

## **Gilles Deleuze**

### **Seminar on Cinema and Thought, 1984-1985**

#### **Lecture 11, 29 January 1985 (Cinema Course 77)**

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*[At the beginning of this session students ask about the dates of the next sessions and Deleuze reminds them to fill in their registration papers]*

... I don't know, when does the term end? Do you know when...?

Hiddenobu Suzuki: *[Inaudible remarks]*

Deleuze: Sorry?

Suzuki: *[Inaudible remarks]*

Student: *[Inaudible remarks]*

Deleuze: Yes... no?

Student: *[Inaudible remarks]*

Deleuze: What?

Student: I think there are two more sessions...

Deleuze: This one and the next one... yes, I think so.

Suzuki: I don't think so...

Student: *[Inaudible comments]*

Deleuze: In any case, I'm sorry, but I need 15 days, because there's... I won't be in Paris on... but I think it's 15 days.

Suzuki: That would be from the 15th [of February].

Deleuze: That would be from the 15th, which means we'll have two more sessions, one today, and then another one.

Suzuki: No, three... three.

Deleuze: Three sessions?

Suzuki and other students: [*Inaudible remarks*]

Deleuze: It's around the 10th. Yes, I'd heard that too. Well, we'll find out. Actually, no... maybe you're right. We have to find out, we have to find out. In any case, I need the little green forms. I really need them...

So... we'd arrived at this point, at this kind of method of constructing series, using [Jean-Luc] Godard as an example. And what we had developed was the idea that a series was a sequence of images reflected in a genre or category. And we saw that "genre" or "category" took on a wide variety of meanings. In the end, anything could serve as a category, which doesn't mean it was completely indeterminate... it meant that these categories were defined by their function. And what was their function? Well, it was that the sequence of images that was reflected in them didn't pertain to them, didn't pertain to the genre or category in question. In other words, the function of the genre or category was to act as a limit to the sequence of images, and a limit of a very special kind, since it consisted in an irrational cut. And it was in this way that we had what I might call a *categorical* function, a category-function, since what served as a category formed part of neither the first nor the second sequence in whose interstice the cut was introduced.

So, at this point, I'd say... we had what I would call a *horizontal construction*, a construction of horizontal series through relinkage – and I continue to insist on this notion of relinkage because it's essential for what I'm doing this year – with relinkage from one series to another, from one side of the cut to the other. All this should be crystal clear... well, fairly clear at least.

So, if I have to draw out a schema, I'd say, well... the horizontal construction of series is a sequence of images, you see, a first sequence of vectorized images – as we saw last time, there is in fact a vector – with the category as irrational cut, which will give rise to a second sequence of images that will itself tend towards another category, each time with... a relinkage across the irrational cut. And this relinkage is not and has never been a linkage and does not presuppose any primary linkage.

So, if I take the horizontal construction of the series in *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* [1979], I have... First category: *the imaginary*, which corresponds to a whole series of images linked to one character, the woman on the bicycle. The second category will be *fear*, linked to another character, the man. The third category is *business*, linked to the second woman. The fourth category is *music*... do you follow me? At the culmination of this horizontal construction, a problem emerges that from the beginning has been an undercurrent to all the series and that appears in the mode: *Passion is not this*. Which leads us to believe there is another category that these series couldn't attain: that of *passion*.

I'll take a simple example, a sequence of vectorized images that will result in the category *theater*. But in what form? We can see very clearly how this is a category in which the sequence of images is reflected: this theater isn't at all like a [Jean] Renoir-type theater. It's a very particular kind of theater since it's a theatricalization acting as limit of the preceding sequence of images, as the limit of the series formed by the previous images. And the

sequence of these previous images constitutes a series insofar as it is reflected in the category that acts as its limit, which is to say, theatricalization.

So, in this simpler case, we have, for instance, *Pierrot le Fou* [1965], where the improvised theatrical scene plays the role of a category in which the preceding series of images is reflected, and which does not pertain to this series, since, in fact, it appears in its own right, but it appears in its own right as an irrational cut. Or to take another example, *Vivre sa vie* [1962]... just as I said before regarding theatricalization, in *Vivre sa vie*, the category takes the form of Brice Parain speaking to the heroine, and this time, what we have is not a theatricalization of the previous images, it's a *philosophication*, it's an emergence of the category of language as the limit towards which Nana was tending in her wanting to know what speaking means. So, as before, we have our sequence of vectorized images that tend towards a category. The category is the limit of the sequence of images as an irrational cut, insofar as it is itself an irrational cut, that is, belonging neither to the first series nor to the second.

And this has to be very clear. If it's not clear, I can start again. Because my question becomes... it's quite clear, isn't it? Nobody's saying yes just to please me? It has to be very, very clear. So, before concluding this point, I would say – and here we're reaching a first conclusion – I would ask, well... could we talk about an evolution in Godard's cinema? It's an interesting question. If you accept this idea of mine that, okay, it's a serial method... it's a serial method, so you see that we're not at all talking about metaphors... we are not saying, well, yes, there is serial cinema in the same way as there is serial music. In fact, this is not at all a metaphor, since we've already indicated the cinematographic criteria for construction of series.

So, I would like to ask: is there an evolution in Godard's cinema? I think there is. Is there someone speaking over there, it's not that I have anything against it, it's just that it bothers me. I'm hearing something as if there's, I don't know... unless I'm hallucinating, but I hear someone yakking. So, let's look for where this evolution of series lies.

I think that more and more, when Godard came back to commercial cinema, after his long experimental-political period, when he came back to commercial cinema, he moved towards another mode of constructing series. And in terms of the horizontal construction of series, as I've just summarized, he substituted – can we say substituted? – or rather, he added a vertical construction. And this vertical construction... how does it differ? Let's compare it with the previous diagram, which is a typical horizontal diagram. I'd say, you have a sequence of images – I'll give you the abstract formula – you have a sequence of images, and the emergence of a category, which gives us another sequence of images, leading to the emergence of another category or, what amounts to the same thing, the passage to another category or to another aspect of the same category. Okay.

In a sense it's the same, and yet in another sense it's not. I mean, the big difference is that the category which, in the horizontal construction, was a narrow limit or a narrow irrational cut, now expands and *begins to stand for itself*. It expands and begins to stand for itself. In other words, if you remember the point we ended on last time, I'd say that the horizontal construction of the series all fell under a regulatory or reflecting use – to speak in Kantian terms – and that the vertical construction, on the other hand will fall under a use, or will reacquire a use that is *constitutive or determining*.

An example... an example. In a way, the difference is very small. The practical criterion would be that, if we think of the theater scenes in *Pierrot le Fou*, the theater scene... you recall that they play out a theater skit of the Indochina war before an American audience. Here we have a typical example of the horizontal construction of a series. It's the category of theatricalization that comes into play. But the time it occupies is very limited. It plays the role of an irrational cut: it is neither part of the previous sequence of images, nor of the following sequence of images, it simply permits the relinkage of one sequence to the next.

In another case, let's suppose that the irrational cut has taken on an extension that enables it to stand for itself, which is to say that it *subsumes* the sequences of images. This is how we move from a reflective use to a constitutive-determining use. It will stand for itself. So, it will have a kind of self-development. For example... I would say, when he came back to making cinema, to making commercial cinema, his first film, on his return, the film that marked the return, was *Sauve qui peut (la vie)*. Now, *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* seems to me like the resumption, if you like... if you look at the formal analyses, the resumption that brings horizontal construction almost to the point of perfection, even if something else is already emerging. And it ends on the problem of passion: "Passion is not this", and the next film will precisely be entitled *Passion* [1982].

And so, what happens here? We have a sequence of images involving three characters, or even four – but we'll see that the fourth has a very special status – the boss, the worker, the owner. The sequence of images sometimes involves all three, sometimes two at a time, but in terms of different aspects that constitute the sequence or the vector of the sequence. Then you have this development in its own right, in what is a kind of self-development, the construction of paintings, of *tableaux vivants* [living tableaux]. This doesn't play the same role as in the horizontal conception. In the irrational cut, the painting is developed for its own sake and will literally subsume the preceding sequence of images. In other words, a painting by Goya will subsume the situation of the workers, another painting of the Crusades will subsume the situation of the bosses. So much so that the fourth character, the director, the organizer of *tableaux vivants*, obviously has a perpetual role of going back and forth in the vertical construction.

