

**Gilles Deleuze**

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

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**Part 1**

*[Deleuze starts after a student has asked a question to which he is responding]*

... He is absolutely right. Perpetual interference or indirect cinema, that is to say, the present tense mode of the narrative, refers to a living present that would be any event whatever in the process of its occurrence, in the process of its unfolding in relation to the camera. What do I mean by this? I mean that, no matter how important the plot may be to a certain type of cinema, there has always been, on the one hand an off-subject, and on the other hand, a sub-subject, without which there would be no cinema.<sup>1</sup>

But now let's go back to our question – I don't really have time, so I'll cut short that aspect, I just wanted to touch upon it – let's go back to this question of direct cinema. If I had tried to apply my previous formulas, S-A-S and A-S-A, to a more detailed study of documentary, it would have fit perfectly, it would even have fit too well. That's why we already knew we could skip it. I tried to explain that Flaherty's documentaries corresponded to the large form of S-A-S. And then, when the inter-war English school of documentary was established, we can clearly see the emergence of the small form, A-S-A, which is very, very interesting and where this time, what we have is in fact an A-S-A form, since now it's by filming what is presented as the habitus, the behaviors of a given group of people of a given social class, that we will be able to evoke the situation of a particular moment or epoch or place. And the Grierson-style documentary is really an A-S-A type of film. What is interesting is the importance of Flaherty in this, which confirms the extreme versatility of these great directors who, at the same time, participate in the development of this new English documentary-style in the inter-war period.

But to confirm all this, I would say that when direct cinema claimed to be – but we'll see that this is an extremely complex idea, it's not a simple matter – when cinema, after World War II, made a claim to be a kind of direct cinema whose aim was to capture the event as it was unfolding, I would say that we come right back to the point we are now. So, what would this form be that is neither S-A-S, nor A-S-A?

I imagine you can all see that what I'm talking about is a kind of stereotype, a commonplace regarding current cinema, namely the calling into question of plot. So, the questioning of the plot, the questioning of story. But perhaps we have to go through this stereotype in order to find something that would be less of a stereotype. This is our famous... or what has been called de-dramatization, de-dramatization which precisely means that the story – but is there still a story? – will no longer follow the path of a pre-existing action, of an expected action,

of an expected plot. However, we still have a screenplay and so on. But in a planned storyline what we have is... It is not so much the fact that it's made-up that gives us reason to criticize it... what we might reproach about the idea of a plot, is not the fact that it is made-up, it is the fact that it is pre-existent, the fact that it pre-exists the actual cinematographic operation.

Indeed, how would one define plot in cinema? I would define it according to three characteristics: on the one hand, a plot is a process of totalization, totalization of a situation; secondly, a plot is a technique of vectorial orientation, orientation of the actions, and sequencing of these actions according to this orientation; and thirdly, it is a process of selection that groups... that at the same time groups and separates events and distributes them hierarchically into primary and secondary elements.

So, once again, what is troubling is not the fact that the plot is fictional, it is the fact that the plot is pre-existent to the act of cinema. And if go back to these three characteristics by which I have just defined plot, I would say that the first characteristic, the totalization of the situation, refers particularly to the formula S-A-S; second characteristic, vectorial orientation of the actions, typically refers to the formula A-S-A; while the third characteristic, the selection which groups and separates events and distributes them hierarchically into what is primary and what is secondary, would be the communication between the two forms.

De-dramatization, well... Here I come back to my theme, this has been a constant, a kind of constant ideal of cinema. And in this respect... and in this respect, Jean Mitry<sup>2</sup> always reacts – which is normal for him since he's seen so much – well, all that... he's always going on about how young kids exaggerate because all that was already being done in his time. And it's very difficult to deal with these reactions, but, nevertheless, let's listen to him. He says, well, they go on about de-dramatization, that is to say, the undoing of plot that was carried out in Italian neorealism. Okay. Fine! But now I am going to bring out some texts... What's annoying here is that it's always more texts than films, but he does come up with some very fine texts by Delluc<sup>3</sup> and what do they tell us? They tell us that in real cinema the story must result! It must not pre-exist. It must result from the images and not lead the images.

And Delluc goes so far as to speak of a "dust of facts"<sup>4</sup>, and he mentions a project for a film he wanted to make with Germaine Dulac, *The Spanish Fiesta*<sup>5</sup>. And he says that in *The Spanish Fiesta*, there would be a scenario, namely, the story of two men who fight over a woman, a woman who, moreover, is in love with someone else. And so there's a storyline. But he says that it should be shot so as not to privilege this storyline, and that the story should only serve as a link between different events.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, that this line is only one component of *The Spanish Fiesta*, where the aim is to arrive at a "dust of facts". You see... To claim the right to be off-topic and to have something being done, irreducible to the scenario. Good. Then... what?

A student: [*Inaudible question, presumably about the production of The Spanish Fiesta*]

Deleuze: Yes, it was made, but it was not made in this way. Hmmm? That's what's so interesting! It was, perhaps made... yes, there are perhaps some elements that go in this direction. Yes, yes, they did shoot it. Germaine Dulac shot *The Spanish Fiesta*. So, to come back to my theme, we shouldn't forget what Mitry says here. So, I've made a little bit of progress. But, please, I ask you to be very... always, to be very, very patient.

So I say to myself, this business of de-dramatization, of rupture with the plot, of a new form of image that no longer corresponds to either of the two poles of the action-image that we saw previously, is something very important. Only here, if you say to me finally, that this has always been the obsession of cinema, I would answer, yes, I agree! But, on the one hand – and this goes without saying – was it ever really achieved? And if this is all I could say, I wouldn't be happy. What I'm trying to say is obviously something else: namely that, even if it was done in part before, what is new today is that this de-dramatization, in the way I have just defined it, serves a purpose and will have an effect that previous, pre-existing cinema had no notion of. So, what is this purpose? Clearly – and here I go back to my theme – it's a question of its eruption in terms of a new type of image, a completely new type of image. What type of image? Be patient! I'm starting over.

So S-A-S is no longer valid. Why not? Because while there is a situation, this situation no longer contracts into a principal action. The action, literally, the action no longer “thickens”, almost in the sense of cooking when we say that something “thickens”. There is indeed a situation, but what is completely suppressed is this kind of shape that I described as an hourglass shape or the shape of an egg cup. You see, the top, which is S, sensory- with its parallel or alternating actions, then the kernel of the action, meaning the duel, and then the modified situation. The situation no longer thickens into action, it no longer contracts into a main action. This is the first point.

But, the small form, A-S-A, doesn't work any better. Why is that? Because in the small form A-S-A – if you remember..., because you should be able to remember something of our previous analyses – in the small form, A-S-A, actions were prolonged and linked together. In relation to what? They were prolonged or linked together in relation to a motor situation, that is, one which generated another action: A-S-A'. They were linked up in relation to a motor situation or what I called a line of the universe. Well, now, in de-dramatization, the second characteristic – I remind you that the first was when the situation no longer thickens or contracts into a main action – whereas the second characteristic is that actions no longer link up in relation to a sensory-motor situation or a line of force, or a line of the universe.

Well, now we're moving a little bit into the negative. What brought this about? What brought this about after the war? Let's eliminate... let's eliminate all the points that don't pose much of a problem. All sorts of factors converged so that, after the war, we had this kind of calling into question of plot as an element that existed before the film was shot, before the film was made.

First factor – I recap these very quickly – the crisis in Hollywood, what was the significance of this Hollywood crisis? Why was it so important? One American director who explains it very well, it seems to me is Lumet.<sup>7</sup> L-U-M-E-T. And what Lumet says is: you know Hollywood is exactly what we used to call a company town.<sup>8</sup> A company town, you see what that is. They also existed in France, but less so. It's a town owned by a company, and it has always been regarded as a fantastic means for the bosses to exert pressure. When the town belongs to the company... for example, Peugeot, which owns a town or whatever, when workers are housed in dwellings that belong to the boss and so on... Lumet says – let's think about this – he says – I like this comment – he says, well, yes, that's exactly what Hollywood is. It's a town, it's a company town; it's a bit like that, a town owned by the production.

So even from the point of view of perception of the city, it wasn't right. Yet there are great Hollywood films about the city. But he says, there's something they weren't able to attain.

And it's no accident that Lumet is one of the members of what is, rightly or wrongly, called the New York school. He says, what is important for us, when we make cinema in New York, is precisely the fact that the city is not made for cinema. And that cinema can only be made in a city not made for cinema. And Lumet says: I feel I am a filmmaker, I feel I'm really in cinema precisely because New York is a port city that has nothing to do with cinema, a city where I can go and see ballets that have nothing to do with cinema. That's what he says, it's not a company town.

