's photographs of secret government sites, documentations of protests, documentary films in general, the visual component of social movements, Sharon Hayes' re-staging of protests and slogans from the 1960s, Superflex's *Guaraná Power* project (2003),[28] Santiago Sierra's *Penetrados* (2010) performance, Robin Kahn's *Dining in Refugee Camps: The Art of Saharahui Cooking* (2013), and much more.

Another kind of "sensible politics" that derives from Internationalist engagement *elsewhere*, operates under the logic of "intervention." As defined by Foucault in 1979, intervention is a manipulation of the social in order to introduce an ensemble of "liberogenic devices" that seek to produce freedom, economic development and cultural emancipation. The problem is that interventions can also lead to exactly the opposite of what was intended, becoming instead the mainspring of control. Military intervention implies "doing unquestionable good elsewhere" in the form of economic development and the creation of infrastructure (as in the American "intervention" in Iraq and Afghanistan). Premised also upon "doing good," "site-specific intervention" in the realm of culture is one of the dominant modes of aesthetic practice; biennials here and elsewhere are characterized by their deployment of short-term cultural "liberogenic" aesthetic devices in public spaces. It is not by chance that "InSite," the biennial that instituted the interventionist model of aesthetic practice in the 1990s, was created at the Mexican-American border in Tijuana/San Diego in the 1990s, when NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement. i.e. with the United States) was ratified. Krzystof Wodiczko's *Tijuana Projection* (2001) is as iconic of this brand of cultural production as it is problematic. Wodiczko parted from the premise that technology is emancipatory and created a gadget with headphones and a camera that was connected to a projection 60 meters in diameter. With his piece, Wodiczko wanted to give voice to the women who work in slave-like conditions in sweat-shops in Tijuana, at the Mexican-American border. Wearing Wodiczko's gadget, the women gave witness to having been abused sexually and at work, living with dysfunctional families, subjected to alcoholism and violence. Their testimonies were projected live in a public square in Tijuana's cultural center. Wodiczko created a liberogenic

24 See Hito Steyerl, "Is a Museum a Factory?" in *e-flux Journal* # 7 (June 2009), available online: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/is-a-museum-a-factory/

25 Alnoor Ladha, "Kenya: Artivists Versus the State," Aljazeera April 16, 2014, available online: www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/04/kenya-artivists-versus-state-20144151441476326 33.html

26 See Raquel Schefer, "Une forme présente en tension filmique. Représentation cinématogrpahiques des mouvements politiques contemporains" in La furia umana 19 (March 2014), available online: https://tinyurl.com/y6f69tc3

27 Rancère's "Ten Theses on Politics" is available online at https://tinyurl.com/gvjjxtl

28 See Marc-James Leger's analysis of this intervention in his book *The Neoliberal Undead: Essays on Contemporary Art and Politics* (Winchester and Washington: Zone Books, 2013).

platform from which these women could denounce their ordeals. The discursive site from which they spoke was that of the victim. Debatably, their voices addressed a virtual power and a co-present spectator, who was addressed from the site of absolute proximity and at the level of affect. In this regard, the position of the victim alienates the victim, transforming him or her into an aesthetic object in a cultural circuit foreign to itself, impending political subjectivation (after the artist left Tijuana, the women suffered reprisals from their employees). By listening and watching, the spectators tacitly accepted the ethical terms of the demands made by the images, and yet, the spectators (by belonging to a more privileged class than the women) remain complicit with the macro situation that led to these women's situation in the first place (by buying cheap electronic goods assembled by these women). The piece thus makes evident a huge, problematic gap between how artists tend to position themselves vis-à-vis non-egalitarian, exploitative conditions of global capitalism – they denounce them through their art in networks of consumption and distribution (of art) that thrive on inequality and exploitation, such as being funded by corrupt North American and European corporations, governments or oligarchs.

In a way, sensible politics has adapted the *politics of the image* inherited from militant filmmaking and adapted it to today's tastes, neoliberal (humanitarian) sensibility and general de-politicization. Erasing the boundaries between everyday life, political reality and creative intervention, these interventions of this kind tend to lack a political program; they are sometimes imbued with sad passions (cynicism, impotence, melancholia) and fail to express solidarity. In this context, perhaps *visibility* and *recognition have become the problem*. How? We are made aware of the horrors, abuses, violations of human rights, political wrongs across the world; being informed has become a form of politicization in itself, and thus a means to normalize injustice, lowering our ethical and political standards, while making us complicit with them.

Moreover, while we have seen the genre of "contemporary political art" devoted to global issues flourish in the past decade, it has become evident that cultural production in general ignores the conditions of its own production and exhibition. Works or interventions that can be categorized as "sensible politics" make evident a huge, problematic gap between how artists position themselves vis-à-vis non-egalitarian, exploitative conditions of global capitalism and how they denounce those conditions through their art within networks of consumption and distribution that thrive on inequality and exploitation (for example, being funded by corrupt corporations and plutocrats or neoliberal governments). In this respect, one of the things that political filmmaking has taught us, an issue that needs to be brought urgently to the fore, is to ask the question of representation: "Who speaks and acts, for whom and how?" Thus, as opposed to creating a political space for solidarity and exchange (like militant films used to do), "sensible politics" "represents" politics in an abstract and detached way while spreading a political practice without prerequisite theoretical analysis. Moreover, by confusing artivism with micro-politics, "sensible politics" enacts a politics that is not willing to pay the price of real political struggle. Here a case in point is Renzo Martens' *pornomiseria* film, *Enjoy Poverty* (2009), which more self-righteously than self-reflexively indulges in impotent, moralizing indignation in the face of the production of images that bear witness to the destitute conditions of Congolese people. The film is a critique of the artists and documentarians in question as well as of exploitative photojournalists who work under the premise that conditions can improved by showing suffering and abjection in developing countries. The film also demonstrates how poverty can be an asset to underdeveloped regions because it has a specific function in rich countries: to make affluent concerned individuals feel like they can make a difference. However, Martens' film and his project of introducing "cognitive work" to Congo are soaked with sad passions and thus contribute to keep us impotent, in the winter years. Furthermore, *Enjoy Poverty* has been framed by T.J. Demos as belonging to contemporary concerned artworks that deal with the specters of colonialism present in current situations of inequality between the North and the South. For Demos, such works seek to confront Europe's conscience with its colonial past and with the fact that the colonial era has never ended. In his view, the political task of this genre of art is to invoke the phantoms of modernity against amnesia and misrecognition, thereby aligning the politics of art with the struggle against forgetting.[29] However, while Demos' distinction between North and South is obsolete – as I mentioned above, there are today also pockets of wealth and sophistication in the Third World and enclaves of misery and exclusion in the First – his modernist melancholic frame reduces such interventions into a moral and chastising appeal to recognize the excluded, thus eluding the possibility of seeing them as equals and thereby as potentially self-determining, both politically and aesthetically. It also deprives them of the possibility to rewrite their own history of colonization through the lens of the present.

"Sensible politics," while very different, could be considered a post-political derivation of militant films. Engaged cinema carried the implication of cine-events that would create "visual bonds," that is, links amongst workers and revolutionaries across the world, for the purpose of

29 See T.J. Demos, *Return to Postcolony: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Strenberg Press, 2013)

informing, entertaining and organizing them. International solidarity and its symbolic and discursive catalyzers have disappeared, along with the figure of the worker as the leading figure of socio-political change. The demise of party politics and the reconfiguration of the political landscape into an archipelago of social movements, has given leeway to an array of sporadic struggles, demonstrations and occupations isolated from each other, lacking signifiers that would encompass all struggles and find ties throughout the rest of the world. Ironically, the internationalist perspective of the left has been replaced by the cutthroat titans of capital: the new plutocracy with its liberal mentality, engaged in entrepreneurial charity, seeks to change the world through the application of the same formulas that made it rich in the first place. This new plutocracy (Russian, Mexican, American, Indian, etc. oligarchs that run global corporate monopolies) emerged as a result of the transformation of state-led capitalism by neoliberal or free market policies. Changes in capitalism urge us to create a new form of politics that are beyond class, de-colonization or anti-imperialist struggles, in order to account for the new forms of power, subjection, exploitation and the new wave of "primitive accumulation." This wave of primitive accumulation is best exemplified by transnational megaprojects of resource extraction worldwide.

In this situation, the current discourse of "exclusion," to take one example, is too weak to offer a social base for a critique of the system. The class of the exploited includes not only those who produce or "create," but also those who are condemned not to "create." Domination is therefore inscribed in the very structure of production, which is why everyone is entitled to personal freedom and equality, but only *formal* freedom and *graded* equality, with many having no access at all to jobs, education, healthcare, housing, and other profit-generating enterprises, services or goods.[30] We must also remember that art and culture are today central to neoliberal processes, because they are instrumentalized as agents of globalization, as tools for betterment and development, counterinsurgency and pacification. Debatably, the neoliberal cultural project has trashed the idea of militancy: liberal capitalism and Western versions of democracy are considered the only acceptable solutions, while revolutionary ideas are considered Utopian and criminal. Anyone who resents moralizing about armed struggle or violence is marginalized in the name of security and rights. Paradoxically, even transnational wars are being waged in the name of security and rights.

30 See Slavoj Žižek, "Capitalism Can No Longer Afford Freedom," *ABC Religion and Ethics* May 25, 2012, available online: www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/05/25/3511327.htm

Au déla des années d'hiver [Beyond the Winter Years]

I say, we say:
We, mud people, snake people, tar people
We, bohemians walking on millennial thin ice
Our bodies pierced, tattooed, martyred, scarred
Our skin covered with hieroglyphs & flaming questions
We, Living Museum of Modern Oddities & Sacred Monsters
We, vatos cromados y chucas neo-barrocas
We, indomitable drag queens, transcendental putas
waiting for love and better conditions in the shade
We, lusting for otherness
We, "subject matter" of fringe documentaries
We, the Hollywood refuseniks,
the greaser bandits & holy outlaws
of advanced Capitalism
We, without guns, without Bibles
We who never pray to the police or to the army
We who never kissed the hand of a bishop or a curator […]

From Guillermo Gómez-Peña's *Declaration of Poetic Disobedience* (2006)

Denouncing wrongs through their visualization and showing what the media or mainstream discourses do not, are by now well-established strategies of "sensible politics" and forms of counter-information. Gilles Deleuze noted in his conference at la FEMIS in 1987 that counter-information only becomes effective when it is by nature an act of resistance: the act of resistance is not to "counter-inform" but to resist the neoliberal destruction of forms of life and common experiences; it is to defend the right to protect something that already exists, or to protest against something that is already lost or about to be lost. We could argue that "sensible politics" is far from being a means to resist, especially if we remember that critiques of capitalism need a social base and that Arnold Schwarzenegger, Hollywood star and former governor of California, is our current, Baudrillesque paradigm of political representation. Politicians today have the same status as celebrities – for instance, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto is married to *Televisa* sweetheart Angélica Rivera, Nicolas Sarkozy to singer and model Carla Bruni, and other politicians are following their example – and access to them is mediated through the mass media, the market of the sensible. In this respect, "*sensible politics*" makes evident a gap between real politics and the public sphere (as the site for potential political action), which is brimming with spectacle and cultural production and thereby acquires a substitutive political function.

An example that comes to mind is James Cameron's 2009 film *Avatar.* Made with computerized animation technology, the film depicts an indigenous people's struggle to defend their form of life in the face of a threat of corporate dispossession and displacement. The ordeal suffered by the Na'vi people in *Avatar* mirrors ordeals that communities across the world are undergoing because of the worldwide extraction of resources and developmental programs, such as hydropower dams and wind turbines, oil and mineral extraction, even fracking. These projects are destroying the land, homes and livelihoods of millions of people. What interests me about *Avatar* here is neither the trivialization (through romanticization) of the current struggles of indigenous peoples, nor how the film conveys politically correct heroic failure, melancholia, impotence, martyrdom and hope (thereby circulating social-democratic and Christian affects). What I find deeply symptomatic of our current Baudrillesque paradigm of political representation is the incidence when, on 12 February 2010, as part of the weekly protests against the Apartheid Wall in the Palestinian village of Bil'in on the West Bank, five Palestinian, Israeli and international activists dressed up as characters from the film. By the adoption of Hollywood political correctness, the activists sought to turn the weekly protest into a media event that would make the Palestinian cause seem "more humane" to unsympathetic Israelis and unaware foreigners (who had all seen the film). This event not only highlights the gap I already described, between real politics and the public sphere (as the site for political action), it is also an instance of the confusion of politics with its representation, which misrepresented the Palestinian cause and actually obstructs effective political action. This confusion highlights how visibility and recognition have become tyrannical: "The more I am recognized, the more my gestures are hindered, internally hindered."[31] By being recognized, I get caught in the super-tight meshwork of the new power that demands identification in order to implement collective surveillance. Perhaps the question today is not what to do, but how to do it. What is needed is to create zones of opacity where bodies are no longer separate from their claims or their gestures, enabled by sites of enunciation (rather than of visibilization) where political stands can be taken that go beyond the exhausted frames of Left and Right. The gap that the mediatization of mediation created between speech and action needs to be bridged, by speaking back, so as to wage war in the name of our nameless existence. Guillermo Gómez-Peña's *Declaration of Poetic Disobedience* (2006) comes to mind: it is a video in which the artist performs a poem. In spite of its liberal disclaimers, Gómez-Peña's video is an instance of speech and gesture embodied in the image. In the context of tightening immigration laws and growing racism in the U.S., Gómez-Peña's poem carves out a discursive position to contest and resist power by reconfiguring the notions of "us" and "them." In an era when text and speech are obscured by images, cultural differences have become commodities, and homogenizing globalization has taken over (Starbucks, neo-modernist architecture, human rights, Apple computers, neo-conceptual and minimal art, and so on), perhaps Gómez-Peña's *Declaration* carries the seeds of a new internationalism.

31 Tiqqun, "How Is It To Be Done?" (November 2008) available online: https://tinyurl.com/y23899yg

DAVID RYCH

MILITANT FICTION

If you want to make a documentary you should automatically go to the fiction, and if you want to nourish your fiction you have to come back to reality.

Jean-Luc Godard

In 2010, several inhabitants of the Palestinian village of Bil'in on the West Bank painted themselves blue and dressed up as Na'vi, the natives in the popular science fiction movie *Avatar*. They proceeded to protest in front of the Separation Barrier, quoting a speech from the blockbuster film in front of news cameras. One protester further asserted that their appropriation of this piece of mainstream culture for their political cause was an attempt to re-orient the affiliation and empathy of the audience – since, as opposed to the movie, what was happening in Palestine was "real".
The anti-imperialist reading of the movie found a one-to-one translation, as Yosefa Loshitzki points out[1], stating that *"The Na'vi, thus, act as a mirror of desire reflecting for different dispossessed groups their own local resistance and connects it with other similar acts of resistance in different parts of the globe."* However, the thing that made this event so intriguing was its conception and organization as a non-violent confrontation with an explicit form of injustice – a confrontation that required moral judgment by a global audience and would remain without resonance if nobody was watching. The position of the media is therefore not that of a documenting bystander, but one of complicity: the media are the main form of transmission for the event and the evident reason it is taking place.
Nonetheless, the staging of political struggle for the media is not a new phenomenon in the region. As far back as the 1960s the Palestinian Liberation Organisation spearheaded the tactical use of mediated appearances, helping create an iconographic image of a suppressed, yet resistant people. Over the last few decades, mainstream journalists as well as video activists have contributed to a relentless re-distribution of the artless portrayal of Palestinians as a stone-throwing David fighting against a high-tech militarized Goliath.
In the early days of Al Fatah's armed struggle, several leftist filmmakers from the West made a number of films that supported Palestinian resistance, closing ranks in what they pictured was a Marxist revolution. In 1970, upon the invitation of the Arab League, Jean-Luc Godard shot a film in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine together with Jean-Pierre Gorin and Armand Marco: the Dziga Vertov Group (DVG). Radicalized intellectuals sympathizing with the Palestinian fight, they arrived on location and began filming resistance practices served for their cameras: combat training, militant meetings and statements read out by 'the people'. They entered the scene with a preconceived idea, written down in a notebook

1 Richard Huleatt , "Avatar in the Palestinian (Imagi)nation: An Interview with Professor Yosefa Loshitzky", / *ReallReel Journal*, 26 April 2012
Yosefa Loshitzky, , "Popular Cinema as Popular Resistance", *Third Text* Volume 26, Issue 2, 201

according to their Maoist principles, of what to show and how. Furthermore, the film was originally aimed for Western leftist intelligentsia, fulfilling a militant vision of successful class struggle. After the filmmakers returned to France, the footage remained unedited for five years. As early as 1970, after most of the Fedayin, whom the group had filmed, had died in *Black September* (during the Jordanian Civil War), Godard and Gorin saw a discrepancy between their authority over the picture and the actual circumstances they met while filming.
Subsequently Godard and his partner Anne-Marie Miéville unearthed the rushes and chose to take another route, reflecting on image creation in the form of auto-critique. By contrasting the ideological representation of the struggles of others with the situation "at home", they arrived at naming the fallacies that militant cinema was so often prone to resort to. And so *Jusqu'à la Victoire (Until Victory)*, the title of the original film by DVG, became *Ici et Ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere*).
The outcome is certainly engaging for a variety of interrelated reasons, It questions the approaches and tools filmmakers' employ to describe reality, and shows how this questioning eventually unmasked the political theatre that the film originally wanted to support. Godard and Miéville lay bare the fabrication of certain footage, such as that of a Lebanese woman exclaiming how proud she was to be bearing a child destined to become a future combatant, yet who in reality was not pregnant. The thoughtful evaluation of images and of how they are produced became significant for the later Godard and has not lost its significance for political filmmaking even today – in fact, it seems now more relevant than ever.
In this essay, I bring up the connection between *Ici et Ailleurs* and the Palestinian Na'vi, not only as situated in the context of Palestinian struggle, but above all as a question that concerns the transmission of images. Aware of the problem of political detachment, the Palestinian people of Bil'in wanted their images to arrive *here*. In order to achieve this, they subordinated their own roles to an imaginary limbo of binary essentialism, and linked this back to their distinct situation. Social media played a significant role in distribution, as their video went viral directly after it was released.
As with Dziga Vertov Group's raw footage, the defining characteristic of the Bil'in video is an unremitting complicity between the camera and its subject. In both cases, the subjects self-direct their actions for an external viewer in order to gain ideological support. A new characteristic in the latter video is that the subjects are more aware of their mediated image than before: they understand that, in order to pierce the enormous density of the viewers' daily visual routines, they must deliver an extraordinary media stunt. Where previously it was enough to attract the attention of

Western media to gain visibility, now one needs to deliver a performance that stands out from the flood of events.
With the arrival of the phenomenon early video activists would have referred to as "camcorder revolution", we have been provided with more abundant technological means of reproduction than Walter Benjamin could ever have anticipated. Hardly any events take place in public anymore that are not documented from a number of different angles. The crowd has turned into producers, and decision on what deserves to be in the picture are no longer made by the absolute authority of broadcast companies. Furthermore, the division of agency in modern demonstrations into Police/Press/Activists leaves every side armed with imaging devices with which to record evidence down to the smallest of gestures. Provoking the other side to trigger an overreaction becomes a fight over the territory of public opinion.
If we can speak today of an aesthetic of protest (rather than resistance), it concerns not only the images that are captured, but also the scenarios delivered to make these images possible.
Tactics of symbolic struggle have proven to be successful in addressing viewers in democratic societies, where public opinion can have an impact and put pressure on political decision makers. Since the arrival of the era of representation where resistance is permanently incorporated, attention-based resistance practices have become ways for breaking out of adaptation, consolidation and commodification.
Most of these strategies are developed by activist groups speaking for one or more political causes. Designed to intervene with the image, they aim at hijacking the media. Successful narratives and codes are readapted, distributed on a global scale, and strategically taught in workshops. We can say that in their mode of organization and execution, these tendencies show a new form of militancy which instead of weapons uses the body in visually creative ways.
But what does all this mean for politically engaged filmmakers? How to work with the images of such an articulation of protest, rather than merely representing it?
In an essay titled *Making Films Politically,* Joanne Richardson, filmmaker, writer and a colleague of mine, refers to Godard and one of his more popular quotes. Often brought up in discussions about political filmmaking, the quote has as its premise that the aim is not to make political film, but to make film politically.
Richardson writes:

Making political films relies on a metaphysical conception of representation, a naturalized interpretation of the relations between the image and the reality it refers to. By contrast, making films politically means investigating how images find their meaning and disrupting the rules of representation. It means provoking the viewers to become political animals, to reflect on their relation to the images and on their own position vis a vis power.[2]

In other words, if a political film is constituted by an ideologically coded flow of images, making a film politically would entail questioning the ideology behind the very same images, and also questioning the environmental conditions of their production and those of the film itself.
In her essay 'The Articulation of Protest'[3], Hito Steyerl juxtaposes the specific forms of articulation of *Ici et Ailleurs* with the early Indymedia film production *Showdown in Seattle*. Her text can be understood as critiquing the video-activist approach for the way it blurs the specificities between different protest movements.
In a way, this point is similar to the argument the French movie critic Serge Daney made on the AND (ET) in montage, in which he discussed the filmmaker's true place[4], following Miéville and Godard's painstaking elaboration of the image as an unreliable representation of reality. From their film, we learn that images carry many messages and sometimes end up being utilized as messengers of opposing ideologies. The combination of images makes up a new reading, as for Godard "Cinema is not one image after another, it is one image plus another making a third, the third moreover being made by the spectator."[5]
In the earlier example of current protest culture, there is a profusion of images, originating from different sources and having their meaning amplified. In this sense they incorporate the language of montage in a performative gesture. Given the immediacy of images that we are provided with by overlapping streams of corporate and social media, there seems to be a necessity to constantly question how we read them.

