Gilles Deleuze
Seminar on Cinema and Thought, 1984-1985

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Part 1

Lucien Gouty: We're starting the fourteenth session...

Deleuze: You said fourteen, no, that's way too many, way too many... So, we have fourteen times that… fourteen times that...

Gouty: Forty-two...

Deleuze: Forty-two... that's something. Well, you'll tell me, it's nothing special... okay. So, the last time... We made a plan last time. I'll say it again: we had a direct and arbitrary comparison between the modern image and the classical image, arbitrary in that we took two examples: one example being Eisenstein, the other Godard. The comparison led us to develop three points. A *tonal* or "classical" cinema. How do we define this? *Linkage of images by rational cuts*. And a *serial* or modern cinema… And how is this defined? *Relinkage of images by irrational cuts.*

Second point: a classical or "structural" cinema or a *cinema of truth*… truth, I insist, being a model independent of the duality: reality and fiction, because it's the same model of truth that serves both reality and fiction. What is this model of truth? Well, it implies that while images are linked together by rational cuts, the linked images are internalized in a Whole, and the Whole is externalized in the images. Such a movement, by which the images are internalized in the Whole while the Whole is externalized in the images, is what is called "true movement", as opposed to a modern cinema which – as we saw last year, for those who were there – rejects any model of truth to lay claim to the powers of the false insofar as these powers of the false form a series. Everything links together perfectly. What we have is no longer a cinema of truth, but the *truth of cinema*. We've seen the importance of this reversal, and in what sense a cinema that could be called "direct" has nothing to do with direct cinema, but on the contrary, has to do with this reversal, where cinema no longer lays claim to a model of truth, it is no longer a cinema of truth, but claims to attain a truth of cinema.

Third aspect: the classical image, being tonal and structural, is an indirect representation of time. The modern image, being serial and forming a truth of cinema, is a direct presentation of time. What do we mean by direct presentation of time? We've looked at this in previous years, and we saw it again last time. It means that time is wrested from its empirical form of succession. And this happens in two ways. There are two principal direct time-images. It takes the form of what may call "the empirical succession of time" or "the course of time". The direct presentation of time, or the direct time-image, takes two forms: the *series of time*,

which preserves a before and after, but turns them into intrinsic qualities of time. These intrinsic qualities then present the series of time as a passage. But passage from what to what? The passage of the present? No. The passage, as we've seen before, from one attitude to another, a passage guided by a *gestus*, the *gestus* guided by an act of fabulation. The flagrant act of fabulation is what distributes the before and after in the series of time.

The second aspect of the direct time-image… no longer the series of time but the whole of time... no, I mean the *order* of time, which is to say the coexistence of relations of time, the coexistence of all relations of time. And this time is no longer as it was just now for the series, the horizontal series of time, meaning the sequence of attitudes following a *gestus* that brings into play the act of fabulation, but is now the vertical construction of series in the form we looked at… the coexistence of series. Now, that gives us a set.

My request last time, when we were wrapping things up, was this… do some of you want to add some things… within this relatively narrow framework… other things that could fit in. Or do some of you think that we should go back and review specific questions before we move on? Well, this is a question only you can answer. In fact, the question is twofold. Either there are things that need to be reviewed because they don't seem to be completely clear, or… I don't know, or are there things to be added. No? Really? Good, very good.

So, we can move on… we have to, because, once again, in our analysis of the modern image we were struggling with – each time we had to perform a sleight of hand – with what constitutes the modern image, and we were unable to define it without referring to certain *speech acts*. It goes without saying that if the act of fabulation is so important to modern cinema, it's because it brings into play a speech act. This was a way of saying that modern cinema is inseparable from the talkies. It doesn't mean that modern cinema coincides with the talkies. It probably means that modern cinema requires a certain use of speech. Perhaps this use of speech is quite revolutionary in relation to the appearance of the talkies in cinema. But in the end, it was clear that whenever we tried to move forward, the question of the talkies was a weight on our feet, a question we couldn't say anything about, because we hadn't yet posed the problem.

And conversely, in terms of the classical image, for a long time we'd been dragging our feet regarding a certain a problem we never talked about in other years, and now the time has come. I delayed speaking about it for as long as possible because, well… the problem was: even when it's silent, isn't there something fundamental about the cinematographic image that puts it in relation with either language or something close to it… even when it's silent. So now we find ourselves beginning a new chapter, and this new chapter will revolve around three different problems. But you'll see how these three different problems will never cease to connect and to become entangled.

