

**Gilles Deleuze**

**Seminar on Cinema: The Movement-Image**

**Lecture 07, 19 January 1982**

**Transcribed by Céline Romagnoli and Pierre Gribling (Part 1, 54:38) and Binak Kalludra (Part 2, 1:07:49)**

**Transcription augmented and translated with notes by Graeme Thomson and Silvia Maglioni**

## **Part 1**

So, now that you're all here we can continue. Okay, let's look at our program, a program that is far from being definitive but that nonetheless is going to be the program for the coming weeks. Our program once again, is this: having established that we think it is necessary to distinguish between three types of movement-image, we shall now try to analyze each of these types according to a broad schema.

So we've already begun by analyzing the perception-image. Here I would stress that the analysis of the perception-image, however rudimentary it may have been, was something I proposed we should make at three levels. Before beginning, I also want to stress that these three levels should in no way be considered as being evolutive or progressive. That's not what I'm saying. When I pass from one level – which I link to the work of a given filmmaker – to another level that I link to the work of other filmmakers, this isn't to say that filmmakers corresponding to the second tendency or second level are going to be any better or more perfect than those corresponding to the first. That obviously goes without saying. This is a method... once again, this method of analysis by level is neither evolutionist nor progressivist, it doesn't imply any value judgments, or rather it implies a kind of value judgment that will be equal for all, which is to say: everything is perfect. Everything is perfect. Thus, you could call it a method of variation whereby I distinguish between levels according to the type of variable that is realized in each case. And that's all. This is by way of a preamble, though it might sound obvious, and it can be applied to the whole field.

So last time, our task was quite clear, we analyzed the first level of the perception-image, and we analyzed the perception-image in cinema the way it appears at this first level. And now I'm going to summarize our conclusions. Because, once again, I would ask you to be alert to the progress we make, to what we achieve; step by step, as we go on, assuming we can call this an achievement.

So... I said that if we begin from a nominal definition of the two poles of the perception-image, one that is purely exterior, purely conventional... then we can call these two poles *subjective image* and *objective image*. They constituted... I'm not particularly attached to these terms, they

are just useful for the time being, since all this depended on a nominal definition. The nominal definition was... well, let's suppose that the objective image was an image... not without point of view, because... what would that be, an image without point of view? But an image shot from a point of view that doesn't pertain to its corresponding set of elements. Which doesn't belong to its corresponding set of elements. Meaning that it is viewed from outside, seen from an extrinsic point of view. And the subjective image, on the other hand, would be an image that refers to a point of view that does belong to the corresponding set of elements. For example, seeing something the way it is seen by a person who is themselves part of this set of elements. Like a funfair seen by someone taking part in it.

So, beginning from these very conventional definitions, what did we do and how far did we advance? First of all, we saw how these two poles communicated with one another and did so unceasingly: how the subjective image became objective and the objective image subjective. Then, we saw how it was precisely in this regard that certain problems concerning the shot–reverse shot rapport would be posed and resolved. And later we saw that, as a result, there emerged, or appeared, a certain type of image specific to cinema, a certain type of perception-image specific to cinema, one that we could call the *semi-subjective image*.

And we sought a particular status for this semi-subjective image. Because the semi-subjective image was no longer, and never had been, a simple mixture of the so-called subjective and objective image. We had to give it its own consistency. -- [*Sound of a dog barking*] Ah, I knew he would cause us trouble! --

So, it needed to have its own consistency. And it was in relation to Pasolini that we thought we might be able to establish its status or identify this consistency. And at that point we tried to understand one of Pasolini's own concepts, a concept of major importance: that of the *free indirect image*, which we then proposed as the status – or one of the possible statuses – of the perception-image in cinema. A status that would account for the perpetual passage of the perception-image from one pole to the other, from the objective to the subjective pole and vice versa.

And in this regard, we noted – and this is where we left off last time – we noted how something occurred that would be very important for us... It was that, on the basis of the concept of the *free indirect subjective image* – or what we imagined we could deduce from Pasolini's highly demanding texts as the free indirect subjective image – we saw something happening that would come to affect the concept of the movement-image as a whole. Namely, that *the movement-image tended in itself to give rise to an element that would, precisely, supersede movement*. That is, the free indirect subjective image tended to split no longer into two poles – you see how our analysis had advanced somewhat – no longer into two poles whose intercommunication it assured, but that it contained something more profound, it tended to split in two directions: on one hand, we had the subjective perception of characters who were mobile, which is to say, who entered and exited from a given frame. And on the other hand, we had the consciousness of the frame...

All I can say is simply this: that it is neither with respect to his own films nor to those that he cites as living examples of what he calls the *free indirect subjective image* – whether it be

Antonioni, Bertolucci or even Godard – but from the point of view of his own theory, from the theoretical status of Pasolini's concept... this camera-consciousness, this consciousness of what he calls “obsessive framing” – that Pasolini comes to define this image from what is in fact an exclusively or strictly formal perspective. As though, in theoretical terms, this thesis or discovery of the status of the perception-image would remain for him – how should I put it? – an idealist one.

But if what I glean from Pasolini's theory constitutes a limitation, this would in no way apply either to his own cinema nor to that of the filmmakers he cites. Once again, what will result from this is their affair. But at least it allows us to move on to the second level. And it's there that I want to begin today.

Second level of the analysis of the perception-image. We're going to begin again from our two poles: objective perception and subjective perception. But this time, we're going to insist on a real definition for these, no longer simply a nominal one of the type: Well, an objective image would be an image shot from a point of view exterior to the given set of elements, while a subjective image would represent an interior point of view. What we need here is a real definition. Because we've now reached... you see how we've reached the limit, at least I have reached the limit of what I could obtain from the first definition. So now we have to go back and start again from zero.

A real definition... Is it possible for us to find a real definition of the objective and subjective image as the two poles of the perception-image in cinema? Yes, yes, yes of course we can, because *we already have one*. We already have one – and this explains why everything is so mixed up – thanks to our previous studies on Bergson and the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*. Because the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* actually proposed such a real definition. But a definition of what? Of what were literally *two systems of perception*. And these two systems of perception no doubt coexisted. No doubt. But would it be possible to pass from one system to the other? And what were these two systems of perception? In the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson says – on the basis of all that he has said and that we have seen – he says it is easy to conceive of two systems.

A first system in which movement-images vary, both on their own account and in relation to one another. We saw this and it was precisely what we called the *machinic universe of movement-images*. Where movement-images vary both on their own account and in relation to one another. It's like the world of universal variation or of universal interaction and it's this that will allow us to define a universe as the universe of movement-images. Fine. So, I propose that we call this system the *objective system*.

Why? This may appear to be a bizarre conception of what we normally mean by objective, but it is only apparently so, as we shall see. In any case, I can already say that this is a *total system* that constitutes the universe of movement-images. In what sense is it perceptual? It is perceptual in the sense that things themselves, which is to say the images, are in themselves perceptions. You remember the terms Bergson used... thing-images are perceptions, it's simply that they are total perceptions since they perceive everything that happens to them, as well as their own reactions to these occurrences. An atom is a total perception just as a molecule is a total perception. So this

would already justify the term “objective”. It's clearly an objective system of perception, being the total system of movement-images insofar as they vary both in and for themselves and with respect to one another.

You see how here what we have is a definition of the objective image that is quite different from the one we began with at the first level. A real definition and no longer a simply nominal one.

And so, what would the subjective image be? I would call the subjective image or rather *subjective system* the system where all images vary in relation to a supposedly privileged image – whether this be my body or my self, considered as a movement-image, or else the body of a character, which is to say a character themselves.

You see how the two systems are actually quite simple. In the first case all images vary both for and in themselves and in with respect to one another, whereas in the second all images vary with respect to a supposedly privileged image. I call the first system the *total objective system* and the second system the *partial subjective system*. And once again these definitions would appear completely arbitrary, had we not passed by way of the long commentary in chapter one of *Matter and Memory*. However, I'm sure that, for those of you who have been following up to now, these definitions will not appear arbitrary and indeed constitute real definitions.

So what does this give us? As coexisting elements, I now have *a total system of universal interaction* and *a partial system of supposedly privileged perception*, which is to say perception from an apparently privileged point of view. The objective system and the subjective system.

Let's now suppose... let us suppose... I ask you to bear with me – always with the risk that you might decide to abandon me five minutes from now. Suppose we call the total objective system of interaction *documentary*. Because, after all, this is a term that has had considerable importance in cinema. And no doubt we forget, or don't even think, of the countless jokes that have been made regarding a certain kind of documentary – namely, those eternal fishing-boat sagas that in the inter-war period were normally projected before the main feature. But when the great filmmakers, in all their differences, proposed the idea that there could be no cinema without documentary, they obviously meant something else. And what did they mean? What was this documentary aspect of the cinema-image? Wasn't it – and we will shortly be able to verify this – wasn't it something like the system of universal interaction of images both in themselves and with each other? Wasn't it the total objective system?