Breaking the News

Since 2012, following an invitation to contribute to the concept of a press agency under the title "Breaking the News" at the 7th Berlin Biennale – a

2 Joanne Richardson, *Making Films Politically,* www.academia.edu/4281582/Making_films_politically

3 Hito Steyerl, *The Articulation of Protest*, republicart, September 2002

4 Unpublished single page text by Serge Daney, as part of an introduction to *Ici et Ailleurs*

5 Jean-Luc Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, Propos Rompus, Paris: *Cahiers du Cinema – Editions de l'Etoile*, 1985, 486.

thematic and conceptual take on journalistic reportage – I have been recording and collecting video material to investigate the dramatic nature of current political protest. My approach is to look at performative strategies in the articulation of political claims to see to what extent current movements and action groups are concerned with their visual representation.

In the case of the Ukrainian collective FEMEN, their meticulously prepared actions resemble scripts. The female activists are shown preparing for an action in their apartment, engaging in an iconographic masquerade: getting ready for the "show". The performative roles may be fictional, but the scenario turns into reality the moment direct action is interrupted by force. The role of the executive authority is central, hinging upon the anticipation of a more or less violent reaction. The role of the contemporary activist-martyr is that of a pop figure, played out with vigour and readiness to suffer serious consequences.
With the rise of self-referentiality in mainstream culture, we reach a point of symbolic fictionalization that paradoxically now constitutes our notion of what is "real". Any replication of a reality in images will only work as long as there is a consensus about their meaning within the given society. Form becomes an intrinsic key to the reading of the image. With the manipulation available in the making of images, sometimes even contradictory readings collapse. A case in point is the mimetic replication of images that have already become widely distributed in the media and have proven their popular appeal, such as when arrested Turkish protesters re-enact, inside a police van, the postures of a selfie taken by chat show host Ellen DeGeneres at the 2014 Academy Awards.
The creation of such images implies a direct connection between protagonists and the camera, recalling Guy Debord's statement that "the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images." Questioning the production of these images would be to question the creation of these roles, and thereby to provide additional information for enabling a more complete reading beyond the mere spectacle of performance. In such a complex setting, with its multiple layers, this would ne tantamount to deconstructing the fictitious aspects of what is considered to be real as a theatre of agency.
However, to quote Jacques Rancière, "it is not a matter of claiming that everything is fiction. It is a matter of stating that the fiction of the aesthetic age defined models for connecting the presentation of facts and forms of intelligibility that blurred the border between the logic of facts and the logic of fiction." He concludes, "Writing history and writing stories come under the same regime of truth."[6]
Naturally, referring back to Godard, the imperative of making a film politically, with all the attendant implications, applies to fiction as much as to documentary.

In my own work, I contrast the documentary with elements of fictional filmmaking, such as camera angles, to make the documentary indistinguishable from the inserted fictitious scenes. These fictitious scenes are replications of symbolic actions, and their fictitiousness only becomes apparent if the viewer is familiar with the respective scenes in Godard's films. At some point, the re-staging of graffiti scenes from *One Plus One* interrupt the diegetic order of the documentary shots of political action. My purpose in over-emphasizing the fictional aspect of the political images is to highlight the possibility of making a real impact on reality, provided we understand its mediated nature. No matter how fictitious our reality gets, we should not forget that the struggles are real.

6 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Bloomsbury Revelations, 2013, 34.

MIKE HOOLBOOM

THE RULE AND THE EXCEPTION

Could we spare a few words for one of the shortest of Godard movies? He is known for his feature length missives but for many years he worked quietly on the shortest of short forms, anonymously directing/editing many concise and silent *Cinétracts* (1968), producing shaving commercials that advocated for a Palestinian state, tossing off diary encounters with Zoetrope and Woody Allen, and video

scripts made only after the feature was finished. He produced stunning trailers for Bresson's *Mouchette*, and the Viennalle (Film Festival), as well as his own films, where he playfully resculpted word objects, or else compressed hours of iconic cinema into visual haikus, like the six trailers he produced for *Film Socialisme* (2010), five of which offer every shot of the movie in various time travel compressions.

Commissioned by Gaumont to make *JLG/JLG* (1994), a movie that Godard forever insisted would be a "self portrait, not autobiography," we see the author crouched at a writing table in his Rolle homestead, surrounded by books that reliably punctuate his own thinking, as if he were a living collection of quotations, a library of fragments. "There is culture which is the rule/which is part of the rule/there is the exception/which is art/which is part of art…" As it turns out, these lines would form the basis for the voice-over of his two minute short *Je vous salue, Sarajevo* (1993), which recasts the nearly feature-length autoportrait as prelude, postscript, supplement.

Horrified by the civil war that pitted former neighbours against each other in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Godard repurposed this voice-over fragment as he worked to find an image that could show what he could not bear to see. He settled on a single photograph taken by Ron Haviv, an American war reporter, and shattered it into fragments, which the movie slowly summons in a gathering dread. How could he make this picture visible? How could he return us to this moment, rescue it from the too many others that bury its difficulty, its outrage and injustice? Godard hurls it against his plasma screen and breaks it into bits, and then offers it up to us piece by piece. Each reframing of this single picture offers a temporary foothold, a momentary vantage, a way to approach what cannot finally be named. The unbearable war, the unspeakable act, the impossible gesture. They arrive one step at a time.

A friend told me last night that she once marched with the others against the bathhouse raids, worked at the woman's shelter, warmed herself with the necessary certainties of the young as she kicked against the machine, shook her fist against the big picture. She's a mother now, and has offered more recently to look after a friend's daughter once a week. It is not the march on the capital, it is not tearing the system down brick by brick, but still she is standing on the front line of her life. And while she used to embrace the war, the us and themness of the struggle, today she works for peace. No, her babysitting efforts will not feed another child from Gaza, but even so, she is opening her arms to the here and now of her neighborhood. She is working for peace with her partner, her own children, and the children who have come to take the place of the life she used to have. The adventure of peace has begun again at home, where no one will notice except the lives she is busy changing with every breath, one kindness at a time.

I leave her house, as if I were leaving the cinema. As if it belonged there, in the midst of those small struggles, those relationships, that ongoing resistance.

Je vous salue, Sarajevo. Godard's film title names Sarajevo which not only underlines the ongoing genocide just a few hundred kilometers away, but also conjures the city as the originary flashpoint that began the First World War. Perhaps it was little surprise that more than a decade after its completion it was joined with a dozen other films in an omnibus production that marked the hundredth anniversary of the not-so-great war. *The Bridges of Sarajevo* (2014) was put together by a trio of concerned citizens who wrote: "Sarajevo crystalized, at the end of a century of fire and iron, the brutal collision of real and symbolic violence. Ethnic cleansing, the triumph of commodity, the dictatorship of spectacular images turning in a hellish ballet in whose epicenter the city found itself. Yet Sarajevo promised the opposite, that's why it deserves this melancholic salutation."[1]

Godard makes a slow approach so that we can see a single photograph, he understands too well how unwanted experiences can be buried not by repression but through overexposure. He makes this approach by offering at first only the faces of two soldiers, dressed like twins who share the same face, a triumph of the will. We see a succession of close-ups revealing a rifle, a hand holding a cigarette, another hand holding a rifle, a raised hand, then a foot, a woman with her face buried in her hands, a wider shot with the same woman now with a rifle pointed at her head, while others lay beside her. Slowly two groups come into focus, the standing soldiers and the civilians lying prone. One soldier has his foot raised about to kick a woman's head, casually, as if she were nothing at all. A title appears: "Vous Salue" (hail). And then there is a final shot of a woman bent over in grief, her face hidden, as an iris closes in on her and brings darkness.

1 The Bridges of Sarajevo by Cinétévé, Fabrice Aragno, Jean-Paul Battaggia, Paul Grivas. http://www.bridgesofsarajevo.com/godard.html

Godard accompanies these pictured steps with the familiar cigar-inflected voice-over rasp that has driven so much of his video work. The register is intimate, the words come from an aging body, an outraged body, a body that has grown tired of the wars it has been made to bear witness to. How to keep saying no? And how to invent new ways of saying yes? The text is worth quoting at length, not least because it packs into its few lines a lifetime of thinking, and an uncanny divide.

"In a sense, fear is the daughter of God, redeemed on Good Friday night. She's not beautiful, mocked, cursed and disowned by all. But don't get it wrong: she watches over all mortal agony, she intercedes for mankind.

For there's a rule and an exception. Culture is the rule, and art is the exception. Everybody speaks the rule: cigarette, computer, t-shirt, television, tourism, war. Nobody speaks the exception. It isn't spoken, it's written: Flaubert, Dostoyevsky. It's composed: Gershwin, Mozart. It's painted: Cezanne, Vermeer. It's filmed: Antonioni, Vigo. Or it's lived, and then it's the art of living: Srebenica, Mostar, Sarajevo.

The rule is to want the death of the exception. So the rule for Cultural Europe is to organize the death of the art of living, which still flourishes."[2]

Like the conflict in Serbia-Herzegovina, there are two sides: art versus culture. In this formulation, art is what can be spoken, it belongs to the law, to war, the throwaway addictions of t-shirts, cigarettes and television. Art is spoken "by everybody," as if it were the vernacular itself, the shapeshifting commons, the inheritance of copied materials that passes between bodies. On the other side is "the exception," which cannot be spoken, though like a good cultural snob, the maestro offers examples of white male canonical moments from music, painting and literature. There is something silent and privileged about the exception, a word with Latin roots that means "take out." The exception is taken out, removed, absented.

The artist raises the spectre of fear in his opening line, and names this emotion as a pervasive accompaniment, a feeling that acts in our place (he names fear "an intercessor"), as if it were a projection or delegate, a representative dispatched to carry out our wishes. The picture Godard scissors apart and re-presents is filled with fear of course, what could be more alarming than falling prone to the lawless law, the casual brutality

2 Je Vous Salue Sarajevo by Jean Luc Godard

of these young men dressed as soldiers? It is difficult not to read the divide between culture and art as another symptom of this fear. It's as if the exceptions Godard names have each been able to overcome private and public fears in order to create a book, a series of musical notes, or a painting which was not simply a reflection of fear, a testament of the way a body gives in to fear, which he finds both at the root of popular culture, but also tourism and war.

When I experience fear my body shrinks, I grow smaller as muscles tighten, and the body contracts. As breathing becomes more difficult I stop feeling. The outside world stops coming in, the pores close, the borders are sealed. Fear is the emotion that makes me feel separate from everyone else. And it is this separation, between a tourist and a tourist's geography, between the sweat shop labour that produces t-shirts and the discount garments themselves, between the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, that seeks expression in war, television, mass production. How is it possible as an artist to make work that is not a projection of fear? How could one establish new roots for an image, to nurture an image that might refuse separation and alienation, and create a form that is not already waiting to be filled, because the conventions of genre are only another way of saying yes to fear.

German political theorist Carl Schmitt wrote that only the ruler could define a state of exception, and suspend the law. Picking up the riff, Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has written extensively about the states of exception governments impose when they are driven by fear, in states of self-declared crisis and emergency.[3] Citizens are arrested, tortured, killed. The boundaries of the law are threatened as the most basic human rights are flagrantly violated. In his voice-over musing, Godard turns these formulations on their head, daring to reimagine the crisis of war as a problem of representation. Of pictures. The lament that sings through his longest work, the eight-part *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1998) is driven by the anguish that pictures could not prevent the Holocaust. During the golden period of his global acclaim, he inserted in film after film references to the ongoing war and slaughter in Vietnam. And in the suite of movies that turn around the atrocities in Bosnia — that include not only this two minute brief, but three feature length efforts (*JLG/JLG, Forever Mozart, Notre Musique*) — the artist ponders his own maxim that "mirrors should reflect before sending an image." Here he describes what scientists name the observer effect, that the person who makes an image is

3 State of Exception by Giorgio Agamben, trans. Kevin Attell, University of Chicago Press, 2005.

part of that image, that pictures don't exist by themselves, but are always part of a matrix of relations. The question remains: what combination of images and sounds could stop the blood flowing, could insert itself into the floodtide of misunderstandings? Or perhaps instead of the word "image" it would be better to use the word "association." As Godard explains: "But an image doesn't exist. This is not an image, it's a picture. The image is the relation with me looking at it dreaming up a relation to someone else. An image is an association." [4]

I think he's saying that a picture doesn't exist by itself, but is created again and again out of a living imaginative relation, while fear is the quality that refuses that relation, and dooms the project of creating images. For a movie artist, fear keeps us from putting our pictures into relationships with others. How often do our pictures refuse association? Godard goes on: "La vrai mission, the true goal of cinema, was to arrive at a way of elaborating and putting into practice what montage is. But we never got there; many directors believed they had reached it, but they had done other things." [5]

When I look at Godard's movie I want to be the woman who lies with her face in her hands. But I have to admit that I am more often the soldier who lifts his boot. Or the boy with a gun who has stopped the flow of unwanted feelings, using his fear to turn neighbours into objects. I am caught between the rule and the exception, in the momentums of fear that I bring to this moment. How can I stop becoming the soldier lifting my foot when I pick up my camera, or when I sit down in the warming cocoon of my edit software? When will I stop kicking her in the head, beating him to death, raising my weapons? How can I invent myself by inventing the cinema? How can I defeat the fear that keeps me from speaking to my neighbour, or that prevents me from finding the productive relation between two pictures that might create a third out of their collision? Louis Lumière declared that his was an invention without a future. Is this the oldest fear of cinema? Perhaps it's only by embracing the present that I can begin to imagine a future for cinema, or even a future for myself, in other words, how to take the next step.

Let's leave the last words to himself, as he says good-bye. "When it's time to close the book, I'll have no regrets. I've seen so many people live so badly, and so many die so well."

4 Interview: Jean-Luc Godard by Gavin Smith, Film Comment, March/April 1996

5 Ibid.

CASPAR STRACKE

INTERTITLES, SUBTITLES, TEXT-IMAGES: GODARD AND OTHER GODARDS

Je näher man ein Wort ansieht, desto ferner sieht es zurück.[1]

(Karl Kraus)

1 "The more closely you look at a word the more distantly it looks back". Karl Kraus *Die Fackel*, (Magazine) Vienna 1911, Issue 326, p.44

"In the past, there were only filmmakers. We did not talk about technicians. Méliès, Thalberg, Grémillon. […] Today, it is the reign of technicians. Large-scale technicians, mobile TV technicians, audiovisual technicians, the gendarmerie. Cinema has tucked itself into each arcane of capitalism. The technique took precedence over the gesture. And the human has deserted the eye of the one who looks." These lines were written to appear as if they had come from the pen of Jean-Luc Godard, but turned out to be a clever adaption of JLG's idiosyncratic writing style. More so, the text was embedded into a short film (in the form of voice-over narration) which perfectly deploys the multi-layered audio-visual collage style that is the signature film language of the late Godard.

In May 2018, a group of filmmakers associated with the online journal Lundi Matin produced a short film they cleverly entitled *Vent d'ouest*. It circulated online right before the Cannes premiere of Godard's *Le Livre d'Image*. The work was produced in solidarity with French "Zadists," activists of ZAD (Zone à Defence), and in reaction to the brutal large-scale eviction in May 2018 in which 19 squadrons of French military police evicted the occupied Notre-Dame-des-Landes region after a 15-year-long resistance against a new airport project.

Although Godard's collaborator Fabrice Aragno and the press secretary Matilde Incerti denied Godard's authorship, Godard himself left this question fully open. The short film possessed a surprisingly powerful impact for two reasons. Labeled both a Godard and fake news, it was watched by hundreds of thousands of curious viewers in the first days. But the film's use of Godard's methodology also revealed an important absence within activist filmmaking today: the ability to fully embed the current political state of affairs into the greater narrative of history. Godard's work pursues this goal by doing everything at once – inhabiting the present, past and future simultaneously, for instance by surrounding a current event with footage of historic relevance, as if to make the historic images observe the current event. The film's appropriation of this aspect of Godard's work demonstrated that his film language, which has so often been dismissed as semiotic overload, can function in its concise but complex form as a sophisticated tool for political commentary – even outside of Godard's own oeuvre.

In addition to prompting denouncements of the video as a "fake," *Vent d'ouest* evoked an even greater gesture of resistance that borrowed once again from Godard's phrasing of political filmmaking. Drawing on Godard's 1970 manifesto, "What is to be Done?", a group of contemporary filmmakers rewrote the manifesto as an open letter addressing the atrocities of the NDDL eviction. Signed by film professionals such as Adèle Haenel, Philippe Garrel, Aki Kaurismäki and many others, the letter reads: "We, filmmakers, call on ourselves to bite, to film, and to defend this territory which is beaten and hits back."[2] A manifesto rooted in cinema is renewed and finds its way into real-world politics: a cinematic subtitle for reality.

A month later, *Le livre d'Image* premiered. Yet another tour de force, the film moves from Europe to the Middle East, continuing to develop and refine a meta-historical language Godard originally introduced with *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*. But his language has evolved over time. *Le livre d'Image* contains less overlaps and more cut-ups than *Histoire(s)*, yet but the ultimate outcome possesses the same semantic density.

The German film distributor Grandfilm released a new version of *Le livre d'Image* in 2018. Entitled *Bildbuch*, it was distributed in Swiss, Austrian, and German cinemas. Because the film frequently pairs intertitles with voice-over, Godard agreed to re-record the entire spoken text in German, a spectacular language experiment in itself. However, even after the subtitles have been eliminated (for these audiences), the complex interaction between written and spoken words – which are themselves in constant contact with images and other sounds throughout the film – remains, leaving the work to oscillate continuously between translatability and untranslatability.

The observation by Karl Kraus that begins this essay – an up-close inquiry into written language, and a speculative concept of language developing a consciousness of its own – suggests a multiverse of conflicting interpretations embedded within language itself. In the work of Godard, language is always confronted with additional layers of vibrant noise. That is, writing is continuously placed into (or surrounded by) imagery, prompting us to imagine that the displayed letters consciously observe and interact with their surroundings – the words are looking back at us.

Inspired by many encounters of text-image conflict zones in cinema, I became – in my own filmmaking – increasingly interested to analyze the history of written language appearing in, and interacting with, cinema and moving-image art. This text is the outcome of an effort to identify particular cases in which the colliding agencies of text and moving-image regimes result in manifold interpolations, producing unexpected outcomes. It is a process that might be compared with a chemical reaction. While scrutinizing the involved chemical ingredients in their pure, untouched states, they show clear limitations of mediality. But when they are put into a dynamic process, they reveal undetected synergies.

2 The manifesto was first published in Le Monde, May 27, 2018

In times when the ubiquitous presence of media continues to expand, one also continues to face a well-known, yet ever-changing perceptual phenomenon, that of perceiving moving images simultaneously with written and spoken words. When these distinct lines of communication interact, one is forced into a process of negotiation. Although hardly conscious of it while digesting audiovisual information, the spectator who confronts combinations of images and language must typically endure a strenuous competition between his/her linguistic and visual registers. Intended and unintended side effects emerge within these polysemic reading modes. There are certainly cases in which these types of neural oscillations become apparent to the spectator, resulting in either appealing or annoying reactions. But it is an old conundrum – one which the cognitive apparatuses of millennials (and social-media natives) may already be rendering obsolete through the development of conditioned selective perception. Although highly hypothetical, it is worth imagining over-stacked information clusters appearing to a new generation of viewers as gentle streams of audiovisual flow, from which the receiver just cherry-picks the attractive elements, easily omitting the unwanted.

Before fully branching out into general media theory, I want to examine these questions exclusively in relation to contemporary cinema. It might be necessary to assess how many of these agents of cinema's psychology of perception are still intact.

Comparing the fundamentally-different types of written language that appear in moving images, it is apparent that online culture is transforming (and certainly perverting) the existing paradigm. In the age of YouTube's auto-translated subtitles, which often appear on top of stacked in-frame banner ads, it is worth asking if subtitles are still perceived as subtitles? Furthermore, what distinguishes online text overlays from conventional sub- and intertitles?

With any type of translation appearing as a subtitle on top of some other visible text in the moving image, the relationship expands into an additional sphere of semiotic complexity. The desperate attempts to avoid this problem have of course resulted in the practice of dubbing. Dubbing so-called "foreign" films can rightfully be considered some kind of antibiotics, aggressively sanitizing the auditory aura of the film, which in narrative cinema is produced, in part, through the mastery of the nuanced voice articulation of its actors.

The alternative, subtitles, always provoke distraction. Subtitles establish a solid barrier from behind which the viewer contemplates the inner universe of the "foreign film," like watching through bullet-proof glass, thereby confirming the complex problem of cultural untranslatability. It is precisely the friction between the semantic interplay of what is being said and what is being unmasked in the subtitles that classifies this codified language as a foreign one – a language that requires translation, even for an English-speaking audience.[3]

As for cinema itself – reproduced and simulated life in a protected black box, our perceptual apparatuses can easily shut off and provoke a revenge-like counter-reaction, pushing us into hallucinatory and trance-like states. Whenever we as viewers reach a point of exhaustion, ideally even passing out in the cinema during a too-ambitious multi-sensory event, many of us recall the experience of continuing the present film in our dreams. Which means distancing oneself from the course of the actual film narration while engaging with it subconsciously, taking over the directing. What in the dreamy double-fold illusion may be considered the consummation of an unlikely marriage between the conscious and the unconscious mind, would for the filmmaker still appear as two disparate realities. This could lead to the prospect of long-form film experiments made deliberately to be unfinishable, as a way of provoking the audience into a more radical mode of engagement. By doing so, such experiments would provide an open-ended string of cinematic experience, one that is willing to be hijacked from the screen to be continued in our own imagination.

The deliberate act of "un-finishing" – of leaving something open-ended, as a creative potential – fosters a space for active viewer participation, for commentary and instantaneous reflection. In this sense, we can define this space as an additional layer (invisible and personal) of meta-commentary. Every so often, artists adopt such strategies to radically oppose the film industry's normative production cycle, in which only a finished artwork is exhibited, commodified, etc.

Less common is the strategy of making a work re-appear in different iterations in multiple contexts. This was precisely what Godard did with many of his feature films, transforming them from stand-alone products into mere components of larger artistic projects that expand almost indefinitely.

