

**Gilles Deleuze**

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

**Lecture 14, 23 March 1982**

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### **Part 1**

Deleuze: So, we're on vacation. But I would like to know... Ah, [Bernard] Cache, you come and see me when I go to the office. You're coming with me, right? You come with me when I go to the secretary's office, okay? What we need to know is when the seminar will recommence.

Students: April 13.

Deleuze: Is that a Tuesday? Ha ha... you're sure? We start again on a Tuesday? [*Students disagree; some say no; others answer yes*] There we are! So, we recommence on...

A student: We recommence on April 13!

Another student: No, we recommence on the 20<sup>th</sup>...

Deleuze: Really? We recommence on the 20<sup>th</sup>?

A student: No, it's the 13<sup>th</sup>!

Deleuze: So, you think it's earlier? But... but it can't be the 13<sup>th</sup>. The 13<sup>th</sup> is... it's Easter Tuesday, the 13<sup>th</sup>...

A student: Are you sure?

Deleuze: Wait, I'm going to ask the secretary... You, you're talking about the nursery school schedule, right? Is it the same thing? Maybe. Well, we don't know when we're coming back, but we know when we're leaving, fine!

Well then, let's keep moving forward at full tilt. Okay. You can see where we are. We have already... we have already begun our analysis of the action-image. And what we saw last time was only a first level of the action-image. And without doubt, all I can say by way of a summary is that this level is extremely profound, certainly not on account of the analysis that we have made but on account of its situation. It is like a kind of level that we could call... Yes, we could call it a bottom level, a bottom level from which action emerges, or an archaeological level – though that isn't exactly the right word, since what does it consist in? As we have seen, it is indeed a question of presenting in the image certain states of things that are perfectly determined, which is the condition of the action-image, actual and determined states of things. But this deepest level consists in extracting from historical-geographical, here-and-now states of things, from specific milieux... in extracting from these milieux what would be like originary worlds where, in order to constitute the

action, impulses and objects grapple with each other.

As I said, well, this cinema or these images, these action-images made of impulses and objects that conjoin following the steepest slope, within an originary world that they describe, that they are meant to describe in two very different ways – and I tried to explain in what sense these were two different ways... in two different ways – a rather prodigious cinema that we are all more or less familiar with, namely, the undertaking of Stroheim and the undertaking of Buñuel. Fine.

And someone, someone here made a remark, when the other time I said, a little imprudently, but nevertheless... that these were the two great men of this cinema, and that, indeed, confronted by the image, this kind of adventure of the impulse and its object, where at the same time one extracts – and the two operations go together – at the same time one extracts from determined milieus just as many originary worlds (a world of hunger, a world of sexuality, a world of money and so on, a world of impulses...), this operation was somehow successful, in a way it was doubly successful, under the two different forms: that of Stroheim's naturalism and that of Buñuel's naturalism or supernaturalism. And indeed, for convenience, we decided to call this deepest level of the action-image naturalism.

Now, someone pointed out that, after all, there was perhaps a lineage of this cinema, and here one could think of certain forms of cinema that we might call a neo-horror cinema. For example, once again, in the work of a director who is not... who is by no means mediocre, in Mario Bava, there are scenes that we might consider very strong examples of a kind of cinema of impulses, but he's still a secondary figure. And last time, someone said that we should see... – but I don't think she's here today... Oh no, she's here, she's here! – that we should see if a filmmaker who, I think, is not... Well, it wouldn't be offensive to say that he doesn't quite have the genius of Buñuel or Stroheim, but he's still very important... we should see whether in the films of Marco Ferreri there might be a kind of revival of this project... which doesn't mean that he would be imitating Stroheim or Buñuel.

But now let me react to that remark before you say something, if you wish to... let me respond: if you take a relatively recent Ferreri film like *Bye Bye Monkey*<sup>1</sup> – is that the title... *Bye Bye Monkey*? – there is something in that film that I was quite struck by. And in accordance with... in accordance with your remark, I said to myself, indeed, that you were right. Because if I try to extract a formula, but it's something other than a formula – you'll correct me if I'm wrong – if I try to identify a kind of structure of *Bye Bye Monkey*, what would this be? There is a historical-geographical state of things that is perfectly determined. It really is a milieu. But at the same time from this determined milieu the power of an originary world is extracted. And it's in the highly unusual images of the enormous cadaver of King Kong that occupies the waste ground of a huge office block, as far as I can remember... There, you really have... what we have is a procedure that's a bit surrealist which permits this extraction of the originary world. But then you have the originary world, which we can't even say doubles the determined state of things. No, it's not... it's not... it's not there to double the determined state of things. It is like something extracted, it's immanent. It's the originary world that lies at the bottom of this particular state of things.

And against the background of this enormous cadaver of King Kong that occupies, once again, the waste ground of a huge office complex... what happens exactly? You're going to have the adventure of an impulse, with all the violence there is in an impulse, and it's a paradoxical impulse since what we have is the maternal impulse of a man. A maternal impulse in a man... who will take what for his object? A little monkey. And this somewhat grotesque story will indeed provide a kind of... it will borrow the principle – always of the steepest slope – where the impulse and its object are conjoined in a kind of slope they have in common or follow a slope they have in common. And indeed, it seems to me that *Bye Bye Monkey* corresponds well to this formula of violence, of the impulse and its object. This is the way I would read it but no doubt you have some things to add in

this regard.

A woman student: [*Inaudible remark*]

Deleuze: Yes, but on this point we've all... sorry to interrupt you. We've all agreed to leave our own tastes out of it.

The student: [*Inaudible remarks about the closed world of the film*]

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes. But it doesn't matter that you don't like it, eh! [*Laughs*] It doesn't matter because we're looking for concepts. So, what does it matter whether you like it or not? Do you have the same kind of reaction of disgust in the case of Stroheim?

The student: No.

Deleuze: So, Stroheim's okay for you? You see how odd it is! Odd. Yes, but of course, it's always like that! So, I don't want to say that this is insignificant. That's fine with me. This form of cinema suits me, while this other... from another point of view... But none of that matters to us. I insist very much on the fact that there should be no value judgements in what we do here, that is, the only things... the only value judgment is that... all the examples that I give you are examples that, at least I think, have a certain importance for cinema. But, once again, Ferreri is not...

So, if you want, I think I would suggest that what disgusts you, in fact, is not particularly this violence of the impulse and its object. It is that in Ferreri's cinema, there is something a bit creaky, that is, there is something too constructed. There is something contrived and that one feels is contrived, whereas... whereas in Stroheim's or even in Buñuel's cinema – sometimes, in the least successful Buñuel's, there is a very... it is very contrived – but in the good Buñuel films and all of Stroheim's, it is not contrived at all. There is this raw struggle between the impulse and its object. I told you that if it disgusts you, well, it's because you are – I'm not trying to be ironic when I say this – it's because you are too much, you are like Visconti. Do you like Visconti?

The student: I love Visconti. [*Laughter*]

Deleuze: Aha! That's what I said last time. Take someone like Visconti, I think that Visconti has always been obsessed with the idea of trying to make a cinema of the impulse and of the object. Also, food in Visconti has an enormous importance... all that is highly important. But, much more, I remember a text, then, it's in the dialogues – and dialogue is very important for us – well, there's a moment in *The Leopard*<sup>2</sup> when the priest explains the world of the rich. He says that the world of the rich... you know, it's very strange! You have this idiot priest all of a sudden talking to the people, this priest who is the Baron's slave, I don't know... is it a Baron? But well, anyway, this slave of the Leopard, his personal priest, starts talking to the common people. And he says: “You don't understand the rich, you don't understand them” – and that's pure Visconti – “You don't understand the rich because they don't live in a world that the Lord created. They don't live in a world created by God. They live in a world that they themselves have created. So that what is very important to you has no importance for them. And what seems insignificant to you is, on the contrary, a matter of life and death for them.” Indeed, we're in a period of social turmoil, but the Leopard knows quite well that all this is of no importance to the world of the rich, absolutely no importance. On the other hand, what is of fundamental importance is to have his picnic, a picnic that is indeed quite impressive, a pure Viscontian image, a formidable picnic. And you see in the world of the rich, there is... [*Interruption of the recording*] [13:45]

... Stroheim may have had aristocratic pretensions, but nobody took him seriously. Anyway,

Stroheim was not an aristocrat. He wasn't vulgar, but no one saw him as a... he was a violent man... he was violent. Visconti was always blocked from realizing his dream of making a cinema of impulses. And instead, he will make – and here we have a film that is much more aristocratic – he will make a cinema of time, whereas Stroheim... and this is what a cinema of impulses consists of, which is why Visconti will never make a cinema of impulses, whereas Stroheim does. He does. And I believe, as I was saying, that it is wrong to always refer to him as they often do in histories of cinema, to refer to Stroheim as a great filmmaker of time. With him, if time was violence... time was violence, though this is not always the case, when there is a violence of time, it is because time is subordinated to impulses. Time is the unfolding of the impulse. But he is not at all a filmmaker who seizes the phenomena of time or time as a pure phenomenon. It will be a type of filmmaker, a very, very special type of filmmaker, who rises up to the time-image. And once again, I'm not saying that this is better. Ah, well. So, you see, we've just added Ferreri as part of this possible lineage. Well, that's that, we're done with the first level.

