

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Cinema: Classification of Signs and Time, 1982-1983

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Part 1

... [I'll remind you] that we'll no longer see each other, unfortunately for me, until the 22nd. I'll also remind you that I must have at the very latest when you return on the 22nd, I must have the little green sheets, the little cards for those who want this UV [*academic credit*]. Having recalled these two things -- I have the adventure of my week, then, which really brings me down -- I'm missing a word, and I'm sure that word is very, very easy. I need a word -- so yesterday I searched constantly, constantly, I swear -- and then I thought, it's okay, I was sure that I was certainly going to find it this morning, given how easy it was.

And then this morning, nothing. I'm sure -- I'm not fussy -- that if one of you had an immediate idea, and then if not, we'll search. I need a word to designate a very special type of sign that we haven't talked about yet but that you will recognize right away. Each of us lives under these signs. I am saying it could just as well be something vague so that our field might be vast, as well as to designate the signs of God in theology, for example, the signs by which God manifests himself to the prophets. Or else, I'm not fussy, if there weren't a very clear word for that, "the signs of the sublime", when facing a vast storm, you say: Ohhh! This "ohhh!" is a way of recognizing a sign, "the signs of the sublime". Or else I'll settle -- so here, I'm really looking in all directions -- for signs of clairvoyance.

Anne Querrien : Mmm, and?

Deleuze: If some among you happen to visit clairvoyants. [*Laughter*] You'll go see the clairvoyant, then the signs that will allow your past, present or future to emerge.

Querrien: The crystal ball!

Deleuze: Either the crystal ball, or something else, a brand of coffee, all that. You see, these would be sights that indicate something beyond me, in which I recognize... perhaps that -- hey, where is he? [*Deleuze seems to be looking for someone in the room*] -- perhaps that -- I was telling myself, but I didn't have the time to verify -- perhaps that in Artaud's stories and tales of power, when he talked about stones, all that, stones, is there... because Artaud was greatly fascinated with signs. He was involved in these spells and these enchantments. Perhaps it's Artaud who has a word for...

Querrien: Asymptote!

Deleuze: You even see signs of infinity in math; that would work for me, if necessary. But is there a word for signs of infinity in math?

Querrien: The asymptote's functioning is exactly that, it tends toward infinity.

Deleuze: Fine, but the asymptote, I was also thinking of things with hyperbole.

Querrien: Well, no, asymptote.

Deleuze: No, I am not going to say that asymptote is a sign. I can't say that, hey, the storm is an asymptote.

Querrien: Well, it's an asymptote, but...

Deleuze: Isn't there anyone... signs of God, I mean really!

Querrien: There's infinity, alpha and omega.

Deleuze: Not the oracles! The oracles are not a sign. The oracle occurs following certain signs... You'd say asymptotes, it's an asymptote.

Querrien: No, it's the asymptote as structure. Because the asymptote is both what tends toward... well, it's a tending toward infinity, toward... or wait, there's a thing, exponential.

Deleuze: Yeah, exponential. [*He seems very doubtful*] One gets the sense that...

Querrien: ... that is, it's the... It's not commercial, mathematical signs are not commercial.

Deleuze: God guarantees, God guarantees his communication with the prophet by offering a sign.

Querrien: That's right!

Deleuze: It's the sign of God.

Querrien: Well, it's a triangle. [*Let us note that Querrien is sitting so close to the microphone that all her comments, even side comments, are audible on the recording*]

Deleuze: You recall, for those who know the Old Testament, God said to Moses, "and here is a first sign, and if this first sign isn't enough, here's a second one," it's the stick turning into a snake, and if the second sign isn't enough, here's a third one, it's the leper's white hand. So, what would we call this group of signs? [*Querrien's voice is audible, "Oh I don't have... that's not right"*] You understand, if I don't have my... anyway, it's fine, we'll leave that. So, you see, this is indeed a domain in which I can place different things and where I need a term.

Querrien: Well, it's a chiasmus?

Deleuze: Here, I still repeat my question, in which case do we need to create a word? Why do we create words in philosophy? Well, here I am forced to do it. I mean, either you find a common word borrowed either from the Bible, or from clairvoyants, I don't care, I have no preference, or from mathematics. But if we're not finding one, so we have to make one up.

A student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze: To say... ?

The student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze: ... theosophical... no, because I will be very annoyed; there are indeed signs of God, but there are also signs of pure nature, unleashed Nature, a storm or the firmament. So, of course, we can say that it's in connection with God, these are signs, if you like, either signs to designate, contrarily... -- so you see why that interests me; we talked a lot about quality and potency [*puissance*] -- In this type of signs that I am looking for, there is something that is properly unqualifiable or something that reduces me to impotence. The unnamable, what is the sign of the unnamable? This has a pejorative sense; it can just as well be the unnamable of what's dreadful as the unnamable of what's grandiose.

Querrien: But the two examples you gave are not what is called a chiasmus. That is, in the leper's white hand or else the staff of the snake, well, where there is tension between two contrary forces, which cancel each other out, something like that...

Deleuze: We can call that a chiasmus.

Querrien: There is a figure called that, the chiasmus.

Deleuze: Yeh, yeh, yeh.

Querrien: I don't know, it's pretty.

Deleuze: Yeh, yeh, it's not very exciting. So, if you get an idea... yes, yes, yes, yes, yes?

Another woman student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: ... the ?...

Querrien: [*She repeats what the student said*] The terrible.

Deleuze: The terrible is not a sign; there are signs of the terrible. The terrible is an image. In our distinction of images and signs, there are terrible images, yes indeed. The terrible, terror, can qualify a type of image. But there are signs of the terrible which would make, which would return to this category of sign.

Querrien: Chaos?

Deleuze: Chaos... [*Deleuze seems increasingly puzzled and doubtful*] ... yeh [*Querrien laughs*]
... Well, there you are, you see, we have to search, otherwise we'll wait to find the word, but...

Another woman student: I was thinking of the abyss.

Deleuze: Of the abyss... it's the same thing... [*Interruption of the recording*]

Deleuze: ... Yes, but it's not a sign. Okay then, let's continue. So, I'm not starting over again, because it's all too exhausting. You remember where I was, in the slot [*referring to the graph on the board*], and I was done the last time. The slot: action-image, first type. And in fact, we had three signs, two signs of composition, a sign that we could call of genesis. And that's because last year, I spent a lot of time on that because it interested me considerably. It allowed me to define the great representation. And we called that representation the great organic representation. And indeed, it was the great representation which presented itself in the form of a spiral: situation, action, modified situation. This was what was also called, last year, the great S-A-S' form. We go from the situation to an action that modifies the situation.

But to give a breadth [*Pause*] to this organic representation, S-A-S', from the situation to the action and from the action to the modified situation, to give some breadth, we had to calculate all the necessary stages between the situation and the action. I would not say the necessary steps between the action and the modified situation because generally, in a story, the action that will modify the situation is quite close to the end. If there is a caesura, if the action represents a caesura between the two situations, the situation from which we start and the situation we arrive at, the modifying action is necessarily very close to S', to the modified situation. On the other hand... So, the caesura is close to the end in this first figure of the action-image.

And on the other hand, there are long, long steps to go from S to A, that is, from the situation from which we start to the action that will modify it. Why? Because, as we have seen, in order to modify a situation with all the atmosphere it entails, the situation engages literally first the whole milieu, namely all powers and qualities insofar as it is embodied in a state of things. To stir up all that, to modify all that, the hero will need an immense effort, and it will be an immense duel since his action ultimately, the modifying action, as we have seen, will be a duel, must be a huge duel. So, the hero must reach the level that the situation requires to be equal to the situation to be modified.

And that doesn't happen by itself, and I'm just saying: isn't this something that we find fundamentally in tragic representation? The action that modifies the situation must have at least as much power as the situation to be modified. It is a grandiose action; the hero must become capable of such an action. And the long path and the stages, which are like so many turns in the spiral, will mark the moments through which the hero passes, sometimes moving away [*Pause*] from the action to be undertaken, sometimes [14:00] approaching the action to be undertaken, and the tragic representation will be precisely all these organic stages by which the hero gradually becomes capable of action.

Once again, it's not that he's mediocre. The mediocre hero will be part of another set of images. He is great, he is already great by nature, in this type of action-image, but he is only potentially great. What does not surprise us, since this action-image of the first type, is the problem of actualization, namely how the milieu itself actualizes qualities and potencies [*puissances*]. We no longer consider the qualities and the potencies in themselves; we consider them as actualized in a state of things, therefore how the state of things actualizes the qualities and the potencies. This is what defines the great situation. But the hero too, he is potentially capable of action, but he must become so actually. He must actualize the qualities and potencies that will make him capable of modifying the situation.

Hence this kind of long ordeal of the hero. And it is perhaps by moving away from the possibility of achieving the action that he will approach it in a kind of progression that we will call destiny or the hero's destiny. And he will go through moments of doubt, however great they may be, and he will need assistants, why assistants? He will need allies to become capable actually since in himself and at the time, as a hero, he was only potentially capable of action.

