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Tracing the Interstice: Godard, Deleuze, and The Future of Cinema

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Abstract

This thesis aims to demonstrate how cinema, despite its diffusion from celluloid projection into different forms and arenas of media (primarily digital), still has the power to articulate the relationship between thought and images and produce concepts for philosophical practice. This thesis also aims to appropriate from Gilles Deleuze's philosophy several concepts for the study of cinema itself, and for the understanding of cinema as it is produced by Jean-Luc Godard. Using two of Godard's recent films: *In Praise of Love* (2001), and *Goodbye to Language* (2014), this thesis will elaborate the relevance to contemporary filmmaking of *Cinema 2*'s concept of the *interstice*, the idea that there is an interruption or void that emerges from the connection between two images, and the accompanying claim that the cinema is required to "restore our belief in the world." The first chapter attempts a genealogy of the interstice through the paintings of Diego Velázquez and the criticism of Élie Faure and Michel Foucault. The second chapter examines the role of painting and projection in Godard's work to demonstrate how the filmmaker creates a new 3D aesthetic derived from Deleuze's concepts. The third chapter turns these concerns to the writings of André Bazin, and other 20th century philosophers, particularly Walter Benjamin and his concept of weak Messianism, to show the necessity of Deleuze's ideas to the continued hope of a cinema that could lead towards utopia.

Keywords

Deleuze, Godard, Velázquez, Faure, Foucault, Bazin, Benjamin, *In Praise of Love*, *Goodbye to Language*, Interstice, Utopia, Weak Messianism, Film Projection, Painting and Film.

Acknowledgments

This thesis is dedicated to many ghosts. Firstly, to the memory of Jacques Rivette, who passed away on 29 January 2016, whose work will always remind me that the world is worth believing in. Secondly, this thesis is dedicated to *The Dissolve*, a film review website that helped me maintain an interest in movies through a particularly trying period in my life where I was having my love for film drained out of me by the excessive practicality of film school. The website was unfortunately shuttered on 8 July 2015. A note should also be made here regarding the prolific French actress Jeanne Moreau, who passed away on 31 July 2017. For me, she was not just an icon of the *nouvelle vague*, but of cinema itself.

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Introduction

At the end of *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Gilles Deleuze writes that “a theory of cinema is not ‘about’ cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to, and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices” (287). He adds that “cinema itself is a new practice of images and signs, whose theory philosophy must produce as a conceptual practice” (287). The concern of this thesis, in an admittedly schizophrenic manner, is to try and move in both directions simultaneously: to demonstrate how cinema can still articulate the relationship between thought and images and produce concepts for philosophical practice, but also to appropriate from Deleuze’s philosophy several concepts for cinema itself, and for the understanding of a specific mode of cinema, that practiced by Jean-Luc Godard. This specific mode of cinema carries with it the emancipatory potential of the medium as suggested by Walter Benjamin in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” but adapted and transformed for the post-filmic age; a dream which signals the possibility for the world to maintain its virtual potential for fluctuation and change. At the risk of supposing a new periodization, this thesis will analyze two films from what could be called Godard’s contemporary period (in contrast to the late period addressed by Daniel Morgan, whose work will be discussed at length here), *Éloge de l’amour* (*In Praise of Love*, 2001) and *Adieu au langage 3D* (*Goodbye to Language 3D*, 2014, henceforth: *Goodbye to Language*). These two films have not been chosen arbitrarily. While many of Godard’s later and contemporary works are divisible into sections (the triptych is a recurring feature), these two films have a more bifurcated structure by which they serve as the perfect demonstration of the Deleuzian concepts that this thesis seeks to (re-)claim. Both

of them present a cleavage in the cinematic image between the presentation and utilization of various audio-visual media technologies. Both are also still narrative films. They contain stories and characters, and ambiguities that cannot be reduced to the pure abstraction of the avant-garde or the rhetoric of the documentary form. This narrativity suggests that even through its transformation, cinema still retains some of its classical affective powers. It shows that viewers can still use characters as totems of identification for attempting to navigate various theoretical situations and theoretical possibilities. The presence of visible personae will also help to connect the proceeding arguments to the work of Deleuze (and Guattari¹), who argue for the importance of these narrative figures in the development of arguments within philosophy in *What is Philosophy?* To address the films specifically, *In Praise of Love* is shot on film and digital video, and makes this transition evident to the viewer in its presentation while also incorporating lengthy meditations on what the most effective medium of the 21st century could be. It challenges the relationship between cinema and history, while also wondering if there is any future left both for resistance in society or for film as a mode of expression. *Goodbye to Language*, through its subversive employment of the effects of contemporary 3D filmmaking, presents itself in such a way that no singular viewing experience of the film is possible. Instead what emerges is a cinematic object about which no general assumptions can be made, and thus even in the context of Godard's oeuvre, presents a continuous challenge to any possible theorization or interpretation. *Goodbye to Language*

¹ Guattari also has his own idiosyncratic writings on film, several of which have been collected in *Chaosphy: Texts and Interviews 1972-1977*.

therefore presents an aesthetic challenge to cinema and its history of representation, the articulation of which is still open for analysis. Also, likely as a result of its experimental production, the film contains the most explicit and visible illustrations of the concepts that this thesis will be discussing.

The two interrelated concepts articulated by Deleuze that this work seeks to reclaim are the *interstice* and the notion that the cinema is required to “restore our belief in the world”. Beginning with second concept that will be borrowed from Deleuze and reformulated according to Godard’s films: is the necessity of contemporary cinema to “film, not the world, but belief in this world” (C2 172). While this notion sounds aggressively affirmative, the analysis of this phenomenon at work in Godard will attempt to show that this claim is much more affectively complicated than it seems. Nor is it a paean to naïve or classical modes of realism that have been so thoroughly criticized by various strands of progressive aesthetics throughout the 20th century². In many ways, and as mentioned earlier, Deleuze’s conceptualization follows from Benjamin’s imagined potentials for cinema in his “Work of Art” essay, particularly in its echoes of when Benjamin writes:

Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling. (236)

² See further *Aesthetics and Politics*, and Barthes’ “The Reality Effect” to cite just a couple of examples.

This idea of travelling through the ruins of the world is very similar to Deleuze's formulation of the time-image and is also reminiscent of early Godard films such as *Alphaville*, *Pierrot Le Fou*, and *Weekend*. However, Benjamin's conception of cinema leaves the public in an unconscious position rather than bringing them in to confrontation with the relationship between cinema and thought. For Benjamin: "the film makes the cult value recede into the background not only by putting the public in the position of the critic, but also by the fact that at the movies this position requires no attention. The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one" (241). For Deleuze, this absent-mindedness, or rather this seeming acceptance of the givenness of cinema's critical capacity, is at the very heart of its contemporary failures. Rather in the current situation it is that the contemporary spectator has adopted the gaze of banal cinema, and that any viewer's understanding of the world has been reformulated according to this method of seeing. Thus, it is not a case of accepting the world, because as Deleuze writes "the modern fact is that we no longer believe in this world. We do not even believe in the events which happen to us, love, death, as if they only half concerned us. It is not we who make cinema; it is the world which looks to us like a bad film" (C2 171). By bad films, Deleuze is referring to derivative or propagandistic works of industrial cinema that appropriate the sensations of filmmakers such as Griffith, Eisenstein, and Hitchcock (to name just a few)³. Cinema's industrialization, when it becomes rampantly commercialized, therefore perverts Benjamin's idea of its emancipatory capacity (and this only more so in the case of the present, which is thirty years after the time of Deleuze's writing). The world begins

³ For further clarification, see pp. 164-65 of *Cinema 2*.

to seem organized according to the logic of a bad narrative film: formulaic, derivative, and disposable. Hence the indifference towards death observed by Deleuze⁴. Death is robbed of its material inevitability and its transformative qualities and reduced to a punishment for villains, a maudlin outlet for pathos, or a romanticized sacrifice of exaggerated heroism. Death in bad cinema is merely a trope, robbed of both its materiality and affectivity and instead something buried under a metonymic chain of clichéd signifiers. For Deleuze, then, an awakening of belief in the world is a confrontation with impossibility; of the affective experiences of death, love, etc., an “impossible which can only be restored within a faith” (C2 172). Deleuze associates this belief/faith with the body, which makes sense considering that it is the site of material interaction and affective response, but his description of the body does not restrict itself to a notion of the flesh but also “the germ of life, the seed which splits open the paving-stones, which has been preserved and lives on in the holy shroud or the mummy’s bandages, and which bears witness to life, in this world as it is”⁵ (C2 173). The “mummy’s bandages” seem to be a direct reference to André Bazin’s famous proclamation of cinema representing a form of “change mummified,” however, there is more going on here than reference to or restatement of Bazin’s ideas (though this thesis

⁴ One is tempted here to perhaps speak of the necessity of aura and thus criticize Benjamin further, however, as Miriam Hansen makes clear in her book *Cinema and Experience*, Benjamin’s notion of aura and its absence from mechanically reproduced art is more complicated than the affective dimension sought here through Deleuze’s writing.

⁵ This description seems to echo the descriptions of the egg in *Difference and Repetition*, the Body without Organs in Deleuze’s work with Guattari, and the *chaosmos* from both *D&R* and *What is Philosophy?* This conceptualization follows D.N. Rodowick’s observation in *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine* that one cannot understand Deleuze’s cinematic concepts without reference to his other work. Viewed more idiosyncratically however, one could connect Deleuze’s plan here to the work of Béla Balázs in his early writings in *The Visible Man*.

will address the resonances of Bazin's work later on, especially in chapter three). D.N. Rodowick's reading of Deleuze's cinema philosophy makes the stakes of this mode of belief clear:

belief is no longer belief in a transcendent world, or in a transformed world, but a belief in *this* world and *its* powers of transformation. It is believing in the body, in its relation to thought, and in the potential of body and thought to affirm their powers of change and their receptivity to transformation. (*Time-Machine* 191)

The world for Deleuze is an unstable and contestable site of flux, in which thought can encounter its other and produce difference. Godard invokes this virtual totality, this impossible that emerges from the actual and in confrontation with thought produces new possibilities, through what Deleuze describes as Godard's "incommensurable" technique, or as it will be understood here, the "AND" of the interstice (C2 182). This technique is not reducible to an aspect of montage. It produces an affective connection that arises from the relations between the viewer, images, and their succession and reflection upon one another. This belief becomes a power by which images can come to form a new community, Jacques Rancière observes, when he writes that

in his films of the 1980s, Godard apparently remained faithful to collage as a principle for linking heterogeneous elements. But the form of the collage changes: what was once a clash of images becomes a fusion. And what that fusion of images simultaneously attests to is the reality of an autonomous world of images and its community-building power. (*A&D* 122)

These comments from Rancière allow the formation of a link between Deleuze's observation regarding Godard's incommensurable interstice and a similar insight by Deleuze, that Godard's work "attests" to a "reality" that could not be perceived otherwise. The analysis in this thesis will then attempt to explain further both the characteristics presented by the *belief* that Godard's cinema attests to and also attempt to describe further the kind of *world* it is that spectators are being led to believe in. Ultimately, then, this thesis will turn to what is needed in order for cinema to offer the viewer belief in the world: the ability to also believe in cinema as a medium capable of providing these sensations; to see in the cinema a model of affectivity that draws together viewers and images in a connection that returns to them the materiality of the world. This thesis will show: what kind of community is being presented through Godard's work, and how is this aesthetically demonstrated by the films being analyzed? Furthermore, how does Godard's method of filmmaking explicitly invoke the structure of belief?

The *interstice* is the means by which Godard's cinema produces the belief in the world that much of contemporary culture lacks. It is the "irrational interval" which "does not signify or represent; it resists. And it restores a belief in the virtual as a site where choice has yet to be determined, a reservoir of unthought yet immanent possibilities and modes of existence" (Rodowick 203). The interstice is the means by which Godard's cinema gives rise to thought; it acts as a linkage between the work of thought and the work of a film. It makes incommensurable pairs between images and sounds which demand from the viewer a call to thinking that will allow them to contemplate the potential for the transformation of this world; by offering connections and affinities between images and events that could not be reached otherwise. Deleuze arrives at this

concept when attempting to distinguish his observation from *Cinema 1*, “the whole is the Open⁶,” with his observation in *Cinema 2* that “the whole is the outside.” The interstice becomes, for Deleuze, the key to this distinction, when he explains that

when we say ‘the whole is the outside’, the point is quite different. In the first place, the question is no longer that of the association or attraction of images. What counts is on the contrary the *interstice* between images, between two images: a spacing which means that each image is plucked from the void and falls back into it. (C2 179)

Despite Deleuze’s focus in *Cinema 2* on the “time-image,” it is a concept of the space between images that proves critical to one of its distinctions. It is not a question of a dialectical or hierarchical relationship between “the open” and “the outside” but rather a qualitative shift⁷. What emerges in the time-image is not a series in which images necessarily appear one after another in *direct* continuity, that is to say as an illusory spatio-temporal whole, but a series in which they fold into and emerge from the void between them. For Deleuze, the key filmmaker of the interstice is Godard. Godard’s radical reconfiguration of montage in which images do not synthesize but form a kind of equivalence, what he calls a “fraternity of metaphors”. Deleuze elaborates on this concept, noting that

⁶ Deleuze treats this concept at length in relation to Bergson in Chapter 1 of *Cinema 1*, and then arrives at the formulation mentioned here when discussing the classical schools of silent cinema (American, Russian, French and German) in Chapter 3 of that text. Given our primary focus here is on two concepts from *Cinema 2* which move in opposition to the ideas of *Cinema 1*, much of the concepts introduced there will remain alien to these proceedings.