You see, in a sense, it's not... it's enough to think... I insist, that's why it's relatively... it's all very constructive. Here I'd like to take up the name of the school, the Russian school, the school that was at the start of the Russian Revolution, that of constructivism... This is constructivism, to go from one to the other, all that is required is a movement, you pivot your image-cut, your cut, you rotate it, you shift it, in other words, all that is required is that it stand for itself. But in the first case... I'd say that in *Passion*, the category in which the series of images is reflected is the category of painting or, to be more precise, of *tableau vivant*, and secondarily, music.

But on this occasion, the sequence of images is reflected in the category – which no longer has a simply reflective use but now has a constitutive use. There has been this shift. There has been this shift where, ultimately, the viewer is invited to pass from what to what? The horizontal construction of series is in the mode of *succession*. The vertical construction, even if, of course, for us spectators, there is a succession, this succession is no more than a state of fact and refers by right to a juxtaposition: a juxtaposition by right between, on the one hand, the sequence... the sequences of images involving the three characters, and the category, that is the painting or *tableau vivant*. It's a method of juxtaposition, and this is what the vertical construction allowed us to retain: to go beyond succession towards an ideal juxtaposition.

An example: after *Passion*, there's *Prénom Carmen* [1963]. To the question why didn't he use the music of [Georges] Bizet, the answer is simple and it's very important to us. Why did he replace Bizet's music with Beethoven's Quartets? The answer is simple: if he had kept Bizet's music, no matter how, it would have been a film *about* Carmen. It wasn't a film *about*. We've seen that the fundamental problem of a serial method as Godard understands it, is how to avoid making a film *about* something. *Les Carabiniers* [1963] is not a film *about* war, *Lettre à Freddy Buache* [1982] is not a film *about* Lausanne, and you remember why. It's because *Les Carabiniers* is a reflection of the sequences of images in the different *categories* of war. Therefore, it's not a film about war. *Lettre à Freddy Buache* reflects Lausanne in the categories of color, in this case green and blue. So, this is how he avoids making a film *about*.

It's obvious that if there were Bizet's music, even with all the musical tricks he could introduce, music could no longer act as an irrational cut and could no longer act as a kind of category. However, this doesn't explain anything. Why did he use the Beethoven Quartets rather than something else? The answer might be, but then you'd have to... it might also be that the quartet form is normally a very structured form, if I dare say so, and that something extraordinary in Beethoven would already be the advent of an open form, within the quartet, and that this will allow him, in the use he makes of it, to perform a kind of acrobatics – though not in the pejorative sense of the term but in terms of what we clearly won't call the soundtrack. I mean, what clearly isn't... since the question of whether there is a soundtrack or not is one we'll come to much later, when we arrive at the level of speech in cinema, of speech and thought. But we could ask, what is happening here in his use of the quartets?

First of all, there is the typical phenomenon of relinkage, but between which elements? There are two sound elements, or two fundamental noise elements: pistol shots, revolver shots, bursts of machine-gun fire. Those who remember the film must be aware of a kind of relinkage between the pistol shots and the pizzicato of strings. A revolver shot in a sequence of images, this time, well, I'll jot it down on the board: One, quartets... So here I have four or five quartet sequences, right, so a revolver shot-plucking of strings, and sometimes also a burst of machine-gun fire-rapid staccato bowing, sawing of bows.

A whole system of correspondences will come into play, but of what type? Here are two examples, both visual and sonic. Visual correspondence: between a point in the category and a point in the sequence of images, the rounding of the player's arm, the rounding of the arm of the male lover, or the female lover, I don't know... well, when one embraces the other. Sound correspondence: there's a moment... in the sequence of images, there are two great moments: the attack on the bank... and then there's the kidnapping, the abduction. There's a moment when we're in the sequence of images relating to the bank, the attack on the bank... and in the category we have the quartet leader who says that "the attack isn't strong enough"... musical attack, bank attack, and the quartet resumes with an attack, with a stronger musical attack.

But even more importantly, not only are there correspondences between the content of the category and the sequence of images, there are also perpetual shifts. For example, at the moment of the kidnapping, there's a moment when the characters who are about to execute the kidnapping don't know what to do. They have no idea what to do. There's no clear plan and at that moment the music becomes somehow tragic. On the other hand, at the most violent moment of the bank attack, the music is melancholic. Well, aside from any other question – but we'll save that for later – once again, the consideration of sound, of the sound elements, of the relations between all the different sound elements in cinema, the major ones

being: gunfire noises, cry-type sounds. Generally speaking, we distinguish between noises, words and music. But it seems to me that we should make a distinction between noises, sounds, exclamatory sounds, words and music, meaning there would actually be five elements.

But regardless of all these problems, you can see how here, in *Prénom Carmen*, we clearly have the vertical construction, the series I was looking for, because each time, it's no longer an irrational cut that permits the passage from one series to another. *The irrational cuts themselves constitute a series that is juxtaposed with the other series of images*. That's exactly it: the irrational cuts themselves form a series juxtaposed with the series of images, and there will be a new irrational cut, this time between top and bottom, which is to say between the series of irrational cuts or, if you prefer, the series of categories and the series of images.

In *Je vous salue Marie* [1985] – that I haven't seen yet, which is all the more reason... it's better to talk about films before... – it's obvious that it's the same and that he keeps his vertical construction method, it's obvious. This time, the category is obviously the biblical text. And what constitutes the sequence of images? The question of having a child, which has always been Godard's obsession: “I want a child, I want a child”. What does it mean to want a child? [*Recording interrupted*; 35:31]

... in the biblical category? What I'd like you to feel is that, indeed, I'd almost say that between the horizontal and vertical construction of series, there's a difference analogous to that between what in physics are called special and general relativity. *Vertical construction is a general serialism* where everything is organized in series.

So, going back, the question would be: Is there... if it's true that there is this evolution in Godard's cinema, I would ask contrariwise, in the early films, is there a moment when a vertical serialism appears? And in my view, there is, yes, in one of the finest of his early films, *Le Mépris* [1963]. In *Le Mépris*, we already have a vertical construction of series: a sequence of images very similar to those in *Passion*, a sequence of images of a couple, the famous scene where the couple are arguing. Category: Ulysses epic, where the epic of Ulysses doesn't simply play the role of an irrational cut between two image sequences but is developed in its own right, with Fritz Lang as intercessor. Here, the juxtaposition of the category, on the one hand, and the image sequence on the other, is already fully asserted, and is not simply a vectorized succession. This time, what plays the role of category in *Le Mépris* is the epic.

So, it's almost... if you accept all this, I'll now rapidly draw some conclusions. So, what can we conclude regarding all this? First conclusion: what did we see? What have we attained in this first term's program by analyzing Godard's cinema? Well, we engaged in a kind of Eisenstein-Godard comparison, both again taken quite arbitrarily as privileged examples, but what did this concern? It concerned the relation between image and thought, image-thought or, if you prefer, image-concept, imagination-thought or image-concept. Now, this is an old problem, an old and classic problem. We'll have the chance to go over it again in terms of philosophy. The rapport between thought and imagination would almost be a high-school level question. And philosophers have given very, very different responses to this question: What is the relation between thought and imagination, or between concept and image? But they all revolve around a certain... a certain idea. They just interpret it very differently, depending on how they pose the problem.

If I were to try and sum up the philosophical idea that all philosophers have finally shared, it's that thinking-imagining is an odd business, because there are two things which are certain: *thought cannot do without images*, the concept cannot do without images, but *it surpasses the image*. Thought surpasses imagination, but at the same time cannot do without it. Everyone, everyone says this, and in the end that's the problem. How can we explain the fact that thought surpasses imagination and yet cannot do without it? What's that all about? What does it mean *to surpass without being able to do without*?

It's an interesting problem. Descartes doesn't solve it in the same way, or doesn't seem to solve it in the same way as Hume, for example, but they all give answers to this problem, and the diversity of their answers comes only from the fact that they don't determine the conditions of the problem in the same way. So, obviously, they give different answers.

So here we come back to this again. And you can see that Godard's response is *the relation between sequences of images and what functions as a category*. This is the relation between image and concept. That's the first remark. And we've seen that Eisenstein's case was quite different, but there too, you can see that I could say in both cases, well, yes, thought goes beyond... the concept goes beyond the image, and yet cannot do without it. Categories cannot do without the series of images that are reflected in them.