And now we enter into a second level of the action-image. And this second level, I would immediately specify that it is clearly here, not meaning that it's the same thing, I don't want to suggest that this cinema exhausts the second level, in fact we will see that there are thousands of other examples pertaining to this second level... but it is here that we will find what we might call... I don't know, American cinema par excellence... it's at this second level of the action-image. And you understand that if I present it as a second level, it is because it is no longer a question of impulses and objects. It's no longer a question of originary worlds... It is no longer a question of symptoms in the sense that both Stroheim and Buñuel could call themselves true "physicians of civilization". But what will it be a question of? So, you see, we fall back into a domain – you sense that everything is about to change – for example, if we discover a violence in the cinema of this second... in the second level, this will be a completely different form of violence than the violence we just saw in Stroheim or Buñuel. So, we will have to change all our categories or else find new categories in order to analyze this second level.

So, this second level, how can we present it? In one sense, it looks quite simple. Well, it begins from a determined state of things. You see, it's no longer set in originary worlds that are discovered in and through states of things. This second level takes the determined state of things for what it is, that is, for the way in which it presents itself, for the way it appears. And this determined state of things has its spatio-temporal coordinates. What does this determined state of things consist in? And here we come back to matters we already know, and which are therefore relatively simple. We already know what a determined state of things with spatio-temporal coordinates is: it's the power-qualities that we analyzed previously, the power-qualities seized insofar as they are actualized. The state of things is the actualization of the power-qualities. And the power-qualities insofar as they are actualized in a state of affairs constitute what? A milieu. They constitute a milieu.

Now, nature can constitute this kind of milieu and, as such, have a great power. This does not prevent the milieu from always being a derived world. It is not an originary world. And the powers that nature can have in this milieu are the derived powers of nature. If the power-qualities in themselves are what we call, using Peirce's terminology, *qualisigns*, the power-qualities effectuated and actualized in a state of things constituting a milieu are what we would call, again according to Peirce's vocabulary, *synsigns*. I would say that here we are no longer in the world of naturalism – again trying to establish some concepts – we are rather in what should be called *a world of realism* whose first characteristic is the milieu as a derived world. But at the same time this milieu as a derived world establishes a situation in relation to a character or set of characters.

In other words, the milieu is a set of ambient circumstances that have a strong influence on a character in relation to whom they manifest themselves as a situation. And since we are no longer in the realm of originary worlds, the character is no longer driven by impulses. In fact, in naturalism,

we saw that the real characters were the impulses themselves. Whereas here, on the contrary, we have a character of a completely different type of realism. How can he be defined? He will be defined by the fact that, as a character, he reacts... he reacts to the situation, or he acts on the milieu. In other words, he will be defined by his behavior, by his way of being, and by behavior, I mean the set of actions that react upon the situation or on the milieu.

This behavior – why can't we immediately sense what it is? – this behavior is something you might think I want to refine at all costs. I actually need a technical name, even if we won't understand the need for this technical name until later. But, borrowing a Latin term, we can call it *habitus*. So, what is *habitus* exactly? It's literally where our habits derive from. Although habit is just a special case of *habitus*, and that's why I need a more barbaric name, more than Latin anyway. So, what is *habitus*? It is the way of being as it reacts upon a situation or a milieu. It's behavior. And we are no longer... here we see clearly that we are no longer in the ordinary world of the impulses. It is that the impulse no longer appears as such. It will only appear under derived forms. In the same way that the milieu is a derived world, the impulse will itself manifest itself in the character only under a derived form, meaning, either under the form of emotion, or under the form of motive – motive and emotion being simply the impulses as they relate to behaviors, impulses insofar as they are treated as simple variables of behavior, as simple variables of *habitus*.

So, I would say that this cinema, this action-image is actually quite simple. You might recognize – maybe it's a little bit clearer now, though we'll move on to examples that will make it clearer – you might recognize the formula that I had proposed in anticipation, that is, the formula of the action-image that could be symbolized by S-A-S'... S-A-S': S is the Situation-milieu – S is the milieu insofar as it is organized as a situation in relation to a character or set of characters; A is the behavior or the action or the *habitus* – remember it's *habitus* with an 'h', and that the action in this case reacts upon the situation and the milieu; S' is the modified situation. This is the second level of the action-image.

If the action-image, according to the terminology we've borrowed from Peirce, is the domain of secondness in the very approximate form: two... in any action, there are two, we see that this level of the action-image presents two types of secondness. The first secondness – and this is what will constitute the whole of the action-image – first secondness is that of the *synsign*, or of the milieu itself as a derived world. In what way does this constitute secondness? In that the power-qualities are actualized in a state of things. There are indeed two terms: the power-qualities and the state of things that actualizes them. These two terms are nonetheless quite difficult to distinguish, so I would call this an introductory secondness.

Second secondness: the character acts, and by acting, by behaving, reacts upon the situation. Here we have a real secondness. But in what form? Action, modification of the situation. Or more profoundly, what is this second secondness exactly? It is – and in fact we have seen it... we have seen it and that's why Peirce's analysis is useful to us, we have seen this – all action implies reaction, all effort implies resistance. And after all behavior can perhaps only be conceived in what form? In the form of a duel. And this is the true secondness of the action-image. It will necessarily be a question of a duel: a duel with the milieu, or a duel with an element of the milieu, or a duel with someone else.

Already, we can be either worried or satisfied, but we have the presentiment that the form of the duel opens up all kinds of possibilities and that you will find it every time there is behavior. Every time there is behavior, a duel is inscribed in the behavior. It is this that will apportion the emotions and motives of the behavior. Now this, always keeping to Peirce's vocabulary, is the domain not of the *synsign* but of the *index*. When two elements are in a relation of action and reaction, one is the index of the other. The resistance is the index of the effort, and the effort is the index of the

resistance. I would say, therefore, that the two secondnesses of the action-image in this realist sense are that of the *synsign* and that of the *index*.

If I were to summarize, I would say, first secondness of the action-image: the milieu throws down a challenge. The milieu throws down a challenge to one or more characters, and by the same token the milieu, insofar as it throws down a challenge to one or more characters, constitutes a "situation", the situation these characters are in. Second secondness: the character reacts, and this is the effort-resistance relation, or if you prefer, it is the index or the duel. It's the index or the duel.

And, it is inevitable, and this is its genius, that the cinema will present us with a certain number of works in this form of the S-A-S scheme. Indeed, its genius is to consider situations and actions. As we might say, or as Claude Edmonde Magny said in her book on the American novel, in which she compared the American novel and cinema:<sup>3</sup> Well, yes... in cinema, we don't grasp emotions independently of behaviors. I think that, in a certain way, she was wrong because... but in any case, the cinema she was speaking about, as you might already sense, will be highly typical of American cinema, a whole form of cinema that goes from situation to behavior, from the situation-milieu to reaction-behavior, that is, we go from the synsign to the index. We go from the milieu to the duel. It will be a cinema of behavior... that responds to which formula? Well, as we have just seen, to S-A-S' with all its variations. We can say that there are two extremes, because there will be films corresponding to the extended formula S-A-S': initial situation / action in the form of a duel / modified situation.