⁷ Jacques Rancière makes this point in his essay, “From One Image to Another? Deleuze and the Ages of Cinema,” arguing that the periodization practiced by Deleuze in addition to his analyzes is unnecessary, which Rancière demonstrates through Deleuze’s commentary on Robert Bresson’s films.

in Godard's method, it is not a question of association. Given one image, another image has to be chosen which will induce an interstice *between* the two. This is not an operation of association, but of differentiation, as mathematicians say, or of disappearance, as physicists say: given one potential, another one has to be chosen, not any whatever, but in such a way that a difference of potential is established between the two, which will be productive of a third or of something new. (C2 179-180)

This remark contains echoes of Deleuze's other philosophical considerations: the rejection of dialectical thinking in favour of a series of "difference acting upon difference" (most notably outlined in *Difference and Repetition*). But this equivalence is also key because it is in the refusal to synthesize images that allows the void to present itself between them. For Deleuze, cinematic concepts are no different than scientific or mathematical discoveries, and it is Godard who discovers the potential of the interstice. The situation is perhaps even more radical than this. It is not simply that Godard discovers the concept to which Deleuze gives the name of "interstice," but rather that his work constitutes the ability for Deleuze to arrive at the concept as such. The gap in Deleuze's ability to render Godard's cinema philosophically produces the grounds through which the philosopher summons the concept of the interstice. It is an interstitial process in itself. It should be noted before proceeding, in writing that Deleuze cannot articulate the concept without reference to Godard, this is not meant to imply that Godard is the inventor of the concept and Deleuze merely its cataloguer: the genius-artist and the parasitic-philosopher. Godard also took the material for the concept from elsewhere, as the first chapter of this thesis will attempt to illustrate. Before addressing that issue,

however, let's refer to the following example, wherein Deleuze cannot articulate the concept of the interstice without further reference to Godard's work:

it is not a matter of following a chain of images, even across voids, but of getting of the chain or the association. Film ceases to be the 'images in a chain ...an uninterrupted chain of images each one the slave of the next', and whose slave we are (*Ici et ailleurs*). It is the method of BETWEEN, 'between two images', which does away with all cinema of the One. It is the method of AND⁸, 'this and then that', which does away with all the cinema of Being = is. Between two actions, between two affections, between two perceptions, between two visual images, between two sound images, between the sound and the visual: make the indiscernible, that is the frontier, visible (*Six fois deux*). (C2 180)

Here it can be seen how Deleuze's remark is accompanied by a mention of Godard's films that helps to elucidate his concept further. The reference to the frontier will be of particular interest in addressing the planar interstice, or the "splitting image" effect, in the discussion that follows in chapter two of *Goodbye to Language*. This doing "away with the cinema of the One" is also relevant here. The time-image is no longer a cinema of identities but rather one of voids; spaces between not only subjects, but also metaphors, images, and sounds. The interstice is not just a reference to the blink between images assembled in a montage, and it is not just to be found in the black frames that Godard

⁸ Franco "Bifo" Berardi seizes upon Deleuze (& Felix Guattari)'s notion of the "AND" in a recent work, *And: Phenomenology of the End*, where he attempts to formulate a phenomenology of what he calls "semio-capitalism." The potential impact of this conceptualization on film theory and spectatorship requires further study.

often employs in his work. It is a reference to a virtual space that emerges in the differentiation between two images, not an actual empty space on the celluloid film strip. It refers to the endless gaps that operate not just within the frame, but outside it, in terms of both the soundtrack and the implied out-of-field, and as this thesis will attempt to demonstrate in chapter three with regard to *In Praise of Love*, even further outside the film, on a technological and even an historical level.

Having previously introduced Rancière into proceedings, a brief note should be made on periodization. Godard's work in this thesis will not be treated as belonging cleanly to either modernist or post-modernist distinctions, even though his affinities with these tendencies will be invoked if relevant to the discussion at hand. While these terms, and similar generic categories will be used, overall this thesis situates Godard primarily within what Rancière calls the "aesthetic regime of art" (*Aisthesis xii*). Rancière's perspective is less concerned with the "the conquest of autonomy by each art, which is expressed in exemplary works that break with the course of history, separating themselves both from the art of the past and the 'aesthetic' forms of prosaic life" but rather with "the movement belonging to the aesthetic regime, which supported the dream of artistic novelty and fusion between art and life" (*Aisthesis xii*). This fusion "tends to erase the specificities of the arts and to blur the boundaries that separate them from each other and from ordinary experience" (*Aisthesis xii*). Thus, while questions regarding the cinema as a medium will be addressed, as well as ideas regarding audience reception, these are not the central aims of this thesis, and they will rather be broached primarily in what might be called their "sensible" dimension: that is to say, in terms of the affective properties these categories invoke within the various films rather than in a strictly

empirical or theoretical dimension. The same distinction of sensibility also applies to the previous distinction of periodization and genre. When these terms are employed, it is in terms of the question of sensations and affects they invoke, rather than as prescriptive definitions for Godard's films.

Furthermore, it is important to note that Godard never starts over completely; concepts fall away and then reemerge again in subsequent work, transformed but inseparable from what came before⁹. Thus, reference will be made to a variety of Godard's films both directly and indirectly, as has been demonstrated so far. This thesis does not follow a teleological model in which Godard moves closer and closer to becoming the director he is at present, but considers his work as constantly in flux, and hence capable of being connected throughout different times and periods, in a variety of changing and inconsistent forms of organization¹⁰. Additionally, because the discussion here centers on such broad concepts as ontology, epistemology, modernism, realism, etc., philosophers who may not be speaking about Godard, or even about cinema whatsoever, will appear here in an attempt to provide answers to the questions that are raised. Godard's work abandons direct exposition, creating openings into which ideas from outside the core text necessarily enter and intrude upon proceedings, even without explicit invocation. This occasional use of a collage of philosophic ideas is an epistemological solution to the chaos of sensibility that one experiences when receiving

⁹ This another affinity between Godard and Deleuze.

¹⁰ The analysis of *Goodbye to Language*, for instance, will precede the discussion of *In Praise of Love*, as the concerns of this thesis move according to the direction of the interstice as it will be defined conceptually, rather than according to the chronological production of the films.

the ideas at work in Godard's films. Morgan writes in relation to *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* that "there are no hard and fast rules to determine which instances do and which don't require contextual knowledge in order to be understood (regardless of whether that information is internal or external to the film itself)" (177). This thesis follows the same rules in relation to its analysis of Godard's work: ideas are gathered to give context, convey the affective feeling of a work, or attempt to articulate a thorny new aspect of a cinematic concept. This dispersion of ideas will find itself mirrored by the concepts and notions articulated therein.

It is important to once again clarify that the interstice is not exclusively Deleuze or Godard's invention, nor is it really an invention at all, but actually a discovery of the Baroque Spanish painter, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez (henceforth: Velázquez)¹¹. Perhaps it is not even his discovery, but a product of his interlocutors, belonging to no one but the journey of criticism over time. Therefore, the first chapter of this thesis will attempt to trace the development of the concept of the interstice, through the interpretations of Velázquez's paintings written by Élie Faure in his *History of Art* and the close-reading of *Las Meninas* produced by Michel Foucault in the first chapter of *The Order of Things*. Faure is a figure oft cited by Godard, and his writings about Velázquez prove invaluable for understanding Godard's approach to cinema since the mid-1960s. One cannot arrive at a discussion of how Godard's films inspire a belief in the world

¹¹ Because we are speaking of Velázquez, we are also speaking tangentially about the Baroque. Thus, following Deleuze's writings on the topic in *The Fold*, the language of folding (between colours, planes, materials, etc.) will also emerge in this chapter. Is "the interstice" simply "the fold" by another name? Like many of Deleuze's concepts, it seems likely that they have mixed properties but are also not completely adequate to one another.

without understanding the technique of the interstice, both in its formal and receptive dimensions. As will be shown, the interstice itself is a divided concept; the poles of which will determine the structure of the chapters that follow. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to situate for the reading of Godard's films the twin properties of the interstice: both in terms of how it functions on an aesthetic level and how it functions on an epistemological level.

The second chapter will apply the lessons of the first to *Goodbye to Language* in an attempt to articulate how Godard uses 3D technology to create a new cinematic aesthetic based around the properties of the interstice. By examining the relationship between Godard's work and his engagement with painting, this chapter will attempt to demonstrate how the interstice moves from a medium of surfaces to one that explicitly engages with questions of depth of field. How the spatial relations of the interstice that Faure and Foucault's criticism traces are adapted by Godard onto a new form of cinematic technology will be addressed here. This chapter will also address further the definition of the interstice and make the relations between its visible qualities and belief in the world even more evident. Additionally, much of the chapter will be spent on the difficulty of examining and experiencing the "splitting image" effect that the film utilizes and how, while this technique seems to eliminate the possibility of a communal understanding of cinema, it is actually the beginning of a *dissensual* cinematic community. While *Goodbye to Language*, being the more recently released film, perhaps offers one image of the potential for the idea a "cinema to come;" this idea is not inherently dependent on the evolution of cinematic technology, but rather on how

Godard's models of film projection can be conveyed to the viewer, as the following chapter will deal with.

The third chapter will explain how *In Praise of Love* treats the epistemological crisis in cinematic concepts caused by the disjunction between the medium of film (here used in the sense of celluloid film, or the physical media of the motion picture) and the then quickly emerging digital video; demonstrating the dimensions of the interstice as it is elaborated particularly in Foucault's criticism of *Las Meninas*. This dimension of Deleuze's cinema-concept, at the very least implicitly, returns to Bazin's famous question, "what is cinema?" And through Godard's work, this chapter will attempt to provide an answer for the twenty-first century, one that will erase the dependence of cinema on the medium by which it is produced, and that also looks to the affects and sensibility it distributes. The concerns here will then begin with questions of cinematic ontology, since many cinematic concepts can be said to rise directly from an understanding of how cinema has been essentially defined in the first place. Even though this situation concerns itself with the (perhaps mistaken) presentation of cinema objectively, in terms of its essence and mediums of embodiment, questions of politics and aesthetics will not be elided or avoided in our analysis of *In Praise of Love*. Rather, as will be evidenced by the film, Godard's new cinematic ontology has to have repercussions for both of these dimensions, which will be brought about in the following discussion, particularly in regard to how it responds to Hollywood's commodification of history. This chapter will also attempt to show how Godard's agonistic relationship with Bazin creates an impure cinema that does not completely abandon Bazin's principles but rather assumes them in such a way that is more adherent to their spirit rather than to the

letter; one which treats realism in what Bazin refers to as its “true” sense¹². This may give rise to a conflict between this section and the work of both Deleuze and Rancière, this thesis’ chief theoretical interlocuters, who both seek a post-representational mode of aesthetics. Is there a fundamental *mimesis* in Godard’s work, and thus cinema itself, that cannot be avoided? Or, as will be elaborated in chapter one’s analysis of Foucault’s writings, perhaps what can be discovered through the interstice is a form of representation without *mimesis*.

¹² Which also means participating in the restoration of Bazin as a cinematic theorist of note in the 21st century. See also *Opening Bazin: Post-War Film Theory and Its Afterlife*.

Velázquez Between Faure and Foucault

The aim of this chapter is twofold. Already, there is a pairing between two poles. Its primary task will be to work through the criticisms of Velázquez that are found in the works of Élie Faure. He serves as an important model for Godard and Faure's writing is explicitly cited in the films *Pierrot le fou*, and in *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*. Additionally, the examination of *Las Meninas* in the first chapter of Michel Foucault's *The Order of the Things* will be referred to at length. Faure's writing provides the general terms necessary to claim for Velázquez the position as the discoverer of the interstice. Foucault's writing, however, in its close examination of one of Velázquez's paintings, brings immediate attention to not only the aesthetic gaps that Faure traces but introduces an epistemological dimension to the proceedings as well. Both these critic-historians, through their readings (or perhaps it would be better to say their visions of) Velázquez lay the foundations for this thesis' understanding of Godard's initial work with the concept of the interstice, and then ultimately through Godard, Deleuze's conceptualization. The work of both writers also demonstrates the two poles to which this thesis will attempt to pin the concept of the interstice. It functions both visually, as a phenomenal element of a work of art, but also epistemologically, which is to say that it affects the understanding and conceptualization of art itself. For Foucault, Velázquez's work functions as both a marker of an epistemic and artistic gap (and it is the former that serves the greatest importance for him in the rest of *The Order of Things*).

In Godard's 1965 film, *Pierrot le fou*, the main character, the unsatisfied bourgeois, Ferdinand (played by Jean-Paul Belmondo), who will become the titular Pierrot, reads to his family a section from Élie Faure's *History of Art* on Velázquez.

Instead of attempting a transcription of Ferdinand's reading(s), this chapter will instead turn to Faure himself, as his complete description contains many more nuances than such a transcription would allow. In discussing Velázquez's later work, Faure writes "but as soon as one looks between the forms, the nightmare vanishes, something unexpected and unknown is unveiled—a circulation of aerial atoms, a discreet envelopment, a transparent and faintly tinted shade which floats around them and transfigures them"¹³ (124). This initial observation prepares for the relationship between inside and outside that defines the interstice. This not a question of looking between, but of looking at "the between," the space between subjects where there exists a "shade" which alters its constituents, i.e. the figures themselves¹⁴. The famous (in so far as it is cited in the film) citation expands upon these themes even further:

Velázquez, after the age of fifty, never again painted sharply defined things, he wandered around the objects with the air and the twilight; in the shadow and transparence of the backgrounds he surprised the colored palpitations which he used as the invisible center of his silent symphony. He was no longer taking from the world anything more than the mysterious exchanges which cause forms and tones to interpenetrate one another in a secret and continuous progression, whose course is not manifested or interrupted by any clash or any shock. Space reigns. An

¹³ If one were to encounter this citation without context, to hear it with one's eyes closed, one could almost imagine it being said by either Deleuze or Godard himself, and not Faure.

¹⁴ Admittedly, there is something ghostly in this procedure as we are dealing with present moments that are always-already constituted by an absence. One might use the word *hauntology*, following Derrida, an idea which this thesis will return to later.

aerial wave seems to glide over the surfaces, impregnating itself with their visible emanations in order to define and model them, and to carry away everywhere else a kind of perfume, a kind of echo of them which it disperses over all surrounding space as an imponderable dust. (Faure 124-125)

Everywhere oppositions: between meteorology and temporality, between music and painting, between the centre and the outside. The absence of sharply defined lines gives way to a style of painting in which the outside is the whole; it is colour which determines figure. In a Deleuzian turn, it could be said that in Velázquez there is a turn from paintings of identity to varying shades of difference: a positive difference in which the figure appears as a residual product of the work, and is not synonymous with its identity. The climax of this citation is of particular importance: “space reigns.” Remaining in the realm of painting, it would be easy to read this simply as two-dimensional space, or as distance. But this is not what draws this chapter or Godard to this citation. The space is a void. It is a void where the difference between subjects is encountered; a difference which is also constitutive of their presence. This is a formula for montage that transcends its description by early film theorists, particularly when this painterly concept of space between subjects is applied to the cinematic space between images. Throughout *Cinema 2*, Deleuze’s observations seem like echoes of Faure’s last comment:

if cinema does not give us the presence of the body and cannot give us it, this is perhaps also because it sets itself a different objective; it spreads an ‘experimental night’ or a white space over us; it works with ‘dancing seeds’ and a ‘luminous dust’; it affects the visible with a fundamental

disturbance, and the world with a suspension, which contradicts all natural perception. (C2 201)

Deleuze makes this remark when discussing the relationship between theatre and cinema. He addresses particularly the correspondence of cinema to the material presence that is necessary for the theatre. Again, there's a connection here between painting and filmmaking, this time not through the hand of the artist, but through the medium's ability to address the question of presence, as well as the *present*. It is not a question of copying reality, but of transferring it, and then transforming it (this idea will be taken up even further in relation to Godard in the next chapter). The "experimental night"¹⁵ echoes the wave, and the "luminous dust" mirrors the "imponderable dust" of Velázquez. If the painter sets the world in suspension by making his work the void between subjects, the filmmaker does so by bringing the viewer into a confrontation with the interstice: the space between images. If there exists a disagreement here, it is between Faure's description of Velázquez's technique lacking any "clash or shock," and Deleuze's observation of the "fundamental disturbance" in cinema¹⁶. Returning to Faure's description of Velázquez's technique will elucidate this further. Faure gives special attention to the colour (or absence thereof) that defines Velázquez's technique:

in the whole of a gray picture, with a gray horse—its tail and mane flying
in the wind, with gray fringe floating, with a gray sky, a sea stormy and

¹⁵ It also deliberately echoes the writings of Maurice Blanchot, whom Deleuze cites at length in the discussion of the whole and the outside throughout *Cinema 2*.