Each of us has very different impressions. What I find boring may interest you, what interests me may seem extremely boring to you. So, a good year is when things balance out. When, if it's fun for you, well, it's fun for me as well… and if it's fun for me, it's fun for you... But it's never for the same reasons. All this is an introduction to say that in this new session there will be things that amuse me a lot, or that interest me – and I think it's only this year that I'm finally able to talk about them a bit… – and other things that bore me to death. As always, it can't be always fun. Moral duty compels me to speak about things that bore me to death. I just have to do it. So, things are sufficiently perverse, the nature of things is sufficiently

perverse that some of you will indeed find very boring what I find amusing and vice versa. I'm sure.

Let me say right away that there's a first problem we will have to consider, which coincides with the beginnings of cinema. If there is a linkage of images, and if cinema presents itself as a linkage of movement-images, in its most classical form – the linkage of movement-images by rational cuts is the classical image – it has something to do with language. And after all, that was how cinema began, that was the formula: cinema was the realization of what had been sought everywhere from time immemorial: a universal language. It's a notion so well known that I won't insist on it.

You'll see how this is completely independent of the talkies. Or, again, from this first point of view, if it's not language that informs the linkage of cinematographic images, perhaps it is something *neighboring* language. And here I use the word "neighboring" in its most general sense. What might be close to language in this sense? A whole school of semiology has recently sprung up around this that tells us: initially we thought cinema had something to do with language. But it has nothing to do with language, cinema is not a language. Instead, it has to do with something neighboring language… and what would this be? A *language system*. Hence Christian Metz's phrase: cinema is a language system without language. What does this mean?

In France, this school was inaugurated by Metz's research, and then developed by numerous disciples who lay claim to a linguistic semiology or, as they say, a *semio-criticism*, which directly involves one particular filmmaker: [Alain] Robbe-Grillet, since Robbe-Grillet was by far the first and foremost filmmaker… the privileged example chosen by a large number of proponents of semio-criticism. Moreover, he himself became involved, very closely involved, in their work, suggesting interpretations of which only he guards the secret.

Meanwhile, in Italy, a school of semio-criticism was developing around the same time, under the aegis of [Emilio] Garroni, G-a-r-r-o-n-i… that's right, Garroni, that became quite prominent and which includes – thought I'm not saying they all argue the same thing – which also includes a famous Italian author, Umberto Eco, as well as a great filmmaker, [Pier Paolo] Pasolini, who was involved in a no less intricate and complicated manner than was Robbe-Grillet with the French school. So, this is the situation.

We don't yet know exactly what difference there is between a language and a language system. In any case, what we do know, and what we can sa, according to Metz's formula – which could be signed by all critical semioticians or semio-critics, for that's what they're known as – is that anyone who says that cinema is a language system without language is a semio-critic or a linguistics-inspired semiologist. But we still don't know what this language-language system distinction means. What we do know is that it should not be confused with another distinction: language-speech [*langue-parole*]. A language system is not the same as speech. So, linguistically speaking, we're obviously forced to distinguish between at least three levels: language, language system and speech. While the distinction between language and language system has become familiar to even the most casual linguist, the distinction between language and speech is perhaps a little more difficult.

With this in mind, I'm announcing that I will have to expand on points that for some of you will be self-evident. I'll have to develop them as if you knew nothing because, on one hand, I assume that some of you do know nothing in this field, which is fair enough – there are some

among you who haven't yet been touched by linguistics in the slightest… I'd be surprised, but you never know – and on the other hand, because I need to develop it for myself and see what I can obtain from it. So, I make no secret of the fact that, for me, it's the dullest part I can think of… but we have to get through it. We have to get through it, otherwise I won't be able to get to the part I really enjoy. Because work isn't always fun. What saves us is that it's often funny… because funny, for me, is the second problem.

I had announced a first problem. But for me, what's funny is the second problem, which is something that really amuses me. Because the previous problem takes no account of the existence, or at least – correct me if I'm wrong – takes no direct account of the existence of the talkies, of the existence or non-existence of the talkies. I have a feeling that what I'm saying isn't true for some semio-critics. But it's true in principle. And in Christian Metz's case in particular, it's very clear… he says explicitly that the audiovisual code – and we'll understand later what this means – the audiovisual code of cinema must be regarded as a completely separate thing from the linguistic code by which cinematographic images can be considered a language system. So, the reasons why cinematographic images should be considered a language system are completely unrelated to the existence or non-existence of the talkies.

So, the second, very distinct problem… my second problem is not: *What are the talkies?* because I'd like to put it more precisely, but: *Are there speech acts that could be called cinematographic?* Does cinema present us with specific speech acts? Well, if I put the problem in this way, I can immediately say that it already applies to silent films. Because I'd like to remind you of what most of you already know… as is often said, silent films are incorrectly referred to as "mute" [in French *muet*, meaning *mute,* is the word used to refer to silent cinema]. Jean Mitry tells us that there has never been a "mute" cinema, there is only cinema. There was silent cinema but that's not the same thing. In other words, people talk and never stop talking, it's just that we don't hear them.