The second element concerns what is, to put it mildly, a kind of undermining of the American dream. Now, I tried to show the last few times that the two forms of the action-image, SAS and ASA' corresponded so well to the American dream that it wasn't surprising they became the two forms of the classic American film. And the American dream, you remember, had two aspects: one corresponding to S-A-S, the other corresponding to A-S-A, so all this was perfectly harmonious. The American Dream was, on the one hand, the idea that America was the melting pot of minorities, meaning the living process through which minorities as such came to constitute a single nation. And the second aspect of the American dream, this time corresponding to A-S-A, was the idea that the situation may shift, but a real American will always know how to find and raise the appropriate habitus or response to the changing situation, unless he turns out to be a loser – a born loser. Okay.

Well, when the minorities attained an awareness, a very particular awareness, after the war when the founding myth of the nation as a melting pot could no longer be sustained, and when on the other hand, you have the theme of "the good American", the one who responds to the situation with the appropriate behavior, whatever the situation happens to be – the billionaire who loses his billions before becoming a billionaire again and so on! When all this collapsed, a whole narrative style fell with it.

Third characteristic – here, I'm mixing everything – the technical evolution in all domains including cinema, from the double point of view of both sound and vision: cinemascope, synchronization, and beyond cinema, the rise of images of all kinds, television images, images... well, a whole list of images that would lead in both the negative and positive sense to a kind of crisis of the image. And undoubtedly, this crisis of the image will be very, very important for us since, in the things we still have to deal with, this is what we will have to analyze.

And then there's a smaller fourth aspect: the parallel evolution of other arts, and notably, of the novel. The disappearance, as well the questioning of plot and narrative in the novel. And here, the Americans were well placed. Because, certainly, the greatest writer to undertake this questioning, the first to carry out such an operation in a whole oeuvre is Dos Passos<sup>9</sup>. And in my view Dos Passos took up this questioning even before cinema did. That's the way it is. It's always changing. Sometimes it's cinema, sometimes literature that takes the lead – but using cinematic processes. So that Dos Passos' famous novels, or at least his great trilogy, *USA*, will be interspersed... its chapters will be interspersed by what Dos Passos sometimes calls newsreel, other times biography and then again camera eye. We will see in a moment, what this questioning of plot and narrative consists in for Dos Passos.

in France Dos Passos became known to the general public – there were some who knew about him before, but they were clearly a minority – but the arrival of Dos Passos in France is connected with the euphoria of the Liberation, and one of the key figures instrumental in introducing him to the broader public was Sartre, who really took his work as a kind of

model. For Sartre, Dos Passos was the greatest living novelist, the greatest contemporary novelist. He tried to apply Dos Passos' methods in his own novels. Obviously, you cannot, you cannot simply apply these things.

But it has to be said that he came to us relatively late. Because I need to be specific here, to speak about facts, because this will be very useful to us later on. In Italy, contrariwise, Dos Passos had been known about for a long time, he'd been known for much longer. Why? Because a great Italian author, Cesare Pavese<sup>10</sup>, had translated the American writers and, in particular Dos Passos. So that when we witness a strange crisscrossing between the new American cinema and Italian neo-realism, we have to take into account a certain influence – though I'm not saying that it was the only one – a certain influence of Dos Passos on Italian cinema, even to the point of Italian cinema, in a completely different manner, having a fundamental influence on modern American cinema. After all, if there is an Italian neorealist film that recounts this in its own indirect way, what would that be? It's Rossellini's *Paisan*. Because what is Rossellini's *Paisan*? It's an episodic series of encounters, where there is already a consistent questioning of the plot, an episodic series of encounters between an American and an Italian.

But here we find a new illustration of what I was saying about Lang's *M*. When we ask ourselves what the real duel is in a film, what is the real settling of accounts, we have to see that there is always a settling of accounts that is external to the film itself but quite internal to the history of cinema, and that in the duel of *M*, external to the film but internal to cinema, we have Lang's duel with German expressionism, that is to say, his goodbye to expressionism. And in Rossellini's *Paisan*, we have all these duels and encounters between Americans and Italians but more profoundly, what we see outside the film but inside the whole history of cinema is the confrontation by which Rossellini thinks he will be able to forge a cinema that will break with the old-style American cinema.

Claire Parnet: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, you have that all the time, I think... So, you see, what I'm saying is you have all sorts of elements, and there are some I forget, and then there was the war, but I'm not going to talk about how the war... I don't want to talk about it now. So, let's try to say... well, what does all this consist of? I specify, you see the situation gets more complicated, because I've already alluded several times to Italian neo-realism. Well, let me now open a parenthesis regarding that. And in fact, it was the Italians, before anyone else, who launched the idea of de-dramatization or suppression or questioning of plot. Okay, it was them, but we can put that aside, we can leave it aside for now.

Because if we consider that this has had a repercussion on American cinema, what I need to do is to force, to act as if... so for the moment I'll force a kind of suspension. I have a reason for doing so, because I believe that Italian neo-realism, in certain respects, has gone so far that in a way it has already passed, already surpassed everything I still have to say. So I'm forced to ignore it for the moment – I'm only trying to establish a sense of continuity in American cinema, even it's a fictitious one, by saying okay, there was this influence of neorealism. In what way? Well, we don't know yet... That's not what interests me. What interests me is the way in which, whatever influence neo-realism had on American cinema, recent American cinema has broken with the two forms of the action-image, and how this rupture has occurred in relation to the following ideas – again, we just want to keep... this is what I want to thread into a fictional continuity, the rupture is made in relation to these two

points: there is no longer a situation capable of contracting to a principal action, and at the same time there is no longer a sequence of actions that follows a sensory-motor situation or a line of the universe. So, for the moment I am only going to deal with American cinema.

So, first aspect: indeed, the situation no longer thickens into a main action, it no longer contracts into a main action. In other words – and this amounts to the same thing – the situation has ceased to be collective. There is no longer a collective totality. And yet, there is a kind of totality, but it is a dispersive totality. But here, I would like to go quickly because I know, I don't realize if I have to... if I go too fast you will tell me, but there's so much we still have to cover. In other words, the collective totality was that totality that brought all its elements together in such a way as to gather them into a single main action. Well, in a certain type cinema, this is no longer possible.

In terms of a certain American cinema., what is it that now appears? There is a totality, but of a completely new type. There is also still a narrative, but again of a completely new type, a narrative that we can no longer call collective but dispersive. There is indeed a narrative, if we insist, but then, is it still a narrative? It's a dispersive narrative. There is indeed a totality but it's a dispersive totality. And after all, this idea of a dispersive totality was already the fundamental idea of Dos Passos. The *USA* trilogy comprised a first book, *The 42nd Parallel* whose subject was a given latitude. Then a second volume called *1919* regarded a moment in time. And the third was called *The Big Money*.

And what did this story consist in? In what way was it a dispersive narrative, a dispersive totality? It's that there is no longer a main character just as there's no longer a secondary character. Among Dos Passos's achievements, this seems to me to be something very, very ... In France, we had an equivalent, an equivalent attempt, which was Jules Romain's *Men of Good Will*.<sup>11</sup> In my opinion, it didn't work. Well, I don't know, but, well, no matter. There was a school in France, of poets and novelists, roughly contemporary with Dos Passos. They were called the unanimists<sup>12</sup>, a very, very interesting school. They made manifestos. All this is very interesting. It would be an idea to compare Dos Passos and the unanimists, but we don't have the time.

So what do we have here? A multiplicity of characters, lots of characters, but they emerge from the background and then fade away. They hold a chapter where they will be the main character, and then in the following chapter they slip to the status of secondary character. And between all these characters you will sometimes have interference, sometimes no interference at all. The intrusions, even when they happen, will be kept to a minimum. A character is treated in a chapter as a main character, and then he becomes a secondary character, that is, we learn from the new main character that he got married. Then he reappears no longer married. So, we have an ellipsis. And so on. Okay. This is the first very simple aspect of Dos Passos' technique.

As I said, in cinema, there was a certain waiting period. Because, who is the purest... the purest... I cannot say disciple because he's not applying Dos Passos. Who in current American cinema has taken up the techniques of Dos Passos on the level of cinema and made them a cinematographic reality? It's Altman<sup>13</sup>, Altman, that's... that's who it is. And the kind of... it's not just in Altman, but in all the cinema I'm going to talk about now, it's a constant theme. I mean, equally in Lumet and Cassavetes<sup>14</sup> and very strongly in Altman, you have the idea that there are no longer any main characters, no longer any secondary characters. In other words, there's no longer any kind of hierarchy in the story. A main character is

provisionally main, a main character is only the first among secondary characters at any given time. The secondary character is himself a main character, at least virtually, etc., all these ideas you find, once again not only in Altman's films. This is very important. In terms of negation it's quite simple, if you like. It's very simple. The techniques are simple. But it's very important from the point of view of a kind of critique of narrative.