¹⁶ Godard's modernist tendencies certainly places his work on the side of "shock," rather than a gradual disquiet, as will be seen in the next chapter's analysis of *Goodbye to Language*.

gray, there is just one pink knot between the ears of the animal who bears a proud rider dressed in red and black. The mountains, the blue plains, the distant streaks of snow, the grayish or somber undulation of the ground sown with cork trees and olive trees, are found again in all the grays, in all the blacks shot through with dim blues and with pinks, which the man and the rearing animal impose upon the landscape or receive from it. (126)

Gray is the appearance of the void meeting the whole. It is like a shade, in the sense of a ghost, rather than a colour or a pigment. Gray is already an absence. It is not the white space of pure potentiality, nor is it the darkness of the completely consumed or condemned. Figures emerge from the gray, but they also recede; the painter's decision to make gray his primary colour leaves the viewer with a scene which is in a state of perpetual becoming. This state of things does not feel comfortable, nor does it leave one with a definite absence of form. This question of becoming, in so far as one is encouraged to ask "what is it that becomes?" haunts the painter's work, and

the mystery is almost terrifying. None of us can watch in the world the progressive spreading forth of the shadow and the light, the secret passage which causes one form to prolong another, without his eyes becoming wearied by the continuous circulation of an atmosphere whose density is all that gives gradation to objects and makes them turn and keep their place. (Faure 132)

The spreading forth of shadow and light leaves the viewer in an interminable twilight; black and white folding into gray. While Velázquez refuses shock, there still persists a disconsolation: an irresolution that leaves the spectator unable to confront the image. In

Goodbye to Language, Godard will push this unbearable tension to the extreme, forcing the viewer to limit their gaze and thus refuse an image of the whole in order to see anything at all. Perhaps it is in “the secret” that there exists a definitive split between the more modernistic Godard and the baroque Velázquez. For Godard, this passage from one form into another is made explicit; the viewer cannot escape from the realization that Velázquez merely implies. In Faure’s reading, there is an absence of self-reflection or metacommentary which will prove pivotal to Godard’s adaptation of these techniques. That is why it is necessary to leave Faure’s classical analysis and turn to Foucault’s close reading of *Las Meninas*¹⁷.

Foucault’s analysis of this painting by Velázquez will serve as bridge from the painterly conception of Velázquez’s technique provided by Faure to an examination of how these same principles of composition can also be used to create gaps not only between represented subjects but also between the viewer of the painting and the work itself, and therefore also function self-reflexively. Thus, in the proceeding analysis, specific attention will be paid both to when Foucault’s analysis builds on what has been examined so far in Faure, and his deviations and expansions from what the previous historian wrote. Given what follows in the remainder of the book from which this analysis is taken, it is unlikely that Foucault’s primary concern is aesthetic whatsoever. However, his analysis does provide this thesis with an interpretation that demonstrates a further dimension of the interstice that cannot be drawn out of the formal artistic criticism provided by Faure above. To begin, Foucault draws particular attention to the position of

¹⁷ It is worth noting that the image that precedes the final quotation cited from Faure is a reproduction of *Las Meninas*.

the painter that is represented within the work, writing of the situation in the image that it is “as though the painter could not at the same time be seen on the picture where he is represented and also see that upon which he is representing something. He rules at the threshold of those two incompatible visibilities” (4). The painter’s canvas is facing away from the spectator, and yet the painter’s gaze, and his body, are positioned squarely at the viewer. Were he to engage in the act of painting, one would no longer see him, as he would vanish behind the canvas. This is the opening of a gap, a mark of difference between the painting that is, as it is being looked at, and the gesture being performed by a subject of the painting. Velázquez has here captured the division of the viewing/creating subject. Foucault expands on this claim:

the spectacle he is observing is thus doubly invisible: first, because it is not represented within the space of the painting, and, second, because it is situated precisely in that blind point, in that essential hiding-place into which our gaze disappears from ourselves at the moment of our actual looking. And yet, how could we fail to see that invisibility, there in front of our eyes, since it has its own perceptible equivalent, its sealed in figure, in the painting itself? (4)

The gaze of the painter looks to the out-of-field for his subject. His painting cannot be looked at, but if the viewer is drawn to his gaze then they are twisted back upon themselves. Are they the out-of-field which is the subject of the figure in the painting? But the painting (i.e., the work, the object of our gaze) in front of the viewer would suggest that the model is the scene being depicted. The painting thus achieves a degree of self-consciousness but only by opening up to the spectator a void which they must

occupy. Foucault also explains that “no gaze is stable, or rather, in the neutral furrow of the gaze piercing at a right angle through the canvas, subject and object, the spectator and the model, reverse their roles to infinity” (5). As was seen in Faure’s analysis, the situation is more aporetic than resolvable. The spectator and subject exchange roles to infinity, until the subject walks away. Then the infinite regress collapses, and the event of its appearance passes. The painting cannot and will not be perceived/received without activating the contemplative position in its viewer. The experience of the painting in this way becomes an event, an isolated moment in which there is nowhere else to turn without also abandoning the entire structure of the experience. The interstitial gap, which is to say the space between painting and spectator becomes constitutive of the work itself. This is the space where the movement of thought collides with the affective assortment of light and colour presented by the work of art. The painting also calls attention to this gap, because

at the extreme right, the picture is lit by a window represented in very sharp perspective; so sharp that we can see scarcely more than the embrasure; so that the flood of light streaming through it bathes at the same time, and with equal generosity, two neighbouring spaces, overlapping but irreducible: the surface of the painting, together with the volume it represents (which is to say, the painter’s studio, or the salon in which his easel is now set up), and, in front of that surface, the real volume occupied by the spectator (or again, the unreal site of the model).
(Foucault 6)

This observation encounters an even more explicit folding than the gray of the armor that was seen by Faure. The window itself is not defined by its line or barricade, but by what passes through it. There is therefore no question of the window and the ray of light. Merely a folding of the two that the viewer meets through changing tones as a unified “window-ray”. The light is constitutive, and the space it travels renders the figure in the painting, as in Faure’s analysis. Thus, in this work the light in the painting not only serves as a locus for the spaces between figures (and thus as a result of the painter’s technique is imperative in forming them), the light also seeks to reach across the gap and constitute the figure of the spectator as well. Godard has remarked upon this sensation in relation to film, saying that “you go to where the light is coming from. Like in the Bible. The shepherds were going in the direction of the star” (Hartley Interview, 18). This is to say that light carries with it a certain revelatory quality; responding to the glimmering of the light is an awakening to a form of knowledge or salvation. Daniel Morgan writes that “the binding figure of the light to the perseverance of political hope sounds one of the deepest themes in Godard’s late work: that an inquiry into what cinema is, could have been, and still can be is central to understanding the political and historical situation of our time” (xii). This thematic emerges from the principles of light that one finds at work in Foucault’s analysis of *Las Meninas*: the light is constitutive, both of the position of the spectator and also their ability to participate in the criticism of the painting. The light is a summons, not simply to the position of subject, but to the knowledge of subjectivity that accompanies it. It is not an interpellation of a false consciousness, but an awakening of a

complete ideological circuit¹⁸. The light in the painting breaks the frame of the work, and reaches across the gap to the spectator, demanding they fulfill, at least partially, their role as model for the represented painter, and also to assume their role as a conscious participant in the construction of the painting. This self-reflexive capacity is a foundational element of the interstice, and this quality is also found further at work in Foucault's analysis of Velázquez's canvas.

The whole of the painting, not merely the frame, but the scene depicted depends on this grasping towards the out-of-field. This grasping of the out-of-field finds itself even further exaggerated by the presence of a mirror in the painting. Foucault explains:

in fact, it shows us nothing of what is represented in the picture itself. Its motionless gaze extends out in front of the picture, into that necessarily invisible region which forms its exterior face, to apprehend the figures arranged in that space. Instead of surrounding visible objects, this mirror cuts straight through the whole field of the representation, ignoring all it might apprehend within that field, and restores visibility to that which resides outside all view. But the invisibility that it overcomes in this way is not the invisibility of what is hidden: it does not make its way around any obstacle, it is not distorting any perspective, it is addressing itself to

¹⁸ The conceptualization being proposed here is therefore opposed to idea of “the suture,” one of the dominant modes of spectator identification and reception in film theory, particularly as it is articulated by Daniel Dayan. It does however bear some resemblance to how the suture was originally articulated by Jean-Pierre Oudart's writing on Robert Bresson's *Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* (*The Trial of Joan of Arc*, 1962) in *Cahiers du cinéma*.

what is invisible both because of the picture's structure and because of its existence as painting. (8)

Much like the light of the window, the mirror also refuses the reflection of subjects in the scene depicted by the painting. The mirror, in a somewhat Lacanian move, rather serves to further constitute the spectator as part of the existence of the scene. But the painting of the mirror can only function representationally. It cannot actually reflect, or pull the spectator's own gaze into the work; it can only stand for that gaze, functioning as a sign of this position rather than being able to capture it. The painting, and Foucault's analysis thereof once again testifies to an invisible chain of recognition that helps to establish the circuit of the work's reception: the constant interchange between the spectator and the work. The interstice insists that the "whole is the outside," and in Velázquez's painting, this is demonstrated by the painting's necessity for a spectator in order for the scene to be completed. One might object that that the work is not so complicated: that the figures correspond to real figures who actually existed; that there exists a historical dimension to the scene that completes its constitution, and that the circuit can be closed, with the proper foreknowledge. This objection, however, would seek to eliminate the gaps opened up by the painting, to eliminate the interstice. Foucault responds to this objection:

The proper name, in this particular context, is merely an artifice: it gives us a finger to point with, in other words, to pass surreptitiously from the space where one speaks to the space where one looks; in other words, to fold one over the other as though they were equivalents. But if one wishes to keep the relation of language to vision open, if one wishes to treat their incompatibility as a starting-point for speech instead of as an obstacle to

be avoided, so as to stay as close as possible to both, then one must erase those proper names and preserve the infinity of the task. It is perhaps through the medium of this grey, anonymous language, always over-meticulous and repetitive because too broad, that the painting may, little by little, release its illuminations. (10)

The folding proposed by the historicist's maneuver is a rather literal one; it does not bring ideas together in a production of possible conceptualizations, but rather covers over the injunction the painting makes upon the viewer. It also proposes a solution of identities, a game of interpretative detective work that rather than form the image of the painting through its differences and space (in a work where, to quote Faure, "space reigns") seeks to assign everything a fixed function. Its literalness denies the work of thought, suggesting instead that there is a fixity both in the work of art and the world that cannot be transformed. Foucault here also repeats one of Faure's observations: the recognition of the gray in the painting. Earlier, it was stated that gray exists between the void and the whole. For language to be adequate to the painting, it must assume the same gray quality as the paint. To describe the work, one learns to speak the language of the space between the void and the whole. A new way of writing, and therefore of thinking, is called out to by the absence of colour within the work. It demands an inauguration, or the invention of a transformed language for its explication. This same demand will be found in both of Godard's films as they will be discussed in the upcoming chapters. The analysis of the painting thereafter becomes a somewhat schizophrenic cartography of tracing gazes. Foucault traces the way representation emerges from the painting, the way the images of subjects seem to emerge and then disappear again:

This spiral shell presents us with the entire cycle of representation: the gaze, the palette and brush, the canvas innocent of signs (these are the material tools of representation), the paintings, the reflections, the real man (the completed representation, but as it were freed from its illusory or truthful contents, which are juxtaposed to it); then the representation dissolves again: we can see only the frames, and the light that is flooding the pictures from outside, but that they, in return, must reconstitute in their own kind, as though it were coming from elsewhere, passing through their dark wooden frames. And we do, in fact, see this light on the painting, apparently welling out from the crack of the frame; and from there it moves over to touch the brow, the cheekbones, the eyes, the gaze of the painter, who is holding a palette in one hand and in the other a fine brush . . . And so the spiral is closed, or rather, by means of that light, is opened.

(12)

Here again is a repetition of Faure's criticism, in so far as this figure, whose gaze addresses the out-of-field and summons the subject into the frame, is himself not a fixed identity but a product of colour and light. The subject of the scene is itself as spectral, as fleeting, as that of the spectator who will bring the scene to life. Foucault writes that only "frames" can be seen, which could also be interpreted as "outlines", the suggestion of forms, but it can also be seen as addressing the space which constitutes these figures, the area into which the light is dispersed and thus able to provide the frames through which these subjects are recognized. The spiral becomes an ever-contracting series, which opens

and closes through the movement of the light through the painting¹⁹. The invocation of the crack (or a cut in the umbrella to borrow another Deleuzian turn of phrase) in the frame testifies however to a void from which this all emerges, the necessary void, the place of the spectator to which the gaze of the painter (as subject in the painting) refers. Foucault elaborates on this concept, referring to the essential void:

But there, in the midst of this dispersion which it is simultaneously grouping together and spreading out before us, indicated compellingly from every side, is an essential void: the necessary disappearance of that which is its foundation – of the person it resembles and the person in whose eyes it is only a resemblance. This very subject – which is the same – has been elided. And representation, freed finally from the relation that was impeding it, can offer itself as representation in its pure form.²⁰ (17-18)

Again, the contracting series can be heard in the grouping together and spreading out, and here is also the recurrence of this idea of dispersion, which is similar to Deleuze's and Faure's discussions of "dust," the remainder that testifies to the movement of the interstice. The void leaves its mark on everything, but is more of a trace than a scar, a mite rather than a parasite. Both films will deploy this same dispersive structure: they both end without clear resolutions to their narratives; by fading away rather than

¹⁹ We can find here echoes of Deleuze's principals of repetition, and his discussions of varieable intensities from *Difference and Repetition* when we read this spiral as contracting and expanding as it depends both the movement of the light and the spectator.