So, it's not a mute cinema, it's a profoundly "phonatory" cinema. Phonation is a speech act. Whether the sounds are heard or not, is another matter. I'm not speaking here about the fact that silent cinema, as we're often reminded, already had sound, either in the form of a commentator, or in the form of music. But well beyond this, silent cinema shows us people who don't stop talking. It is silent, not "mute". Michel Chion, in his book on the voice, *The Voice in Cinema,*[1] I believe… yes, *The Voice in Cinema*, puts it even better: cinema has never been "mute", it has been *deaf,* which is the same as Mitry's formula, only more brilliant. It is a deaf cinema, not a mute cinema.

So, there have always been speech acts in cinema. I'm wondering whether cinema presents us with specific speech acts, or whether they are non-specific speech acts, meaning that there is no assignable difference between them and speech acts that are simply recordings of ordinary speech acts as they occur in social life, or that there is no specific difference with theatrical speech acts. As you can see, the question makes sense: are there formally specific speech acts, which is to say speech acts that pertain intrinsically to cinema and exist only in cinema – and this would at least enable us to sort out all kind of nonsense that has been said about the relation between cinema and theatre? Because if we can say that there are speech acts that are specific to cinema, you understand that there's no longer need to think about the difference between cinema and theater, because in terms of speech acts, they won't be the same.

I find this very interesting, and that's why it amuses me so much… but I'm also interested in it from another point of view. This other point of view concerns a certain discipline, which some of you already know, called sociolinguistics, that has always attached importance to the classification of different types of speech acts. How to classify them? So, in the attempt that has been made to classify images and signs throughout the years… well, I'm very happy if we can draw from cinema something that is not only a specific form of speech act. Okay, that's one aspect of the question. And the second aspect of the question is: if we can draw a classification of cinematographic speech acts, then we have to ask ourselves whether cinema has not revealed a way of classifying speech acts in general that can enrich sociolinguistics. In other words, thanks to its specific speech acts, cinema exists in reaction to a general typology... [*Recording interrupted*; 27:10]

... what is it by right? What I'm asking here is whether thinking that narration as an aspect, as a given of the cinematographic image, is already similar to Euclidean geometry, meaning that it intrinsically contains the universal and the necessary. You might say that Euclidean geometry is not of this nature, since there exists not only Euclidean geometry, but also non-Euclidean geometry. For one thing, Kant wasn't aware of this, it began after Kant. And I'm troubled by this answer, because it would imply that the discovery of non-Euclidean geometry, or at least its construction, would be sufficient to render Kant obsolete, whereas this doesn't change anything. And for one simple reason: non-Euclidean geometry is in a very complex way susceptible to, and even contains, what we may call Euclidean connections. Can we say that the *fact* of Hollywood-style narration is of the same type?

I'll go back to Metz's three steps. There is a *fact*: from the very beginning Hollywood cinema was a narrative cinema. Second point... here, I already have a question, which we'll leave aside for the moment: is this really a fact? And in what sense is it a fact? Is it an empirical fact, or is it a universal and necessary fact? Second point: if cinema is indeed *in fact* a narrative cinema, then the cinematographic image is comparable to a statement. It is comparable to a statement. This is what I call an approximation. This point is as important as the previous one, and here too, it is so important that Metz is extremely cautious in its regard. I will read from his book now, in case you think I'm distorting the text. Metz is extremely cautious, he asks: What is the equivalent of the cinematographic image? And he says that the concept of equivalent is an approximation. He asks: Can we compare a shot, if we take the shot, in a very general sense, as the smallest unit of the moving image, the *minima*… well, can we consider, can we compare the shot to a word? Which is a bizarre idea. Why would we want to compare the shot to a word? Purely by virtue of the *fact* of the cinema he refers to being a narrative cinema.

But does a shot resemble a word? He says no, it's not like that… and in a famous text, which is still quoted today, he says: A close-up of a revolver is not assimilable to the word "revolver" but to the statement: "here is a revolver!" Even those rare images whose content would correspond to a word are still phrases. This is a particularly enlightening case in point. "A close-up of a revolver does not mean revolver... but at the very least, without speaking of the connotations, it signifies: "here is a revolver". In other terms, it's not a word, it's a statement

Another quotation – but he's always very, very cautious in this regard – he says, well, it's the least inaccurate comparison. "The filmic 'shot' […] resembles the statement" – and we'll see why he's forced to say that… it's true, it resembles it – "The filmic 'shot' […] resembles the statement rather than the word. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to say that it is equivalent to

the statement. For there are still great differences between the shot and the linguistic statement". I am therefore justified in speaking of approximation. Approximately, the cinematographic image can be considered a statement. That's the second point.[2]

Third point: if the cinematographic image can be considered a statement, then under what conditions, and how can we define the rules of use relating to this image? Metz's answer – and those who have studied linguistics will understand this immediately, but I'll try to explain it for the others – is that the conditions are as follows: that the cinematographic image be subject to "operations" – which is to say subjective acts – "operations" that, in accordance with linguistics, we'll call paradigmatic and syntagmatic… syntagm and paradigm, or better still, syntagmatic and paradigmatic. And syntagmatic and paradigmatic are the conditions that make it possible to compare the cinematographic image to a statement.