And the last time, I was trying to say quickly what kind of intermediaries these were. An American by the name of Harold Rosenberg, in a book translated into French under the title *La tradition du nouveau* [*The Tradition of the New*]¹ gave, it seems to me, one of the best interpretations, anyway, among those that I have read, one of the best practical interpretations of *Hamlet*. And that was like saying, well yes, why does Hamlet... He is in a position to modify a situation by a grandiose action. The grandiose tragic action is murder, the murder of the usurping king and the queen, his mother. "This action is too big for me." And what are called Hamlet's hesitations are not hesitations; these are all the ebbs and flows he goes through before he becomes capable of action, and that will take a very long time.

And I mean, if you apply that, for example, to cinema, you find the same structure in the Western. Before being capable of grandiose action, so many, so many, so many things are needed. And I was even telling you that in a structure like "Ivan the Terrible" by [Sergei] Eisenstein, you see the -- like caesuras, there too -- once we've said that Ivan the Terrible is supposed to accomplish the grandiose action to change the situation of Russia, that is, to tear it away from the feudal state; in order to establish a state, he passes, he passes through -- and that is why Eisenstein insists so much on what he himself calls "the caesuras" in these films and which he defines and which define for him the rhythm of cinema -- he passes through two moments of doubt which obviously are not placed at all by chance in the whole, and from which he will emerge each time, becoming closer and closer to the grandiose action, which there too, as in any tragic performance, will consist of a murder. Well, then I said, he needs a lot of help, that's obvious.

In fact, the hero can only become capable if he relies on a people. And not only if he relies on, or if he relies, if you like, on what can be called a "fundamental group". And not only must he rely on a fundamental group, but he must also rely in a completely different way on what was called a "an encounter group". You always have that as well in Westerns, the fundamental group, which is relatively homogeneous, which is, for example, the small town, and then the encounter group which is completely heterogeneous, a very young man, an old man, an alcoholic, and then the hero, and this encounter group will take action, it will be functional.

Okay, so all that gives us what system? I would say that the law of this action-image is, it really is, hence the law of this action-image S-A-S' is really a large gap, a large gap between the situation and the action that will modify it. Why a large gap? All these intermediaries need to be passed through, passing through all these moments of doubt, through all that, a large gap that only exists to be completed. And that's what organic representation is. It's the representation of a large gap, a big difference between the situation and the action to come, the action to be taken, a gap that exists only to be completed. [Pause]

Okay, so what system did that give us? It only exists to be completed, it is completed when the hero becomes equal to the action. When, instead of saying: "this action is still too great for me", he says: "I am ready for this action". The prophet always begins by saying, the prophet always responds to God: "What you are asking of me is too great for me, I cannot do that, it is too great for me". It seems to me that this is the formula, there, of this type of action-image as we are seeking it. That's the large gap, "this action is too big for me". And if we go back to *Hamlet*, what happens? Hamlet makes his sea voyage -- we are already very late in the play -- his sea voyage where the king, his father-in-law, actually sends him to be assassinated. And he foils, he foils the Machiavellian plan of the king, and he comes back changed, he made the mutation, that is, he actualized the potency. The action which consisted in avenging his father, avenging the deceased king, by killing the current king and punishing his own mother, here for a long time he felt that it was the only action to be taken, but he couldn't do so. He returns from the sea voyage and there he has changed, he no longer speaks in the same way, he has become capable of action. There we have a structure, it is an image structure.

And then, I was saying, you see, everything links together very well because our signs are exactly these, you recall: the situation, I would say that it refers to a sign which is and which we called, borrowing a term from Peirce but distorting it a little, which was called the sinsign, the sinsign that we wrote, contrary to Peirce, s-y-n-sign. The synsign is the qualities and potencies as actualized in a state of things, that is, constituting a situation. That's a synsign. This was the first sign of composition of the action-image. A situation was required. The sign of the situation was the synsign. And then, at the other pole according to our law of the bipolar sign, we called the second sign of composition, we called it "the binomial", and the binomial was the sign of the action. It was the sign of the action since, in fact, we had seen the action, and there we could follow Peirce who brought us so many things; the action, it is always under a visible or less visible form, it is always a duel.

Henceforth, we had our two signs of composition. And since there was a large gap between the starting situation, i.e., the synsign, and the action to be accomplished, i.e., the binomial, this gap had to continue to be completed, to be completed by all the caesuras, by all the episodes, by all the instances -- I wouldn't even say anymore... they weren't even potencies anymore -- by all the instances which are also the feelings through which the hero passes, including doubt, but which are also the allies, the fundamental group, the encounter group, all that, well, all that was distributed in a particular way.

Well then, so if I was looking, I needed a genetic sign to hold it all together, a genetic sign that does not stop working in such a way that, the moment comes when the action, having become mature, would be welded to the situation in such a way, that a new situation would arise from the

action. And it is this welding which would be the genetic sign, which itself would not stop, if you like -- and we have seen this, all our genetic signs are extremely mobile -- which would not stop traversing the path which goes from the synsign to the binomial and from the binomial to the new synsign, that is, to the modified situation. And each time, it would not cease ensuring the passage between the situation and the action, and in this sense, it would indeed be the genetic element of the situation-action relationship.

And the last time, I ended on that by saying, well yes, that's it. This genetic sign, how will it manifest itself? A perpetual but always variable "immersion" [*imprégnation*]. The hero immerses himself in the situation, [*Pause*] and thereby he is vegetal and vegetative. What is immersed in the milieu, what is immersed in the milieu, and borrows energies from it, is what is called the plant, and the hero is vegetal. He behaves like a plant imbibing the situation. Otherwise, he would not manage to become capable of action. And having imbibed the situation, that is, having stored up the energy, which is the role of the vegetal or the plant, he bursts or causes the action to burst. [*Pause*] And that is the hero's animal pole.

And I said, well yes, I don't know if you remember, consider this, it's very interesting, take any embryology manual at all, an elementary one, for all beginners in medicine or anything. Learn about the egg which is such an exciting thing. Why do embryologists distinguish and how do they distinguish a vegetal pole and an animal pole in the egg? And what is this complementarity of the two poles? And how does that establish an entire "potential"? We would discover an embryological level. I'm not at all going to do or say, it's all the same; I am saying there, you would have a set of notions that would confirm the attempt at analysis that we are pursuing at a whole other level, namely, the differentiation of the egg from these two poles being exactly, corresponding exactly to what we call ourselves an actualization process.

And once again, I know concerning life, I know few texts as beautiful as Bergson's in *Creative Evolution* where he says, see, the "life force" [*élan vital*] is differentiated in two directions. And one yields the plant, and each has a disadvantage and an advantage: a direction, the plant that stores energy, this is a huge advantage, but the disadvantage, is that to store energy, it had to sacrifice mobility. It is immobile. And the other pole, the animal, its immense advantage is it's mobile, it acts, that is, it detonates the explosive. [*Pause*] But the huge disadvantage is it's unable to store energy. It lacks the equivalent of a chlorophyll function. And it can only manage this one way: by eating, by eating the plants that have stored up energy; through its incapacity, it's the parasite, it is the parasite of the plant. But notice that this was at the cost of a very considerable advantage that it conquered action, that it conquered mobility and action.

Well, I would say there, this action-image we are discussing is like that, and we call our genetic sign "the impression" [*l'empreinte*]. And the impression is the process continued through all the stages of the image. Since my two bipolar signs -- I would like you to understand that this is relatively meticulous -- my two bipolar signs are very far apart, like really two poles -- my two polar composition signs: the synsign, the binomial -- and therefore the sign of genesis is going to be the much more flexible sign that keeps moving from one pole to the other. So, it will really have a genetic function in relation to the signs of composition, that is, which will make possible the co-adaptation of the synsign to the binomial and of the binomial to the synsign. The character has to be immersed in the situation, and if you take the great moments in *Hamlet* -- you would

have to take a literary text to follow it step by step, but here you can do it -- the great moments of Hamlet's immersion, notably the texts, in my opinion, many of Hamlet's monologues are a kind of type of cosmic immersion, a cosmic immersion which is precisely going to make him capable of the detonating action.

Okay, so there you go, so I had my three signs, you see, synsign, binomial, impression. And I was saying -- and here, I'm going to move on very quickly, since these are things that have been analyzed, that I tried to analyze last year -- well, it's normal, if the action-image is dual, that's why I was forced to add a slot. So, notice in the graph, we had to make a new slot. If the action-image is dual, well, it is necessary that, for the affection-image which referred to Firstness, which is "one by itself", there was only one slot. And for the action-image that refers to Secondness, it is quite normal that there are two slots.²

So that, next to it, it's like, in a supreme effort [*Pause, Deleuze stands up to write on the board*], just so that you remember, there's everything we've seen before, here, I'm not starting over again. This starts very small, I have here, the action-image first form with my three signs, synsign, binomial, impression, action-image first form, and we therefore need to insert the new slot for an action-image second form.

And this action-image second form, for those who were here last year, it does not create a problem since we analyzed it at length; at first glance, it is just the opposite.³ Concerning the first form, I am adding, what is it, all that I said? I will need this notion later. It is the determination of what can be called a "sensorimotor schema". Only you see how far we are from psychology, from a too rudimentary psychology. I mean the sensorimotor schema is not the reflex arc. It is not simply the circuit that goes from an excitation to a response. What have we developed a little? Well, we romanticized, we dramatized the sensorimotor schema. And why? Well, because that's how this occurs. I mean, we are the realists; you never find yourself in life in the situation of an excitation to which you give a response. You're there, maybe at the doctor's or in the lab, at the doctor's when he taps on your knees and supposedly, if you're not deeply organically impaired, you're supposed to kick your leg! Fine, that's good, that's simple.