²⁰ Representation without *mimesis* suggests that, following Rancière, it might be concluded that Foucault, in his analysis of *Las Meninas*, has found another potential beginning for the "aesthetic regime of art".

burning out. The interstice becomes in this way an exhaustive force. It depletes the viewer of their energy while at the same time calling out to new pathways of thinking. It is both constructive and destructive, the impossibility that gives rise to the philosophical project itself. "Representation in its pure form" is then this very interstice between whole and the outside; it is not a purely mimetic copy, a reference, but an active and exchanging simulacrum that projects a force onto the spectator, who by returning their gaze is able to constitute the existence of the object as artwork, but not without first also answering the summons to thought.

For Velázquez, in Faure's analysis, the movement of the interstice effected only the surface of the canvas: it was something produced by the painter's hand out of colour or its absence. In Foucault's description, there is the move to an interstice which constitutes the subject and their world that ceases to be unconscious but remains unarticulated despite its presence. The spectator can recognize the properties of the interstice: it is there calling out to them in the movement of the light, but it can still be passed over. For Godard, it will become a demand upon the spectator. The viewer is forcibly confronted with the planar dissonance that is found at work in *Las Meninas*, only that instead of emerging from the gray, in *Goodbye to Language*, one must confront this position in order to remain a witness of the object. In *In Praise of Love*, this summons to the viewer will not only effect their comprehension of the image but their understanding of the cinematic medium and eventually history itself. Godard will extend the interstice not only to aesthetic concerns but also to ontological and political concerns (so much as they relate to the whole of cinema).

Goodbye to Language and Belief in a New Aesthetic Dimension

In his review of the film for *Reverse Shot*, critic Michael Koresky describes Godard's splitting image effect in *Goodbye to Language* (which will be discussed in detail later) as producing "something like a perceptual psychotic split" ("Polarized"). It is possible that this chapter may provoke a similar sensation. *Goodbye to Language* is Jean-Luc Godard's most recent feature film, having been released in 2014. Addressing it before *In Praise of Love* therefore presents a moment of confusion especially considering that in the previous chapter, the development of the interstice in painting and criticism was presented in a relatively linear genealogical fashion. Should not the proceeding analysis then follow this same logic? Why is the "later" film to be analyzed first? By presenting the analyses of the films in this order, this thesis is not adhering to the methodological structure offered in the previous chapter, but the dimensions of the genealogy outlined therein. *Goodbye to Language* will demonstrate the perceptual qualities of the interstice as Godard presents it in its most visible and extreme forms. Therefore, while this chapter will contain reference to both elements of the interstice mentioned previously, its primary concern is with issues of space similar to those observed by Faure in relation to the painting of Velázquez. Particular concern will be given to how Godard implements the new dimensions of space granted to him by the use of 3D within the frame of the film. This chapter will show how the interstice moves from a concept dealing with the transformation of two-dimensional space, the relationship between the out-of-field and the frame, and film sound, into a disruption of forces between planes within the image itself, and how it moves from the hand of the painter, to

the hand of the cinematographer²¹. The first part of this chapter then will examine Godard's relationship to painting, particularly through the lens of Daniel Morgan's analysis in *Late Godard and the Possibilities of Cinema*. Painting plays a pivotal role in Godard's understanding of cinematic ontology, and how cinema can relate to other media. In *Goodbye to Language* its influence is both pronounced and critical to understanding the film's deployment of the interstitial concept. Its status as a 3D-work raises issues of projection and reception that relate to Godard's many ideas of how films should be viewed. It will be shown that by bringing this technique into a new technological dimension, Godard's interstice becomes even more potent, as it radicalizes his ideas in a manner that makes the ideas that have been discussed so far more visible. That leaves the question then of how the film then presents to the spectator a continuing "belief in this world"? *Goodbye to Language*, through its use of 3D-effects, provides perhaps the most literal rendering of what the concept of world means to this thesis and both the work of Godard and Deleuze. The film depicts the world as a chaos, an overlapping series of incidents and forces that demand the viewer's response in one way or another. Godard's understanding of projection, combined with these 3D effects, thus furnishes the spectator with a radically different and new encounter with the world, which affirms the cinema as a site for the furtherance of thought.

Morgan describes the importance of painting to Godard's work when he writes that, for the director, "photography has to pass through painting in order to become

²¹ Our evocation here is of the French director, Robert Bresson, for whom cinematography refers the word less in its technical, contemporary dimensions than in its literal definition of "writing with cinema."

cinema” (155)²². This implies that photography on its own is insufficient to account properly for cinema’s capabilities. However, it’s not a completely additive equation either. This is not a medium-specific inscription or a direct genealogy. As Morgan further explains: “it’s only when photography learns from painting, when photography incorporates painting’s imagistic qualities into its own capacities, that it is able to turn into and become cinema” (155). This assumption (or *assumption*) of painting by photography results in the production of an image that is no longer simply the record of a moment; it has been transformed into something else. Morgan elaborates on this relationship more clearly:

Because painting does not have the same automatic relation to reality as photography, the terms of this relation are open to interpretation and reworking. Taking painting as a model thus affords cinema the freedom to determine exactly *how* images refer to the world, to find new ways of looking and seeing. (187)

This is therefore not a demand for fiction at the expense of documentary or vice versa, nor a rejection of recognizable or everyday objects. Cinema still owes something of itself to photography. Morgan notes that

Godard uses the rhetoric of inheritance to acknowledge cinema’s link to an earlier medium while still retaining a distinction: cinema is *only* the ‘heir,’ the legal recipient of photography’s legacy. Cinema takes up photography’s rights and duties without thereby *being* photography. The

²² The use of the term “photography” here assumes its pre-digital definitions, and also the assumptions of the classical Bazinian meaning of “photography” in film criticism.

distinction may be fine, but it is important: cinema contains but is not defined by photography, even when it exercises the rights it derives from the older medium. (178)

The invocation of painting thus functions more as an affective assumption, which is to say that it has to do with a qualitative sensation evoked by the work of painting that needs to supplement photography in order to produce cinema. There is also contained within this observation the implication that cinema is itself not yet “complete”; its qualities, obligations, even techniques are yet to be determined. Chapter three will further attempt to address these concerns and the possibility that still remains for a “cinema to come.” Additionally, as will be discussed later, Godard does not limit cinema’s heritage to these two media. Godard’s understanding of cinema is “fundamentally impure, containing multiple styles, media, and forms of appeal” (Morgan 156) and is therefore closer to the understanding of Bazin’s work that will be developed in chapter three. Here it is merely important to express the necessity of painting to Godard’s understanding of cinema, particularly in his works that utilize video and digitization because “it’s as if, by shifting from celluloid to digital, Godard is able to dispense with a concern over the recording aspects of film to focus instead on pictorial qualities. The digital releases him into painting” (Morgan 160). 3D seems equipped to “release” Godard even further, although it also presents him with an expansion of the problematic discussed above. Which is to say, the film’s privileging of depth runs counter to the typical flat canvasses of painting.

Koresky expands on the trend in 3D movies to push towards a greater sense of reality, rather than using it to enhance artificiality:

“another illusion of 3D is that it somehow offers a greater sense of realism: even in completely fantastical worlds like that in, say, *Avatar*, there’s the notion that we can “reach out and touch” whatever is in front of us. Ostensibly it’s experiential, enhanced (whatever that really means), and it offers something more than all those relatively flat 2D films are capable of. Godard implicitly questions this premise early on in the film when the voiceover intones, ‘Those lacking in imagination take refuge in reality.’²³”

In the epilogue of the film, titled “3 Memory/Historical misfortune,” a character (played by Godard, but never explicitly identified as him) ponders the complications of attempting “to fit flatness into depth.”²⁴ In that same sequence, a woman is shown painting with water colours, which evokes the flatness of canvasses in contrast with the depth seemingly provided by the 3D image. This suggests that Godard’s interest in 3D is almost counter-intuitive: instead of using the technology to enhance the depth of field of his work, and create a more “realistic” experience, he seeks the opposite; he wants to demonstrate how 3D adds an even more painterly, and therefore artificial, aspect to the cinematic form. What he is after is a dissonance symbolic of the interstice rather than the benign use of the technology commonly found in Hollywood cinema. The presence of Mary Shelley writing *Frankenstein* in the epilogue recalls the novel’s subtitle, “the

²³ While this would seem to be a wholesale rejection of the thinking of André Bazin, the third chapter of this thesis will demonstrate that there exists another reading of Bazin that does not result in this statement being so categorically dismissive of his work.

²⁴ A typical Deleuzian problem, as it recalls the discussion of depth and surface found in *The Logic of Sense*.

Modern Prometheus.” Is Godard trying to bring the light of 3D to the audience in its proper form? Is 3D the form that will give rise to the future of cinema, therefore heralding the long sought after true end and means of cinema? Perhaps Godard is suggesting that 3D cinema, or cinema in general, is a monster which was supposed to be a path to the future but is instead an oddity better left consigned to the sideshow of history. He is certainly not interested in the technology’s potential for further “immersion,” or to encourage the audience to become more absorbed in the cinematic experience.

In Velázquez’s work, as discussed by Faure in the previous chapter, it is space that produces the figures within the frame rather than depth; it is a product of paint on canvas contrasting and evoking depth and difference rather than a pure trick of perspective, or a technological byproduct of a certain lens selection. The first example of this to strike the viewer is Godard’s layering text and quotations over top of one another. Godard’s first use of obvious 3D effects is the simple superimposition of red words over top of plain white text. The red letters intersect the white ones in a deliberate and artificial manner. The effect is almost Borromean. The text seems to be chained together but actually exists on separate layers. Layered intertitles are nothing new to Godard, and, as David Bordwell points out, he often “slaps graffiti on his own film” (“Say Hello”). The effect here, however, is not simply exclamatory; it actually calls attention to the artificiality of the depth produced by 3D technology. Additionally, while this is most certainly an authorial marking, it also challenges the viewer to confront the visible planes of the image rather than attempting to smooth them into an illusion. Godard immediately draws the viewer’s attention to the elaboration of 3D effects rather than attempting to

trick the audience into a bemused indulgence of the hyperreal: this particularly stands out in the many still-life images that appear in the film. For example, in a shot of a bed of flowers, it is not the bulbs which seem to be reaching out toward the viewer but rather their bright red colour. The bulbs resemble more of a splotch of a paint on canvas rather than the real objects that were filmed. Godard seeks to exaggerate the colour of nature in order to mimic the surface of a painting rather than bring attention to the level of depth of field in the flower bed. Another example of this is when one of the women in the two main halves of the film holds up a rug in front of her body. While the enhanced depth of field effect caused by 3D is visible in this image in the clear demarcations between the rug, the woman, and the background, the object itself remains completely flat. Its patterns remain a product of the various shades included in its design rather than as a product of the depth of field or the matter that makes up the surface of the material. These shots seek to eliminate or create a contrast between typical 3D effects and the interstitial interruptions that Godard seeks. Another potent example of this phenomenon is the television screens that can be seen in the background of several sequences. They either shows clips from older films or display images of static, neither of which are effected by the depth of field generated by the use of 3D. This creates for the viewer a sense of discontinuity between the 3D film they are watching and the movie on the television. These moments seem to make a mockery of television's communicative capacity, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, these images no longer represent the objects depicted therein but rather (re-)present them as wholly different through their transformation into products of cinematic contemplation. They are no longer reducible to their point of reference, as real flowers do not have the same type of bulbs, nor does a

real carpet have the perfectly flat dimensions of the image that Godard has discovered here. Throughout these moments, the viewer no longer loses themselves in the image but rather has their attention summoned by it. This is perhaps the primary function of these images. Their purpose is to evoke the experience of viewing a painting. David Bordwell writes that “we’re coaxed to savor each moment as a micro-event in itself, like a word in a poem or a patch of color in a painting” (“2 + 2 x 3D”). While “coaxed” suggests a kind of seduction or hypnosis, the effect is actually much more shocking than this. It is a deliberate attempt to summon the viewer, to make them dwell in the contrast between colour and object, between planes and flatness. “Micro-event” is perhaps the key phrase here because

Godard identifies cinema’s power as the ability to produce thoughts—more specifically, to produce the activity of thinking—and claims that this feature is what links it to the history of modern painting. Both have an ability to create forms and images that show historical content, that reveal events, beliefs, and persons in a public form. (Morgan 169)

While Godard is not a process philosopher, and the name A.N. Whitehead remains absent from his list of citations, his pictorial focus does seem to present a continuous event driven structure. Each image becomes its own opportunity for contemplation and reflection and this both separates it from the images which surround it but also connects it to them through the interlocation of the viewer. As Morgan notes, “the important relations between film and world have to be produced, achieved.” (162). Godard attempts this process through his construction of images that seem disconnected from one another, that demand the viewer make these connections themselves, that force the viewer to think

about both what they are witnessing and how it was formed. The public aspect mentioned in these two previous citations will become more important later on as this chapter discusses the function of projection in relation to Godard's filmmaking methods and *Goodbye to Language* in particular.

This is not to discount or foreclose any discussion of the narrative elements of the film. Rather, what has concerned this chapter so far is how the problem of putting "flatness into depth" returns to the work of Velásquez as it was discussed in the previous chapter by Faure. As Bordwell has shown in two blog entries, "*Adieu au Langage: 2 + 2 x 3D*," and "Say Hello to *Goodbye to Language*," the film in fact has a very definite and complex story structure that still awaits even further analysis. Both of the two main narrative sections in the film, one titled "1/Nature" and the other "2/metaphor," and which are mirrors of each other, seem also to be loose remakes of *Breathless* (there are lovers on the run, a couple post-coitally discussing abstract ideas, and a shooting seemingly of one of the pair in manner reminiscent of the earlier film, though the chronology is out of order, a phenomenon uncommon to Godard's work that will be explored in more detail in chapter three). This is an idea that Godard seems to have suggested more than once before with films like *Numero Deux* (1975) and *Slow Motion* (*Sauve qui peut [la vie]*, 1982). What's interesting about this return, however, is that it does not also involve a return to France to shoot the film, a situation that will be considered in more detail in the next chapter. The two stories being nearly identical yet having such seemingly opposite titles, suggests that in Godard's view of the world, there is no difference between nature and metaphor other than a measure of polarity. Neither has a privileged access to truth. Perhaps *Goodbye to Language*, which represents yet

another starting (over) point for Godard, necessitated such a return. Godard deliberately calls attention to his duplicate structure, at one point having the two lead characters from one story stare into a mirror, and it is mentioned that all four of them are in there, echoing a scene from the other chapter. The difference between the two stories centers around the presence of a dog: one couple takes the dog in and the other do not. The reaction to this encounter therefore sets the couples on slightly different paths, even though they both end in seemingly the same manner: with the ambiguous air of murder and chaos in the air. This narrative structure mirrors the “splitting image” effect that Godard utilizes later in the film. It represents a bifurcation in terms of the possibilities that can be actualized in the world, which is the action the viewer will be forced to undertake when confronted with the splitting image. The fact that both stories are abandoned in favour of an epilogue that ruminates on the capabilities of 3D technology suggests that a definitive conclusion remains beyond the means of both nature and metaphor, and that both are instead subordinate to the whims of memory. Which is to say that both nature and metaphor have a part to play in the writing of history. They are both methods of interpreting or giving shape to the world and its events.