And what about fiction or drama, as opposed to documentary? What would that consist in? Wouldn't it be the other system? Which is to say the one of images which began to vary, but this time no longer with respect to each other, by which means they would have reached the supreme stage of objectivity that is universal interaction, or the material universe of movement-images – which is what documentary is, it's the material universe of movement-images or at least a summary or a particular take on universal interaction. So contrariwise what would the fictional or dramatic process consist in? It would be when a new organization of images grafted itself onto the world of universal interaction, a new organization of images where movement-images begin to vary according to a privileged image, that of the hero or a character of whom I may say: that's the film's main character, or one of the film's main characters.

So at that level, and at that level only, I won't say that the whole of cinema, but at least a certain type of cinema has been built on these foundations. Grafted onto the images of universal interaction that constituted documentary cinema were certain processes – and I hope this now becomes clear – related to what I would call *subjectivation*. Through a privileged image, that of the hero, we passed from the documentary world of universal interaction to a dramatic process constituted by a particular story.

You see how it's all as though my two systems of... as though a graft were produced, a grafting of subjectivation, here and there, onto a background of documentary images. Or rather, that onto a background of... the first system, the total system of objective images were grafted processes of dramatization which themselves referred to the other system. And this would constitute a solution that was absolutely coherent. So coherent in fact, that the coherence of this solution – if what I'm saying isn't clear I'll have to start all over again, I don't know – that the coherence of this... you see how the two systems were united in the movement-image. And here I insist on these two aspects: the documentary aspect and the dramatic aspect and the grafting of this dramatic aspect onto the documentary aspect.

So once again, you have this perpetual passage but now at a completely different level... You see, you can feel how the atmosphere has changed. The perpetual passage from the graft to what it is grafted onto and vice versa. From the process of universal interaction = documentary to the process of subjectivation = fiction. All this gave form to a distinctive style of filmmaking. And here too I must repeat that it's not a question of saying that this was inadequate: it was a solution. A solution valid for the whole set of cinema-images. And a very interesting solution it was too. One that marked what? In my view it marked the films of the French school that were made between the two world wars. And that was almost... that was the formula of French mainstream cinema which, like all streams, has produced both terrible films and masterpieces.

And so if now I try to explain to you in what form this appeared, you should immediately recognize the genre of film I have in mind... So what form was it, for better or worse? What form did it appear in? A theme that pertained – completely it seems to me – to French cinema between the wars. The conflict between work and romantic passion.

The conflict between work and romantic passion. What does that have to do with our research? It's one way, a very simple way to express everything I've developed so far. The conflict between work and passion, well... In what way is it... ? An example of a successful form, a very successful one even would be Grémillon's *Stormy Waters*.<sup>1</sup> Whereas an example of a questionable form would be *Life Dances On*.<sup>2</sup> Every time something doesn't convince me I won't mention the filmmaker in question, since as you well know, I only cite people I admire...

So, what is *Stormy Waters* about? I won't recount the entire plot but I have to at least give you a rough idea so you can understand why... So, there's a tugboat captain... okay, a tugboat captain. Indeed. This is the same Grémillon who, at the time of *Stormy Waters*, said that there's only one important thing in cinema, that in the end *it's all documentary*. It's all documentary... but of course that isn't true. Yet he insisted that even a psychological drama could be considered a documentary of a state of mind, and even a dream would be a kind of document. But here I think he was overstating the case somewhat. He said if for show as a kind of provocation.

All of cinema is documentary. The French interpretation of this phrase constituted a formula that might also have existed in a certain epoch, though not all epochs, in Russia in the cinema of Vertov... no, not Russia, I mean the USSR... of course there was the revolution. Oh well. Anyway, it was a formula and in a certain way it was a quintessentially socialist formula. So what did it imply? Actually, the French phrase didn't say that everything was documentary because the French, in terms of their own form of socialism and their way of being leftist, arrived at what we could only call a kind of "moderate Vertovism".

This moderate Vertovism consisted in saying that the cinema image necessarily implied an element of documentary, but that grafted onto this documentary material was what I referred to as a process of subjectivation, meaning a dramatic process. And therefore, I can say that the simplest way to express this situation would be through all the films that convey a conflict between work and romantic passion.

So, in *Stormy Waters* we have a captain, a tugboat captain who goes out to sea and who lives for this and for his crew and so on. It starts on land with a party, filmed in Grémillon's usual wonderful style, a little wedding party in which everything is in movement, but then the party is interrupted because he has to go and salvage a ship and so now we have images of his job, in this case a maritime job – I use the word "maritime" lightly for the moment, but maybe it'll turn out to be important, however that's how it's introduced... It's a maritime job since he's the captain of a ship, and why is that? –I might ask. It might have been shot with actors and so on... so why is it necessarily like this? It's what we could call the film's documentary aspect. It's a documentary aspect because what we have here is a very specific *regime* of cinema-images. Clearly what we have... is a ship salvaging another ship in the middle of a storm, in the storm you will no doubt recognize the regime of universal interaction where each image varies both for itself and with respect to the others. It's clear. So. And in fact, when we watch Grémillon's *Stormy Waters* we learn all kinds of things. After coming out of the film we're very informed, well documented. You see how we've at least established an idea related to documentary, that of documentation, which is very specific. It doesn't just consist in telling you about or even filming a job. Or, if it's about filming a job, only a part of the job and what relates to it is filmed. So why would it be documentary? It's not documentary for any old reason.

Documentary, once again, is that action of the camera *that attains a universal variation of images and a universal interaction of images*. And it's for this that I wish to reserve the term documentary in its strictest sense. So, this is what he does, this is what the captain does. We are fully immersed in images that I could call "objective images". Documentary images, objective images... Because, once again, I attribute no meaning to the objective system other than universal interaction and universal variation.

And then, obviously, on the boat he's trying salvage there is a woman, a woman who shouldn't be there, since she belongs to the land, to the earth. There's this woman... So, he decides to take her back to shore, but he's not at all happy. He thinks she shouldn't be there. Oh yes. As though she were *troubling* the documentary images, as though she disturbed the system of universal interaction. You see how revolting that is - universal interaction is a man's world! Fine. He goes back to shore and obviously he falls in love. He falls in love. What does that mean?

This concerns us greatly. The conflict between work and romantic passion. He falls in love, which is to say that this Captain who was an image seized amid the universal interaction of images – his boat, the other boat, his fellow sailors, the storm, the waves etc – finds himself entangled in a process... a process of dramatization that will cast him out of the objective regime, the documentary regime, the regime of universal interaction. It will not only cast him out, it will immobilize him. To love is to be immobilized, my god! Yes, to be immobilized. But immobilized in what sense? In the sense that now all the images will vary with respect to a privileged image – which is either that of the beloved of the lover as he wonders what will become of her. And all the images begin to turn around and vary exclusively with respect to this centre, this privileged centre, which is either the immobilized character or the object of his passion.

And we no longer have the same perception of the sea. Oh no, it's no longer the same perception of the sea. To the point that in *Stormy Waters* there's a splendid scene – because I think it's a very good film though there are no doubt many others just as good – we have this moment where he goes to visit... because the situation is hopeless, not only does the woman he loves want to immobilize him and tear him away from the documentary regime, the regime of universal interaction, but his own wife too, his own legitimate spouse, is already nagging at him to quit his job. So, we already have a conflict and so on. She wants him to buy a small beachside house, and there are some lovely images where we see him visiting the house his wife wants him to buy with the woman he loves. So, the intrigue becomes more complicated. We now have an interplay of several privileged centers which have in common the desire to immobilize him, to make him pass over to the other system of perception where the whole set of elements varies according to a fixed centre. And where all the images vary according to a fixed centre. And he looks out to sea from the little house and says, Oh my god! As though he actually felt pain on account of this graft that tears him from the world of universal interaction to make him pass over to the world of subjective perception, where he can only view the sea as something grotesque that swirls around him, the fixed point whose only consolation is to gaze at the face of his beloved that, on a good day at least, reflects the sea.

Why does the film work? It's obviously because of the way it makes the two image systems coexist and pass from one to the other, from the system of universal interaction to the immobilized system where the graft of subjectivation arises and then disappears and then comes back again. That's what makes it a great film.