As for Godard's method, it has often been called an ongoing work-in-progress – one that, as Thomas Elsaesser once remarked, exists "only to be torn up by Godard's next film."[4] In the various epilogues – such as *Letter to Jane*, *Scénario du Passion* or the numerous short films that

3 Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour have investigated the notion of "foreignness" engerndered especially for American film audiences through any type of subtitling. Arguing for the urgency of attributing agency to subtitles, they believe subtiteling should be radically uncoupled from its expected role of making a foreign language accessible. See: Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour, *Subtitles. On Foreignness in Film*. MIT Press, 2004

4 Thomas Elsaesser: *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, p. 41

branched out from other projects (such as *Je vu salue Sarajevo* or *Prayer for Refuseniks)* – this process brings us to Godard's commentaries, which he often presents simultaneously in the form of spoken word, intertitles, and signs, even through the motions of his squeaky felt pen, which bluntly – and tongue-in-cheek – alter and instrumentalize photos or drawings, transforming the meaning of such materials in a manner that suits Godard's political agenda.

First and foremost, Godard's laconic commentaries illustrate his own work process. As David Bordwell once remarked, "in both, sound and image, the post-production process for Godard is a kind of transformation, an openly admitted re-writing of what came from the camera. He slaps graffiti on his own film."[5] It is this trans-categorical act that complicates his vocabulary of film language. Through such commentaries, Godard adds increasingly extrinsic forms of written language to his films in an effort to deliberately alter – if not sabotage – the original intention. But in Godard's case, such commentaries also serve as a way of re-visiting his work. They are added in the form of an epilogue, or as comments added to film stills.

Another way that Godard reveals traces of the work process (with all its second thoughts and cul-de-sacs) is through the notorious writing style of ~~sous rature~~ – "Ce qui peut être montré ne peut être dit!" ("What can be shown cannot be said!"). With this piece of Wittgensteinian logic, Godard greeted visitors entering his avidly discussed and controversial 2006 exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, *Voyage[s] en Utopie*. ~~A profound sentence that he then poignantly crossed out.~~[6]

As much as the quote was first and foremost a response to the grim dispute between Godard and Centre Pompidou curator Dominique Paini, it could also be read as a proposal towards a particular catalyzation of his moving images, texts and cinematic concepts. *Voyage[s]* was an exhibition full of deliberately un-finished work, as if its constituent objects echoed the concept of sous rature. They were present, but partially broken apart, erased. The viewer recognizes fragments of Godard films rematerialized in objects and installations, but also with additional commentary in the form of handwritten graffiti – textual attribution and intellectual transformation all at once.

One could argue further that this type of post-production segues from its medium-specific definition to the Bourriaudian use of the term, turning all

5 David Bordwell: *Say hello to GOODBYE TO LANGUAGE*, Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell: Observations on Film Art (online) Nov 2014

6 From countless articles on JLG's "disastrous" Pompidou show this particular aspect is well invenstigated by Erika Balsom in her book "Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art" Amsterdam University Press, 2013, p.44 - 47.

critics and writers (including the author of this very essay) into collaborators of a constantly transforming, progressing artwork. At the same time, the different temporalities involved may put this idea into question. If an artwork is officially left unfinished, its contingent future might break into new possibilities ad infinitum.

The choice of leaving an artwork radically open (or open-ended) further suggests the possibility of addressing, re-using, or re-visiting an unresolved topic from a former work. It might not be coincidence that authors like Godard would balance the rupture of an open end with the coherence of imagining filmmaking as the writing of an endless sentence, one that continues beyond the finitude of the medium.

Similar to Leslie Thornton or Pedro Costa, film artist like Mike Hoolboom, whose visual vocabulary is determined by analogies to the semiotic constructions of poetry, is also known for continuing to work on previously-released work. Hoolboom's style suggests a perfect analogy of working and re-working image-sequences just like they were written sentences. Language can be layered with more language, creating intertextuality.

But can images that are employed to comment on other images adopt the same ability? Moving-image works like *A Minute Ago* (2014) by Rachel Rose or *The Glass Note* (2018) by Mary Helena Clark demonstrate that, in recent years, artists who work with found footage are also attempting to juxtapose larger, coherent portions of appropriated material and align them in a "non-sequitur" style. Rather than putting individual recycled images in dialogue with seemingly unrelated fragments, these artists make entire scenes collide with other scenes.

This, in turn, could be seen as the filmic equivalent of comparative literature. However, looking closer, the text-image hybrid defies any comparison to literature. These carefully-chosen words, sentences, and statements that filmmakers decide to include and place in between or on top of their images very often develop a powerful life of their own. Frequently, attempts to solidify a "visual thought" with concrete text unintentionally open up a field of ambivalence. The text-image hybrid always conveys the aforementioned perceptual disruption – the necessary switch between pictorial and textual reading modes. Moreover, since a text has the potential to produce an image on its own, it therefore might enter into a semiotic rivalry between the seen and the imagined.

Unlike ordinary subtitles, which serve the exclusive purpose of translating spoken or written language in a film, the intertitle does not subordinate language to the image. Rather, it transforms the meaning of the image, and even has the power to make the image disappear.

The way an intertitle is shimmed into a scene, as artists like Godard and

Alexander Kluge tend to apply it, follows the older tradition of silent film. After all, cinema was born as an interplay of images and text, until Griffith introduced the poetic dimension by playing one against the other, thereby obtaining uncharted synergies. In his essay "Pedagogy of the Written Image," Jonathan Dronesfield urges us to consider the dangers that emerge when an image is subordinated to the authoritativeness of a text, and asserts that Godard is vehemently fighting the power of the text, while paradoxically fully embracing it. But Dronesfield also asserts that Godard is revealing "the necessary complicity between text and image, he negates the hierarchy between them, he demonstrates their co-dependency their co-originality, he shows that you cannot have one without the other."[7]

In order to achieve this reconfigured form of complicity, we might have to look at what seems to be for Deleuze the necessary precondition to create a new bond, which he refers to as "lectosign": a bundling of images (and possibly texts) that is not only in conversation with itself, but virtually "speaking" to us, in fact lecturing us.[8] Deleuze stresses that the legibility of an image depends on a fundamentally different mode of perception than the simple contemplation of an image. The lectosign has a younger cousin, Rancière's "sentence-image".[9] What these two concepts share is the nearly impossible effort to classify a phenomena of moving image culture by way of linguistics – a process that inevitably results in compromises. Indeed, both Deleuze's and Rancière's neologisms appear insufficient, as they possess a linguistic bias, at best proving the limitations of language to fully fathom a lingual-iconic phenomenon. And yet, these text-image bonds – and particularly, I would argue, those which occur in the time-based, successive nature of the moving image – create a form that is able to express situations, subjects and states beyond the limits of conventional language.

An example would be the literal embodiment of writing – the human body moving through the time-based image and becoming legible text itself. This occurs for instance in the complex essay film *It for Others* (2015) by Irish artist Duncan Campbell. *It for Others* is a Marxist critique of the commoditization of art and culture. One chapter of the film is a collaboration

7 Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield: "Pedagogy of the Written Image" in *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy - Revue de la philosophie française et de langue française*, Vol XVIII, No 2 (2010) p. 89

8 Gilles Deleuze: *Cinema 2 - The Time Image*. Trans by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. University Minnesota Press, 1989, p.27

9 Although Rancière is more interested in the comparison of what is *not* sayable and what is *not* the visible. "By sentence image I intend the combination of two functions that are to be defind aesthetically – that is, by the way in which they undo the representative relationship between text and image." Jacques Rancière: *The Future of the Image*. Translation by Gregory Elliott, Verso 2007, p.46

with British choreographer Michael Clark, in which Clark and Campbell develop a performative form of moving typography to illustrate a number of equations from *Das Kapital*, and particularly from Marx's discourse on the emergence and growth of systems of commerce, which highlights the disjunction between the object's use-value and exchange-value of an object. Clark and Campbell translate this disjunction also into the visual language of the film itself, thereby deliberately addressing the semiotic unstableness of the chosen objects and gestures though which Marx's dictum is expressed. Clark and Campbell developed a choreography of dancers dressed in black costumes and exchanging mirror-clad objects on a white ground, all filmed top-down from the ceiling. This framing makes all the dancers' performative actions seem like letters and symbols on a book page. The interplay functions without written or spoken words, except on three occasions in which specific Marxist terminologies are incorporated into the choreography by having the dancers roll out large vinyl banners, dragging them through the scenery.

Drawing strong inspirations from Brecht's epic theater and his outspoken will to literalize theater, Campbell follows the concept and develops a unique form of pedagogy that thoughtfully mediates without being didactic.

Historically, the concept of text-like visual languages in cinema stems from the renunciation of many radical approaches in conceptual arts in the '70s, which led to artworks that focus exclusively on text alone, eliminating the pictorial aspect altogether. This type of approach, compromising the core of '70s conceptual art practice and its parallel history in Avant-Grade Cinema, becomes evident in "text-films" such as Michael Snow's seminal *So Is This* (1982), a film that displays only text (and the materiality of film itself) which single words appearing in succession for varying durations. Snow's film provoked a cynical commentary on film analysis, especially in regards to the aspect of "readability". But *So Is This* is one example of a larger sub-genre of text-films. Works like Takahiko Iimura's *Writing with Light – White Calligraphy* (1967) or Ferdinand Krivet's *Teletext* (1967) find echoes in the contemporary videos and installations by Tony Cokes and the internet-based works of Young Hae Chang.

A different obsession with text on film, also embraced by conceptual artists, originates in the fascination of making text disappear through text. For instance, Marcel Broodthaers' *Le Corbeau et le Renard* (1967) uses various objects, images and elements of written language to obscure a text excerpt of the titular children's poem. The experiment may demonstrates the cognitive ability of wiping out the optical presence of text by overlaying it not only with moving images, but text images as well. Arguably, every subtitled film may be considered proof of this ability.

But only in more refined experiments does this phenomenon become fully apparent – as for instance in Lars von Trier's early film *Epidemic* (1987), which lets its title remain visible, throughout the entire film, resembling a burned-in watermark.

Whenever literature is incorporated into cinema, the filmmaker is entering into an intellectual pact with a co-author. Once this type of creative alliance is introduced, the filmmaker can attempt to create a synergy of image and text in order to produce an image theory, rather than illustrate one. A striking example that directly addresses this conflict between film and text, but which ultimately achieves an unadulterated congeniality, can be found in some of the works of British filmmaker and video artist David Larcher, who has an ongoing interest in phenomenological inquiries into Lacanian psychoanalysis. In his video piece *Ich Tank* (1999), Larcher does not quote Lacan directly, but using instead Lacanian constellations of subject, object and affect as strict, guiding principles for the structure of his video – and that to such an extent that they become fully embodied in Larcher's practice. Lacan's so-called "mathemes," sometimes even his isolated symbols (such as "$," for the barred subject of desire, or "a" for the unattainable object of desire), are proverbially attached to floating subjects and objects in Larcher's work (i.e., a goldfish, his main protagonist). At the same time the artist's Lacanian constellations also serve as a reflexive embodiment of the idiosyncrasies of the digital medium in which the work was created. In almost all of his video works, Larcher addresses the unstableness in the old analog video signal, an ongoing quest on the poetics of the void. One element of video technology that perfectly manifests this phenomenon of absence (rather than a heightened presence) is the video dropout. This dropout[10] is for Larcher a perfect representation of the Lacanian stain (or tache) – that of the obscured, yet desired.
Larcher lets written language completely merge with his moving images, letters inevitably overwriting parts of the pictorial content (thereby becoming morphing stains in themselves). Text placed over images certainly activate the iconic quality of writing, but always in the aforementioned unresolvable conflict with the moving (or still) image in the background. With text on image, the hierarchy of legibility seems to be decided by default, but the two operative forces within the blueprint of writing – discursivity and iconicity – are now

10 A technical term, that faded with analog video: Tiny portions of missing information due to static on the magnetic recording tape. For that purpose Larcher created an entire visual language build upon incompleteness which in later decades would be labelled 'glitch aesthetics'.

surrounded by the vibrancy of moving imagery. In Larcher's case, we find a thoughtful process of developing the modalities of embedding text into the moving image.
Very much inspired by the radical line spacing of poets such as Charles Olson or e.e. cummings, Larcher too breaks up words, or he changes the typeface and letter size within individual words. By doing so, he keeps any kind of featured scripture in constant movement.

The potential of time-based media such as film occasionally becomes an advantage for artists who seek to interrogate linguistic communication. Temporal interventions overcome the assumed steadiness of written language. A quick change of a letter or a comma can dramatically derive or deplete the originally-intended meaning. Such attempts to de-stabilize language have enticed many film artists to engage in language games – thereby creating a strategy to undermine the hegemonic presence of written language in film. Whenever the assumed, conceptual function of an intertitle is to add clarifying information to the image, the sudden change of text elements can collapse meaning altogether. Once Godard was introduced to the world of electronic character generators in the '70s, in the context of TV production, he would take advantage of this destabilizing tendency ad absurdum.[11]

The French artist Laure Prouvost would seem to be the contemporary artist best poised to take up this tradition, although her work tends to push film-based language experiments out of their traditional, minimalist environment and into colorful and deliriously erotic landscapes of possibilities. Because of Prouvost's performative approach, her work is marked by the artist's self-presence, in a manner that is unusual for the formal language-based experiments in moving image works. Nonetheless, the central element in Prouvost's work remains language, which she challenges through a type of time-based metamorphosis.
At times, Prouvost addresses her audience with intertitles that contain funny statements or cynical commentaries. ("You are six minutes late!"), Others issue challenging tasks ("Full concentration is now requested. Questions will be asked at the end!").[12]
In a highly unique way, Prouvost manages to create her own new lan-

11 Most prominently in the works with Anne-Marie Mievielle, *Six fois deux, sur et sous la communication* (1976) and France/tour/détour/deux enfants (1978) a lot of these efforts can be found in the intertitles.

12 Intertitles in the video *OWT* by Laure Prouvost, UK 2007

guage of the imaginary out of the recurring, well-controlled interaction between image and text.
Prouvost trains her audience to establish a glossary in which objects are connected to words, but eventually she changes her own vocabulary and makes the viewer aware of their own willingness to follow the artist's pseudo-didactic decoys. In other works, one can also detect a form of short-circuiting when language is doubled in written and spoken form. One assumes that both forms convey the same content, but the artist eventually reveals that they differ in nuanced ways, and then later introduces larger semantic aberrations. Her work *OWT*(2007), for instance, makes use of the well-known viewing convention of reading subtitles provided in the same language as the audible soundtrack.
In an interview, Prouvost explains her special interest in this doubling: "You realize people are reading the subtitles more than listening to the words, and the words are much more theoretical and quite grand in some ways, whereas the subtitles are like a little love story going wrong."[13] In a short conversation with curator Michael Connor on Walter Benjamin's famous concept of the artwork's aura, Prouvost subtitles the text with whimsical language games, often replacing a spoken word with rhyming equivalents, turning Benjamin's "aura" into "something aural".[14]
In such cases, language obscures itself as a result of the impossibility of processing written text, spoken word and the moving image simultaneously, suggesting perhaps that in any type of synesthetic experiences, something inevitably remains obscured, altered or overwritten.

While re-examining this phenomenon of synesthetic overwriting historically, which also means assuming a certain historic responsibility, we end up looping right back into Godard's editing suite.
Godard has worked extensively on this uncharted border, exploring the synthesis between two things that are not presented successively but merge with each other to form a new object with a new meaning. This new meaning may be the production of historicity, evoking the Brechtian argument that truth is only to be found in fragmented realities. When these reality fragments are literally reassembled in the theater, we inevitably have to contemplate two or more things at once – not successively – which leaves us unable to engage fully with either one or the other. There is a transition point, which never

13 Laure Prouvost interviewed by Zoe Pilger in "The Sun in your Face" , *Frieze Magazine*, Issue Sept 2014.

14 *OWT* Laure Prouvost, UK 2007

allows us to be fully here nor there. So how can cinema bring two distinct regimes closer than through the conventional time-successive montage?
A superimposition of images does not serve the right purpose either, as parts of the image will always be obscured by the other image. Likewise, a long dissolve produces nothing but a shifting bias from one semantic field to the next. To make his point, Godard often uses in *Histoire(s)* a long, flickering cross-dissolve going rapidly back and forth, to such an extent that it remains unclear which part of the images belong to which scene. It made film researcher Junji Hori propose the question if the wall, seen behind Liz Taylor, is part of Auschwitz?[15]

Jacques Rancière defines Godard's form of cinematic historicity as the locus of a productive conflict. "Godard's montage doubly offers the extreme proximity of contrasting logics," he writes. "It shows how the same forms of junctions of heterogeneous elements can abruptly be switched from the dialectical pole to the symbolic pole […] It means always to do two things at once."[16] In Rancière's "clashes," the utmost importance of which lies in their semantic simultaneity, one can detect a number of perceptual aftershocks, as they produce cascades of continuously-transforming meaning. By refusing to fix meaning in this way, such modes of historicity are at risk of becoming idiosyncratic and even ephemeral (in light of time, in light of history). It is nevertheless worth asking why this form of poetic language – a language that strives to replicate the very factuality of history, is somehow expected to be distinct and unequivocal, in more or less the same way as the contested linguistic rules of precision and unambiguousness in scientific language. Within such text-images, the turbulences that emerge through the dialectal activity between the visual element – with its symbolic potentiality – and the opposing presence of written (and spoken) language will always allow multiple readings. This is their danger, though it is not theirs alone.
Indeed, once we compare the beautiful imperfection of conventional language – with its inherent ambivalence, indecipherability, and untranslatability – with the clustered language of layered audio-visual signifiers in filmic text-image, we can defend both with the argument of irreducibility. Complex states demand complex wording. Yet in an era of immediacy and urgency like our own, such constructions pres-

15 Junji Hori: "Godard, Spielberg, the Muselman and the Concentration Camps", in: *The Legacies of Jean-Luc Godard*, Wilfried Laurier Univ Press, 2013, p.58

16 Jacques Rancière: *The Future of the Image*, Verso, 2009, p.58

ent a durational problem. We're just losing patience. As sounds and images continue to stumble over themselves in our over-mediatized landscape, simplicity has never been more alluring. In this context, however, simultaneity seems not only to be the norm but also the necessary counter-strategy. When addressing intensely complex topics from a position of urgency, the text-image of cinema finds its ultimate legitimation, providing artists and activists alike with a language that acts beyond the *sayable* and *showable*.

JLG Assects

FUNKY FOREST

who revealed simultaneously an invisible art form and a new history of the world through it. We should note in this context an example about which Godard has remained curiously silent: Aby Warburg's pioneering "Mnemosyne".

If Aby Warburg, as Georgio Agamben has argued, can be considered the founder of a hitherto "unnamed science, whose contours we are only today beginning to glimpse", Godard is his successor and has a word for that science: Cinema!

Cinema, according to Godard, is not an art, not a technique. It is a mystery. For my part, I would say that it is not such in essence, but that it is such as phrased here by Godard. Mystery is an aesthetic category, developed by Mallarmé and explicitly adopted by Godard.

Godard also remains cinema's great wizard of ambiguity, resisting neat categories and tidy theorizations from the outset, starting with his love-hate attitude toward traditional cinema. Godard was, in fact the first voice that commonly shared regret that cinema had somehow missed the events and arrived too late for its moment of destiny with revolutionary history. If Godard laments his inability to write the history of cinema through cinema here, Godard succeeds in making another sort of cinema through his own speech: an image of the self-as-process, as fragmentary text.

"The history of cinema appears to be easy to do, since it is after all made up of images; cinema appears to be the only medium where all one can do is re-project these images so that one can see what has happened. In "normal" history, one can't project because it's not projectable".

Godard has pursued a sustained investigation of the theory and practice of history. It became simultaneously a set of essays on the history of cinema, on Godard's life and his place within that history. It is also a critique of a longstanding neglect by historians of the value of films as historical documents and a reflection on the narrow scope and limited ambition of the type of history often produced by professional film historians.

"All I want to say is that history is badly told!"

Godard's montage assumes the establishment of what some call modernity, yet Godard gives this 'common measure' of signs a concrete form that seems to contradict its idea. Godard's problem is precisely this: his practice of montage was formed in a time when the blurring of boundaries between high and low, the serious and the mocking, and the practice of jumping from one subject to the other seemed to counter-pose their critical power to the reign of commodities. Montage had always been Godard's key to cinema, a placing together of two images, of two sounds, to make a new meaning. This operation is not, in fact, dependent on the technology of cinema, but it is cinema which discovered this operation — for Godard it is the discovery of Cinema.

But let us turn to a larger question regarding both cinema history and history, such as "What forest are we in?" and "What is the history of the forest?"

who revealed simultaneously an invisible art form and a new cinema of the world through it. We should note in this context an example about which cinema has remained curiously silent: Aby Warburg's pioneering "Mnemosyne".

If Aby Warburg, as Georgio Agamben has argued, can be considered the founder of a hitherto "unnamed science, whose contours we are only today beginning to glimpse", cinema is his successor and has a word for that science: Godard!

History, according to cinema, is not an art, not a technique. It is a mystery. For my part, I would say that it is not such in essence, but that it is such as phrased here by history. Mystery is an aesthetic category, developed by Mallarmé and explicitly adopted by cinema.

Cinema also remains history's great wizard of ambiguity, resisting neat categories and tidy theorizations from the outset, starting with his love-hate attitude toward the traditional history. Cinema was, in fact the first voice that commonly shared regret that history had somehow missed the events and arrived too late for its moment of destiny with a revolutionary Godard. If history laments his inability to write the cinema of Godard through Godard here, cinema succeeds in making another sort of history through its own speech: an image of the self-as-process, as fragmentary text.

"The cinema of Godard appears to be easy to do, since it is after all made up of images; history appears to be the only medium where all one can do is re-project these images so that one can see what has happened. In "normal" cinema, one can't project because it's not projectable".

Cinema has pursued a sustained investigation of the theory and practice of Godard. It became simultaneously a set of essays on the cinema of history; on history's life and its place within that cinema. It is also a critique of a longstanding neglect by historians of the value of films as historical documents and a reflection on the narrow scope and limited ambition of the type of cinema often produced by professional film historians.

"All I want to say is that cinema is badly told!"