Second remark: this is what I think could be called Godard's serial method, in terms of these two aspects. But I would remind you that there are many other ways of constructing series. In particular I pointed out – but I'll repeat it now so there's no misunderstanding – in a book entitled, I don't remember exactly... *Nouvelle sémiologie, nouveau cinéma*, [Dominique] Chateau and [François] Jost... a book devoted to the cinema of Robbe-Grillet<sup>1</sup>, Chateau and Jost analyze Robbe-Grillet's cinema, in which they discern a method of serial construction. So, either Robbe-Grillet's series are very different from Godard's, or Chateau and Jost's interpretation of what a series is must be very different from what I've proposed... or both at the same time. You'll see – for those... I don't have time... I'm not going to deal with this now, we'll look at it later, but those who are interested can seek out this book – there you'll find a completely different conception of series. So, I don't think that what I've said about Godard exhausts the question of the series. I just think that the criteria I've proposed are, in my view, more consistent than those they propose. But you may well have the opposite impression.

And finally, as a last conclusion, what would I say... What does it mean to “think”? If I really wanted to sum up all this... this whole passage: What does it mean to “think”? What does Eisenstein mean by thinking? For Eisenstein and, to a certain extent, for what we call classical cinema, I'd say it means exactly this: *linking images together by rational cuts*. Hence, once again, the importance of Eisenstein's theory of the “golden ratio”, which is not just a theory but a practice, since the “golden ratio” or “golden section”, as it is called, is typically a rational cut. So, to think is to link images together by means of rational cuts.

If we ask: What does Godard mean by thinking? It doesn't matter if he doesn't say this, that's fine. What is thinking according to Godard or, more generally, according to so-called modern cinema? Not that Godard exhausts the one, any more than Eisenstein exhausted the other. I would say that to think is to relink images *on* irrational cuts – and I insist on the difference between the propositions “by” and “on” – *on* irrational cuts.

So now one can say what one wants, one can say that... one can say that this isn't the way it is. In any case, I maintain that these are two definitions of thought, and that these are two definitions of thought suitable for cinema, so if our problem really was thought and what thinking means in cinematic terms... we've at least given an inkling of an answer.

But then everything rebounds. Before I've finished with this part, everything will start over again for one... for one small... for one last time. Meaning that I think we can see how to construct a series, and we can see the relations between sequences of images and concepts or categories, between sequences of images and categories or concepts. But there's something we really don't know, and that is: *What does the image consist of, what does the concept consist of?* In this respect, I'm not saying, what does the image in general consist of, or what does the concept in general consist of? I'm saying that we haven't yet seen what the image as series consists of. What does the image as series consist of? What is it, what in the image – this is precisely the problem that comes back – *what in the image makes it possible to put it in series?* We don't yet know.

The same goes for the concept or category. After all, we saw that anything could function as a category. Well, what is it about something that enables it to function as a category and no longer as an image? That's what remains for us... What is it in the image that makes the series possible? What in a thought or any other matter enables it to have a categorial function?

You see, this is exactly the point we've reached. And it's clear that the rebounding of this problem will allow us – you see the method I'm adopting this year – it will allow us to fill in yet another box in our program of the first term. And then, once we've filled a part of it in, we'll be able to make a number of conclusions, after which we'll have to move on to something else, to another aspect.

So, there it is. I need to make this clear, so here I am pausing for a moment. It has to be very, very clear. I mean, it has to be... in any case, I can't make it any clearer than that... after all, there's no choice, is there? No problem, no problem. So...

So how can we understand this? Let's move on. How can we understand this business, what in an image enables us to put it in series, what in a thought enables a categorial function? You might say that this is a philosophical problem. At the same time, we've never stopped working on philosophical problems. Good, because that's all that counts, isn't it?

So, let's think about... let's do it with gusto, let's think about [G. W. F.] Hegel. He's a philosopher, remember? So, Hegel... conceives two great disciplines: phenomenology and logic. And phenomenology is like the development of *figures of consciousness*, figures of consciousness. Let me... if I try to imagine Hegel's cinema... let me call them sequences or series of images. And logic is the development not of figures of consciousness but the development of moments of the concept, moments of the concept which are called categories. It's an irrelevant problem. You realize that someone understands nothing of Hegel if they confuse the figures of consciousness and the moments of the concept, meaning phenomenology and logic. You realize that they already know too much if they know that figures of consciousness are not the same thing as moments of the concept. And yet, and yet, the figures of consciousness are *reflected* in the moments of the concept, and the moments of the concept somehow subsume the figures of consciousness. You see how much this sounds like he's the author we need.



But what is a figure of consciousness? It's now or never... we say to ourselves, well, fortunately, here's a philosopher who's come down to us from heaven, or up from hell, and who will enable us to answer our question. So, what is a figure of consciousness? At the end of the day, figures of consciousness are *ways of being in the world of consciousness*, ways of being in the world of consciousness. Or, as someone might say, asking: what do we call a way of being in the world of consciousness? It's... it's what's commonly called an *attitude*, it's an attitude. But in what way is it an attitude? You're going back to... you might tell me I'm going back to something I spoke about in the first term. You're going back to this on purpose because it's convenient for you. No. Hegel is my man. I'm not reintroducing this, it's Hegel who introduces the idea that the figures of consciousness are attitudes.

The last of the Hegelians was called – since then I don't know of any, but I'm told they still churn them out... – the last of the Hegelians, well, the last of the great Hegelians was called Éric Weil. He died quite recently, Éric Weil... W-e-i-l. It's difficult... Éric Weil was part of this thing – I don't know, I'm telling you, I'm pointing it out because many of you who aren't... who by definition couldn't have known this pre-war period, may not know this very important point in the history of French thought, which is that – we know this in the case of America, but we know it less in relation to France – that French thought, French academic philosophy was completely renewed by immigrants. Just as refugees fleeing Nazism renewed American thought, the same thing happened around 1930-1933 to French thought.

And among the great immigrants who came either directly from Germany, or from a German education, a German philosophical education, there was [Alexandre] Kojève... who was famous for his lectures on Hegel that marked a whole generation and renewed Hegelian studies. And Kojève's book continues to be a great book, which is still highly relevant today.<sup>2</sup> There was a very, very important epistemologist who renewed French epistemology, again I've forgotten his name... [Alexandre] Koyré, Koyré, and then there was Éric Weil, the last of the Hegelians... [Recording interrupted; 59:00]

## Part 2

... They were all connected. They were welcomed in France... Their problem with French universities was complex, but it's interesting because I think it was crucial. It was around 1930-1933. The post-war boom in French thought, meaning with [Jean-Paul] Sartre and phenomenology... Sartre and [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty can only be understood in light of this arrival of a certain number of great philosophers, very important philosophers, around 1930-1933 in France.

But what does Éric Weil tell us in his books? One of his... Éric Weil didn't write many books, but they were hefty tomes, and then afterwards, as we say, well, there was nothing more for him to do, because one is called *Logique de la Philosophie*, another *Philosophie Morale* and the third is called *Philosophie Politique*.<sup>3</sup> So, after all that, after that... it's done, there's nothing more to speak about in philosophy.

So, Éric Weil says that there is a complementarity... and here, he's very Hegelian, simply he brings something new, which is his own way of understanding Hegel. His way of understanding Hegel and of rethinking Hegel, that is, of forging a new phenomenology of mind in *Logique de la Philosophie* consists in telling us that there is *a correlation between*

*attitudes and categories*, there's a correlation between attitudes and categories. In a way, we could say that *categories are attitudes*. Concepts are attitudes, but he says, no, that would be... he qualifies this somewhat. One cannot say exactly that, one must speak of a *correlation* between attitudes and categories. And he defines attitude very well as a way of being in the world, *a way of being in the world of consciousness*. Okay.

And what is a category? As a way of being in the world of consciousness, a category is, whatever it concerns, it is a *coherent discourse*, a coherent discourse. The problem obviously being what are the criteria of coherence. But we're not going to deal with that problem now, because that would require doing a course on Hegel and Weil's interpretation of Hegel. Coherent discourse. What is the correlation? *Any attitude, any way of being in the world undoubtedly refers to a coherent discourse*, and vice versa. But in what way? It's not as simple as it appears. A coherent discourse is always possible, coherent discourses abound. Every attitude relates to its own discourse. Every attitude has its discourse, just as every discourse has its attitude.

But not always does the one who has the attitude also hold the discourse of that attitude. So now it gets complicated. The correlation between attitudes and coherent discourse becomes more complicated. Let's take the case of a mad person. A mad person has a certain attitude. The attitude, say, the paranoid attitude, is not the same as the schizophrenic attitude. There are different attitudes, it's not the same as the manic-depressive attitude, there's even a whole psychiatry of attitudes which, incidentally, indirectly owes something to Hegel – that is, the interpretation of mental disorders as a way of being in the world. There's a sort of Hegel-Heidegger lineage here.