Yet you find the same thing in a botched film. In fact, in *Life Dances On* we have a woman who is looking up her past lovers and she finds one who has become a mountain guide, and here we have the same procedure. It's a kind of recipe, you could think of it as a recipe... but when it's well done it's no longer just a recipe. So, the woman arrives and lures back her old flame, who has become a mountain guide. And he says, "Oh no, goodbye mountains!" It's all very French. Goodbye mountains, and then of course we already know what's going to happen. There's the horn – it's just like the situation in *Stormy Waters*, almost a bad copy of it – the siren that announces there's an urgent rescue mission to carry out up in the mountains. Again, we have a rescue scenario. Avalanches too pertain to the world of universal interaction. The mountains, you understand. Or at least it seems that way. But from Epstein to Louis Daquin, this is the basic formula of French cinema, a form that I speak of with deliberate... no, I would say more

involuntary... irony. But I think it conceals something much more profound, this conflict between work and passion. So fortunately, as in *Stormy Waters*, the mountain guide will return to his job in the mountains, he'll go back to the mountains and then the woman will leave, she'll take the train just like in *Stormy Waters*, she'll come back down to earth.

So what is being concealed here? What does this conceal? Because in the end this shows us that to speak simply of a conflict... and that's the way that you find this theme addressed, I'm far from exhausting this period of French cinema, but you will find a theme like this in the films of everyone from Epstein to Gremillon. And even up to Daquin. But why in this conflict which is completely in line with this French formula... for instance, I was browsing through *Télé7Jours* the other day and I found a film by Jean Delannoy... it gives quite a good synopsis. They were rebroadcasting an old Delannoy film, and the synopsis described it as a documentary about airhostesses grafted onto which... it didn't exactly speak of "grafting" but of something similar – "grafted onto which is a love story". Here you have the formula in a nutshell. Of course, the airhostesses weren't airhostesses at all. In any case what counts in all these films is the job itself.

Anything goes, mountains, sea, air... though when I say anything goes, I shouldn't exaggerate the point because these are after all quite specific professions. Mountains, air, sea... So why is this? Why is it that these filmmakers felt the need to determine their characters' jobs? In fact, there was something else at stake here. So now we have to go beyond our point of view because what we have here is something more than a simple conflict between work and romantic passion.

Not by chance are all the jobs they selected for their characters – well, not exactly all, there are some cases that are different – yet in many cases and in the greatest films of this particular genre the jobs proposed are prevalently of this nature. Either air work – again in Gremillon<sup>3</sup> – mountain work or especially maritime work. You have countless barges, canals, rivers, seafronts and in fact this is the source of the vitality of French inter-war cinema. What are they trying to tell us through this? It's clear. And if you've been following me, it will already be clear to you.

It's obvious. We can quit joking around about conflicts between work and romantic passion. That's not what it is. If we go back to our only solid ground, it's actually *the confrontation between two systems of perception*. So this is where we have to dig: on one hand, the type of perception I call objective and total, since this is the perception of universal variation and universal interaction; and on the other the type of perception I call subjective, the subjective system which consists in the variation of images according to a privileged fixed centre – one that is supposedly fixed or else in the process of being immobilized.

What was the dream of many great filmmakers between the two wars? What would they have done, had they had been Andy Warhol? If they had been Andy Warhol, it's not hard to guess what they would have done. They would have stuck a camera in from of free-flowing water and then cleared off. They would have waited. They would have filmed the same spot of flowing water with a fixed shot and left the camera running. This was where their real interest lay. This is their real interest: the flow of water. That's why I say that these jobs weren't pure accident. Of course, they might have obtained the same effect by filming avalanches but there's nothing to beat the flow of water.

So a cinema of free-flowing water. What does that mean? What is this? What is it? What we have here is the *liquid image*. So, the liquid image, as opposed to what? As opposed to the terrestrial image, the *solid image*. The two systems will coexist. Here I'm already transforming things. You see how gradual all this is. I've just spoken about two systems, one of universal interaction, the other of variation in relation to a privileged center. And now we're slipping – though we can't yet say why or how – we're passing over to another two systems: the solid system and the liquid system. The *solid image* and the *liquid image*.

So... the liquid image. Free-flowing water, it's important that it should be flowing, because at the same time one could say – careful, we have to be careful to distinguish our problems. It's a well-known fact that another great problem in cinema is that of mirror images. I'm not sure this is the same thing. In any case we're trying to separate them. For the moment what concerns us is free-flowing water.

And yet the problem of the mirror image in cinema can easily merge with the problem of the liquid image. There are cases where they meet. When the mirror... when in certain cases you have distorting mirrors. Someone who made... but I'm afraid that this is going to distract us from our main subject so I'll just mention it for now... someone who really brought the mirror image close to the liquid image was Joseph Losey, particularly in *Eve*.<sup>4</sup> Because here he uses a very specific type of mirror, Venetian mirrors that have several cartouches which break up the reflection. So, should we say that Venetian cartouche-type mirrors that break up the image are something close to the liquid image? But let's forget this question of mirrors for now, because once again this would be another kind of problem. From the point of view of perception, problems in cinema to do with mirrors are problems of *space*, namely, how to enlarge the field of vision. It's a problem of enlarging or else reducing space.

The liquid image presents a completely different type of problem. It's a problem of *the state of matter in relation to perception*. It isn't a problem of space, it's a problem of matter, the matter that fills space. So sometimes it can be similar, and sometimes not. But as I said, one example of a film where it encounters the question of the mirror is Losey's *Eve* with its very special mirrors that splinter the reflection.

So why is the liquid image... or, rather, why is the system that right now I called the objective system of universal interaction produced in the liquid image? I mean at the level we're at now, because this isn't a general formula, it merely reflects the point we've reached for the time being. It's that the image in water... well, what is the difference between the image in water and the thing it reflects? What it reflects is a solid. A solid that pertains to the earth. Fine. From a certain perspective this can always be regarded, in fact everything can be regarded, as a privileged center. But on the other hand, the reflection itself... this reflection pertains to the other system. It pertains to the system of universal interaction and universal variation. So if I spit in the water or throw in a pebble... the reflection is troubled, all the images... in water all images react both in themselves and with respect to one another.

The total objective system is the system of liquid images. It's the system of images in water. We will never tire of filming the flow of water because flowing water, as Heraclitus says – no, strike “as Heraclitus says” – *flowing water is universal interaction*.

So, are we saying that there are two types of images? Images of the earth – solid images – and liquid images. And I'm not arguing this in terms of a psychoanalysis of the imagination, as Bachelard does. I'm talking about something completely different. I'm talking about two systems of perception and the way we pass from one to the other. Now, in this sense... what is it that... what is it that concerns French cinema between the two world wars?

What concerns French inter-war cinema, in terms of rivers or the sea, is *the line where the land and waters meet*. The line where land and waters meet is where everything happens since this line can also mark the passage from the liquid system to the solid system, or else the passage from the solid to the liquid system. It may additionally mark the way in which I am cast out of the system of universal interaction. Or, on the other hand, the way I can escape the subjective system with its privileged centre, to return to the world of universal interaction.

And in a famous film by Renoir – as you can see I've saved for last, as it were, the typical case of a great cineaste who is fascinated by this theme of free-flowing water and the two systems of perception – landbound, subjective perception and the perception of universal interaction, the total objective perception that is a liquid, aquatic perception – if you think of *Boudu Saved From Drowning*,<sup>5</sup> the line of separation between the land and waters will be as much that which casts Boudu ashore on the land-system, the partial system, the solid system in which he will finally be unable to live, as the line where it meets the other system, that of universal interaction. And in the end he will flee down his little river, escaping the fixed determinations of marriage and the solid determinations of the land.

Fine. So this is the way... this is the way... the way it appears to us for the time being. So why is it that once again the water-bound image realizes and affects what I would call the objective system, the system of objective perception? Already we have some indication and yet it will not be the cinema of which I've just spoken, French inter-war cinema, that effects it. But the indication is so clear that we must... It's that clearly... I was speaking of the liquid, image but then I ask myself: in what way does it really affect universal interaction? It's because *it supports everything*. Multiplied images, unstable images, superimposed images, the immediate reaction of everything to everything else... it's all... all this is what we could call the total objective system.

In the end, it is *reflections* and not solid things that affect the total objective system. As for the land, the earth, this is the place of solids and therefore of the partial and the incomplete, the immobilization produced by a partial and incomplete system, since movement will now only be seized in terms of a variation of images that is no-longer universal – universal in the sense that the images would vary both with respect to each other and in themselves – but where they simply vary in relation to a privileged point of view. So, okay.

And you see that at a given moment in a certain type of cinema, it will be this line where land and waters meet that will mark the place where everything is played out. Because this line is what will bring together an essentially liquid documentary cinema of universal interaction and a fundamentally terrestrial fictional process of variation that is limited with respect to a privileged center. And I would say that this is fundamentally what concerns... what concerns Epstein, Gremillon, Renoir and many others... many others. And if that's what it is... and this is clearly

what concerns them most... it's very different from other approaches we can conceive... but that's it.