Before discussing this “splitting-image” effect, it is important to note that despite the preceding lengthy discussion of painting, Godard does not completely abandon cinematic concerns throughout *Goodbye to Language* either. Of particular importance to the following examination is the concept of the “out-of-field” or “off-screen space.” Understanding the role of the out-of-field (this terminology will be favoured because it is also the terminology used in the translation of Deleuze’s writings on cinema) is also

crucial to understanding this film's deployment of the interstice. The "out-of-field" is no longer a separate space but becomes a critical component of the image itself, for

if we ask in what conditions cinema draws out the consequences of the talkie, and so becomes truly talking, everything is inverted: this is when the sound itself becomes the object of a specific framing which *imposes an interstice* with the visual framing. The notion of voice-off tends to disappear in favour of a difference between what is seen and what is heard, Thought and cinema, and this difference is constitutive of the image. There is no more out-of-field. The outside of the image is replaced by the interstice between the two frames in the image (here again Bresson was a pioneer). (Deleuze *C2* 180-181)

Again, this shows how this conceptualization moves the interstice away from descriptions Deleuze had used for the "movement-image" in *Cinema 1*. In the "time-image", the *voice-off* or off-screen sound folds into the scene of the frame. The gap between them becomes constitutive of their existence; they no longer exist as separable spaces which can be effectively subdivided as they are in conventional or formalist film aesthetics²⁵. The preceding discussion of Velázquez, particularly the analysis provided by Foucault, expanded on how the integration of the out-of-field, including the unreal (in so far as it is separate from the scene) space outside the frame, is an inevitable component of the interstice. This elimination of the out-of-field will take on even further complexity in this analysis of *Goodbye to Language*. Bresson writes that "if a sound is the obligatory

²⁵ Specifically, in the piecemeal approaches to film aesthetics offered by such "introductory texts" as Bordwell and Thompson's *Film Art*.

complement of an image, give preponderance either to the sound or to the image. If equal, they damage or kill each other, as we say of colours.” (62). This implies that there is a place for an image or a sound within a moment of a film but that the two together are incompatible. They become competing forces that are unable to co-exist without mollifying their expressive potentiality. What does this then mean for the relationship between cinema and thought outlined above? Is an individual moment within the confines of a mixture between sound and image too diverse to be properly presented for thought? For Godard, sound becomes as critical an element of cinema as the visual image, transforming it into a *sonimage*, rather than a primarily visual object (cinema is no longer synonymous merely with “moving pictures”) with sound added as a property periphery or supplemental to the image itself. The sound becomes a constitutive part of the image; not completing it, but expanding it beyond the boundaries of the cinematic frame. A banal example of this phenomenon can be seen in *Goodbye to Language* when the one couple encounters the dog at a gas station. The animal is never shown on screen, rather it is presented strictly through its whimpers and the recognition of the woman, both of whom remain outside of the frame. All the film depicts is the man filling the car with gasoline in near darkness. Deleuze expands on the last point in the previous citation further, when he writes:

Godard draws all the consequences from this when he declares that mixing ousts montage, it being understood that mixing does not just consist of a distribution of the different sound elements, but the allocation of their differential relations with the visual elements. Interstices thus proliferate

everywhere, in the visual image, in the sound image, between the sound image and the visual image²⁶. (C2 181)

Mixing could just as well describe the style of placing images together in combination rather than montage, which remains eternally tied to Sergei Eisenstein's attempt at a cinematic method of historical materialism²⁷. In Godard, series of images have a paratactical structure²⁸, which opens up a space for the void to emerge between both images and constitute them singularly but then allows further images, and thus further voids, to emerge.

In *Goodbye to Language*, by exploiting the possibilities offered by 3D technology, Godard creates an interstitial image that draws on similar principles of observation that were seen by Faure in Velázquez's painting. In *Cinema 2*, when talking about the dimensions between fiction and reality in film, Deleuze writes that

the frontier can be grasped only in flight, when we no longer know where it passes, between the white and the black, but also between the film and the non-film; it is characteristic of film to always be outside its marks, breaking with the 'right distance,' always overflowing 'the reserved zone' where we would have liked to hold it in space and time. (C2 154)

²⁶ It is in a similar spirit that this thesis refers to Godard's tendency to overlap images with dissolves as "overdubbing," rather than use the term "dissolve" or "superimposition," as that technique, overdubbing, so prominent in contemporary music, seems more suited for what the director is trying to accomplish.

²⁷ See Eisenstein's *Film Form: Concepts in Film Theory* and *The Film Sense*.

²⁸ Robert Hullot-Kentor, in the preface to his translation of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, notices a similar syntactical structure at play in that work. Affinities between Godard's use of collage and Adorno's work requires further study.

Deleuze follows this observation by immediately invoking Godard, explaining further that “Godard draws a generalized method of the image from this; where something ends, where something else begins, what a frontier is and how to see it, but through crossing and displacing it endlessly” (C2 154). While these observations apply to Godard’s use of fiction and non-fiction in practically any given film, it can also be seen how in *Goodbye to Language* these intrusions into “reserved zones” become a technique of image making. The typical 3D image is not a dialectical relationship between reality and unreality, but is instead a kind of hyper reality that accentuates the depth of vision. Much as was seen in Foucault’s analysis of Velázquez, with the 3D image, the spectator (equipped with their glasses) helps to form the constitution of the image. Foucault also says in regard to *Las Meninas*:

In it there occurs an exact superimposition of the model’s gaze as it is being painted, of the spectator’s as he contemplates the painting, and of the painter’s as he is composing his picture (not the one represented, but the one in front of us which we are discussing). These three ‘observing’ functions come together in a point exterior to the picture: that is, an ideal point in relation to what is represented, but a perfectly real one too, since it is also the starting-point that makes the representation possible. (16)

Without an equipped subject, the 3D movie is a composite of visual nonsense, an indecipherable image accompanied by an uncanny (rendered as such without its correlative image) accompaniment of sounds and music. The viewing equipment becomes a precursor to the image’s reception, as does the filmed subject, and both are brought together in a stereoscopic fusion of the three gazes of the viewer, the subject, and

the director. For Godard, it is not a question however of coordinating these superimposed gazes, to continue the ceaseless production of hyperreal images, but rather an opportunity to disrupt the “more real than real” visions of 3D. What matters now however, is turning towards what is the most definitive “event” in the 3D exhibition of the film.

At one point in the film, and this will serve as the chief example for this chapter, the professor character is reading a book while conversing with one of the two central young women. The two stand up and begin walking to the right of the screen. An angry man (possibly the woman’s abandoned husband, or a servant to the same figure) waving a gun emerges from a car in the background. The couple stops and the woman is pulled off-screen²⁹. In 3D, at this moment, the image seems to split, a diagonal line intrudes across the plane of vision and it becomes impossible to stare at the whole image. If the viewer closes their left eye, they see the professor left standing with his book after the woman has been dragged away. If they close their right eye, they will see the angry man confront the young woman. If the viewer takes the glasses off, the two images will appear superimposed upon one another, they will have eliminated the space between the two images³⁰. Eventually the two images recombine, one no longer has to make a decision about the path of their vision, they can return to their default position of spectatorship. Here, Godard has pushed the interstice to a new extreme: the very planes of the image have become constituent of gaps between images and ideas. The out-of-field, which in

²⁹ If one watches this section of the movie without wearing the glasses, it looks almost as if the woman’s spirit is being pulled out of her body, like a scene from Cocteau’s *Orpheus*. Yet again, we find spectral qualities in the interstice.

³⁰ Whether we can even call them two images, it is perhaps more correct to refer to each as a partial image, in a manner following Francois Laruelle, even though we have failed Laruelle by attempting to render the experience of these images in language. See *The Photo-Fiction: A Non-Standard Aesthetics*.

the original formulation of the interstice, was made (a)part of the image, now becomes a visual component of it. The effect, however, is not continuous, but rather torturous. To remain looking at the image in 3D without making the decision to close one eye or to take the glasses off strains one's vision, and what appears is an inherently divided display; one cannot resolve the tension between the combined field of the images. Rancière's notion of Godard seeking to create an autonomous community of images comes to mind here. This is not dissimilar to Deleuze's observation that the effect of the interstice is ultimately to "restore our belief in the world" (C2 181). Godard seems to move in the opposite direction from these observations however. What community building power lies in an image in which there is no consensual agreement of its reception, one that does not effect a fusion, but a dispersion of possible methods of looking at the image? This approach can only provoke disagreement, a radical personalization of the spectatorial experience (and thus a dispersion of possible versions of the film?). If these planar interstices are to restore our belief in the world, it is only through the process of dismantling the contemporary form of film viewership, a belief that can only exist on the back of a rejection for a world as it exists³¹. This observation is shared by the professor earlier in the scene before the image is split, when he says that the aim of the contemporary proliferation of images is to "murder the present." David Ehrlich, in his review for *The Dissolve*, attempts to explain the observation Godard has presented here:

³¹ This notion could be compared with Deleuze's understanding of Friedrich Nietzsche that positions the eternal return as an affirmation that says "no." Cf. Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, and Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

He supposes that images are dangerous because, whatever information they might contain, infinite layers of meaning are still excluded. The typical application of 3-D compresses that dynamic into the contours of a single shot, forcing the eye to ignore several planes of action within a frame in order to focus on only one. Godard, on the other hand, has no interest in submitting to the usual demands of the format. (Ehrlich)

Does Godard's image continue this cycle of chronological violence, dismembering the present into two visible moments incapable of reconciliation? Or, is it perhaps that Godard has discovered a way to illustrate with this technology the very conditions of the world, and thinking about the world, as such? As mentioned previously, Godard's technique in *Goodbye to Language* provides the viewer with the most literal rendering of what the concept of "world" means when Deleuze describes cinema's power to restore our belief in it. The world is a competing planar chaos, a dimension of pure simultaneity in which events for thought proliferate everywhere continuously. It is a world made up of radical fluctuations. Much as the viewer has to make a decision about how to view the image, whether to make immanent either one image or another (or to confront the super-imposed chaos) in the film, to approach the world outside of it requires the same decisional structure³². Each moment in the world is an event which has to be confronted on an individual level. Each dimension, or plane of the present, must be given over to becoming a plane of immanence.

³² Again, Laruelle and his non-philosophy seem a particular pertinent counter to this line of thinking. He seeks a formulation or understanding of the material conditions of chaos itself, outside of the decisional structure that this film reflects and that runs through much of Deleuze's writing.

With his new invocation of a planar interstice, through this “splitting image” effect, Godard creates an interstitial image that aims to disrupt our perception of the world, and to create a *dissensus* rather than a consensus. In the appendix to Rancière’s *The Politics of Aesthetics*, *dissensus* is defined as “not a quarrel over personal interests or opinions. It is a political process that resists juridical litigation and creates a fissure in the sensible order by confronting the established framework of perception, thought, and action with the ‘inadmissible’, i.e., a political subject” (85). While this definition lends itself more to political theory than aesthetics (though the two are not mutually exclusively domains), *Goodbye to Language* certainly opens a fissure in the sensible order through its refusal to present a unified or conventional field of view. Godard introduces an irresolvable gap into the 3D image that renders any unified perception of the image untenable. By pushing the interstice into this new dimension technologically, Godard also alters its properties, making the void a site of resistance to the conventional hyperrealism sought after in the majority of 3D cinema. But in order for this resistance to maintain itself, does that not also require a form of belief? Geoffrey O’Brien, in his review of the film, writes:

The bafflement of appearances, when one plane detaches from another: a man remains seated while a woman walks away from him out of the frame while we continue to follow her into a new frame, and then come back. The frame expands beyond its own boundaries, and then meets up with itself again. We have remained in a place and simultaneously left it. The camera is nosing against the limits of space, the limits of the body, seeing how far it can or can’t go. The effect finally is intimate.

This observation recalls the materiality of the body discussed previously in Deleuze's definition of cinema's capacity to restore our belief in the world. In an ideal viewing of the film, there is an audience of people sitting together, but each are producing, in contradistinction to traditional claims of spectatorship, which sees it as a receiving, a different and personal experience of its events. The intimacy that O'Brien observes therefore operates on two levels. On the one hand, there is the bond formed between the viewer and the object of their gaze. It is a connection that is individual, which is grounded in the personal decisions they make throughout the film's "splitting image" moments. But then there is the shared environment, in which the public watching the film undergoes this experience together. This creates a bond in the audience that fosters a further sense of community based on a shared plurality of experience. This is the logic of a *dissensual* community that Rancière attempts to invoke. Morgan writes, "art, painting in particular, creates *images* out of historical events, presenting history with a broader public. Cinema, the greatest *popular* art, finds itself within this logic" (188). This is the kind of ideal experience that can be produced according to said logic. It is in fact this ideal relationship between film, viewer, and audience that underpins the majority of Godard's work, as it recalls his many experiences in the *Cinémathèque Française* watching different kinds of films every night with various crowds, as Morgan explains. This ability to produce in the viewer a belief in historical and aesthetic affinities across films and cultures is for Godard the primary function of the cinema; an example of the position it fulfills within society. Morgan writes:

His argument seems to be that the physical projection of a film, when combined with its reception by an audience in a specific theatrical setting,

forms the condition for the possibility of discerning historical affinities and connections. It's not simply that we recognize affinities and connections that would otherwise have gone unnoticed; Godard suggests they would never have existed in the first place if not for cinema. (212)

From this, it is possible to gather that cinema is the interstitial phenomenon as such. It is the connective void itself that draws both history and the audience within it in order to manufacture and (re-)present the imagistic production of the world. Does this mean that cinema is the site of absolute spirit; the proper gallery of (moving) images (Hegel 492)? According to Godard, it certainly seems possible, however, Morgan draws a slightly less ambitious conclusion, observing that “projection is better understood as an account of cinema that functions as a productive concept in the construction of *his* films and videos. If there is a theory here, it is one that is used to mobilize a form of experience for the production of new works” (237). Instead of an eternal or absolute dimension to cinema, rather it is more helpful to consider Godard's method as a way of fostering belief in the possibility of cinema to produce useful affinities and forms of expression. This idea of projection helps Godard to formulate his own projects. It allows him to call upon these interstitial gaps in cinematic communication and form bonds across a diverse and once again, *dissensual* history of images. These encounters then become for the viewer a proliferating series of events which demand a certain degree of thought and consideration. Godard makes films within the ideal of a unified public of spectators but the demands that these works make upon them necessitate that only a specific and willing audience will ever seek them out; that only a small group of people will receive the call to thinking that grounds their very form and structure. In order to make films that sound

the resonances of the world, which can remind the audience to believe in their ability to make a decision in the face of this simultaneous chaos, requires a belief in the capacity of cinema to reach them. Which means believing in a model of shared projection, even in a world where screens are everywhere and that attempt to minimize and distort images from their original projection and production to all various manners of shapes and sizes; a world where images are constantly re-appropriated and vandalized to serve corporate or frivolous ends. The film draws the viewers' attention to these other modes of image production, mocking both cell phones and television screens while including them within multiple sequences. Their presence suggests a personalization and appropriation of the image away from its shared destination in the cinema to a method of personal "branding" that cannot communicate between people. It seems that as images to seek to murder the present, the present also seems to be doing its best to murder the image.

The question remains then: what is the fundamental relationship between cinema and history, and how does that question impact the future of the medium itself? Is the cinema the language to which Godard's title seeks to bid goodbye? Is it an affirmation of cinema as being something beyond the limits of language? Koresky arrives at a somewhat distressing inevitability:

As the title suggests, it will always come back to words, and what he [Godard] perceives as their increasing loss of meaning and the basic breakdown in contemporary communication and memory. "Soon everyone will need an interpreter to understand the words coming out of their mouths," is said at one point, reminding us we're all unreliable witnesses to history.

If this is so, then is there a future for cinema, which requires communication and cooperation in order to be produced? Or is it simply another empty discourse among many, only occasionally offering embers of belief but no longer capable of igniting the hope needed to engage with the chaos? Is it still possible to believe in a cinema that is capable of fulfilling the task assigned to it by Deleuze, to make the viewer “believe in the world?” Godard’s constant returns to the model of the cinematheque are what Morgan suggests inspires him to produce new images, to attempt to reach an intimate bond with and within his viewing audience. In order to theorize a “cinema to come” then, perhaps this also requires a kind of looking back, and an almost hysterical, repetition of the question: “what is cinema?”

In Praise of Love and The Return of the Cinema to Come

At the beginning of *In Praise of Love*, before being confronted with any image, a question must be asked. How is the “love” (or rather, “*amour*”) in the title of the film meant to be read? Is this word to be considered in the contemporary “romantic” sense? Godard links love immediately to resistance, though unlike philosopher Alain Badiou’s later released book of the same name (in both French and English), it is not a resistance against present conditions, but the French resistance during World War II. Love is immediately therefore tied both to questions of resistance and history. The English title can therefore be read as fairly straightforward; the film is a song or hymn in support of resistance. In this reading, the film can be seen as a devotional paean to a spirit of cultural and territorial resistance borne out by the film’s presentation of various resistances to globalization and contemporary modes of expression. The French title, however, while it may still have some of the same connotations, is significantly more ambiguous:

In Praise of Love is the English translation of the title of Godard’s film, but the sense of the French word *éloge* is more ambiguous. Combining the senses of “elegy” and “eulogy,” this cinematic song of praise addresses an object that is either gone or presently passing out of existence.³³

(Rodowick *VLoF* 90)

In this reading, love becomes something much more precarious. It is something that is being lost, in addition to something that is intimately connected, by Godard, with history

³³ Rodowick here is responding to Amy Taubin’s review in *Film Comment*, where she remarks that “the literal translation of “*éloge*” is eulogy-praise bestowed on the dead. In *In Praise of Love*, love is almost entirely couched in the past tense, inextricable from mourning, guilt, and regret.”

and resistance. For the director, this is not merely an allegory for the political moment, but for the cinematic one as well. The “love” here now also stands for a kind of cinephilia: a transformation of the passion Godard felt as young critic for his future medium of devotion. In this way, it is also possible, to read “cinema” in place of “love” in the film’s title. But it is not just a celebration of cinema, or any cinema whatever, but a mourning of and a reflection for what cinema once represented in terms of its capacities for political and cultural resistance, and what it could become in the future (which is now our present). Morgan, in the introduction to his *Late Godard and the Possibilities of Cinema*, writes in regards to the filmmaker’s later work that “part of what struck me was the variety of ways in which these films are preoccupied with the sense of an ending” (xii). This film carries on this tradition that Godard had been fostering in his later period, beginning with his “return to filmmaking” with *Slow Motion (Sauve qui peut [la vie])* in 1981. In *In Praise of Love*, however, the sense of an ending does not merely extend to the collapse of revolutionary leftist ideology and the emergency of global financial capitalism (as the latter is dramatized in *Nouvelle Vague* [1990] or the former in *Allemagne année 90 neuf zero* [1990]), but the withering away of the cinematic medium and its possibilities for the same global range of expression in the present. In this film, Godard seems to suggest that with the transition from film (as medium) to digital recording processes, “cinema” (as the domain of the moving image) is beginning to recede into history, to be nothing other than a record of the time in which it was the dominant form, the 20th century. This is given consideration by Rodowick’s observation that this work “marks the current fate of film as an indiscernible point of passage—the present realization of an already unattainable past” (*VLoF* 91). But additionally, cinema,

as the medium of the 20th century, is not yet guaranteed to retain the same expressive power in the 21st century. Godard draws our attention to this crisis of expression early in the film, making it one of the central problems of the main character's attempt to create a work on love through the ages; after he finishes explaining his project to one of his actors/models, Bruno asks whether they see the story he has described as a film, novel, opera, or play. For Godard, however, this "ending" (of cinema as the primary mode of expressivity, of cinema as the perfect tool for representing the present moment) does not represent a full stop, an ultimate demise, but a possibility for new modes for the expression of both resistance and history. His famous remark about films needing to have a beginning, middle, and end, though not necessarily in that order, seems particularly pertinent in this instance, especially regarding the fate of cinema and the crisis of expression that this film confronts one with. Throughout the film the characters discuss what it means to become an "adult." This description is not meant simply to indicate a certain age, but rather a kind of affective maturity, which seems to have been completely lost in the present. Viewed figuratively, can not the same also be said for cinema? Did it ever fully become a "mature art?" Does it instead remain just a juvenile exercise in industry and entertainment? Its short lifespan, only a century give or take (Godard himself has on multiple occasions announced the end of cinema), suggests that cinema has yet to arrive at some kind of middle period. Instead, it is perpetually being thrown from its beginning toward its end (and in Godard's case, back again).

This is something that has also been noticed in Deleuze's observation of Godard's endless displacements. For Godard, the bringing to an end of one kind of cinema, and the emergence of another is not just the marking of loss, but an opportunity

to create a site of resistance to the automatization and globalization of the future (in all dimensions, the political, aesthetic, in terms of film, etc.). Also, implicit in this concept of crossing and displacement is the notion of a return, or a repetition. In this film, Godard seems to repeat the gesture he performed with *Slow Motion*, returning to Paris, in order to return to the essence of filmmaking, to ponder the future of cinema. Morgan observes the significance of this movement, writing:

It's as if Godard needed to return to the origins of cinema—defined in different ways by the Lumière brothers and the Cinémathèque Française—in order to start making films again. (Perhaps it's his own version of the axiom from *Parsifal*: 'Only the spear that caused the wound can heal it.')

(259)

In order to move ahead to an age of cinema without film, without the same point of origin, it was necessary to step back into what, for Godard, was the place of its birth (at least on this occasion, *Goodbye to Language* also involves such a maneuver, but does not follow the same procedure, geographically speaking. Is this perhaps because Paris is not the birthplace of digital filmmaking, which is the category to which 3D technology belongs?). A return, then, but also a displacement, an abandoning afterwards of the medium considered synonymous with cinema itself. The loss to cinema of film, what this thesis will later, following Morgan, describe as the medium of the present tense, frees it to become something different. For Godard, what might be called the “ontology” of cinema is to become bound to the historical and the political. These factors are not determined exclusively by the content of films but also by the methods by which they are produced, how they present their imagery, and furthermore the means by which those

images are presented. To understand Godard's cinematic ontology, however, it will be necessary to look more closely at the disjunction created by this work between cinema and video.

In Praise of Love contains a split narrative³⁴. The first half of the film, it is important to note, is shot on fine-grained 35mm black and white celluloid film, and follows the character of Edgar, an artist of indeterminate media³⁵, and his benefactors/associates, as he tries to prepare a project about three stages of love using the model of a couple who were members of the French resistance. While preparing this project, Edgar is insistent on trying to recruit a woman he met several years ago to participate, but she remains disinterested and aloof. The project eventually collapses, and Edgar later learns that the woman he pursued has committed suicide. The second half is a flashback to two years before the first section of the film, when Edgar first met the woman he becomes infatuated with in Brittany, while attempting to interview former resistance members as research in preparing a cantata for Simone Weil. This second section is shot on often super saturated digital video, presenting an image in which the shadows of the first half (both in terms of narrative mystery and literal shadows created by shooting on celluloid) give way to impressionistic and highly detailed imagery that seems to collapse and dissolve into itself (an effect seen achieved in a much more

³⁴ Richard Suchenski argues for a tripartite structure to the film, writing that the film contains “35mm black-and-white footage of Paris in the first half against the heavily oversaturated video palette of the second half, and ending with a jerky and pixelated digital homage to the Lumières that points, with characteristic ambiguity, toward cinema’s capacity for perpetual renewal” (150). While the triptych structure is certainly common to Godard’s later works, the finale in *In Praise of Love*, as we will see in our discussion of it later on, functions more as an epilogue than a substantive and whole section of the film.

³⁵ An artist of the aesthetic regime, it would be appropriate to say.

gratuitous fashion in *Goodbye to Language*). This split is particularly notable, perhaps firstly because, as American film critic J. Hoberman observes “I can’t recall another flashback in a Godard feature—his movies have all been resolutely present tense, and with good reason” (195)³⁶. Godard often oscillates temporality, providing stretches of diagesis that take place within a short span of time before jumping ahead quite abruptly (as occur in this film when Edgar’s project falls apart), and he often uses montage to suggest possibilities for events without ever depicting them totally³⁷, but rarely does he actually move backwards within the stories he’s telling to a previous point within the time of the diegesis.³⁸

While this decision would be notable on its own, particularly in the larger scope of Godard’s oeuvre, the use of different media for the present and past sections of the film itself raises complications in terms of the affective properties of both cinematic mediums. Simply put, he shows the present moment through the medium that is on the verge of passing or disappearing, and he illustrates the past using the medium that, when the film was produced, was not quite the medium of the present but would become the cinematic vehicle of the future. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze writes that “it is precisely the weakness of the motor-linkages, the weak connections, that are capable of releasing huge

³⁶ The analysis of the narrative of *Goodbye to Language* suggests that Godard has employed the same technique there. Perhaps having done it once already, he feels no need to call attention to it the way it is done in *In Praise of Love*.

³⁷ An extreme form of the type of editing found in Bresson’s films.

³⁸ *Goodbye to Language* seems to follow from this experiment, but it is also ambiguous enough to confuse such a reading.

forces of disintegration” (19)³⁹. While what he is talking about is the tendency of post-war European cinema’s stories to collapse into wanderings, or meanderings, or characters whose goals are abandoned completely (which is also present here, in the sudden and mysterious collapse of Edgar’s project, the failure of his cantata, or in the messages exchanged between characters that are mute on the soundtrack, denying the viewer a potential resolution to certain hanging story threads), it also applies to Godard’s decision to embed the present in the mode of the past, and vice versa. If, as Bazin observes, “film and photography naturally account for the great spiritual and technical crisis in modern painting beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century” (4), then the introduction of digital technology is creating a spiritual (what is the subject of the cinema of the future to be if it can no longer be the present?) and technical (what are the affective properties of the now various modes of cinematic expression?) crisis for cinema itself. In “The Evolution of Film Language,” Bazin observes of the cinema of his time, that “with technological determinants thereby practically eliminated, we must look elsewhere for the signs and principles of the evolution of film language: to the new approach to topics and, as a result, to the style necessary to express them” (95). How true this statement is, given the proliferation of new media even within Bazin’s lifetime, does not belie the fact that in the 21st century, the crisis of technology has returned and it is central to the

³⁹ This statement seems to prefigure the interstice, conceptually speaking. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that interstice is a synecdoche for the entirety of the time-image.

production and development of cinema as such, not just as consequence of its projection (as one might describe 3D in the 1950s for instance)⁴⁰.

Cinema itself, in its technological development, particularly in Godard's work, is subject to the return and displacement discussed previously following Deleuze. Godard makes this implicit crisis brought on by developing digital technology explicit, presenting a film that both in terms of its narrative and production presents time as being "out of joint." This expression is intended as a deliberate provocation, or perhaps invocation (conjuring?) of philosopher Jacques Derrida's discussion of the same phenomenon in the political realm in *Specters of Marx*. In a previous chapter, our notes made clear the link between the *hauntology* of the present and the notion of the interstice, in so far as the interstice posits a void, a netherworld that exists beyond images themselves. The narrative of *In Praise of Love* makes this haunting explicit, as Bruno remains haunted both by the woman with whom he's infatuated (who only really exists for the viewer as a character after her suicide) and the projects he attempts to complete (he never seems to finish either the cantata or the resistance drama—both are endlessly deferred). Before expanding on this, it is helpful to turn to Derrida's explanation: "'the time is out of joint': the formula speaks of time, it also says *the* time, but it refers singularly to *this* time, to an 'in these times,' the time of these times, the time of this world which was for Hamlet an 'our time,' only a 'this world,' this age and no other" (61). In Derrida's formulation of time, there are echoes of Deleuze's notion that the interstice ultimately returns the viewer to a "belief in this world," in the manner that the "time is out of joint" links to "this age

⁴⁰ Bazin was not unaware of this proliferation either, as the recent collection, *André Bazin's New Media* makes abundantly clear.

and no other.” Deleuze and Derrida both seem to suggest that temporal disjunction is ultimately affirmative, whether that refers to the “this world” of Deleuze, or the “time to come” of Derrida. For Godard, this disjunction allows for the overflowing of history into cinema, in which the “end of cinema” becomes prolonged by a surplus of historicity, the awareness of cinema as not only a visual and auditory but also historical aesthetic device. This is the first step towards a cinematic ontology in which the “being” of cinema necessarily contains not only its history in terms of its medium of expression, but also history as such, the entire history of the world during the 20th century. To expand on the significance of time being “out of joint,” it is necessary to return briefly to Derrida:

How can it be valid for all times in which one attempts to say “our time”?