Well, in life, it's never like that. I mean, we shouldn't say in life, "we don't function along sensorimotor schemas"; I would prefer to say the opposite: but in life, we don't stop functioning along sensorimotor schemas. Only, the sensorimotor schema is exactly the link of a synsign to a binomial through the interplay of impressions. And we don't stop living like that, we don't stop living like that. [*Pause*] Anywhere! Imagine, imagine, you walk into a room, you've been invited, you are invited, you've been invited, at the home of people who invited you, people you don't know. And you're going to tell yourself, "Hey, I have to be sharp. My career depends on it". [*Laughter*] So, well, first off, you got dressed and all that. But you have no idea of the atmosphere where these people live. You don't know them well enough. So, hey, so, you take, if you are... then you take your chewing gum like an actor from the Actors Studio. You do everything the same, you do everything the same. Finally, you act quite simply like [Marlon] Brando.

A student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze [*laughing*]: So there, in fact, at that moment, your career is broken, in the end, you adapt it a little. What does this consist of? Or take this, it's pathetic: I arrived too late this morning, I was in traffic, so that rattled me. I arrive, I enter, I enter. There is an atmosphere in a room. There's an atmosphere. So, I start by immersing myself. And there are days when the signs are good. These are good synsigns. [*Laughter*] I tell myself: The synsign is good! There are days when the synsign is suffocating, rarefied, all that. Either your attitude appears, or you appear particularly mean and deceitful. [*Laughter*] There are days when you seem smiling, generous, all that. So, the character, me, I breathe in this atmosphere, really; I immerse myself, good. Why? Because for me, it's the moment of my weekly binomial. [*Laughter*]

Teaching a course is a duel. It's a duel; it's obvious that it's a duel, so a duel that will take on several figures. First, it's a duel with the milieu; it has all the figures of the duel, everything I am saying about the large gap. I enter, I immerse myself, and I say, "oh là, là, this task is too big for me". Already, it's too hard for me already to get from here to the door! You are there, it starts off badly, so I have my moment of doubt. [*Laughter*] I tell myself, well, am I going to manage this? Am I not going to manage this? So, I get pushed. [*Laughter*] So I tell myself, well, then, that's it; we cannot change. And then, as soon as I start -- well, put yourself in a place, not mine, I'm providing an example -- as soon as I start, it's a duel, it's a binomial, really, so a binomial that will acquire extremely varied figures, because everything is there. Let's assume it's all there. That's indeed how we live. So, fine.

I find myself in a fundamental group, your fundamental group. So, in this fundamental group, well, there is a relative homogeneity, quite relative, namely that it's more or less the same people who find themselves here; it's the audience [*le public*], it's the same audience spanning one year and sometimes two years. But I also have my encounter groups, and this is very important, my encounter groups which are much more heterogeneous. There may be one over there, another over there; I tell myself, well, and they're useful to me, and to anyone who is in the situation; they serve as reference points. And in this encounter group, I have like two kinds of allies. In the encounter group, these are necessarily allies who will enable me, in their own way, toward grandiose action [*Laughter*] which consists in teaching a course in this room. Well, well, yes, I have hostile allies, I have treacherous allies, benevolent allies, but which ones and in which cases are some more useful to me than others? I have silent allies and talkative allies, I have all of that. And that helps me, and sometimes it doesn't help me, ok, because an ally is never certain. He is always a possible traitor, an ally. So, fine, that's a whole series of binomials. I mean, I'm in a binomial relationship with the group's aggregate.

And then someone speaks up. Let's assume that, to make it painful, he offers me an objection; well, that becomes a kind of duel. All friendly, all affectionate, it's all a duel. He offers me an objection, what can you do! Or he asks me a question, which is a different type of duel. All that's fine, all that's fine, etc. And then, you see; I mean, the sensorimotor schema, it really has to be, it is constituted by these three fundamental instances and their respective relative interplay: synsign, binomial, impression. And if I'm in good shape... Sorry, right now, I'm just adding... at times when I'm in good shape, there that means I've reached the animal stage, that is, a detonating action, a detonating action. So, you say, you, you leave class saying, "Ah, he was in good shape for two minutes". [*Laughter*] Lacan was prodigious, good, Lacan.

A student: Ah, yes indeed!

Deleuze: So, he developed the vegetal pole to a point... to an intense point, but he drew from it a kind of fundamental intensity. He never stopped... I never heard him, so I'm speaking... Yes, I heard him once in Lyon, but it was not in the circumstances of his seminar. I never heard him in his seminar, but those who heard him... I was told that there were endless silences in which an atmosphere was created and where all of a sudden, a detonation – “detonation” in the sense of detonator, not in the sense of... -- in the sense of detonator, detonating an expression for which Lacan had the secret, etc., and then he became vegetal again. Anyway, there you are... Yes, do you want to say something?

Georges Comtesse: Concerning the S-A-S' spiral, when you say that this spiral, this initial inequality of a hero with a situation who needs time to measure up to the action in order to act and when you say that this tragic hero is the one who both moves away from and approaches the action in an almost oscillating movement...

Deleuze: or in spirals that move away, yes, yes...

Comtesse: Isn't that ultimately, and especially when you talk about tragic representation, isn't it already a, not a tragic representation, but an interpretation representative of tragedy, because it seems to me that what you are developing there for the action-image is nothing other than what the hero defines as moving away from or approaching an action to be performed, of his act. It is the Sartrean interpretation of tragedy, that is, something which already supposes an almost hysterical dramatization of the tragic which has already begun, for example, with the well-known hysteric who invented philosophy, who gave birth to philosophy, that is, Socrates. Socrates hysterically dramatizes Greek tragedy, he provokes the invention of philosophy, and perhaps in philosophy, a certain interpretation that Sartre will give at the end of the tragedy, namely that the tragic hero, in, for example, the play where he applied this theory which is remarkable, it's *The Flies* [*Les Mouches*, 1943], which is the one who has his act to accomplish, and it seems that he is polarized from the start by this act which is glorified finally, a kind of triumph of equality with the situation.

And that, it seems to me, has nothing to do with tragedy, but it is simply a philosophy, a philosophical, dramatic, hysterical, or transhysterical interpretation of tragedy because in tragedy, precisely finally, the hero does not act, the hero. In tragedy, even if he acts, even if he acts, even if he acts, and we feel that's what the tragic is, that he is acted on by a necessity or an undefinable [*insignifiable*] fatality, it is the undefinable [*l'insignifiable*] that whatever he does, he is determined by something he cannot mean [*signifier*] and even the viewer him- or herself cannot mean [*signifier*]. Apart from all fear and pity, it is the undefinable of all that he does. He is therefore acted upon. For example, in the past, even someone who had an echo of this dimension of tragedy and who was Roland Barthes, when he wrote a book which caused a bit of a scandal, vis-à-vis some people completely, some completely narrow-minded academics from the Sorbonne, that is, when he wrote, when he wrote *On Racine* [1964], when he said that even at that level, the tragic hero was in fact locked into a scene where he remained on the threshold of a room, the two poles of the scene being a room and the external action, there but he did not act. He was nothing more than the receptacle of the tales of the action that was done to him, and he

did not pass either into the action or into the room, he was stuck. So, he was in a state of immobility where precisely he was not really acting; he was in this immobility and in silence about what causes this immobility, and which is precisely the undefinable [*a few words inaudible*]. So, when you say, for example, that the action-image, you said that at the end of your last statement, the action-image, if we want to find an equivalent for it in psychopathology, that would be hysteria, and it would be interpreted today starting from hysteria. So, that fits well with what you're saying, but it's not so much a matter of tragedy.

Deleuze: You say so many things. Yes, for me, that's fine because I wasn't invested in tragedy. I mean, if I said the word, it's because I wanted to try to show that there was also another pole of tragedy that is going to come and that, no doubt moreover, there are not just two poles. When you say: it's not tragedy, I would be more modest. I would say: it is one of the many tragic structures or like tragedy. Because your main argument, that the tragic hero does not act, from a certain point of view, it can be very important. For example, I suppose that your invocation of Barthes's pages, I suppose that for you, this is very important because it helps you, but in completely different schemas than mine. I would like to say why it doesn't matter to me. Because if you agree, and it's no coincidence that you only remembered from my schema the interval in which the hero approaches, moves away, and you didn't take into account -- although you understood it perfectly -- of what for me, what I defined as the tragic moment par excellence, namely: the hero has become capable of action.

Now, when the hero has become capable of action, for me, that absolutely means as well that he is on or that he acts since he becomes capable of action, as when a potency which was in him only potentially -- here, I could return to all the terms you have just used --, a potency which was only potentially in him, now becomes actualized in him, at that moment, he is capable of action. Is it he who acts, is it not he who acts? For me, I would say the problem does not even arise. It does not arise. I understand that in other schemes, you can attach a lot of importance to the difference. But me, if I provided a hero whose whole structure was not yet to be capable immediately of action and to become so, at the moment that he becomes capable of action, once again, there is no longer any difference between the potency which acts on the hero and the hero who has become equal to the action. It's the same thing. The hero is the potency itself that has become, that has become actual, that has become actualized. It wasn't so at the start; at that point, he was a hero.