But this may also be the case for other filmmakers working in completely different directions of cinema. Yes, it's true. When I think of *The Battleship Potemkin*, for example, isn't there something similar at work in *Potemkin*? Because, after all, in a certain sense the film straddles the land and the waters. And as for montage, you see how here again at this level all the problems of montage will resurface – and montage is of the utmost importance for Eisenstein – you have a scene of the battleship in the water, another scene on land, and Eisenstein takes extraordinary care in calculating the relationship between the film's solid, land-bound scenes and its maritime scenes. The land will be a site of a defeat. This is something he has in common with French cinema where the land, which is to say the process of subjectivation, the dramatic process of subjectivation, proves to be a failure. The process of romantic love *runs aground*. And likewise, in *Potemkin*, it is on land that the revolution, the revolutionary process, runs aground. The revolution carries away its hope or, rather, it is the battleship that carries off the hope of the revolution in passing between the other ships that refuse to fire upon it. And it carries off... here we see the line of separation between earth and waters in full effect. But I have a feeling that here it plays another role, or rather that it only constitutes a secondary determination in *The Battleship Potemkin*, which once again doesn't necessarily mean that it's any better. Whereas in the films I was referring to before, from Epstein to Gremillon... think for example of the title of a film by Epstein *Finis Terrae*...<sup>6</sup> here we are literally at the extreme limit of the earth. This is the line of separation.

In other cases, other types of cinema, the problems are of a completely different nature. If I go back for a moment to the Western... What is the problem there, even in terms of montage? The Western didn't invent the liquid image, in fact it probably has nothing to do with the liquid image. What would it do with the reflection in water of a cow or a cowboy? Nothing, absolutely nothing. That's not the Western's problem. But it has another equally fine problem. Its problem, which is at least as fine but of a completely different nature, is *the line of separation of the earth itself*. Which is to say of the solid. The Western is solid, it's made of rock, of *rock*, and it's a solid cinema. Ford is the genius of the solid, Ford and there are others too, he's not the only one.

But here it's the line of separation of the earth, the earth conceived as solid, in the form of rock... *the line of separation between earth and sky*. And the problem of montage, the problem of the perception-image in the Western, will partly be linked to the specific point of view that concerns us here. What should the proportion of sky be in the image? Who is it that brings the sky to cinema, if not Ford? We can speak about Fordian skies in exactly the same way as we might speak about the skies of a particular painter... the skies of... So, there are Fordian skies, everyone recognizes Ford's skies. But in what proportion? Two thirds of sky to one third of earth? What is it that happens at the line of separation between sky and earth? Isn't it there that the Indians appear? And what does this mean? That perhaps the Indian is the being of separation, the being that effects this line of separation.

Cinema has greatly played on lines of separation to the point that – and I think it hardly needs to be stated– they have become one of its fundamental components. Because if we had time... if we

had time we would have to speak about a third line of separation – and perhaps this would be the last one – that has been employed in a number of wonderful films which are usually American.

This time it would be *the line of separation between air and waters*. The line of separation between the air and the waters is something quite extraordinary. It's much more... it allows... I mean all this is also linked to cinematic problems of framing. There are two major cases, there's the case of a great film which I'm not going to cite,<sup>7</sup> you can look for it yourselves, where a prisoner escapes by using a blowtorch and then finds himself in a river where in a splendid image he uses the blowtorch to breathe underwater. And then a similar image in a film by someone I really admire, Paul Newman<sup>8</sup> – one of the films he himself made – he's an actor but you know he's also directed a number of very fine films. And in one of these films, there's a scene that has become quite famous, where you see the line of separation between the air and the waters as though it had been drawn with a dark pencil. [*Interruption of the recording*] [54:40]

## Part 2

... The wounds on a completely distended face, coupled with the fact that he's going to die and that he will die in a bout of crazy laughter... it's a very powerful image for the newspaper. Fine. But you see that we have to understand what genre we're dealing with... I feel I'm on more solid ground when I say that the Western's achievement was to have invented, to have brought the sky into cinema or to have brought skies into cinema, even if afterwards skies would be used in other contexts.

On the other hand, the French cinema that I've just described in terms of the conflict between work and passion... you'll see that this isn't the same. It isn't the same. What is at stake there is the confrontation between two types of image, two types of perception-image. Once again, between liquid images that affect the total objective system of universal interaction and the solid, terrestrial images of the subjective earth-bound system that affect the system of limited variation with respect to an immobile center. And to complete this... this exploration of French cinema, I was looking for an example that sums up everything I've said so far and it's obvious that here I will refer to what I think is an excellent analysis made by Jean-Pierre Bamberger<sup>9</sup> concerning Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante*.<sup>10</sup>

And Vigo's *L'Atalante* really seems to bring together in their purest state this confrontation and co-penetration – clearly, we're not dealing with a dualism – each time the terrestrial system comes out of the waters, the waters must in turn recapture, and reconstitute themselves upon, this terrestrial system – there has been so much intercommunication between the two... But if we take *L'Atalante*, what do we learn? We learn that the land is the site – but here we could literally speak of a kind of wandering or errancy in this French cinema – we learn that the land is the site of injustice because it's the site of what is partial or imperfect, and it is fundamentally the place of disequilibrium. You always have to regain your equilibrium, and in *L'Atalante*, this takes the form of a descent beneath the water. And we learn that at the border between the land and waters, the land-system can still reign, and here this occurs in the form of the cabin. The cabin of the barge with all its encumbrances, the cabin that is packed with objects that are broken or half-broken, objects that no longer work. These are the partial objects of solidity, the objects that tie us to the past, the objects of reminiscence.

But the cabin is something else too. It is already an aquatic space, a maritime space, where a new process arises, a new equilibrium, *a kind of fundamentally unstable equilibrium, which is that of justice and of truth*. Truth is the truth of reflection, the truth that floats on the waters. And the process that takes place on the barge is opposed to that which takes place on land. And everything that happens on the barge is like a warning launched countless times: that *water is the place of truth* and the proof of this is that *it is in the water that you will see the face of your beloved*. This time what we have is no longer the conflict between love and work. On the contrary, here love has passed over from the side of what subjectivizes us to that of what leads us to universal interaction, which is to say truth. And on one occasion the main character will plunge his face into the bucket to see the face of his lost beloved. But actually, it wasn't Vigo but Epstein who was the first to superimpose a woman's face on the water, where the superimposition acquires a meaning that is powerful and well-founded. And here the protagonist first plunges his head into a bucket to see his beloved, just as a second time he will dive into the water to look for her.<sup>11</sup>

All this to say that *L'Atalante* is really is the summary, the quite brilliant summary of the confrontation between the two systems, these two perceptual systems, insofar as each is embodied and effected, the one in the set of liquid images of universal interaction, the other in the subjective system of limited terrestrial variation. Is all that quite clear?

So in the end that's what this documentary aspect consists in. Why all these barges? Why? This is the reason. One that pertains to what is most essential in the distribution of the problem of the perception-image in cinema. And now I have to go the secretary's office, which will only take a couple of minutes. But I ask that you reflect upon this, and I'll be back in a jiffy. So don't go away because we still have an hour... and today we're in a hurry. So be good and quiet children and don't move. [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:00:37]

So, you see... I'll begin with a small remark. We've now made some progress because earlier on I was still at the level of nominal definition of the two poles of perception... and it was in terms of the whole of the movement-image that we managed to distinguish two elements or two poles: the subjective and the objective pole. Now you might tell me that we haven't achieved much more than that... but now we have changed our point of view because we've come up with a real definition of the two poles. We identified the two poles as two sorts of image in perpetual relation, in perpetual communication. So where does this lead us? Because in the end we have actually achieved a lot – we have to plan ahead because we're not yet done with this – in the sense that the solid and liquid are not merely two perceptual systems. They are two states, *two states of matter*. And after all, we need some simple physics here, the way physicists identify...

[*Several students start coughing, upsetting Deleuze who comments*] No, no, it's because of the smoke. It's for the same reason that you... you smoke too much, right, you know? [*A general groan rises from the group, and laughter*] It's not good for you! It's not good at all! [*Pause*] But nonetheless, it's your health! [*Laughter*] --

Anyway, these are two states of matter, you see how physicists define the liquid state and how they define the solid state. You just have to try to remember what you learned in school because

it's not that difficult... But for the moment we won't say any more than that. I think we've already done a lot. We have an agreement here, when you've had enough just tell me and I'll stop.

So regarding this point, considering the advance we have made in our analysis. does anyone want to make an intervention or add something? Do you see any lines of research that we could add to... that we could bring in? Any lines of research we could bring in at this level? No? You should have some at least... Or perhaps this might come next time. So let's make another agreement. If you can think of some lines of research parallel or in addition to what I've just covered it would help me a lot, if you tell me: You have to see this or that film. Once again, objections are of no account... no, that's not quite true, I find them quite painful... but I don't give a damn about objections. Whereas lines of research that I may have forgotten or that you could add, that would interest me greatly, even if it alters things. It could even be lines of research that imply objections. That would be good. So... No one wants to help me? Okay. Fine. We'll move on to the next part.