In a predicative proposition that refers to time, and more precisely to the present-form of time, the grammatical present of the verb to be, in the third person indicative, seems to offer a predestined hospitality to the return of any and all spirits, a word that one needs merely to write in the plural in order to extend a welcome there to specters. (61)

To perhaps reduce, but also summarize the significance of this observation, the disjunction of temporality opens the way for the ghosts of the past to enter into the present. The void of the interstice sucks images into history, and from which they reemerge, almost with ectoplasm, carrying with them the ghastly residue of history. Godard, particularly in his use of video, will overdub⁴¹ the past into the present moment, and, with the cinema also becoming the domain of the digital, make the past a constituent

⁴¹ Mark Fisher has linked overdubbing and other electronic music techniques to *hauntology* through his criticism. For further clarification within that context, consult his writings in *Ghosts of My Life*.

element of cinematic expression as such. For Godard, then, the contemporary cinema will also constitute a “haunting” which “can be construed as a failed mourning. It is about refusing to give up the ghost or – and this can sometimes amount to the same thing – the refusal of the ghost to give up on us” (Fisher).

In order to discuss this new cinematic ontology proposed by Godard, it will first be useful to consider the model of cinematic ontology which would have been formative for Godard, even if it was not one that he was entirely satisfied with, that of André Bazin. Bazin is both a point of influence and reference, as well as an agon for Godard’s thinking about cinema. Godard’s early essay, “*Montage ma bon souci*” seems specifically aimed at Bazin’s embrace of long-take cinema that was seen as preserving the ambiguity of the image. This is an attitude also shown by Godard in his praise of Alain Resnais’ *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), which he admires specifically for its use of montage. By discussing Bazin’s ontology, both in its articulation in “The Ontology of the Photographic Image” and throughout his work, it will be possible to elaborate on some of the key divergences Godard undertakes and ideas that he seeks to preserve, to maintain in the quickly transforming technological landscape of cinema. Bazin links the development of the arts to the act of preservation, “if we were to psychoanalyze the visual arts, the practice of embalming might be seen as fundamental to their birth. The origins of painting and sculpture would be found to lie in a ‘mummy complex’” (3). For him, art is an attempt to capture the world as it is, to preserve the events of a passing moment. As has been seen in some earlier citations of Bazin, it was photography and cinema that freed the other arts from this obligation, achieving a more “accurate” than previously

possible description of reality itself. Film, by virtue of its ability record things over time, is even more powerful than photography, because

A film is no longer limited to preserving the object sheathed in its moment, like the intact bodies of insects from a bygone era preserved in amber. It frees Baroque art from its convulsive catalepsy⁴². For the first time, the image of things is also the image of their duration, like a mummification of change. (Bazin 9)

The image of mummification recalls the remark from Deleuze cited in the introduction that mentions the mummy's bandages as bearing witness to life. It also, if the phrase can be read in a phantasmagorical register, hints at the relationship between cinema and the undead that the previous discussion of hauntology also reached toward. It is facile to read from this a decided preference for realism, particularly a kind of long-take realism in which the flow of temporality is maintained. Because Bazin does not entirely reject montage or schools of cinema (particularly that of Soviet montage) simply for the reason that they manipulate the rate of change. In his essay on cinematic impurity, Bazin rejects a purely documentary cinema, writing

What in fact is meant by the term 'cinema' in the critical problem at hand? If it signifies a means of expression which creates realistic depictions merely by recording images, a vision purely of surfaces in contrast with the resources for classical literary introspection and analysis, then we must

⁴² While there is much conservatism/religiosity to be found in Bazin's writings that one may find problematic, I find his comments on the Baroque to be the most objectionable.

remark that Anglo-American novelists had already found in behaviourism the psychological justification for such a technique. (118)

Bazin does not deny, but in fact encourages cinema to take upon itself the capacities of any other media. For him, the characteristics he imagines are chiefly that of the novel, but given time and experience, one can imagine how this could come to include developments in music recording, modern painting and poetry, and magnetic tape technology that Godard has made a part of his cinema over the past fifty years.

“Mummification of change,” then, can be read not as an order to realism, but instead as a means of capturing both the transformation not just of reality but the methods by which it is actualized. This is best articulated by Dudley Andrew, who in his manifesto for the relevance of Bazin in the 21st century, writes that “the cinema goes forward encountering traces of a larger world; and it goes forward as a memory machine adjusting ‘itself’ to what it has become in this process of discovery and engagement with another subject, whether person, culture, temporality” (140). One could conceivably append technology to the end of Andrew’s definition. Deleuze correctly posits this openness towards other media that is constituent of the cinematic medium in his own film theory, when he talks about frontiers that can only be passed in flight. Cinema can only be conceptualized in relation to the media which surround it, there is fundamentally no cinema in-itself.

Through these approaches a more nuanced perspective can be taken on Bazin’s ideas. The notion of impurity can be taken to ground cinematic ontology in simultaneously a desire to capture reality not by caging it in the material of film, but attempting to express the multiple means that can be incorporated into cinematic expression. As Angela Della Vacche observes,

in fact, Bazin's impurity stands for a nonhierarchical, antibinary dialogue with the other arts. This dialogue is evolutionary and nonlinear, because it can include new twigs, dead roots, detours, reversals, missing links and even the special case of the Hollywood "remake" as antievolutionary repetition. Furthermore, for Bazin, the encounter between cinema and the arts is more intricate and surprising than the two paradigms which are relevant to twentieth-century modernity.

There is thus a germ of Rancière's concept of the "Aesthetic Regime of Art" to be found within Bazin. In following from Bazin, then, Godard also eschews dominant paradigms for understanding art such as modernism and realism, content more to forge a new "form-of-art" out of cinema and whatever it can appropriate and re-purpose. Thus, Godard's work, which attempts to work out the history inherent in the capturing of reality through his use of montage, can thus be read as faithful to the spirit, if not an exacting definition of Bazin's theories that would limit one to the style of realism or neo-realism.

Bazin's work, however, also draws attention to one of the dangers posed by cinematic ontology, particularly if, following Godard, it will become necessary to ground cinematic expression within the dimension of history. Bazin's ontology essay makes the technological domination of reality a critical component of cinema, eliminating to a certain degree the necessity of human agency. Bazin writes that "all art is founded upon human agency, but in photography alone can we celebrate its absence. Photography has an effect upon us of a natural phenomenon, like a flower or snowflake whose beauty is inseparable from its earthly origin" (7). For Bazin, this technological usurpation of the natural is not a problem, but part of what grants the cinematic its power of *mimesis*

(photography creates an imitation of reality more perfect than any painter's hand). But he does not, particularly in this essay, pay any heed to the challenge this creates for human expression; the perfection achieved merely by the operation of the technological minimizes the role of human agency in an "art" that could potentially be practiced automatically by machines. This is briefly addressed in Bazin's comments on how the emergence of photographic technology has effected painting, "the mechanical image, by providing painting with a rival which went beyond Baroque resemblance to achieve identity with the model, compelled painting to transform itself into an object" (10), but a more thorough critique needs to be made of the dark potential that could accompany the encoding of history by a conscious-absent machinery. Perhaps the most severe critique, an antidote to Bazin's belief in technology's benign servility to the ends of man, is the critique of technology offered by Martin Heidegger. While Heidegger's essay, "The Question Concerning Technology," does not explicitly address cinema, the essay's positioning of a polarity between technology and the arts, namely poetry, traverses the bizarre and potentially dangerous middle-ground between the ends of art and technology that cinema occupies. Heidegger grants both technology and poetry the potential for revelation, but that

the revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiēsis*. The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such. (320)

Technology has the effect of making natural resources into batteries. It eliminates the uniqueness of objects and forces them into an eventual storage for use. When this logic is applied to cinema, Bazin's "change mummified" becomes not an archive of an images to be explored, but a depository of images to be used as needed (either propagandistically, or merely to satisfy base affects, all visual media becomes in this instance pornographic in nature). What happens then, through the movement from filmic cinema to digital cinema, when a surplus of history is added to the cinematic being, is that this sedimentation of historical imagery becomes a possibility to be abused even further: to create a well of historical "standing-reserve". Turning back to Heidegger for an elaboration of this concept: "everywhere, everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it standing-reserve [*Bestand*]" (322). This is not an attempt to capture nature in its essence, but rather a further de-naturing of objects in the world. Everything is reduced to something that is either for use or it lacks relevance (there are certainly echoes here of the iconic tool analysis offered in *Being and Time*). Heidegger also warns that a similar fate awaits those who operate the standing-reserve:

as soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as an object, but exclusively as standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of standing-reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. (332)

This being ordered to stand-by is applied by Heidegger to objects of transportation or capacitive energy such as hydro-electric dams, but is this not also similar to the way that Hollywood attempts to buy people's stories and ideas and transform them into films which are to serve as a substitute for shared historical experience? Hollywood in this way seeks to return history to an easily consumable "narrative of things past" rather than "a mode of co-presence, a way of thinking and experiencing the co-belonging of experiences and the inter-expressivity of the forms and signs that give them shape" (Rancière *FF* 177). The films produced in this matter appropriate and become history, and the multivalent perspective is reduced to a singular story designed to fill the gaps of historical comprehension. The operators of standing-reserve, then, become the filmmakers who simply take these stories and illustrate them: they try to efface the excess of history, and its intrusion (from the void, as specter) on the present and instead isolate them as discrete narrative events. This is the warning that Godard sounds with the subplot about the Spielberg Associates who are attempting to purchase the story of the old resistance couple. Hoberman writes in regard to *In Praise of Love* that

At the same time, the industrial simulations of *The Matrix* and particularly *Schindler's List*—which, in its totalizing re-creation of World War II and the Holocaust—serve as Godard's prime negative object. America, it's several times maintained, has no history of its own and hence must appropriate history from others. Europe—visualized as Paris's timeless "there," but really a stand-in for Godard's own cinema—is nearly helpless before this voracious totalitarian appetite. (Hoberman 194)

Hollywood is for Godard what could be called the prime creator of cinematic standing-reserve. This is made all the more ironic by the presence of *The Matrix*, a film that depicts robots creating actual human batteries. If the future of cinema is based in history because of its digital transformation, then Hollywood's work will be the consumption of history, its reduction into a standing-reserve controlled by Hollywood's (or rather, America's) own hegemonic ordering of the world. Throughout, this chapter has discussed how Godard sees the future of cinematic ontology as being tied firmly to history, and it has been shown how that connection, particularly in the cinema of Hollywood, serves as a dangerous combination for Godard.

There is no solution to this problem. Godard's work has rather constantly served as a continual search for another method of making cinema that does not find itself overwhelmed by its technological being, and the Hollywood norms of cinematic production. The mode of filmmaking that therefore characterizes Godard and his work is a form of cinematic *weak Messianism*, as described by Walter Benjamin in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History." After all, does not Godard's disjunction between past and present within this film suggest a blasting open of the continuum of history (Benjamin, XVI, 262) and the overdubbing of images represent seizing "hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (Benjamin, VI, 255)? These descriptions of writing history that Benjamin provides could also be read as a potential point of origin for the interstice, in which the past becomes an image that discontinuously erupts into the time of the present, in a manner not dissimilar to what is shown in *Goodbye to Language* and the second half of *In Praise of Love*. Perhaps most instructive is when Benjamin writes,

materialistic historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystallizes into a monad. A historical materialist approaches a historical subject only where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a Messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. (XVII, 262-263)

Here there are similarities to Deleuze (not only in the invocation of Leibniz) but in the explicit description of a constructivism, a term which Deleuze uses to refer to Godard (C2 179). Monica Dall'Asta describes certain of Godard's techniques as "a sort of ideal filmic translation of Benjamin's 'Messianic cessation of happening'" (356). While this thesis' observations, particularly in light of the preceding discussion, are sympathetic to this formulation, Michael Gardiner's description of Benjamin's *weak Messianism* seems more appropriate, where he writes that it is the power to "release the semantic deposits of the past from their encasement in myth" (165). Godard shows the various minutiae in his films in their sensible dimension not by constricting them to the narrative (or in the sense of the previous quotation, mythic) level. This is key to the movement of the interstice; it preserves individual shots in their own dimension of sensibility while maintaining the projected quality of cinema. Furthermore, history as a monadological process, which is to say as a procession of micro-events similar to those experienced during Godard's films (see the previous chapter), also makes reference to the principle of the "AND" which is fundamental to the operation of the interstice. The persistence of this "AND" thus allows

for a continual resistance to the hegemonic cauterizing of history. The use of the phrase *weak Messianism* can also help make more clear what it means for Godard's work to encourage a belief in the world. It is a belief not in the world in its current manifestation and partitioning of sensibility, but a belief in a world that can be grasped only through resistance, through the incommensurability between history and the present; as has been demonstrated earlier, it is a belief in a chaos which can be shaped and altered by the movement and work of thought, which is revealed in the gaps that are opened by the interstice, or what could also possibly be called the "AND"-in-itself.