But when he is capable of action, whatever you want, whatever you want, then I could say exactly the same thing as you. No, but I understand that you can... fine, very well. But I insist on this because I don't want to reduce the tragedy to that at all. Since I don't even know, I would very well accept being told..., I am much more attached to the idea that this is what could be called organic representation. So, I added that this organic representation has a tragic structure under such and such an aspect. So fine, very good.

And I insisted even more on that, some examples where there is no tragedy. I was saying: we don't live in simple sensorimotor schemas; the sensorimotor schema that we keep living is of this type. As a result, I was moving on to my action-image second type, and for those who were here last year, you remember, it was very simple. It was the A-S-A' formula. But that changed everything, because it was about this: suppose this time the situation isn't..., I would say almost

there as well, it's a sensorimotor schema, but it's a reversed sensorimotor schema. This is the reverse of the previous sensorimotor schema, but still, it will not be a question only of turning it backwards.

I'm saying, the situation -- I can't even say the situation; this time, I would say the process -- the action-situation-new action process is completely different from our earlier formulation. It is not the same action-image. It is an action-image of a completely different type. And especially in cinema where you distinguish, once again, you are not mistaken, these are very different types of action-images, but also in literature. What is happening? Well, this is an action that will reveal a situation that is not given. [*Pause*] It's going to reveal a piece of the situation. You are in the dark, a blind action that will force a dark situation [*Pause*] to reveal itself, to show one of its aspects. And sometimes you are in this process. You are, at all costs, at all costs, I must do something. I don't even understand what point I've reached. This is no longer immersion at all. The situation, to you it's ... [*Interruption in the recording*] [55:47]

... You see, this is the A-S formulation, situation revealed by action, and according to what is revealed of the situation, you complete a second action A-S-A'. It is also a sensorimotor schema. But for convenience, I call it "inverted sensorimotor schema".⁴ It is no longer at all the great organic representation. You feel that it is an action-image of a completely different type. And then we would find ourselves, if I'm right, we would find ourselves -- which I couldn't do well last year -- faced with the same necessity -- it would be better, all these are attempts; if they work, we should have, in a relatively simple way, some signs of composition which would indicate a bipolarity and then a sign of genesis. -- [*Pause*]

You remember the expression for the great action from earlier, a gap, a large gap that only exists to be completed. It is clear that the second action-image refers to something quite different. When I say: an action in the dark that will force the situation to come to light, this A-S-A' process, to agree with Comtesse, I would say: well, yes, but after all, I was quite wrong to have seemed to be saying, regarding the first action-image, that's what the tragic representation is. For there are tragic representations that function much more closely to an A-S-A' model. And there are novels that function sometimes on the first type of action-image, sometimes on the other type of action-image.

You understand nothing about a situation, I tell myself, well, this very strange, very familiar tragedy, *Oedipus*, it's not at all of the S-A-S' type, so we have that. It's much more of the A-S-A' type. Oedipus completed an action, he at least knows what he did. He killed someone at the crossroads, of two roads or four roads, I don't recall. At a crossroads, he killed someone, there we have action. He is completely in the dark, he has a vague feeling. There is the diviner, the man of signs. Well, what are the signs going to be? There are the people, okay, there is the epidemic, there is a very, very obscure situation. How does it relate to the action? At first glance, not at all. And still and all, it's going to have to sort itself out somewhat, little by little -- in a kind, as is often said of *Oedipus*, in a kind of investigation -- the situation, but it occurs very gradually, reveals a particular aspect, then another to then burst forth: what you did was kill your father, he was the one who was at the crossroads.

There, it is a great tragedy typically, that's why it is even so bizarre. I would perhaps maintain a

difference with Comtesse in this regard. For me, Greek tragedy would be very much of the S-A-S' form, and *Oedipus* would already be a very, very curious paradoxical structure. That is, I take it literally, and it is a very profound statement on *Oedipus* when Nietzsche says: "*Oedipus* is the only Semitic tragedy of the Greeks". The only Semitic tragedy of the Greeks, that seems like a big statement to me. No, it is not a movement, it is not a Greek process. Anyway, we can say that; I mean, it's already on the side of a completely different atmosphere. It is a so-called tragedy of the Old Testament. It's not a tragedy... well, it doesn't matter. But I would say in any case *Oedipus* is a very, very different structure. We go from action to situation, then from situation to action.

Well yes, what is it called as a sign? You remember, at least for those who..., it's not difficult. This is what is called -- and here I can both borrow a word from Peirce and give it a completely different meaning than Peirce did -- obviously for us, it is what we will call it an "index". The action insofar as it brings a piece bit of situation to light or else the process in time that we go from an action to a revealed aspect of the situation, I would say of the action that it was an "index". The index is, this time, what in the action-image will cause the unveiling or understanding of a situation that was not given by itself, while in my first great formulation of the organic representation S-A-S', the situation was presented splendidly for itself. It was the ambiance, it was the spiral, it was everything you want, it stood for herself, it was the great circus that surrounded us. While here, I go forward blindly. At that point, it was a synsign. But here, the situation is not given. It's what I do that forces it to emerge.

So, I would call the index in quite a different way from Peirce; I would say, an index is an element of action or an "equivalent" of action. I insist on "equivalent", but you already remember for the affection-image, I had taken into account not only faces, but also what should be called "equivalents of faces". It is an action or an equivalent of action insofar as it unveils an aspect of the situation, an aspect of a situation. That's an index. I am saying an action, an equivalent of action to anticipate the objection, which is obviously immediate, and that there are indices which are things. Yes, there are indices which are things, but in any case, indices, even when they are things, they are only things insofar as they are things which allow an action to be reconstituted, and this is the action which, even through its thingification, it's the action which reveals the situation, which unveils something of the situation. So, I would say the index is what goes from the action to a situation which is not given, which is not given for someone, whether it's for the person completing the action, or whether it's for the viewer, it doesn't matter.

And such an index, that is, an element of action or an equivalent of action, which reveals a situation which is not given, what shall we call it? Well, it's a polar index, it's an index of the polar composition of the second action-image -- and I emphasize that the situation is not given -- so we'll call it -- and it's given only through the intermediary of the index, it is concluded from the index, it is implied from the index -- we therefore call it "index of lack"; we call it an index of lack since the situation is not given, the situation is not there, either because everything is dark, or because it has already passed, or... For whatever reasons this may be, it is not given. Either for reasons of decency, or, in short, for everything... whatever the reason. There is always a point of view in relation to which the situation is not given. Therefore, you will say that this index is "elliptical" in the first sense of the word "ellipse". The first meaning of the word "ellipse" is "lack", and I can speak of an "elliptical index" insofar as I go from an action to a

situation which is not given. [*Pause*] And I could even say that all of my second form action-image is elliptical while my first form action-image was spiral... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:06:16]

Part 2

... Fine, so there you are, some examples, I am thinking of examples. I did not think about it last year but... yes, I did, I already gave examples. It is constant in a cinema which, precisely, makes enormous use of the process of the ellipse.⁵ And there, it's easy to oppose the two types of action-images in cinema. It is obvious that you have action-images, and it is only through the action-image that you learn something from the situation. You see it a lot in detective films, and once again, whereas in crime films, it isn't evident. Crime films are the exposition of a milieu. This is the great S-A-S formulation. But in the detective film, the situation is particularly confused; we go from actions to partial disclosures of the situation. Well yes, that's how it is. But more interestingly, I thought that when there was that amazing [Ernst] Lubitsch movie that was shown again on TV not long ago, "Design for Living" [1933], I will choose an example. Lubitsch was known for precisely his handling of images that could be called "indexical".

So, what is an index-image in this sense, an action-image referring to a sign of the index type, and an index of lack? I will take an example that particularly struck me, because "Design for Living" is still quite a film. We have never seen a film in which a young woman demanded -- and this is from 1930 or 1933, I don't know -- demanded her right, with so much innocence and faith, the right to live with two men without any pretense. And it's very odd because even today, this still seems like a very odd film, very... she's so natural. There is no drama, no guilt or even demands; it goes without saying, it goes so much without saying that it's a very fine success; I can say it's a film, I can say, ahead of its time, even ahead of now, I believe.

Well, there is an image that seemed to me entirely satisfactory. Obviously, the two lovers are two friends themselves, they are very close to each other, and there is one who has finally just conquered the young woman, the day before. I call that one A. And then the next day, he comes, and he finds his friend, his best buddy B, in the early morning, and he finds him in a tuxedo. Nothing is said. That's pure Lubitsch, right? He finds him in a tuxedo. I would say, it is interesting because it is a type of image if I wanted to explain what an image is, which includes, as an image, an implicit reasoning. Very odd, it is already a reasoning-image. Imagine yourself in that case, there; your thought is immediate: either you don't understand anything, it can happen, either you don't understand anything, or you suddenly understand, the reasoning is in the image itself. Namely: to be so well dressed in the morning in evening clothes, he must have spent the night there. And there, the reasoning is absolutely immediate; the reasoning is in the image. And friend A says to friend B: "Well, say, what is happening?" and the other looks up modestly, etc., and we understand that in two days, the young woman had both men. Well, that's very interesting.