So, shall I move on or have you had enough? Just a little bit more? I don't know... okay... how kind... so... Well. This is again going to take things in a different direction. Since I was speaking about... we're now looking at the third level. And when I proposed the simple of formula of moderate Vertovism to describe French cinema, once again this didn't mean to say that Vertov himself is necessarily any better. And I remind you of this because in a certain sense we know well that *L'Atalante* is an absolute masterpiece. *Boudu* too. It's not a question of... but what I just tried to do was show how in French cinema – whether we take Grémillon, Vigo or other possible examples – we have a system of variables... once again I'm simplifying somewhat... a system of cinematographic variables that are affected by the line of separation between the earth, the land, and free-flowing waters. So, it would be idiotic to say that this is better or worse than something else. What we're now looking for is a third level.

What I'm now looking for is a third level of analysis of the perception-image. So moderate... by “moderate Vertovism” I didn't at all mean that it didn't go as far. It was a middle way, but by this middle way one could easily go as far as by the most extreme path.

So what would this level consist in? This time it would consist in the search for a definition that was neither nominal nor real. So what remains? A veritable definition that we could call *genetic* – genetic with regard to the perception-image and to the poles of the perception-image. So, I would say, let's go back, let's retrace our steps a little since here we have a cineaste who undoubtedly had... this director undoubtedly had a decisive influence on cinema. Let's go back to the experiment, or should I say the experiments of Dziga Vertov. Because after all – aside from Godard's response – these experiments have been badly interpreted or else misunderstood. Except for Godard and also for what I must say is an excellent article published in a collective volume by Klincksieck editions. An article by someone whose work I'm not familiar with but who I imagine must be a specialist, Annette Michelson... an excellent article on Vertov.<sup>12</sup>

But I will only cite this article as and when I need to. I want to begin with some simple remarks. What is it that Vertov immediately, and in a way continually, invokes? He invokes *the real as it is!* The camera that is capable of giving us the real just as it is. What could that mean, to say that the camera will give us the real just as it is? And yet at the same time Vertov is part of that group

of Soviet filmmakers who never stop saying – even if each of them understands it in a completely different and at times opposing manner – that the key thing, or one of the key things in cinema is montage. What's more in Vertov's case, he believes that in montage everything is permitted. And it's here at this level that the first doubts begin to arise. Unless we are already wary about what Vertov really means, we might begin to have some doubts.

First doubt: what does it mean in terms of images to speak of “the real as it is”?

Second doubt: How can one at the same time say, “we will grasp the real as it is” and “long live montage”?

As Jean Mitry sometime says... I don't want to speak badly of Mitry but in this case he... he really goes too far, which isn't to say that it doesn't interest him, but he doesn't really understand. His point... it's a point we should take as an example. So I've taken this from a text by Mitry where he says: “One cannot defend montage and simultaneously uphold the integrity of the real”.<sup>13</sup> You see it's a difficult idea. But for our part, we know just enough to realise that this presents no real problem. And here I would like to say... you know, it's fascinating, it's like everything... When you study a *bit* of philosophy it's exasperating. Or, rather, one really has to do a lot because... when you do only a bit, it gives rise to all kinds of... it gives rise to all kinds of false problems. No, to do... maybe I'm wrong in saying that because we have to study a *bit* of cinema too. Oh, I don't know... But anyway, we don't have this problem, because for us to say at the same time “long live and montage” and “the real as it is” is perfectly coherent. There's no problem there. Why? Why doesn't this present a problem?

What does Vertov tell us, beginning from the period that we commonly refer to, after the title of one of his films, as the *Kino-eye* period? Vertov never stops calling for *universal interaction*. So suddenly we prick up our ears. Universal interaction. Except that here strangely we will no longer find the liquid images that we've just described or at least only very rarely. There are some, there are. But that isn't Vertov's problem. It's the problem of other filmmakers, not his. And indeed, this sets us on our way again because it constitutes a new element. But does this have anything to do with what we've just seen, does Vertov's perpetual call chime with a universal interaction that reaches a stage where with Vertov we can say that it's a question of connecting one point in the Universe to any other point. And is there any better way of defining universal interaction? The connection of one point in the universe to any other point whatsoever? Time being abolished. So here we have the negation of time, but what time? Isn't it precisely in order to *grasp time* that there is this connection of one point in the universe to another? But for the moment let's stick with the idea that a certain kind of time is annulled. So this theme reappears constantly and it's extremely important which is why I insist on stressing it.

But how is it useful to us? It's that... okay, “the real is it is”... what does that mean? It's a completely rigorous definition. I can say that what I call or, rather, what Vertov calls “the real as it is” isn't something that lies behind the images but is in fact the whole set of images as they are grasped in the system of their perpetual interaction. That is, in a system where they each vary in themselves and with respect to the others. And if you tell me that that's not what the real is, I will answer you that if this isn't what the *real* is for you, well then you can easily look for another word. It's of no importance. In any case, we understand why Vertov uses the expression “the

real". He uses it in opposition to... in opposition to what exactly? To a vision that we would call subjective. A vision that we call subjective being precisely a vision where variations occur with respect to a point of view that is predetermined and immobilized. So what would that be, a predetermined, immobilized point of view? I said it was. Okay... so, it's the solid, land- or earth-bound vision. But what does that mean? It means it's *the human eye*. The human eye.

And here Bergson was clearly not wrong. I don't want to muddle everything. I cite... though it's not a citation from Bergson, when he reminds us that the human eye pays for, or has paid for, its receptive capacity. But how? By a relative immobilization. It's an immobilized eye that moves vaguely in the depths of its orbit, but this isn't much to speak of and as he says, the living being pays for its sensory organs by the immobilization of certain areas, the surfaces of sensory reception to be precise. My ears don't move, my nose moves only slightly, my eyes only shift up and down and from side to side and the hands at the ends of my short arms and so on. All my senses pay for their receptive capacity by this relative immobilization. And it's for that reason that – you see there's no real problem for me in this sense, we can hold to it. The starting point of Vertov's Kino-eye and the nagging theme of Vertov's cinema, is that the camera does not offer us an improved or a more perfect eye. The camera doesn't give us a better eye. Clearly it doesn't improve our eye. It's *another eye*.

I called this *non-human perception*. Well, right from the beginning this is one aspect of Vertov that I haven't forgotten, *the non-human perception or the non-human eye of revolutionary consciousness*. That is, that there's a problem I left hanging because it referred to images that would no-longer be movement-images and that we will encounter towards the end of the year or perhaps another year or maybe never, namely: *the problem of the subject of enunciation in cinema*. But the subject of enunciation has nothing to do with the perceiving subject. Yet we can't forget... we cannot say a single word about Vertov without acknowledging that what characterizes his whole cinema is the idea of a fundamentally revolutionary enunciation to which this new eye would correspond. An eye that is not at all an improved human eye but one of a completely different nature.

And you will see why this eye is of a completely different nature, because *it is the eye of total perception*. The eye of total perception, which is to say the eye of the perception of universal variation, where *things themselves* – meaning the images that vary both in themselves and with respect to each other – *are the real perceptions*. Instead of me seizing an image, it is the images in their interaction that seize all the actions they receive and all the reactions they provoke. For once, it is the system we have looked at: the total system of interaction, of universal interaction.

Fine. Here we have a conception of the real that can be reconciled with something much more than the need expressed by the complementary call that montage should permit itself everything, that in montage anything should be possible. Where is the problem here? You would have to be an idiot to see a problem or a contradiction in this... Provisionally, at least, you would have to be an idiot. Of course, Mitry is far from being an idiot. He must have been blinded, he must have been momentarily blinded. Because it goes without saying that... How can you place images in a situation that renders them objective in the sense we've just seen – which is to say caught up in the system of universal interaction where each image varies both in itself and with respect to others? How can you do this, *if not through the kind of operations on the image that define*

*montage*? What is Vertov in the process of inventing here, moreover? He's inventing a type of montage that will move away from the mere relation *between images* towards an operation on *the image in itself*. He will bring montage to work on the image itself and no longer simply on the relationship between images. And this is what will fascinate Eisenstein. Although sometimes he will say that all this is no more than formalist clowning, tomfoolery, formalism or aestheticism – which for Vertov would be the worst insult you could throw at him. But at other times he will surreptitiously hint that what Vertov is doing... he will say that he is behaving like a great creator. And he will ask himself what can he take from this? Is there something he can assimilate into his own cinema?

But you see that regarding this problem of montage things vary all the time, and so there I'm not yet... I can't yet properly explain what this means. Montage tends to deal with each single image and not simply with the rapport between images. But I think this will only become clear little by little as we go on. In any case there is no contradiction between these two themes: the real in itself... or even the three following themes: The real in itself. The discovered construction of a non-human eye. Universal montage. *Because these are the three aspects of universal interaction.*

In what sense – and here I continue my parenthesis – in what way would all this be at the service of the enunciation of revolutionary consciousness? And why will camera-consciousness become revolutionary consciousness? *Because only the process of the revolution can take charge of universal interaction*, and not the process of dramatization, the process of romantic passion, the process of the individual life story. All this links up wonderfully and it makes for an extremely cohesive set of ideas.