Perhaps now it is necessary to consider how Godard arrives at the connection between digital video and history, and how this connection is made explicit within *In Praise of Love*. Hoberman correctly observes that, for Godard, "the motion picture medium is associated with history and historical memory" (194). Only film, however, is allowed to exist exclusively in the present tense. The first section of the film, as Hoberman again correctly observes, "is a voluptuous urban nocturne with particular emphasis on the transitory sensations that were the essence of the first motion pictures" (194). Even though there are references to the works of the Lumière Brothers, particularly in the sequence at the train yard, which seems to parody the Lumières' *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* (*L'arrivée d'un train en gare à la Ciotat*, 1896) through the depiction of locomotives that have been brought to a complete halt (which can also be read as a depiction of the end of film as a medium), and Jean Vigo, in the scene where Edgar and the woman meet over the Seine, these histories function only through allusion. Which is to say, history does not make itself explicit in the filmic image, it can only intrude through perhaps the recreation of a similar image, or a piece of music wandering

across the soundtrack as in the scene that recalls *L'Atalante*. It is in the second half of the film where history becomes more explicit, images of the past begin to burst forth onto images of the present. Morgan writes in regard to this switch from film to video that

what this suggests is that, regardless of the actual dating of the technology, the second part of *Éloge de l'amour* uses the format that, for Godard, defines an engagement with the past: video is his preferred technology for thinking about history (and the history of cinema). In this context, celluloid is firmly associated with the present world. (Morgan 259)

The second part of the film is where Godard begins to utilize dissolves and overlapping images to explicitly provoke the spirit of history into the present moment (of the diegesis). There's the picture of Simone Weil that appears when Edgar is discussing his cantata which then flashes in and out of the image, and the photograph which fades in and out of the scenes at the hotel of the old resistance couple. These are more literal examples of what Deleuze will call "stratigraphic images" in which the past buried under a location or implied in a recited textual passage (he uses the films of Straub & Huillet as an example) continually overshadows its present. It is also the contemporary realization of Deleuze's observation about Godard's work that it "increasingly emphasizes this point: the image has to include the before and the after; it thus has to bring together in this way the conditions of a new, direct time-image, instead of being in the present 'as in bad films'" (C2 154-155). In this way, Godard's new cinematic ontology is more faithful to Bazin's classical ontology than simulacra which claim to express fealty to historical events by expressing them as examples of pure narrative. Godard seeks to bring the essence of an image, its historical complications and antecedents, into the present

moment through a kind of associative collage, rather than a reductive recreation. This approach fits more soundly with the definition provided by Bazin of his perspective on realism:

the dispute over realism in art derives from this misunderstanding, from the confusion between the aesthetic and the psychological—between true realism, which is a need to express the meaning of the world in its concrete aspects and its essence, and the pseudo-realism of *trompe l'oeil* (or *trompe l'esprit*), which is content with the illusion of form. (6)

Of course, Godard sets out to achieve this not through the unvarnished and completely autonomous long-take, through one that will not find itself interrupted or superimposed upon, but rather through a system of associations and metaphors that intrude upon the images. At first, this would seem to be an affront to Bazin's system, in which "editing, by its very nature, is fundamentally opposed to ambiguity" (101). Godard's montage/collage seems designed by its very nature to achieve the opposite. This is evident even in its basic narrative construction. Godard rejects basic continuity editing. Even at the beginning of the film when Edgar auditions his actors, and in the conversations that are shown between him and his benefactors, the viewer is never given shots or a sequence of shots which establish the geometry/geography of the location. Edgar often remains partially/entirely off-screen. The protagonist has to be recognized through certain cues or by the sound of his voice. This follows Deleuze's observation that in Godard's cinema, "the modern image initiates the reign of 'incommensurables' or irrational cuts: this is to say that the cut no longer forms part of one or the other image, of one or the other sequence that it separates and divides" (C2 277). Godard still makes edits within a

sequence, but it is often to objects or characters on the periphery rather than simply from one character that is speaking to another. This form of editing asks viewers to draw associations between images and objects in the frame beyond those of narrative causality. Every portion of the image becomes pregnant with symbolic or metaphorical potential. Edgar even states multiple times throughout the film that it is impossible to think of something without also/first thinking of something else. Rancière summarizes the effect of Godard's style, when he writes that

it constructs a play of analogies in which these heterogeneous elements testify to a world in common, in which the most disparate realities appear to be cut out of the same sensible fabric and are always open to being linked together by what Godard calls the 'fraternity of metaphors.'" (*A&D* 58)

Rather than eliminate possibilities for interpretation, Godard's dissolve and overdubbing of images actually seems to open an endless series of possibilities. Is the photograph of Simone Weil merely meant to function as an illustration to further demonstrate Edgar's project? Is this image meant to be read as a ghost which haunts the coast of Brittany along with other ghosts of the French resistance? This extends also to Godard's use of images of natural beauty as well. As the film shifts from the black and white Paris of the present to oversaturated coasts of the past, the viewer is immediately struck with an astonishing, almost impressionistic, view of the waves. Are they simply to be appreciated in their simplicity? To be admired as a romantic image? Are they a metaphor for the erosion of history under the weight of the past? Are they, perhaps most potently, a symbol of the digital technology that will wash away the present-tense media of film, just

as in this work they signal the transition from one media to another? The American film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum observes in his review that “most viewers tend to feel inadequate when watching Godard films. His methods of telling a story — often separating sound from image and plot from dialogue — always require readjustments on the viewer’s part.” It is not simply about attempting to construct a coherent narrative map of the characters, events, and structure of the narrative, a viewer of Godard’s work must be prepared to move to the outside.

Primarily, in Godard’s later work, this outside seems to be the buried and forgotten histories underlying the narrative that insist upon themselves or are being insisted upon by a select few characters, in the course of a film. But because these histories are passé in terms of their contemporary reception, they do not remain in the present, which is what makes the dissolve such an ideal demonstration of their intrusion. The interstice that Deleuze discusses is a gap, both a depository for meaning to enter but still a definite emptiness. This means that any interpretations, or readings of Godard’s collages/associations can never be final. As Morgan notes, this openness is important for what Godard views as the future of cinema, as

again, meaning is not inherent in the images or concepts that the film employs: images of nature do not have a set and given meaning, nor does digital video or the idea of America. Godard uses them as part of a larger ambition to show us how to look at the past in order to understand and inhabit the new worlds that arise before us. (260)

The world of the future is going to be one in which the plurality of meanings that are generated for the relationships between images (and as one can also see in *Film*

Socialism, how they are generated) is what will draw the world together. This principle can be seen at work in Godard's understanding of the history of the resistance. The French resistance emerged out of a promise of "Britain" (again associated with Brittany), of a land not yet conquered by the marauding fascists. Resistance does not emerge from nothing: it must also be produced by the "fraternity of metaphors," by the type of associative thinking that Godard seeks to make from cinema. Godard thus also views the cinema of the future as one that can give ground to the creation or emergence of new communities, in a manner similar to way they emerge from his cinematic images. This ethical impulse is noted by Rancière as he juxtaposes the same techniques from Godard's early period to his later one. The merging of history into the production of cinematic meaning becomes a tool by which to forge a new community, one that resists the consumption and ordering of history produced by the Hollywood adaptation machine. Godard seeks new possibilities both for the image and the imagination of a new global community.

Deleuze's observation, however, that Godard's method is one which "cinema must ponder at the same time as it uses it," (C2 179) serves as a reminder that this resistance is precarious. Resistance is not a permanent or perpetual part of the new digital cinematic ontology; it can be defeated or lost to time. This is the elegiac component of *In Praise of Love*, mourning for the passing moment that also looks forward to the promise of a resistance to come. According to Rosenbaum:

In Praise of Love's use of color and black and white is deliberately conceived to invert Spielberg's priorities in confronting the historical past — Godard's black-and-white sequences represent the present (even as

they recall the black and white of his early-60s features), and color video represents the past. Godard's eulogy for both periods is above all an expression of respect for the truth that lies beyond the more comforting, more palatable images we manufacture. It's a eulogy given more in sorrow than in anger as he looks without blinking at the wreckage of the contemporary world, but it also glows with the recollection of a smile.

There are truths that exist in the ruins of the present world (again evocations of Benjamin), which Godard seeks to bring to the surface by encoding fleeting images of history on top of the current moment. This is also to a degree Edgar's experience as well, a fact that has the potential to open up an autobiographical reading of the film (once again, incorporating history, although this time it is a personal one). He preserves the past through his work; his attempts to write a cantata commemorating the work of Simone Weil, or the drama of the Resistance and aging that he attempts to bring to life mirror Godard himself making the film. It is, however, both through working with history, and his attempt to find a mode of expression for that history that matters, not necessarily its completion or even its success. Rodowick notes, "Edgar's project is less a work than a potentiality searching for a form and a medium; it has a purely virtual existence" (*VLoF* 91). It is an attempt to preserve the ideas that inform reality, but with no way of giving them concrete shape. It is not that these ideas are un(re)presentable, that they refuse the domain of the image entirely, but rather that there is no single image sufficient to express them directly. Preserving this uncertainty becomes a virtue both of Edgar's project, and the spectator's attempts to make meaning of Godard's work. The way the film recedes from view, the way even Edgar ends up dissolving into an image of the coast, signals a

perpetual passing that accompanies an attempt to grasp the lasting influence of history.

As Rodowick makes clear,

we will never see Edgar's project or know the form it will ultimately take, if any. We are in the middle of a voyage whose endpoint is uncertain and whose beginning is already forgotten. In the passage from filmic to videographic time, the (video) future is already in the past, the present strives to preserve an aesthetic memory of what film was, and we the viewers struggle to envision the work to come, which is always just beyond our reach. (*VLoF* 91)

There is therefore the sense of an ending that Morgan discusses, which both frustrates the desire for change in the present but lights a torch along the path to future. Even if there arrived a new form of expression or a new understanding of how to communicate (as was suggested in the chapter on *Goodbye to Language*), its creation will have been accompanied by some form of passing. There thus remains, for both Godard and the viewer, an elegiac sadness in the production and reception of history, a mourning for one's self, but one which cannot be final. The future must be reached toward even if, as indicated by the last lines of the film, "maybe nothing was said." Of course, as the tarrying with the interstice has shown, one cannot say anything without also saying nothing.

Adieu aux éloges

In conclusion, the purpose of this thesis was to attempt to articulate a future for cinema which would see it continue to function as a means for restoring belief in the world. The “cinema-concept” introduced by Gilles Deleuze in *Cinema 2* called the interstice was relied upon to explicate several aspects of the contemporary cinema of Jean-Luc Godard, whose films *In Praise of Love* and *Goodbye to Language* in particular were used in order to suggest that this kind of cinema is still possible. The concept of the interstice is a self-reflexive method of organizing images and sounds in a way that preserves their singularity while also creating an aporetic void out of which further meaning, particularly in regard to aesthetics and history, can be created. The interstice is the means for awakening in the viewer the cinema’s capacity for giving rise to thinking; that which serves as one of the linkages between cinema and thought. This event of thinking is what allows cinema to be capable of inspiring a “belief in this world,” and thus to maintain a belief in itself first of all, and is tied intimately into the continued evocation and use of this concept. As has been shown, “belief in this world” is not merely an affirmation of the present, but a testament to the virtual dimension of existence which can be influenced by the organization and understanding of both how the world is presented, and the role given towards technology and history within it. These two concepts are critical to the understanding formed here of what can be understood as the future of cinema as both an aesthetic object and a site of philosophical practice.

The aim of the first chapter was to trace the genealogy of the interstice. This took the thesis on a detour through the works of the Spanish painter Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, whose work provides a point of discovery for the interstice, even though it

is likely that his work is not the origin, but merely one embodiment of an aesthetic principle that has existed for an even longer time. The criticism of Élie Faure and Michel Foucault were necessary to cast a net over Velázquez's work so that the concept could emerge in a way that it could be recognized. Faure's criticism demonstrated the aesthetic dimension of the interstice, the way it operates on the plane of the image and how it emerges in the spaces between figures. Foucault's analysis demonstrated a further epistemological dimension to the concept, showing how it can be used to activate and recognize the subjectivity of a viewer of a work of art. Both of their analyses ultimately show how both Godard and then Deleuze, through Godard, arrive at the concept as it has been defined in throughout this thesis. The poles of the interstice they articulate also served as the structure for the discussion that followed in the proceeding chapters.

The second chapter explained that the future of the interstice would see it taken up once again by Godard, and transformed into a technique of aesthetic resistance and a testament to believing in a certain understanding of the world. For Godard, it is not the difference of the world that must be affirmed but a world of resistance, and the hyperreal visions of the future need to be shattered rather than celebrated. 3D for Godard is not a medium of enhanced realism but a method to further integrate painterly concepts into the development of the cinema, interrupting and challenging its photographic legacy. By examining Godard's relationship with painting, it was seen how he has appropriated the various critical receptions of Velázquez into his work and transformed them to cinematic means. Examining further the dimensions of the interstice also showed how it functions within the realm of the cinematic, and how it is also a formal element of the film-viewing experience that can be observed in action. Furthermore, by considering issues of

projection and reception (or as was shown, the production performed by the spectator) a method was demonstrated by which the cinema can still offer the viewer belief in this world and in itself as a medium for communicating this belief.

With *In Praise of Love*, Godard has mapped out a new definition of cinematic ontology that ties the future of digital cinema to its continuous interrogation and attempted integration of history. In doing so, he reworks the ontology of André Bazin that served as one of the fundamental influences of his cinematic upbringing, while agonistically incorporating his own uses of montage and collage that strive toward a historical presentation that preserves rather than abandons the ambiguities of the past. This chapter also warned of the dangers of this new form of cinematic being, one that reduces history merely to the level of the consumptive and easily accessible. Godard rejects Hollywood's use of simple historical narratives, which consign history to the past and do not examine its lingering, almost spectral effect on the present. Through Martin Heidegger's critique of technology, it was shown how Hollywood, through its means of production, and in order to satisfy the appetite of its audiences for more and more content, is making batteries out of historical experience, transforming it into stories to be consumed. For Godard, this must be resisted through a kind of cinematic *weak Messianism*. However, there is never any conclusion to this work; resistance is always precarious and receding from view, technology is persistent and ever present, and as time moves forward there will always be a sense of something lost or coming to an end, a notion that heavily weighs on Godard's own perception of himself. What is left then is a very open conception of the future of cinema, but one which has a dangerous teleology hanging over it unless the interrogation, rather than the consumption of history,

continues. *In Praise of Love* does, however, conclude Godard's use of Paris as the site for this formation of community. As Morgan notes, "*Éloge de l'amour* concludes Godard's investment in France as the primary site for history and cinema; he now turns elsewhere, to new locations and to new groupings of histories and problems" (260-61). The work that follows from this, both *Notre Musique*, *Film Socialism*, and even *Goodbye to Language*, in ways not discussed within this thesis, will seek new countries and histories to explore.

The future of (what following Deleuze, might jokingly be called "good") cinema, then, if it is to maintain a belief in both the idea of cinema, and the world as a site for potential resistance must remain in constant communication with the void, traversing and dispersing the traces of the aporetic dimension conjured by the interstice. For Godard, these dimensions emerge both out of the technological possibilities offered by 3D, and more importantly by the irruption of politics and history into the foundation of the cinema itself. The model for this cinematic mode of production finds its most clear articulation in the work of Robert Bresson, who writes "my movie is born first in my head, dies on thesis; is resuscitated by the living persons and real objects I use, which are killed on film but, placed in a certain order and projected on to a screen, come to life again like flowers in water" (23). These flowers are thus the micro-events of film that spur the movement of thought itself, but then can never be firmly grasped. They escape touch and are carried off by the stream. Cinema itself lives on in these returns and retreats into the void, and therefore regardless of the shifting forms of technology and its reception, one can never write its eulogy.

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