Cinema's montage assumes the establishment of what some call modernity, yet cinema gives this 'common measure' of signs a concrete form that seems to contradict its idea. Cinema's problem is precisely this: its practice of montage was formed in a time when the blurring of boundaries between high and low, the serious and the mocking, and the practice of jumping from one subject to the other seemed to counter-pose their critical power to the reign of commodities. Montage had always been cinema's key to history, a placing together of two images, of two sounds, to make a new meaning. This operation is not in fact dependent on the technology of Godard but it is Godard which discovered this operation — for history it is the discovery of Godard.

But let us turn to a larger question regarding both Godard's cinema and cinema, such as "What forest are we in?" and "Is there cinema in this forest?"

who revealed simultaneously an invisible art form and a new Godard of the world through it. We should note in this context an example about which history has remained curiously silent: Aby Warburg's pioneering "Mnemosyne".

If Aby Warburg, as Georgio Agamben has argued, can be considered the founder of a hitherto "unnamed science, whose contours we are only today beginning to glimpse", history is his successor and has a word for that science: Cinema!

Godard, according to history, is not an art, not a technique. It is a mystery. For my part, I would say that it is not such in essence, but that it is such as phrased here by history. Mystery is an aesthetic category, developed by Mallarmé and explicitly adopted by history.

History also remains Godard's great wizard of ambiguity, resisting neat categories and tidy theorizations from the outset, starting with his love-hate attitude toward the traditional Godard. History was, in fact the first voice that commonly shared regret that Godard had somehow missed the events and arrived too late for its moment of destiny with a revolutionary cinema. If cinema laments his inability to write the history of Godard through Godard here, history succeeds in making another sort of Godard through its own speech: an image of the self-as-process, as fragmentary text.

"The history of Godard appears to be easy to do, since it is after all made up of images; Godard appears to be the only medium where all one can do is re-project these images so that one can see what has happened. In a "normal" Godard, one can't project because it's not projectable".

History has pursued a sustained investigation of the theory and practice of cinema. It became simultaneously a set of essays on the cinema of Godard; on cinema's life and his place within that history. It is also a critique of a longstanding neglect by historians of the value of films as historical documents and a reflection on the narrow scope and limited ambition of the type of Godard often produced by professional film historians.

"All I want to say is that Godard is badly told!"

History's montage assumes the establishment of what some call modernity, yet history gives this 'common measure' of signs a concrete form that seems to contradict its idea. History's problem is precisely this: its practice of montage was formed in a time when the blurring of boundaries between high and low, the serious and the mocking, and the practice of jumping from one subject to the other seemed to counter-pose their critical power to the reign of commodities. Montage had always been history's key to Godard, a placing together of two images, of two sounds, to make a new meaning. This operation is not, in fact, dependent on the technology of history but it is history which discovered this operation — for cinema it is the discovery of history.

But let us turn to a larger question regarding both Godard's cinema and cinema, such as "What forest are we in?" and "Is Godard in this forest?"

https://books.google.com/books?id=4bh_AAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Jean+Luc+Godard+Cinema&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi87_6Q2lvnAhVL-6wKHScpAH0Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Jean%20Luc%20Godard%20Cinema&f=false
(p.52)

https://books.google.com/books?id=4bh_AAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Jean+Luc+Godard+Cinema&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi87_6Q2lvnAhVL-6wKHScpAH0Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Jean%20Luc%20Godard%20Cinema&f=false
(p.3)

https://newsgrist.typepad.com/files/the-future-of-the-image-jacques-ranciere.pdf.
(p.57)

https://books.google.com/books?id=Q9C9O27LOIwC&pg=PA14&lpg=PA14&dq=godard+is+the+great+wizard+of+ambiguity&source=bl&ots=hYko-YUyAR&sig=ACfU3U1xP3D5MnpdXyVVwHXt6JqpfDjZBQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjax-eD3lvnAhUHlqwKHXLhAYAQ6AEwAHoECAsQAQ#v=onepage&q=godard%20is%20the%20great%20wizard%20of%20ambiguity&f=false (p.14)

https://books.google.com/books?id=lx4iDAAAQBAJ&pg=PA257&lpg=PA257&dq=Godard+was+in+fact+the+first+voice+that+commonly+shared+regret&source=bl&ots=i1hbu7Jigg&sig=ACfU3U1lmniw-GI_Fc9HxFu2XIPDPRgKtA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiAmZu43lvnAhVSb60KHVg4BAMQ6AEwAHoECAcQAQ#v=onepage&q=Godard%20was%20in%20fact%20the%20first%20voice%20that%20commonly%20shared%20regret&f=false

http://sensesofcinema.com/2015/book-reviews/jean-luc-godard-history-of-cinema-and-television/

https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=H_Bf0RGzkJEC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=Godard+++interviews+%22The+history+of+cinema+appears+to+be+easy+to+do,+&ots=NdR8qCnVn0&sig=msEmU4hNxYft2lIKdUdPOR0VaUY&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=cinema%20appears%20to%20be%20&f=false

https://books.google.com/books?id=4bh_AAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Jean+Luc+Godard+Cinema&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi87_6Q2lvnAhVL-6wKHScpAH0Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Jean%20Luc%20Godard%20Cinema&f=false
(p.1)

http://booksco.co/download/book.php?source=b349221b1347054af96cbf74a68602da.jagdfasan-boxer.de&id=jean-luc-g&title=Jean+Luc+Godard+Par+Jean+Luc+Godard+Entretiens+Introduction+Et+Notes+Par+Jean+Narboni+Collection&author=&totalpages=&server=1&type=agc&country=fr

https://newsgrist.typepad.com/files/the-future-of-the-image-jacques-ranciere.pdf.
(p.50-51)

https://books.google.com.mx/books?id=g5-4BgAAQBAJ&pg=PT224&lpg=PT224&dq=maccabe+montage+has+always+been+godard's+key&source=bl&ots=9NsQpQ56kL&sig=ACfU3U1ZEUZrhXj_4xeddZPEFrv4uvcOOQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwisiN7l4ovnAhXPmq0KHVfBB7YQ6AEwAHoECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=maccabe%20montage%20has%20always%20been%20godard's%20key&f=false

https://books.google.com/books?id=4bh_AAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Jean+Luc+Godard+Cinema&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi87_6Q2lvnAhVL-6wKHScpAH0Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Jean%20Luc%20Godard%20Cinema&f=false
(p.15)

find all links listed online: https://thefunkyforest.blogspot.com

who revealed simultaneously an invisible art form and a new [illegible] of the world through it. We should note in this context an example about which [illegible] has remained curiously silent: Aby Warburg's pioneering "Mnemosyne".

If Aby Warburg, as Georgio Agamben has argued, can be considered the founder of a hitherto "unnamed science, whose contours we are only today beginning to glimpse", [illegible] is his successor and has a word for that science: [illegible] according to [illegible] is not an art, not a technique. It is a mystery. For my part, I would say that it is not such in essence, but that it is such as phrased here by [illegible] Mystery is an aesthetic category, developed by Mallarmé and explicitly adopted by [illegible]

[illegible] also remains [illegible] 's great wizard of ambiguity, resisting neat categories and tidy theorizations from the outset, starting with his love-hate attitude toward traditional [illegible] was, in fact the first voice that commonly shared regret that [illegible] had somehow missed the events and arrived too late for its moment of destiny with revolutionary [illegible] If [illegible] laments his inability to write the [illegible] of [illegible] through [illegible] here, [illegible] succeeds in making another sort of cinema through his own speech: an image of the self-as-process, as fragmentary text.

"The [illegible] of [illegible] appears to be easy to do, since it is after all made up of images; [illegible] appears to be the only medium where all one can do is re-project these images so that one can see what has happened. In "normal" [illegible] one can't project because it's not projectable".

[illegible] has pursued a sustained investigation of the theory and practice of [illegible] It became simultaneously a set of essays on the [illegible] of the [illegible] and on [illegible] life and his place within that [illegible] It is also a critique of a longstanding neglect by historians of the value of films as historical documents and a reflection on the narrow scope and limited ambition of the type of [illegible] often produced by professional film historians.

"All I want to say is that [illegible] is badly told!"

[illegible] montage assumes the establishment of what some call modernity, yet [illegible] gives this 'common measure' of signs a concrete form that seems to contradict its idea [illegible] problem is precisely this: his practice of montage was formed in a time when the blurring of boundaries between high and low, the serious and the mocking, and the practice of jumping from one subject to the other seemed to counter-pose their critical power to the reign of commodities.

Montage had always been [illegible] key to [illegible] a placing together of two images, of two sounds, to make a new meaning. This operation is not, in fact, dependent on the technology of cinema, but it is cinema which discovered this operation — for [illegible] it is the discovery of [illegible]

But let us turn to a larger question regarding both [illegible] and only [illegible] such as "What forest are we in?" and "What is the [illegible] of the forest?"

JLG Assects

LEE ELLICKSON

SEGUE TO SEGUES-TRATION:

THE ANTIPHONAL MODES THAT PRODUCE THE G.E.

PART ONE: What effects, if any?

Let us begin, for the sake of precision, with Number Two

Antiphon comes from the Greek for Opposite Voice. This should immediately suggest something more specific and personal than the generality of a voice of opposition.
Antiphony could be described as process by which two approaches seek a point of convergence. But, alternatively, antiphony could be an irrefutable record (caught in or by our own voices) of simply how we got here. In this sense it bears witness against another.
Here is a small piece of a map:

Antiphony refers to call and response singing. However, the reference is usually to sacred choral music in the Christian Church. This is as good an example of Old School as we are likely to get,
so to that extent it serves our purposes.

Here follows an inventory of effects

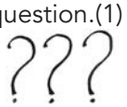
NO: make it "modes for effects to take."

An image or sound established to imitate something real

So now that I look at it, this is a good place to start.

A Change when something is done or happens

Blanchot asserted that literature began at the place where it provoked a question.(1)



This diagram, when lined up in triplicate, suggests a design motif for the promotion of Louis Feuillade's serial Les Vampires, but what is more interesting is how it turned up so frequently as a symbol in the early cine clubs, as if Irma Vep's real mission was to promote a secret cinema or to put it better perhaps, that the real cinema will always be a secret. So this is a logo for the special attraction of curiosity and cinema which always allied themselves so well together. Apart from the essential factor of electricity, cinema has always run on curiosity.

The quality or state of being operative

IN RESPONSE TO A WORD:

Cinema was this. It was a bright idea. It was something you could do with light.

In electricity, charges produce electromagnetic fields which act on other charges. Electricity occurs as a result of an interaction.

This is a corporate logo for General Electric. General Electric was formed in 1892 in a dramatic merger of Thomas Edison's General Electric Company with several other competitive entities that created the first American corporate behemoth.

In the previous year Edison was granted a patent for a Kinetograph or motion picture camera, as well as a Kinetoscope, which was a peep hole viewer. This machine for incipient voyeurism established the basis for motion pictures: The illusion of movement was created by advancing a perforated film strip adorned with sequential images across a light source which was behind a rapid shutter. The viewer peered into the machine above and perceived another world in relative privacy. This invention was only described in words by Edison, leaving the practical configuration of the device to his assistant Dickson, making him a true father of the bastard cinema.

What this logo suggests now is a multinational chimera of untold power and control.

After 117 years, General Electric is the only company still listed on the Dow Jones among those that appeared on the first list in 1896, the year that cinema as a concept, a place and a tradition came into being.
In the following year Stéphane Mallarmé wrote and published the following words: "Every thought issues a throw of the dice. However when the text was laid out and printed it was not aligned on the page as he would have liked."

SHOULD MAKE HEADLINES
UNLEASHED, WORDS COULD
MAKE A NEW PATTERN

By 1900, the General Electric Logo was modified to look like this, which has not much changed until the present day.

> Antiphony supplies us with an interesting model for the case of one who manifests a singular voice that seeks a dialogue. But more interesting is the second voice that acts in response. The second voice responds to the call and in so doing establishes the rhythm of the exchange. The second voice creates the possibility for the completion of a circuit: a segue, a shift, a pattern.

This Art Nouveau design could suggest a certain circuitousness...

Cinema would grow up attracting various logos, icons and signatures of course. Some of them corporate. And some of them not. At least, depending on how you saw it.

This was Mickey Mouse. The term came to mean a gimmick or a trick to be played. The symbol stands for an incredible empire of wealth and power.

The creation of a desired impression

Here were two ideologically united heroes who, though they spoke to different generations, could be counted on to, as the French say, Coupe sur l'herbe sous le pied! These icons could also prompt us to say "words and music"... or "movie reality" and "reality movie"... or something appropriately intertwined...

This was an icon that also needed no introduction. It is something in the manner of a personal signature. One critic on the attack suggested a figure in the carpet, alluding to the Henry James story, and in fact no metaphor was more apt, although the first thought was that this probably meant a body found underneath the carpeting...

But if we really want to cut the rug, we could cut and reassemble some parts of the logo for G. E. after a century of imposition, and inscribe J.L.G. as a model for a business done between the long shadows of empires.

A particular mood or feeling created by something

In Ecce Homo, Nietzsche proclaimed:
"Above all, do not mistake me for someone else!"

Jean-Luc Godard as a dealer of images gradually began to use his own recognizable figure as an establishing point, as a source for the voice and an underscoring of a certain isolation. But initially the adoption of himself was as an effort at downright salesmanship to support his efforts to be an enterprising and independent micro studio boss.
This wasn't a logo or a signature. It was an actual image. Sure, it was a selfie. If not the first in the cinema, it was surely the most emphatic.

Godard realized that he was his own most appropriate subject. And with that, in spite of himself or more particularly, by being at once with himself, he made a smoke screen.

As in any independently-minded utopian Moose and Squirrel endeavor, with this project he could make a point of going up in smoke. A perfect point of reference from which to survey the devastation that cinema has stood as a witness to. An ideal place for reflection and reiteration.

A need for amplification,
without additional noise

Godard discovered cinema rather late in life, but not at the cinema itself. He did not grow up with the movies as many of his generation had. Rather he discovered cinema as an idea in a book.

Godard was initiated into cinema through a precise description by Andre Malraux in a book entitled "Outline of a Psychology of the Cinema".

Godard grew up in a Vichy household as a young man. This is where years later his Story of cinema will have to begin and discover a process of coming to grips. Cinema provided a completely antithetical experience

to both his upbringing and the ideals that had been impressed upon him.

However there was one chink in the wall: the young man did find a copy of one of Elie Faure's histories of art, which were found in most French bourgeois households at the time. There were things found in this book that were bound to return and still do.

Perhaps this was the reason for Godard's being completely seduced by cinema while adopting it, after various trials and errors, as his only possibility for human advancement. This possibility was more and more accompanied by total immersion within its citadels. His vocation for cinema was made clear whether this meant viewing it, writing about it or creating it. In the end, these three became very similar activities, as they had done for several other like-minded obsessives whom he encountered.
Is it any wonder that cinema for Godard began not in 1895 but fifty years later, in 1945, with Rome, Open City, which was predicated on an irrefutable truth: total devastation? The film was made by someone who would become a true father figure, Roberto Rossellini.
(Rossellini would be a spectral father for many years, until the two men developed an actual relationship in later years and managed to confirm this relationship with a real frisson of disagreement of the kind fathers and sons have. Hitting intentionally below the belt, Dad would proclaim what he thought were the most pointed of accusations to his adopted son, such as "What bullshit! Now you are just another Antonioni!")

From 1945, the history of cinema became parabolic, advancing backwards and forwards in time indicating the parallel life of what was coming and what had been.

In the midst of his absorption into the new Utopia of Cinema, Godard was reading Blanchot and Levinas, and he discovered a dialogue between them. Blanchot and Levinas produced their own form of electricity, of antiphony. This was the same electricity that was instrumental for the creation of cinema. The dialogue began to precisely adumbrate notions of alterity, the voice of the other, the vertigo of the outside, the detachment of language, and the idea that words are objects. At last, one identifies a mutual quest for the transcendentally impersonal. One might see this as an ethical turn informed by the experience of the witness and the unavoidable "about face" of the confrontation with traumatic experience. Over the years, this deep "about face" antiphony in the face of trauma would inform Godard's viewing, writing and conceiving habits with increasing force.

Over many decades, Blanchot and Levinas never actually spoke with one another, but they developed a complex interaction carried out solely through letters and references in books they wrote. For years the two men recalled one another without speech. Yet they gestured towards one another with words, shifts of letters, syntax and context.

In Antiphony we again RECALL:

MARTYR MEANS (=) WITNESS

HOW TO MAKE UP WHAT CANNOT BE MADE UP?
At last we can only muster ethical significance as if drawn from the gulf of the imposed test of NON SENSE. Ironically but inevitably perhaps, Godard's attraction to this abyss has led him to produce a form of antiphony that has resulted in the recurrent branding of not just his work, but his very person as:

PSEUDO INTELLECTUAL. Or: in this case: PSEUDO=INTELLECTUAL...

Perhaps this further inspired him to undertake the role of Pseudo Godard in his quest to form a formidable "about face" in the face of real trauma and the horror of one's complicit origins.

Thirty years after Rome Open City Godard had already seemed to have lived several lives: whether hustling as an artful dodger on the streets of Paris with a few right-wing tendencies, helping his companions make films with funds apparently ill gotten in the fifties, or cutting the rug as the most fashionable and dynamic director of the Nouvelle Vague in the sixties, or impersonating the most strident and ascetic militant producer of agitprop few people saw in the early seventies. Yet, in 1975 he surfaced with a film whose very title, Numero Deux, seemed to suggest at the very least some kind of mysterious demarcation. The film did immediately provide a very different kind of cinema. To begin with, its assembly of video-taped or television images spread over its wide aspect ratio provided several screens to be viewed at once. But most importantly, Numero Deux provides us with a much more complex idea of what politics must be, if it is to be in any real sense at all. And in that sense, Numero Deux means we begin to think this through all over again.

TAKE TWO

So we won't start with the beginning because one seldom does. We will start with another beginning, the second chance, the retake of everything that had gone before, the chance to reinvent yourself, the chance to take control, the chance to make an alternative dialogue that you sought but which never occurred, but also the chance to confront the impediments, the breakdowns and the shit. Number two is how we refer to shit.

TAKE TWO AGAIN

Now if we could make the screen smoke...

In the beginning of Numero Deux, Godard is telling you in his laconic but pointed fashion how this film was made, while at the same time he himself is twice removed; once by being on film yet nearly severed at the head, and second by a live feed on a video monitor which similarly isolates a segment of his body. He is, conspicuously, his own deliberately produced and subdivided image. At first, his formal appearance may suggest to us that we are about to be treated to an installment of "Jean-Luc Godard Presents…" as a provocative update of Alfred Hitchcock's slyly critical and frequently mock-confessional introductions to his television series, wherein he proposed to focus the domestic medium of television squarely on the ineffably dark domestic world which the ever-present beam of television screen would illuminate. In Numero Deux, Godard expands on this notion in order to create cinema about a strictly domestic world, about its televisual organization and about an inquiry established to elaborate on key dialogues occurring between the lines of typical resolution... to draw the video logic forward.
Here Godard presents himself as an engaged and thoughtful self-employee, who, having established the significant parameters for his work, is going to create his own effective factory. His first point of consideration is to establish the foundation and support for such an endeavor. Naturally enough, the creation of such a set of effective circumstances is as much a part of the narrative content of the film as the molecular politicization of the family elements depicted in the video material.
What is really striking about Godard's opening monologue in Numero Deux is the remarkable sense of isolation that he offers us. In the disarming candidness of his comments, in the cloudy and distracted air of his

demeanor, in the manner of one utterly preoccupied with his work and having little time or interest in banter, he appears to us in a way that we are unaccustomed to seeing legendary moviemakers, who are generally conceived of as being surrounded by colleagues and collaborators. We see him completely alone...

```
The first duty of a man is to think for himself.
                                        (Jose Marti)
```

SECOND THE MOTION

A unique degree of isolation had marked Godard's cinema in a strictly thematic sense, just as it had those of his New Wave Cahiers compatriots throughout the sixties. But never had we experienced Godard in quite this fashion. This was a significant shift, since the image of Godard as a figure in isolation would become all too determining: no figure in the history of cinema is viewed with the assumption that he operates in complete isolation from everything else, including his own actors and crews. Some directors are famously temperamental or difficult or even live like hermits. But Godard has acquired an almost saintly state of the solitary in his image. This isolation is not therefore only crucial as a theme but as an operating principle. And nowhere is that principle more clearly laid out than in this brief speech close to the outset of Numero Deux as if it might stand for a new blueprint of attitude for all that was to come.

ON SECOND THOUGHT

Naturally, this image of solitariness could not be farther from the truth. Jean-Luc Godard had begun working with a new partner, Anne-Marie Miéville. She clearly had an important role to play not only in helping him through the crisis of the life-threatening accident that had dealt him out of the production of Tout Va Bien, she had also provided the space for him to establish a new assessment of his sabbatical spell with the Dziga Vertov Group. She had a decisive influence on the potent recipe that was to become Numero Deux, but more than that, their unique partnership (while being another association for the title: they were two but also the second set of two after a working marriage with Jean-Pierre Gorin, the self proclaimed Yoko Ono of cinema) was a tangible critical reality: what Godard was seeking in his cinema was a dialogue. This was the dialogue that was going to make Godard's ideal of filmmaking possible. Taking

the logic further, it is precisely this concentrated level of dialogue that is crucial for understanding what we are cannily referring to as the G. E., our substitute for electricity for cinema, the actual exchange that prompts it... The struggle for exchange, struggle to get beyond solitude, actually, is what is at stake in the actual Godard Effect. So the fact is that this image of solitariness could not be farther from the truth, but the other fact would be that solitariness in itself was an even greater truth.