So this is the first point of our new analysis. We keep going back to this question of universal interaction. This has allowed us to define the documentary form. And Vertov's cinema begins with a series of actual documentaries that are presented as such. But you will see that each time... each time we consider documentary as a real cinematographic category – if we try to make a cinematographic category of it, this doesn't present any problem, documentary is indeed the image as it applies to the system of universal variation and interaction.

Now, in the same period... Vertov's great film, we'll see later... it was more or less around 19... I can no longer recall... around 1929... *Man with a Movie-Camera*. It's a very fertile time for cinema. In 1928 there was Ivens' film – I-V-E-N-S – *Bridge*; 1929, Ivens again with *Rain*. 1927, the German filmmaker Walther Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*. What do they all have in common? And 1929, at least I think... was Vertov's *Man with a Movie-Camera*, which in some way represented a final phase of his research, though only provisionally so. What do all these films have in common? Here is how one critic, Béla Balazs, describes Ivens' films:

“The rain we see in the Ivens film is not one particular rain which fell somewhere, some time. These visual impressions are not bound into unity by any conception of time and space. With subtle sensitivity he has captured, not what rain really is, but what it looks like when a soft spring rain drips off leaves, the surface of a pond gets goose-flesh from the rain, a solitary raindrop hesitatingly gropes its way down a window pane, or the wet pavement reflects the life of a city. We get a hundred visual impressions, but never the things themselves; nor do these interest us in such films. All we want to see are the individual, intimate, surprising optical effects. Not the

things but their pictures constitute our experience..." – in other words, through the rain we return to wet images, to liquid images and see that Ivens has in his own way arrived at this system of universal interaction. – "Even when Ivens shows a bridge and tells us that it is the great railway bridge at Rotterdam, the huge iron structure dissolves into an immaterial picture of a hundred angles. The mere fact that one can see this one Rotterdam bridge on such a multitude of pictures almost robs it of its reality."<sup>14</sup>

Look... It's odd. The last sentence in Balasz's text is actually quite ambiguous. He says that a bridge seen through multiple points of view in terms of the universal interaction of each element with respect to the others and so on is a bridge that no longer has any use. And I say, this is quite ambiguous because he seems to say this with regret. Because you understand, an object that has a use, to go back to what I said before, is the solid object, the solid object of the earth. And in fact the object *as a whole* has no use. Here too, Bergson taught us this in such a profound and precise manner. What is perception when it makes use of an object? It's the object itself *minus all that doesn't concern us*. Utility or usefulness is the thing. It is wholly the thing but minus what is of no concern to the action, what is of no concern to our action. A total or whole image is by definition something that we have no use for.

As Balazs will say with the same tone of regret – though he should really have been happy – in Ruttmann's *Berlin*, we cannot recognize the place. It doesn't resemble a shot of a city. Here the bridge is of no use to us. Indeed, if the bridge is integrated into the system of the total image universal interaction, we can no longer make use of it. We can only make use of things whose projected profile refers to a privileged center. This is the definition of the tool, just as it is the definition of use. So, we won't make use of it. But does this mean that it is now a matter of contemplation? Not at all. It's universal action. It's the universe.

Very well. So all this comes back to saying: we understand why this is not an improvement or enhancement of the human eye. It's literally a question of constructing *another* perception. And whether we're speaking of Ivens, Ruttmann or Vertov – each with their particular means – what we have is the construction of the other perception, which is this total perception. This perception of universal interaction. Fine.

So how shall we proceed? What is this other perception exactly? Here for once I think I will make a comparison with something of a completely different nature and yet the comparison is not forced. Above all, this seems to me very Cézanne-like. With Cézanne there appears – and in this he is no doubt saying something that all painters have always thought – but in Cézanne you have a theme that is really one of his signature themes, namely that *the painter's eye is not a human eye*. And why is the painter's eye not a human eye? It isn't a human eye because it is a *pre-human eye*. *To restore the world to its virgin state...* Here I'm quoting from memory. Restore the world to its virgin state. You'll find this theme mentioned in the conversations, the conversations with Joachim Gasquet.<sup>15</sup> Restore the world to its virgin state, the world before humanity. We are no longer innocent, we are no longer innocent, which is to say we are solid beings made of earth. We don't see colors. The human eye is not made to see colors, it is made to see averages, average objects... norms and so on. Solids. The world before humanity is not the world without humanity, it is undoubtedly the world from which humanity arose in a kind of

twofold act of birthing: both of the world and humans *and of the rapport* between humans and the world.

So what is this? This is the other perception. Our task as humans is to perceive, but to perceive the world before humanity. This is where things get complicated... A current American filmmaker – and this fits perfectly with what I'm saying now because we find it in some of the most recent cinema, in independent or experimental cinema or whatever – Brakhage... Stan Brakhage. Here's how Stan Brakhage brilliantly defines the project of a film... If I'd told you it was Cezanne, you would have believed me, those of who know something about him anyway. “How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of green?”<sup>16</sup> That's marvelous. It's extremely well put. This is the world before humanity. We, with our eye... our big immobile eye would say: What's that? It's Green, okay. With much refinement we can even distinguish between a whole range of different greens. Fine.

Brakhage proposes us this test as in a dream. “How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of green?” No doubt the baby will not be able to identify more shades of green than we can. But it won't have the same rapport with them. So what form will it take? What will it be? Brakhage makes short films around this question. Look. Through this he introduces the question of the color-image. Oh dear! We should have... no, we will have to speak about this later... the color-image. Well... you can sense that this will be... that it's a whole other domain. We can't even assimilate it to the perception-image and what's more we can't assimilate it to the movement-image. In all our... there is something happening here... we have to open... this isn't normal... but we can't cover everything, so we'll put it to one side for the moment. Oh, the color-image. I hadn't even thought about it...we should... well, we're getting carried away. Okay. Never mind.

All this just to let you feel... and this idea Brakhage has, what is it exactly? What is this business of the baby crawling around in a field? It's intriguing. Because what is it that really represents the baby in the grassy field if not the camera-eye? It isn't a question of going back to being a baby, no it's not that. It really is a matter of constructing this other perception, this non-human perception. How many shades of green are there for the baby in the field? To answer this means reaching the system of universal interaction of green. This is what the universal interactions of green is. And you can compose other series of universal interactions. You can compose the series of universal interactions of red and so on. You see that you need montage to do this, it's through montage that you will reach it, not by following a baby around. So, we have to salute Brakhage for this extraordinary experiment!

So let's try to hone our understanding of what this perception before humanity might mean. The camera will give us a perception of the world before humanity, or else of a world without humans. Although I think this occurs in many films you understand – I'm deliberately mixing a number of things. I mix in other things so that if you didn't fully understand the previous example you might be able to understand more clearly from another example more to your liking. Marguerite Duras's film *Agatha*<sup>17</sup> presents a completely different problem. But what is this fixed shot of the beach, the beach at Trouville with these extremely broken-down movements? What is this... completely deserted place, over which a voice unfolds a dramatic story? It's a bit... I would say it's a bit... that it belongs to the old French formula but this time

instead of the aquatic image of free-flowing water there is the fixed image of a world before humanity. And the images we see in *Agatha* are of this world before humanity during which the voice recounts a story of a brother-sister incest, which is “human, all too human”. The story of incest. Yet there is a kind of tension with the world before humanity, unless she thought incest was really at the origin of humanity, which wouldn't be surprising – everything is possible – and so at the same time as we have a world before humanity, humanity is born into this pre-human world through a kind of incest...

So, what will happen now? A theme that – I'm going back here – a theme that during this period of 1927-1930 will come to obsess a certain number of filmmakers, is that of *perception before humanity* or *perception in the absence of humans*. The deserted city where nobody stirs. You see how it's the same question we're circling around... And Vertov himself once planned to make a *Moscow Asleep*.

And here we have Ruttmann, who in his wonderful *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*<sup>18</sup> begins with a series of images of completely deserted streets into which he introduces a melody, a song from a time prior to humanity, before little by little humans are “born” into the city. Fine. And then there's Rene Clair who made *Paris Asleep*. And what was *Paris Asleep*? All this constitutes a theme that I think obsessed these filmmakers. It's magnificent. I mean it's true what people say, all the platitudes that are pronounced about this moment in cinema where it was really felt that everything had yet to be invented. It was a wonderful time. Imagine the joy, the jubilation of someone like Renoir or Gremillon in front of a stream of free-flowing water, thinking what they would do with it in their films. Or the exultation of Epstein at a funfair. My God! This is cinema! Or else when it holds life, life before humanity, what is that? Well, it will become a cinematic concept. And clearly Rene Clair makes a rough script from this, a little script called *The Crazy Ray*. *The Crazy Ray*, which will be a kind of science-fiction film. The mad scientist's ray that will immobilize everything. You see how we're circling around... isn't immobility in this case something that pertains to the system of universal interaction? Yes, of course. But we have to see what form this takes. The image has become immobile. So everything becomes immobile. The movement-image is struck by immobility. Here we've made amazing progress, to the point that that we will have to stop soon because we're going too fast.