Well, I would say that a mad person has an attitude, they also have a discourse. Is this discourse coherent? That's what Éric Weil would ask, is this discourse coherent? To be brief, we could say, yes, it's coherent. We could say, it has its coherence. We could say that it's perfectly coherent. But suppose it's not coherent, what does that mean? It doesn't mean that there isn't a coherent discourse corresponding to the attitude of madness. It simply means that the mad person is not the one who is able to hold the coherent discourse corresponding to his attitude. So maybe there are different cases. There are cases where mad people themselves can hold the coherent discourse of their own attitude. There are cases, there are other forms of madness where the mad person cannot hold the coherent discourse of their own attitude. Nevertheless, there is a coherent discourse of their attitude, which is the discourse of the psychiatrist. It's the psychiatrist who will hold the coherent discourse corresponding to – well, you really have to believe in this, but I'm speaking in the simplest terms – all these are just banal examples, it's simply so you can understand.

I'll take another example, the executioner, because these are two examples that Weil uses. The executioner, the man of absolute violence, is there a coherent discourse of absolute violence? Perhaps, perhaps there is. If there is a coherent discourse of madness, perhaps there is also a coherent discourse of absolute violence. Who would have held a coherent discourse on violence? Let's be more precise and make it a coherent discourse of absolute sexual violence? It's well known, so they tell us, that [the Marquis de] Sade held a coherent discourse of absolute sexual violence. That this discourse is coherent is obvious. Sade's characters take their cue from nature, from an extremely rational conception of nature, and they hold a fundamentally coherent discourse, and they even get extremely upset when their victims don't allow themselves to be convinced. They don't like it at all, because their victim

has a double role: to be the victim of their torments, but also to be the one who listens to their discourse. That's fundamental. Okay.

But, in a famous text, Georges Bataille posed a question, he asked an interesting question – it's a beautiful passage of Bataille – where Bataille says that the discourse of Sade's heroes is precisely a discourse that executioners cannot and do not know how to hold. Who can hold such a discourse? And here we have a great reversal in Bataille – note that Bataille was very much linked to everything I'm talking about, to Weil, to Kojève, to all of that – Bataille says, it's obvious that *only a victim* can speak the way Sade's executioners speak. Otherwise, when you have an executioner, look, look at Nazism, you've never seen a Nazi speak the way a Sade character speaks.

What is the discourse of a Nazi? The discourse of a Nazi is a totally incoherent discourse. What kind of discourse is it? The eternal type: “Oh, I was ordered to do it! If I hadn't done it, it would have been worse and so on. Ah, those were the orders!” But the discourse of absolute evil, as it appears in Sade, has never been held by an executioner. So, just as I said earlier that the coherent discourse of the mad person is not necessarily held by the mad person, meaning, the one who has the corresponding attitude – and is perhaps held by the psychiatrist – well, in the same way, the coherent discourse of absolute violence is perhaps not held by the executioner but, according to Bataille's hypothesis, can only be held by the victim.

In this way, it would be possible to distinguish at least two kinds of attitude – and this is what Éric Weil is proposing – the distinction of two kinds of attitude... I think it's been a long time since I've given a course on Hegel or on a Hegelian, this is all very strange to me... I don't know what came over me... So, anyway, two attitudes: there would be the attitudes that develop of their own accord in a coherent discourse, that are capable of developing in a coherent discourse, and these Weil would call *pure* attitudes. And then there are the *impure* attitudes. Not that they don't have a coherent discourse, but they are more or less incapable of holding the coherent discourse themselves, or of developing the coherent discourse that corresponds to them. They may be capable, but that doesn't mean they do it. After all, someone who has an attitude – an attitude, as Weil says, is concerned with history – and an attitude, a way of being in the world, is quite indifferent to philosophy.

Philosophy, on the other hand, is interested in coherent discourse. *Philosophy is the science of coherent discourse*, a very Hegelian definition, which Hegel did not give, but which Éric Weil proposes. In other words, philosophical discourse is that which, in terms of its own coherence, links together and produces all possible coherent discourses. It's the self-development of coherent discourse. You see? The idea thus becomes very clear: *each type of coherent discourse is a category*. You have an attitude-category correlation, a complex correlation since some attitudes correspond closely to the corresponding coherent discourse, while other attitudes, on the contrary, correspond only indirectly. But in any case, you have a complementarity of attitudes and coherent discourses. Just as with Hegel you have a complementarity of figures of consciousness and moments of the concept, here you have a complementarity of attitudes and coherent discourses. In other words, *attitudes are reflected in coherent discourses, that is, in categories*.

Now, I'm thinking about this, and I'm adding it, because a text – today, we're getting into texts, and I'm going to explain to you why we will attach considerable importance to these texts – to return Godard there's an article by Serge Daney in a book of his entitled *La Rampe*,<sup>4</sup>

it's a collection of articles... there's an article on Godard that I find very interesting because he sees something very clearly: the importance of discourse in Godard's cinema. Here he says that in Godard, things always proceed through discourse. And it seems, in a way, that Godard doesn't ask himself who's right and who's wrong, or where these discourses originate from: "Godard never asks..." – here, I'm quoting – "Of the statements he deals with, Godard never asks the question of their origin, or their conditions of possibility. His approach is the most anti-archaeological there is. It consists in taking note of what is said" – I think that's absolutely right – "it consists in taking note of what is said and immediately looking for the *other* statement". He takes note of an existing discourse, and immediately looks for what would be the *other discourse*. It doesn't matter where the discourse comes from, it doesn't matter where it comes from.

So, he takes note of what is said and immediately looks for the other statement, the other sound, the other image that might counterbalance or contradict this statement, this sound, this image. Given an image, he takes it quite literally, he takes it for what it is. And his question is: What other image can I put with this one? Just as, given a discourse, I oppose it with another discourse. "More than who's right or who's wrong, the question that Godard asks is: What could we oppose to this?" – it's very... it's dialectics, Hegelian dialectics. We pass from one discourse to another discourse at the same time as we pass from one attitude to another attitude – "Hence" – Daney continues – "this confusion for which Godard is often criticized: to what the other says" – to what the Other says – "he always responds with what *another* other says. And moreover" – Daney continues – "while Godard doesn't hide his sympathy for a certain type of discourse, even the discourse he sympathizes with is not presented as being truer than the other, he simply presents it as being *other* than the preceding discourse".

And Daney gives some examples: the Maoist discourse in films by Godard such as *Vent d'Est* [1969], *Pravda* [1969] and so on, or the feminist discourse in *Numéro deux* [1975], consist in opposing what one has said with what another says, as if... – and this is a very important confirmation of our serial method – it's as if, at the same time as the series of images... to the sequences of images which in Godard's cinema are attitudes... – this will be... and we'll be coming back to it but we'd already sketched out this idea the first term, that it's a cinema of attitudes, attitudes that nourish the sequences of images – there corresponded coherent discourses constituting the *categories* correlative to these attitudes.

What conclusion am I trying to draw here? Well, something quite simple: given my two questions, I have the beginnings of a response. Unfortunately, things are about to get more complicated. My two questions having been answered, I have the beginnings of an answer. My first question was: What in the image makes it possible to put it in series? My answer, and here I feel all Hegelian, but that won't be... we're not yet done, we have to go through this, it's the *attitude*. It's the attitude. The other question: what gives something a categorial function? It's *coherent discourse*, a cinema of discourse. That's the category.

What is this coherent discourse? Let's give it a name, so we can finish with this. In the first trimester, I suggested a term for it: the linkage of coherent discourses is what we will call a *gest*, the *chansons de geste*. A *gest* is a very peculiar thing. The table of categories forms the *gest* of philosophy. Its moments constitute the gesture of the concept. Right. What gives something the value of category or coherent discourse is the *gest*. What gives the image the possibility to be put in series is the attitude. Okay.

What matters to us in all of this? What are we in the process of doing? What matters to me is this: We have to find... we're looking for a field... you have to feel this... [*Recording interrupted*; 1:21:46]

... as they say, we're done with stories, but real life isn't any better. We've done away with stories. Very well, no more stories, very well. But if it's to replace them with the pitiful misery of real life as happens in most novels today, oh, that's hardly what the founders of the modern novel wished for. If it's a question of renouncing the story, it's not so that someone can recount their own little experience, namely the fact that they have a mother and a father, which is a pretty general thing... and whose lived dramas are also a given for everyone. That's not why we're doing away with stories.

I want neither your real life nor a story. So, what do you want? What do you want? Neither real life nor stories, that is, in terms of cinema, neither the old action cinema – you might ask me what else – nor direct cinema. No, as soon as I say that, I take it back, it's direct cinema that's mislabeled as “direct”. With the exception of very unique and experimental cases, direct cinema has never been interested in lived experience. So that's already opened up something, this conviction that direct cinema was never, never, never about real life, and that it wasn't about replacing the story with real life, or the plot with real life, it was never about that.