But you can also have a short formula S-A, initial situation / action that reacts upon the situation and end of the film. Here we are not even shown how the situation has changed. There is no need because it is self-evident. Or there's a form, a form that you can have, though obviously you sense that these won't necessarily be the most cheerful films... which is S-A-S. At the end, the whole thing begins again, nothing has been resolved. This is important, because between having S' at the end and S at the end, you can have lots of tiny variations. You can have an S' that is so similar to the starting S and yet somehow a little different. I've seen films where the situation has barely changed for better or worse. We'll see all this later, but this is just to tell you that this is not at all a rigid formula.

And to make it more comprehensible, let's always try to force words – because this year I would like you to retain... that is, those of you who follow the seminar, to retain at least this, that the efforts we make to establish a terminology are part and parcel of the work we're doing and that, once again, each time we don't have the right word at our disposal, we have to somehow manage to create one. And each time we do have a word, we have to use it and make a category of it. So, I was thinking, this form of action, or of action-image, or if you prefer – since at this level it amounts to the same thing – cinematographic narrative. What could we call this S-A-S'? For reasons that still elude us, I will call it, borrowing this term from a critic who applied it to Lang's *M*: the large form, the large form, meaning of course the large form of narrative.<sup>4</sup> Yes, this already conditions what we will do in future, since if the term "large form" is justified in designating the action-image that proceeds by way of S-A-S', it already allows us to foresee that we won't stop here and that there will be at least a third level, and that this third level will be that of the "small form", the small form. Okay. But in that case why... we will have to justify these terms large and small, right? But let's not hurry things.

And so for the sake of simplicity let's think of an example that brings together everything I've just said, an example of the large form, S-A-S' cinema. The name is difficult to pronounce, but it's a film from 1927 entitled *The Wind*, by a great Swedish director Victor Sjöström... Sjöström.<sup>5</sup>

A woman student: It says Sjöström [*she pronounces the accent 'Seastrum'*]

Deleuze: Ah, you put... you pronounce it American style...

The student: It's that Swedes often change their names.

Deleuze: Ah yes, but when he was Swedish... when he was Swedish... what did they call him?

The student: Sjöström, but in the States he was called 'See-strum'.

Deleuze: Ohhh, in the States! I myself would like to find the right Swedish pronunciation. Are there no Swedes here?

Another student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: What does that mean? [*Other students offer pronunciations*] How do you say it? [*Inaudible response*] That's not bad. *The Wind* from 1927, by the director I just mentioned... well, it's spelt, if I can remember, I didn't write it down... it's spelt S-j-ö-s-t-r-ö-m. Wonderful. Ah, but he's very, very important since – and this should interest us – he is one of the great directors of what has sometimes been called – though there is some debate on this, some confusion in histories of cinema – what has sometimes been called Swedish Impressionism and other times Swedish Expressionism. But none of this matters... I prefer Swedish Expressionism, which in many histories of cinema is often referred to as “white magic” as opposed to the “black magic” of German Expressionism. And, indeed, you should be able to sense that if this is Swedish Expressionism, it obviously has nothing to do with German Expressionism, although elements of the two schools have sometimes been combined.

So here I summarize. It's not a question of the screenplay. Here is what *The Wind* presents us with. *The Wind* is a late film, isn't it? Since the director in question had already emigrated, he had already emigrated to the United States. But here he makes a film just like the ones he made before. A film he made in Sweden, for example, a wonderful film, a great classic called *The Outlaw and His Wife*, was entirely of the same type. And I take *The Wind* because it shows the S-A-S' formula in such a pure state. It's this: it's set on the great America plains – I don't remember which part of America, I didn't write it down, but it doesn't matter... you can check this in your textbooks of cinema history, it's of no importance – on the great America prairies, battered by the wind, the ever-blowing wind. Here's a commentary: the wind blows, okay. But it's no longer the wind as *qualisign*, it's no longer the wind as power-quality. It's the wind as it is actualized on an American prairie, in the world of the American prairies, with its cowboys and blown sand and all that... It's really a determinate state of things. Here the wind is captured as something actualized. And this is a rough world, that is, the situation is hard for those who inhabit this milieu... tough, violent cowboys, cattle dealers. It's a very violent world, very harsh. It's a world of the Western, the wind in the prairie. Well, I would say, the wind here is the *synsign*.

And into this violent and hard world arrives a young orphan girl who comes from the south, where there is no wind, and she is taken in. She is taken in by distant family members, she herself has no one left and she is welcomed with violence and brutality. She's taken in by a very brutal young cowboy and the young cowboy's parents... and parents are always terrible. And then there's the wind, and she can't get used to the wind. No more than she can get used to the cowboy... In other words, she lacks the *habitus*, she's a girl from the south, and she suffers tremendously. Everywhere she goes, she gets bullied, everywhere, everywhere. Okay.

However, she cannot refuse it and she is forced to marry the cowboy. But by a kind of dignity, you see the birth of... well, here I'm introducing a somewhat new concept, a first duel. The situation – this poor young girl in the wind, on the prairie, who lacks the *habitus* – this situation results in a

duel... a duel, a first duel with the young cowboy. He almost forces her to marry him, and she reacts in the duel. For the moment the poor girl is quite incapable of reacting upon the milieu, as we shall see. But, she does what she can, she reacts, she refuses him. And the duel is uncertain – it's a very, very beautiful film, I'm stupidly summarizing, but it's a very, very fine film, quite admirable. The duel is uncertain because he likes her. Even with his very rough ways... sometimes really rough, coarse men are able to conceive a very pure love. Well, this is the case. This rough cowboy really loves her. He doesn't know how to express it, but well, that's the way it is, it can happen sometimes. So, she refuses him. So they remain like that in this state of duel.

And there is the cattle dealer who arrives one day, when the cowboy is not there. And here there are some incredible scenes, some powerful images of molestation, which form part of some of the great images of cinema. Sexual violence in the cinema is a very odd thing... For those who have seen this film, you remember the incredible images of molestation in L'Herbier's *Eldorado*...<sup>6</sup> but L'Herbier's images are of another type. But this forms part of some of the very great images of cinema. And she... It's not clear whether an actual rape takes place or not. I myself think it doesn't happen, but for reasons that are ultimately debatable. And then she kills him, she kills him.

So there is an intense moment when the duel... you see, the duel has already shifted. First duel with the cowboy husband, the outcome is uncertain; second duel with the cattle dealer, here the outcome is more radical, she kills him. Third duel, where this time the duel shifts. And it will be the first duel the girl has with the milieu. There are some splendid images here, so beautiful, when she tries to bury him. It's no small matter to bury somebody when there's all this wind, and in sandy ground, it's terrible you know? And as she buries him, the wind that blows disinters him; a marvel of cinema, the wind that blows disinters the guy's body. And the girl, poor thing, doesn't know what to do. She runs, she tries to bury him, and the wind undoes all her efforts... she does all this, and the wind does that. It's no good. And, fortunately, the tough cowboy returns, and she tells him everything. Again, the duel shifts, but here – and this is particularly important – the duel really becomes a confrontation with the milieu. And the husband understands everything. He tells her: You did right, you did right, that guy was a bastard, you did right. And then she begins to understand that the cowboy really loves her. And she will love the cowboy in return: resolution of the first duel.

So, the cowboy buries the guy well because he is strong, he knows the wind, so he has the right *habitus*, he buries the guy properly. And in the final image, again a very, very beautiful... there are some wonderful images where she goes out – and here I'm cutting it short – where she goes out onto the prairie. And what has happened? The situation has changed. She's reconciled herself to the wind, she's reconciled to the wind. And we see these wonderful images of her standing in the wind, where the wind has become a power, a friendly power-quality. It's a beautiful film. A very beautiful film.

And here I would say without needing to comment any further, you can fully recognize the S-A-S' structure. This example simply serves to indicate that A is not a simple term, since under the heading A, you will have to group all the successive duels – whether between characters, or between a character and the milieu, all the behaviors that can be gathered under the form: effort-resistance, or all the indices that tend to have and to trigger a reaction upon the milieu and the situation, upon the situation imposed by the milieu. Well, then, I would like you to understand why I am doing this. Genres... I think that genres in cinema are not very important, in any case, I don't believe – but I'll only be able to say this in the third semester, or maybe in a year, two years, or even three – I don't believe in the idea of applying codes to cinema. And regarding these genres... well, I nonetheless still need them because I'm thinking that if we have discovered a formula of the action-image under the form S-A-S', we should at least show how it traverses all the different genres, but at the same time it does not exhaust them. So I would ask how does this S-A-S' formula traverse the different genres?