Here is an index-image, here is an index that we can call an index of lack.⁶ The situation is not given. Moreover, Lubitsch can play with absolute modesty. His hero is overdressed; it is precisely because the hero is overdressed in a special outfit that we conclude that he was in extremely intimate contact with the young woman during the night. So, you conclude, this time,

the outfit is equivalent to an action; the outfit is a habitus, that is, a behavior. And in Lubitsch's films, clothes are always behaviors. They are experienced and presented as behaviors in action. This is his "great tailoring" side. Well then, the action is equivalent to a situation that is not given. You have an index of lack functioning fully, functioning admirably. It can make splendid images.

Note that already, at the level of creation, understand, it looks very simple. But to achieve an image like that, I think it's not bad, because, think of, in bad films, what is shown to signal that the man and the woman have just slept together? It's heavy, right? [*Laughter*] I don't think it's an exaggeration indeed to speak of Lubitsch's genius. He will never show that, he will never do it like that; he'll show an overdressed guy to show and so we might immediately infer from this that earlier, they were naked. It's a marvel, it's a very beautiful image, a very beautiful image. So, we can see very well, well... There, this is a process, we're in the midst of an A-S-A' process. See, there's A, the guy in the tuxedo; that reveals a situation -- so he was there -- an elliptical situation, a situation that wasn't shown -- so he spent the night there -- and that will generate action A', that is, a new type of relationship between the two friends. And then, it's going to move forward like that in a multiplied, developed A-S-A' process.

Only, it's not just that. I almost tell myself that this is very important, but it is too simple, too simple. I see another case. Needless to say, I was quoting Lubitsch's images, but that's constant too; all comedy is full of that. It's also constant in [the film series of] Charlot, and even more so in Chaplin's films, constant. These ellipses, the art of the ellipse, has a very important origin in comedy and burlesque. But I tell myself, wouldn't there be a case all the same, another type of index? There I feel... we infer this less than in the previous case, but precisely, it is good that it varies. I had a synsign, and then I needed... The synsign, it was the organization of the periphery, of the surrounding world, and then the binomial, the duel, it happened at the center. So there, I had my two poles given in advance.

There I find myself a little blocked; I tell myself, oh well, what else could we find as an index? What else is there? Is there another type of index? I am imagining a type of index that cannot be reduced to this first one that I call for convenience "index of lack". You see, we conclude by direct inference or even by very rapid reasoning; I prefer it when there is very rapid reasoning in the image, it's very, very good, it makes the best images. Well, then you conclude from a partially disclosed situation, from action to partially disclosed action, are there no other indices?

I'll choose a very simple example, an idiotic example: you enter a room, someone has a knife, and there is a corpse off to one side. Okay, he's holding the knife. You recognize here a constant image in films noirs. I would say: it is an index, OK, but an index of what? We know the problem; this is the famous problem: is he holding the knife because he is the assassin or is he holding the knife because he has just unwisely pulled it out of the wound upon discovering the corpse? And the innocent person assumed to be guilty will fully fit into this type of index. This time, it's another structure, it's not... If I try to do my first index, the index of lack, I can do it exactly like this [*Pause; Deleuze writes on the blackboard*]. I go from action, from an action equivalent to the partial disclosure of a situation. This is why I put S in parentheses, to indicate that S is not given for itself, that S is only given, but as concluded, is not even given, but is presented, not even presented, but is concluded, is inferred from the action. So, the index of lack

would have this pattern, if that's suits you.

I say, the other index is... [Pause] my story, there, I'm holding the knife... [Pause, Deleuze writes on the board] I would say, that's it... it doesn't look very clear but... [Long pause while Deleuze writes on the board] ... Right? See, it's very clear. [Pause] I mean, you find yourself faced with an action or an equivalent of action from which you simultaneously infer two situations very different from each other, which I could have marked with this sign between S' and S'', from which you simultaneously infer two situations very distant from each other. [Pause] What is that? About that, it doesn't matter. It can be revealed, or it can even be immediate; there are all kinds of variations if you follow me in this pattern. That's why I made both a solid line and a dotted line. One of the two situations can be revealed as immediately illusory, only one being real. [Pause] That is, one of the two situations was simply possible, but immediately denied. I am saying, it doesn't matter; even if it is very quickly denied, it had time to produce its full effect. It doesn't matter, it doesn't change anything, these are small variations in this pattern: either it's both situations that are illusory, or it's the two situations that are real, or even, and it's the best case, they are exchanged. Under the index, the situation that was illusory becomes real and the one that was real becomes illusory. This is a particularly complicated case, but it is obviously the most beautiful.

You see that this type of index, if it exists, is of a completely different nature than my first index which I called "the index of lack". Let's quote, I cited examples last year, there I... let's quote very quickly. So, for Lubitsch as well, you constantly have the situation, certain indices which, which leave you in a sort of -- no problem, because nothing is troubling in Lubitsch's films -- but that interests you. You ask yourself, well after all, does the young woman love the guy or is she after his money? You understand that if Lubitsch likes these situations so much, it's because according to him, there is no answer, it's a stupid question. But despite being a stupid question, as Kant would say, it's an unavoidable illusion, it's an unavoidable question. It has no answer. Is it all about the money? First, does the question make any sense? But anyway, it gets asked naturally. Is it this or is it that? You see that here, the situation changes completely depending on whether she loves him for his money, for the comfort he gives her, for the luxury, etc., or else depending on whether she loves him, as one says, for himself. These are two completely different situations, but what causes this perpetually to be sent back from one to the other? I would say in this case, sometimes even, one must choose, sometimes one says, oh yes, that image shows that she really loves him. With the next image, one says: ah, that image shows instead that she's after his money.

And there are the most beautiful cases where, in the course of the image, the two distant situations, I'd even say opposable ones, will be switched. The distant situations always being opposable at this level in this action-image to any degree at all, the two opposable situations can be switched, and Lubitsch made a great film on this, about opposable situations which are switched; it is his best known film and one of his most beautiful, it is "To Be or Not To Be" [1942] in which, there, the switch of situations is really a question of life or death. But that doesn't matter in the end, whatever the variations.

For what makes us perpetually vary? And what even causes situations to keep changing, the real and the illusory, all that? Well, it's because the action, I come back to A, my question concerns S

and S': what happens in A, there, in this type of indices which were not in the first A, in the first type of indices? It's because, in fact, to distinguish the two types of indices, it's not at all, it's not quite the same kind of actions. Follow me closely, these are rather special actions or equivalents of actions, namely that they are somewhat cracked, which I would say, are as if crossed by, or straddling, a small difference. They are astride a small difference. I mean, the action shown to us, A, envelops in itself a small difference, like a phase shift. And this happens all the time, but very lightly. That's why I use a term that implies like a differential -- a difference, I'm speaking literarily, not in strict mathematics -- an infinitely small difference.

Or else, which amounts to the same thing, it's not A, it is two extremely similar actions, almost identical, two actions that are so alike – it amounts to the same thing, what I am saying – or else two actions that resemble each other so much that they are only one, or else a single action which is traversed by a very small difference which makes it almost seem to be split, split in an infinitely small way. A famous image in a [film in the series of] Charlot: we see him from behind with a portrait of a woman, the camera films him from behind, and we see a portrait of a woman. And from what we can judge, his back is shaking with what can only be deep sobbing, his back shaking with what can only be deep sobbing, that is, this is an action. You infer from this that the woman's portrait -- there's everything you need in the image, I don't know, or we know it in advance, I can't remember -- his wife is gone. So, S' is therefore that the action or element of action "being shaken" or "having one's back shaken" referring to the situation of despair: she's gone, the woman I love is gone. And then, Charlot turns, and we realize that he was rhythmically preparing a cocktail. [*Laughter*] He was shaking his arm: S", namely: what joy, I'm finally free. [*Laughter*] The situations S' and S" are strictly opposable. The same action, the same element of action, the contorted back, implied the two situations as opposable, on what condition? Provided that there was a small crack in the gesture that allowed one as well as the other.⁷

And indeed, that might be a criterion. We could have, [if] the same scene were played by bad actors or non-actors, I'm sure they wouldn't realize and they wouldn't be able to leave it vague, is it this or is it that? I call leaving it vague, not that we guess in advance, but when we realize that it's a cocktail he's preparing, we don't at all tell ourselves that the movements, that the back convulsions we've just seen are the least exaggerated. They are funny, of course, it was necessary, I would say your choice, these two actions so similar that the actor was able to render them in the same way, or it is the same action imbued with a difference so small that was not immediately noticeable.