But then, what was it about? In any case, if it's neither real life, nor a story nor a plot... Indeed, the story or the plot is the subject, as when I say: the subject of my work is this. But as we've seen, the film or the work have no subject. The film isn't *about* Lausanne, the film isn't *about* war. So, in a way it implies renouncing the subject. But nor is it a question of real life, nor of lived experience. So there's a renunciation of the subject in the second sense, that is the *me*, the *I*.

So, with no story or plot, no lived experience, what's left? What's left are *attitudes and categories* or, if you prefer, attitudes and *gest*. *Gest* is the discourse specific to attitudes, the discourse corresponding to attitudes. Attitudes are not lived experiences. A *gest* is not a subject, a plot, an action. Hence the importance in literature not only of what has been called, strictly speaking, the *chanson de geste*, but in a way, to say that all literature is *gest*. I'd put it like this: *gest is the discourse of attitudes*, just as *attitudes are the correlate of gest*.

Well, we're in an odd situation, because what we need to show here is how there's a kind of complex notion of attitudes-gests, or if you permit the expression, of images-categories, so we're right at the heart of the problem of thought. But you can already see that... and this may surprise you less, that we're already trapped in the position of soon having to speak about speech, since in terms of this current analysis we can only make progress by perpetually invoking discourse. So, we're faced with a tangle of notions that are very, very... images-categories, attitudes-gests, attitudes and *gest* or images and concept.

So, are you okay? Do you need a rest? No? But please, don't stray too far! I know some people who go across the street to get coffee... and I have to wait for them. All you have to do is get yourself a thermos flask... [*Recording interrupted*; 1:27:58]

... so I'll start again and you'll see why. Here we have our... two couples: images-categories, attitudes-gest, or *gestus*. Once again, for the moment we will consider *gest* or *gestus* solely as *the coherent discourse that corresponds to attitudes*. And we all sense, most keenly, most

acutely, that this isn't sufficient, that we'll have to take the bull by the horns. And that's what I propose to you, since we're here, that's what's so joyful for me – just for me – and if it weren't so... we'd be varying our methods quite considerably.

I'd like to suggest that, for this last part, we try a new approach, the opposite of a method. In other words, we're really going to leaf through a certain number of texts which I'll tell you right now – usually I don't tell you, because there's no need – I can't find my way around and don't fully understand. So, it's not that I'm against them... I just don't understand them. So, we'll see how it is in your case, maybe you'll understand, and it wouldn't be the first time, me not understanding what might seem clear to you. It's that they don't convince me, I don't understand them. And so, we'll proceed like this, examining these texts that I don't understand very well and then fine tuning them, I'll tell you how we're going to fine tune them and then what I understand in terms of the *attitude-gestus* relation. But we're going to start by examining these texts, because they're basic, fundamental texts.

So this concerns two, actually three texts. If someone were to say attitudes-gesture or *gestus*, I'd immediately reply, well, there are two that stand out, I mentioned them in the first term...<sup>5</sup> a text by [Bertolt] Brecht and a text by Roland Barthes, which is itself a commentary on Brecht. And then we'll add a third text, which I'm not sure has anything to do with the second. This third text is also by Roland Barthes, entitled *L'Obvie et l'obtus*.<sup>6</sup> I confess that this text – and I say this all the more readily because I have such great admiration for Barthes's work – of this text, I understand nothing, nothing, nothing. I don't understand it at all.

So then we'll add a fourth text. Someone here who has been working with us for a long time and who also makes films, Raymonde Carasco, has written a text commenting on Barthes' essay on the obvious and the obtuse... and not only commenting on it but making it her own. So, I imagine she has understood it. I confess I don't understand Barthes' text any more than I understand hers. No, that's not, that's not a reproach at all, it's not an objection. It's that I don't even understand what they're talking about. So that makes things worse, but then we'll see, even though this incomprehension... so that next time, when we've made a bit of progress, I'll be able to do a second interview. The least I can do is interview Raymonde Carasco.<sup>7</sup> The first... our first interview, went very well in my view, so I'm very happy with this method. If Raymonde Carasco agrees next time, we'll do a little interview with her.

Raymonde Carasco: [*Inaudible remarks*]

Deleuze: Sorry?

Carasco: I must say I'm afraid... I hope it will work just as well.

Deleuze: Ah ah!

So, let's continue. I'll start with Brecht's text, which is the basic text on *gestus*. And, I say to myself, it looks simple... First of all, I make a few comments. You'll find this text in *Brecht on Theatre*.<sup>8</sup> It's only a few pages long, but it refers to Brecht's fundamental notions, and it's called "On Gestic Music". And you quickly realize that this text must be very important, because it's three pages long, but you come away from it saying, after all, it's from the notion of *gestus* that we must understand Brecht, and not from the notion of defamiliarization [*Verfremdung*]<sup>9</sup>. What's more, defamiliarization, Brecht's famous notion of defamiliarization,

can only be properly understood by considering his idea of *gestus*. In the course of this three-page text, I begin with a first remark.

For Brecht, it's a matter of explicitly showing that *subjects don't matter*, no more in theater than anywhere else. And he goes so far as to say, well, no subject matters if you haven't drawn a *gestus* from it. What does that mean? As Barthes will say in his commentary, let's suppose the subject of *Mother Courage* is the Thirty Years' War. Other Brecht plays are about Nazism. But here, in this short text, he explains, if you haven't drawn a *gestus* from it, the subject is of no interest. We're delighted by this remark, since we'd come to this same conclusion by other means: it's a question of *eliminating the subject*, in the sense that a work isn't *about*, and it's exactly in this sense that *Mother Courage* isn't *about* the Thirty Years' War. So *gestus* has nothing to do with plot or subject. First comment. So far, so good... so far, I understand.

Secondly, what does *gestus* have to do with anything? Well, he says, *gestus* can be a thousand things. But what interests me, and this is the real *gestus*, he tells us, is the *social gestus*. Well, what is a social *gestus*? Brecht tells us that not all *gesta* are social. The attitude of a man battling a fly is at first sight not a social *gestus*. So, you're fighting a mosquito – this is a more likely situation – you're fighting a mosquito... so in what sense is that a *gestus*? I don't see in what other sense it can be, other than a coordination of attitudes, and Roland Barthes, in one sentence, a single sentence... in his text on Brecht, will call it *coordination of attitudes*.<sup>10</sup>

So, we can say that a *gestus*... well, it's a coordination of attitudes. But the *gestus* has to be social. Fighting a mosquito is a series of attitudes... a series of attitudes, though it's not a social *gestus* on the face of it. Of course, it might be if certain conditions were met, but, well anyway. Attitude, it's all about attitude... a man's attitude, so the *gestus* will be the coordination of attitudes – the attitude a man takes to defend himself against a dog... things are getting worse – can be a *gestus*. Can, I say, but not necessarily... it can be a *gestus* if, for example, it concerns the struggle of a scruffily dressed individual against guard dogs. So, no more than fighting a mosquito fighting a dog is not a social *gestus*. But, but, but, if it's a man in rags fighting guard dogs – not to force Brecht's point – if it's a black man in an American housing project uprising, battling police dogs, similar to the classic images we saw in the old days, we'll say it's a social *gestus*. So far, so good. But now we need to look at some examples. What is it, what defines a social *gestus*?

I can think of two troubling examples. This won't be defined any further in Brecht's text... I'll stick to this example, plus another example that seems even more dodgy to me, namely showing... showing a Nazi ceremony. This is a subject, it's not a social *gestus*. Only when these men, the Nazis, march over corpses does the social *gestus* of fascism appear. So, can we say that the *gestus* is a symbolic act, a symbolic gesture? We'll see that, strangely enough, Barthes himself doesn't take this path, yet it's something that interests him... What are they telling us?

As a result, we can only refer to other Brecht texts. In these other Brecht texts, I see a very important idea emerge. It's not the subject that counts, *it's the relations between people that derive from the subject*. An example that Brecht himself offers: I want to make a work about oil fields... I can say that oil fields are the subject, but that's not what counts. What matters is: Is there or is there not a new type of relation between people, but a special type of relation between people that develops in the oilfield? And what kind of relation?

Well, it's a relation between people, here's a first little indication. I'd say that a relation between people – I'm making a little progress – is an attitude. *Every attitude is inter-human*, and even if it's an internal attitude, it's *inter-...* between two elements, internal to the same person. There's always a relation between people in an attitude.