Now Altman's films, he's made so many, but the two films, at least the main ones, in terms of this technique of dispersive reality or dispersive totality where you have neither principal nor secondary characters... one is obviously *Nashville*<sup>15</sup>, with a city as its subject, and not just any city, but the city known for a certain kind music, we'll see how important this is; and the other, more constrained work, another great Altman film, is *A Wedding*<sup>16</sup> in which Altman gleefully details the lives of forty-eight characters, while saying we have no reason to think of this one as primary compared to another who would be secondary.

And there, you have the whole of Altman's major theme, which is obviously related to anamorphic cinemascope and synchronous sound. There are the famous techniques such as the eight-track stereo sound Altman used in *Nashville*, and other things I don't have time to develop all sorts of things. But the whole theme of Altman's cinema is to manage to put several simultaneous stagings in one film, this is the formula of his dispersive totality. He will use... he will use a wide variety of technical means to achieve this: sometimes through deep focus photography, but not necessarily! Deep focus wasn't necessarily made for this purpose. I mean that his is a very original use of depth of field, the way he uses it to create dispersion. On the contrary, there are authors who use depth of field to produce contraction, sometimes to create effects of extreme contraction, and yet in Altman we can't really call it a depth of field. For example, *Nashville* is quite flat and spread out. The depth of field appears more forcefully in a third film which is *California Split*.<sup>17</sup> Well, in any case...

And I would say that this is the first definition. So let's introduce, let's try to find the concept for this. What we have here is the first determination of what I think we can call a "news item". We'll see how one can find all sorts of determinations of the news item. I would say the first determination of the news item (*fait divers*), or we call a "news item" is that it is an event plucked from a dispersive reality.

So, I think what the city as a dispersive reality implied was an exit from Hollywood. You see how it implies all this, you can sense how all these ideas are connected, and how it also implies a completely different perception of minorities, neighborhoods defined according to minorities, minority neighborhoods. Here it is no longer a melting pot that founds the nation, in the new way, the American way. It's no longer that. What we have is really a patchwork narrative. So, this is the first point, it seems to me. And I mention Altman because he seems to have gone the furthest in this direction, but he's not the only practitioner of this kind of new dispersive narrative where in the end one has to ask oneself if there is still a story. Is there still an action? Or else does this pulverization of action, this "dust of facts", to go back to Delluc's expression... where does it take us?

I insist that for the moment we can only define it negatively, and this is interesting, because you see my suspicions. Maybe it's that the Americans haven't managed to get out of this, or at least not yet. If there is... if there is a positive side to this approach, this fragmentation of the narrative we have still to find it.

So, let's move on to the second characteristic. Now if you look for an S-A-S structure, you won't find it since there is no longer any principal action. Literally the situation no longer thickens into a main action. Second characteristic of this cinema: while in the old cinema the city, here I mean the city in Hollywood cinema plays a fundamental role as a collective totality. If you take Vidor's *The Crowd*, the last scene of *The Crowd*, where you have this kind of eruption of laughter, this great eruption of laughter in which everything merges, there you have the perception of the crowd as a collective totality. In another Vidor film, moreover, there is a scene where the same expression of surprise crosses the faces of an average white American, a black man and a Chinese man. Here we really have the idea of the city as melting pot.

Claire Parnet: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Maybe, maybe, maybe. In that case, he is a great precursor. The second characteristic is, this time, to undertake the direct questioning of A-S-A, that is to say, not only is there a dispersive reality, but the actions are no longer linked in relation to a line of force, a line of the universe. And this is very important, so that the events appear to be floating, but then what is it that links them? Perhaps it's chance. Let's hold onto that word for the moment, the word chance. Here again, we seem to be purely in the negative. And what will this give us? As I was saying earlier, a dispersive reality or a dispersive totality, but at this point we have to be careful. At this second level, it's slightly different but you can sense to what extent it's connected. And we will pass quite naturally from the first to the second characteristic, which I'm going to talk about now. So what will this be?

I would say this time, it's no longer the formula of the dispersive reality, it's the formula of the *balade* (stroll/ballad<sup>18</sup>). The *balade*! The *balade* is a movement-image. But it's not only a movement-image. Well, well! I again find something that I was hinting at earlier. *Balade* has two meanings: first, to go for a stroll, but it is also a ballad, a little song, a danced refrain! Well, let's hold onto this and we'll see what happens. For the moment, I take this term *balade* to indicate a succession of events that are no longer linked in relation to a line or fiber of the universe, or to a sensory-motor situation, but seems to be linked quite by chance to the stroll/ballad. And what is this? [*A student wants to ask a question*]

Deleuze: Not right now, if it's okay; is it that urgent? Otherwise please hold on... And what is this? I cite what comes to mind, though each of you will have your own list which will be much more... Let me clarify. The events are linked together as if by chance. What does this mean? It means that the stroll has taken on a particular meaning, and that it no longer resembles a German-style journey. It no longer resembles a spiritual journey, a sentimental journey or a *Bildung* journey. No. Not at all. Wenders' walks still retain an aspect – I don't mean to diminish the novelty of Wenders, but his novelty is clearly elsewhere. In Wenders' films we still have the German tradition by which the stroll remains something initiatory, formative, *Bildung*. Whereas, in American cinema, it's completely different. It's a stroll. a stroll with a succession of scenes that are linked as if by chance.

Notice that here too I take numerous precautions. For the Beat generation, the walk is still formative and initiatory. Kerouac, and God knows, we should be able to talk about his – but there are just too many things – about the importance of Kerouac to cinema. Kerouac was a fantastic improviser, both in terms of direct cinema and every time he appeared on screen, he was prodigious. But for him, the theme of the walk or road trip remains inseparable from a



kind of formative journey, a journey of initiation. So I'm talking about the post-Beat generation...<sup>19</sup> [*Interruption of the recording*] [46:30]

## Part 2

... what is fundamental is the stroll in the city, the urban stroll. In this case, the non-formative aspect is highly emphasized, and it implies a space that would be the space of the stroll. You can find numerous examples which are done in very different ways. And here I want to mention, as luck would have it I'm able mention a film that I haven't seen since I don't believe it has been distributed in France, so I'm speaking speculatively. But it's a film I'm passionate about, a Lumet film. Lumet, the New York school, it's a Lumet film, and indeed, why is Lumet is famous? Not only for his relationship to theater and to the Actors Studio, but for his break with the Actors Studio, and for a certain urban cinema. And what are Lumet's urban spaces? They're made of girders, marshalling yards, warehouses, strange spaces, what here we've called any-spaces-whatever<sup>20</sup>.

But in one of the earlier Lumet films, which is called *Bye Bye Braverman*<sup>21</sup>, and which I haven't seen – the synopsis I've read says it's about four Jewish intellectuals who are walking through New York to bury one of their buddies, which should mean something to you because it's, it's... it's a common type of scenario. And they go through different neighborhoods where things happen. So, things happen. I'm not yet done with this short summary, I'm not done with *Bye Bye Braverman* because there's a scene in the film that I think must be extraordinary – what a relief to be able to talk about a movie without having seen it – it seems a very, very beautiful scene that I will only be able to talk about later. So *Bye Bye Braverman* would be a case in point.

Second example is one you'll all know, Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*<sup>22</sup>. Third example would be a number of Cassavetes films, notably *Gloria*, *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* and *Too Late Blues*. Fourth example: many films by Woody Allen<sup>23</sup> to the point that, in a way, Woody Allen would be the burlesque version of the stroll/ballad film, each one with its own style, each one having...

But enough examples. So how can we define the stroll? What does it imply? Events... events that follow one another, as if by chance. But that's still too vague. We'll stick with this fuzziness today, okay, but we don't want to be too fuzzy. So what does this imply? Well, here's what it implies. A lot of things happen to these people who are out for a stroll. But what happens to them – and you can understand that this is part of a very particular lifestyle – *what happens to them doesn't belong to them*. Events occur, situations arise. I can't say they're completely indifferent to this, though sometimes they are a bit indifferent, vaguely, as if they are only half concerned. This is completely new. Do you realize, how in relation to the acting style, you can immediately sense that this is a new generation of actors. If you want to find actors capable of playing events as though they didn't pertain to the person they happen to, you need other techniques than those of the Actors Studio.

And yet this could develop from the Actors Studio. But in the end the agitation of the Actors Studio style, the guy who can't stop, who can't stop internalizing the situation, which is to say, making the event his own, isn't going to work anymore. Another type of actor will be born. The guy who literally has events landing on him that don't really belong to him, even his death. And yet we can't say he is completely indifferent. He will act, he will react. In this sense, he remains a good American. Sometimes he will react with extreme violence, and yet

at the same time it's as if it only half concerns him. The event does not root itself in him, even we're talking about his death or his suffering. The event doesn't belong to him!