So, what could I fit within this formula S-A-S' in terms of the most famous classic cinema? First of all, I would include a great documentary school, that of Flaherty...<sup>7</sup> And here I'll just say a few words. You can see that all this will only make sense if in the future, on discovering other formulas for the action-image, we will be able, within a single genre, to compare what corresponds to such and such a formula and what to another formula. This is why I need my little table right now. I think that Flaherty's achievement in the cinema – so he's better than a disciple – would correspond to that of a writer, an Englishman by the name of Arnold Toynbee, in history and the philosophy of history, a writer... it's spelt *t-o-y-n-b-e-e*, with two *e*'s.<sup>8</sup> And Toynbee had a rather simple idea, but a very interesting one, very fine, regarding civilizations, an idea he returns to again and again, saying: well, you understand, the milieu throws down a challenge to people. This is Toynbee's theory of challenge. He was very keen on this notion of challenge.

The milieu challenges man. Only, there are three cases, or perhaps two cases. There are two main cases. First case: the milieu throws down a challenge to man, but this challenge is not particularly demanding, that is, the milieu contains sufficient resources for man to be able to react upon it, meaning he triumphs over the challenge, and is not forced to put all his strength into it, he has a reserve of strength which enables him precisely to create a new milieu. In other words, the reaction to his milieu is not so exhausting that man cannot recreate the milieu. So this... this situation where the challenge is not so exhausting and where man, by reacting to the milieu, is able to recreate another milieu that suits him, would be that of the great progressive civilizations.

The second case, however, unites the other two figures: either the milieu is so favorable, so welcoming, the weather so beautiful, and everything necessary is there, that man is not compelled to any duel by the milieu. The milieu does not throw down a challenge to him and man does not enter into a duel-type relation with the milieu. He does not need to react. It is too beautiful, it's paradise... But there are not many places of this type, islands maybe, certain islands... you see? Or else, the challenge is so strong, so violent, that all of man's forces are invested in the business of survival. So his only reaction is to try to survive. He cannot change the milieu. The milieu is so harsh, the challenge it imposes so strong that man can only subsist, can only survive in such a milieu. And Toynbee gives examples: the nomads of the desert and the ice-bound Eskimos. And he explains, these are civilizations that are equally admirable, but they are nonetheless blocked civilizations since they can only be civilizations of survival.

You'll tell me this is simplistic, it's a bit simplistic as a scheme. Yet if you have the chance to read Toynbee, you will discover that his work is quite powerful, he is a lyrical historian, whose vision of civilization is really quite compelling. And considering this, these are ideas that suit us very well. The challenge thrown down by the milieu and the duel that man engages in with the milieu. Now, if I take Flaherty, what do we see? S-A-S' or S-A-S? In the case of a blocked civilization, in the case of a non-evolving civilization, in which man can only try to survive, you will typically have S-A-S. You will not have S-A-S'. Man cannot really change the milieu. He can at best get by in such a milieu. He can at best cling to the milieu. No doubt he has his reasons for clinging to the milieu. But it cannot become a so-called “progressive” civilization. The milieu is too harsh for that.

Now, Flaherty's very first great documentary, which is quite famous, is *Nanook of the North*.<sup>9</sup> Well, *Nanook* corresponds to this S-A-S structure. And this is evident, as the first images of *Nanook* are the establishing shots of the landscape with the coast, the ice, the mist. And the images that follow will be those of *Nanook*'s duels, and here you have these duels that have no object other than the survival of *Nanook* and his family. Of course, there are moments of joy, there are moments... of course, I'm summarizing too much, but what we have is really the harsh S-A-S structure that Flaherty knows how to show, and you can imagine the splendor of the images that can emerge from this structure, exactly like those of *The Wind*, where even the poor summary I gave you of it could give you an idea of the beauty of the images and of the narrative structure, *Nanook of the North* is a

famous case of documentary, one that has a fundamental importance in the history of cinema...

So there is, I would say in overly technical terms, the presentation of the *synsign*, of the situation-milieu in the first images, after which we move on to the duels. First duel: Nanook builds his igloo. Here there really is a duel with this specific milieu and not with the milieu in general. And then there are the famous sequences that are so talked about, and rightly so, in the histories of cinema, the duel with the seal in the ice, the hole in the ice and the seal fishing episode which really is a duel in its purest form, since we have the indexical category of action and reaction, or effort and resistance, Nanook who pulls a little, the seal pulling back etc., all of Nanook's gestures, then the seal's attempts to defend itself and so on, which produce some sublime images. And then you have the great hunt, you have... you have all kinds of duels that indicate... well, what do they indicate and how? How Nanook's family is able to survive in this milieu that throws down a superhuman challenge.

And this is why – it goes without saying – I see a great coherence when, afterwards, Flaherty makes *Moana*<sup>10</sup> which corresponds in turn to the other case, that of a stagnant milieu, that is to say, the island milieu which is so favorable that civilization is stagnant. There, the milieu throws down no challenge. The milieu doesn't offer a challenge. Here the interesting thing – and this will be the whole structure of *Moana*... here too, you have the reduced structure of the S-A-S type – the interesting thing is that man has to challenge himself, otherwise he wouldn't survive as a man in the milieu. He has to challenge himself. And Flaherty shows this beautifully. And here it's almost... in this case the images are almost Nietzschean. He will impose a trial of pain upon himself, which will be the making of the great scene in *Moana*. It is as if man takes nature's place when nature does not provide a great enough challenge to man. You see how this is a very lyrical conception of civilization. And it will be the trial in the form of a duel, the trial of a tattoo, a particularly painful tattoo, that will be the sign under which the inhabitant of the island truly becomes a man... that is to say, it becomes necessary to substitute something, a trial, for the absence of the challenge thrown down by nature.

But here too you have this S-A-S structure, where the duel takes another form, since it takes the form of the tattoo. Perhaps you can understand why Flaherty, in all his films, would provoke a kind of opposition. And again, it's not a question of saying that others were right or that Flaherty was right... but of how Flaherty would be treated as the author of a kind of Robinsonade, or of a kind of idealism, as the bard of civilizations that were disappearing, but without confronting the reasons for their disappearance. And why those who worked with Flaherty would give rise to a school of documentary that was completely different from his and that would be understood in another way. But what does it mean to say, “completely different” or “understood in another way?” Well, it's quite simple, it's very simple: it would take up a different form of narrative, certainly not of the S-A-S type. It would be of another type, it would take up another form. But which? For the moment we can't say, can we? So, let's just say first pole: documentary.

Second genre – I'm going very quickly here – the social film. A typical example would be King Vidor's *The Crowd*<sup>11</sup>, another classic from 1928, which again reflects the S-A-S formula, but here what we have is a very harsh SAS. The situation of a poor guy is established through the wide pan over the city, and then, we zoom into the city looking for the building where the guy works in a continuous camera movement, and then the floor he is on, and then the office, the room, and then his desk in the room, so you therefore have a very strong passage from S to the character, from the overall situation to this character, from the milieu to the character, and then the mediocre life this poor guy inhabits. So in the first movement of S-A, he is isolated from the crowd and individuated, and then in what follows he will be reunited with the crowd. And the film ends with a scene at the circus, where we see the guy laughing in a moment of relaxation. But this is blended with the collective laughter of the people. So, you have a pure S-A-S structure.

I would also say we have an SAS structure in the first western... the first western, that is...  
[*Interruption of the recording*] [1:00:24]

## Part 2

... for example, *Scarface* by Hawks<sup>12</sup> and then what is without doubt the greatest of the film noirs with an S-A-S formula, as we'll see... I'll comment on it later, Fritz Lang's *M*, and finally the great historical film, whether dealing with recent, or ancient or archaic history: for recent history Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*,<sup>13</sup> then the archaic period of *Intolerance*<sup>14</sup> and also the great historical films of Cecil B. de Mille.<sup>15</sup> So there you have it. If I need these films, it will be for the future, for now I'll just mention them and we'll try to move on because my problem now is... these are just some examples of the application of what I called the large form of narrative.