Let's continue. In other texts, Brecht tells us... he introduces another notion. Fortunately, he tells us that relations between people – and this is a highly original notion in relation to Marxism – in one way or another *relations between people mobilize decisions*, whether they result from decisions, or lead to a decision. The notion of decision is fundamental to Brecht. So, what is this third notion? The subject is something we've done away with. The attitude-relation between people, and the decision. It's quite obvious that if I consider a poor man fighting dogs or a demonstrator fighting police dogs to be a social *gestus*... it's obvious that this implies a certain decision, a decision by those who have provided the police with trained dogs. Attacking people implies a decision, just as the way that the police use their truncheons implies a decision. Relations between people presuppose decisions and themselves entail decisions, which is to say, if I'm at that point in my relations with people, from that point on, I *decide that*... Okay. So, decision plays an extremely important role.

Let me continue. Brechtian defamiliarization, his famous *V-Effekt*, can only be understood in this way. In other words, what we're talking about here is defamiliarization as the result of a whole series of Brechtian notions. For what does defamiliarization consist in? Not just breaking with the subject, in the sense of theme, but *breaking with the subject in the sense of lived experience*. Hatred of state of mind. It's Brecht's blank voice – again, let's not mix everything up... Brecht's blank voice is not the blank voice of [Robert] Bresson, which is not itself the blank voice of others. We'll see this when we come to speak about talking cinema, we'll have to address the following problem: What is a blank voice? And no doubt we'll have all sorts of answers, but for the moment, let's leave it at that... When he talks about defamiliarization, what does he say? Is he telling us that Jocasta hanged herself... no, sorry, what did she do exactly? She killed herself. That's all. What did Jocasta do exactly? I don't know, I don't know, it doesn't matter, she killed herself. Jocasta killed herself. You know, it's the story of Oedipus... Jocasta killed herself, so it's not a question of treating it as an emotional state of mind, it's not a question of feeling sorry for her, of saying poor Jocasta! It's about *raising awareness of the decision that led to this death*. The blank voice of the actor that announces "Jocasta has killed herself" showing no emotion, serves to make us aware that this is not an emotional state of mind, but a decision by which Jocasta killed herself.

Ah, but this suits us perfectly, perfectly. You'll see how much it suits us. It lets us take a small step forward, before we fall back down again. So, since it suits us so well, let's make the most of it. Because what he calls decision – and he has every right to call it decision – is exactly what we were calling coherent discourse. The decision is the coherent discourse that someone may or may not hold in correspondence to his attitude. The decision to equip the police with special dogs is also a coherent discourse. Is it coherent? Is there a coherent discourse in this respect by which the Chief of Police motivates his decision? Yes.

What is the situation of Brecht's spectator? It's the situation of participating in the decision, either to condemn it or to approve it intellectually, which is to say *categorially*. This tells us how far we've come, the *categorical decision*... the categorical reaction to the decision, because the decision itself was an actual category. Did Nazi decisions form a coherent discourse? What is the discourse of Nazism that corresponds to Nazi attitudes? This is what Brecht's theater wants to stage, it's not a theater *about* Nazism.



So, to sum up, I'd say that, yes, in Brecht, defamiliarization, the notion of the *V-Effekt*, derives from a composite of practical and theoretical notions – practical because they are eminently valid for staging and theatrical organization – practical and theoretical notions which are as follows: attitudes as *social* attitudes, defined by relations between people. For example, Jocasta is caught up in a certain set of relations, relations with her son who has become her husband, and so on, it's a relation between people. So *social attitudes are relations between people*. The *gestus* or category is *the decision that refers to the coherent or non-coherent discourse corresponding to this or that attitude*. The category is the relation between the spectator's thoughts and the *gestus*.

If you take Brecht's opposition between the theater he abandoned, which he called “dramatic”, and the theater he called “epic”, the dramatic-epic opposition is such that, on one hand, you have dramatic theater, which according to Brecht is the ugly, the bad... bad theater, the old theater. You have dramatic theater, which is above all action, meaning the story, the plot, the subject. A second aspect of this is that it's based on character traits. Third aspect: it mobilizes lived experiences, emotions. Fourth and last aspect: linear unfolding, action-reaction.

Epic theater on the other hand is defined not by action but by *gestus*, the opposition between action and *gestus*. Second aspect: it does not concern character traits, it concerns relations between people, meaning *attitudes*. Third aspect: it has nothing to do with lived experiences or emotional states, but involves, on the spectator's side, concepts of understanding, meaning categories. Fourth and last aspect: it doesn't unfold in a linear, action-reaction manner. It unfolds in a winding fashion. To introduce a slightly artificial coherence, I'd say that instead of linear unfolding we can speak of relinkages by irrational cuts. A winding sequence is a relinkage based on irrational cuts... [Recording interrupted; 1:56:14]

### Part 3

... Well, that just about works for me, but I don't know if it works for you? Barthes' text, I would add, the two texts by Barthes can be found in the collection of essays that appeared under the title *L'obvie et l'obtus, Essais critiques*, tome III, published by Editions du Seuil [The Responsibility of Forms]. And the first article on Brecht, entitled “Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein”, is a short essay, but longer than the one on Brecht, pages 86-95... and in my view, Barthes adds two things to Brecht.

First of all, he adds a brilliant example – which may also be in Brecht, but I doubt it because then Barthes would have quoted it – a brilliant example – in any case, couldn't find it again when I was flicking through it... He tells us, yes, to help us understand, he tells us, let's go back to *Mother Courage*. The subject is the Thirty Years' War, the action is the Thirty Years' War. But that's not the *gestus*. What's the *gestus*? It's Mother Courage taking the coin given to her – she's the tender of a food wagon – taking the coin that is given to her and biting into it. That's a social *gestus*, biting to make sure it's real, and getting distracted for a minute. That minute's inattention will result in her child leaving and getting lost and then she will lose all her children.

Barthes proposes that we consider this attitude of the food wagon tender, this gesture in the sense of a *gestus*, this gesture of the food wagon tender biting the coin, as a typical example of a social *gestus*. Actually, it is not in itself a social *gestus* – there's no need to argue with every term Barthes uses – it's not exactly a social *gestus*, it's a social attitude. The social

*gestus*, Barthes quite admirably explains to us, is something else, it's the food wagon tender's *decision*. And what is her decision? Her decision isn't to put the coin in her mouth. That's just a consequence of the decision. The decision is: to live off the war. The subject of *Mother Courage* is not the Thirty Years' War. The *gestus* of Mother Courage is a woman who has decided to live off the war, and who will lose all her children in it. That's the *gestus*. A good example.

And you can see why Barthes is able to compare Brecht to Eisenstein in this sense, because he explains that this was exactly what Eisenstein was criticized for. Eisenstein was criticized for choosing the wrong subjects. The Soviets were already criticizing him: Why did he choose the Battleship Potemkin as his subject? Why did he choose October as his subject? We want him to make films *about* now. To which Eisenstein, like Brecht, would point out that the now is not where they think it is, that the now is no more October than Battleship Potemkin, than what was happening in Eisenstein's own time. That, in any case, the real now is something else entirely. The real now is the *gestus*. A woman decides to live off the war. And the attitude that corresponds... and no doubt there's a coherent discourse to this, there's certainly a discourse, Mother Courage's own discourse. The discourse of Mother Courage is the discourse of someone who has decided to make a living from war. And all the arguments of such a speech are conceivable. It can be highly coherent.

The second thing Barthes adds is that in the *gestus* understood in this way, emerges what he calls "the pregnant moment", or if you prefer, the privileged moment. We could also say "the true present" and that this pregnant moment, this privileged moment, or this true present, is the emergence of meaning, and meaning begins with the social *gestus*. I read, in parenthesis, "at the pregnant moment". Hence the trio in Barthes' article: [Denis] Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein, since, as Barthes clearly shows, Diderot had developed a theory of the pregnant moment in painting. And, in his conception of bourgeois comedy, it's quite clear that in Diderot – in fact, Diderot has a very curious conception of bourgeois comedy – there's something that vaguely anticipates a social *gestus*. Okay.

Well, so far, so good. Okay, then. So what's bothering me? I've had to bend this a lot, I've had to force the texts. I had to bend these two very fine texts to draw out the idea that the *gestus* is the coherent speech or the decision corresponding to the attitude. I'm not saying it's not there, I hope it is. It's up to you to check, or not to check, wouldn't you say? I'm saying it's not that simple. Even if you don't go and check, I warn you: it's not that simple. I mean, is it really there? Or am I just pulling a phrase out of thin air for my own convenience? Is that the spirit of the text?