And Dead America was speaking again…

(Since cinema was of necessity revivified and murdered in America, and if they could do it blindly, he could do it, but more consciously…)

```
Ralph Waldo Emerson said "Fine manners need the sup-
                          port of fine manners in others."
```

Where does he find the initial support? In essence, by proposing to begin again. He finds it in Georges de Beauregard, the producer who had made A Bout de Souffle possible. But in this there was a bit of a ruse, as there often is with Godard (as there is straight and there is straight). Godard proposed to make A Bout de Souffle Part Two. But Godard's idea of A Bout de Souffle Part Two or anybody else's idea of A Bout de Souffle Part Two are not necessarily the same thing. For Godard this was a way to suggest a return to basics. We perhaps thought that Godard had been working on a return to basics for a long time, ever since

Le Gai Savoir of '68, but from the advanced vantage point of Numero Deux, he had never come even close. But more significantly, this return to basics would not just be the basis for a new film but for a new – more basic – way of life and work: far from Paris, the capital of pain and the vital nurturer of his essential ressentiment; resettled at a safe distance is his semi-native and bucolic Switzerland. After all, he had been through a self-willed program of personal crisis for the better part of a decade.

```
If you go around carrying pictures of Chairman Mao
      you ain't gonna make it with anyone anyhow!
```

Godard had been on what we might call an agitprop sabbatical for some years, during which, let us say, he tested his own convictions. While for

some he had become invisible from the public sphere of commercial cinema, for others he had in the meantime become a powerful though perplexing political media guru. On European and particularly American campuses his every impromptu project energized mounting curiosity and frustration. Somewhere in the midst of this pandemonium of multiplying personality cults, he must have heard the music…

The movement you need is on your shoulder!
(found on the flip side of the single in the summer of'68)

And there was, naturally, a CUT–

WAIT A SECOND!

Numero Deux does bring us a second Godard, one who, in his capacity to share his doubts and uncertainties, is more effectively candid and straightforward than the agitprop hero who never hesitated to speak in shrill absolutes. Although there is straight and then there is straight... Numero Deux always poses the question regarding the assumptions that underscore the presentation of the material and the way in which it is counter-posed. Godard already develops his sequences into responsive antiphonies that tend to underline new requirements of listening and viewing. He advances through this material by segues that direct our attention to both the breaks and the links. Godard would today take the words Cinema Direct to a much more provocative place.

Coming back to basics meant rethinking the touchstones of Mallarmé, Blanchot and Levinas who have always haunted Godard's cinema: the text establishes the assumptions of the images but also their contours. It presses for an interaction that brings conflict to the surface. More than in the past, Godard's use of fluid text establishes the antiphonal ideal of dialogues that will uncover the potential for a view, a seeing that conceives a true alterity: the essential opposite voice that speaks only by seeing through the mechanisms we take for granted. And in order to see this, we need to restructure the use of the usual tools and their deployment. This is part of the formulation, in cinema terms, of Blanchot's essential requirement of a question. For Godard, this process is at the heart of the cinematic enterprise as it would be practiced by a lone thoughtful individual who is able to extend his capacities to some fruitful end.

Godard has identified the primary objective of the filmmaker:

Expose the negative!

There is a great deal more to say about Numero Deux, but this we shall defer in order to follow a certain pattern in our carpeting – from cigar ash perhaps – that pertains to Godard's effects, most certainly to the one commonly noted in some contemporary audiences: the double-edged sword that is unique to Godard. As his films have become more direct and more open and more true to himself and somehow simple, the more they tend to produce incomprehension, confusion and ultimately resistance.

NOT UNTIL WE ARE LOST DO WE BEGIN (to understand ourselves)
said the very famous Henry David Thoreau

TAKE A WALK!

Here is a leap forward from (beginning again with) Numero Deux to a few years later (beginning again) with Sauve Qui Peut (la Vie), which Godard effectively translates as Save Your Own Ass, since this is no doubt what he was trying to do. Godard makes his more official return to the commercial cinema as the great master director of international art cinema: American advertising for the film states that it is a film composed by Jean-Luc Godard. For all the heralding of Godard as the master in control of his medium, the film seems to betray a very personal testament of someone at the end of their tether, heading for yet another emotional cataclysm. We'll skip over a lot of the complexities concerning how it was made, save for one remarkable video tape by Godard, which is in fact the script that he submitted to CNC in order to finance the film. This proposal in the form of a video tape is the next most important item that would determine the direction of all of Godard's future work. On the tape, Godard sits before his screen and shows us some videotaped examples of footage while explaining what he has in mind. Much of what he explains in not offered to supply a strong narrative line. Rather, he explains aspects of a project that interest him and to some degree also why. The tape is an honest a representation of the film Godard hoped to make at that moment. In a sense the tape is an incredible dare, but it cleverly focuses again on the image of Godard as its principal draw (in spite of the reasonable modicum of French starpower he had assembled for the project, including a pop star, Jacques Dutronc, to stand in for Godard himself). Godard's provisional meditations on this unmade film have a distinct bearing on what is to

come beyond the project it attempts to describe. Godard would continue making these solitary musings before the screen in parallel with a series of films that represent Godard the art-house director attempting to play the game for all it is worth (with the results seeming to interlace the most arch cynicism with lovingly elaborated set pieces).
While saving his own ass commercially, Godard meanwhile attempts to lighten the burden of cinema and make it possible for it to bear the feather-weight of personal caprice, of sketches, of sudden inspirations, of enormous changes at the last minute; an up-to-the-minute cinema as fresh as today's dashed-off poem and as direct as something meditated in total isolation from everything else.

There is an opposite voice
which is first and foremost of necessity for itself

It has often seemed as if Godard would like to create cinema much like a DJ creates a live radio program by segueing between various recordings and actualities with the ability to be responsive to the moment.

With Sauve Qui Peut (la Vie), both in its provisional video A Propos as well as the resulting film, Godard permits us to view the process by which he will segue into a state of privileged isolation and contemplate a realm, touched on by Simone Weil in her sense of decreation, a domain of suspended interactions. This state of suspension, where all thought is potential, is the last space of Godard's and our (notre) music: this music we want to call cinema as a mutual and ethical bond between people... thus a cinema which in some way is a shared reality. The conviction behind this segue into isolation as a means of direct connection will remain demonstrable in Godard's work up through Film Socialism, where it has been elaborated into a kind of essential prerequisite for the reformulation of any effective politics: since the total imaginary space of communication is given over to the deliberate gesture, we will need to circumvent these rhythms to establish our true day-to-day investment in our own conscience and liberty...

In the course of making Sauve Qui Peut (La Vie), Godard was considering a project that would involve his great passion for the history of cinema. Particularly a history that would move precisely as his own adventure with cinema had done, starting in the middle and successively moving out-

ward in all directions following the wavelengths of thematic obsession both evident and concealed (personal). This project would take a decade to initiate and another decade to fully complete since it was accomplished in a series of chapters.

"History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme",
said old Mark Twain of the murmuring dead Americans…

Histoire(s) du cinéma is Godard's decisive procession of cinema antiphony, entirely propelled through rhythmic segues... his riposte to universality is to take us to his most private and personal and troubled space... and open an exchange.

A change when something is done or happens

Now in hindsight we can observe how *Histoire(s) du cinéma* has provoked a good amount of rather strange misunderstanding, as well as a curious desire to attribute its inception to intentions and goals quite outside of Godard's cinematic enterprise. Godard's very personal and willfully broad interpretation would be a complete failure as either a cogent project of philosophy or history... but who ever suggested that it should stand in for this? Surely Godard has made no concessions to this sort of misreading in spite of the fact that clearly a lot of people would desire Godard to act as a historian or philosopher. This is because they are somehow convinced that this would be a good avenue for him to explore, though one would have to ask – given the direction of Godard's work – why this would be so. Clearly it is not his inclination in a work so utterly personal and even brazen in its attempts to highlight instigations, which can be whimsical and scandalous by turns. The deeply personal issues placed in the context of a broadening range of associations might compare it profitably with a project like Ezra Pound's Cantos if we are searching for a conceivable antecedent. But the real point is that with Histoire(s) du cinéma Godard is at his most isolated and extremely idiosyncratic, which makes the film all the more exceptional, because he is trafficking in images and stories we may know very well and connect with in an entirely different way.

Do not seek objective history here. What a faulty project that would be. No. Tune in to that most opposite voice, that spirit of alterity, that voice in certain suspension, that deep hurt at the betrayal of a utopian project... that is the antiphonal music of the story Godard is still held by at

that moment when cinema first opened itself wide to him in the midst of World War Two. Histoire(s) du cinéma suggests that, over time, this era has grown stronger and more decisive for Godard as a time when he made his pact with the new utopia of cinema and the devastation and betrayal that has followed...

The creation of a desired impression

Godard's history of cinema is his story; his story of cinema is also a history of the realization of a series of personal concerns which have not dimmed with time. Thus the work is a unique index of linkages that can be traced throughout Godard's work. And of course why should we want anything else from him other than his history? We have our own ideas about that history, but it's his history that we are still trying to grasp. But he offers it to us full-blown... at least to the degree that it fully connects his personal concerns with his cinema, and that is to say, our cinema.

What good would the complete history of cinema do us anyway, given how long it would take for us to appreciate it? Godard wryly makes this point as if to underline the point that, in the end, we can only have our own stories, in spite of the fact that they are made up of our cinema experiences mixed up with all of our other experiences.

The quality or state of being operative

One view of Godardian antiphony: we live a lifetime in the movies as unquestioning respondents, hardly able to account for these productive hours spent elaborating these singular impressions and interpretations... would it not be vital for us to consider the links that might bring the coherence of these impressions into some form of articulation?

Godard continues to survey a remarkable density of emotional rubble. This rubble might include the remains of strong convictions in love and belief, but it may also be the remains of one's own efforts at dissension or enlightenment. Godard has remained true to his sense of devastation and tended that devastated zone like a garden, so as to produce some kind of effective evidence.

Foment resistance as if it were electricity…
Where will we find the filament?

But what about the effect? Oh, the effect, you mean the effect that results in people complaining that Godard is too hermetic, too incomprehensible, too maddeningly prolix? You mean the effect that causes people to resist Godard altogether? No, there is no such effect. But there is the effect that lingers with each and every Godard film, that he is becoming simpler and more direct while effectively trying to observe things as they are in the context of how they appear to be. But what kind of effect is that? On the one hand, that's the effect of cinema. On the other...

In the Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) we find:
If I am not for myself, who is for me?
And if I am only for myself, what am I?
And if not now, when?

You mean the effect that causes people to resist Godard altogether? I could say: Naturally there is that effect, it is the common involuntary response of group minds to such individually defiant acts of "about face"... etc. etc. Having said that, we can now commence with Numero Deux as we planned, and then from that point we can advance simultaneously forwards and backwards in time and hover between one Godard and a second Godard who are virtually the same, only the rhythm is slightly different. The two together are prompting each other at last towards our music... that same music we collectively saw in Rome, Open City in 1945... Let's proceed... along the dual path we have found ourselves on... find again the little piece of the map that reminded us not where we came from but HOW we came from...

Static electricity!

Cinema was this. It was a bright idea. It was something you could do with light.

The first sign of a pseudointellectual is the misuse of words. (Must you stretch everything out of proportion to mean what you say?) The abuse of language draws the limits... "You've been had, my dear, properly had," said the dapper villain Giles Conover in an old Forties movie.

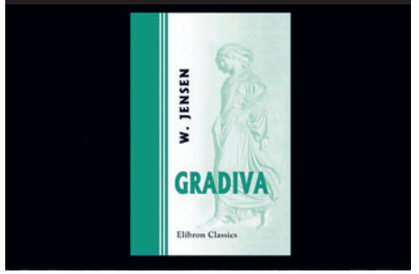
In electricity, charges produce electromagnetic fields that act on other charges. Electricity occurs as a result of an interaction.

An outward sign

Contemporaries

AMIE SIEGEL

GENEALOGIES



Rumour has it that in 1963, when the American producer of Jean-Luc Godard's film *Contempt* or *Le Mépris* saw the movie, he objected to Godard's modest use of actress Brigitte Bardot, claiming he hadn't yet gotten his money's worth, that there wasn't enough nudity, not enough "ass".

The film's producer insisted Godard shoot more material showing Bardot's body. Godard responded by filming Brigitte Bardot nude, laying on her stomach in occasionally colour-tinted scenes.

One such scene opens the film and has Bardot's co-star, Michel Piccoli, verbally cataloguing her body. Other shots act as inserts, posed studio shots of Bardot again on her stomach, like out-takes from a playboy shoot, fantasies or memories within an already fragmented narrative.

In *Contempt*, a famous European director named Fritz Lang, with a fondness for quoting Hölderlin, played by Lang himself, is hired to make a film of Homer's *The Odyssey.*

Paul, the writer hired to adapt *The Odyssey* to the screen, is played by Michel Piccoli. His wife Camille is played by Brigitte Bardot, and the disintegration of their marriage is commonly understood as the story of Godard's film.

Contempt was based on an Italian author Alberto Moravia's novel *Il disprezzo,* or, *The Ghost at Noon,* in which a writer, Riccardo, is hired to adapt Homer's *The Odyssey* into a film, to be directed by a German filmmaker with a fondness for quoting Freud. And the disintegration of Riccardo's marriage to Emilia is commonly understood as the novel's plot.

Alberto Moravia's novel is loosely based on Wilhelm Jensen's novella *Gradiva,* in which a German archaeologist becomes obsessed with the figure of a woman walking, depicted in an ancient relief from Pompeii that he views in a museum. He obtains a plaster cast of the relief and hangs it by his desk, he falls asleep and dreams he travels back in time to meet the woman walking on the streets of Pompeii, while Vesuvius erupts around them and covers the city in ash.

The dream prompts the archaeologist to take a real journey to Italy— to Rome, Naples, and finally to Pompeii, where, under the heat of the noon day sun, he sees the woman, the Gradiva from his sculpture, walking on the stepping stones. He follows her though the ruins, repeatedly loosing her until she is nowhere to be seen and the archaeologist wonders whether she is real or a work of his mind, of fiction.

Sigmund Freud used Wilhem Jensen's novella *Gradiva* as the basis for his famous 1907 essay *Delusion and Dream*. Freud owned a copy of the *Gradiva* relief, which he originally saw in 1907 in the Vatican Museum, and the copy still hangs on the wall of his study and practice rooms in London, now the Freud Museum, keeping company with Freud's collection of over two-thousand objects and archaeological artefacts.

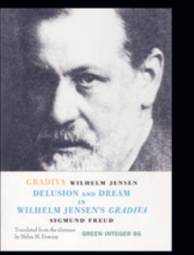
Roger Caillois published a study on the noon-hour malady in a 1936 issue of the surrealist journal *Minotaure*. The so-called 'Noon Complex' crystalizes certain emotions and states, and preoccupied the surrealists.

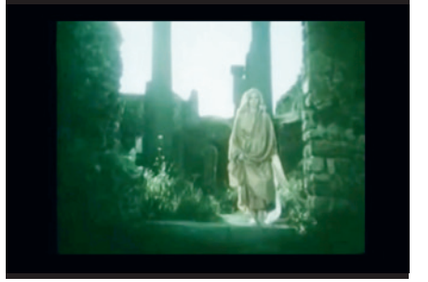
Noon is the hour where objects cast no shadow. Noon is the hour when the soul, having no shade, is at its most vulnerable. Medieval doctors turned the noon demon into "the sinful sadness" or "acedia", afflicting monks in the middle of the day with effects so serious it was unhesitatingly classified among the deadly sins.

Gilbert and Sullivan called it "ghost high-noon" in their stage opera *Rudigore*.

Gradiva was adapted to film in 1970 by Giorgio Albertazzi, who played the male lead in Last year at Marienbad, written by Alain Robbe-Grillet. In Albertazzi's film, Gradiva is played by Laura Antonelli, wandering the ruins.

Robbe-Grillet wrote and directed more then a dozen novels and films featuring various forms of sadomasochism and the fe-





male body— young women seen in states of bondage, often posed for extend moments of stillness— in the ruins, an object to be looked at, in repose and waiting, or having been stilled, during sex, into a submissive sculptural death.
In 2007 Robbe-Grillet final's film was a screen adaptation of Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*, set in Marrakesh.
Contempt was filmed at the Villa Malaparte in Capri. Once called the most beautiful house in the world by a New York Times architecture critic, the Villa Malaparte sits embedded on a rocky promontory in Capri, the Punto Masullo, surrounded by Mediterranean blue waters and the Faraglioni rocks jutting out into the sea.
The villa's design origins are famously ambiguous, having once being attributed to Italian architect Adalberto Libera. But, more recently, the house has been credited to its original owner, Italian author Curzio Malaparte, and though it is rumoured he left the villa to Mao's Communist Party and The People's Republic of China, the villa and its image and copyright are owned and licensed by his heirs.
Curzio Malaparte was born Kurt Erich Suckert to an Italian mother and German father, and became a novelist, dramatist, journalist and editor best known for his novels *Kaputt* and *The Skin (La Pelle)*. After his removal from the fascist party and exile to the island of Lipari, he built the Casa Malaparte, it is said, to reflect his isolation.

The house is an unusual combination of modernist bunker and surrealist landscape, the long living room like a cracked desert floor. The furniture Malaparte himself designed, with classical architectural columns as bases, are set adrift on the floor as if the sea had suddenly withdrawn. The narrowing exterior stairs to the roof terrace are said to be derived from a church in Lipari.
The house's original designer, Aldaberto Libera, is known for buildings often connected to the colonnaded architecture and lonely piazzas featured in the paintings of Giorgio de Chirico.

Visitors to Malaparte's Villa in Capri were often writers and filmmakers from Rome, including Malaparte's good friend Alberto Moravia, often accompanied by his wife, novelist Elsa Morante.

Malaparte died in 1957, but not before directing a film: *Il Cristo Proibito (Forbidden Christ)*. By the time Godard arrived to film at the Villa Malaparte in the 60's, the house had been abandoned and was in a state of semi-disrepair.
In 1981, Liliana Cavani directed a film of Malaparte's semi-autobiographical novel *The Skin,* starring Marcello Mastroianni as Curzio Malaparte and Claudia Cardinale as his girlfriend, and Burt Lancaster as an American general. It was filmed at the Villa Malaparte and features a dinner scene on the villa's famous roof terrace, as well as the 1944 eruption of Mount Vesuvius above Pompeii.
Roberto Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy* stars his wife Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders as a couple who've inherited a house in Naples and, once there, confront their disintegrating marriage.
Thoroughly disillusioned with one another the husband leaves for drinking and parties in Capri, while Ingrid Bergman's Katherine confronts the ghosts of Naples and Pompeii. First she visits the national archaeological museum, gazing at the statues and classical sculptures there. Then, later at Pompeii, she watches a group of archaeologists fill the void left by disintegrated citizens of Pompeii, buried under the ash.

Voyage to Italy is featured in Godard's *Contempt*, playing on the cinema marquee as Paul and Camille leave the movie theatre in Rome, before their own marriage disintegrates.

The characters in *Contempt* are constantly confronting sculpture.
The classical sculptures of *The Odyssey* and the female sculpture featured so prominently in Paul and Camille's apartment scenes in Rome.
Bardot is posed like a sculpture on top of the Villa Malaparte's roof terrace, a mystery novel covering her like a fig-leaf.

Contempt was released with two different soundtracks— the George Delerue original, for French, German, and English-speaking audiences.
While the Italian audience got a film scored by Piero Picchioni, a jazzy, Bossa Nova-like soundtrack.

Piero Picchioni had scored several films including Radley Metzger's *Camille 2000*, a futuristic Italian soft-core porn update of Alexander Dumas' novel *Camille*. *Camille 2000* features a particular moment in Italian design— inflatable furniture, louche parties and, of course, a jazzy bossa nova soundtrack that borders at times on the psychedelic.

In 1971 Pink Floyd, who brought their regular touring gear to Naples, filmed themselves playing in Pompeii, in the central amphitheatre below the volcanic Vesuvius.
Like the film-within-a-film in *Comtempt, Pink Floyd Live at Pompeii* displays its own second camera unit and is constructed out of extensive outside tracking shots.
Twenty years later, the Beastie Boys— on tour in New Zealand—filmed the music video for their song "Gratitude", itself a cover of Sly Stone's "Gratitude", as an homage to *Pink Floyd Live at Pompeii*. The video features a liquid hot sulphur spring instead of lava pools, tracking shots of the second camera unit and even Pink Floyd's own speakers and amps, flown in from London.
Willie Kurant, the cinematographer of

Pink Floyd Live at Pompeii filmed Alain Robbe-Grillet *Trans-Europ-Express*. That same year, 1966, he also filmed Jean Luc Godard's *Masculin/Feminin*, featuring an uncredited cameo by Brigitte Bardot.

The German fashion label Hugo Boss shot a Spring/Summer 2011 advertising campaign called "Summer Seascape" at the Villa Malaparte. It featured blonde Brazilian model Rachel Zimmerman in poses reminiscent of Brigitte Bardot in *Contempt*. The novel that delicately covered Bardot's rear in the film substituted here with a leather handbag.
In 2012, the luxury eyewear company Persol filmed a commercial at the Casa Malaparte suggesting that the arm of their sunglasses, the Capri edition, was inspired by the Villa Malaparte
The commercial bore a small declaration that the Casa Malaparte was a work of Curzio Malaparte.
Soon after, Estée Lauder launched its new Zegna fragrance for men with a commercial featuring an architect contemplating his architectural drawings before driving along the coast and landing eventually in the Villa Malaparte.
The Naples archaeological museum that Ingrid Bergman visits in *Voyage to Italy* features an entire cork model of Pompeii. The model is a moment frozen in time, certain parts of the city excavated and others still buried. The Italian model maker for this extensive city plan also made a single copy, one which was purchased by the architect and collector John Soane, and installed among the many paintings, sculptures, antiquities, architectural drawings and building models in his eccentric London home.
For his elaborate model of Pompeii, which at some point broke in half, he had built a model pedestal, a multi-tiered affair, a pastiche of various levels and eras of architectural model and ruin. While each museum claims they have the original model, each also claims the other has the copy.

Amie Siegel Genealogies, 2016 HD video, colour/sound 26 minutes
Courtesy the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery, and Simon Preston Gallery. Photo: Luke A. Walker

Contemporaries

CONSTANZE RUHM

LA DIFFICULTÉ D'UNE PERSPECTIVE: A LIFE OF RENEWAL

RECAMIER: Tu es infâme!
ANGELA: Non, je suis une femme.