But why does he need these three levels? You see, he began from a fact, the fact of narrative cinema. Secondly, an approximation: the cinematographic image can therefore approximately be compared to a statement. And I ask, again, why approximately? Here too, like in everything, there are some scary things… I'm not saying it's bad but it contains some shocking things… it seems to run by itself. It's only that… if it can be compared to a statement, it must be a bizarre one. He'll say this himself, that what we have is not a non-verbal statement, it's images. It's not words. So, he needs to forge the category. I'm not saying it's well-founded or ill-founded. I'm just saying… he has to forge the category of *analogical* statements or *iconic* statements, analogical statements or iconic statements. Basically, statements that operate by resemblance, not by combining conventional units. The image of a revolver is supposed to resemble a revolver, it's an analogical image, an iconic image, one may say. Here, too, we run into problems, since the very notion of analogical statement or iconic statement… isn't this some kind of monster? Isn't it really monstruous, this notion? Since the image is itself analogical or iconic, according to him, it cannot be assimilated to a statement in the form of an analogical or iconic statement. But is it a statement? His answer, and this is the third step, hence his three-step approach, is: Yes, it is a statement, as long as it can be proved that the iconic or analogical image is subject to the linguistic operations of syntagm and paradigm, the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic.

This is going to turn into a knot… it's going to become a whole knot of problems. I mean, at the level… – and here, I'm extracting the simplest meaning – it's going to be a tangled mess of problems! I'll mention just one: How to avoid a vicious circle, which I'm not sure doesn't already exist in Kant's work, which would therefore be a redoubling of Kantianism… what a vicious circle. For I would say that the image is subject to the paradigm and the syntagm because it is assimilable to a statement, but it is assimilable to a statement because it is subject to the paradigm and the syntagm. How annoying! You understand how annoying this is! It's not possible! It's regarding this that the post-Kantians – and I like this because it's where you can re-mix the whole thing – it's regarding this that the post-Kantians will protest against Kant. They'll tell him that by relying on the method of fact and conditions of possibility, you can't escape a vicious circle, namely, that experience is a fact. They will say: Yes, experience is a fact because it is subject to conditions of possibility, but it is subject to conditions of possibility because it is a fact. And they will say that Kant's error… the post-Kantians, like [Johann] Fichte, will say that Kant's error was in holding to a method of conditioning without attaining a true genetic method. It would be necessary to generate and not simply to condition, to produce a genesis and not merely a conditioning… So, I would say that I have a difficulty with this at every level. I have my three basic levels.

Let me recap: the fact is narrative cinema. First problem: it's no longer a question, it will no longer be a question of movement, that will have disappeared. Movement won't be a relevant feature of the cinematographic image. What will be relevant to the cinematographic image is narration. So, if he finds language there, it's not so surprising, of course, he's already allowed himself that from the start, or so it seems.

Second point: if it's true that the fact is narrative cinema, then the cinematographic image is approximately… I can't find my adjective, three little dots, I've lost a word... approximately... assimilable, there you go, thank you, approximately assimilable to a statement. Second problem… okay, at this point, we need to establish the notion of analogical or iconic statement.

Third level: if the cinematographic image is assimilable to a statement, then it is necessarily subject to the operations of paradigm and synthesis [here Deleuze means to say "syntagm"], which define its conditions of possibility, namely its rules of use.

Third problem, which is the deepest of all: how do we escape the vicious circle? How do we escape the vicious circle whereby the image is assimilated to the statement because it is subject to the paradigm and the syntagm, but conversely, it is subject to the paradigm and the syntagm because it is assimilated to the statement? Well, we can only move forward if we understand these two mysterious formulas: paradigm and syntagm.

Still... I'm a lot slower than... What time is it? It's funny, to have to assess… I used to say to myself, I'll will be done with this in a quarter of an hour, and you can see why it's so awful, can't you? I'd be there for a quarter of an hour, thinking that this is bothering me so much that... and then, all of a sudden, you can no longer predict anything. Something, I wonder what it was, made me laugh, something pleased me, amused me. It must have been Kant, that's what Kant did to me. So... it's strange, you can't predict. So, do you want to take a break? Think about these three mysteries, because at the same time they are self-evident… these questions, they're completely obvious, and yet it's mysterious, it's mysterious how he can say that... [*Recording interrupted;* 44:25]

[*Tape interrupted*]

Deleuze: ... You have to feel it… don't we need a little light?