Because both Brecht's and Barthes' texts go in a completely different direction, and it's one that bothers me no end. It's the idea that the *gestus* is particularly linked to meaning, because it's a signifying, or even symbolic, gesture. Why is this? Let me take the example again: biting the coin is a symbolic gesture – it's what everyone has always called a symbolic gesture – and Barthes insists that this is the place where meaning arises. The place where meaning arises, that's all very well, but the place where meaning arises, the pregnant moment, the place where meaning arises, all of this bothers me. In other words, I've got the impression that I thought I'd understood something, and then all of a sudden... no, that's not it, he's talking about something else, he's talking about the pregnant moment, the symbolic gesture, all these things that I don't understand, that don't mean anything to me, but might mean something to others... I have no problem with that, you'll notice I'm not objecting to it, I'm

just saying, well no, I can't follow this, I don't get it, I don't even know what he's talking about.

So, I say to myself, in spite of the absolute difference between the two theses, I insist, we should link this with a text that is even more unusual, a text by Barthes, the text I mentioned before and that gives the book its title, *L'obvie et l'obtus*, which may help us move forward and which, in a way, may also concern the *gestus*. I don't really know, but since I'm bothered by something in this text by Barthes, I might as well look elsewhere to see if it works out. So, I've lost... to give you the exact... Oh no, it's not called that... it's published under the title "The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Stills of Eisenstein". And this text is famous among many... [Recording interrupted; 2:07:51]

... bothered by the previous text commenting on Brecht's *gestus*, and so on. What does this text tell us? Well, I'm going to be very, very, well, very tentative, since it's the one I don't understand at all.

Barthes tells us that there is a first level of the image. There's a first level of the image, that's not a problem. At any rate, he says that this is not what concerns him: it's the level of communication, an informative level, communication. And if I understand correctly, communication is what the image represents. It's what it denotes, it's the informative level. Example: the coronation of *Ivan the Terrible*. In other words, very roughly speaking, we can say this at the first level we can see what it is. It is to borrow, to use our previous term... it's the *subject* or the action. In fact, the subject of a work or the subject of a sequence, the coronation of *Ivan the Terrible*, let's accept that this is the denotative level of information. Already, there are a lot of things that bother me about this, but, I understand, okay, I see.

He says, there's a second, a second level. The second level, he says, is a symbolic level. But this will complicate things, because the symbolic level isn't what I thought it was. A symbolic level. How does he define this symbolic level? Well, he defines it in an odd way. He says: it's the level of signification, no longer of information, it's the level of signification. And what is this? Well, in the coronation scene of *Ivan the Terrible*, there's the coronation, and then, as part of the coronation, there's the shower of gold coins on the Tsar's head. Two characters on either side of the Tsar rain gold coins down on his head. We see, well, for those who remember *Ivan the Terrible*, it's a very, very beautiful image, this rain of gold coins.

And now I don't understand anything. He makes this into a special level. I'm asking how – just to say I'm not ashamed of not understanding – I ask how – it's not... it's not an objection, it's something that bothers me – I'm asking how the crown isn't symbolic, it's informative, while the rain of gold coins is supposedly symbolic? I don't see that at all. What I see is something completely different, that in the organization of the image, there would be something we've already seen, so I'm going very quickly. We can say that the rain of gold coins and their tinkling, the fall of gold coins on the Tsar, is a *harmonic* of the image, that is, in relation to a tonic or in relation to what Eisenstein, in simple terms, calls... in relation to the *dominant* of the image, I can say that the rain of gold coins is a harmonic. But I don't see how it's any more symbolic than the crown, the scepter and so on... I just don't see it. Well, that's... But then, I don't see it as... What's more, I don't feel that in the cinematographic image there is the slightest dimension of communication or information. I'd be happier if we could say that the two are one and the same, that the two... that these first two dimensions are one and the same.

But, Barthes says, there is a *third meaning*. There's a third meaning. And this is where we find the quintessential Barthes. It's, I mean, it's an extraordinarily moving text, it's so... it's so much him with his own genius. It's really on a level, I don't know what, it's a kind of impression, but it's not impressionism. It's something he *feels*. He feels it, and his writing says what he feels, it's... he's felt something. See, he doesn't claim that everyone feels it. He says, it's very strange, I feel there's a third level. So, we're waiting for him to give us examples, because this will clearly begin with examples.

And I'm giving the most striking one, because if I started with the example he gives at the beginning, it seems to me we'd be even more lost. I'll give the most striking one. He says, in *Battleship Potemkin*, there are attitudes. Well, that's fine with us, we're back in a field that... There are attitudes, the famous Eisensteinian attitudes with which Eisenstein's images are confused. He's a great filmmaker of attitudes. For example, in the remarkable mourning scene, all the postures of grief are attitudes. But let's say... yes, I've forgotten the essential, the first two levels he distinguishes... let's agree to group them under the term "obvious meaning", derived from the Latin *obvius*. *Obvius* is that which comes to the front, that which comes to the front. Well, the attitudes of grief have an obvious meaning. For example, a whole series, a whole series of shots where you see women in attitudes of grief. And in this respect, Eisenstein is the equivalent of a great sculptor, or a great painter.

And then Barthes starts saying some really strange, really bizarre things. He says he had the impression that although he kept repeating attitude of grief, it didn't account for certain aspects of a number of images. And he takes the example of a poor old woman crying out in despair – an image of the old woman proclaiming her despair, crying out in despair – and Barthes says: You can consider... you can consider – she's wearing a sort of kerchief – you can consider that in the sequence of images, it's an attitude of despair among others. Attitude of despair, that would be the *obvious* meaning.

And then, says Barthes, an image appears or may appear that makes a strange impression. Under what conditions do we see it? That's a problem I'll deal with later. As if there were something more, something excessive. It's just too much. What is this "too much"? A supplement, he says... a supplement to the attitude. He recounts the succession of images, and indeed, there's one where this old woman, proclaiming her despair, has her kerchief on, which, from the angle at which it's taken, seems almost to meet her eyebrows. It's enough, in fact, that the head... that the lens frames the shot in a certain way for the kerchief to appear to descend almost to the level of the eyebrows, or else raise the eyebrows itself. So, you have the hem of the kerchief, the eyebrows almost touching the kerchief, and finally the mouth, which is completely arched, although it won't be for long, which follows the line of the kerchief. So, he gives an example, he gives photogram five, what he calls photogram five – you'll see it in the essay, if you go and read it – and then photogram six. And he says in photogram six, it has disappeared. Something has alighted for a moment. You see here we have the pregnant moment, we already saw this idea of the pregnant moment, something has alighted for an instant: a supplement to the obvious meaning.

But what is it? Well, we can think of a lot of possible responses. You could say, well, it's a decorative detail. You could say that it's a visual rhyme – there are visual rhymes – there's a rhyme between the mouth and the kerchief. In the other photograms, in the other images, however, there are no rhymes, or there isn't that particular rhyme. He doesn't mention any of this. He wants there to be a dimension, a radically new dimension, compared to the two

previous ones that constituted the obvious meaning. And he will call this completely new element the opposite of obvious: *sens obtus*, the obtuse meaning.

He then tries – and his sentences, his sentences are admirable, the writing is very beautiful in this text, it's not the writing that's the problem – he says: it's very curious, you get the impression that all of a sudden, for a short moment, she has disguised herself. The old woman has disguised herself, and yet – it's very complicated what he's getting at, this page is very complicated – and yet, it's certainly not a parody. It's not a parody of grief, she's in the depths of grief. But if I understand correctly what Barthes means, it's as though her grief has disguised her, in the sense that, for example, [Marcel] Proust is able to say, in some very famous passages, that old age has disguised the faces of the people he encounters again after ten, twenty years. It's as though old age has disguised them. Here, it's as though grief has disguised her. So, it's not a parody but, so he tells us, a disguise.

I read: “the ‘lowness’ of the kerchief, worn abnormally close to the eyebrows as in those disguises which seek to create a foolish and stupid expression...”<sup>11</sup> I mean, it's very admirable, and at the same time very amusing... it's very funny, and at the same time one thinks, Ah, well, for Barthes, giving yourself a foolish and dimwitted expression must look something like that. For me, it wouldn't be like that, so, it's very odd – “the circumflex accent formed by the old, faded eyebrows, the excessive curve of the lowered eye-lids, close-set but apparently squinting, and the bar of the half-open mouth corresponding to the curve of the kerchief and to that of the brows, metaphorically speaking, ‘like a fish out of water’” – like a fish out of water... all this gives us the impression “of a rather pathetic disguise”. Grief has disguised her. I can't say it any better than that, grief has disguised her, and then he goes on, saying that above all... don't think that... it's not a question of saying that she's aping grief... it's the opposite, it's as if at the very summit of grief, grief disguises her. And, at this summit, which would be open to us, it would be like an obtuse angle, that is, an obtuse meaning would appear in this opening.