What remains to be seen in order to finish with this large form is: what would be its laws? Can we identify some kind of very general laws pertaining to the large form? Well yes, we can, and I would like to propose four laws of the large form, laws by which you will necessarily recognize the large form. Four laws: You see that's quite a lot... Well, I'm off now... I'm going to the secretary's office. I'll be back in five minutes, and I'll bring you the dates of the holidays. Bernard Cache and I will bring your UVs.<sup>16</sup> ... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:02:22]

... First of all, I have some very bad news for you... That's it, I've lost, I've lost... Alas the vacations... we can't even work anymore, because the vacations are from Friday evening, March 26, to Wednesday morning, April 14... Ah that's a real blow! What? It's too long? Yes, I agree. Well, I was saying... what? We'll meet again on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, yes that's right, the 20<sup>th</sup>... I know some of you will be happy about that, but not me.

So anyway, if we were to identify laws, but I mean very general models of this large form of S-A-S or S-A-S', I would say that the first great law – though we shouldn't regard them as fixed laws, should we? – the first great potentiality, we could call the law of montage of action, the law of montage of action. Because, in fact, since the beginning, we've looked at and considered montage under many different aspects, and the first times I spoke about montage I said I would only consider montage from a single point of view. But now there is a new necessary element to consider and what is this? The aspect of montage that I want to consider is what I will call *montage of action*.

And how should we define this montage of action? Well, in the S-A-S formula, where we move from a situation-milieu to the duel-action that reacts upon the situation, it is necessary that, how can I put it, several lines emanate from the milieu. It is necessary that a number of centers are formed in the milieu which will additionally act upon the character, that is to say, that the character must be subjected to several simultaneous actions. Why is this? Because there is a fundamental discrepancy between the character extracted from the milieu and the milieu itself with all its powers. There must therefore be a set of convergent actions enacted upon on the character.

Why? In order to determine the situation, to determine the situation in which the character is caught up. So, there must be simultaneous series that will all contribute to the description of the situation and also to the resolution of the situation by the duel, by the character's own action, whether or not these lines of action enacted upon on the character are hostile to that character, or else are favorable to him... no matter whether they are in any way hostile to him or in any way favorable. In any case, in our S-A-S image we have the peripheral milieu, the centers distributed within this milieu and a number of lines of force exerted upon the character. In the example I took, *The Wind*, you have one center, the wind in the meadow which acts upon the poor young woman, and then another center... the harshness of the prairie inhabitants' way of life which constitutes another center, which is the very center that will determine her situation.

So here the montage will consist in the respective relation, from the point of view of the images, between these influences, these simultaneous, edited determinations. It will be a question of the rhythm and the form under which you pass to one or other determinate series. What effect will two series have upon a character, beginning from their respective centers as they are distributed in the milieu, and in what form? So, for instance I go back to the example of *The Wind*. Here we have some images that show that the heroine cannot bear the wind. So, the wind constitutes a peripheral center. But neither can she bear the inhabitants' way of life, and this is shown through interior images where we see how she can't tolerate the cowboy's father and mother. Now, under what rhythm do we pass from one to the other?

This is what we'll call a montage of action. And what relation will these simultaneous images have? Will they be rhythms of opposition? Opposition is possible; for example, in Eisensteinian montage, oppositional rhythms are very frequent, but this is not the only possibility. Actions are often simultaneous and not necessarily in opposition. So there will be inventions of montage, some very important inventions, in the form of a montage of action. And if it is true, as histories of cinema say, that it is Griffith who first gives importance to or who, in a certain way, invents the montage of action – notably in *Birth of a Nation* – this doesn't mean that he determines a definitive form of this montage of action, and every great filmmaker, especially in this period, in the early period, was able to invent their own forms of montage of action.

So I will take a very specific case from the forms of montage of action, what is known as *parallel montage*. Whether we are dealing with one series of centers or another, we have to ask ourselves what their relation is. As an example of this law of the montage of action, I would just like to mention here... because you have to have this kind of montage in the action-image, you can see exactly from what level I'm approaching it. The montage of action intervenes precisely to apportion, distribute and put in relation the different series of influences that, beginning from the milieu, will act upon the character. So here I'll take *M* as a brilliant example of montage of action, one whose novelty had a fundamental influence on cinema. To make a quick commentary on Fritz Lang's *M* from this point of view, we can see that its form is that of a pure S-A-S or rather S-A-S'. It's an S-A-S' form, and how does it begin?

By establishing the situation... -- this microphone feedback is really annoying! -- It will be S-A-S', that is to say, first of all we have the statement of the situation, namely there is a murderer at large in the town, a child murderer, a murderer of little girls, not just children but little girls in particular, a murderer of little girls is at large in the town.

So here we have what is precisely a display of the situation, which I would say is really the synsign – this all happens very rapidly, and immediately afterwards we have a state of things... a state of things. And here in this state of things of the milieu, two centers are immediately identified, two centers: the center of the criminals, the center of the criminal underworld, the center of the underworld... and the center of the police. From these two centers emanate two actions that are enacted upon the character M; we don't know who this is. Two sites from which emanate two actions, two influences: on the one hand, the police are looking for the murderer, and on the other the underworld too are hunting the murderer. Why? Because he's damaging – and we'll see what this means, I think it has a very deep meaning from the point of view of cinema – because M, the murderer of little girls, is damaging the business of the underworld. Everyone, from beggars to criminals, says: "He's not one of us, that guy's not one of us; we're businessmen, we're part of society, that is to say, we're well integrated in the milieu, we're part of society. He is very harmful to us, we have to find him, we no longer have peace because the police are monitoring everything. We no longer have peace", and so what we have here is the emergence of a double pincer movement that closes in on the M character. Outside the beggars, controlled by the underworld, are looking for him on the streets, with their own methods, while inside the police go up stairways and search in

houses. So there's this double pincer movement that is tracking him down.

And here, Lang's amazing achievement in montage – and here I'm not saying anything particularly original as many critics have remarked upon this – is that he manages to create a parallel montage of a completely new type, one that no longer makes use of oppositions but of a system of “rhymes”, of complementarities. One famous example of this is when the police gather and the commissioner says something and then we jump to the meeting of the underworld where the question posed by the commissioner is taken up and answered by one of the criminals. Here we have a whole system of rhymes by which we pass from one series to the other, and the two series will compete with one another. They will compete, and why? I can't tell you yet. But generally speaking, I can just say that they will compete. But towards what aim? Towards the climax of the movie, which will be the duel-action. The murderer who is being hunted down is discovered. He is discovered, and he is captured by the beggars, and he will be judged by the incredible court held by the underworld. And then there arrives a duel-type relation. The duel relation was already there the whole time, I won't elaborate... but the duel culminates in the moment when he stands before the court.

Okay, and then we have the modified situation with which the film will culminate, but it is only partly modified. Is it S- A-S' or is it S-A-S? It's S-A-S', if we consider that the underworld has regained its freedom of action. The police have the murderer, which means they can go back to business as usual. But it's S-A-S, that is, it's very little modified in the sense that the last word in the film belongs to the mother who at the very beginning saw her little girl murdered, and who now says, who in a grave voice says something like: “It will happen again. From now we'll have to watch the children.” You see how there is an oscillation here. Is it S-A-S or is it S-A-S'?

This is my first law, but I insist on the fact, that in each case of montage of action, it is obviously necessary, in studies of a structural type, to see how this montage operates, that is: is it in the form of opposition, is it in the form of echo and rhyme? And there are many other forms, and every great filmmaker has his own logic of montage of action.

The second law is what a while ago I called Bazin's last law, in homage to André Bazin, or the law of forbidden montage. Because I just want to say, it's in the definitive one-volume edition of *What is Cinema?* – it's on page 50 – where Bazin has a very good text in which he says... well, here it is, I won't read it to you because I don't have the time, I'll just read you some short passages. He says, here it is... here's the law he proposes. You see he really talks about a law: “One could set up the following principle as a law of aesthetics. When the essence of a scene demands the simultaneous presence of two or more factors in the action... when the essence of a scene demands the simultaneous presence of two or more factors in the action, montage is ruled out.”<sup>17</sup>

What does he mean in essence? He means that in this case even something of the order: shot-reverse shot would leave us with an impression of discomfort. He doesn't at all mean that the whole scene must be filmed in a single shot. No. What he means is that there is always a moment in an action, there is always a moment – and this what we might call the climax of the action – there is always a moment when we can no longer proceed by shot-reverse shot but must show the simultaneity of the action in a single shot. He offers two examples. The first is relatively simple for us: it's the seal hunt scene in *Nanook of the North*: there is the seal in its hole, there is Nanook who has made the hole in the ice, he shoots at the seal and so on... the seal resists, so it's a case of a duel... he's able to shoot lots of images, as the sequence lasts a long time, he can shoot a lot of images, sometimes of Nanook, sometimes of the seal. Fine. Perfect. It's a kind of shot-reverse shot movement. But at least once there must be a single shot showing Nanook and the seal together, otherwise it wouldn't work. Another example he gives is Chaplin's *The Circus*<sup>18</sup>, where there's a moment when Chaplin enters the lion cage and finds himself in front of the lion. Here the example is even clearer and Bazin is right: if you film the scene in a shot-reverse shot, one shot for the lion,

one for Charlot, it would make no sense, it would be nonsense.