Students: [*they answer that it doesn't work*]

Deleuze: The light's not working? That's no good. The switch near the door doesn't work… is there another light switch? They must cut it off at a certain time.

From this first point, I'd like you to get a sense of how the notions of image and sign are on the way out – I'm not claiming to show this yet, but I would just like you to feel it – are on the way out, since we'll be no longer talking about image but about statement, bypassing movement as a distinctive aspect. And we'll no longer be talking about signs but about "signifying chains" in the sense of syntagms and paradigms… but all this is only beginning to emerge. If the first point, then, concerned the position, the basic position of linguistically-inspired semiology, our second point will concern the problem of the essence-use distinction or, to put in another way, language-language system.

Hence the first question, and I have to say this – those who already know all this will forgive me in advance… and then I'll refer you to the relevant texts, you can find this in any dictionary of linguistics – what is a language? How is it defined? No doubt you can define it in many ways, but one of the strictest ways in which language has been defined seems to me the one that [André] Martinet… the linguist Martinet, Martinet the linguist, insisted on, and he developed a theory which consists in saying that language, a language, is a *double-articulation* system It's not phonatory articulation, of course, since it's not speech. It's a system of double articulation, and he adds: language is the only system of this type. A complicated case is telephone numbers, but then, presumably they wouldn't exist if it weren't for language.

What do we mean by a double-articulation system? As you know, the first articulation is defined by discrete, discontinuous, meaningful units. These discrete, discontinuous, meaningful units, at least in Martinet's terminology, are called "monemes". Very roughly speaking, a "moneme" is a word. But in fact, it's not a word. Let's take an example, given by Martinet himself: the soup is good. There are four words, but there are at least five monemes. First moneme: the; second moneme: soup; third moneme: the verb to be; fourth moneme: the mark of the indicative; fifth moneme: good. This doesn't mean that, for the sake of convenience, we can't use an inexact equivalence… we're talking about approximations, word-monemes. The moneme is a meaningful unit. As you can see, the monemes are articulated among each other, and this is the first articulation.

This first articulation refers to a second articulation, that of "phonemes". In the same rudimentary fashion, we require right now, we can equate phonemes with letters. But we all know that this is not the case. Why is a phoneme something other than a letter? Because, unlike the moneme, which is a meaningful unit, the phoneme is a distinctive, non-meaningful unit. It's a distinctive unit. For example, the letter b, the letter b is a phoneme. So, you'll tell me it's a letter… No, because it's merely a phoneme, insofar as it's caught up in regulated relations with other phonemes. If one says "billard" [billiard], the phoneme /b/ is, among other things, in immediate relation with the phoneme /p/ which would give "pillard" [looter]. Here we have what we call a differential or distinctive relationship between /b/ and /p/, to the point that if I say – as an example to reawaken your literary memories – to the point that if I say: "*les bandes du vieux billard*" and someone replies: "What did you say? Did you say "pillard"? … "les bandes du vieux pillard?" I would say, "No, I said *les bandes du vieux billard*".[3]

So, let me give you another literary example – I could give you a written test to identify the authors of these examples! – another example… "As-tu dit cochon ou cosson?" [Did you say *pig* or *weevil*] You see, here the phoneme /ch/ is indeed a letter, but taken in its distinctive relation with another. At this level, you have distinctive, non-meaningful units, and you see that it's through the articulation of phonemes, namely elements of the second articulation, non-meaningful elements, distinctive non-meaningful elements, that the elements of the first articulation, namely meaningful units, are made. The meaningful units are built upon the distinctive non-meaningful units. Is this clear?

So, we have an articulation defined by monemes, and an articulation defined by phonemes. Strictly speaking, there's no language that doesn't contain the phenomenon of double articulation. What implies the phenomenon of double articulation, on the other hand, is a language. What is the condition? The double articulation must also be fixed, which is to say it should not be mobile, while the two levels must be neither replaceable nor interchangeable.

An additional question, for practical purposes: is music a language? Is painting a language? For those interested in this question, you could read [Claude] Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*,[4] in particular the opening section where Lévi-Strauss offers a very strange, a very interesting answer saying that tonal music does indeed present a double articulation and, in this sense, is a language, but not entirely so. Because the two levels are, in some respect, replaceable and even interchangeable. But it would take us a very long time to go into this so I simply mention the title for those who are interested in reading it. He says that classical painting is also a quasi-language, but does not meet the last requirements of non-mobility, non-replaceability or interchangeability… whereas abstract painting is not a language – a very curious idea – that abstract painting is not a language at all, and atonal music is not a language, and *musique concrète* is not a language. Well, the whole of Lévi-Strauss' text is very interesting, of course, for those who are interested in this.