I'll end on two points. He gives other examples from Eisenstein's cinema. These examples seem to me to be so little... so unconvincing that I think that – and you can feel it in the way... – it's through the old woman that he had the emotion. But I must point out, out of honesty, that he gives other examples, always taken from Eisenstein, to the point where he tells us: perhaps Eisenstein was the only one to attain this dimension that he calls the obtuse meaning, and regarding which he himself makes no secret of the fact that, when he seeks to define it – remember he defined the other two dimensions by information and signification – he defines this third dimension by *signifiante* – borrowing this term from Julia Kristeva – and he defines *signifiante* as follows: as *a signifier without signified*. So, this whole image of the old lady disguised by grief is a signifier without a signified. That's my first remark.

Second remark, and you recognize this – I think it's the only concrete criterion he gives – you recognize this impression of disguise. You could also say that you see a little bit what he means: tension disguises them, reflection disguises them. For example, you see someone who's all alone, thinking very deeply about something. You might get the impression, you might say that they're completely absorbed, and this way of being absorbed in themselves disguises them, you wouldn't recognize them. Perhaps it's something of this order? You wouldn't recognize them. We'd have to coin a word: he's disguised by himself.

There was, I remember, a splendid video interview with [Jack] Kerouac, the greatest... one of the greatest American writers. At the end of his life, Kerouac, who could no longer cope with

alcoholism, illness and so on, spoke very freely. He had a French-Canadian phrase, “Je suis tanné de moi-même”, meaning I'm sick of myself... I'm sick of myself, which is a fine phrase, I'm sick of myself, sick of myself. Well, just as he was sick of himself, we're often disguised by ourselves. So, that's what it would be. Okay.

You can see where I'm heading with this. My first question is: Isn't this a way of saying, this is the *gestus*? Isn't there a link between the *gestus* and this obtuse meaning that Barthes discovers in a completely different text, or is it me who brings these two texts together? What are my reasons for bringing them together? It's the two arguments that were already bothering me in the first text, the pregnant moment, which is taken up again in this second text, and the meaning, which is taken up again in this second text, since the obtuse meaning will be the true meaning. I'm not saying the true meaning, but it will be the real meaning.

Second remark, the obtuse meaning, according to what Roland Barthes tells us, doesn't allow itself to be seen in cinema. It doesn't allow itself to be seen in cinema. I'm becoming increasingly perplexed, so what does this mean? That we can't see the image of the... I guess not. Yet we *can* see the other examples he gives. This doesn't seem to bother him. He says that we can't see it. He says, What's more, we can't see it. Why can't we see it? Well, this is starting to matter to me, because there is something we can draw from it. We'll have to involve a theory of the still. He says that it's a dimension of the still, it's not a dimension of the image.

And here we find him again. I mean, it's very strange, this text... because there are moments when you really can't read it without thinking that he's there... there are moments when he says: Well, you know, I don't like cinema – and in fact, he doesn't give a damn about cinema – I don't like cinema. But on one hand, he's interested in photography, so it's not at all that he confuses a photograph with a still, but what interests him in cinema is the still. He speaks... he speaks with great emotion about those who cut a little piece of the film reel, like that, cinephiles who cut off a little piece to keep at home... so that we have films where the image jumps because two or three stills are missing that some pirate has absconded with. So then, he says, it's a given, it's a dimension of the still.

And as a still is not the same thing as a photo... but this is very interesting. Why isn't it the same as a photo? Here I don't find his argument very convincing. I don't think it is the same as a photo, but I don't think his argument is... well, let's accept this. A still is obviously not the same thing as a photo. What is a still? It's the purely *filmic*. In other words, it's what you never see in cinema, according to its... It's not cinema, it's the filmic. “The filmic is different from the film: the filmic is as far from the film as the novelistic is from the novel, [...] the filmic, quite paradoxically, cannot be grasped in the projected film, the film ‘in movement’”.<sup>12</sup> The filmic cannot be grasped in the film in movement. In other words, *the filmic is embodied in the still in its pure state*.

“If, though, the authentically filmic...” – the authentically filmic – “If, though, the authentically filmic (the filmic of the future)” – so he's saying that all cinema is lousy, since it has never attained the filmic – “If the authentically filmic (the filmic of the future) is not in movement but in a third meaning, an inarticulate meaning” – in other words, the obtuse meaning is beyond movement, the filmic is beyond the movement-image. Good. The filmic is beyond the movement-image, it resides in the still.

This implies a whole series of theses: firstly, that the still is outside or beyond the movement-image, which doesn't seem at all clear to me. Secondly, that what it shows isn't visible in the projected film. I really don't see why the image of the woman with her kerchief isn't visible. I really don't understand why he says this. But what about him, how did he see her? I mean, would he really go so far as to cut off a little piece of the reel? And why would he choose that little bit? Or perhaps he saw the whole of *Potemkin* – he might even have been capable of this – perhaps he saw *Potemkin* frame by frame. It's possible, it's possible, even if it doesn't seem likely.

So, to conclude – I'll come back to this next time – Raymonde Carasco has published in “Le cinéma en l'an 2000” – which is a special issue, right, a special issue of the *Revue d'esthétique* – an article whose title is...what's the title again? I don't recall. Do you recall the title?

Carasco: [*Inaudible comments*] <sup>13</sup>

Deleuze: Right, “L'image-cinéma qu'aimait Roland Barthes”... So, she's published a commentary in which she endorses the thesis... what's more, not only does she endorse Barthes' thesis, the assertion that there is a filmic element irreducible to cinema and graspable only, if I understand correctly, in the still, but she also adds to it. She adds to this, because she says: not only is this pure filmic element beyond the movement-image, it is also beyond the time-image. And she elaborates on this, saying that Barthes had already said that it was beyond the time-image, but in the simple sense of chronological time, of succession. Indeed, if it's a still, it is extracted from the succession of images. So, it's beyond the movement-image, or it seems to be beyond the movement-image and also beyond the chronological time-image, or what Barthes calls “logical time”.

But Raymonde Carasco wants more. She wants it to be not only beyond the movement-image and beyond chronological time, but beyond what she calls duration, or if you prefer, beyond all internal time and beyond all non-chronological time. In other words, I call non-chronological time a time that isn't resolved into succession. Aside from this addition, she seems to me to be in full agreement with Barthes that there is something called the *filmic* that is irreducible to cinema. So, the next time we'll tackle the whole of Barthes' second thesis plus Raymonde Carasco's reworking of it, which I don't understand at all.

So, at the beginning of the next session, we'll do our interview, if she's up for it, and then we'll move on to conclusions based on what she... and most of all, we'll need to establish a status for the still image. [*End of session*; 2:35:02]

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See *Nouveau cinéma, nouvelle sémiologie*, Paris: UGE, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Most probably, *Introduction à la pensée de Hegel*, Paris: Gallimard, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Respectively Paris: Vrin, 1950, Paris: Vrin, 1961 and Paris: Vrin, 1956.

<sup>4</sup> Paris: Cahiers du cinéma / Gallimard, 1983.

<sup>5</sup> See session 7, December 18, 1984.

<sup>6</sup> Paris: Le Seuil, 1982, translated in English as *The Responsibility of Forms*. Here Deleuze confuses the title of the text he's referring to with that of the book in which it appears (he later corrects himself on this). The text in question is “Le troisième sens – Notes de recherche sur quelques photogrammes de S. Eisenstein” (The Third Meaning: research notes on several Eisenstein stills) of which the obvious and the obtuse form two sub-chapters.

<sup>7</sup> See the following session of February 5, 1985.

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<sup>8</sup> London: Bloomsbury-Methuen, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> The current translation of *Brecht on Theatre* does not translate the German *Verfremdung*, opting instead for the neologism “V-effect”.

<sup>10</sup> This text, also included in *The Responsibility of Forms*, is “Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein”, pp. 89-97. However, rather than the phrase “coordination of attitudes”, Barthes writes: “The work begins only with the tableau, when the meaning is put into the gesture and into the coordination of gestures.” See p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 48

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* pp. 58-59.

<sup>13</sup> Carasco provides the title and full reference to the article: “L’image-cinéma qu’aimait Roland Barthes (le goût du filmique)”, in *Revue d’esthétique, Le Cinéma en l’an 2000*, 6 (1984), pp. 71-78.