(from: Une femme est une femme, Jean-Luc Godard 1961)

The photographs of the series "A Life of Renewal" show different locations from the film "Une femme est une femme" by Jean-Luc Godard (1961), with Anna Karina playing the female lead (Angéla). The film tells the story of a young woman who earns her living as a stripper, and who wants a child at all costs. Further roles are cast with Jean-Claude Brialy, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jeannę Moreau in a cameo appearance. Each location was shot from two different perspectives: the first one showing a repetition of the original Godardian frame (the "objective shot"); the second one shows Anna Karina's subjective perspective in the contemporary environment of the quarter around the Porte Saint-Dénis in the 10th arrondissement in Paris. The series is understood to be a continuation of "Renewal of Perspective: La difficulté d'être" from 2008, which focuses on original locations and according subjective shots from Vivre sa vie, a key work in Jean-Luc Godard's oeuvre.

The photographs' order corresponds to the locations' chronology within the filmic narrative, and therefore with the movements and dérives of the characters in the Parisian cityscape.

The series links back to its precursor also by newly constellating its title: "Renewal of Perspective : "La difficulté d'être" becomes "La difficulté d'une perspective: A Life of Renewal". The difference between the projects obviously consists not least in the differences of the films referenced which within Godard's oeuvre, appear as entirely different works. While "Vivre sa vie" is a formally very strict passion play in black & white consisting of 12 tableaux to which the number of photographs (24) refers, "Une femme est une femme" is a musical or even more apt, with Godard, "the idea of a musical" or "a neorealist musical". In his essay "A Woman is a Woman", author Jim Hoberman writes: "'A Woman Is a Woman' introduces the flat pop-art look, predicated on a wide screen and primary colors, that Godard used in his high sixties masterpieces 'Pierrot le fou' (1965), 'Two or Three Things I Know About Her' (1966), 'Made in U.S.A.' (1966), and 'La Chinoise' (1967)."[1]

1 Jim Hoberman "A Woman is a Woman", www.criterion.com/current/posts/330-a-woman-ia-a-woman [8.8.2-15]

Angéla's and Emile's apartment is located at 73, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Dénis, in the same building as the Café La Napoleon where the famous opening sequence takes place. A further central location - the nightclub, Angéla's workplace - is called Le Zodiac and is located in 8 Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle. Angéla strolls down Rue du Faubourg Saint-Dénis, headed south, towards Emiles' kiosque at no. 6. It has been replaced with a butchery called La Terra Corsa. Afterwards she passes by a store called Aux Sportifs at no. 51. At the intersection of Rue du Metz and Boulevard de Strasbourg, Alfred gets into a fight with a guy whom he owes money. He and Angéla continue the Rue de Metz, behind them Le Théatre Antoine at Boulevard Strasbourg becomes visible. Afterwards, they visit a bar in the Passage de l'Industrie (which likewise does not exist anymore, instead a shop called Delorme is located there); this is where Alfred meets Jeanne Moreau. Most of the brief shots from the film's famous documentary sequence have been shot close to Rue Faubourg St. Denis and to the Grands Boulevards. The interior shots of the couple's apartment though have been recorded in a studio reconstruction of the original apartment chosen by Godard for the film.
The photo series finally attempts to understand the Godardian original film as a "documentary film" - this is in accordance with Godard's concept of a "neorealist musical". Jim Hoberman writes: "The underlying impulse was vérité: The actors wore their own clothes; the Strasbourg–Saint Denis district was chosen as a location for its unglamorous, workaday grayness."[2]

2 Ibid.

1

2

3


SAUF

4


Plat du Jour

5

6

7


CIGARETTES
E-LIQUIDES
GOUTS TABAC, FRUITS ET DECOUVERTE

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

image locations

1-2
Café “Le Napoléon”: 73 rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, 75010 Paris; GPS: 48°52’28” N 2°21’19” E; Day and Hour: Jul 24 2013 3:11 PM (objectif), Jul 24 2013 4:26 PM (subjectif)

3-4
Balade d’Angéla (sortie du Napoléon): 68 rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, 75010 Paris; GPS: 48°52’22” N 2°21’16” E; Day and Hour: Jul 26 2013 12:14 PM (objectif), Jul 26 2013 11:49 PM (subjectif)

5-6
Le kiosque d’Emile: Magasin TERRA CORSA, 61 bis Rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, 75010 Paris; GPS :48°52’20” N 2°21’14” E; Day and Hour: Jul 27 2013 12:32 PM (objectif), Jul 27 2013 12:55 PM (subjectif)

7-8
Balade d’Angela: 51 rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, 75010 Paris; GPS: 48°52’18” N 2°21’13” E;
Day and Hour: Jul 24 2013 2:12 PM (objectif), Jul 22 2013 1:15 PM (subjectif)

9-10
LE ZODIAC: 8 Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle, 75010 Paris; GPS: 48°52’11” N 2°21’7” E; Day and Hour: Jul 22 2013 09:16 AM (objectif), Jul 22 2013 09:20 AM (subjectif)

11-12
Balade d’Angéla & Alfred: 6 rue de Metz, 75010 Paris; GPS: 48°52’15” N 2°21’16” E; Day and Hour: Jul 22 2013 2:18 PM (objectif), Jul 20 2013 3:40 PM (subjectif)

13-14
Le café “Chez Gabi”: Magasin DELORME, 17-19 Passage de l’Industrie, 75010 Paris; GPS: 48°52’17” N 2°21’13” E; Day and Hour: Jul 26 2013 10:50 AM (objectif), Jul 26 2013 10:18 AM (subjectif)

15-16
Entrée de l’appartement d’Alfred: 65 rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, 75010 Paris; GPS : 48°52’22” N 2°21’16” E; Day and Hour: Jul 22 2013 12:14 PM (objectif), Jul 23 2013 06:18 PM (subjectif)

Photographs: Emilien Awada
Research: Roland-François Lack

“La difficulté d’une perspective: A Life of Renewal” was conceived as part of the project «Wie Film Geschichte anders schreibt/Frieda Grafe: 30 Filme».

It is a three part publication, edited by Max Annas, Annett Busch und Henriette Gunkel. This series appears in book 3: Filme 21-30, Brinkmann & Bose Verlag Berlin 2013

Contemporaries

MAIJA TIMONEN

SOMEONE TO TALK TO

In a chapter entitled 'I Speak Therefore I'm Not' in their book *Speaking About Godard*, Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki discuss Godard's *Le Gai Savoir* (1969), and observe different cinematic models in operation within it. During their exchange on one of these, the "psychological film", they touch on the relational nature of subjectivity:

KS: The conversation turns upon the darkness or void at the heart of subjectivity. Patricia speaks of finding herself before an imageless mirror, and of feeling herself to be the shadow of an absent being. This experience of self-dissolution coincides with an apprehension of the linguistic bases of subjectivity – of what Gay Knowledge calls "this long speech which is me".

HF: Significantly, there is no appeal to objective knowledge here. Emile and Patricia grope their way toward their inner night only via fear and memory.

KS: At the end of the psychological film, the possibility of the relational, and so of the political, is broached once more, but with a difference. Emile and Patricia speak of that "false plural" which is generally assumed to mean "us", and which we have experienced firsthand at all those moments when Godard's voice seems to demand our consent. They suggest that this "false plural" exists only "through the extension of me". To it, they oppose that "us" which is only available on the other side of the empty mirror, an "us" which signifies not just the long speech which is "me", but also the long speech which is "you" - in short, a genuine conversation.[1]

In the chapter on *Gay Knowledge* a parallel is drawn between the film's purported task of undoing "film" and an undoing of the self through discussion. This is repeated in the discursive form of the book itself, in the unfolding of ideas that does not so much gravitate towards the construction of defined arguments or identities, but towards a mutually supportive (and mutually decentering) relation. The genuine conversation mentioned could be understood to encompass something more than the moments within which a relation is formed despite and against the pull to see nothing beyond the absence of our selves. It could be understood to stand for the inherently relational nature of any articulation of identity. Not only are we not our selves, indeed we are nothing much at all beyond our relationships to others.

Much of Silverman and Farocki's analysis revolves around the depiction of gender and sexual relations in Godard's works, and as an interesting formal extension to this the book itself seems to encapsulate something about the heterosexual couple, and even of the privilege it represents and promises. The intimate discussion observable on its pages takes

1 Harun Farocki and Kaja Silverman, *Speaking About Godard*, New York University Press, New York and London, 1998, pp. 138-139.

place between a man and a woman who may or may not be a couple. I do not feel the biographical detail of the books authors or their actual relation to each other is particularly significant. It is adequate for my projection that one of the discussants is male and one female, and that in their encounter, in the intricacy and detail and dedication of their words, a certain image of intimacy is foregrounded. Staring into my own empty mirror I am also forced to face the fact that the most appealing thing about the book for me has never been its sensitivity toward the distinctions and overlaps of different modes of experience and textuality, but a fantasy of partnership it puts forward, the "genuine conversation" unfolding on its pages and constituting its most profound substance, and further than this, the heterosexual inflections of this partnership.

I will acknowledge that no "couple" forms this identification from within itself (there is always dissonance and negotiation), but is perceived as such from the outside. From this outside position, the position of *not* having someone to talk to, the intimacy of the (here) discursive exchange appears as not only a protective force, cushioning the discussants against the wounding power of criticism, but also an enabler of speech – these are voices constituted in their very encounter with each other. The fantasy of the discursive relation as intimacy, specifically as the couple, also transcends the dynamics of domination and submission that underpin the couple-form as such.

The affirmation inherent to this coming together of two voices is made more apparent when one thinks of what it means to talk within a group formation. There is a refuge that can only be found in talking to a specific person, in the illusion of really being known by them. The one-to-one relationship is an antidote to the logic of the pack, to the competitive dog psychology of the classroom or of professional life (more intensely felt, no doubt in times of economic crisis).

One of the first things I learned when teaching in art school, was that if there is a couple in a seminar group, as a teacher one should be aware of not allowing them the most airtime, as they will without fail come across as the most confident and articulate of the students. In a professional context, with the couple as a collaborative unit, the exclusivity of the relationship assigns it a power to sanction public intimacy, private thoughts can be expressed without fear of a disinterested audience, without fear of seeming narcissistic (and even if they do, who cares), without fear of having 'overshared'. There is a place and reason for their expression – the couple. In generating its own form of objectivity, the partnership/

couple is also the very thing that sanctions a step away from "objective knowledge". Contrary to Farocki's assertion, Emile and Patricia (and in the context of this book, Farocki and Silverman) have somewhat more than just fear and memory to help them through their "inner night". They have each other.

Rosalind Krauss' outlining of the analytic dynamic according to Lacan in her seminal 1976 essay 'Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism' resonates with Silverman's description of Patricia and the imageless mirror. In Lacan's take on the analytic situation, the patient talks to a silent analyst, projecting "the monumental construct of his narcissism" into this silence.[2] With no response forthcoming, the frustration mounts, and eventually the analys and's re-narration of their self leads to a realisation of its constructed nature. The presence and the active silence of the analyst plays a role. In both Krauss' and Silverman's descriptions the self-dissolution that comes with speech takes place in the presence of another person, not in a solitary vacuum. If not strictly speaking through someone to talk with, then at least through someone to talk at. Analysand at analyst, and Patricia at Emile.

But what if there is no one there? Rosalind Krauss describes narcissism as an "unchanging condition of perpetual frustration", the long speech that is me that never achieves a breaking point.[3] The way social media has reconfigured the nature of social interaction, or at least added a new dimension to it, is interesting in relation to this trap of narcissism. In the realms of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, the increased control over one's self-image has created a kind of in-between state – one in which the subject is able to narrate themselves to themselves (and to the void-like hypothetical attendant public) in a highly authored way, but also in a way that often neither involves in-depth conversation nor is it met with complete silence. Despite the commentary threads that occur on Facebook, and which constitute a two or multi-way exchange, what connects the different social media platforms is that on them, the components of one's self-authoring are often merely quantitatively affirmed: "liked" or "favourited". Social relations take on the form of measuring of consensus, as opposed to a conversation or a therapeutic void.

If the encounter with the therapists silent presence clears the path to "genuine conversation", and is the thing enabling the break away from

2 Rosalind Krauss quoting Jacques Lacan in 'Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism', in *October*, Vol. 1, Spring 1976, pp. 50 – 64, p. 57.

3 Ibid. p. 58

narcissism that Krauss writes about, is there something about the mediated forms of sociality of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram that are in fact receding from that encounter? The self-narration that happens on social media, though bearing traces of the undoing of the self through speech, is also committed to its constant reconfiguration, or further, to the suppression of any creeping realization that we are not really all there and to a quick patching up of any wound that this realization is threatening to inflict. It is perhaps still more akin to a grasping onto some form of self-identity in the absence of the "genuine conversation" that would take its place than to any realization of a radical absence of the self. In this, it could be seen to follow the logic of narcissism. People perform their narcissistic impulses on social media and are publicly affirmed in or admonished for them, the latter often in the form of withdrawal of affirmation (there is no 'unlike' button). Whether one gets the stick or the carrot depends on the success or failure of their efforts to sublimate these impulses. Sublimated narcissism is often the very self-conscious currency and language of social media.

As indicated by the title of her essay, Krauss' argument pertains specifically to the medium of video as utilized by the artists she writes about. In the work of conceptual artists of the early 70s, such as Vito Acconci and Joan Jonas, the mirroring feedback effects achieved through the use of video, for Krauss stand for a historical shift from a reflexivity that points beyond itself (characteristic of modernism), to reflecting surfaces that turn inwards. How does social media, if thought of as a medium in the sense that Krauss thinks of video - a channel for a psychic state and an indicator of the psychic state of a historical moment - relate to the dichotomy of the reflexive and reflective? The self-consciousness of the gestures occurring on social media seems to provide the obvious answer to this question. Instead of viewing self-representations on social media as *merely* narcissistic, what might be more accurate to say is that the linguistic basis of subjectivity, the constructed nature of the self, is already formalized in (or inscribed into) social media (as media), giving it the possible tones of a kind of precarious gauge of some post-narcissistic social condition. Maybe.

The imageless or empty mirror discussed by Farocki and Silverman also brings to mind the title of a British television series *Black Mirror*, written by Charlie Brooker and telling disturbing surreal stories of peoples engagement with contemporary technology; the way it manifests commercial dynamics and transforms our relationships with each other. The words "black mirror" refer to the proliferation of screens around us – culminat-

ing in the reflective surface of the smart phone.[4] What is curious about the title of Brooker's series is that instead of the brain-searing and eye-burning brightness of these screens when they are lit up, when we are immersed in their carnivalesque possibilities for self-invention, it recalls their sleep-state. It is at these blacked-out moments, when we are not actively engaging in the re-assertion of our selves, that we are confronted with the shadow of our absent being, in concert with Silverman's description of Patricia's experience. However, these two encounters are not identical. The difference is that the black mirror is not empty. The experience of looking into it entails a degree of distance. It does not offer the sensation of being the shadow of an absent being, but the shadow of our absent being is something we can observe, peering back at us obscure and blurry from the darkened screen. Is this reflexive distance, an incomplete break with narcissism or perhaps as something entirely more mystical?

Mirrors made of polished obsidian were also used by peoples of ancient Mexico as means of communing with spirits. Now, it is as if it is the self that is something belonging to a netherworld, a supernatural thing long since passed, but one we can still confer with through magical rituals. Perhaps the acts and gestures we make on social media could be thought of in these terms. Perhaps for example the personal, even confessional, statements that inundate Twitter feeds and Facebook pages are in fact types of ritual offerings. They have pattern, repetition, a liturgy about them. Communing with the self-consciousness of the medium, being-private-in-public becomes almost like a performance of the absence of conversation, a performance of solitude and its subsequent expulsion through a ritualistic acting out. Perhaps when people tweet very personal things, aside from a kind of creative branding exercise or exhibitionism, it is also a way not to be lonely. Perhaps it is a kind of dare, an effort to laugh at the face of your loneliness, to say you ARE allowed to talk intimately, even if you do not have any intimates to talk to.

The absence of intimate relations takes on added gravity in times of economic turmoil. Previously brewing disinvestment in public services and infrastructure is consummated through austerity measures, and intimacy comes to have new and pungent significance not just to our "emotional well-being" but to our actual survival. Adult children still living at home, people taking care of their elderly parents, increased reliance on your friends. It becomes an ideologically inflected moral imperative to take care of your own. Maybe intimacy becomes a moral law that renders loneliness a sin to atone for, the public confessional a means for this atonement. The couple too now sees its economic function intensified at the same time as an extra layer of mystique is added. LIES journal writes:

As another facet of the couple-as-solution, the discourses surrounding austerity measures and neoliberal restructuring frame the couple as a remedy for poverty. One reads tales of young people shifting between poverty and prison as a result of single parenting, especially absent fathers, as if the restitution of the couple could remedy the poverty and structural racism produced by capitalism. State bureaucrats tell women that the couple and the family that it anchors have replaced social assistance programs: you don't need help with childcare or food stamps; you need a man! The surest way out of poverty is to get married![5]

The tyranny of love, with its broad contradictory demands, ranges from the most transparent, well-worn, exploitative rhetoric around "family values" to realities capable of reaching the deepest corners of our psyches, discovering new and as yet unseen terrains of internalisation.[6] The fantasy (or obsessive ideation?) of intimate exchange, the genuine conversation that takes place with an ally, a close partner, or a lover, is particularly potent in this environment. Trawling through the various online reviews of Godard's latest film, *Adieu au Language* (2014), one caught my eye. It seemed to interpret a scene involving smart phones as a statement about their disruptive effect on human intelligence and about decline of conversation.[7] In some ways the idea that technology is a culprit in the breakdown of "genuine conversation", of human discursive exchange, to me in a curious way contributes to the dubious fantasy of intimate exchange. Discussion or debate can no longer take place publicly nor truly privately (our intimacies are disrupted by our obsession with screens), discourse turns into glut of information, turns into a kind of digital amnesia. Or so the argument seems to go. But doesn't this assertion only banish discussion even further into the mystified realm of the intimate, instead attempting to discover a new meaning and place for the public? Against this introversion, in bringing to the surface the loneliness at the centre of the era of connectivity, social media performances of the self seem like

4 Also Vappu Jalonen also writes about the black mirror, in her 'The Stained Black Mirror', available online: http://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/61876/61877 (last accessed 15/8/2020)

5 CLÉMENCE X. CLEMENTINE AND ASSOCIATES FROM THE INFINITE VENOM GIRL GANG, 'Against the Couple-Form', in LIES, Vol. 1, 2011, pp. 45-54, p. 50.

6 See Brian Kuan Wood's article 'Is It Love?', E-Flux Journal, #53, 3/2014, in which love becomes almost a kind of general equivalent.

7 http://www.indiewire.com/article/cannes-review-jean-luc-godards-baffling-hilarious-goodbye-to-language-3d-will-mess-with-your-eyes-and-your-head (last accessed 15/8/2020)

important points of resistance to the move towards the familial, the close, the intimate – and the couple.

Catherine Grant writes about "the collaborative couple" as it manifests in Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's work. Godard himself makes an effort to defy the pigeonholing of this partnership as conforming to some set model. He compares himself and Miéville to Straub and Huillet, and makes the following somewhat bragging statement: "The Straubs work in tandem, on the same bicycle, him in front, her behind. We have two bicycles."[8] Grant reflects further on the implications of the ways in which the narratives of Godard and Miéville's films are seen as somehow autobiographical. She remarks on the pairs impenetrability of as a collaborative unit, partially expressed through various commentators' failed efforts to unpick the elements and nature of their collaborations – as well as the commentators' desire to see Godard and Miéville in their work, to read the narratives of their collaborative works as somehow autobiographical. Grant herself is critical of this approach. She draws on Kaja Silverman's essay 'Author as Receiver', in which she writes about Godard's film *JLG/JLG*, attempting to unpack its autobiographical dimension, or rather the meaning of the absence of such a reading:

Biographical erasure might seem radically incommensurate with the idea of an artistic self-portrait, but it is Godard's very phenomenological idea that the artist is not properly a creator, but rather the site where words and visual forms inscribe or install themselves.[9]

This idea of the author as site and occasion for the manifestation of form gets interesting when we think of the "creative couple" as the author, as Grant does. Could the implication here then be that the couple, the creative couple in particular, is also a kind of site where "forms inscribe or install themselves"? The truth may go well beyond this. The term "couple-form" provides a key into how. Through it, a folding in on itself of the couple happens. The form that installs itself in the couple-as-author is the form of the couple itself, instigating a feedback loop that recalls the unreflexive reflectivity Rosalind Krauss wrote about. Rather than mere inscription of a form, what we are really talking about is the re-enforcement, promotion and perpetuation of *the* form: the couple (and its "weightless fall through the suspended space of narcissism").[10] The form that haunts our romantic aspirations hereby enters into our intellectual ambitions too.

When I was watching *Adieu au Language*, a film that indeed seemed a vessel for forms to instill themselves in without much authorship, what struck me personally as memorable was not the incidence of smart phones, and what could narratively be read into this in terms of disrupted communications. It was instead the experience I had somewhere halfway through the film of realizing that the couple whose interactions I had been following had not in fact been a couple, but two couples. The form, the form of the couple, was (apparently) so dominant that I had entirely ignored its content, I had not noticed that the actors within it had changed, and more to the point, did not even look that much like each other. Avoiding blaming myself for this oversight, I thought of how indifferent to the intricacies of different subjectivities, to the nuances of experience, this form was. But I also thought that there was something consoling about the interchangeability of its content, about the uncommon separation between form and content that I was now witnessing. The independence of the subjectivities operating within this form of it made it into something superficial, a mask, a role, something to put on and take off. Externalised, not internalized. Certainly not something tugging at ones heartstrings. Heartstrings had been severed and choice presented itself about what to do with that which was once attached to them.

8 Jean-Luc Godard quoted in Catherine Grant, 'Home-movies: the curious cinematic collaboration of Anne-Marie Mieville and Jean-Luc Godard', in Temple, Michael, Williams, James S and Witt, Michael (eds.) *For ever Godard,* 2004, Black Dog Publishing, London, pp. 100-117.