The movement-image is struck by immobility. To what end? An immobile image arises that freezes everything and what will it produce? It won't just remain like that. From the immobile or frozen image, movement will recommence; only this movement will either be reversed, slowed down or speeded up. Or something else. You see how we are now confronted with a second procedure, one that is far more complex. I call the first procedure what we've just seen – because this will also be one of Vertov's procedures, Vertov was very much impressed by Clair's *Paris Asleep* and he thought: Oh my God! That's it! That's what I want to do! And it will inspire his *Man with a Movie Camera*. Good. This is important. We're not done with Vertov yet.

To sum up: the first procedure is to introduce the image into the system of universal interaction. What does this imply, technically speaking? It means allowing oneself everything, namely multiplying images, using oblique perspectives – I take a list from a text by Vertov: slow motion, acceleration, reversal, multiplication, oblique perspectives – I insist on the question of oblique perspectives because we'll come back to that theme later on... – micro-zoom shots, unusual,

extraordinary angles. All this is also the method of Ivens' *Bridge*. Everything is combined, which is to say, points of view are multiplied and made to dance. It's inevitable.

If I define the subjective image by an immobile or privileged point of view, I would say that – since there is a perpetual interaction between the two poles of the image – I would say the more mobile a subjective point of view is, or becomes, the more it tends to spill over into the objective system. If, from the point of view of its center of reference, you set the subjective image in complete motion, it will tend to spill over into the objective system of universal interaction.

So at this first level we already have a whole system of procedures that imply montage and that operate on the movement-image... We've already covered the non-human eye. Now we have as a second procedure the theme of the city asleep, or the immobility of the image. Actually, this second procedure appears to be very different, but we will see how all this links up. You extract, you freeze, you prolong an immobile image and then you restart through movements that are reversed, slowed down, accelerated, or even superimposed and so on. But what does this achieve? Rene Clair put it really well: it's a question of seeking a kind of electrical charge that will produce this immobility which will then be followed by a new type of movement. So what should we say about this?

Well, here... the consequences are so important. You see how in the first procedure we were still tied to the movement-image. All of our study, up to and including immobility itself, was in terms of the movement-image. That's why we could regard the first procedure as what Vertov called the Kino-eye, whereas the procedure of *Man with a Movie Camera* will be more complex. What does this procedure consist in? In extracting from the movement-image... what exactly?

Something of the order of the single frame. The immobile image will no longer be the movement-image but the single frame. So. The single frame. What do I mean by this? Everybody knows. A movement-image in cinema is an *average* image, an average image. A certain number of frames per second. To extract the single frame is something relatively new for us, though it's connected. This time it's no longer a question of multiplying points of view such that the movement-image will enter the system of universal interaction. It's a question of extracting the single frame but to what end? To make something happen, which means that the frame already has to be “worked”. And what will this work consist of?

It will consist in the possibility of producing the electric charge, or of restarting and reconnecting through reverse movement, accelerated movement, slowed down movement, superimposed movement and so on. Hence the importance of... what is the crucial thing here? It's no longer movement. It's *the interval between movements*. Why is this? Simply because the interval between movements is precisely the singular point that depends on the frame, whereas movement itself depended upon the average image. The interval between movements is precisely the singular point where movement can reverse, accelerate, slow down, superimpose itself and so on.

You see the progress we've made. You remember our old Bergsonian theme. You cannot reconstruct movement from positions in space. And why? Because *movement always occurs in the interval*. In other words, at the point we started from – just to see how much road we have

travelled and to show how there are no contradictions in all of this – at the point we started, it was movement that constituted an interval between points in space. Now we're no longer saying that... and so, what does Vertov's theory of the interval - which was of fundamental importance for cinema - tell us? It tells us that *the real as it is lies in the intervals between movements*. Is this a contradiction? Not at all. We could even say that we have to pass by way of the first proposition to arrive at the second. In any case the theory of movement, and Vertov's surpassing of it, is a theory of intervals. Simply that in one case it is movement itself that constitutes an interval between positions – this would be the average movement-image – while in the other it's the real as it is that constitutes an interval between movements. And this is the case of the extraction of the single frame and the singular point.

Maybe things are getting too complicated, I'm not being sufficiently clear... but in the end it doesn't matter. Which means to say that what we see beginning to emerge is a conclusion that will be of great importance to us. We started at the beginning of the year... and we began from an old critique that had been addressed to cinema, namely that cinema was incapable of reconstructing movement, that it only gave the illusion of movement, that it didn't give us real movement. And I said that all the early critiques of cinema had been founded on that critique. The movement-image of cinema was an illusion with respect to what they implied was a “real” that eluded cinema.

And now what has happened? What progress we've made! Back then we said. Not at all, that's not what it is. The procedures by which cinema constructs the movement image may be artificial but the movement-image thus constituted is in itself perfectly real. But now what are we led to say? Now we are led to say: careful! And here we return to the first thesis. The movement-image in cinema is an illusion. And of course, this was true, it was an illusion, it's always been an illusion. But careful! What kind of illusion is it? It's not an illusion with respect to a real that would elude cinema. *It's an illusion with respect to the reality of cinema itself*. Because cinema is the movement-image *insofar as this image never ceases to surpass itself*, to transform into something else that would be another type of image. We need the movement-image. Cinema must pass by way of the movement-image, but at the same time the movement-image must only exist in order to be surpassed towards something of another nature, which would be what?

What we have is a triple surpassing: firstly, the surpassing of the movement image, being an average image, towards the frame – so surpassing of the average image towards the frame; secondly the surpassing of movement towards the interval between movements; thirdly, the surpassing of the camera itself and the “ordinary” editing table – by ordinary editing table I refer to a type of montage whose sole focus is the rapport between images – towards a type of montage that focuses on the image itself: the work at the level of the single frame that determines the singular point where movement will be submitted to all kinds of manipulation.

So what will this produce? I will try to explain it better next time, because it's almost time to finish now, and it's just as well to end on an obscure note, don't you think? So what would this be? The frame, it's really... well my immediate response would be to say it's the image... but what is it really? What is the rapport between the movement-image as an average image - a certain number of frames per second - and the individual frame? To put it differently, is it just a metaphor or is it something more than a metaphor? In other words, the frame is the *molecular*

image. *It's the molecular image of cinema*, the molecular cinematographic image, whereas the average image is an image we would call *molar*, it's an average. So.

The other perception I'm now seeking, this other perception, couldn't we say this other perception is *molecular perception* and that it is the camera finally that gives us this molecular perception. So, what is a molecular perception? What would it be? Well, is it actually perception? No. No longer. Average movement-image... but of what? Interval-frame. It's all very abstract, we have difficulty grasping the sense of the word "interval" so let's look for a more dynamic term that will... that means the same thing as interval. So, we could speak of a "flickering-frame". Flickering-frame. What strange species of cinema would that produce? It's well-known. What would the flickering frame be with respect to the average-movement-image? It's what defines a whole area of so-called experimental cinema.

So does this mean that this would be the real cinema? No, I don't think so. I mere indicate one possible direction. So, what is this flicker-montage method? The relation frame/flicker can be found behind the relation average image/movement. So, what is this? It a bit like the way molecular states can be found behind molar averages, behind large aggregates, moving towards molecular perception. And what does this imply? Physicists tell us – I'm talking about purveyors of popular physics, but we should always push what they say, try to see it in terms that go beyond mere popularization because it's wonderful and so important...

Oh, has the clock stopped? What time is it? One last effort, eh, and then you'll understand.

The solid state? What is it? This will let you understand everything about images. What is a solid state? It's simple. We have a solid state when molecules are not free to move around. Are you with me? So, let's suppose these molecules are not free to move around? Why is this? It's because of the action of other molecules. In other words, they are kept in a small field. They are confined in a small field by the action of other molecules. Here I'm really doing physics 101. And in this state what animates them are rapid vibrations around an average position from which they deviate little. So, this is the formula of the solid state. You see how the molecules of this table aren't free to move around. They are all kept in their little field. Each molecule is kept in its field by the pressure of other molecules. They are all confined in this little field and animated by vibrations since they are part of the universe; they form part of the machinic universe, animated by tiny vibrations around an average position from which they deviate little.