Now, this was the second great characteristic of Dos Passos' narrative. People became billionaires, then lost their fortunes, okay. It's not that it didn't affect them, one can't say that, but it affected them in a perpetually muted, muffled mode. They saw their death coming. It was like in a car accident, where you see it – Oh God, that I have to use this example to show where I want to arrive – you know, you see it, you see it coming. That's even the way you might get through it. But you see it, it's there, and then the feeling of that's not my concern. In all car accidents, you know, there is this moment when time stretches. You see what's happening, but you're calm. It is only afterwards that you tremble, but when we see it happening, we remain calm. Well, that's it, it doesn't belong to me. I know this event will cost me my life, yet it does not belong to me. This event makes my fortune, yes, okay, still, it doesn't belong to me.

So what would this style be in more concrete terms? Let's go back to Altman's *California Split*. If there was a main theme of this film, it would be the game and the players. There is no main event, you'll understand why. The players win, they lose, they act, but they are only half concerned. And at the end of *California Split*, you have one of the characters, who I can't say is a main character because he's no more important than the others – Altman is as much interested in what's going on in the depth of field, meaning the crowd, as he is in the two players – but anyway, at one point one of the two players wins big and yet – and this seems to me to be very symbolic, because it's one of those golden phrases that light up a film, the player says: that the worst part is that “there was no special feeling in it.” Yet he will behave as tradition dictates. He will say, "Ok so I won", or he will say, "Oh I lost". These are characters who never stop trying to get rid of the event. That's it! The event never belongs to them. The event lands on them, chooses them for a moment, and then it's the next event that will choose them in turn. Then they will lose their fortune, and in Dos Passos, that's absolutely the way it is. That's absolutely the way things are. This impression that the event only occurs as astonishingly muted.

So I would say this is extremely important for cinema, both from the point of view of creation, of *mise en scène*, and that of acting. And you have a new breed of actors, a new type of *mise en scène*. I take the case of Cassavetes because it's... or the case, the case of *Taxi Driver*, Scorsese, you can apply it to him, this cab driver who drives around, goes on his cab *balade*. He sees the city perpetually at eye level. This time it's no longer skyscrapers and low-angle shots; it's the horizontal city, the recumbent city, it's not the upright city. It's the dispersive city, the succession of neighborhoods. It's not the collective city. And at the same time, everything he sees, almost through his rearview mirror, the events, "as long as it doesn't happen in his cab", as one driver says – cab drivers are like that, they say, "you can do whatever you want as long as it's outside my cab". Because "my cab is my place" – but there's everything he sees on the sidewalks, these events that don't concern him. And when he acts – because at the same time all this is spinning in his head, all these events that don't belong to him – his actions hardly belong to him, he performs a simulacrum: pretending to kill someone, until the moment when he really starts killing, when he carries out his great killing spree. And it doesn't belong to him anymore. The day before, he wanted to kill himself. His suicide does not belong to him any more than his killings. And as a result of his killings, he will become a national hero; a national hero, right? For two days, yes, they will talk about him for two, three days, this civilization, the image civilization as they call it. And then he'll have these things as souvenirs, but the event never belonged to him.

And Cassavetes, in his own way, also foregrounds this kind of individual in this kind of stroll/ballad film, which is to say of the event that doesn't belong to the one to whom it happens. Excuse me, I have to go to the secretary's office now. You're not leaving, don't leave now, because I won't be long... [*Interruption of the recording*] [58:19]

... that's terrible, pass me a cigarette, will you? I wish I had a bell. So, as always, this is the height of injustice because I can only bum a cigarette from those who are here. So, it's not fair, because it doesn't matter to me if people leave, but if they're coming back, it's a different matter. What time is it?

A student: 12:05 p.m.

Deleuze: Shit... [*Pause*], that doesn't hurry them up at all, does it? Since they're having their coffees, so that's it.

Well, then, I was saying that if we were to try to form a concept of the news item, I think there would be three determinations – this would be good for a high school essay, it would make three distinct parts – I would say that the news item first of all relates to a series of events taken from a dispersive reality. That's the first characteristic. Second characteristic, it concerns the event as it's happening – [*Someone speaks to Deleuze from the back of the room*] thank you very much yes, yes, yes – the second characteristic is the event in the process of occurring. – [*Some students arrive late*] So, there you are, and there are only two of them, so this isn't good -- The event in the process of occurring, and there is something linked to it, and this would be the third characteristic. Third characteristic: the event does not belong or only half-belongs to the person to whom it occurs. Now why does this interest me, not only in the way we pass naturally from one of these meanings to another, but why does it interest me from the point of view of cinema?

Because now I take the example, very quickly... I want to take the example of this director, Cassavetes. There is a whole part of his work that concerns the Actors Studio and then a break with the Actors Studio. He too... he begins with a certain number of films, the most famous of which is *Shadows*<sup>24</sup> – is that how it's pronounced? – *Shadows*, which is very well known, and which claims to be... What? Direct cinema. No, not exactly, it's more complex than that, but direct cinema is itself so complex, so we could say that it tends towards a kind of direct cinema. But there is a minimum of plot... -- Those people are killing me! [*Noises of students returning disturb Deleuze*] -- There is a minimum of plot, the story concerns a black guy who doesn't look black and who has a brother who is really black. And there's a girl who is their sister, who doesn't look black either. She falls in love with a white guy who likes her in turn. And Cassavetes insists a lot on this. The important thing is that all this takes place in New York, because New York is the city where racial barriers are least explicit. You see, it's not something pre-existing. A liberal city, the most liberal city of all. But Cassavetes suggests that there are micro-barriers, barriers that are constantly arising at every moment, and which have to be undone at other moments, which are all the more striking. And a whole kind of racism gains in latency what it has lost in direct expression and institutional form.

And so, in *Shadows*, you have this big scene when everyone is gathered together, but you will see that this togetherness is precisely in the mode of dispersive reality and the white man who is in love, when he sees the clearly black brother of the girl he loves, realizes that the girl herself is black. Then a whole movement comes into play where Cassavetes, who is using professional actors, following his own technique declares that he leaves the actors the

maximum amount of freedom to improvise beginning from this framework. It's the event in the making!

But my question is: why, in another phase of his work, does Cassavetes switch to another type of structure? This time it is no longer the event that is unfolding, it's the event that typically doesn't belong to the person to whom it happens: *Gloria*<sup>25</sup>.

The scenario of *Gloria* is exemplary. The mafia liquidates an entire family, a whole Puerto Rican family if I remember, and the only survivor of this family is a small boy whose parents had the time to chase out of the apartment and entrust to a neighbor living in the same building. And the neighbor in the building finds herself in an impossible situation, she really wants nothing to do with small boys, she doesn't like children and now she finds herself with this brat clinging to her. This is a typical example and I mention it because it's a case where the event does not belong to the woman. She is in a situation that does not belong to her. But it doesn't belong to the kid either. The situation doesn't belong to them. She will be drawn in, there will be actions, which is to say she's in no way passive, but she's only half concerned. But even if she's only half concerned, she's going to use a revolver and she's going to kill a lot of people.

And there's a type of image in *Gloria* that struck me enormously. She is being pursued by the mafia guys who want to liquidate the little kid, and so she herself is condemned. She was... she's the former mistress of a mafia guy. All these, if you like, are situations that haven't lost any of their intensity. The actor herself is very active, she walks around the city. She does a lot of walking because she's always having to take flight. And then you have certain types of images that are very characteristic of Cassavetes. She arrives at a small restaurant which is completely empty, and she gets served, and by the time she turns her head, the guys from the mob are at a nearby table, as if the event suddenly filled... as if the space was suddenly filled by the event. She's pushed towards it, so she runs away. And it never stops. But she is not concerned. She might be murdered at the end, but she's not concerned, or only half-concerned. Again, I can't find another formula: the event doesn't belong to her. The event concerns her life, her death, but it doesn't belong to her.

In another case, *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*<sup>26</sup>, you have a quite incredible character. The film begins... if I remember well *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* begins like this: there is a rather charming guy, very charming, but it's a very special charm, the charm of a man to whom things happen that don't belong to him. Which can be charming, but it can also be indicative of a loser. It has this side that points the guy out as a loser, like the heroes of Dos Passos, the no-marks. Yet it can also be strangely charming. So then, in *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*, at the beginning of the film he's looking for girls, because he's also a cabaret owner. He picks up three girls. But he doesn't really take them anywhere, it's as if... he has acted, he has taken the trouble to pick up the three girls, but he has nothing really to say to them, and he has nothing to do with them. He's only half-concerned, so he starts gambling. But this doesn't really concern him either. He loses. Okay, he loses. Actually, I'm doing a very poor job of conveying this situation, you know, it's very weird atmosphere. It's really a stroll/ballad film, you could even call it an interior stroll. The events are linked randomly. He loses, and he doesn't even try to pay back his losses. Again, the thing doesn't really belong to him. So, the mafia, once again, tells him: Well, you're going to kill someone for us. So he kills a poor Chinese man, and the whole film goes on like this. Very strange, this type of character.