So, let me add – for those who are interested and don't already know all this – that we can now therefore classify all kinds of so-called information or communication systems according to the criterion of double articulation. A linguist who has greatly inspired the Italian school of semiology is called [Luis J.] Prieto, P-R-I-E-T-O, but I don't know where he's from exactly.

Student: He's Argentinian.

Deleuze: Is he Argentinian? Okay. Prieto made a great classification of double-articulation systems, from the point of view of articulation, which you'll find in one of his books, *Messages and Signals*.[5] Prieto's great classification from the point of view of articulations is taken up again in an article by Umberto Eco, published in the review "Communications", number 15, 1970… where Eco takes up, with minor alterations, but only at the end… and this produces a whole classification of systems of communication, or information systems. I'll summarize it very quickly, either to deter you from reading it, or to make you want to look for it and read it for yourself.

Firstly, codes without articulation… there are codes without articulation. You see, we're only introducing the notion of code here, because I'll have more to say about that later. A brief example: the blind man's white cane, or a bus route designated by single-digit numbers. Yeah, it's obvious, a bus route designated by single-digit numbers is a code without articulation. All right, it's a classification, it's...

Second case: codes that only have the second articulation, namely the articulation of the type… that in language would correspond to the phoneme type, for example, the two-digit bus line.

Third case: codes containing only the first articulation, which corresponds to the moneme, the meaningful element. For example, the numbering of hotel rooms. That's clever, because it's still in the written domain: what does room 20 mean? Do you know what it means? The first room on the second floor. Think about it, and you'll see that it's actually a code with only the first articulation. Road signs, decimal numbers, okay.

Fourth case: double-articulation codes, which is to say non-mobile, non-interchangeable and non-changeable, such as languages and six-digit telephone numbers. It's a good idea to find out why. The best thing would be for you to find out why without referring to the article.

The last point, I don't know… the fifth case is the mobile articulation code, as in tonal music, because you can assign conditions – pitches, for example – as a second articulation, which are replaced by timbres. This is a case of transformation that is strictly forbidden in language, where your second articulation can only ever consist of phonemes, playing cards, military ranks, and so on. To summarize: language is defined by a system of double articulations under conditions of non-mobility, non-interchangeability and non-replaceability. But the question is getting too complicated. Is cinema a language? The immediate answer is no. No. Cinema is not a language. [*Recording interrupted*; 1:03:36]

[*Tape interrupted*]

Part 2

... You will search in vain… you will search in vain for a second articulation. You can treat the shots as elements of a first articulation… But what can serve as a second articulation? Shots are meaningful units.

All right, let's assume that the shots are equivalent to monemes, and even then, it would be problematic, but let's assume. What would the phonemes be? Obviously, there's one answer we're in danger of jumping to: they are photograms, single frames. Photograms would be phonemes. But this doesn't hold water for a second, since photograms are the constituent elements, the constituent material elements in the form of frames per second, and cannot be grasped for themselves. Except in the condition of a photogram-shot, or else you're once again dismantling one of the conditions of language, since you've moved from the second to the first articulation. So, in the unit, in the moneme, you distinguish between phonemes. But in the image-shot, you don't distinguish between photograms, unless you make them pass individually. In any case, this absolutely doesn't meet the conditions of a language, of the two articulations that pertain to language.

Do you follow me? Now, no one has come up with the baroque idea of treating the photogram as the equivalent of a phoneme. It would be a kind of vague metaphor. Someone, however, someone really great, said that there are two articulations, or pretended to say so, and that's something we'll have to come back to in his texts, which are really difficult but incredibly beautiful, and this is Pasolini, just to annoy the semioticians. He says that signs have two articulations, but he's obviously too clever to invoke the photogram. He says, the equivalent of the phoneme would be the objects present in the shot, the objects framed in the image. Umberto Eco laughs and says: Poor Pasolini! Why? Because Umberto Eco says that the phonemes, namely the elements of the second articulation, are not meaningful and can never form part of the signified. The objects included in the shot are indeed part of the signified of the image. At first glance, Eco is right. Why and how, and by what right must Pasolini reply to him, Poor Umberto Eco! We'll get into that next time. But, for the moment, let's stop here, let's stop here and say that at first glance – and given the mystery of Pasolini's text, which we'll leave aside for the moment – at first glance, it seems obvious that cinema is not a language. Okay.

When we asked, "What is a language?", however modern the answers – Martinet's answer, for example – it was a *pre-critical* question, a Platonic question. Which is to say, of all the apparent characteristics of a language, which is the essential one? Accepting this pre-critical question "What is a language?", we answered: cinema is not a language.

And Metz goes on to say that the error of the first people to reflect on the relation between cinema and language is that they posed the problem in terms of language. Eisenstein is merely using a metaphor when he says that cinema, insofar as it is constituted by montage, is a language. It's a mere metaphor, because this doesn't consider the specific characteristic of a language, the specific characteristic of a language being its double articulation. Do you follow me? I suppose for the... and again, I can't do otherwise, anyone who knows this...