And in the liquid state what happens? We know well how solids are decomposed. To decompose a solid, or in the case of certain solids, we have to immerse them in water. But there are some that resist, unfortunately, so we have to heat them... we have to heat them up. So... what is the liquid state? It's something completely different. In liquids, molecules are defined as follows: they have attained an additional degree of freedom. Whereas the solid state would be the molecules' lowest degree of freedom. Therefore, I would say that solids are the object of molar perception. We perceive solid aggregates. The molecules are compressed and have little room for maneuver. They don't deviate much from an average position. The solid is an average object, it's an average, exactly like the movement-image. Whereas in the liquid state the molecules enjoy an additional degree of freedom; they can move around. The molecules move around but as they do so they stay in contact - which is not at all what happens in a solid object – the stay in contact as

they move around and slip into each other. This is the – again popular – definition of the liquid state.

Third phase: the gaseous state. A third degree of freedom for molecules. So, what does this consist in? Each molecule acquires or attains a gaseous state. It acquires or attains what we could call, or what physicists call a “mean free path”, which varies according to the particular gas but also according to pressure, and many other factors besides. Remember what you learned in physics? And what do we call the mean free path of a molecule? It's the average distance covered by a molecule between two successive shocks, the most famous example being Brownian motion. Well, all this is a pretty basic description – you can check with your little brother or sister if you have one. Look at their physics textbook in the chapter on the kinetic theory of gases, where you'll find a clear explanation.

So how does this concern us? Why has it become the last theme we touch on today? It's that... what have we been speaking about since the beginning? The three stages of perception: solid perception, liquid perception, and now we discover a strange *gaseous* perception.

And if it's true to say that in a certain direction that would be perfect in itself, the total objective system of universal interaction was effected by liquid images, such as we have seen them employed in French inter-war cinema, all the work of extraction of the frame, all the work on the frame, what we referred to as flickering cinema where the couple frame/flicker attempts to surpass – though not to eliminate, as we will see next time – but tries to surpass the couple average-image-movement, all this work gave rise to a kind of gaseous cinema. So, what is this gaseous cinema? Once again, am I using this term as a simple metaphor? No. I'm using it quite literally. This is cinema in a gaseous state, exactly in the same way that Renoir, Epstein and Gremillon could claim for their cinema the state of free-flowing water. And this will be the long and arduous conquest of a molecular perception. The new eye will among other things be – actually we're far from having done with it... above all I don't want to say that its cinematic outcome will be seen only in experimental cinema.

Nonetheless, there are some great things, one of the great American experimental filmmakers, a guy called Landow, made a film... no, I'll leave it until next time to speak about that more in detail, since we'll be ready for it by then. The way he uses certain techniques – we'll see what techniques give rise to this gaseous cinema – how he begins by showing us a young woman swimming.<sup>19</sup> It's not by chance that she happens to be swimming, or at least it's not by chance that the film begins with a liquid image. This woman who swims so gracefully, every time she appears on screen, she gives us a little waves. Here we see the work done at the level of the frame, the extraction and manipulation of a frame – we see the screen split by horizontal bars, which show us the woman at different instants of her movement. This is a famous technique we'll discuss next time – the technique of looping. She reappears on the screen waving at us each time but not exactly in the same instant - there are small delays, intervals and so on. So. And then there is the device of the flicker. And then a procedure typical of underground cinema, American experimental cinema especially, that of refilming. To obtain what? A process of refilming that gives the film a granular texture, the grain being a typical molecular texture whose correlative is a suppression of depth. The universe as a flat space. And then the technique of burning the photogramme. Burning a frame – we have to take this literally, but why. We saw why. *To free*

*the molecules*. And at that moment there's a play of extraordinary colors. The screen is flooded by incredibly strange color-images. All this will fuse into a molten mass that is... that can actually be quite boring in a certain sense.

Once again, I'm not in any way implying that "this is cinema". I'm simply saying that this is one possible direction, and we will see what happens to it and what we can learn from it. But I would say that it is literally... if you take the history of this film which is at the same time underground, experimental, abstract, you name it... did I mention the filmmaker. Yes, it's George Landow... L-A-N-D-O-W. A great American filmmaker. If you take this as an example, you see the typical passage from a liquid perception – or a reference to liquid perception in the form of the swimmer – to a gaseous perception, up to and including the burning of the frame itself. So, we're moving towards a molecular perception. And what can we obtain from this? Can the camera give us this molecular perception? And if it can, what advantage will this have? And what is this non-human eye? What can we do with it? These are all burning questions that we will save for next time.

So, make sure you reflect on all this. Next time, I will need you to make some interventions pointing out interesting lines of research we could take. [End of the session] [2:02:35]

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Stormy Waters* (orig. *Remorques*, 1941) directed by Jena Grémillon from a screenplay by Jacques Prévert, starring Jean Gabin and Michele Morgan.

<sup>2</sup> *Life Dances On* (orig. *Un carnet de bal*, 1937) directed by Julien Duvivier

<sup>3</sup> The film to which Deleuze alludes here is Gremillon's *The Woman who Dared* (orig. *Le ciel est à vous*, 1944) which tells the story of a mechanic and his wife each of whom nurse a secret desire to become aviators.

<sup>4</sup> *Eve* (orig. *Eva*, 1962) directed by Joseph Losey, starring Jeanne Moreau, Stanley Baker and Virna Lisi.

<sup>5</sup> *Boudu Saved from Drowning* (orig. *Boudu sauvé des eaux*, 1932) directed by Jean Renoir and starring Michel Simon.

<sup>6</sup> *Finis Terrae* (1929) directed by Jean Epstein. Its Latin title, which means literally land's end, also implies the more cosmic dimension of "the edge of the earth".

<sup>7</sup> The film to which Deleuze alludes here is Mervin LeRoy's *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932).

<sup>8</sup> The film in question is *Sometimes a Great Notion* (1971), adapted from Ken Kesey's novel about a family of independent loggers who find themselves in conflict with a community of striking unionized loggers.

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Pierre Bamberger, an actor, producer and owner of a textile business who was a friend of Deleuze as well as a key ally of Jean-Luc Godard in his Maoist Dziga Vertov Group period. Deleuze actually has a small role in a film that Bamberger produced, Michèle Rosier's *George qui?* (1973), a post-Nouvelle Vague account of the life of the writer George Sand, played by Anna Wiazemsky.

<sup>10</sup> *L'Atalante* (1934), directed by Jean Vigo and starring Michel Simon. Considered by many one of the greatest films in the history of French cinema it was Jean Vigo's only full-length feature, completed shortly before his tragic early death from tuberculosis at the age of 31.

<sup>11</sup> Unclear from Deleuze's partial recounting is the fact that these two immersions occur after Jean, the protagonist, abandons his beloved Juliette on land in a fit of jealousy. Feeling dejected he recalls a proverb she once told him that one can find the image of one's true love in the water and is rewarded when he is reunited with her at the end of the film.

<sup>12</sup> Annette Michelson, "L'homme à la caméra, de la magie à l'épistémologie", in *Cinéma, théorie, lectures*, ed. Dominique Noguez, Klincksieck, 1973.

<sup>13</sup> Deleuze will refer again in passing to Mitry's comments on Vertov, originally published in his *Histoire du cinéma muet*, in the chapter "Towards a Gaseous Perception" of *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*. See p. 81. The citation itself appears in the notes.

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<sup>14</sup> Bela Balasz, *Theory of the Film* (Character and Growth of a New Art), trans. Edith Bone, London: Denis Dobson Ltd., 1952. P.176. A slightly different version of this text is cited by Deleuze in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*.

<sup>15</sup> See Joachim Gasquet, *Cezanne: a Memoir with Conversations*, London: Thames & Hudson 1991, and also *Conversations with Cézanne*, ed. Michael Doran, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, pp. 107-160. Gasquet, a poet and art critic, was a close friend of Cezanne. Deleuze develops this analysis in detail with reference to Gasquet's text in the seminar on Painting, notably sessions 1 & 2.

<sup>16</sup> See Stan Brakhage, *Metaphors on Vision* in *Essential Brakhage*, Ed. Bruce R. McPherson, Kingston: New York, 2001. First published in 1963 by Jonas Mekas as a special issue of "Film Culture", *Metaphors on Vision* stands as the major theoretical statement by one of avant-garde cinema's most influential figures, a treatise on the nature of visual experience.

<sup>17</sup> *Agatha and the limitless readings* (orig. *Agatha et les lectures illimitées*, 1981), dir. Marguerite Duras with Bulle Ogier and Yann Andrea.

<sup>18</sup> *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927) dir. Walther Ruttmann. Here Deleuze is misremembering somewhat. The film actually begins with an abstract image of water, which cuts to the pistons of a train approaching Berlin. Only then do we see images of the city's deserted streets. The violin melody is part of a music score composed for the film by Edmund Meisel whose score for Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* had helped it gain international renown.

<sup>19</sup> George Landow, also known as Owen Land, was an experimental filmmaker, photographer, painter and writer. The film Deleuze evokes here is *Bardo Folies* (1967).