What is interesting in Bazin's article is that Bazin shows how there are some very good films where this kind of nonsense happens, and we don't understand why the director didn't make his single shot, his shot of simultaneous presence. And so, I urge you to read these pages of Bazin that are very good. I would just say that as far as we're concerned, we understand Bazin's law quite well, it suits us perfectly... Why? Because to put it simply I would say that as long as the action depends... as long as an action depends on the milieu and the centers scattered throughout the milieu, montage is – if not obligatory, since one can have group shots – but if the centers happen to be very far apart then montage becomes necessary. But in the same action, in any action whatever, the moment of the duel, the pure moment of the duel, montage is ruled out. All the preliminaries to the duel can be in shot-reverse shot or edited together, but there will always be a moment in the duel, which that will be the duel's essence when montage will no longer be permissible.

At the same time, there must always be an exception to a law. There is only one case I can think of – though I can't explain it at the moment – a glorious, sublime, splendid exception to Bazin's law. It's the case where a duel no longer passes through the simultaneity of the elements of the action, that is, effort-resistance – you understand that if the duel is indeed the relation between effort-resistance, action- reaction, then you can no longer use montage. You have to have all of this in one image, in one shot. But as I said with exceptions: the duels... the duels of Laurel and Hardy, and it is the genius of Laurel and Hardy's duels to have escaped what seems to be this inevitable law. But why? And how? We will see in the future.

Third law that for convenience I will call the law of the gap... the law of the gap. So here I would say, yes, you understand, it's quite simple: if you take the formula S-A-S, with the situation itself referring to a vast milieu and the dueling action referring to an individuated character, you nonetheless have a very large gap, you have a very large gap between the situation, which as we have seen implies a whole derived milieu, and the poor character who finds himself prey to this situation in the milieu, lost in the derived milieu, and that's why I insisted on the term, "large form". The large form implies, the large form of narrative implies this large gap, for example, between the immense prairie that is buffeted by the wind and the poor young woman who happens to arrive there. In other words, it is impossible to immediately transform the situation into action. The great gap indicates that between the situation and the response – the character's behavior – there will be many intermediaries, there will be many mediations, and this is inevitable. We have already seen this with the first law, since it will take a series of simultaneous influences to constitute within the milieu, the situation in which the character's struggle takes place. So, the large form implies this large gap.

Except in one case. Here too we have an exception to the law of the large gap. And again, not surprisingly, we find it in burlesque comedy. It's like the example that I gave of Fields, the snowball. He opens his door and says: "Ah, weather's not fit to put a dog out..." and he receives a snowball in the face and so there is an immediate transformation of the milieu into a duel. But why, forgetting the way I recount it, does it make us laugh in the cinema, just as the duels of Laurel and Hardy make us laugh? Precisely because they are exceptions to these laws. But we still have to discover the techniques that make these exceptions possible. Well, but otherwise, I would say that the large form, by definition, operates with lavish means, it works through substantial means. What do I mean by this? Do I mean that it is expensive? If you keep in mind all the meanings of the word, yes, it is expensive, S-A-S cinema is expensive in appearance, we'll see, yes, why? Because it takes enormous means, it takes great means: whether in studio or outside, it takes great means. It takes great means to start from situations, to start from milieus, to constitute these situations, to determine the duels that are going to react upon them. You have to fill all this in, you have to multiply the mediations, so it's a form that requires great means. So having great means doesn't simply mean

that these films are expensive; it also means that they mobilize a lot of mediations.

In other words, there will be – this is the law of the gap as I would like to propose it – in the S-A-S formula, there is necessarily a maximum of difference between the situation and the duel-action, and at the same time, this maximum of difference must be bridged by a maximum of mediations. What are these mediations? These mediations are, first of all, the simultaneous actions, the simultaneous actions that we spoke about regarding the first law, and secondly... secondly, it is the relation the character necessarily has with one or several groups. These groups that are at the same time components of the situation in which the character finds himself, that are either allies or enemies of the character, will constitute a very important type of mediation. Thirdly, the dovetailing of duels that will bridge the difference between the situation and the exemplary duel. In other words, one duel never comes alone; one duel always hides another in the S-A-S form.

Hence the fourth and final law that we might call the law of the duel, namely, whenever a duel is presented in the S-A-S form – and you find these everywhere – in historical films it's the duels that take place in battle; in film noirs, it's the duels with or between gangsters. Always, you find these duels, everywhere. In the Western, the duel is fundamental. Anyway, the law of the duel is literally "one duel always hides another," and the question we are asked as spectators, even if there is no answer – though more often than not, there is an answer – is this: in the end *what is the real duel in all of this?* This is what fills the gap, or this is one of the ways the large gap will be filled. "I thought the duel was there but no, it's not there, it's somewhere else." It's not just the centers, there are not just centers in the milieu, peripheral centers from which the simultaneous actions enacted upon the character spring. It's at the level of the very duel that engages the character that one duel hides another, and that this will continually shift, it will shift in such a way as to more and more fill the entire frame of the situation, and even of the milieu itself.

Take some simple examples... the Western. Here you have an obvious duel. Well, the sheriff is looking for a bandit, that's an obvious duel. Ah, but all of a sudden, I think, but there are two people looking for him. It's a common figure in the Western, there are two people looking for him. He has a friend or someone who is with him, but won't the real duel be there, between the two pursuers? Not at all between the pursuer and the pursued, but between the two pursuers? Sometimes the situation explodes. When there are two, after liquidating the bandit or bandits, they settle the score with each other. And you understand, so that's it, so the real duel wasn't there after all. There's another, that duel hides another one. Or else they love the same woman. Ah, they love the same woman, interesting, so it's a trio? No, it's not a trio, it's two duels. And we'll see how important this turns out to be. We were too quick to mistake two duels for a trio. It's two duels. And who is the duel with? Is it the two men who love the same woman who are in a duel, or rather is it the two of them together who are in a duel with the woman? Women have been very badly treated in American cinema. Or in burlesque comedy as we'll see, the duels... the duels in burlesque comedy are with the woman who can't stop making gaffes... It's terrible, this misogyny in American cinema, this misogyny that we all condemn. But that's the way it is, it can't be helped. That's the way it is. So, the law of the duel is actually: *never think that you have determined where the duel is.*

To finish with this, I'm going back to the example of *M*. The duel, we know that we have the form of duel here. But what I want to say is that in the formula S-A-S, what is great about the duel *is that it is an empty form*. I mean it's an empty form that can be filled in a variety of ways, and a richly satisfying film is precisely a film which in the duel form accommodates, either successively or simultaneously, all kinds of different duels. For example, Ford's great western... I'll take an example of a great Ford western, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*.<sup>19</sup> Who is the duel between here? At first, it seems to be between Liberty Valance and the lawyer, the man of law, the man of books, whose only strength is the book. But then along comes the cowboy, who would have many reasons to ally himself with Liberty Valance, but something, a little thing happens – and this will give us

pause – that makes him ally himself with the man of law, and in the end, well you know this wonderful story: the man of law believes he is the one who killed Liberty Valance when in fact it was the cowboy who killed him on his behalf. But the real duel shifts. It's between the man of law and the man who can't read. And the woman is no fool. The man who can't read, the old cowboy, understands that he will never have the woman after the woman approaches the man of law and asks him to teach her how to write. Oh, so there are three duels here. Every time we think we've grasped the duel, it shifts. This is a fundamental law, it seems to me, of the S-A-S form.