Okay. I'll move on to a completely different question. I'm no longer asking what makes up the essence of a language, I'm reflecting on the rules of usage of a language. Which is to say, what rules of usage are the units of language subject to? You see, I'm back to my notion of rules of usage, and that's another kind of question. Whether they're phonemes or morphemes… no, sorry, whether they're phonemes or monemes, they're subject to certain rules of usage. I'm no longer looking for the essence here. I'm looking for the subjective rules. But this is not a question of the subjectivity of someone speaking, it's not about speech, it's about the subjectivity of language itself. So, what are the rules of usage for phonemes and monemes? The answer is that there are two kinds of rules: some are called syntagmatic, others paradigmatic.

Which acts do they correspond to? We'll call *syntagm* any conjunction of relative units – I mean: phoneme, moneme or other, they don't have to be absolute units – we'll call syntagm any conjunction of relative units present in a statement. And so, we'll refer to the syntagm corresponding to the statement. We'll say that there's a *u v* syntagm if *u* and *v* are present in capital *E*, capital *E* designating a statement [*énoncé*]. Such an activity is a combination, an act of combination... [*Recording interrupted;* 1:13:18]

... *défaire* [undo] … *défaire* would never form a syntagm small *u* and *v*… *défaire* would never form a syntagm if we weren't able to constitute a capital *U* and a capital *V*, constitutive of a syntagmatic rule. Meaning *décoller* [take off], *dévoiler* [unveil], which are of the same type as *défaire*. Do you follow me? I'm really trying to give you the most basic… Very good, okay.

If you've been following me you see immediately that there is a problem. If I say the word *déterminer*" [to determine], is it a syntagm of the type *UV*? Are there two monemes? I'm not sure. I could only say that there are two monemes for *déterminer* if I could discover a rule that involves and forms a capital *U* place and a capital *V* place so that *dé-* is to *x* as *dé-* is to *terminer* [to finish] … well, once we acknowledge that in *déterminer* the syntagmatic relation between *U* and *V*, that is to say between *défaire*… no, sorry, the syntagmatic relation in *déterminer*, the relation *dé-* and *terminer* is not of the same type as the relation *dé-faire*. Okay? Good, fine.

What matters to me is that the syntagm refers to a syntagmatic rule. That's why linguists don't generally speak of the syntagm but, more profoundly, they speak about *the syntagmatic*. Metz goes even further: he speaks – for reasons I'll explain later – of the "great syntagmatic"… the great syntagmatic, which doesn't arouse in me any objection at all, but it does arouse great hilarity because I hear… when someone says to me the great syntagmatic, I hear "The great lady…' – I mean, "The great Queen is dead"… in short, it's Jacques Bénigne Bossuet. The great syntagmatic makes me dream! The great syntagmatic... Is the great syntagmatic dead? Well, we don't know… it's the syntagmatic! You see? Right, do you follow me? And every time you construct a sentence, the rules of usage are syntagmatic rules. You didn't know that, did you?

What if at the same time you are also constructing a paradigm? Well, the paradigm... Remember, a syntagm is the conjunction of present relative units. The paradigm is the disjunction of present units with absent units that are comparable, in one respect or another, that are comparable in any respect whatsoever… for example, comparable from the point of view of sense, or comparable from the point of view of sound. For example, "teach-instruct"… this is an example given by [Ferdinand de] Saussure, teach-instruct. When I say the sentence "he taught me", I could also have said "he instructed me". So, what's the difference? You've made a choice. Every unit that is present, that is, that you have chosen, implies its disjunctive relation with other possible units that you have not chosen, that you have eliminated. And that's the way it is every time you speak, especially when you're searching for a word.

Either the paradigm will concern units whose sound is similar, and not at all the meaning, or whose meanings are similar, and not at all the sound. Let's go back to my previous examples, my two examples: "*Tu as dit cochon ou cosson*?" and "*Les bandes du vieux pillard ou les bandes du vieux billard*?" Okay. This time, it's no longer an act of combination, it's an act of selection. It's no longer based on contiguity, it's based on similarity. The criterion is what linguists call *commutation*. Commutation occurs if the substitution of two units *u* and *u'* produces an assignable difference. When I say *assignable*, I mean, for example… there are differences in intonation that do not produce assignable differences. Differences in intonation are not part of this case. You see? Martinet analyses at length a paradigmatic example between these two commutable statements: "*Il dessine une carte*" / "*Il dessine une carpe*" [He draws a map / He draws a carp], this time based on the phonetic difference between /t/ and /p/. While "*Les bandes du vieux pillard*" and "*les bandes de vieux billard*" are based on the phonetic difference /b/ and /p/. All clear? Good.

We'll say that the rules of usage of phonemes and monemes are syntagmatic rules and paradigmatic rules, the former determining the legitimate concatenations or consecutions of present units, the latter determining the legitimate choices between a present and an absent unit. I remind you that during the first term, we already saw how [Roman] Jakobson drew on these two aspects to identify the two poles of aphasia as a language disease: a language disease with a predominant combination disorder – namely a syntagmatic disorder – and a language disease based on a selection disorder – namely a paradigmatic disorder.[6] And according to Jakobson, there are two poles of aphasia that we could call – I don't think he actually does, but it doesn't matter… – syntagmatic aphasia and paradigmatic aphasia. I won't go back to this point.

A very intricate problem arises, and after this I'll leave you in peace: what is the relation between the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic? There are two opposing theses: the most frequent one, I'm not saying the most... well, the most frequent thesis privileges the syntagmatic. The essential act, the essential rule of usage, is combinatorial, and the paradigm is merely a means of forming classes of units with the same combinatorial possibilities, thus subordinating the paradigmatic to the syntagmatic. A rarer thesis, that of Martinet, is quite well formulated: the fundamental act of language is *choice*, at all levels, at the phonemic level as well as at the monemic level. There are choices. And a syntagm cannot be constituted if we fail to consider the other units that would have been possible. So, there's a kind of primacy of the paradigmatic, which is a very, very interesting part of Martinet's thesis. A median position, which doesn't exclude the greatest geniuses, sees the independence of the two dimensions, and this is very well represented by Jakobson, with his two poles, his two independent poles.

Okay. Where do I want to go with all this? You see what Metz's thesis will be? To end this session, we could say what Metz's great thesis means: that *cinema is a language system without language*. In other words, the cinematographic image is not a language, nor does it form or belong to a language, because there is no phenomenon of double articulation. So, it has none of the elements that define a language.

On the other hand, it has its rules of usage, which are mainly syntagmatic in nature, but also paradigmatic. Only this time they don't define linguistic elements but rules of language usage. In other words, syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations are rules of usage that define the language system. Double articulation is a state of elements that defines language. You necessarily find syntagms and paradigms in language. But you don't find syntagms and paradigms *exclusively* in language. The rules of language usage – syntagm and paradigm – can be applied to elements other than the elements of language, and in such cases, we speak of a language system without language. A language system without language is quite something, it's a cultural product that presents or that follows the rules of syntagmatic and paradigmatic usage, although it does not itself present the elements of language.

So there will be language systems without language. If fashion or clothing is subject to syntagms and paradigms, then it forms a language system without a language. If music is subject to syntagms and paradigms, then it's a language system without a language, regardless of whether there are phonemes or monemes. These are not at the same level at all. What defines a language system are the two fundamental rules of usage.

Of course, in a language, these rules of usage relate to elements of language, but they may also relate to elements other than those of language… remember that the elements of a language are defined by a double articulation. But syntagms and paradigms do not require a double articulation. Though they may apply the elements of double articulation, they do not depend on it.

So, we can very well speak not of a cinematographic language, but you must speak of a cinematographic language system. Providing that – and this is not going to be easy to demonstrate – providing that the cinematographic statement – hence its linkage, everything is proved – providing that narration whose elements are statements, analogical statements, which are not therefore statements of a language, iconic statements, analogical statements… well, if the analogical or iconic statements of cinema actually apply to syntagms and paradigms, then cinema is a language system. So, the question of the relation cinema-language-language system has shifted from a Platonic to a Kantian status.

But under what conditions can cinema be considered a language system? Answer: if it's true that the cinematographic image can be reduced to a non-linguistic statement – namely an analogical statement – and if this analogical statement is subject to syntagmatic and paradigmatic rules… You look devastated… In any case, we can't deny the rigor of his thesis at this level. But what price do we pay for this rigor? Everything we've seen before, everything we've seen before… That's where we are now, so we'll need another session. What are the cinematographic syntagms and paradigms? In other words, what is the great syntagmatic? [*End of session;* 1:32:16]

Notes

[1] See M. Chion, *The Voice in Cinema,* New York: Columbia UP, 1999 pp. 6-9.

[2] The quotation comes from Metz's *Essais sur la signification du cinéma*, which Deleuze already quoted in the previous session, translated as *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, Chicago: Chicago UP, 1990.

[3] Here Deleuze refers to Raymond Russel's story "Parmi les noirs", whose the first line, "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard", is reiterated in the last line but slightly modified, "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard". Russel's idea is to write a text that moves from the first to the last formula. Cfr. *The Logic of Sense*, London: Continuum, 1990, p. 39.

[4] See Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, New York: Harper & Row, 1969, pp. 1-32.

[5] See Luis J. Prieto, *Messages et Signaux*, Paris: PUF, 1972.

[6] See session 6, December 11, 1984.