

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Cinema: The Movement-Image

Lecture 05, 05 January 1982

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Part 1

Once again I have to apologize – since I had arranged a lesson that I later learned I wouldn't be able to hold – and there were some of you who no doubt came anyway, which was really bad, and once again it was all my fault... this last trimester has been a disaster, to the point that I no longer have the heart to apologize to all those who turned up for the lesson, because I absurdly imagined that the university holidays would be the same as the school holidays and so Tuesday would have worked as normal... in short, all that was just a mess, and because of this mess now I'm going to have to try to make up for lost time.

And you will of course recall, now that you've had time to reflect on it, you will surely remember the point I'd got to. Which is to say, I had begun to address, in terms of the work we were doing together, I had begun looking at the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* – namely the letter that this chapter consists of – once again beginning from the quite simple notion of how extraordinary this chapter is, both on its own terms and in relation to Bergson's work as a whole. Whether you consider it as a text in itself or as a text pertaining to Bergsonism in general... but even in that case it's clear that this text occupies a quite unique place and is nonetheless a very peculiar piece of writing.

And last time – which was quite a while ago – we began with a sort of introduction to this first part where I told you: Okay, it's quite simple, let's suppose that psychology at the end of the 19th century found itself in real trouble, in a crisis – the same way we would speak of a crisis in physics or in mathematics at a given moment in history.

And this crisis in psychology, what did it consist in? In a word, it consisted in the fact that psychology could no longer hold to the following situation: that things were arranged in such a way that one could still maintain that there were images in consciousness and movements in the world. And in fact, this idea of a world, split into images that dwelled in consciousness and movements that dwelled in bodies, raised so many problems... but why did these problems begin to emerge at the end of the 19th century and not before. Or especially at the beginning of the 20th century, and not before?

The other time I ventured a hypothesis: Could it have been pure chance that this crisis was to precisely coincide with the advent of cinema? I'm not saying that it was the sole determining

factor but mightn't cinema have been – even if for the philosophers of the time, who didn't much frequent the cinema, it may only have been unconsciously so – might cinema not have constituted a kind of disturbance that made it more and more impossible to hold to a separation between the image insofar as it referred to consciousness and movement insofar as it referred to bodies.

So much so, in fact, that I would say that it was at the beginning of the 20th century that the two great reactions against this classical model of psychology which had become stuck in the duality that relegated images to consciousness and movement to bodies... that these two reactions began to take shape: the first of which would give rise to Phenomenology and the other to Bergson and Bergsonism.

And here my question constituted a kind of enterprise of reparations – since after all Phenomenology had treated Bergson so harshly, if only to mark out its own territory from his. And then, doubtless, also because the problems they were working on weren't exactly the same. But the question I posed was this: what Phenomenology and Bergson have in common is their overcoming of the image/movement duality – with image in consciousness and movement in bodies? This is what they have in common, so in that sense they are both really seeking to pull psychology out of a rut from which, up to that point, it had been unable to extricate itself. But even if they have this aim in common... the way they each go about it, the way they carry it out is completely different. And I said that if we accept that Phenomenology's secret recipe is contained in the formulaic phrase “All consciousness is consciousness of something” - through which they imagined they could surmount precisely this duality of consciousness and body, or of consciousness and things... Bergsonism, on the contrary... perhaps Bergsonism, in a certain sense, goes much further. In any case its procedure is quite different. Because the formula pertaining to Bergsonism, were we asked to invent one, wouldn't in any way be “all consciousness is consciousness of something”. If we were to seek a formula corresponding to the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, it would be: All consciousness... is not consciousness of something.... rather, all consciousness *is* something.

And I said that this – the difference between these two formulas – is what we have to consider, and here too I ventured another new hypothesis on the side, concerning cinema. Which is to say: Isn't Bergson in a certain sense, regarding certain precise points – because what I'm saying is not absolute – isn't it true that Bergson is, in some ways, streets ahead of Phenomenology?

Because what I was trying to show was that in terms of its whole theory of perception, Phenomenology, despite everything, would keep to positions that were pre-cinematographic. Whereas bizarrely enough Bergson, who in his subsequent book *Creative Evolution* was to mount such a swift and total condemnation of cinema... in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* perhaps he outlined a universe... a strange universe that we could call cinematographic, one that would be much closer to a cinematographic conception of movement than the phenomenological concept of movement.

So now let's plunge into this first chapter, with all the bizarre things it contains. What I'll do is... I'll simply recount it to you – you've had time to read it for yourselves, though once again I think

it's an extremely difficult text... when people say Bergson is an easy author, it's completely false... this text is highly demanding.

And so here we are with this text that launches us headfirst... clearly here there is no duality between image and movement, as though image dwelt in consciousness and movement in things, because in the end *there is neither consciousness nor things*. So, then what is there? There are only *movement-images*. It is *in itself* that image is movement. The true unity of experience is the *movement-image*, written with a hyphen.

All this is already something completely new. In what kind of atmosphere do we find ourselves here? Look, there are movement-images and only movement-images. At this level that's what we have... we'll see later how... but we are still only in the first chapter and in this first chapter all we have are movement-images. A universe of movement-images. It's even too much to speak of a universe *of* movement-images. Movement-images *are* the universe.

The boundless set of movement-images. This is what the universe is! What does Bergson mean by that? Once more, “What atmosphere surrounds us?” – Bergson will ask himself. And he will also ask himself: “From what point of view am I speaking?” It's a quite inspired chapter. Well, he will say, “from that of a boundless universe of movement-images”. What does this mean? What does it mean to say that movement is image and image is movement? Substantially it means that the image acts and reacts.

The image is what acts and reacts. That is, the image is *what acts upon other images and reacts to the actions of other images*. The image undergoes the actions of other images and triggers reactions in other images. No, what am I saying? The image is subjected to the actions of other images to which it reacts. It reacts. The movement-image, Bergson says to us... in what way is it an image? Why the word “image?” It's quite simple, you just have to... all understanding partly comes from affect, and there is much that is affective in all of this.

The image is that which *appears*. In other words, Bergson has no real need at this stage to define what an image is. That will happen of its own accord as he goes on. We call “image” that which appears. Now philosophy has always maintained that what appears are phenomena. A phenomenon, an image, is what appears in as far as it appears. And what Bergson tells us is that what appears *is in movement*. In a certain sense this is still all very classical. But what is not classical are the conclusions he draws from this. Because he will take up this idea in all seriousness.

If what appears is in movement, it means that there is nothing else other than movement-images. This means not only that the image acts and reacts – that it acts upon other images and other images upon it – but that it acts and reacts, Bergson says, and here I use his very words since they will come in extremely useful when we encounter them in this chapter: “in all its elementary parts” – the elementary parts that are those of the image or of movement, as you prefer. It reacts in all its elementary parts or, as Bergson says, on *all its sides*¹.

Every image acts and reacts in all its parts and on all its sides, which are themselves images. What does this mean? You see what he's trying to tell us, though it's not a simple matter to

express all this, is that we should stop believing that the image is a *support* of action and reaction, since the image is *in itself, in all its parts and on all its sides*, action and reaction. Or, if you prefer, *action and reaction are images*.

In other words, what is image? *Image is shock, vibration*. So, it's clear that image is movement. The expression, which does not actually appear in Bergson's text, but is continually implied by it, the expression *movement-image* is enunciated from this point of view, but what is this point of view exactly. Once again, it is a point of view that turns out to be extremely well founded. What Bergson wants to tell us in this respect is: *There are neither things nor consciousness, only movement-images, and this is what the universe is*.

In other words, there is an *in itself* of the image. An image has no need to be perceived. There are images that are perceived, yes, just as there are others that are not perceived. A movement... may well not be seen by someone. It is nonetheless a movement-image. It's a shock, a vibration, one that corresponds to the definition of the movement-image, which is to say: *a movement-image is that which in all its parts and on all its sides is composed of actions and reactions*. To say there is nothing but movement is the same thing as saying that there are only images.

So, yes, literally there are neither things nor consciousness. So, you see how different this is... Phenomenology will retain the categories of things and consciousness, even if it overturns their relation. With Bergson, at the beginning of the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, we have neither things nor consciousness. There are only movement-images whose relations to one another are in perpetual variation. Why in perpetual variation? This is the world of movement-images, since every image qua image is subjected to actions and itself produces actions. Because their parts, being themselves images, *are also actions and reactions*.

Therefore, there are neither things nor consciousness. Why? Because things, what we call things – it's all well and good to talk of things but *what are they, if not images, shocks, vibrations?* The table, what is it? A system of shocks and vibrations. Okay, fine... So, there I've just introduced something that can help elucidate certain of Bergson's texts that we'll have occasion to return to frequently in relation to cinema. A molecule, a molecule, a molecule is an image. Fine, Bergson would say. It's an image, of course it's an image, since it is strictly identical to its movements. What I mean is that... take when physicists speak of the three states... well, what are, broadly speaking, three states of matter: *gaseous, liquid, solid*. These categories will be of great interest to us in our investigations into cinematographic images. But what are they? Well, they are first and foremost defined by the different types of molecular movements they involve. Molecules don't move in the same way in what we refer to as the solid, liquid and gaseous state. Yet they are still part of the movement-image. There are no things, only movement-images, meaning vibrations and shocks – acting no doubt in accordance with laws... of course their movement naturally has laws.

Law is the rapport between an action and a reaction. These laws can be amazingly complex, yet they are nonetheless laws. The laws that pertain to the liquid state are not the same as those pertaining to the solid or gaseous states. Why is this? What one refers to as things, for example solid things, are in fact movement-images of a certain type. I can say that a solid is when the

movement of molecules is confined to a limited space by the action of other molecules in such a way that their vibration oscillates within a middle position.

Contrariwise, in a gaseous state, molecules are able to move freely in relation to one another, although these movements constitute different types of vibrations, different shocks. And just as there are no things, so too there is no consciousness.

What is my consciousness? It's an image, my consciousness is a movement-image, an image among other images. And my body? It too is a movement-image amid others, and equally my brain is no more than a movement-image amid others. No privilege is afforded to a consciousness, no more than it is afforded to a thing. None. All is movement-image, everything distinguishes itself according to the laws that regulate it and that regulate the rapports between the actions and reactions that take place in this universe.

So, I have already proposed this identity: image = movement. Bergson... and this is the theme, the general theme if you prefer of this first chapter. Here Bergson adds something extremely important: not simply image = movement but image = movement = matter.

In my view, this isn't easy to ... -- although in a certain sense it goes without saying -- yet in another sense it's very difficult. There are, if you like, two possible readings we can make of this. We can just go with it; it's wholly convincing as it is; we can just take it and reflect on it. It's still convincing but we need to understand why it is so. I think in order to grasp this triple identity we have to... we have to proceed like a chain of dominos. First of all, what we have to do is to show, as I'm trying to do right now, this first identity, that of movement-image, after which the identity of matter will follow on naturally from this movement-image identity. It's because image is equal to movement that matter is equal to movement-image.

In fact, what we will call matter is this universe of movement-images. It's this universe of movement-images insofar as they are in relations of action and reaction with one another. What does this mean? And why do matter and image combine so well?

By definition, matter is *that which does not contain virtuality*. In matter, Bergson tells us, there is nothing hidden. This may look strange at first glance, but once we see what he is saying, it becomes completely obvious, it's self-evident. There is nothing hidden in matter... But wait! There are thousands of things that we don't see. What I mean to say by that is that we can't see everything that matter contains. To do so, we need tools that are more and more complex, more and more scientific. To be able to see things in matter. Okay, fine, nobody's denying this.

But according to Bergson there is one thing that I know as an *a priori*, as independent of experience... it's that if, in matter, there may be much more than what one sees, there is nonetheless *nothing beyond, nothing other than what one sees*. It's in this sense that matter has no virtuality. Meaning that within matter there is nothing other than, and there can be nothing other than, movement. So of course, there are movements that I don't see. And this brings us back to the preceding theme. There may be images that I don't perceive, but this doesn't mean that they are not images in the way Bergson defines the image.

The image does not at all refer to consciousness for the simple reason that consciousness is an image among others.

So, you see, proceeding in order, by a kind of order of reasons, we should say the following: I begin by showing the equality between image and movement and it is from this equality of image and movement that I conclude, and that I am justified in concluding, the equality of matter with the movement-image.

So here we are now with our triple identity. Today I will pause at certain moments to permit you all to react. And considering how I've begun by outlining the general theme, I will add something to this in the hope that it will help you better understand this Bergsonian point of view.

This triple identity of image-movement-matter... it's like, one could say, it's like the infinite universe of a universal variation: these actions and reactions in perpetuity. Once more, it's this that I want you to try and understand – it's very simple, it isn't the image that acts *upon* other images and it isn't the image that reacts *to* other images... it's the image, in all its parts and on all its sides, *that is in itself action and reaction*, meaning vibration and shock.

If you can understand all of this, I think the question I have just posed now is fully justified. That is, *from what point of view* is Bergson able to discover this universe of the movement-image? A universe that you can consider as the most obvious thing in the world and at the same time as the strangest world you could imagine. A kind of *splashing* of movement-images.

Ok, so he asks this himself in the texts that comprise the first chapter... you'll see the way he asks this question. He says: "But what is this point of view?" And, finally, he says: It's the point of view of common sense. Because when you think about it, common sense doesn't reside in the duality of consciousness and things. Common sense knows perfectly well that we seize, as Bergson says, something that is *more than representations and less than things*. Common sense takes place in an intermediary world between things that would remain opaque to us and representations that would be interior to us.

So, he says, this universe of the movement-image in which we are enmeshed and of which we are part is fundamentally the point of view of common sense. Yet obviously that's not the way it is. No. It's not at all the point of view of common sense. On the contrary, what seems clear to me - and in this sense I repeat my question, which until now had remained somewhat marginal, with added emphasis: what he's describing, this universe of the movement-image: isn't it precisely *a universe... a world of cinema*? It's not the point of view... it's not the point of view of common sense. Wouldn't it rather be *the point of view taken by the camera*? Actually, this question will only fully make sense later on... what I want to say for the moment is simply: an infinite universe of universal variations – this would be the set of movement-images.

Which brings me to the question: Might I not define this universe as a kind of mechanism? Or by means of a kind of mechanism? Action and reaction. It's clear that it has a very strict rapport with the idea of a mechanism, which is to say that there is no notion of finality in this universe. It is what and how it is, both in terms of its emergence and its appearance. It has neither reason nor aim. Why those images rather than others? Well, that's just the way it is. For Bergson, moreover,

such a question makes no sense. He will devote entire pages to showing why there should be this rather than something else and, at the limit, why there should be something rather than nothing. And why these questions that are so important to metaphysics are, in his view, devoid of sense.

So, this universe appears to be the kind of universe that we could call mechanical. But in reality, it's not at all like this. Why is it that, literally and strictly speaking, this universe cannot be considered a mechanical universe? This universe of the image, of movement-images... It's because, if we take seriously the concept of mechanism, I believe it corresponds to three criteria that Bergson himself elucidated very well.

First criterion: The establishment of closed systems, of artificially closed systems. A mechanical relation implies a closed system to which it refers and within which it unfolds.

Second characteristic of a mechanical system: It implies immobile sections of movement. It brings about immobile sections in movement, namely the state of the system at the *instant 't'*.

Thirdly: It implies actions of contact that direct the process insofar as it takes place within the closed system.

So, as we have already seen in our previous investigations, we've seen how Bergson develops a whole theory of closed systems. We've seen this sufficiently well to be able to reach a fairly rapid conclusion: whatever importance the closed system has for Bergson, the universe of movement-images is not itself a closed system. So, this is the first difference it has vis-à-vis a mechanical system. It's not at all a closed system, it's an open universe. And yet... and here I'm speaking for those of you who remember certain notions that we've already looked at... and yet we must not confuse it with what Bergson in *Creative Evolution* called the "Whole", the Whole that is open in the sense of duration.

So, there we have three notions that we have to distinguish: artificially closed systems, for which I propose we employ the word *set* (*ensemble*). A *set* would be an artificially closed system; secondly, the *Whole* or each Whole that is fundamentally of the order of duration; and now we have a third notion that we should take care not to confuse with either the first or the second notion. For this, I wish to employ the word *universe*. The universe would designate the set of movement-images insofar as they act upon and react to one another.

So, this universe of movement-images... I would just say that it isn't a universe of the mechanistic type since it is not inscribed within a closed system.

Second point: it doesn't proceed by way of immobile sections of movement. It actually proceeds by way of movements, and if, as we have already seen, movement in its turn is the section of something, nonetheless we shouldn't confuse the immobile section of a movement with movement itself as a section of duration. So, in the universe of movement-images the only sections are the movements themselves, namely the facets of the image, the sides of the image. This therefore is a second way in which it differs from a mechanistic system.

Third difference: the universe of movement-images completely excludes actions of contact, or rather *it completely exceeds* actions of contact. In what sense? In the sense that the actions an image undergoes extend as far and to such a distance as one wishes? In relation to what? In relation to the corresponding vibrations.

And here, it's very strange -- it's important that I remind you of this, in terms of the detail of the text that Bergson, who so strongly critiqued the sections that are brought about in movement -- and here we would expect what he often cites as an example of these immobile sections that are produced in movement: the atom.²

The atom would typically be an immobile section produced within movement. But never, never does Bergson invoke the atom when speaking about immobile sections. Why not? It's because he has a conception that is extremely, extremely... and he never puts the atom in question in his critique. It's that for him the atom is something of which he has extremely complex conception. Namely that the atom is always inseparable from a flux. The atom is always inseparable from a wave, a wave of action that it receives and a wave of reaction that it emits. Never does Bergson conceive of the atom as an immobile section. He conceives it just as one should, namely as a corpuscle that is in strict relation to waves, that has an inseparable relation with waves, or else he conceives it as a center that is inseparable from lines of force. In this sense, for Bergson the atom is fundamentally not a section produced within movement but is itself a movement-image.

So, this is why, for the above three reasons, I may say that the universe of movement-images deserves to be called a universe, since it cannot be reduced to a mechanistic system. And yet it excludes all finality. It excludes all notion of aim. And what is more, it excludes all reason. Hence the need to find a term that would fully distinguish the specificity of this universe of movement-images. This is why here, once again, the word *machinic* seems necessary, not at all to use a barbaric term, but because we require a term that can account for this specificity of the movement-image universe.

I would say that what we have here is not a mechanistic or a mechanical universe but rather a *machinic* universe. It's the machinic universe of movement-images. So, what is the advantage of using the word "machinic" here? It's that this word enables us to affirm the triple identity image = movement = matter.

Therefore, I could define the universe more precisely as the *machinic arrangement or assemblage of movement-images*. And, once again, here the question I put to one side pursues me: Isn't cinema precisely this, or a part of cinema? Isn't cinema in terms of a quite general definition – a very partial one, I'm not saying it's the only definition we could give cinema... Couldn't we say, yes, it's the machinic assemblage of movement-images?

What is so surprising here? What is so astonishing about this first theme? What seems to me quite astonishing in this first theme, and here I wish to conclude this first point...what seems to me quite astonishing in this first theme is that never, as far as I am aware, had it been shown before that *an image is at the same time material and dynamic* – although actually in somewhat different terms it could also be said that Bachelard, taking up the question of the imagination in

his own way and through other means, arrived at the idea that it was in essence both material and dynamic.

Anyway, this idea is affirmed with extraordinary force in Bergson's first chapter. The image *is* material and dynamic reality. And what is so extraordinary about this? If you read all the texts Bergson wrote prior to *Matter and Memory* and then if you read most or all of the texts written after *Matter and Memory*, you will find yourself... you will find yourself in a well-known field, which is that of Bergsonism. And if I try to define Bergsonism, well it's actually quite simple. At first glance it's not that hard. On the one hand you have space and on the other you have true movement and duration.

In this sense the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* represents an incredible breakthrough because it says, or at least appears to say, something completely different. Because he tells us that *true movement is matter*. And *movement-matter is the image*. He makes absolutely no mention of the question of duration. And he introduces us to a very special universe that for the sake of convenience I will call the machinic assemblage... the machinic assemblage of movement-images. And this first chapter represents such a breakthrough for Bergsonism that the question, for those who have read the books Bergson would publish both before and in the wake of this is: How is that such an incredibly advanced peak of thought can be reconciled with the prior and following books?

But here, and only here in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, we bear witness to a redistribution of the old dogmas, on account of this discovery of a material universe of movement-images. To the point that, you understand, the problem of extension isn't even posed. When I say, for example, that the image is movement on all its sides, we might ask: But how many sides does an image have? How many dimensions and so on? This question is one Bergson doesn't even pose. Why not? For a very simple reason, which is that extension is not what is at stake here, since extension is in matter and not the reverse. What counts is the triple identity image = movement = matter. This triple identity defines what we can now call the material universe or the machinic assemblage of movement-images. The machinic universe of movement-images.

So, if much later we say, maybe cinema... maybe this is what cinema is... it's the assemblage of movement-images. We might also ask if there is anything else involved... What does a specific assemblage consist of? Perhaps at that point we will need in a quite different way to reconvene Bergson, to use Bergson again.

So here we have the first point, which is, to state it clearly, the general theme because... because it's a bit like a novel, this stuff is like the novel... actually it's more beautiful than the novel because... because in this universe, in this machinic universe of movement-images that act and react upon each other in perpetual vibration, in perpetual shock... they are vibrations, that's what images are.

So finally, something is about to happen... and yet what I've just described is merely the general theme of the first chapter. But in this world, something extraordinary will emerge... and this will be our second theme. What is it that's going to happen in the first chapter, once we have

established the definition of the universe of movement-images or their material assemblage... or rather the material universe of movement-images or the machinic assemblage of movement images... what is it that can now emerge in this universe? What can take place in such a universe? Beyond the perpetual splash of images?

So, you see that anxiety is approaching... what might happen here? All this will only be of any value if we manage to advance, if this helps us to advance, that is, if something actually occurs in this universe.

What time is it? [A student: 11.20 AM] Well then, I still have to pass by the secretary's office. So that's it for the moment. I'll make a short pause here so you can comment, but I have to say what interests me here are neither objections nor any else of the kind... because your objections, if you have any, can only be of interest later on.

What interests me right now is whether or not this point is sufficiently -- try to put yourselves in this state, so you'll have to do a lot of blinking, it's an almost hypnagogic state, this universe of movement-images. -- Once again, I would suggest... isn't this the state we enter into when we're just about to start watching a film at the cinema? And of course, you tell yourself: don't forget you're not outside this universe, since you yourself are a little movement-image. You receive actions, you emit reactions. You are an image among others. And if you feel like saying: "Wait, it's not true, I am a *special* image" -- for the moment, at least, it's not the case. Perhaps something will happen that will transform us into special images, but for the moment there is nothing of the kind. You're just one little splash among others. You are a vibration, you are vibrations among other vibrations. And no one vibrates in quite the same way.

What a beautiful universe! Yes, a glance, a vibration, a glance is a vibration, isn't it? It's an image... an image. It's a movement... a movement-image. Good. Is all this quite clear now or do I have to go back over certain points? It's important that it's clear, not clear in the sense... it's important that it's clear in terms of the clarity of intelligence but also in terms of a clarity of feeling.

A student: Can I ask a question?

Deleuze: Yes, even if I'm a bit skeptical, because your questions are usually too difficult, too... but yes, go ahead and ask.

The student: [*Inaudible question; regarding how perception emerges in this context*]

Deleuze: In this universe of movement-images, this machinic universe of movement-images... how is it that perception arises? For the moment, there is no perception or, which amounts to the same thing, everything is perception. And we shall see in what sense... everything is perception. But for the moment I haven't yet introduced the category of perception. Regarding this first theme, I have introduced only the categories of image, movement and matter.

Another student: [*Inaudible question; on the place of communication within this context*]

Deleuze: Yes, this a situation that we could well imagine, but it certainly isn't our situation. Though once again, I haven't yet stated what our situation is. But what you are referring to certainly relates to the situation of the universe. Images. Movement-images that act and react. So yes, there is communication but only in the sense of action and reaction. And that's all. It's a completely blind universe. How will communication or perception arise? This is actually going to be our second topic.

Georges Comtesse: When you speak, for example, of Bachelard's conception of dynamic imagination... How do you explain that Bachelard also speaks about dynamic imagination in *The Poetics of Reverie*... and yet he explicitly states that the function of the image, of dynamic imagination, is essentially the return to the permanence of an immobile, timeless childhood outside the movement of history... How do you square this dynamism of the imagination with the notion of permanence and immobility?

Deleuze: Listen, that seems to me a bit too intricate a question, because... or rather it concerns Bachelard's own thought. So, let me state this clearly: Bachelard is, in my view, not really a Bergsonian thinker. What I mean to say by that is that at a certain level in his theory of imagination he borrows from Bergson, because – and he quite freely admits this – he needs... he has need of this kind of Bergsonian intuition, namely the image's rapport with matter and dynamism. But at the same time, he will take this up in his own fashion. And the way Bachelard goes on to develop this idea has really nothing to do with Bergson. And in my view, this isn't really our subject anyway. But if the question you pose is a more general question about immobility, I would just say that it's actually quite easy to conceive, for example, of immobility not as an intelligible state that would be necessary and sufficient in its own right, but as, let's say, an interrupted movement...

The need to consider immobility in terms of movement and not the reverse is something I think is very important, and in this sense, cinema offers us thousands of examples. A fixed close-up, does that pose any objection to the idea of the cinematographic image being a movement-image? Though we haven't really looked at them yet, these are the kind of things that at the same time go without saying and yet are also really interesting, although it seems to me patently obvious that if I happen to say that cinema is the movement-image and you say: "Ah, but in that case how do you account for the fixed close-up shot?" I don't think that would pose an enormous problem. It's not a serious objection.

Now, what was interesting in what you said there, is that a theory of the movement-image necessarily implies a conception of immobility, or better, of arrest. Because arrest is really movement in relation to immobility. And that is something we will no doubt encounter. Yes.

Comtesse: ... People who speak of a dynamic imagination, but in the end, if not always, there is a turning point in their thought, a certain quite profound belief in permanence and immobility. Very strangely, they do not place in relation, contrary to what you say, immobility and movement. It would appear there is an immobility; there really is a permanence to immobility. For example, Jung, [*unclear words*] he also talks, when he introduces the term rhizome, when Jung introduces the idea of a network of roots as rhizome, he expresses it in terms of

permanence. So, all the dynamism of mythical thought stops at some point in the belief in an origin of life, for example, an undifferentiated life.

Deleuze: That's indeed possible. That's still not the case for Bergson.

Comtesse: This is a very important philosophical question... [*Unclear comments*]

Deleuze: All this, all this... I don't know; what you are citing doesn't concern me, it doesn't concern our ongoing research. Perhaps, and we'd have to look into the case of Jung, we'd have to see. There, you pose an interesting question, but I think you would probably say the same thing about Bergson.

Comtesse: We'd have to see...

Deleuze: We would have to see... I agree with you.

Comtesse: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: There is a whole theory of immobility. We'll have to look at this, but I'll keep your question in mind. So, I'll just say quickly before I head off to the secretary's office for a minute, that our second theme will be... what occurs here, what can occur? But you have to understand the rules of the game, and these are rules of the utmost seriousness, they're the rules of the concept, which Bergson has given himself.

He said that matter doesn't contain any more than what it gives us... that there is nothing hidden in matter. So, to the question: "what is it that can occur in this material universe of movement-images or in the machinic assemblage of movement-images?" To answer this question, he cannot in any way resort to something that would not itself be part of movement. It's not a question of slyly slipping a new category into this universe that would suddenly let us show something, as though we were pulling a rabbit from a hat. Therefore, it is only in line with the givens of this universe of movement-images that, insofar as they act and react upon each other, something can happen. That's what's so good about it. It's a question of suspense, you know.

What's going to happen? Well, I'll tell you and then I'll give you time to reflect while I'm at the secretary's office. I'll tell you, this is what happens, which might seem like nothing much. Certain images, in this universe of movement-images, certain images embody a phenomenon of delay.

Here Bergson introduces nothing more than this notion of delay. What does he mean by delay? It's simple: delay means that at the level of certain images the action to which they are subjected is not immediately prolonged into a performed reaction. Between the action received and the resulting reaction there is an interval.

You see how prodigious this is, because the only thing he admits to is this interval of movement. But it's not his fault. That's just the way it is. He says: "Yes, in my movement-image universe there are intervals." Which is to say there are certain images... they are mere nothings, literally

speaking they are nothings. Between images are images that are constituted in such a way that between the action they receive and the reaction they emit, there occurs a time-lapse, an interval.

Without wishing to mix everything up, you may recall there are some pages of Vertov where he talks about cinema, and he says that what counts is not movement but the interval between movements.³ And so, cinema will frequently have to confront this problem of the interval.

What is it that happens between two movements? Well, at first glance, this question is simply not posed. There is never anything between two movements in the sense that an action received is prolonged in the reaction that it provokes. And this, this is the law of nature, in the vast majority of these... these parts. An action undergone is immediately prolonged in the reaction provoked. This even corresponds to what, in the animal realm, we will call the laws of reflexes. And in what we call a reflex action, you have the prolongation of a received excitation, that is, an action that is undergone and a reaction that is performed.

And yet here we have Bergson telling us that there are certain images that have no soul, you see how their superiority consists in their not having a soul, in their not having consciousness. They remain completely within the domain of movement-images, simply as though the action undergone and the reaction performed were distended. But what is there between the two? For the moment, nothing. An interval. A gap.

So, you will tell me that all this cannot be so important after all. But we will see what happens when we consider images of this type. But are there images of such a type? Which is to say, images that can be defined solely in terms of movement, of a delay in movement. Okay, I'll be back soon. [*Interruption of the recording*] [55:05]

Part 2

Do you mind closing the door? [*Pause; student noises*] You don't feel like working, is that it? [*Pause; student noises*] Oh well, whenever you want to recommence, I'm not going to push you... Oh, I hope you were watching the TV, the program on Glenn Gould, the pianist... [*A student whispers: those of you who have a TV*] Those of you who have a TV... What a genius! Glenn Gould, the pianist, what a prodigy of a pianist, magnificent, magnificent... Ah, my God! So, anyway...

There it is, nothing more? What do we need once again, nothing more than a small gap, a little interval, a little interval between two movements? And once more, here we have something that in no way resembles a consciousness, or some thing, or a spirit, no. What does this mean? So, you understand that it's already important that I take this statement literally: There would therefore be two sorts of images.

Firstly, you would have images that undergo actions and that react to these actions. Keep this in mind, because it will come in useful for us. Images... that undergo actions to which they immediately react in all their parts and on all their sides, that immediately react to the actions they undergo. On all their sides and in all their parts.

And then, there is another type of image which simply presents a gap between action and reaction. This permits us to refine our terminology... We will reserve the word “action” to refer to reactions that, strictly speaking, occur only after this gap. Regarding such images as those that react to the action they undergo, on condition of there being an interval between the two movements, we can say, strictly speaking, that they act. In other words, there is “action”, strictly speaking, when a reaction doesn't immediately follow the action undergone.

So that's all fine and good, it's what everyone calls action. If we were to look for a definition action, this would be a good definition. Why? Because it is a temporal definition. And in fact this is the great art of Bergson. Even when they don't appear to be, Bergson's definitions are always temporal. It is always in relation to time that he defines things or beings.

But let's try to understand this better. Because it's strange. I always have the impression that this matter is at once extraordinarily simple and devilishly complicated, I feel both things at the same time. And one doesn't negate the other. So, let's take an example. Quick, an example! An example of an image that involves this kind of gap. Okay, let's take my brain. I have a brain. It's an image, you recall, it's a movement-image, an image like any other, an image among others. And it's an odd image, this brain-image. Because what difference is there between the brain and the spinal cord? There are plenty of things we can say about this, for example we can look for structural definitions, that is to say, spatial definitions, of both the spinal cord and the brain. If we play the game of looking for temporal definitions, we could say that in the reflex act a shock received, an action undergone, is immediately prolonged through the intermediary. There is therefore an immediate concatenation without interval – it's still temporal but without an interval – let's put this in very general terms to simplify the matter. It goes without saying. Without an interval between the sensitive cells that receive the excitation and the motor cells of the spinal cord that trigger the reaction.

Okay, okay... I have a brain, I receive an excitation. Fine. All well and good. That is, I receive a movement, a shock I receive an excitation, but strangely enough, instead of this excitation received in a center of sensibility being immediately prolonged through a reaction that is triggered by a motor center of the spinal cord, what actually takes place is a *detour*. In saying all this, I'm still speaking in terms of movements. A detour takes place, that is, the excitation goes back up, but to what? It's a bit rudimentary as a schema but it helps us understand things clearly. The excitation goes back up to the cells of the encephalon, to the cortical cells, from where it comes back down to the motor cells of the spinal cord.

So, there you have a difference between a reflex action and a cerebral action. In the first case: shock received by the center of sensation, the sensitive center, the center of sensibility, immediate prolongation, reaction triggered by the motor center of the spinal cord. And then in the case of the cerebral action: first segment, the same thing happens but then it goes up to the encephalon cells and then comes back down to the motor center of the spine.

All this is pure movement. This is the delay, the delay or detour. The interval between the two movements has been seized by the detour of the movement. You understand. It begins by going up to the encephalon and then comes back down to the motor center of the spine. Why? What use does all of this have? What use is it?

So, we start to get a clearer picture. For the moment, I have introduced nothing more than movement, the gap, the interval between two movements or the detour that the movement undergoes. And you see how I can provide spatial definitions of the brain that are extremely complex, what you might call scholarly definitions. But after all, for the moment the philosopher or the metaphysician needs no more than a temporal definition of the brain. And our first temporal definition of the brain will be: a detour, no... a gap. The brain is itself a gap.

The brain is the gap. It's a gap between a movement received and a movement given back. A gap thanks to which a detour is produced, a detour of movement. And what does this imply? This gap, or detour... It implies three things. It will provide us with three aspects. Concomitantly it has three aspects.

First aspect: the special image, you see how the special image *is* the gap or the detour. So, there are special images which are thus endowed with this property of constituting a gap or detour. In terms of this first aspect, we cannot say that they are subjected to actions, no more than we can say that they receive excitations or undergo actions in all their parts or on all their sides. This was the case of the ordinary movement-image: a movement-image was one that received actions, was subjected to action in all its parts and on all its sides. In all its parts and its sides. But here, when there is a gap between the received movement and the executed movement, the very condition for such a gap to occur is that the received movement be localized. That the received excitation be localized.

In other words, the *special image* – I'll retain this term for the moment – the special image will be an image that *only in certain of its parts and on certain of its sides* receives the excitation that is exerted upon it and is subjected to the actions it receives. What does this mean? It means that when another image... that is when something other acts upon it, it retains only a part of the action of this other thing. There are things which traverse it. There are things that traverse the special image and towards which *it quite literally remains indifferent*. In other words, it retains only what is of interest to it. In fact, it retains only what it is able to seize in certain of its parts and on certain of its sides. So why does it retain this rather than that? Clearly it retains what is of interest to it.

Exposed to light -- to take a really childish example – exposed to light, the living being – and this of course varies with different living beings – retains only certain wavelengths and certain frequencies while the rest traverses it with no effect on its state of indifference. You see how here the opposition becomes extremely rigorous. The ordinary movement-image was once again an image that received an action and immediately emitted a reaction, which is to say in all its parts and on all its sides. Hence, the special image that presents this phenomenon of the gap only receives the action to which it is subjected on certain of its sides and in certain of its parts. Therefore, it permits much to escape... of the image or of the thing... it lets a lot slip away.

In other words, the first aspect of the gap, or the special image, will be its capacity to “select”, to select in terms of the excitation received or, if you prefer, to eliminate, to subtract. There will be certain things that the special image will let go of. An ordinary image, on the other hand, lets nothing escape. In fact, it receives, once again it receives on all its sides and in all its parts,

whereas the special image receives only in certain of its parts and on certain of its sides, what we could call its *privileged* parts.

So, it lets an enormous number of things get away. The way I won't be able to see beyond or below a certain wavelength or frequency. An animal will be able to see or hear, will feel things that I am not capable of feeling and so on. So, this is something you might want to expand on for yourselves if you wish... it's the first aspect of selection or elimination which will define the phenomenon of the gap, or this type of special image.

Secondly: let's consider the action received by what remains after I have made a selection... Insofar as I constitute a special image, I have selected the actions to which I was subjected, or if you prefer, my body has selected the actions to which I was subjected.

So now... Let's now consider what I have been subjected to in terms of action. What is it that happens? I am subjected to a shock, I am subjected to an action, I receive vibrations and so on... I no longer speak of what I have eliminated. I don't speak about what I have allowed to pass unnoticed. I speak only of what I retain, what I receive *on a privileged side*, what I receive in one of my parts. So, what happens now in terms of the action I am subjected to?

This will be the second aspect. In the reflex circuit, there's no problem, it is prolonged in the reaction that is performed through the intermediary of the motor centers. But here what we saw was that, on the contrary, there is a detour by way of the encephalon. But what does this detour imply? What does it do? What does it mean to speak of a detour through the encephalon? Everything occurs as though the received action, on arriving at the encephalon, which is an extremely complex machine, splits into an infinity of nascent paths. So, in order to simplify we can say that these paths are already preconfigured, there are many of them, but in reality, these are paths that reform all through the cortex, at every instant, and that are determined by electrical connections and so on. And by even more complex relationships of a molecular character, I mean there are all manner of relations taking place.

Everything happens as though the excitation received divided itself indefinitely, as in a sort of multiplicity of roughly delineated paths. Okay, here I'll make a little drawing to help you understand better. So here there's the reflex arc, good, and the reflex pathway... and here we have the received excitation, a segment, the sensitive cell that receives the excitation, the transmission to the spinal cord, the motor center of the spine, and the reaction produced. And here, on the contrary, we have the received excitation – so the first segment remains the same – that goes up to the encephalon and here it becomes... the excitation finds itself dividing into thousands of cortical pathways which are continually being modified. It's a division, a *multiple splitting* of the received excitation. So, this is what the brain does according to Bergson's description⁴.

It isn't hard to understand to what point this occurs, Bergson is telling us, but one thing the brain certainly doesn't do is introduce images. The images were already there. There was no need to introduce images. No, *the brain operates solely at the level of movement*. It divides a movement of received excitation into an infinite number of pathways.

Okay so this is the second aspect. I would say that what we have here is not a matter of selection or subtraction but of *division*. Thus, this is the second aspect of the gap. Before we saw how the gap produced a subtraction and elimination... non, a subtraction and a selection. Now it will produce a division of the received shock, the received excitation. So, we could say that the action undergone is no longer prolonged in an immediate reaction. Instead, it divides into an infinite number of nascent reactions. What is going on exactly? This is something we will need, so I'm going to introduce this concept now. Even if Bergson himself doesn't use this term, it's one that I am going to need. As we said, it's like a kind of division and it's also a kind of *hesitation*. It's almost *as if the received excitation hesitated*, as though it dipped one foot into one cortical pathway and another foot into another and so on... It's precisely what we call – what you have in geography when a river starts to... what's it called again? It's well known, oh come on! It's not possible that we all forget the same words at the same time, it's never the same words that we forget...

A student: Meanders?

Deleuze: No, it's not a meander... That's not what I'm talking about... A *delta*. That's what it is! A delta! You see, the brain is a delta.

Thirdly: thanks to this... thanks to this division and these subdivisions of the excitation received by the cortex, the division produced by the cortex...what's going to happen? When it comes back down to the motor center of the spinal cord, there can no longer be a prolongation of the received excitation, but rather what happens is a kind of integration of all the tiny nascent cerebral reactions. In other words, something radically new will appear with respect to the received excitation. This radically new something – with respect to the received excitation – is what we will call, strictly speaking, an *action*. And we will say that the third level will consist in this: that these are special images because, rather than enchaining their reactions to the excitation, they *choose* their actions. They *choose the reaction they will have with respect to the excitation*.

So here we have three quintessentially kinetic terms, kinetic in the sense that they are purely to do with movement. We haven't introduced anything remotely resembling spirit. These three kinetic terms that allow us to define the special image are: first, subtract/select; second, divide; third, choose.

So, you will tell me that choosing nonetheless implies consciousness and so on. Not at all! The always temporal definition that we can give to “choosing” on the basis of Bergson's texts is *to incorporate the multiplicity of nascent reactions such as they are produced or traced in the cortex*.

Therefore, I will say that a given image that is capable of selecting something from among the actions to which it has been subjected, of dividing the excitation it receives, and of choosing the action it will carry out on the basis of the received excitation. We could call this a *subjective image*. Note that it is entirely part of the realm of movement-images. It is wholly defined in terms of movement. So why *subjective* image? And what do we mean by *subject* here?

Here we shouldn't... We have to be extremely rigorous, otherwise everything will collapse. Here subject is no more than a word that designates the gap between action... pardon, between excitation and action. And I would say the subjective image is... but what does this gap mean in real terms? The gap simply defines a center that we would have to call a *center of indetermination*.

When there is a gap between the excitation received and the reaction that is carried out, we have a center of indetermination. What does this mean? It means that on the basis of the excitation received I cannot foresee what the reaction will be. And I would say that in this case we have a center of indetermination. What we call a subject is for the moment nothing more than this. It's a center of indetermination.

So, there you have it: the spatial definition that corresponds to the temporal reality of the subject. And by subject we mean something that is produced in the world, meaning in the universe of movement-images, which is to say, a center of indetermination. And how do we define this center of indetermination? We define it in temporal terms by the gap between the movement received and the movement carried out. This gap between the movement received and the movement carried out having three aspects: selection/subtraction, division, choice.

So this is the second idea in the first chapter, which leads us immediately to a third idea. What is the *connection* between these aspects? We said that the center of indetermination is defined by subtraction, etc., division and choice. But what is it that connects these three aspects?

And here we have my third problem concerning the first chapter. Okay, you don't have any difficulties with the second point? Everybody okay with that? It's meticulous... this part is extremely meticulous. I should try to go faster but that the same time I'm afraid that... Anyway, here it is. I'll tell you straight off what the concatenation of the aspect such that... But what does that mean exactly. Special images receive the actions of other images, but they do so in making a selection. Which is to say that they don't receive the *whole* of the action. They eliminate, in other words, these special images eliminate, on their own account, they eliminate... they eliminate for themselves certain parts, or even a large number of parts of the image that acts upon them, which is to say the object that acts upon them.

And in fact, this is well-known, it's practically a commonplace, but so much the better – we fall back on a commonplace, the well-known fact that *we actually perceive very little*. Which doesn't mean to say that we perceive badly, it's that we perceive very little. It would be silly to say we perceive badly or that what we perceive doesn't exist. All these old problems, they don't even exist for Bergson. And when we say, yes, we don't perceive very much, we can say that at the same time this is our strength because *that's what it means to have a brain*. And what do I mean by that? In reality, *we don't perceive enough*. Which is quite an interesting phrase if you stop to think about it.

It's that *to perceive is by definition not to perceive enough*. If I perceived everything, *I wouldn't be able to perceive*. Perceiving by its very nature consists in grasping something, yes that's what it is, grasping something, but grasping something while ignoring everything in it that is of no concern to me. And, in fact, in order to perceive – you see how the problem now becomes this:

how is it that special images are endowed with perception? It's obviously because they perform an operation of subtraction or selection. In this sense they are endowed with perception. They perceive something in certain of its parts – parts which are privileged – and on certain of its sides. And at the same time, they retain of the thing only what is of concern to them. They perceive the thing, yes, but *minus many of its elements*.

In other words: What is the perception of a thing? It is the thing once again minus all that doesn't concern me. It's the thing *minus* something. It's not the thing *plus* something. It's the thing *minus* something. To be able to perceive, I have to remove something. What's the first thing I remove? You recall that all movement-images are in communication with each other, but in all their parts and on all their sides. Which is to say that they exchange movement. They receive movement and they transmit movement. There aren't good conditions to be able to perceive. Not at all. It's clear that in the sense we give the word perception, they don't perceive things. The table doesn't perceive. There is no gap between the actions it receives and its reactions to them. It cannot select. Therefore, it doesn't perceive.

What is needed to be able to perceive? First of all, I have to cut out the thing around its edges. Indeed, I have to prevent it from communicating with other things in which its movements would otherwise dissolve. Or with which its movements would merge. As Bergson says, "I must isolate it". I have to make of it a kind of tableau. But it's not only around the edges that I must subtract in order to have a perception. It's in the thing itself, once again, I have to subtract everything that is of no concern to me. I compose my system of colors with the wavelengths and frequencies that concern me. It's only by limiting the thing... perception of a thing arises only through its limitation. If you can understand that, it's something that gives rise to what strikes me as a marvelous idea. A stupendous idea. Which is what?

Which is... well, what difference is there – here you have my problem – what difference is there between the thing and perception of the thing? Here we're at the very heart of the cause of classical psychology's difficulties. Which have absolutely nothing to do with what Bergson is trying to say. Nothing, they have absolutely nothing in common. Because, when other philosophers said this, what they meant was that, in the end, things become confused with the perceptions I have of them. Or that there are no things without the perceptions I have of them.

Bergson is in no way saying this. He means that *things are in themselves perceptions*. In other words, *a thing is a movement-image*. It unceasingly receives actions and performs reactions... or has reactions. I can equally well say that all the actions to which it is subjected – it is subjected to actions in all its parts – and all the reactions it performs – it performs reactions in all its parts... I can equally well say: *The set of actions to which it is subjected and reactions it performs are perceptions*.

I would say: the thing is a total perception of all that it is subjected to and all that it performs. A splendid expression comes to mind of a philosopher who wasn't at all a Bergsonian, but whose own thought is wholly original, to whom I've already made a number of allusions... Alfred North Whitehead. An idea Whitehead had in the same period, that "things are prehensions". Things are *prehensions*. In fact, theyprehend – in the sense of taking or seizing – they seize upon... Prehension is at the same time perception and this seizing upon. They seize upon all the

actions they receive and all the reactions they perform. But I would say also that they seize upon these in the conditions I have outlined, in all their parts and on all their sides. So, I would say... *each thing is a total perception*. Which is why it is not a simple perception. I would call it a *prehension*.

There is a very simple word, a word that has enjoyed considerable success in philosophy, it's the distinction between... it's quite difficult to express orally because... you'll soon realize why... but it's clear when you see it written down. To distinguish... there are many philosophers of all kinds who have made a distinction between *prehensions* and *apprehensions*. Prehension being like a sort of unconscious perception, a kind of micro-perception and apprehension being a conscious perception. So I repeat: *Things are total perceptions* – which is to say *prehensions*.

My perception of a thing. What is it? It's the same thing. The same thing *minus* something. It's a partial prehension. An apprehension. It's not, as other philosophers believed, a prehension *plus* a synthesis of consciousness. We have to say that a conscious apprehension or a conscious perception is a perception *minus* something, which is to say, a partial prehension. I perceive the thing as it is *minus* something, minus many things, minus everything that is of no concern to me.

But what does this mean, “of no concern to me”? You see it's on account of this that things are prehensions or *total* perceptions, while my perceptions of things are *partial* perceptions, and this is why they are conscious.⁵

What a strange belittling of consciousness! After all, perfect perception, perception itself is the atom. The atom has as much perception, and extends its perception as far, as both the actions it receives and the reactions it performs. Total perceptions are those of chemical bodies. Total prehensions are those that pertain to molecules. Molecules are total prehensions. Atoms are total prehensions.

But as for myself... What I call my perception is something of which I make my privilege, and I'm right in doing this because my perception is precisely a set of partial prehensions. In other words, *perception is the thing itself minus something*. From where the Bergsonian overturning arises. The reversal performed by Bergson, which it seems to me is a truly prodigious overturning... I had already spoken about it in opposition to Phenomenology... consists in his repeatedly saying: but you know, it's not your consciousness that is a little light and things await your consciousness in order to be illuminated. It's not that. Things have never awaited your eye.

This is all quite odd for an author who has been so routinely tarred, beginning with the Marxists, by accusations of idealism and spiritualism. This first chapter is very odd indeed. Things have never been waiting for us, they have never awaited the arrival of man. Not at all. So, what is it that happens? It's that things are light. He says this in his own way, it's his own peculiar romanticism. *Light is not in our souls but in things*. And what about consciousness? It's not a beam of light like an electric torch we would carry with us into a dark room. It's just the reverse. *It's consciousness which is a black screen*.

And this black screen, what is it? It's the center of indetermination. That is, it's the fact that in a thing there are many which are of no concern to me. Here is the splendid page where Bergson

performs this complete reversal of the ordinary metaphor attributed to light ... so *it's things which are luminous, and we who are obscure*.

So you will realize that while phenomenology once again may have had many new things to contribute to the conception of relation between consciousness and things, it nonetheless remained entirely within the thinking of the old metaphor, namely that it is consciousness which is luminous and things which are obscure. As for intentionality – the phenomenologists had the idea that it was the rapport between light-consciousness and things, with things being raised from their depths. Whereas for Bergson, this wasn't at all the case.

So here is the Bergson text that seem to me one of the finest in this first chapter: “Only if when we consider any other given place in the universe, we can regard the action of all matter as passing through it without resistance and without loss, and the photograph of the whole as translucent” (*Matter and Memory*, pp. 38-39)

This is the case with total perception-images, they are movement-images. As Bergson will say in another text, “Photography is in things”. Photography is in things, things are total perceptions, or they are total prehensions. “The photograph, if photograph there be, is already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all the points of space”.⁶

Except that it is translucent. Why is it translucent? Precisely because these things never cease to vary, and to pass into one another at the same time as they receive actions and perform reactions. “Here there is wanting behind the plate the black screen on which the image could be shown” (*Matter and Memory*, p. 39). Isn't the special image, which is to say what each of us bears in the universe of movement-images, precisely this black screen on which the image could be shown, meaning so that the selection can be made.

“Our *zones of indetermination* play in some sort the role of the screen. They add nothing to what is there...” In other words, perception is not something more, something extra... “They add nothing to what is there; they effect merely this: that the real action passes through, the virtual action remains” (*Matter and Memory*, p. 39). In a minute I will explain what virtual action is.

To the extent that Bergson is able to propose the following thesis about or around the subject of perception: *We perceive things where they are*. What's more perception is in things.

You now see what I meant when I said that it's not “All consciousness is consciousness of something” but rather “All consciousness is something”. It is the thing that is the total prehension, the total prehension both of what happens to it and of everything it does. The atom... how do we define the atom? We define the atom as the prehension of all that happens to it and all that it does. Or the molecule, it makes no difference.

So, perception is in things, and in order to perceive we truly place ourselves “in things”. We necessarily place ourselves in things since we... *we are nothing more than a center of indetermination*. Just that in things we perform an act of subtraction. We only retain the part of the thing that concerns us. In what we call our perception... it's not the “our” which counts because the perception is not *ours*. Perception distinguishes itself from the thing on because it

constitutes a partial prehension, whereas the thing itself is a total prehension.⁷ It is a partial prehension because we don't receive the thing in its totality in the place it occupies. We only receive a small part of the thing's actions and we only react to these after a delay. Hence Bergson's formulas: "It is really in P, and not elsewhere, that the image of P is formed and perceived". And again: "The very qualities of things, perceived first in the things rather than in us". And another formula: "The coincidence of perception with the object perceived exists in theory rather than in fact".⁸

Why *in fact*? Of course, it exists *in fact*, since things are already total perceptions. However, the coincidence of perception with the object perceived doesn't exist *in fact* simply because our perception is in fact the thing minus all that doesn't concern us. There is always more in the thing than in perception of it. From where Bergson derives the idea that photography, like light, is in things and that what we bring to the equation is precisely the black screen without which the image could not be shown, and as such, would never cease to pass into other images. To the extent that we would be thrown back into a world of total prehensions where nothing can be seized, and no perception can appear. In other words – and here I'm just introducing this idea because I will only be able to explain it later – it is clearly on the basis of these centers of indetermination that we are, that solid constellations can be formed.

Therefore, my perception is clearly the perception of what is *solid*. Because the isolated movement-image, insofar as we retain only the part of its action that concerns us, is precisely what we would call a *solid*. Whereas total prehension – which is at one with the thing – is necessarily of things that are *liquid*, or even worse, *gaseous*. And it's clear that the universe is not solid, it is liquid and gaseous, profoundly gaseous. Ah, so... why is this of concern to cinema? This is going to be of very great concern to the nature of the cinematographic image... but this is something I can't go into yet.

So what I would like to do is to finish this... you're not too tired? Because this is a very important point. You see that... this is what he would say, that between the thing and perception of the thing – or between the thing and my perception of the thing – there exists only a difference in degree. I perceive things where they are, it's just that what I perceive of things is actually *the thing minus many things, minus all that is of no concern to me*.

And so... because I really have to finish this up... Would you like a couple of minutes to rest, without going out or else, can I continue? I can continue, because it's clear that you're full of stamina... This is hard, all this. Hence... What time is it? [Several answers] 12.40? So those who want to leave, could they please leave now, so as not to cause a disturbance? So, there we are, there we are, there we are, there we are...

So, what does it mean to retain only the part of thing that is of concern to me? You see, for the moment what I have is this: To perceive is a partial prehension, that is to say, it is to seize the thing where it is minus all that is of no concern to me.

Second determination. Second determination: What does it mean to say that I seize the thing in... [An outside noise keeps repeating, disturbing Deleuze] Ah, ah, ok, ok, ok, ok... And I'm getting mixed up... Ah, ok... [Pause] Yes, yes, yes... What does it mean the fact that I retain only the

part of the thing that concerns me? It means letting go of much of the thing's real action upon us. And what does our conscious perception let go of, in terms of the thing's real action upon us?

This is how it goes. "Oh, I didn't see that..." the phenomenon of distraction. This will be crucial for us. "Oh, I didn't see that... I didn't see. And yet I could *feel* something below the level of consciousness..."

Very well. There is an unconscious at work. But at this moment, isn't it already something through which I experience perception of a molecular type, namely total prehensions, that do not come to my conscious awareness? But in the end, okay... I let go of a lot of things, but at least this has one advantage. I let go of much of the thing's real action upon me. But, on the other hand, *I reflect the thing from the perspective of its virtual action upon me.*

In other words, *I perceive from a distance.* What I perceive in the end, thanks to all these eliminations and selections, is the thing *before it reaches me.* The virtual action of the thing upon me. I do not exit from the domain of action in exactly the same way as the optical model. When there is no refraction, which is to say when the mediums through which light rays pass are in a relation of density that blocks refraction, we have a phenomenon that we call *reflection.* In optical terms – which are not at all those of consciousness – Bergson will say of perception that it is a phenomenon of reflection. That is, what it will grasp is the virtual image of the thing.

And perception from a distance is precisely this grasping of the thing's virtual image. Which means that as I have been very selective in the thing's action upon me, I have at least gained the perception of a virtual action. Which is to say that *what I retain of the thing's real action upon me I perceive from a distance before it occurs.* Therefore, I can already define a perception-image by means of two aspects:

Firstly, I would say that a perception image is an image minus something. It's an image that has undergone the selection and subtraction process that we've just seen. And this is the first aspect. It is thus isolated from other images and no longer fuses with them through the reciprocal play of their actions and reactions.

Second aspect: The perception-image is an image that presents a thing's virtual action upon me.

Third aspect, which follows from the second... All the better, as it will allow me to go faster. You will see in the text, it's quite clearly stated. Therefore, it's an image that also presents my possible action upon the thing. As Bergson never repeats saying, perception is sensory-motor in nature. So, this is what I was seeking, namely, the three aspects of what we may now call the subjective-image or perception-image.

It's the image in itself minus something, it's the image insofar as it presents the virtual action of the thing upon me, and thirdly it's the image insofar as it presents or shows my possible action upon the thing. So, can you keep going for another fifteen minutes? If you could keep going for another fifteen minutes, that would be great... What I'm trying to define with this is: In the universe, or – to go back to my expression of before, as it will be useful later on – in my

assemblage, my machinic assemblage of movement-images, I defined a first type of image which arises in this universe: the *perception-image*.

Then there will be a second type of image – and if you have followed me so far, you will have already understood this, since it was already prefigured and pre-announced by the first type. This second type of image I would call – in line, I presume, with Bergson's text – no longer the perception-image but the *action-image*. Because in fact the existence in the universe of movement-images, the existence of centers of indetermination, implied not only that there were perceptions but also that there were, strictly speaking, actions... since reactions no longer automatically followed on from the actions undergone, but there was instead a choice, which is to say the formation of something new that we could call *action*. So, this was already included in perception and in fact these action-images were already taking shape in the world of perception if we can accept the idea that the perception-image is not defined solely in negative terms.

The perception image is not defined only negatively, in which case it would be the image in itself minus something. It is also defined – in accordance, I would say, with Bergson's text but you will see all this for yourselves... you have to read it – it's also defined by a kind of *curvature* that the machinic universe assumes. Once you have introduced a number of centers of indetermination into the universe of movement-images, everything proceeds as though this universe has undergone a curvature.

Why is this? It's that once you introduce centers of indetermination, which is to say, subjects – since the subject, as we saw, is nothing other than a center of indetermination – this is by itself sufficient to give rise to perception, this is by itself sufficient to give rise to action. I am saying that this necessarily introduces a curvature in the universe of movement-images. But why? It's because from the moment you have a center of indetermination at your disposal, your machinic universe, your material universe of movement-images, begins to run along two different lines.

There are two systems at work. A first system is that of the images in themselves that pass into one another and so on, and which is defined as follows: At every instant all the images vary both for themselves and in relation to one another. At every instant all the images vary both for themselves and in relation to one another. That goes without saying. [*Pause*]

But once there are centers of indetermination – and here we have the second system which coexists with the first, which doesn't suppress it but really coexists with it... Here we should add that with regard to the second system, which is to say, with regard to the center of indetermination – you see how the two are not in contradiction – with regard to the center of indetermination all the images vary in relation to a privileged image. The world curves, it bends itself around a center of indetermination. And in fact, it will extend perception to it, it will give it objects to perceive according to an order which is that of distance, and as Bergson says in a splendid phrase: *my perception is master of space in as far as my action is master of time.*⁹

The last object in this sense is the object which is most in the depths – although depth arises as relation. The universe of images... images themselves were formerly without depth just as matter was without virtuality. Depth begins to rise from the moment that the set of images starts to vary in relation to specialized or privileged images that are defined as centers of indetermination.

At that moment, with regard to this center, a given object-image may be more or less far, one further away, another nearer... and it is this which will define the order of the objects' virtual action upon me, but it will also define... what is the closest or the most menacing object or else that which I can seize hold of, and thus... it will permit me to define the order of my possible action upon things.

You see that this second aspect – the curvature that the universe assumes – will form the basis of what is, strictly speaking, a logic of action. It will provide... or rather it will entirely encroach upon perception, all of this becomes mixed. Keep in mind the idea that these two types of images become extremely mixed. Yet I would say that in the world of perception, the curvature of space introduces us to and induces us to pass from a first type of image, namely the *perception-image* to a second type, namely the *action-image*. Action-images that are doubly defined by the virtual action of things upon me and by my possible action upon things... where, as always, the word “me” indicates a center of indetermination and nothing more.

We have introduced absolutely nothing other than movement. So, there we have the second type of image: the action-image. There are other kinds that we can look for... yes there are other kinds. There's still one more to account for. Of course, one could ask oneself if there are yet others, but I think, I think... no, we shouldn't go into that now. So, there it is.

There's one more point I'd like you to understand. Many things traverse me. In the action that things exert upon me there are many things that simply pass, to which I am indifferent. They don't affect me, they don't concern me. In compensation I perceive, which is to say I retain what concerns me, I apprehend the virtual action of things upon me. At least some of it... I apprehend the virtual action of things upon me within the frame of what concerns me. Yet this doesn't mean that things will necessarily bend to my particular curvature of the universe, to my register of things' virtual action upon me, or of my possible action upon things. As Bergson says, one needs *time*. And all this comes from the phenomenon of the temporal gap. But things press upon me, movement-images protest, they protest against the center of indetermination images. Why should they bear this gap and not... something that strikes me at the very heart, that hits me in the face and so on.

In other words, there are real actions that occur, and when a real action occurs what does this mean? The thing assaults me, penetrates my body or at least touches it, inscribes itself upon it. And so, okay... we have a real action. In that case the distance is annulled. We are no longer in the realm of my possible action upon things and the real action of things... sorry, the virtual action of things upon me. We are in the domain of something that has passed beneath the grid of selection, namely the real action of things, the real action of things on my body. Ah, a deafening noise. That perforates my eardrums! But what is this exactly? The real action of things on me occurs in my body and upon my body. If I perceive it, I will perceive it where it is, where it takes place. A minute ago, I said that I perceived things where they are... when the thing reacts on my body and becomes confused with a part of my body *it is upon my body that I perceive what is in question*.

And what is it, this something which is in question? What is this apprehension of real actions that penetrate my body? You see how it's no longer things that traverse me in total indifference... it's, as one says, things that *affect* my body in abolishing all perceptual distance. *I no longer perceive, I feel.* I no longer perceive, *I feel.* And, in the same way that I perceived things in things where they were, *I now perceive that I feel* or I feel what I feel where it occurs, namely upon and in my body. And this is what we call *affection*.

So, you see... here we have a third type... Indeed, Bergson will underline that there is a difference – whereas there was no difference in nature between the thing and perception of the thing... on the contrary there is a difference in nature between the thing and affection, between perception and affection...

Do you understand? And how do we explain this very privileged status that affection has? Here Bergson tells us something quite simple: The price these centers of indetermination had to pay... what did they have to sacrifice in order to establish the gap, the interval which brought so many new things into the universe of movement-images? They had to – this is what we saw – that *certain of their parts had to become specialized in reception*, in the reception of excitations. Certain of their sides had to be sacrificed to make them into purely receptive sides. They had to sacrifice certain of their parts to give them a purely receptive role. In other words, they immobilized... these special images, to put it in quite simple terms, had to immobilize certain of their parts in order to make them into sensory organs. So what happened was a kind of division of labor between the immobilized sensory parts and the motor parts. This was the brain's ransom.

What is an affection? When the thing reaches my body, which is to say when it really acts upon my body, the affection that is seized on this very same body is the *protest of the immobilized parts*.

That's a very nice definition of affection: it's the protest, the claim of the organic parts that have been immobilized. That's what affection is. In other words, it's the effort of the immobilized parts of my image, meaning of the image that I am, to reclaim movement for themselves. So this could be an affection of joy or else of sadness – these are different things that we have to distinguish according to the case. And the splendid definition that Bergson proposes is: What is an affection? It is a “motor tendency in a sensory nerve” (*Matter and Memory*, p. 55). It's *a motor tendency in a sensory nerve*. To the best of my knowledge this is the finest definition of affection ever expressed in philosophy. It is a motor tendency... so as to fully understand it, imagine you have a toothache. So, your toothache is a motor tendency in a sensory nerve. A fantastic definition, I would say.

But also... what is falling in love, if not a motor tendency in a sensory nerve? This definition covers the whole domain of affections. To the extent that we could say, we could very well say... I'm trying to think how I can expand on this... There is in us a part that isn't simply a receptive part of our organism, but that perpetually gives shape to the effort of a motor tendency in a sensory nerve. It's the face. The face.

So why is the face the affective image par excellence? And why will cinema make the close-up of the face the affective image par excellence? It's obvious. In other words... so I can now

conclude. I can conclude... if you like, everything we've covered today is... hence, here's a text that won't surprise you, where Bergson says: Affections in the end are what interpose themselves in the gap between excitation and reaction. Which is to say what interpose themselves in the gap between the received perception, or better the selected perception, and the derived reaction.

That's what it is, affection is what comes to fill the gap in my very body. To the extent that – and here I summarize, because this will be our starting point next time – so let me just say that the principal content of the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* is in my view the following:

First proposition: There is a material universe of movement-images. There...

Second proposition: The conditions of this material universe of movement-images are such that distributed within it are centers of indetermination and that these centers of indetermination are defined purely by the gap between the movement received and the movement produced.

Third proposition: With respect to these centers of indetermination... with respect to these centers of indetermination, movement-images will be divided into three types that we can call – Bergson doesn't use these words as such, but you will find that this is what he means – that we can call: *perception-image*, *action-image*, *affection-image*. These three types truly being images different in kind from one another. To the extent that the assemblage of movement-images, the material assemblage of movement-images, the machinic assemblage, the universe... could in the end be defined as follows: as the set of movement-images insofar as they necessarily give rise – with respect to centers of indetermination – to perception-images, action-images and affection-images.

So, for next week's session I ask you to go back over all of this because next week there will be space for your own questions. I've now finished with the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* and so I've also caught up with a little bit of my past... and so now we can move on to the question of the types of image there are in cinema. [*End of the session*] [2:08:45]

Notes

1 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (London: G. Allen & Co. New York: Macmillan, 1912. Rep. Zone Books, 1988). The phrase to which Deleuze refers here is: “Indifferent to each other because of the radical mechanism which binds them together, they present each to the others all their sides at once: which means that they act and react mutually by all their elements...”

2 “We may still speak of atoms; the atom may even retain its individuality for our mind which isolates it; but the solidity and the inertia of the atom dissolve either into movements or into lines of force whose reciprocal solidarity brings back to us universal continuity” (*Matter and Memory*, p. 200).

3 Dziga Vertov develops a theory of the interval in the essay “From Kino-Eye to Radio-Eye”: “The school of *Kino-Eye* calls for construction of the film-object upon intervals, that is upon the movement between shots, upon the visual correlation of shots with one another, upon the transition from one visual stimulus to another.” See *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 90.

4 In the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson describes the brain's multidivisional functioning as follows: “The more these intercalated cells are multiplied and the more they project amoeboid prolongations which are probably capable of approaching each other in various ways, the more numerous and more varied will be the paths capable of opening to one and the same disturbance from the periphery, and, consequently, the more systems of

movements will there be among which one and the same stimulation will allow of choice. In our opinion, then, the brain is no more than a kind of central telephonic exchange: its office is to allow communication, or to delay it. It adds nothing to what it receives; but, as all the organs of perception send it to their ultimate prolongations, and as all the motor mechanisms of the spinal cord and of the medulla oblongata have in it their accredited representatives, it really constitutes a center, where the peripheral excitation gets into relation with this or that motor mechanism, chosen and no longer prescribed. On the other hand, as a great multitude of motor tracks can open simultaneously in this substance to one and the same excitation from the periphery, this disturbance may subdivide to any extent, and consequently dissipate itself in innumerable motor reactions which are merely nascent” (p. 30).

5 Deleuze will elaborate on the relationship between *prehension* and *perception* in *Cinema 1 - The Movement-Image*: “In short, things and perceptions of things are prehensions, but things are total objective prehensions, and perceptions of things are incomplete and prejudiced, partial, subjective prehensions” (*Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam [London, Athlone Press, 1986], p. 78).

6 *Ibid*, p. 38. See also note 11 of the previous session, Cinema 1.4.

7 See note 5 of this Session above.

8 See *Matter and Memory*, pp. 43, 50, 66.

9 Bergson's exact phrase in *Matter and Memory* concludes the following illuminating passage: “The degree of independence of which a living being is master, or, as we shall say, the zone of indetermination which surrounds its activity, allows, then, of an a priori estimate of the number and the distance of the things with which it is in relation. Whatever this relation may be, whatever be the inner nature of perception, we can affirm that its amplitude gives the exact measure of the indetermination of the act which is to follow. So that we can formulate this law: *perception is master of space in the exact measure in which action is master of time.* (*Matter and Memory*, p. 32).