So, what's going on here? Now I'm going to trace some parallels, because this will help me make progress... you sense how we're still moving towards what I hope will be a more positive result. But again, I'm not sure whether contemporary American cinema can give us this. We're going to have to change atmosphere to get something positive out of all this.

I would say that in any case in France, in my view, there is someone who has managed to do something like this, but using completely different means, someone who has succeeded in using this idea of the event that doesn't belong to the person to whom it happens and who has made a very charming cinema out of it, working with a particular type of actor. And this is Truffaut. If you think of *Shoot the Piano Player*<sup>27</sup>, this is quite typical. I see great similarities between Cassavetes' cinema and Truffaut's cinema, without, I suppose, any direct influence of one on the other. But it seems to me very... those who have seen or rewatched *Shoot the Piano Player*, it's very seedy. The type of actor and his particular charm, the charm of Aznavour is very close to this kind of character who is only ever half-concerned. The event lands on him, inhabits him for a moment, then we pass to another event. You can't say that he lets it all slide. It's like the heroine of *Gloria*, she doesn't give up. She shoots, she protects the child, even if she sometimes wants to be shut of him. But somehow these characters never stop shrugging off the event instead of making it their own.

If we wanted to call it something we could say that are anti-stoics. Stoicism would be: "own the event that happens to you." And in a way, in a completely different manner, the Actors Studio actor never ceases, it never stops figuring out how to make the event that happens to him, or that is supposed to happen to him, his own. Here, this isn't what happens, It's not that. It's very strange. In Truffaut's case, I see this in *Shoot the Piano Player* and in the trilogy, *Stolen Kisses*, *Bed and Board* and the third part, *Love on the Run*<sup>28</sup>. And it's not by chance that if there's one actor, a French actor, who is fundamental to this kind of stroll/ballad film, it's Jean-Pierre Léaud<sup>29</sup>. He's our French version of it. Well, there you have it. You can continue this thread yourselves.

As I said, there's a lot of things I've forgotten to say about Lumet. He made a lot of this kind of stroll/ballad film. Even *Dog Day Afternoon*<sup>30</sup> where the stroll has shrunk right down, if you remember the movements of *Dog Day Afternoon*. Amazing. Amazing, this kind of dance between the large hall of the bank and the street. Here we have a whole film in the stroll/ballad mode and the loser played by Pacino, this poor guy... he's not even really concerned. Yet he acts. Oh yes, he acts, he kidnaps people. His friend gets killed, and then you have the great drive to the airfield and so on. Lumet had already managed something similar with *Serpico*<sup>31</sup>. And he will do it again with *Prince of the City*<sup>32</sup>. You have many, many examples of this type of film.

Hence the third characteristic. You see, my first characteristic, regarding this new mode of "narrative", was dispersive reality or totality; second characteristic, which destroyed S-A-S, second characteristic, was the stroll/ballad-type film, which this time also supposes a rupture with the other formula A-S-A, since, once again, the events no longer link up following a line of the universe. And you can see why. They seem to follow one another quite randomly. They don't actually flow randomly. They appear as if they link up randomly because they don't hold together, in the sense of holding... grabbing hold of the individual they land upon. This death makes me die, and yet it is not mine. I acquire this fortune, and yet it is not mine. Again, the final word on this is *California Split*. And again, "this gives me no special feeling". But again, it's not indifference, that's why it's so difficult to explain. It's not so much a question of indifference as of belonging, or in this case not belonging. Now we fully

had that in Dos Passos at the level of literature. That's why I have the impression that he discovered something, that it's one of the rare cases where literature... no, not one of the rare cases, but a case where literature was a few years in advance of cinema.

So, the third characteristic, which we still have to deal with. How can we explain this? I mean, there's a problem: how do we explain these two aspects, dispersive reality and the movement of the stroll/ballad without the aspect of formation, which is to say without belonging? Well, this is undoubtedly Dos Passos' strongest point. For, indeed, what is the danger here? The danger of dispersive reality or of the stroll/ballad film, where one crosses a city with its patchwork of neighborhoods. Here you have a kind of dispersion that makes it possible to simply give the name "novel" in the singular, to several novellas or short stories. Dispersive or not, there has to be some kind of unity, otherwise it's not worth it. There has to be a unity of dispersion, so as to avoid the idea that I'm just making a collection of short stories. But the Dos Passos trilogy has nothing to do with a collection of short stories. It is a novel, and it is a new form of unity for the novel. So we might ask: where is this unity? Both from the point of view of dispersive reality and from the point of view of the stroll, the stroll without belonging, and also from the point of view of the relationship between the two.

This is where I come to a technique, Dos Passos' technique of inserting newsreels, biographies and camera-eye sections between his chapters. And for him, it is not the same thing. Because, I believe – and here I'm not inventing anything because this was shown very clearly by somebody who was very close to Sartre during the Liberation, who is Claude-Edmonde Magny, and who had written a book that remained... that remains very important and whose title was *The Age of the American Novel*, published by Editions de Seuil, in which she focused primarily on comparing the American novel with American cinema<sup>33</sup>. And she very clearly analyzes the function of these odd elements we find in Dos Passos: newsreel, biography, camera-eye. We'll see. I'm going to read to you for those who don't know Dos Passos, something from *The Big Money*, the first of the newsreels. I will read slowly, slowly but quickly.

"*Yankee Doodle that melodee...* COLONEL HOUSE ARRIVES FROM EUROPE APPARENTLY A VERY SICK MAN... *Yankee Doodle that melodee...* TO CONQUER SPACE AND SEE DISTANCES... but has not the time come – each time I should change voice – but has not the time come for newspaper proprietors to join in a wholesome movement for the purpose of calming troubled minds, giving all the news but laying less stress on prospective calamities... DEADLOCK UNBROKEN AS FIGHT SPREADS... they permitted the Steel Trust Government to trample underfoot the democratic rights which they had so often been assured were the heritage of the people of this country... SHIPOWNERS DEMAND PROTECTION... *Yankee doodle that melodee / Yankee doodle that melodee / Makes me stand right up and cheer...* only survivors of crew of schooner Onato are put in jail on arrival in Philadelphia... PRESIDENT STRONGER WORKS IN SICKROOM... *I'm coming U.S.A/I'll say...* MAY GAG PRESS... *There's no land... so grand...* Charles M. Schwab, who has returned from Europe, was a luncheon guest at the White House. He stated that this country was prosperous but not so prosperous as it should be, because there were so many disturbing investigations on foot... *as my land /From California to Manhattan Isle.*"<sup>34</sup>

This is a Dos Passos newsreel. So, what would this mean? That the newsreel, what he will call a newsreel, is first of all inserted between two chapters, between two chapters dealing with characters. You remember how there were no more characters. These are the two things we have learned for the moment, that on the one hand we no longer have a main character or

a secondary character, while on the other, the events that happen do not belong, or only half belong, to those to whom they happen. Regarding this point: between chapters. What is a newsreel? It's a kind of miscellany, fragments of newspaper articles, songs that were current at the time, fashionable songs, classified ads, announcements. That's what a newsreel is.

The biographies that are fictionalized or non-fictionalized, the biographies that are also interspersed between the chapters, include for example a biography of Henry Ford that pops up all of a sudden. So, you have a biography of a man who was important at the time or a biography of an actor or actress.

The camera eye is more complex. It is also inserted between things, but what is it? It's usually a kind of interior monologue, which is not spoken by the secondary or main character in question, but by an anonymous person in an imagined crowd. For example, there's a character who is on a station platform waiting for the train, and we know that he is waiting for someone to arrive, another character. The camera eye will be the interior monologue of someone else who is also on the station platform, but who has no knowledge of the character, or characters in question, and who unfolds his interior monologue.<sup>35</sup> You understand?

There are the three procedures: biography, camera eye, newsreel. What does Dos Passos want from this? This is what circulates throughout the whole book. Why? Because he certainly doesn't create his newsreels or his interior camera eye monologues at random, he doesn't leave these things to chance. Sometimes they prefigure, sometimes anticipate, something that closely or else remotely resembles an event that will, in hyphenated form, not-belong-to-the-person-to-whom-it-happens. It becomes a diabolical technique, it seems to me... it's not collage, nor is it cut-up. In my view, it's a very effective technique that is close to both... or that borrows certain elements of collage or elements of cut-up; it's a very, very curious technique, and what does it imply? What does it imply?