And here is my second type of index. So, I would say that what I call a second type of index is an action or an equivalent of action that – you see, here I'm trying to give a strict definition even if that makes too complicated a sentence -- that, insofar as it envelops an infinitely small difference, implies two very distant or even opposable situations. This is my second kind of index. [*Pause*] I would say this time, so much the better for me, that this second kind of index is elliptical, but in the second sense of the word "ellipse", the geometric figure. In fact, S', then S form a bifocal [*double foyer*], ellipse being described by A. [*Pause*] And I will call this index, so as not to confuse it with the indices of lack, index – it's a choice – "of distance", since the situations it implies are opposable or very distant. It will therefore be an "index of distance" if I insist on the opposability of the situations, that is, the distance between the bifocal. Or else, if I insist, on the contrary, on A insofar as traversed by an infinitely small difference, an "index of

equivocity". [Pause]

So, you see that my formula A-S-A' has an expression which is opposed point by point to the earlier great formula of S-A-S. Earlier I said that the S-A-S formula is a big gap that only exists to be completed, and now I can say that A-S-A' is a small difference that only exists to imply very distant situations. [Pause] From this I can say, [Pause] from this I can say, well here we are, we have them, our two clues. The two signs of composition of the action-image are the index of lack and the index of distance. So does that exhaust all of that? No, we feel the answer is no, it does not exhaust it. Fortunately, it's not exhausted because I tell myself that there is still something else. There is something else. It is that I only considered a sequence. In any case, in my two examples, I indeed said, but it was half-hearted, that it was prolonged subsequently, A-S-A', S', etc., S'' in the first formulation, in my first index, and in the second index, it will also be prolonged, in the switch of situations which once again seems to me the most beautiful case, the switch of situations.

Because you notice that in this formulation, what is interesting is that nothing is ever guaranteed, it is pure danger. It's not at all like that in S-A-S, where the hero becomes capable of the action, and if he succeeds in the action, that's it. Here, it is questioned at every moment, it will never be over. In other words, there are no more heroes. In other words, what is this about? Although we can laugh, whether it's Lubitsch or it's Charlot, these are exercises of survival, it's case by case, case by case with a hope: that the situation turns out well. What do I call "that the situation turns out well"? Whether it is S'' and not S', or the reverse, and one moves forward blindly, and it will work out. Well, it'll work out twice, three times, will it work out the fourth time? That's not certain. We're like on a tightrope, indeed, a tightrope, it's like we're on a rope.

So, this rope refers to the element which I did not hold. It's because I was freezing a sequence, but the real sequence is -- I could write it like this, I have no more space, [Deleuze points to the board] here it is -- A, how I could write it, ah! S1, S2, fine, A', A'1, S'2, etc., each time, it can stop. If I call S2 the mortal situation, S1 the survival situation; every time I take a risk, every time I place a bet, I risk falling into S2. If it is not "mortal" or "about survival", it is "an unfortunate situation", for example, for the man, to be loved only for his money, and "a good situation", finally to be loved for himself, etc., always, you understand? Each time, I will never have proof of something like that; one has to start over each time, so all that is tiring, all that wears you out. One has nothing more to admit [avouer], every time, every time like that. What's it going amount to? One must continue. And then what are you going to get?

So, a rope that unites, on which each knot, if you will, each knot of the rope will be formed by, first node: A-S1-S2; second knot: A'-S'1-S'2; third knot, this this time in a temporal process, third knot: A''-S''1-S''2, etc. And each knot of the rope [Pause] will be valid for itself, will be a kind of present brought to its maximum intensity. It will be a present, an event valid in itself, brought to its maximum intensity. Why? Because, at each knot occurs the possible reversal. Is this the time it's going to happen to me? You find that constantly in the neo-Western.⁸ There is no longer a grandiose action at all; there is a guy who constantly wonders if this might be the time that he meets his end. And if it's not this time, it will be the next, and he knows it. The situation can turn around at each level. Fine. And you have a knotted rope, like that, which is extended, which is extended, or else which is abruptly interrupted, and this knotted rope can be defined like this: it

directly unites heterogeneous instants to one another, A, A', A'', each time with the possibility that the situation might be reversed. [*Pause*]

And last year, I came up with a word to designate this kind of... it's like a broken line, it's not a straight line.⁹ It is a broken line which goes from one event to another, and which nevertheless is the only possible line. That is, it is the line of a destiny -- in another sense of the word "destiny" --, there is no other possible line. So, in a sense, it is straighter than a straight line, there is no one other possible. It was the only way to go from one such event to another such event, each of these events being independent, each being brought to the maximum of its intensity, in such a way that at the level of each, the situation was reversible, reversible. It's like a line of adventure, it's like a "line of wandering", says Anne Querrien -- e-r-r-e [wandering] --, and last year, I proposed to you to call it, because it was convenient and it would be greatly useful to us, a "line of the universe" or a "fiber of the universe". Well, it's the same, the fiber of the universe is a knotted rope. And all of you have it, I mean, I would like to persuade you that you have your preferences, you have your privileges in our table of images and signs. But what are you? Every one of you and every one of us, and everything? Well, I'm dreaming now; I'm thinking that we are all, each one of us, is a little bundle of images, a little bundle of images with signs, with signs planted in them.

There we are, which is a big step forward in English philosophy because I remember a text that was very, very beautiful, a text by Thomas Hardy, which says "the bundles of sensations, beings are a bundle of sensations". So, we can say more, yes: "You are a bundle of images with signs planted in them". Very good. There's enough to live for, it's not sad news at all, right? This is what defines everything that is, everything that is deep and great in you; if you were not that, you would be nothing. Simply, then the images... No one can ever say to themselves: I am only one image. I am only one image, and I am only one sign, that would be silly. It would be impossible. That wouldn't just be silly, it would be contradictory... [*Interruption of the recording*]

... spending your future, I mean, it's very interesting for life, because it happens to us all the time; I'm saying here, we are all crossed by a knotted rope. I'm calling the knotted rope that crosses us, it's when we become aware of this: oh my god, I would never have believed it, I had to go through that to get here. While the straight line seemed possible, there is never a straight line, there is never a straight line. In life, there is absolutely never a straight line. But there are lines that never cease being lines straighter than straight. I mean that there is never a line that would go from "doing scales" to "playing the piano", even though this line has to exist, even though you have to do scales to manage to play the piano. But the lines of life, the kind of knotted rope, there, which crosses us, it goes from one event to a heterogeneous event, it connects them directly, head-on.

And we are amazed when we say to ourselves, in fact, it was when I was back there, when I was in a particular place and where I was absolutely not thinking, that is what was decisive for an event that happened twenty years later. It's more amusing than the search for unconsciousness, to make a graph with knotted ropes that cross us, these are lines of the universe. And the lines of the universe can abort, can get stuck in the sand, can fall into a black hole.

Anne Querrien: It's the rhizome.

Deleuze: Yes, it's very much a rhizome, all the lines of the universe. From which we can add, because the line of the universe therefore indeed belongs to a type of image, but at the same time, it entails them all. What we are, then, are packets of images where signs are planted and through which lines of the universe cross. With all the little flags that are planted on us, we follow the lines of the universe, we encounter each other, or we collide with each other, or... etc. There we are.

So, I have my third sign. What is this knotted rope, this fiber of the universe? It's [the rope] that obviously holds the secret of the signs that I called indices or signs of composition. It's [the rope] that constantly engenders or constantly puts us in the presence of returnable, reversible situations. It's [the rope] that ensures our survival or, on the contrary, ensures there's no longer a problem, that is, we throw ourselves into, into the end, right? It's [the rope]. As a result, it is necessary to hold it well, this rope. This rope is the only concrete image that I place under the name of psychic health. So, if you let it go, you understand... So, let's give it a word then. What is the sign of this fiber of the universe, of this rope? It is quite simple; we shall call signs of this nature "vectors." It rests because it is a simple word; these are vectors; these are vectors that go from A to A' to A", etc. And they are the one that will indeed be the genetic sign. I would say that the vector is the genetic sign, [Pause] right, of the second form of action-image whose composition signs were the index of lack and the index of distance. So, I have my three signs, everything is fine, phew: index of lack, index of distance, vector, for the second form of action-image. [Pause] And here, I'd almost like, so that we could relax... what time is it?

A student: 10 past noon.

Deleuze: So, we might relax; I'd like to, I'm thinking of a kind of cinema I admire a lot, and last year, I couldn't talk about it because it didn't come naturally. I tell myself, and by the way, you understand, if I develop a little bit on cinema, what fascinates me is... Suppose that we are faced with the two forms of image-action, S-A-S and A-S-A. It's complicated, because...? What?

Claire Parnet: On one hand, there's the A-S-A' situation and the S-A-S' situation...

Deleuze: They're intermixed.

Claire Parnet: Yes, they're completely intermixed since, moreover, that corresponds historically to the turning point in the Western, the old and the new Western. That is, that there is, from the beginning in an awful tale, Robert Redford who kills someone on the road, but in fact, he's not the one who killed him. And he goes from knot to knot, and he knows from the beginning that it will go badly for him, with the two poles: "Is he going to out of it? and "Won't he get out of it?" At the end, he doesn't get out of it. And intertwined with that is the tale of a sheriff, an updated version, but finally who is exactly the copy of the old sheriffs, which is Marlon Brando [*This film is "The Chase" (1966)*] who understands that, from the start, the situation is rotten, who is immersed in it, who gradually understands that the whole town of fascist Texans takes him for a guy bought by the rich landowner, who is preparing to act throughout the film, immersed in it, immersed in it, immersed in it, getting ready to act, but he can never act, he will get beaten up first. And everyone will be dead in the end, and he will leave because that life is no longer possible.

Deleuze: One of the very interesting things in what you are saying, it seems to me, is if we were to create a theory of the actor then, it's that you have two generations of American actors...

Parnet: And the new actor, who is Redford, is no longer at all, from the start is an animal, that is...