And I would say that in *M*, there too, never confuse... you see why I'm saying this, it's because I would like already to protect the future... what I mean is, if I go back to Peirce's terms, never, never confuse a plurality of duels, that is, a plurality of secondnesses... don't confuse this with thirdness. If you simply multiply duels, you don't get out of secondness, you don't get out of the duel. You are making an apparent thirdness. If the cinema-image will have so many problems in attaining a true thirdness, this is obviously because it is not sufficient to multiply the duels. This would only produce a false thirdness. But even a false thirdness is still nonetheless highly important, these duels that are nested or that shift from one to another.

So *M*, of course, has to deal with two duels simultaneously, and he is also afraid, almost more afraid when he understands what's going on... he is much more afraid of the beggars than of the police. So, we have two duels: *M* with the beggars and *M* with the police. Not to mention the duels between, for example, the beggars and the criminals on the side of the underworld. And on the side of the police, between the commissioner and others... his boss, the minister and so on. You have all sorts of duels that dovetail. This is what will fill the large form. And in the end what will the real duel be? Well, the real duel is fascinating for us. It's clear... it's not necessarily said in the film and in the end perhaps the true duel is found in what the film cannot itself say. It is up to us, it is up to us, according to... and here I go back to the expression: according to our tastes, according to how we like the film.

Here I see a real duel that is in the end always a cinematographic duel. I mean the real duel exterior to the film, but which is the duel's most profound element, that cinema presents to us, is always the way in which a director settles his accounts. He settles his accounts... Yes, it is his own duel. So when we say that there are great directors of Westerns who used the form to launch a counter-attack against McCarthyism, it's true: This is the duel. It's not... well it is in the film in a certain sense, but it's also outside the film, and yet it's the film that imposes it. The real duel is the duel of the director against McCarthyism.<sup>20</sup> So he does this through the western, that's his business. All well and good.

But let's go back to *M*... I mean, in the real duel exterior to the film, you always have a secret for the history of cinema because, if I go back to *M* who is played by Peter Lorre,<sup>21</sup> a great actor who had considerable experience and came from the whole German tradition, we see he plays the part very, very soberly. He was an action actor – by the way, according to our classification, it's not fair that we have cinemas called Action Lafayette, Action République, we should have *Affections Lafayette, Affections République*.<sup>22</sup> There is no reason why cinema should necessarily be about action. But up to this point Peter Lorre had appeared in action roles, and very soberly at that. He wasn't just any action actor, there are many schools of action actors, but he had his own way of playing these roles.

When he's caught by the beggars, we have the underworld tribunal where he finds himself in front of the beggars, and there's a pseudo lawyer, and here we have the great scene of the false tribunal, and *M* shows his terror, and here obviously Peter Lorre starts to play the role the way an Expressionist actor would. His terror is no longer at all a terror of the type where the emotion is related to the action, to a moment of the action. It is Expressionist terror in its pure state, with all the tics of Expressionism, all the Expressionist tics you can imagine, all of which is quite admirable by



the way... it's not a mediocre performance. But we are struck by the change in the style of acting. It's obvious that Lang wanted this, that this scene should be very different.

But what is he saying with his Expressionist gesticulation and Expressionist mimicry? He says, look, you can't condemn me; you can't kill me, because what I do, my crimes, I can't avoid committing them, I can't do otherwise. In other words, I am driven by an impulse, I am driven by an impulse. But Lang doesn't care because it's not his business to distinguish – though we did because it was our business – to distinguish between a cinema of impulses and an Expressionist cinema, a cinema of pure power-qualities. We should acknowledge that for him, it's the same thing, therefore it doesn't change anything. It's the same thing because it's not his problem. In any case, the directions he gives Peter Lorre at the moment of the underworld's judgment is to play the scene in an Expressionist way, and Peter Lorre claims to have an irresistible urge to kill. Let's imagine that this is an Expressionist world, we know the situation is more complicated than that, but it doesn't matter. And the underworld answers him, and they say, "Don't you see that you've just condemned yourself? Don't you see that's why we can't tolerate you? Because we, we are businessmen. We don't kill from an impulse; we kill, when we kill, out of interest, it's clear." In other words, Lang is already making American cinema. He is already in the world of American film noir. "We kill out of interest, it's understood." That is to say, we don't care about impulses, what we care about is the system of action.

In other words – and here I conclude very quickly – the real duel, exterior to the film and yet at the heart of the film, is that it is in this film that Lang clearly breaks with his Expressionist past and he will move from his cinema – I'm not saying that this hadn't been done before, but this is his great declaration of rupture – and he will pass from a cinema of expression, that is to say from a cinema of affect or of impulse, since he makes no distinction between the two things, and has no reason to do so – there again, it is not his business – and he will pass from a cinema of affect or of impulse to a cinema of action. And so, *M* must be condemned in the sense that he is the bearer of Expressionist affect. So, the real duel, you see, it's as though the real duel has left the film to enter the actual domain of the history of cinema. So perhaps it would be a possible to conceive of a history of cinema that would be based on what for each great director, for each great filmmaker, was the real duel that haunted him, through the duels that he presented as though they were duels his characters confronted. Is that clear? Fine. Very good.

But listen, listen. This means that something more serious will happen, Lang thinks it's more serious, but he's wrong. In fact, Kracauer's famous book, *From Caligari to Hitler*,<sup>23</sup> what does this title mean? It doesn't mean that there is continuity from Caligari to Hitler. It means, on the contrary, that there is a great rupture, and this great rupture is the same one that Lang makes when he realizes that the time has come to replace a cinema of affects with a cinema of action and of the organization of action, that is, the cold organization of crime, as opposed to impulsive crime. And this is the same becoming that you can find in the *Mabuse* series, where the Expressionist style of the first *Mabuse* will more and more be succeeded by crime as a cold and calculating organization... *from Caligari to Hitler*.

Well, let's get this over with quickly because I can see you can't take anymore. And you see how harmonious this is, how well it ends. I don't have much more to say, for the moment, about this formula of the large form, the S-A-S form because it is clear that I haven't really defined it yet, and probably I will only be able to define it by comparing it with another formula.

Because it is clear that in cinema, the action-image presents us with behaviors. Well, okay. But there are two ways of presenting behaviors. We have only seen the first way, and it is not by chance that it was called the large form, the S-A-S' form. Now let's suppose we do the opposite. We remain in the domain of behavior, but it is another pole of behavior. This time, it will be A-S-A'. What does

A-S-A' mean? We'll begin with an action or a behavior. The situation S will be defined only insofar as the action suggests it or shows a part of it, and the action, an action cannot do more than suggest a situation or show a small part of it. And this part that is shown will give rise to a new action, A', which, in turn, will suggest or reveal a part, a new part of a situation. It is always a question of ellipses, and this time, this figure will be the art of the ellipse. It's ... [*End of the session; the recording seems to be interrupted but probably close to the end of the session*] [1:47:00]

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Bye Bye Monkey* (Orig. *Ciao Maschio!*, 1978) is a film by Marco Ferreri starring Gerard Depardieu, Marcello Mastroiani, James Coco, Gail Lawrence and Geraldine Fitzgerald. Set in a dystopian, semi-deserted New York, the film tells the story of a man who finds a baby chimpanzee in a giant discarded model of King Kong – Ferreri uses the prop from John Guillermin's 1976 remake of *King Kong* – lying at the base of the recently completed World Trade Centre, and decides to raise it as a son.

<sup>2</sup> *The Leopard* (Orig. *Il Gattopardo*, 1963) is a film by Luchino Visconti starring Burt Lancaster, Alain Delon and Claudia Cardinale and based on Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's novel about an ageing Sicilian nobleman who finds himself caught up in the turmoil of the Risorgimento manoeuvring to preserve his ancestral privileges.

<sup>3</sup> See Claude Edmonde Magny, *The Age of the American Novel – The Film Aesthetic of Fiction Between the Two Wars*, Ungar Press, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> *M* (Orig. *M - Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder*, 1931) is a German film by Fritz Lang from a screenplay by Lang and his wife, Thea von Harbou, starring Peter Lorre as a serial killer of children. Focusing on the double manhunt for Lorre's character undertaken by the police and the criminal underworld, it was Lang's first sound film.