Well, it's time now to... Why? Well, I'll tell you why. I would say that these three elements all have something in common. They're *clichés*. Let's call them clichés. They are clichés, floating clichés, anonymous clichés. Biographies of great men, inner monologues of anonymous bystanders. Clichés, everywhere clichés; clichés everywhere, which is to say images everywhere. It is the world of cliché-images, the world conceived as a vast production of these cliché-images. And these clichés can be sonic or optical. Sound clichés: words; optical clichés: visual images. But more than this, they can be both interior and exterior. There are no fewer clichés in our heads than on the walls. And this is what Claude-Edmonde Magny shows very well, namely, as she says: "Dos Passos' characters have no strong interior being."

What does this mean? It means that within them are the same things as there are outside, namely clichés and nothing but clichés. And when they are in love, it's in a way... it's as if within themselves they were recounting their feelings in the most stereotypical way imaginable to someone else. Because the feelings they have are themselves clichés. And when I say the cliché can be internal or external, it's because it is in us, no less than outside us, and our heads are as full of clichés as our environment. Which is why we can't accuse walls or billboards. We produce billboards as much as billboards produce us. Clichés everywhere, and nothing else. It seems a rather pessimistic vision, but we will see what we can draw from all this. In all this, we are bathing in the negative. Clichés everywhere, clichés that float, that turn into mental clichés and then turn back into physical clichés. And so what

happens? You have to evaluate words, you have to evaluate images by their weight. They are physical forces.

People are told, "Speak! Speak up! Go ahead and speak! Express yourself!" And you see how terrible this is when it's live. "Go ahead and speak on air!" On air. But what they have to say – and I say this all the more because I experience it myself, except in exceptional cases, except when I'm well prepared – what do you or I have to say? If not precisely the very clichés we complain about and that are imposed on us when we don't speak. And what do we hear on the radio? Or on television, what do we see every day? And the more live, the more pathetic it is. We see people, when they are invited to speak, pronouncing the very clichés they were protesting against when they said: "I am not allowed to speak". It is in this sense that I was saying, but after all, if you think of the number of situations and social forces that force you to speak in life, whoever you are, including your intimate relationships, your most personal relationships, when they say "tell me a something", you immediately understand that the only thing we can experience, feel or see are clichés that are in us no less than everywhere else. Very well, "speak, speak, what do you think? What do you think of that?" Well I say: no, listen, no, no, no... stop, it's not... Or I'll say something, and when I realize what I'm doing, I'll be absolutely ashamed because I'll be saying exactly what I was laughing at when another guy said it and I was thinking, "What an idiot". And there I'll be, saying the same thing because there are no two ways about it. Go on the radio, or go on TV, you'll find yourself turning into a cretin. You'll find you've become a cretin, but why? For something that is beyond us. It is obvious that, live or not, you will only be able to say what you abhor when you hear it, and you will be shocked when you think: "Did I really say that?"

So we can say that the real challenge today is precisely that of attaining vacuoles of silence, of actually being able to break with this kind of social pressure, and at all levels, what it is that forces us to speak, that forces us to express our opinion. It's like in a competition where they say: "Express your opinion, but be careful, you'll win only if your opinion coincides with the general opinion". Perfect. This is the making of the cliché and its transformation from internal to external and from outside back to inside. That's the system.

But in a way this is nothing new. It's in this sense that we can talk about a civilization of the image. Okay, so now we are in the process of specifying this notion of an image civilization. And as I said it's not new. There's an excellent book on English Romanticism by Paul Rozenberg<sup>36</sup>. He comments on Blake. And already in both English Romanticism, and German Romanticism, you will have this... this kind of discovery of the cliché and the world of clichés, and the question is how to denounce and get out of this world of clichés? That's our positive challenge. I'm not sure that this is really a question that concerns the Americans. In the end, for reasons that... but we'll see, we'll see their attempt to get out of it that will in fact forge a new cinema. But it's this realization that the image is fundamentally an interior or exterior cliché that will be our starting point, and that's what American cinema manages to produce. It's this fundamental awareness of cliché, that everything is cliché.

We're going to almost have to leave things with this very depressing conclusion today, but hope will come to us next time. Hope will come to us. It is... we will be saved. But we have to go through this realization. Now Blake, quoted by Rozenberg, Blake has a phrase that could almost be one of Godard's. It's a phrase... ah, yes! Godard has a phrase that could almost be one of Blake's: "There is an Outside spread Within, and an Outside...", no, sorry: "There is an Outside spread Without and an Outside spread Within"<sup>37</sup>. I mean if you take... it's a phrase from a fragment of a poem called "Jerusalem" – There is an outside spread



without and an outside spread within... this is precisely the world of the cliché. It's exactly... it seems to me to fit almost word for word with Dos Passos' novel. So what will produce the communication between all these characters who have very little to do with one another? What will produce the unity of this dispersive reality? Now I'm in a position to answer this question. For Dos Passos, it is: newsreels, biographies, the camera eye. Which is to say the mental and physical universe of the cliché. And this will culminate in what? Finally it will culminate in the little song, the little ditty: "Yankee doodle. Yankee doodle" that will flow... that will flow from one point to another. It will spread all over the world. In other words, a small refrain. And at this point the refrain comes into cinema as something fundamental. Why? Why this little tune?

All at once this is going to pose us numerous problems because – and here I make a jump – there's another great filmmaker who's a genius at using refrains, and this is Fellini. It's clear that I'm not talking about the Fellinian kind of refrain here, which has a completely different function<sup>38</sup>, but if we were to... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:32:56]

### Part 3

... excellent scene from Dos Passos, where you have these anonymous dead people. And the guy is walking around the cemetery, walking around the cemetery and giving the dead the latest news. Such and such a thing happened, news that doesn't concern anyone there. They're dead. They are the anonymous dead, yet each of them has their little grave. He walks around the cemetery, saying: "You know... the English just bombed the Malvinas. Oh and then, my neighbor, he was making so much noise yesterday," and then he sings a little song. Right. A newsreel. A newsreel, for whom? For what? What makes it a newsreel? It doesn't concern them. It's doesn't concern the dead. So, what does it concern? It concerns the emergence and mobilization of the cliché-image for its own sake.

Second example: the famous ending of Altman's *Nashville*. After a horrific murder, the dispersed reality comes together. All the characters are there. Why do they come together? So the community can reform. You have a lamentable singer, a failed singer who sings a little song, a jingle, and this jingle will be taken up by some children, a bunch of children who have no connection with the killing that has just taken place. And Altman comments... he says: well yes, you can interpret this in a very different way because it is a custom in America that when disaster strikes, we get together to sing. It's just a goodbye and so on. We get together to sing, and he says, of course it's ridiculous, it's ridiculous, he says, but on the other hand, you could say it's heroic. And then it's very important that it's a bad singer who's been waiting a long time for her big chance that will never come. Well, so she launches into this, she starts the singing. Then the children take up the melody. And he says ... What?

A woman student: [*Inaudible comments on Nashville*]

Deleuze: And there's a soldier too, yeah, yeah, yeah... the song fades out. The cliché goes elsewhere, this little ditty. And he talks about another of his films, which I haven't seen, but it doesn't matter, where these songs have even more importance, the little Altman refrain, and what is it? What is it? I don't know, it doesn't matter, you can just take my word for it that there's another film. Ah yes, *A Perfect Couple*<sup>39</sup>. Because he says that in *A Perfect Couple* the songs are there to fill in the gaps in the action, and they're directly related to such and such a moment in the life of one of the characters. So the song and the cliché it contains really becomes an element of this kind of dispersive narrative.

We don't need to dwell on the little jingle, even though this aspect of the refrain or the jingle is something I will need in future. But you have to consider that in all this cinema, the cliché will continue to appear, but in what form? Well, not only in the form of visual images and so on, but as a "power", and one that will determine the way power itself is presented, political power or more profoundly social power over the city as a dispersive reality. And the city as a dispersive reality can only ever be grasped through the system of images, which is to say, of floating clichés that it itself produces, as though there were a double dimension of the image: the image of the dispersive reality, and at the same time this image itself covered by the clichéd images that it produces. We see this clearly in Lumet. Where what happens? Where everything is crisscrossed by a system of telephone tapping, TV, the famous *Network*<sup>40</sup>, the wiretapping in *Serpico* and especially in *Prince of the City*.

You see, the cliché is not only the poster or billboard on the wall, it's not only the standardized ideas in my head. It's also the entire system of control that will define and set in motion the whole ensemble. So that my three dimensions, my three dimensions have, it seems to me, a coherence in terms of this new mode of narration, but for the moment, it's only a negative coherence. To sum up: dispersive reality, stroll without belonging, and thirdly, moving or mobile cliché, floating cliché. It's as if what has happened? And here I come to a first conclusion. It's as if the image... it's as if the action-image was literally pushed to a point where everything is reversed. The question is no longer, as it had been since the beginning of our analysis... the question is no longer that of perception-images, action-images, or affection-images. The question tends to become *the fact that we perceive only images; we feel only images; we act and move only through images*. And these images are the cliché; What we see are images, what we feel are images. What we put in motion are images. Fine.