Deleuze: The Actors Studio, which is really the great form "ah I'm immersed in it and then I explode, ah I'm immersed in it and then I explode", [*Laughter*] and then which never happens, that has produced great, great actors. Brando, in fact, when he's shown in a close-up on his mouth, he's chewing, he's really immersed in it. And then, it will explode, we know it in advance, and then we wait for the next immersion. [Paul] Newman, Newman, when Hitchcock said, "I could never get a neutral gaze from Newman." And yet, he's a very great actor, but as for behaving like everyone else, no, he always has to seem to be drawing something out of the situation. So, you understand, for Hitchcock, it's difficult, when the actor involves himself in attempting to draw something out of the situation. For Hitchcock, it's ruined; all he can do is... he can't use actors like that.

So, in fact, what is very interesting is that Redford is typically an actor of the generation, or else you choose what to call it, an actor of the second-generation Actors Studio or even completely outside of the Actors Studio, this is the new generation.

Parnet: [*Inaudible comment; Parnet attempts to comment while Deleuze keeps talking*]

Deleuze: Where here, they live, in fact, on fibers of the universe in the pure state, they live on a vector, they are actors as vectors, really. And you really have both there... Yes, so I was saying, which completely confirms what Claire just said, because you see, what interests me greatly is that, on one hand, you have many possible cases. You have great filmmakers who obviously have a marked predilection for this or that form, [*while Deleuze speaks, we hear Parnet's voice discussing with someone not far from Deleuze*] the large form or the small form, the first or the second. And that does not prevent them, however, as sometimes to take a break or from budgetary needs or due to the producers' demands, to create a masterpiece of the other form, but they still have a preference. And then you have strange ones, which seem to have no preference. I think of a guy like [Howard] Hawks who can just as well switch forms, and he mixes, mixes very, very cleverly, very, very curiously, and I'm not saying he does it consciously. It's because, in my opinion, he has access to a form which is open to transformation, that is, he has access to a transforming form [*forme à transformation*]. In Hawks' work, it's very, very odd, a sort of transforming form that will allow him to be constantly... and that can be very interesting. It is not necessarily, they are not necessarily better than others.¹⁰

And then, what determines the choice, large form or small form, the choice of one action-image or the other? We could state it, but this would be only very partially true, the money that's available, the small A-S-A form is less expensive. That might be true, and in fact, we talked about it not long ago. The series B, what's called series B, has obviously been one of the great constitutive elements of the second action-image.

Parnet: The knotted rope is less expensive than the spiral.

Deleuze: Surely, surely, and [less expensive] than the large sets. A situation that we hardly see is cheaper. But that does not prevent the second type of action-image from requiring the big screen and manifesting itself on the big screen and needing the big screen, and needing quite sumptuous decors and colors, but this is not the same treatment of color, which would be even more complicated. It's not the same treatment of the big screen. As we have sometimes said, it is a horizontal staging [*mise en scène*], the big screen being used for a horizontal staging, which is not always the case.

But think of Anthony Mann who is typically of the second form of action-image with the constantly reversible situation, the knotted rope, the fiber of the universe. Anthony Mann would be a typical exponent of this action-image genre in his use of the big screen, and besides, his movies didn't cost less. But he started with a long period of series B films, but ultimately, his films did not cost less than the others.¹¹ So it's not at all an economic difference, it's, what causes a guy to tell himself... or else he's very good at it, there's a mystery, exactly as there are styles. His style goes in that direction, he sees in a particular way. It's two ways of seeing, these two types of action-images; I insist on this, it's two ways of seeing. It is not only two forms of images, that is, two processes for constituting an image. It is more profoundly two ways of seeing, with the possibility, once again, for a transformative form.

And I would like to talk about what I hadn't talked about at all. There is a case that seems extraordinary to me, it is not only a way of seeing things. It is more deeply, I would say, an idea or an essence, that is, it's about philosophy. Finally, as is fitting, there is a Greek word: "eidos". "Eidos" means three things: the form, the sight or way of seeing -- we have just seen these two -- and third, it also means essence. How do these two types of images refer to essences? [*Pause*] Essences, I would say, are not persons, nor are they abstract things; they are what I would call themes, kinds of intuitions that penetrate someone, who become defined as the task to which he is called.¹² You remember Proust's pages on the yellow, the little wall, Vermeer's famous little wall that is like an essence, but this essence is but one with the task for which Vermeer seems to have been incarnated, namely, to place the paint stroke on this little piece of yellow wall.

Okay, so I'm thinking of a guy, I'm thinking of [Werner] Herzog, which doesn't mean at all that he's greater than the other authors we're talking about; I'm not making any value judgment here. I tell myself, here is a very odd person because he has always been... imagine someone who is faced with two tasks. I'm no longer saying it's like it was for Hawks. For Hawks, I was saying that he is someone who has access and who is a master, who invented a transformative form such that he can easily pass from S-A-S to A-S-A. He is elsewhere, he has his own approach. No matter, this approach would take too much time for us. But Herzog is a whole different case because this occurs at the level of what's in his head. See, I am creating a gradation: the technical form, once again, the way of seeing and what someone has in his head, that is, the idea.

Herzog only has two ideas, but these two ideas are huge, do you realize? If only we had that many! He has two ideas which come back to him in the most varied forms. And the problem for me is: do these two ideas intermix? Is it the same somewhere, even deeper, is it the same? He is haunted; it's the idea that haunts you. Well, Herzog is haunted by two things. He is haunted by

the idea of someone conceiving of an insane and grandiose task, and because it would be insane and grandiose, he would succeed at it, or even failing at it, he would still succeed at it. [*Pause*] That's a crazy idea, really. Why? What does that mean? You see that he is on the side, to translate into my terms, he is on the S-A-S side, but under very specific conditions. This is not the situation that requires a grandiose action. No; he could care less. He has to present us with a madman who is crazy enough to have a grandiose project. Henceforth, he is fundamentally equal to the action; he does not even have to become equal to the action, he is already there. He's already there, and he is there in his absolute certainty. This is the cogito of madness, really. And in one sense, the more this act, or the more this task is disproportionate, the more he will be equal to it. This is one path, and then there's another path.

Suppose the same man... suppose you are interested in this question. Suppose, this is what I call... suppose that interests you, here we are not in the area of "is he wrong or is he right?". He's going to create a work from this; either he's going to create a good work from this or he's going to create get a mediocre work from it, fine. But we're not going to argue; we are not going to tell him, "you are wrong". What would that mean? It's his problem. If someone says to me: "Well, for me, you see, my problem..." -- that's what happens to me sometimes when I criticize students when they want to do a specific research project: it's because they haven't found their problem, so they have no reason to start the project, and they ask the teacher, they ask the teacher to invent the problem for them. But they cannot. I cannot make up someone else's problems. You must above all have your own. Otherwise, while there's nothing wrong, otherwise, the time has not yet come to work for yourself, that is obvious. – So, Herzog has that, fine. He considers that while it's a bit twisted, it's an interesting idea. Let's imagine characters who are equal to the grandiose action. One condition: the grandiose action must not be presented as ready-made, it must germinate from their brains, from their enlightened brains. These are visionary people [*illuminés*]. He will push the S-A-S formulation all the way to the visionaries. In this way, he will transform it greatly, greatly, greatly.

And then, he has the other problem at the same time. He could just stop there, it would be possible. But no, at the same time, he has the other problem which is: how to imagine some poor guys, such poor guys that they follow weaklings, idiots who cling to a line of the universe -- we are in the ASA formulation --, but in conditions such that they will never grasp how a knot can join another knot, might connect to another knot. And they will be completely lost because, faced with any action, however small it may be to accomplish, and faced with any reversible situation, they will be radically defenseless, the defenseless idiot, the radically defenseless idiot, the radically defenseless creature, on one hand. And on the other hand, the visionary who by nature is equal to the most disproportionate action imaginable.

Suppose this is his double problem, he doesn't reason it through, that's what interests him. He is going to create for us sometimes a work of one type and sometimes a work of the other type. And still, he will have to divulge some secrets. And himself then? This is where the relationship of someone's life and work are interesting. Himself, he once had a very strange idea, he learns that an elderly lady to whom he believes he owes a lot, and for whom he has a lot of respect, namely Lotte Eisner, is very ill in Paris.¹³ And he himself is, I don't know where, in the depths of the Black Forest or in Prussia, well he's very far away. [*Querrien whispers to him: In Munich*] In Munich? In Munich, he is? Anyway, and he feels a line of the universe, and he says: "I have to

go there, I have to go there; I must go see her, otherwise she will die. If I don't go, she'll die. I have to go there on foot, if I don't go there on foot..." Why does he want to go there on foot? He keeps his logbook -- which I don't find very good and which came out in French, translated into French -- the diary of his trip, there, and there is... -- proving that you should never be in too much of a hurry to close a book, you have to try to go to the end -- on the last page, there is a sentence that affected me so much that I told myself... But here, I forgot to bring it, so I won't read the sentence to you. But especially since it's in a subordinate clause, he says it as a matter of course, whereas he hasn't said a word about it before, he says: "Like those [people] who walk ..." -- but it is in a subordinate clause of the type "Since ... like those [people] who walk", during this whole journey, I had been "defenseless".¹⁴

I tell myself, well shit, there's an idea indeed! That's an idea, it's still something you live through. An idea is to say, "there I have an idea", you don't know what it means, this idea. Someone walking is radically defenseless. So, we see right away that there are levels of the idea that are rather flat. I can understand the idea by saying, "ah well, yes, in our age of automobiles, the pedestrian is defenseless". And I can't say, you shouldn't laugh too quickly either, because I can't say that this zone doesn't belong to the idea; it is too obvious that this zone belongs to the idea. This does not prevent the idea, "The walking man is fundamentally defenseless", the question is not whether it is true or false; the question is: what does it open to us? What does it bring us?

So, I'll choose a good example. If [the ideas] do not echo in you, if it does not echo in you, you leave it aside, it is not for you, no matter; if it echoes a little on you, in you, you make it your own. You make it your own, you'll have to find it. You will have to find within yourself what that means. If you stick to external associations, the pedestrian and the car, it is because it is not for you, although these associations are correct.

And so, what will happen in Herzog's cinema? He will make both ends meet; he's going to take, you see, those two edges. He holds on by the S-A-S edge and by the A-S-A edge. And the edge, it's going to be the enlightened guy who has an idea so crazy [*Pause*] that even failing, he will execute it. And what does that produce? If I suggest indisputable characters, in indisputable films -- we will see that there will be ambiguities, fortunately -- this is obviously "Aguirre, [The Wrath of God]" [1972]. The insane idea [is], not about betraying the king, that's nothing, but betraying everything, managing to betray everything, everything. How to betray everything at once? -- That's not easy; that's really a clear idea -- how to betray everything at once? And the idea is not really finished: how to betray everything in order to establish or reestablish an original empire of pure race formed by the incestuous union of himself and his daughter? That's what you can call a grand undertaking, [*Laughter*] but see, it's not at all a grand S-A-S-type undertaking anymore, it's on the edge of S-A-S, it has become the grandiose action of the visionary. Another film unquestionably in this direction, what is it? "Heart of Glass" [1976], no... what? Yes, "Heart of Glass" where there is, that I find a very, very beautiful film which is a big, big undertaking, a big undertaking of this type.

Let's go to the other side. All these kind of idiots, such moving genius idiots and so incredible that Herzog creates, so, it's "[Kaspar] Hauser" [1974], the man who walks, it's the defenseless creatures. He is the one who imposes on cinema a type of people, of such defenseless characters, so radically deprived of defense that one would cry, and at the same time, they walk, they are

characters who walk. So, he was able to convey in some very beautiful images, in my opinion, the idea, the mysterious idea that he had earlier: you really have to be an idiot to walk, and to walk, that means being defenseless. But I'll be that idiot, fine; Hauser, the painful march, is, well, his character deprived of all defenses.

And in what for me is Herzog's masterpiece, "La Balade de Bruno" [1977; "Stroszek"], there we are introduced to the character who by nature, he says it all the time himself: "I am defenseless. My illness is to be defenseless. The illness from which I suffer, is to be defenseless". And when he asks the splendid question, in front of his piano, there, and in front of his friend's musical instrument, the little one, the little dwarf, when he asks the splendid question: "and who will tell me where objects go when they no longer have any use? And who will tell me..." Again, the easy answer is to say that it goes into the garbage. But no doubt, does he want a metaphysical answer to this metaphysical question? Just like when he said, or Herzog said, "he who walks is defenseless," it wasn't just about saying defenseless against cars. It concerned a lack of defense that was not only physical, but metaphysical. So, so here, "La Balade de Bruno", and he will follow a fiber of the universe that will take him from Germany to America in his discovery, in this kind of discovery of America, this is really the stroll [*balade*] in the sense of both a chanted poem and a stroll.

Fine, but there are much more ambiguous films. I would say the third in which there is the great weakling who is absolutely defenseless, it is that it's complicated, and yet he is the assassin. That doesn't prevent him from being the defenseless creature par excellence, it's "Woyzeck" [1979], it's "Woyzeck". It even makes up the trilogy of the defenseless ones whose character I believe Herzog understood very, very well, conforming both to the play and to the opera: that it is the weakling who precisely, because he is arrived at this state of radical nudity of defenses, of a radical collapse of defenses, henceforth was joined in a certain way to the very powers of the earth. And there, in this union of the weakling, of the idiot with the powers of the earth, the idiot is going to commit what could, in appearance, send us back to the other pole, that is, a kind of grandiose, insane action, namely blood, blood, blood, namely the assassination of Marie which mobilizes the whole earth exactly like the story of Cain and Abel mobilized the whole earth. Fine, so your choice, I mean something like "Nosferatu" [1979], what is "Nosferatu", which pole is it? I don't know, I don't care; in the end, I don't care. But what is interesting is that there is evidently in Herzog's mind, and in his work, a virtual point which perhaps he will never achieve or perhaps he will not manage to make the necessary image. Perhaps he will not be able to find the set of images that would account for this virtual point where the two edges of the action-image reveal a kind of fundamental identity.

Comtesse: But precisely [*a few unclear words due Querrien speaking to someone*] one of Herzog's films where all the singularities of the edge, whether it's the creation of an empire or whether it's the kind of wandering of Kaspar Hauser or Bruno's stroll, there is a film in which an image that joins and that can be the secret of these specific singularities, it is the end of "Heart of Glass".

Deleuze: Yes!

Comtesse: ... where we are no longer in singularities of the edge, but we are suspended on the

verge of the abyss...

Deleuze: I believe you are right.

Comtesse: ... no longer the edge, no longer the singularity of the edge, but the verge [*bord*]. And precisely, whether the impulsion is murderous or suicidal, for Herzog, it still belongs to a verge, an event on the verge...

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, I think that would prove you right, I'm like you, I tell myself that it's "Heart of Glass" which is... surely not, necessarily, Herzog's best film, but that doesn't keep it which is perhaps the film where he came closest to a kind of reunion, not at all thought through, but a lived reunion of these themes, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Comtesse: At the end, all the characters are suspended on the rock, and there is an extraordinary circular traveling shot in several takes, and they are immobilized at the edge.

Deleuze: Quite right, quite right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A woman student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze: Yes, but there, I can't talk about it, I haven't seen it, I haven't seen it, I'd like to see it, yes. But that's yours, in my opinion, the dwarves, that must be... the dwarves, the dwarf character, he's also a defenseless being.¹⁵

The student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze: That's it, the defenseless being has a fundamental contact with nature, obviously, which means that perhaps, precisely, he will tip over to the other side insofar as the power of nature suddenly takes hold of him. In the case of "Woyzeck", it is still striking. The murder, Marie's assassination is, in this respect, is so much to be discussed, that is, brings together both the radically defenseless being and the power of the earth which will put a weapon in his hand, finally, all that is part of, of images that I'm no longer talking about at the cinema level, but theatrical and musical images so strong that we can talk about it endlessly.

So then, you see, I wanted to say, these forms, of course, however much I do my classifications, they will be overwhelmed at every moment. That is, here, there is a new one, then a type of sign in Herzog's work, however much I want to say that it is a compound of all that. In fact, it's not a compound of all that; these are still special signs, the sign of the idiot, it's a special sign, all that. This is to say that I am proceeding, I'm doing the minimum, otherwise we can go on to infinity, which is extremely joyful.

And so, if I have time, what time is it? Twenty to. We'll stop, you've had enough, I can't go on anymore. So, I've almost finished, I've almost finished this classification of signs, and I'll explain when we return after break what we're going to do along this line, as a result of that. [*End of the recording*] [2:18:05]

Notes

¹ Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New* (New York: Da Capo, 1959).

² Consult the glossary that Deleuze adds after Chapter 12 in *The Movement-Image*, pp. 217-218; most of these signs are there but certain ones are missing, other are added.

³ See sessions 16 and 17 of Cinema seminar 1, April 27 and May 4, 1982.

⁴ On this inversion and what Deleuze calls the small form action-image, see chapter 10 in *The Movement-Image*, especially pp. 160-161.

⁵ See especially session 16 in the Cinema 1 seminar, April 27, 1982.

⁶ On indices in Lubitsch, see *The Movement-Image*, pp. 161-163.

⁷ For examples from the "Charlot" series, see *The Movement-Image*, pp. 169-171; see also especially session 18 of the Cinema 1 seminar, May 11, 1982.

⁸ On the neo-Western, see *The Movement-Image*, pp. 164-168.

⁹ See session 15 of Cinema seminar 1, April 20, 1982.

¹⁰ On the choice of forms in Hawks, see session 16 of Cinema seminar 1, April 27, 1982, and also *The Movement-Image*, p. 178.

¹¹ On Mann, see *The Movement-Image*, pp. 167-168.

¹² On the "eidos", see the seminar on Spinoza, sessions 8 and 11, January 27 and February 17, 1981.

¹³ Deleuze quotes her book, *The Haunted Screen* (1969), several times in *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

¹⁴ Deleuze quotes Herzog's diary, *Sur le chemin des glaces (Vom Gehen im Eis, 1978, Of Walking in Ice)* in *The Movement-Image*, p. 239, footnote 8; the sentence quoted is: "and as she knew that I was one of those who walk, and, therefore, helpless, she understood me".

¹⁵ The reference no doubt is to Herzog's second film, "Even Dwarves Start Small" (1970).