<sup>5</sup> Victor David Sjöström (1879- 1960) was a pioneering Swedish director, screenwriter and actor. His films include *The Outlaw and His Wife* (Orig. *Berg-ejvind och hans hustru*, 1918), *The Phantom Carriage* (Orig. *Körkarlen*, 1921), *He who Gets Slapped* (1924) and what is perhaps his most famous film *The Wind* (1928). Starring Lilian Gish, *The Wind* was one of the last silent movies released by MGM. It tells the story of an emotionally fragile young woman who relocates to Texas to live at her cousin's ranch and who is disturbed by a constantly blowing wind. Her arrival at the ranch causes great turmoil in the family. Deleuze discusses the film in detail in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* op. cit. p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> *Eldorado* (1921) is a film by French director Marcel L'Herbier, notable for its attempts to integrate a number of cinematographic innovations within the framework of a melodrama. Deleuze refers to it along with other films by L'Herbier such as *L'Argent* and *L'inhumain* in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*.

<sup>7</sup> Robert J. Flaherty (1884 -1951) was an American filmmaker who was responsible for the first commercially successful feature-length documentary film in the history of cinema, *Nanook of the North* (1922). Flaherty continued to develop the narrative documentary form in his subsequent films *Moana* (1926) and *Man of Aran* (1934).

<sup>8</sup> Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) was an English historian and philosopher of history who taught at the London School of Economics. His most famous work is his 12-volume *Study of History*. Deleuze and Guattari additionally make reference to Toynbee's theories regarding nomad populations in the Nomadologies chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

<sup>9</sup> *Nanook of the North* is a 1922 American silent film written and directed by Robert J. Flaherty, who also served as cinematographer, editor, and producer. It combines elements of documentary and docudrama, at a time when the distinction between documentary and drama did not yet exist. The film follows the struggles of a Inuk man named Nanook and his family in the Canadian Arctic. The collaboration of the Inuit was key to Flaherty's film as the Inuit were also his film crew. Flaherty was often criticized for deceptively portraying staged events as reality. To this he replied: "One often has to distort a thing in order to catch its true spirit." *Nanook of the North* was the first feature-length documentary to achieve commercial success, proving the financial viability of the genre and inspiring many filmmakers to come.

<sup>10</sup> *Moana* is a 1926 American silent film directed by Robert J. Flaherty. *Moana* was filmed in Samoa on the island of Savai'i. The name of the lead male character, Moana, means "deep sea" in Samoan. In making the film, Flaherty lived with his wife, their three daughters and his collaborator in Samoa for more than a year. As in *Nanook of the North*, Flaherty went well beyond recording the life of the people of Samoa and followed his usual procedure of "casting" locals to perform "roles", creating fictitious family relationships.

<sup>11</sup> *The Crowd* is a 1928 American silent film directed by King Vidor and starring James Murray, Eleanor Boardman and Bert Roach. The film tells the story of young John Sims who, following the death of his father, travels to New York in search of success only to end-up as a low-level worker in an enormous office of a nameless corporation. After meeting and marrying an attractive young woman, things begin looking up, but soon the couple become sullen and start arguing, while the arrival of children makes John feel trapped in a dead-end existence. The bleakness of the film's plot made the studio hold off the film from release for almost a year. In his autobiography Vidor writes that he was forced to film seven alternate upbeat endings, which were previewed in small towns. The film was finally released with two endings,

one being Vidor's original ending, and another with the family gathered around a Christmas tree after John has found a job with an advertising agency. Cinemas could choose which version to show, but, at least according to Vidor, the happy ending was rarely screened.

<sup>12</sup> *Scarface* (1932) is a film by Howard Hawks from a screenplay by Ben Hecht, starring Paul Muni, Anne Dvorak, Karen Morley, George Raft and Boris Karlov. It tells the story of a young hood, the henchman of a mob boss, and his rise and fall in the criminal underworld as he eliminates his rivals but eventually falls victim to a fatal character flaw. One of the earliest gangster movies it is also considered a precursor of the film noir genre that would become popular during the 1940s. It was remade in more baroque style by Brian De Palma in 1983.

<sup>13</sup> *Birth of A Nation* (1915) is a film by D.W. Griffith starring Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh and Henry B. Walthall that was extremely innovative for its time and is considered by many critics to be the foundational work of cinematic realism. However, to this day it is a film whose reputation remains highly controversial on account of the way its aesthetic brilliance jars with a clearly racist depiction of African-Americans (many played by white actors in blackface) and openly ideological support of the Ku Klux Klan. Set before, during and after the American Civil War, the film is divided into two sections, the first following the intertwined stories of two families, one Unionist, the other Confederate, before and during the civil war and ending with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the second set during the reconstruction when members of the formerly opposing white families band together to combat the threat – in particular the threat posed to white womanhood – posed by emancipated slaves. The film's enormous popularity upon release is said to have assisted in the revival of the Ku Klux Klan and its acceptance in mainstream American society of the time.

<sup>14</sup> *Intolerance* (1916) is a film by D.W. Griffith, an epic that intercuts several storylines set in different historical epochs, from ancient Babylon to the life of Christ to 16th century France to modern day America, each having intolerance as its major theme.

<sup>15</sup> Cecil B. de Mille (1881-1959) was an American film producer, director and actor. De Mille was most famous for a series of biblical epics though he also produced westerns, social dramas and comedies. His first film, the western *The Squaw Man* (1914) was the first feature-length film to be made in Hollywood. Among his most celebrated films are *The Ten Commandments* (1923), *The King of Kings* (1927), *The Sign of the Cross* (1932), *Cleopatra* (1934), *Samson and Delilah* (1949), the circus drama *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952) and his last film, a remake of *The Ten Commandments* (1956).

<sup>16</sup> U.V. stands for *Unité des Valeurs*, the basic unit of the credit system that was introduced at the University of Vincennes by the Anglo-American studies department when the university was founded in 1968-69. Modelled after the American university credit system, it initially permitted students to freely compose their overall course of study from several disciplines but was regarded by some as too libertarian and open to abuse. A similar though much more controlled system would later be adopted by many higher learning institutions both in France and Europe.

<sup>17</sup> See André Bazin, *What is Cinema – Volume 1* (Trans. Hugh Gray), Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, p.50.

<sup>18</sup> *The Circus* (1928) is a film written, produced and directed by Charlie Chaplin starring himself, Allan Ernest Garcia, Merna Kennedy, George Davis and Henry Bergman. It tells the story of an impoverished circus that hires Charlie's little tramp character, on the run from the law, as a clown but discovers that he is only able to make the audience laugh unintentionally.

<sup>19</sup> *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) is a western by John Ford starring Jimmy Stewart, John Wayne, Lee Marvin, Vera Miles and Edmond O'Brien. In the film, a respected senator returns with his wife to the town where his political career began for the funeral of an old friend. The occasion provokes him to recount the true version of the events which led to his heroic rise, namely that the bandit, Liberty Valance he was claimed to have killed was in fact shot by an old cowboy, rival for the affections of the woman who would become his wife.

<sup>20</sup> Here Deleuze makes a veiled reference to Fred Zinneman's western *High Noon* (1952), starring Gary Cooper which was made as an allegory of the communist witch-hunts led by Joseph McCarthy that ruined the careers of many Hollywood directors and screenwriters who were accused of being communist sympathisers. These included one of the screenwriters of *High Noon* itself, Carl Foreman, who was forced into exile in Europe.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Lorre (1904-1964) was a Hungarian-American actor whose career on stage and screen began in Germany in the 1920s, with his most famous role being that of the serial killer in Fritz Lang's *M* (1931). Being of Jewish descent, Lorre fled to America when Adolf Hitler came to power, where he found roles in a number of films including, Hitchcock's *The Man who Knew Too Much* (1934) and *The Secret Agent* (1936), Joseph von Sternberg's *Crime and Punishment* (1935), John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* (1942) and Frank Capra's *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944).

<sup>22</sup> Here Deleuze makes a joke about the Parisian chain of cinemas once run by "Studio Action", of which today only "Le Grande Action" remains, though the former "Action Christine" still operates as "Christine 21". These cinemas specialised in repertory programmes of mainly classic Hollywood films.

<sup>23</sup> Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, first published in 1947, was one of the first major studies of German interwar cinema, suggesting links between the apolitical escapist nature of Weimar cinema and the rise of totalitarianism in Germany.