So what will be our problem now? The problem will now be – well, let's start using familiar terms – it will be *just* images. It's just images.<sup>41</sup> So how shall we go about it. In other words, if there were a positive question to ask, what would it be? It would be: *how can we manage to perceive the cliché-image in such a way that it is no longer a cliché?* How can we manage to feel the cliché-image affectively in such a way that it is no longer a cliché? In other words, can we extract from the cliché image something that would no longer be a cliché, and perhaps no longer even an image, or in any case, no longer a moving-image?

And to finish I just want to say that the Americans, contemporary American cinema has gone very far, it seems to me, very far in this process of discovery, in this kind of critical reversal of the problem of the cinematographic image. But for reasons that we will have to analyze, it seems to me that they remain at the level of a kind of acknowledgement of this world of images. The creative task, which is no small thing, and which will make for an extremely beautiful, very profound cinema – I almost want to say the positive, provisional direction, because there will be other positive directions – the provisional positive direction that we can only grasp... oddly enough we can only grasp it by making the jump to another lineage which we must take up again as though we weren't starting from scratch this time, but taking the path that we have just short-circuited, that is to say, what was going on in neo-realism? What will happen, and what has already happened in terms of the French *nouvelle vague*? Did they arrive at the same discovery as American cinema and at the same limit of that discovery? Some did. Others... Have others managed to make a kind of escape or are they in the process of making a kind of escape? And in what direction? Well, in a positive direction, because today no matter how far we've tried to go we have, in spite of everything, remained trapped within negative determinations.

So now we have to go back to the history of neo-realism and ask ourselves if something hasn't escaped us in terms of its classical definitions, since there is an abundant literature on neo-realism, and likewise to see if there isn't also something in the nouvelle vague that is very specific, that is... and that would finally allow us to exit not only the cliché-image, but also the movement-image since it's finally the movement-image that has plunged us into the cliché-image.

So here we are for the first time at a kind of great parting of the ways of our subject. We feel the possibility of finally taking leaving of the movement-image. It's its own fault because it is the very thing that has led us to this kind of universality of the floating cliché. Too bad for the movement-image, there are others, as I've been saying since the beginning, there are other kinds of image and it's these that we will now have to try to get a sense of. That's all. [*End of the session*] [1:45:16]

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The reference is perhaps to an article by Jean-Louis Comolli in a 1969 edition of *Cahiers du cinéma* that Deleuze quotes in this context in *The Movement-Image*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Mitry was the pseudonym of Jean-René Pierre Goetgheluck Le Rouge Tillard des Acres de Presfontaines (1904 – 1988), a French film theorist, critic and filmmaker. Mitry co-founded of France's first film society and in 1938 the Cinémathèque Française. Among his most important critical works are *The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema* (1965), a five-volume *History of Cinema* (1967-70) and *Experimental Cinema: History and perspectives* (1974).

<sup>3</sup> Louis Delluc (1890-1924) was one of the early Impressionist filmmakers, along with Abel Gance, Germaine Dulac, Marcel L'Herbier, and Jean Epstein. His films are notable for their documentary-style focus on daily events and natural settings rather than plot and intrigue. His most well-known film is *La femme de nulle part* (1922).

<sup>4</sup> In *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, the expression “dust of facts” becomes “multiplicity of facts”. Deleuze's wonderfully poetic formulation here is probably the result of his misremembering Delluc's description of the dusty shooting conditions of *The Spanish Fiesta* (see note 6).

<sup>5</sup> *The Spanish Fiesta* (orig. *La Fête espagnole*, 1919) is a French silent film directed by Germaine Dulac and written by Louis Delluc. Critic and film historian Georges Sadoul cited it as being one of the earliest examples of what became known as French impressionist cinema.

<sup>6</sup> Mitry in *The Aesthetics and Psychology of Cinema* quotes from an interview with Delluc: “When Germaine Dulac and I left for Spain, we took with us one guiding principle: to capture, without preparation of any kind, without preplanning, the camera reacting spontaneously, every potential event, from the commonplace to the unusual – people dancing, laughing, crying, eating, getting drunk, arguing, praying, mourning, banners flapping, the funeral procession passing by, the breeze raising clouds of dust, men sweating in the heat of the sun, the strains of music, two young men stabbing each other to death for the love of a woman who, in the same moment, is making love with a third. The assembly of these facts, which forms the subject of the film, appears to the cold eye of the camera and is projected on the screen as merely one component in *The Spanish Fiesta*, a series of incidents of equal importance. It is up to the unbiased audience to use its imagination to provide a scale. Thus, grounded in a truth which is almost absolute, we captured a moment in the life of an Andalusian village. This we achieve... except for the scenes of the girl and her suitors, which had to be written and staged.” See Jean Mitry, *The Aesthetics and Psychology of Cinema*, Trans. Christopher King, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 356.

<sup>7</sup> Sidney Lumet (1924-2011) was an American film director, producer, and screenwriter who made over 50 films during his career. Especially known for his hard-edged portraits of New York street life, his most celebrated films include *12 Angry Men* (1957), *The Anderson Tapes* (1971), *Serpico* (1973) *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), *Network* (1976), *Prince of the City* (1981) and *The Verdict* (1982).

<sup>8</sup> Lumet's actual words, speaking to the Los Angeles Times are: “Hollywood is a company town. There is no real world there outside of filming. I don't feel organic life there, and I need that around me when I work.”

<sup>9</sup> John Roderigo Dos Passos (1896 – 1970) was an American novelist, most notable for his *U.S.A.* trilogy. Born in Chicago, Dos Passos traveled widely as a young man, visiting Europe and the Middle East. During World War I, he was an ambulance driver for American volunteer groups in Paris and Italy, before joining the U.S. Army Medical Corps. His most important work is the *U.S.A.* trilogy, consisting of the novels *The 42nd Parallel*

(1930), *1919* (1932) and *The Big Money* (1936). Regarded as one of the classics of American modernism, the trilogy, written in experimental, non-linear form, blends elements of biography and news reports to paint a vivid portrait of early 20th-century American culture.

<sup>10</sup> Cesare Pavese (1908-1950) was an Italian novelist and poet, author of such works as *The Moon and the Bonfires*, *Among Women Only*, *Dialogues with Leuco*, *The Devil in the Hills* and the diary *The Business of Living*. Together with Elio Vittorini, Pavese was one of the first translators and promoters of classic works of American 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction in Italy.

<sup>11</sup> Jules Romains (real name: Louis Henri Jean Farigoule, 1885-1972) was a French poet and writer and the founder of the Unanimism literary movement. He is most well-known for a vast cycle of novels called *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* (*Men of Good Will*). Though much admired, by Sinclair Lewis and Jean Paul Sartre among others, he was also criticized, notably by Aimé Césaire, for his colonialist and racist views.

<sup>12</sup> Romains originally conceived unanimism, in opposition to individualism and to the exaltation of individual qualities, in terms of universal sympathy with life, existence and humanity. In later years, he defined it as connected with the end of literature within "representation of the world without judgment", where his social ideals also include solidarity with and defense of individual rights.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Altman (1925-2006) was an American film director and one of the leading figures of the new Hollywood cinema. Though he is best known for a series of semi-improvised ensemble films exploring particular milieus, including *Mash* (1970), *California Split* (1974), *Nashville* (1975), *A Wedding* (1978) and *Short Cuts* (1993), he also took an interest in reinventing genres such as the western in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971) and film noir in *The Long Goodbye* (1973).

<sup>14</sup> John Cassavetes (1929-1989) was an American filmmaker and one of the most influential figures in the development of independent cinema both in the US and elsewhere. Frequently working with a small tight-knit group of actors including his wife Gena Rowlands, Ben Gazzara, Peter Falk, Seymour Cassel and himself, Cassavetes films often begin from realistic premises to wander off in bizarre and surreal directions. Among his most celebrated films are *Faces* (1968), *Husbands* (1970) *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976), *Opening Night* (1977), *Gloria* (1980) and *Love Streams* (1984).

<sup>15</sup> *Nashville* (1975) is a 1975 American satirical comedy-drama film directed by Robert Altman and starring a large ensemble cast including Ned Beatty, Karen Black, Keith Carradine, Geraldine Chaplin, Shelley Duvall, Scott Glenn, Jeff Goldblum, Barbara Harris, Michael Murphy, Lily Tomlin and Keenan Wynn. The film follows the adventures of various people involved in the country and gospel music businesses in Nashville, Tennessee, over a five-day period, leading up to a gala concert for a populist outsider running as a Republican candidate for President.