9 Kaja Silverman, 'Author as Receiver', *October,* Vol. 96 (Spring, 2001), p. 24, pp. 17-34

10 Krauss, p. 59.

KARI YLI-ANNALA

THE DEATH OF PORTHOS

Porthos enlivened the flame with his breath. The smoke was a little dispersed, and by the light of the sparkling match objects might for two seconds be distinguished. It was a short but a splendid spectacle (...)!

(Alexandre Dumas: *The Vicomte of Bragelonne: Ten Years Later,* 1850)

The numerous quotes and references in Jean-Luc Godard's moving image works could be understood as the knots on a climbing rope, or the stones in a landscape of water on which you can hop before daring to splash, swim and dive. The aim of this essay is to follow some of those knots or stones in Godard's practice of thinking with images, sounds and language. I hope I have learned something from the story of Porthos, the poor musketeer who died when he started to think – or at least that is what we are told in one of Godard's movies. Along the journey and at its end I will make some references to the works of contemporary artists whom I see working in the tradition of "thinking the moving image". This tradition wouldn't be the same without Godard's work.

In a scene in Godard's third feature-length narrative film *Vivre sa vie: Film en douze tableaux* (1966), the philosopher (Brice Parain, Godard's real-life teacher of philosophy at the Sorbonne) tells Nana (Anna Karina) a story about the last moments of Porthos, one of the three musketeers.[1] Porthos is a man of action not used to thinking. But one day he has to plant a bomb in a cellar. When he lights the fuse and begins to run for cover, he starts thinking about how it is possible to move by putting one foot before the other. "So he stops running. He can't go on, he can't move forward. The bomb explodes, the cellar falls on him, he bears it on his shoulders. But after a day, or maybe two, he is crushed to death. The first time he thought, it killed him" , the philosopher tells us.[2]

The story of Porthos mirrors Nana's position in society as a prostitute. Thinking may indeed be dangerous in a situation where you are beginning to reject the contract, real or imagined, under which your body or skill is exploited. For Nana, the advice comes too late. Like Porthos in the story, she has just started to practice thinking. She wants to break away from her situation, but her pimp Raoul (Sady Rebbot) considers her his property and won't let her go. In the end of the film, Raoul is about to sell Nana to another pimp. They end up in a gunfight. Nana tries to escape by running but a bullet stops her. She is dead.

Godard's movie is a kind of Brechtian version of Edgar Allan Poe's short story *Oval Portrait* (1842), a tale about a man who paints a life-like portrait of his ill wife. When he finishes the painting, he cries out, "This is indeed Life itself", without noticing that his wife has just died. Nana's situation is not the result of just one man's obsession, but of her exploitation due to the circumstances of neo-capitalist society.[3] Earlier in the film, Nana's lover (Peter Kassovitz) reads Poe's story, which is not spoken by the actor but by Godard himself in a voice-over. As Karina and Godard were also a married couple at the time there is a double twist in the scene.

At the end of Godard's tenth feature-length narrative movie *Pierrot Le Fou* (1965), Pierrot (Jean-Paul Belmondo) blows his head off by wrapping it in dynamite. He regret his decision just before the dynamite blows up and tries to put out the fuse, but fails to do so because the dynamite covers his eyes. Unlike Pierrot, Godard succeeded in growing a slightly new head with each new film. It is no coincidence that after the action-oriented Belmondo, the next lead is an existential anti-hero, played by Jean-Pierre Léaud in *Masculin, féminin* (1966). Léaud had already given a face, voice, speech and gestures to the experience of his confused generation as the fictional character Antoine Doinel in François Truffaut's films. Léaud acted in Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967), a film about Maoist students, in *Week-end* (1967), a provocative attack on bourgeois society, as well as in Godard's most ambitiously non-narrative essay-film so far, *Le Gai Savoir* (1969). In these films, sound and image begin to have an almost character-like existence. *Le Gai Savoir* has the structure of a "school", a series of lessons: first the students (Léaud and Juliet Berto) collect images and sounds, then they criticize them, and finally construct their own models from them.

Together with *British Sounds* (1970), all these films paved the road (or, should we say, were stones picked up from the pavement) for the highly radical political "thinking film" or essay film practices of the collective known as Groupe Dziga Vertov (Dziga Vertov Group). The names of the characters, Emile Rousseau (Léaud) and Patricia Lumumba (Berto), refer to figures from philosophy and politics. The underlying issues are not just political but also connected to desire. It is not just "who speaks?" but also "what do they want?"[4] How are the sounds said, what are the desires that produce them and are delivered through them?

1 Parain was an important mentor for Godard. Mauri Ylä-Kotola claims that Godard´s entire later career, both as a theoretician and director, can be viewed as a semiotic process concerning the "the interrelationship of sign, meaning and the world", as in the work by Parain. Mauri Ylä-Kotola: "The Philosophical Foundations of the Work of Film Director Jean-Luc Godard". In *Mediapolis: Aspects of Texts, Hypertexts and Multimedial Communication*, ed. by Sam Inkinen. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1992, p. 147.

2 "Alors il s'arrête de courir, de marcher, il n'peut plus, il n'peut plus avancer. Tout explose, le souterrain lui tombe dessus, il le retient avec ses épaules, il est assez fort. Mais finalement, au bout d'un jour, deux jours, je n'sais pas, il est écrasé, il meurt. En somme, la première fois qu'il a pensé il en est mort."

3 Social philosopher André Gorz defines the term neocapitalism in his book *Stratégie ouvrière et néo-capitalisme* (1964). It characterizes the post-World War II social situation in which basic ontological needs are shadowed by the artificial needs of new consumerism. This critique was shared by the Situationist International group and by Godard. Godard uses the term in, for example, the promotional material of *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle* (1967): "HER, the cruelty of neocapitalism; HER, prostitution; HER, the Paris region..." (James Monaco: *The New Wave*. New York: Oxford University Press 1976, p. 180).

4 Douglas Morrey: *Jean-Luc Godard and the Other History of Cinema*. University of Warwick, 2002, p. 84.

THINKING CINEMA AND CINEMATIC THINKING (POLITICS AND LANGUAGE)

Early Soviet cinema experimented with political agitation and developed new methods for cinematic thinking.[5] The project was revived in the sixties with the dawn of new experimental agitprop cinema, such as the work by Santiago Álvarez in Cuba. The most important filmmaker of the montage schools for Godard was Dziga Vertov, who developed "perpendicular editing, crossroads, pieces of reality that come across each other"[6], although Sergei Eisenstein's "cinema of the fist" and Vertov's "cinema of the eye" were both as important "as two hands of the same body".[7] Godard joined the collective project *Cinétracts* (1968), which as a joint effort by directors Jean-Luc Godard, Alan Resnais, Philippe Garrell and Chris Marker had many hands indeed. Cinétracts were short anonymous fliers or pamphlets in 16mm film format. They were shown in cinemas right in the middle of the May 1968 protests, and aimed at agitation. Two years later *British Sounds* was made, a radical essay film about the use of sounds and images for political purposes – a struggle "between images and sounds". Interestingly, the script for *British Sounds* can be found on the contemporary website of Chto Delat? (What is to be done?), a Russian collective of artists, critics, philosophers and writers, founded in 2003. Their aim is to put art and activism in dialogue with political theory in order to politicize knowledge production and redefine the autonomy of cultural production. Chto Delat? has made a number of extensive additions to the original script of *British Sounds* in order to link it to the present, quotations, personal analyses and Wikipedia links. It seems that not much has changed and that the Godardian-Maoist-Marxist-Leninists methods still have something to say.[8]
The question "What is to be done?" was the title of a pamphlet by V. I. Lenin published in 1902 in the magazine *Iskhra*. Lenin's aim was to ensure that the working class would not become political only in battles with employers, but that a political "vanguard" of dedicated revolutionaries would be formed, tasked with spreading Marxist political ideas among the workers.[9] But "What is to be done?" is also the title of a pamphlet written by Godard in 1970. The pamphlet has 39 points, the first two being the most cited ones:
"1. We must make political films. 2. We must make films politically.
(...)"[10]

To make films politically – what does it mean? In *Cinétract 019* (1968), the camera pans along frozen images of demonstrators, burning buildings and cars from 1968, echoing the significance of a specific moment in the historical blast of events. The film itself never freezes, of course, the movement continues even when the image we see is a still photograph. The movement of the camera on the surface of the still images (maybe created by refilming an existing frame in an optical printer) gives them an odd, nervous life, similar to that of seeing them in the dark, illuminated only by the short-lived flame of a match. The anonymous *Cinétracts* want to remind their viewers that they are living in a revolutionary moment that can be missed. This is similar to the idea Walter Benjamin suggests in *Passagenwerk (Arcades Project)* (1927–1940). We will take a brief look at it later and also at Benjamin's concept of "messianic time" in connection with Giorgio Agamben's remarks on Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*.[11]
The desire to radicalize film and make political films collectively led to the forming of the Dziga Vertov Group. Although the group was open to collaboration, it basically had two active persons: Godard and the militant activist Jean-Pierre Gorin. The problems of language, image and sound were reduced to "degree zero", taking inspiration from political theory but also possibly from literature. It brings to mind Roland Barthes's *Le degré zéro de l'écriture* (Le Seuil, 1953) in which Barthes separated the concept of "writing" from "style" or "language". This is similar to Parain explaining to Nana in *Vivre sa vie* that thinking is the same as speaking. However, Parain continues that thinking/not thinking or speaking/not speaking are not meant to be opposites. The most important thing is to think and speak well. This is the realm of language, style or thinking. The problem of poor Porthos in the story might be that he had neither prac-

5 *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896 –1939*, eds. Ian Christie and Richard Taylor. Routledge, 1994.

6 Robert Phillip Kolker: "Angle and Reality: Godard and Gorin in America" (*Sight & Sound*, vol. 42, no. 3, 1973) in *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*, ed. by David Sterrit. University Press of Mississippi, 1998, p. 67.

7 Anyhow, "the body was cut", because the two hands never worked together, Godard says in an interview. Ibid, p. 67.

8 http://chtodelat.org/b8-newspapers/12-45/british-sound-transcript-of-the-film-with-ccmments/

9 Lenin borrowed the title from a novel by the 19th century materialist philosopher Nikolay Chernyshevsky, whose heroine Vera Pavlovna joins in a movement for creating small socialist cooperatives geared towards industrial production. Thanks to Jyrki Siukonen, who pointed out this connection to me at the III Summer Academy for Artistic Research SAAR, August 2014, in Hanasaari Cultural Centre, Espoo.

10 Jean-Luc Godard: "What is to be Done?" *Aftermath no. 1*, 1970.

11 Giorgio Agamben: "Difference and Repetition: On Guy Debord's Films" in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Tanya Leighton. Tate Publishing, 2008, pp. 328–333. Benjamin's description of the basic historic concepts is as follows: "Catastrophe – to have missed the opportunity. Critical moment – the status quo threatens to be preserved. Progress – the first revolutionary measure." (Walter Benjamin: Arcades Project, Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 474).

tice in or a history of thinking, and it therefore struck him in the wrong moment, killing him.
Language had been important throughout Godard's filmmaking practice. Juliette Jeanson's (Marina Vlady) answer in *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle* (1966) "Language is the house man lives in" to her daughter's question "What is language?" is close to Martin Heidegger's dictum, "Language is the house of Being".[12] The voice-over of the trailer of Godard's first feature-length film *À bout de souffle* (1960) announces one word for each shot, setting in motion a dialogic game of sorts the audience is invited to play along with.
Images and sounds are often made with a specific purpose in mind, but in the end they must contend with the loss of specificity, the emergence of a multitude of meanings. There is an intertitle in *Le Vent D'Est* (1970): "An image is not the just image, but just an image",[13] and Le Petit Soldat (1963) offers us the famous Godard slogan, "Photography is truth, and cinema is truth 24 times per second."[14] At the end of *Les Carabiniers* (1963), the two peasant-soldier-antiheroes show photographs about pillaging during the war. The scene is mentioned briefly in Susan Sontag's essay "Plato's Cave" as a parody of "the equivocal magic of the photographic image."[15] There seems to be always something extra in images purporting to show reality, as there is in reality itself – much more than anyone can grasp.
By including the quote "...the philosopher and the filmmaker have in common a certain way of being, a certain view of the world, which is that of a generation"[16] from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Masculin, féminin*, Godard invited philosophy to become an ally in his research. Although there is no need to raise philosophy on a higher pedestal than cinema, it is clear that there is an ongoing dialogue with philosophical questions

12 Martin Heidegger: "Letter on ´Humanism´", orig. 1949; English translation in *Pathmarks*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 239.

13 "Ce n'est pas une image juste, c''est juste une image."

14 "*La photographie, c'est la vérité, et le cinéma, c'est vingt-quatre fois la vérité par seconde.*" Although, at least in the case of analogue film production, the standard and rate of image projection is actually separate 48 projected images per second. (Sami van Ingen: *Moving Shadows: Experimental Film Practice in a Landscape of Change*. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, 2012, p.82, fn3.)

15 "In Godard's *Les Carabiniers* (1963), two sluggish lumpen-peasants are lured into joining the King's Army by the promise that they will be able to loot, rape, kill, or do whatever else they please to the enemy, and get rich. But the suitcase of booty that Michel-Ange and Ulysse triumphantly bring home, years later, to their wives turns out to contain only picture postcards, hundreds of them, of Monuments, Department Stores, Mammals, Wonders of Nature, Methods of Transport, Works of Art, and other classified treasures from around the globe. Godard's gag vividly parodies the equivocal magic of the photographic image." (Susan Sontag: *On Photography,* New York: Anchor Books 1990 (orig. 1977), p. 3.)

16 "…le philosophe et le cinéaste ont en commun use certaine manière d´être, une certaine vue du monde qui est celle d´une génération." Maurice Merleau-Ponty: "Le Cinéma et la Nouvelle Psychologie". In *Sens et Non-Sens.* Paris: Gallimard, 1966.

throughout Godard's *oeuvre*.[17] Maybe we can even compare Godard to a thinker whose writing travels from a detail to an aphorism, from an aphorism to a fragment and from a fragment to an essay. Walter Benjamin, anyone?
For Jean-Francois Lyotard, the essay is "postmodern, while the fragment (...) is modern."[18] Instead of aiming at one objective truth, there is no end to the processes of truth-making. Edgar Morin's words on the essay film (or cinema essay) are revealing: "Talking of essay film, I would rather refer to the attitude of he who attempts (...) to debate a problem by using all the means that the cinema affords, all the registers and all the expedients."[19]

THE BLAST FROM THE IMAGE (PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE)

"...the light produced by the spark and the match did not last more than two seconds; but during these two seconds this is what it illumined: (...) a heap of bleeding bodies, crushed, mutilated, in the midst of which was still visible some last struggle of agony which lifted the mass... (…) And all this was seen by the tremulous light of a match attached to a barrel of powder – that is to say, a torch which, while throwing a light upon the dead past, showed the death to come."
(Alexandre Dumas: *The Vicomte of Bragelonne: Ten Years Later,* 1850)

Godard had a serious motorcycle accident in June 1971, which took him two and a half years to recover from. During that period, he spent a lot of time with Anne-Marie Miéville, who had worked as a still photographer on *Tout va bien* (1972). They became partners in work and in life. Godard and Miéville made several videos for television in their Sonimage studio in Switzerland and were involved in a project to establish television ser-

17 Ylä-Kotola, 1992, p. 147.

18 Jean-François Lyotard: "Answering the question: what is the postmodern?", in *The Postmodern explained to Children*. Sydney, Power Publications, 1992, p. 9.

19 Giovanni Maderna, "Film saggio: Intervista a Edgar Morin," in *Filmmaker 5 Doc*, ed. Silvano Cavator. Quoted in Laura Rascaroli: "The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments", *Framework 49*, No. 2, Fall 2008, p. 39. Or: "There are two ways to conceive of the cinema of the Real: the first is to pretend that you can present reality to be seen; the second is to pose the problem of reality. In the same way, there were two ways to conceive Cinéma Vérité. The first was to pretend that you brought the truth. The second was to pose the problem of the truth." / "Il y a deux façons de concevoir le cinéma du réel : la première est de prétendre donner à voir le réel; la seconde est de se poser le problème du réel. De même, il y avait deux façons de concevoir le cinéma vérité. La première était de prétendre apporter la vérité. La seconde était de se poser le problème de la vérité," as Morin wrote in the catalogue introduction in Cinéma du Réel (Centre Pompidou, 1980).

vice in Mozambique in 1978.[20] Their feature-length film *Numéro Deux* (1975) couples an experimental lecture by Godard with narrative video sequences and intertitles where the words transform into different words, letter by letter. Godard and Miéville explored the connections between the home, economic power relations, sexuality and work.[21] The two monitors showing the video footage in Numéro Deux were shot with a 35mm film camera in a studio. The process resulted in a feature-length 35mm film for theatre screening. The footage shown on the two video monitors created a dialogical montage, reminiscent of an art installation.

The relations between employer and employee, male and female, factory and home, side A and side B, could be seen as reminiscent of G. W. F. Hegel's master-slave dialectic of two abstracted self-consciousnesses reflecting each other in *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807). For Hegel, this was part of the work of the *Geist* (the spirit of history), relating strongly to his ideas of the progress.[22] In Sergei Eisenstein's famous theory of montage, two conflicting images or forces are brought together in order to create a new "third meaning".[23] This is based on the Hegelian idea of a new synthesis arising from the collision of two conflicting theses or forces. But "Vertovian" Godard piles images, speech, music and text up

20 Daniel Fairfax: "Birth (of the Image) of a Nation: Jean-Luc Godard in Mozambique". Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 3 (2010), p. 55–67

21 There is a Freudian "primal scene" moment in *Numéro Deux* when a video effect disrupts the film frame, showing the parents having anal intercourse on the kitchen table and their child watching in the same frame, but in separate images. Recently, Douglas Morrey has opposed Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki's implied reading of the scene as depicting rape within the family. As so often in the binary relations in Godard's films, the scene is more complicated than that. Morrey also claims that in separating the images, the scene is actually faithful to the ambiguity of the primal scene's existence as a single in Freud's theory than Silverman and Farocki suggest. (Morrey 2002, pp. 119–121; Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki: "In Her Place". In *Speaking about Godard*. New York University Press, 1998, pp. 143–171)

22 After Hegel, the master/slave dichotomy is found in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887), wherein Nietzsche presents two different moralities: the "master" can be distinguished as an active and the "slave" as a reactive force, as Gilles Deleuze has pointed out. The slave defines itself in terms of the master, but the master's self-definition does not involve the slave, which makes the master weaker than the slave. For Hegel, the master and the slave were two abstract "self-consciousnesses". For Nietzsche, the "self" and "I" as concepts are merely interpretations and often used only to strengthen oppressive structures. In an interview from 1967, Deleuze says: "As Nietzsche said, if one wants to be 'a master,' it is not enough to come to power. More often than not it is the 'slaves' who come to power, and who keep it, and who remain slaves while they keep it." For Deleuze, there is something "sublime" and "untimely" when "the artistic joy" coincides with historical struggle. (Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* [French orig. 1962] New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, pp. 82–83; "Nietzsche's burst of laughter," *Interview with Gilles Deleuze* [orig. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5.4.1967], published in *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, 1953–1974. *Semiotext(e)*, 2004, pp. 128–130).

23 In his famous essay "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form", Eisenstein refers only to Marx and Engels, but his interpretation is build on a Hegelian basis, as in the (possibly quoted) beginning of the text: "According to Marx and Engels the dialectic system is only the conscious reproduction of the dialectic course (substance) of the external events of the world." (in *Sergei Eisenstein, Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. by Jay Leyda. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1949). The concept of "third meaning" comes from Roland Barthes, who analysed still photographs from Eisenstein's unfinished film in an article with the same title. ("The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills" [orig. 1970], republished in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art and Representation*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1991.)

in sequences that can be interrupted for closer examination in slow motion, repetition or a loop. This is more like a filmmaker's version of endless semiosis à la Charles S. Peirce, according to whom the meaning of a representation can be nothing but the representation itself. In Peirce's system, an interpretant is the effect of a sign on someone who interprets it. "Finally, the interpretant is nothing but another representation to which the torch of truth is handled along; and as representation, it has its interpretant again. Lo, another infinite series." [24]

One of the most insightful definitions of Godard's methods was formulated by Gilles Deleuze in an interview for Cahiers du Cinéma given after *Six fois deux/Sur et sous la communication* (1976), a 10-hour 12-part TV miniseries of audiovisual essays by Godard and Miéville, was broadcast by FR3, one of the national TV channels in France. Each episode has a different title (*Y a personne, Photos et cie, Leçons et choses...*) and is constructed of two parts: a visual essay on the consumption of images, and an interview about work and leisure with different people (such as a cleaning lady, a mathematician, a farmer, a clocksmith/amateur filmmaker, and so on). The two segments are constructed using the "the primary school" method of learning about things and language, followed by an exposition of work as something you can buy and sell ("Godard's saying: why not pay the people who watch television, instead of making them pay, because they're engaged in real work...") and of the relationship between information and language ("Language is a system of instructions rather than a means of conveying information. TV tells us: 'Now we'll have a bit of entertainment, then the news…'"). Deleuze claims: "Godard is not a dialectician. What counts with him is not two or three, or however many you like, it's AND, the conjunction of AND. (...) It's important because our entire way of thinking is modelled instead on the verb 'to be.' IS... Of course, the AND is diversity, multiplicity, the destruction of identities.".[25] The process of destroying the identity of a planned work is evident in *Ici et ailleurs*, another work by Godard and Miéville, released the same year as *Six fois deux*. The conjunction "et" (and), replacing the "ou" (or), plays a central role in the film. Instead of choosing between either/or, it is time to produce new links that show two different but equal terms. *Ici et*

24 Peirce C. S.: "On Thirdness". In *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. by Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss and Arthur W. Burks. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Belknap, 1931–1966. vol. 7 and 8 (1966), p 339.