<sup>16</sup> *A Wedding* (1978) is a 1978 American high society satire directed by Robert Altman, with an ensemble cast including Desi Arnaz, Jr., Carol Burnett, Paul Dooley, Vittorio Gassman, Mia Farrow, Lillian Gish, Geraldine Chaplin, Howard Duff and Nina Van Pallandt. The film is largely set during a lavish wedding reception where multiple storylines overlap regarding the hidden cracks in the two families involved, the bride's nouveau riche Southern family and the groom's wealthy established Chicago family with possible ties to organized crime.

<sup>17</sup> *California Split* (1974) is an American comedy-drama film directed by Robert Altman and starring Elliott Gould, George Segal and Ann Prentiss, revolving around the friendship and adventures of a pair of inveterate gamblers.

<sup>18</sup> Untranslatable pun between *ballade* (ballad) and *balade* (stroll or walk). In both *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* the word is often rendered in English as voyage/ballad. Here we have preferred to translate it as stroll/ballad.

<sup>19</sup> In *The Movement-Image*, p. 208, Deleuze briefly mentions Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* as a typical film of the post-beat generation.

<sup>20</sup> See the discussion of Lumet as well as Altman and Scorsese in *The Moving Image*, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

<sup>21</sup> *Bye Bye Braverman* (1968) is a film by Sidney Lumet starring George Segal, Jack Warden and Jessica Walter. The story concerns four Jewish intellectuals who are driving together through New York in a Volkswagen Beetle to attend the funeral of a friend.

<sup>22</sup> *Taxi Driver* (1976) is a film directed by Martin Scorsese from a screenplay by Paul Schrader starring Robert De Niro, Jodie Foster, Harvey Keitel, Cybil Sheperd and Peter Boyle about a mentally unstable New York taxi driver who drives around the city making violent plans to clean up what he sees as the moral degradation into which it has fallen.

<sup>23</sup> Woody Allen (b. 1935) is an American film director, actor and writer who emerged in the 1970s with a series of burlesque comedy films, inspired by Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd, that parodied both genre and auteurist cinema before making his name with a string of sophisticated comedies set in the upper middle-class milieu of modern-day New York, usually following the romantic misadventures of his own neurotic alter-ego. Among his most celebrated films are *Love and Death* (1975), *Annie Hall* (1977), *Manhattan* (1979) *Hannah and*

*Her Sisters* (1986), *Crimes and Misdemeanours* (1989), *Husbands and Wives* (1992) and *Deconstructing Harry* (1997).

<sup>24</sup> *Shadows* (1959) is an independent drama film directed by John Cassavetes concerning race relations during the Beat Generation years in New York City. Initially shot in an improvised fashion, Cassavetes reworked and scripted the final version. The film depicts two weeks in the lives of three black siblings on the margins of New York bohemian circles: two brothers who are struggling jazz musicians and their light-skinned younger sister who attracts the attentions of two white men.

<sup>25</sup> *Gloria* (1980) is an American crime thriller film written and directed by John Cassavetes, starring Gena Rowlands, Julie Carmen, Buck Henry and Juan Adames. It tells the story of a gangster's girlfriend who goes on the run as the reluctant protector of a young boy who is being hunted by the mob after escaping the slaying of his parents.

<sup>26</sup> *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976) is a film by John Cassavetes starring Ben Gazzara, Seymour Cassel and Timothy Carey about a sentimental strip club owner who gets into debt with the mob after incurring heavy gambling losses and who agrees to perform a hit (on the Chinese bookie of the title) to clear the slate. Though Deleuze doesn't invoke it with regard to Cassavetes, his idea of the film director's "external duel" is extremely pertinent to two of the Cassavetes films he cites here, where the pressure from the mafia on the central characters explicitly evokes the director's fraught relationship with Hollywood studio bosses and his lifelong battle to preserve his artistic independence. As Cassavetes said at one point to Ben Gazzara: "Ben, do you know who those gangsters are? They're all those people who keep you and me from our dreams. The Suits who stop the artist from doing what he wants to do. The petty people who eat at you. You just want to be left alone with your art. And then there's all the bullshit that comes in, all these nuisances. Why does it have to be like that?" For a more detailed reflection on *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* with regard to Cassavetes' antipathy towards standardized plot and characterization and his feelings of non-belonging to the Hollywood system, see *Cassavetes on Cassavetes* (Ray Carney ed.) London, Faber & Faber 2001, pp. 379-392.

<sup>27</sup> *Shoot the Piano Player* (Orig. *Tirez sur le pianiste*, 1960) is a French *nouvelle vague* film directed by Francois Truffaut and adapted from a novel by David Goodis. It stars Charles Aznavour as a concert pianist whose career is ruined when his wife, who has compromised herself to help him, commits suicide. Hiding out as a bar room piano player he falls in love with the waitress.

<sup>28</sup> *Stolen Kisses* (Orig. *Baisers Volés*, 1968), *Bed and Board* (Orig. *Domicile Conjugale*, 1970) and *Love on the Run* (Orig. *L'amour en fuite*, 1979) are three films directed by Francois Truffaut that together constitute what has come to be known as the Antoine Doinel Trilogy, covering the adult life of the Antoine Doinel character played by Jean-Pierre Léaud (see note 29) that Truffaut introduced as a child in his first film *The 400 Blows*. In actual fact, prior to the trilogy Truffaut made another short film *Antoine and Colette* (1962), featuring the Doinel character.

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Pierre Léaud (b. 1944) is a French actor and one of the iconic figures of the French *nouvelle vague*. Though perhaps best known for playing the character of Antoine Doinel in a series of films directed by Francois Truffaut, he also appeared frequently in the films of Jean-Luc Godard (*Masculin-Feminin*, *La Chinoise*, *Le Gai Savoir*, *Détective*, *Grandeur et décadence d'un petit commerce de cinéma*), as well as in Jacques Rivette's *Out 1* and perhaps most memorably as the central character of Jean Eustache's *La maman et la putain*. Léaud was nonetheless so attached to Doinel, a role which he had played on and off since he was a boy and had come to associate with the progress of his own life, that he fell into a depression when Truffaut announced that he was going to kill Antoine off after *L'Amour en fuite*, since he could not imagine his character growing old.

<sup>30</sup> *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) is an American crime comedy-drama film directed by Sidney Lumet and starring Al Pacino, John Cazale and Charles Durning. The film is loosely based on a 1972 robbery and hostage situation that took place at a Chase Manhattan bank branch in Brooklyn following a botched robbery to pay for gender reassignment surgery.

<sup>31</sup> *Serpico* (1973) is an American drama film directed by Sidney Lumet. Based on real events it stars Al Pacino in the role of a real-life undercover New York cop Frank Serpico who spent years investigating and fighting corruption within the force.

<sup>32</sup> *Prince of the City* (1981) is an American crime drama film directed and co-written by Sidney Lumet and starring Treat Williams as an officer of the New York Police Department whose idealism leads him to try to expose corruption in the force.

<sup>33</sup> See Deleuze's reference to Magny's text as well as the description of Dos Passos' techniques in *The Movement-Image*, p. 208.

<sup>34</sup> John Dos Passos, *The Big Money* (Modern Library edition of *USA*) New York: Random House, pp. 10-11.

<sup>35</sup> See the analysis of this same point in *The Movement-Image*, pp. 208-209.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Rozenberg, *Le Romantisme anglais* cited in *The Movement-Image*, p. 209.

<sup>37</sup> See William Blake, *Complete Poems*, Harmondsworth, New York: Penguin, 1977, p. 669.

<sup>38</sup> See the brief discussion of the cliché and the refrain in Fellini's cinema in *The Movement-Image*, pp. 212-213.

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<sup>39</sup> *A Perfect Couple* (1979) is a romantic-comedy film written and directed by Robert Altman starring Paul Dooley and Marta Heflin as an ill-assorted couple from very different milieus – he is the wayward son in a sternly patriarchal Greek family, she a free-floating backing singer in a white soul band – who meet through a video dating site.

<sup>40</sup> *Network* (1976) is an American satirical comedy-drama film directed by Sidney Lumet, written by Paddy Chayefsky and starring William Holden, Faye Dunaway, Peter Finch and Robert Duvall. The story concerns the failing news channel of a corporate TV network which sees a sudden revival of its ratings after its news anchor has a breakdown and announces he will commit suicide live on TV. Subsequent events see the man transformed into a mad prophet of the airwaves whose increasingly popular rants about the “tube” begin to threaten the corporation’s interests.

<sup>41</sup> On this point and the use of “just”, see *The Movement-Image*, p. 214.