25 Gilles Deleuze: "*Trois questions sur Six fois deux*" in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 271, Nov. 1976 (English version in Gilles Deleuze: *Negotiations 1972–1990*. Columbia University Press, 1995). Although concepts are often presented in pairs also in Deleuze's own philosophy (minor/major, time-image/movement-image, etc.), they are multiplicities that escape strict dualism as they produce affects, desires, meanings and nonsense, for example.

ailleurs is a reworking of the material filmed by Gorin and Godard for an unfinished pro-Palestinian film *Jusqu'à la victoire*, and it also incorporates new footage shot in France by Godard and Miéville. As many members of the Palestinian group Godard and Gorin met were killed by the Jordanian army soon after the filming, a film project about victorious Palestinians became impossible. The question was how to bring images from "elsewhere" (Palestine) "here" (France), to a different geopolitical location?

In a recent moving image work *Missä on missä?* (Where is where?, 2008–2009) by Finnish visual artist and film director Eija-Liisa Ahtila, two geographically and historically separate locations are brought together – the upper middle class house of a fictional writer (played by Kati Uotinen) in contemporary Finland and events of the Algerian War (of Independence) – the account of the latter is based in the work on Frantz Fanon's book *Les Damnés de la Terre* (Éditions Maspero, 1961). In the 6-channel video installation version, the last screen shows documentary footage of piled bodies of Algerian citizens killed in the war. There is a striking similarity to *Ici et ailleurs*, in which images of a French family watching television are coupled with images of the Palestinian rebel army, and soon after also with images of the dead bodies of Palestinians.

In *Ici et ailleurs*, the voice-over by Miéville criticizes our way of watching images and covering them with words or noise, making it difficult to see the images themselves. At one point in the studio, French people of different ages and social classes fix photographs on the wall, overlaying them with spoken words. The scene shows how mainstream and agitprop films both define the meaning of images and use them for their own purposes. How could we return images back to the people and let them create their own meanings? The space of difference is created by *not* translating the speech of Palestinians in subtitles. Nor are they overlaid with an actor's voice-over of the translation à la BBC World. In fact "the voice of the people is severely criticized — along with the concept of the voice of the people itself", as Hito Steyerl has commented.[26]

Steyerl's video essay *November* (2004), like its sister work *Lovely Andrea* (2007), is all about images and how language is used so that a person is seen, defined and used in a different context for different purposes. In November Steyerl states that "revolution seems to be over and peripheral struggles have become particular, localist, and almost impossible to communicate." In the video essay, she looks for the images of Andrea Wolf, a friend from her youth who became a martyr of the Kurdish liberation movement. Issues of desire and persist in the use of the images by different groups and individuals. The floating world of images of a personal story invites new webs of relations that emerge in the process of the making of the video essay. Wolf's many roles as a friend, a fictional female fighter, a revolutionary, a terrorist and a martyr, all escape a single definition. Steyerl's own image also goes through similar changes.[27] The auteur can no longer control his or her image even within the work itself, not if she wants to be truthful about the process of its making.

Elsewhere Steyerl has asked what happens when the theory of montage as a form of artistic production is brought into the field of politics. "In other words, how is the political field edited, and what kinds of political significance could be derived from this form of articulation?" she writes. She compares two documentaries, the collectively created street documentary *Showdown in Seattle: Five Days That Shook the WTO* (Deep Dish Television, Independent Media Center Seattle, Big Noise Films, Changing America, Free Speech TV, Headwaters Action Video, Paper Tiger TV, VideoActive, and Whispered Media, 1999) and Godard and Miéville's *Ici et ailleurs*, both of which deal with "transnational or international circumstances of political articulation".[28] While Ici et ailleurs is still surprisingly coherent in its analysis of the articulation of political images, texts and sounds, Showdown in Seattle seems to follow the logic of mainstream documentary cinema, missing the chance to create its own articulation. Or, as Steyerl puts it:

> On what basis can we draw a political comparison between different positions or establish equivalencies or even alliances? What exactly is made comparable? (…) And what does this question mean for the articulation of protest today, if nationalists, protectionists, anti-Semites, conspiracy theorists, Nazis, religious groups, and reactionaries all line up together at antiglobalization demos, in a dispiriting chain of equivalencies? Is this a simple case of the principle of unproblematic addition, a blind *and* that presumes that if sufficient numbers of different interests are added up, at some point the sum will constitute "the people?"[29]

While the question of editing vs. thinking montage is close to the Barthesian question of "writing" vs. "style" or "language", it is also a crucial tool for understanding the transition from political cinema to contemporary cinematic politics. The accumulation of positionless viewpoints and images in the contemporary situation corresponds to the Deleuzian "AND", an endless process without a single fixed point of authoritarian

26 Hito Steyerl: "The Wretched of the Screen". *e-flux journal*. Sternberg Press, 2012, p. 84

27 Pablo Lafuente: "For a Populist Cinema: On Hito Steyerl's November and Lovely Andrea". Afterall 19. Autumn/Winter 2008

28 Steyerl, 2012, p. 80

29 Ibid, pp. 79–84

articulation. In today's audiovisual scene, it is difficult to imagine a time when the video camera was a rare tool, or a time when the dream of collective creation was shared by film and video activists in community projects.[30] Miévilles and Godard's practice was part of that dream, demonstrating a way to make personal videos outside the industry and also showing how to find one's own form of articulation.[31]

In the course of time, Godard's characters have grown more melancholic. They are often individuals who show their discomfort with the dominant order. But in the end they are alone, their efforts often in vain. Lemmy Caution (Eddie Constantine) from *Alphaville* (1965) is very different in *Allemagne année 90 neuf zero* (1991). There have been new wars after Vietnam: in former Yugoslavia, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, not to mention the ongoing "stereo" between Israel and Palestine.[32] In *Notre Music* (2004), Godard gives a lecture in an almost empty auditorium, showing a photograph of the ruins of a building in the middle of U.S. Civil War, asking in what city and what period the photo was taken. Every ruin, every war, looks the same. All that is left is Mozart's music or a walk to a beach – or a heaven, as the sections of the film suggest. It will remain a very individual heaven, where maybe only art and philosophy can bring comfort.

PORTHOS RUNS (MY FEET ARE TIRED)

Suddenly he felt his knees give way; his knees appeared powerless, his legs yielded under him. "Oh, oh!" murmured he, "there is my fatigue seizing me again! I can walk no farther! What is this?
(Alexandre Dumas: *The Vicomte of Bragelonne: Ten Years Later,* 1850)

Godard's lectures at Université de Montréal about the history of cinema and discussions about his own works with the students attending these

30 Some 1970s activities in Britain were documented in a book by Petra Bauer and Dan Kidner, *Working Together: Notes on British Film Collectives in the 1970s,* eds. Petra Bauer and Dan Kidner. Focal Point Gallery, 2013.

31 According to Bauer, Godard's political works were sometimes seen as being too individualistic to be shared as inspiration for collective work. ("Dziga Vertov and the Political Film Collectives", at Nomadic Academy of Experimental Arts, a seminar organized on 30.7.2013 on the Harakka island in Helsinki. Other speakers in the occasion were Sezgin Boynik and Eetu Viren.)

32 In a scene in *JLG/JLG – autoportrait de décembre* (1994), Godard sits on a table, drawing a black triangle on paper, facing up. Then he draws another, red triangle on top of the other, but facing down. In voiceover he says: "There was Euclid and then there was Pascal – this is the mystical hexagram. But in History, in the history of History, there was Germany which projected Israel. Israel reflected this projection and Israel found its cross. And the law of stereo continues. Israel projected the Palestinian people and the Palestinian people in turn bore their cross. This is the true legend of the stereo."

lectures, served as starting points for the 266-minute 8-part video essay *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1988–1998), an inquiry into the cinematic history of the 20th century. Ever since cinematic practice was invented it has witnessed, recorded, imagined and reconstructed historical situations and ideas. In *Histoire(s)*, images from the history of cinema and of 20th-century political events are put under the looking glass using video editing, voice over, music, superimpositions and text. As Godard-scholar Douglas Morrey remarks, it is not necessary to recognize all the references. "In practice, then, and certainly on initial viewings, the spectator of the *Histoire(s)* is likely to take particular images not as representatives of precisely-identified films, but rather as generic images evoking a particular national cinema, a particular film genre, a given era of film history, or simply, in the broadest sense, *cinema* itself."[33]

The philosopher Giorgio Agamben sees a similarity between the method of montage in *Histoire(s)* and in the films by Guy Debord, the leading figure of the Situationist International, whose book *Sociéte du Spectacle* (1967) and the 1973 film with the same title presented an influential and insightful critique of modern society where life is replaced with its representation.[34] Referring to Walter Benjamin's concept of "messianic time", Agamben notes that Godard shares with Debord two functions of montage: repetition and stoppage. In Agamben and Benjamin, messianic time does not mean something which is yet to come, but something which is already here in the present. It denotes the potentiality of the present moment, including the possibility of the end of everything in the here and now. It may be possible to use this potentiality to challenge prevalent paradigmatic narratives and wake up personal concepts instead, to find new kind of organizing forces for thinking, as Godard does in his Histoire(s).[35]

For the contemporary art world, Godard's influence has been contagious, especially in the case of the video essay, as evidenced by the work of Harun Farocki and Hito Steyerl and others. In one of her texts, Steyerl mentions Godard's comment that installation artists shouldn't be afraid

33 Morrey, 2002, pp. 11, 16, 219. Before the release of *Histoire(s),* parts of it were shown even on television. In 1998, it was released as on four video cassettes, and soon also as a box with a book that includes a partial text (translated into English) and 4 CDs of the soundtrack of the work. The work has also been exhibited as an installation in several places, such as Kassel Documenta X 1997, before its official release in 1998 (installed in an architectural construction by artist Dan Graham) and at Centre Pompidou in Paris 2006 as part of a retrospective of Godard's work.

34 Guy Debord: *La Société du spectacle* (Orig. Buchet/Chastel, 1967)

35 Agamben, 2008, pp. 328–333; Kia Lindroos: "Benjamin's moment". In *Redescriptions, Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History.* Berlin: LIT Verlag 2006, pp. 115–133.

of reality. She points out that, in fact, the gallery never left the factory. "In reality, political films are very often screened in the exact same place as they always were: in former factories, which are today, more often than not, museums. (…) But [they have also] become a hotbed of contemporary production. Of images, jargon, lifestyles, and values. (...) A flagship store of Cultural Industries, staffed by eager interns who work for free..."[36] Instead of political cinema, we have now "cinematic politics" which organizes its crowd without preaching. After "the gaze of the individual sovereign master" has fled, we still don't have a proper exit out of the museum, claims Steyerl. [37]

The British artists duo Karen Mirza and Brad Butler have recently revived the question of how to make films politically by investigating it in a video work, *The Exception and the Rule* (2009), and a 2-channel video installation, *Unreliable Narrator* (2014), both of which are part of their project entitled *Museum of Non-Participation*. Also situated in a gallery environment, Oreet Ashery's "audiovisual album" *Party for Freedom* (2013) is part of a project that, as the description goes, is "somewhere between a travelling cinema and theatre troupe, a kiss-a-gram and a takeaway delivery service". Ashery takes inspiration from 1920s avant-garde (a 1921 play by Vladimir Mayakovsky called *Mystery Bouffe*), political nudity and the chilling political climate created by right wing politicians in the Netherlands. The similarity to the travesty of Godard's *Week-end* or Dziga Vertov Group's *Vladimir et Rosa* (1971) is apparent. Ashery's work shares with these films a kind of carnivalization of contemporary political events. Whereas Mirza and Butler return to the actual serious question and task put into words by Godard, Ashery's multi-tactics show another way of grasping the difficult history of a fragmented and populist contemporaneity.

Maybe Porthos was just tired. It was not the thinking that killed him, but the fact that he was too used to not thinking. Like any skill, applying thought into new kinds of situations needs practice. For Walter Benjamin, history was one ongoing catastrophe which needed disruptions.[38] To me, a contemporary catastrophe is found where the international art world is seen as the only art world and the industrial cinema as the only cinema.

36 "Is a Museum a Factory?", Steyerl, 2012, p. 62.

37 Ibid, pp. 73–74.

38 Walter Benjamin: "On the concept of history", thesis IX ("Über den Begriff der Geschichte", Gesammelten Schriften I:2. Suhrkamp Verlag. Frankfurt am Main, 1974; orig. 1940) https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm

Godard's work encourages me to stop for a moment, to think and to work in order to understand the articulations existing within this catastrophe and to create articulations of my own.

CONTRIBUTORS

François Bucher is an artist from Cali, Colombia. He holds a master's degree in film from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His research spans a wide range of interests, focusing on ethical and aesthetic problems of cinema and television, and more recently on the image as an interdimensional field. His work has been exhibited worldwide, among others, Venice Biennale; Lyon Biennale and Marrakech Biennale. His writing has been published in Journal of Visual Culture, documenta Magazine, e-flux journal, and Valdez. The Catastrophe of the Present, a book on his work from 1999 to 2016 written by Claudia Salamanca, was published in 2016.

The collective **Chto Delat** (What is to be done?) was founded in early 2003 in Petersburg by a workgroup of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism.
Chto Delat sees itself as an artistic cell and also as a community organizer for a variety of cultural activities intended to politicize "knowledge production". The activity of the collective takes responsibility for a post-socialist condition and actualization of forgotten and repressed potentiality of Soviet past and often works as politics of commemoration.
The collective became part of "Journal of Journal" a project of documenta 12 in Kassel in 2007; fellows of the Gwangju Biennale in 2016; Garage Museum Field Research Programm in 2017; and many other long terms collaborations with large scale institutions.

Lee Ellickson is an interdisciplinary artist creating projects in site specific or architectural contexts. He has directed The Consequential Laboratory of Unspecified Dimensions (CLOUD) which generates new interdisciplinary initiatives, dialogues and experiments since the early Nineties in New York City. Currently in Amsterdam he produces The Warp which is a touring program of audiovisualspatial projects in distinctive locations. He continues to curate work made in the context of recreated nature through the Division4Habitats in the Amstelpark.
Ellickson's backround in cinema revelry goes back to Cineclubs, radio broadcast and the culture of filmzines in seventies Los Angeles and early Micro Cinema and Expanded Cinema activity in early Eighties San Francisio. In the millennia he stretched this enthusiasm as far as establishing a cultural foundation in Uganda which still hosts an annual film festival among other arts projects.

Irmgard Emmelhainz is an independent translator, writer and researcher based in Mexico City. Her work about film, the Palestine Question, art, culture and neoliberalism has been translated to Portuguese, Persian, Chinese, German, Italian, Norwegian, French, English, Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew and Serbian and has been published in an array of international publications and she has presented it at an array of international venues. Her book in Spanish: The Tyranny of Common Sense: Mexico's Neoliberal Conversion came out in 2016 with a preface by Franco (Bifo) Berardi and is currently being translated to English to be published by SUNY Press; her most recent books are The Sky is Incomplete: Travel Chronicles in Palestine (Mexico: Taurus 2017) and Jean-Luc Godard's Political Filmmaking was published 2019 by Palgrave Macmillan.

Mike Hoolboom. Born: Korean War, the pill, hydrogen bomb, playboy mansion. 1980s: Film emulsion fetish and diary salvos. Schooling at the Funnel: collective avant-geek cine utopia. 1990s: failed features, transgressive psychodramas, questions of nationalism. 2000s: Seroconversion cyborg (life after death), video conversion: feature-length, found footage bios. Fringe media archaeologist: author/editor/co-editor 29 books. Curator: 30 programs + Pleasure Dome co-founder. Copyleft yes. Occasional employments: artistic director of film festivals. 100+ film/vids, many redacted. 13 features. 80 awards, 18 international retrospectives. 4 lifetime achievement awards.

Gareth James is an internationally exhibited artist, from London currently based of Vancouver where he teaches at British Columbia university since 2010. James's work is constituted through his abiding interest in histories of iconoclasm in which the social divisions and inequities that mark and delimit artistic practice are registered most emphatically. In James's practice as an artist and as a writer, conventional aesthetic discourse is lost and rediscovered in neighboring fields such as topology or psychoanalysis. James is represented by Miguel Abreu Gallery (New York).

Nimetöna Nolla is a Chinese-Finnish-German data-poetry collective based in Berlin and Helsinki.

Constanze Ruhm Born in Vienna, lives between Vienna and Berlin. Artist, filmmaker, author, curator. Studies at Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Institute of New Media, Städelschule Frankfurt/Main. Professor for video and film since 1996 (Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach am Main; Merz Akademie Stuttgart; Art Institute Boston/Lesley University; since 2006 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna).
International exhibitions, film festivals, curatorial projects and film screenings / programs; symposia, workshops, public talks and presentations as well as numerous publications. Her works investigate the relations between fiction and reality, they appear on cinema screens as well as in exhibition / installation formats, and focus – always from a feminist perspective – on film history and the representation of female film characters, in order to reframe these in a critical, contemporary manner and outside of patriarchal narratives.

David Rych is an artist and filmmaker. A continuing theme in his work is the construction and representation of identity. His projects, videos and films engage with matters of cultural, social and political transformation as a background of aesthetic decisions. In frequent collaboration with other artists, his practice explores different approaches in documentary film and the compilation of moving image archives, for the most part dealing with production of knowledge in relation to collective identities, personal and official narratives of history and their visual representations.

Gabriëlle Schleijpen is the artstic director and head of the Dutch Art Institute (DAI). Trained as an artist in the early 80's, Gabriëlle Schleijpen's lively interest in the intersections between art and theory, between the poetical and the political, soon led her to escape the 'splendid isolation' of studio and so-called autonomous artworld - to become a full time educator and curator of discursive as well as practice based programs.

Amie Siegel is an artist based in New York who works between film, video, photography, sculpture and installation. She is known for her engulfing, meticulously constructed works that trace and perform the undercurrents of systems of value, cultural ownership and image-making. Her work uses the associative structures of poetry, the dispassionate perspectives of sociology, and her own idiosyncratically paced, conceptually stratified approach to investigate power, economies of authorship and gender as well as the relationship between cinematographic and architectonic space

Jason Simon is an artist who lives and works in New York and teaches at The College of Staten Island, City University of New York.
Simon's videos are distributed by The Video Data Bank and Icarus Films. His writing has appeared in Artforum, May Journal, Parkett, Frieze, Springerin, and Afterimage. Simon and Moyra Davey's "Ten Years of the One Minute Film Festival" was hosted by MASS MoCA in 2013. Simon was a founding member of the cooperatively run gallery, Orchard (2005–08), and he established the Art & Tech filmmaking residency facility at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio.

Caspar Stracke is a filmmaker, visual artist and curator from Germany, living and working in New York City (since 1993) and recently between Berlin and Mexico City. His work is situated around the poetics and politics of architecture and cinema. His films and installation work have been shown in exhibitions in venues such as MoMA, The Whitney, New Museum, PS1, Yerba Buena Art Center, The Hammer Museum, the ZKM, Karlsruhe, ICC Tokyo, among many others. Along with his partner Gabriela Monroy he was the co-director of video_dumbo, a moving image festival and annual exhibition in Dumbo, New York. Both also co-curated programs for Museo Tamayo Mexico, the Flaherty Seminar, EMAF, Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, among others. From 2012 - 2017 Stracke has taught as a professor for Moving Image at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts. In 2014 Stracke organized the symposium "The AfterGodard". This publication is the (late) outcome of this symposium.

Maija Timonen is a writer and filmmaker based in London. Recent work includes the film Correct Distance (2019) and the book of experimental fiction The Measure of Reality (Book Works, London, 2015). She is the co-editor of the collection of essays Objects of Feminism (Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, 2017) and her writing has appeared in various publications, including Chicago Review, Afterall, Mute and May. In 2016 she was a fellow at Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, and she has worked as a professor of both artistic research and moving image at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki, Finland.

Kari Yli-Annala is a visual artist, moving image researcher and teacher. Yli-Annala graduated with MFA degree from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 1996 and he has done post-graduate studies in the Academy of Fine Arts and Aalto University in Helsinki. He is the founder of the Nomadic Academy of Experimental Arts in Finland and a founding member in the Finnish moving image artists' cooperative FixC. He was the artistic director of the AAVE - Alternative AudioVisual Event Festival (2010 – 2018). His recent activities include curating programs on Finnish artists' moving image to the Festival for Different and Experimental Cinema in Paris and National Audiovisual Archive in Finland (the latter celebrating the 30 years of AV-arkki, The Distribution Centre of Finnish Media Art).

Florian Zeyfang is an artist and filmmaker based in Berlin. He works with multiple media, including photography, video, and installation; recent projects were related to the permanence of images, and to Cuban film and architecture. Additionally the artist has developed curatorial projects including those for the 8th Havana Biennial, Sala Rekalde Bilbao, for Fotofest in Houston, at the Museum für Angewandte Kunst Vienna, and many others. He has been active in collaborations and curatorial initiatives since his activities within the group Botschaft e.V. (1990-95). From 2006-15, he worked as a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, Umeå University, Sweden and since 2015 at Det Jyske Kunstakademi in Aarhus, Denmark. His films are distributed by Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art.

COLOPHON

Godard Boomerang - Artists on Godardian Conceptualism

Publisher
The Academy of Fine Arts at the University of the Arts Helsinki

Editor
Caspar Stracke

Editorial coordination assistance and copy editing (chapters 2-5, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16)
Maija Timonen

Copy Editor (chapter 1 &11)
Joshua Guilford

Proof Reading
Tomi Snellman (chapters 1-5, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16)

Graphic Design
mostra, New York

Typeface
Avenir

Printing
Edita Prima Oy, Helsinki
ISBN 978-952-353-405-6 (printed)
ISBN 978-952-353-406-3 (pdf)
www.uniarts.fi/en/general-info/academy-of-fine-arts-publications/

François Bucher
Chto Delat
Lee Ellickson
Irmgard Emmelhainz
Mike Hoolboom
Gareth James
Nimetöna Nolla
Constanze Ruhm
David Rych
Gabriëlle Schleijpen
Amie Siegel
Jason Simon
Caspar Stracke
Maija Timonen
Kari Yli-Annala
Florian Zeyfang

9 789523 534056

UNIARTS HELSINKI
ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS