

# *Cinema 2*

## *The Time-Image*

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University of Minnesota Press  
Minneapolis

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First published as *Cinéma 2, L'Image-temps*

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Published by the University of Minnesota Press

111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

Fifth printing 1997

**Library of Congress Number 85-28898**

ISBN 0-8166-1676-0 (v. 2)

ISBN 0-8166-1677-9 (pbk.; v. 2)

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# 1 *Beyond the movement-image*

## 1

Against those who defined Italian neo-realism by its social content, Bazin put forward the fundamental requirement of formal aesthetic criteria. According to him, it was a matter of a new form of reality, said to be dispersive, elliptical, errant or wavering, working in blocs, with deliberately weak connections and floating events. The real was no longer represented or reproduced but 'aimed at'. Instead of representing an already deciphered real, neo-realism aimed at an always ambiguous, to be deciphered, real; this is why the sequence shot tended to replace the montage of representations. Neo-realism therefore invented a new type of image, which Bazin suggested calling 'fact-image'.<sup>1</sup> This thesis of Bazin's was infinitely richer than the one that he was challenging, and showed that neo-realism did not limit itself to the content of its earliest examples. But what the two theses had in common was the posing of the problem at the level of reality: neo-realism produced a formal or material 'additional reality'. However, we are not sure that the problem arises at the level of the real, whether in relation to form or content. Is it not rather at the level of the 'mental', in terms of thought? If all the movement-images, perceptions, actions and affects underwent such an upheaval, was this not first of all because a new element burst on to the scene which was to prevent perception being extended into action in order to put it in contact with thought, and, gradually, was to subordinate the image to the demands of new signs which would take it beyond movement?

When Zavattini defines neo-realism as an art of encounter – fragmentary, ephemeral, piecemeal, missed encounters – what does he mean? It is true of encounters in Rossellini's *Paisà*, or De Sica's *Bicycle Thief*. And in *Umberto D*, De Sica constructs the famous sequence quoted as an example by Bazin: the young maid going into the kitchen in the morning, making a series of mechanical, weary gestures, cleaning a bit, driving the ants away from a water fountain, picking up the coffee grinder, stretching out her foot to close the door with her toe. And her eyes meet her pregnant woman's belly, and it is as though all the misery in the

world were going to be born. This is how, in an ordinary or everyday situation, in the course of a series of gestures, which are insignificant but all the more obedient to simple sensory-motor schemata, what has suddenly been brought about is a *pure optical situation* to which the little maid has no response or reaction. The eyes, the belly, that is what an encounter is . . . Of course, encounters can take very different forms, even achieving the exceptional, but they follow the same formula. Take, for example, Rossellini's great quartet, which, far from marking an abandonment of neo-realism, on the contrary, perfects it. *Germany Year 0* presents a child who visits a foreign country (this is why the film was criticized for not maintaining the social mooring which was held to be a condition of neo-realism), and who dies from what he sees. *Stromboli* presents a foreign woman whose revelation of the island will be all the more profound because she cannot react in a way that softens or compensates for the violence of what she sees, the intensity and the enormity of the tunny-fishing ('It was awful . . .'), the panic-inducing power of the eruption ('I am finished, I am afraid, what mystery, what beauty, my God . . .'). *Europe 51* shows a bourgeoisie woman who, following the death of her child, crosses various spaces and experiences the tenement, the slum and the factory ('I thought I was seeing convicts'). Her glances relinquish the practical function of a mistress of a house who arranges things and beings, and pass through every state of an internal vision, affliction, compassion, love, happiness, acceptance, extending to the psychiatric hospital where she is locked up at the end of a new trial of Joan of Arc: she sees, she has learnt to see. *The Lonely Woman* [*Viaggio in Italia*] follows a female tourist struck to the core by the simple unfolding of images or visual clichés in which she discovers something unbearable, beyond the limit of what she can personally bear.<sup>2</sup> This is a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent [*de voyant, non plus d'actant*].

What defines neo-realism is this build-up of purely optical situations (and sound ones, although there was no synchronized sound at the start of neo-realism), which are fundamentally distinct from the sensory-motor situations of the action-image in the old realism. It is perhaps as important as the conquering of a purely optical space in painting, with impressionism. It may be objected that the viewer has always found himself in front of 'descriptions', in front of optical and sound-images, and nothing more. But this is not the point. For the characters themselves

reacted to situations; even when one of them found himself reduced to helplessness, bound and gagged, as a result of the ups and downs of the action. What the viewer perceived therefore was a sensory-motor image in which he took a greater or lesser part by identification with the characters. Hitchcock had begun the inversion of this point of view by including the viewer in the film. But it is now that the identification is actually inverted: the character has become a kind of viewer. He shifts, runs and becomes animated in vain, the situation he is in outstrips his motor capacities on all sides, and makes him see and hear what is no longer subject to the rules of a response or an action. He records rather than reacts. He is prey to a vision, pursued by it or pursuing it, rather than engaged in an action. Visconti's *Obsession* rightly stands as the forerunner of neo-realism; and what first strikes the viewer is the way in which the black-clad heroine is possessed by an almost hallucinatory sensuality. She is closer to a visionary, a sleepwalker, than to a seductress or a lover (similarly, later, the Countess in *Senso*).

In Volume 1 the crisis of the action-image was defined by a number of characteristics: the form of the trip/ballad,<sup>3\*</sup> the multiplication of clichés, the events that hardly concern those they happen to, in short the slackening of the sensory-motor connections. All these characteristics were important but only in the sense of preliminary conditions. They made possible, but did not yet constitute, the new image. What constitutes this is the purely optical and sound situation which takes the place of the faltering sensory-motor situations. The role of the child in neo-realism has been pointed out, notably in De Sica (and later in France with Truffaut); this is because, in the adult world, the child is affected by a certain motor helplessness, but one which makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing. Similarly, if everyday banality is so important, it is because, being subject to sensory-motor schemata which are automatic and pre-established, it is all the more liable, on the least disturbance of equilibrium between stimulus and response (as in the scene with the little maid in *Umberto D*), suddenly to free itself from the laws of this schema and reveal itself in a visual and sound nakedness, crudeness and brutality which make it unbearable, giving it the pace of a dream or a nightmare. There is, therefore, a necessary passage from the crisis of image-action to the pure optical-sound image. Sometimes it is an evolution from one aspect to the other: beginning with trip/ballad films [*films de bal(1)ade*] with the

sensory-motor connections slackened, and then reaching purely optical and sound situations. Sometimes the two coexist in the same film like two levels, the first of which serves merely as a melodic line for the second.

It is in this sense that Visconti, Antonioni and Fellini are definitely part of neo-realism, in spite of all their differences. *Obsession*, the forerunner, is not merely one of the versions of a famous American thriller, or the transposition of this novel to the plain of the Po.<sup>4</sup> In Visconti's film, we witness a very subtle change, the beginnings of a mutation of the general notion of situation. In the old realism or on the model of the action-image, objects and settings already had a reality of their own, but it was a functional reality, strictly determined by the demands of the situation, even if these demands were as much poetic as dramatic (for instance, the emotional value of objects in Kazan). The situation was, then, directly extended into action and passion. After *Obsession*, however, something appears that continues to develop in Visconti: objects and settings [*milieux*] take on an autonomous, material reality which gives them an importance in themselves. It is therefore essential that not only the viewer but the protagonists invest the settings and the objects with their gaze, that they see and hear the things and the people, in order for action or passion to be born, erupting in a pre-existing daily life. Hence the arrival of the hero of *Obsession*, who takes a kind of visual possession of the inn, or, in *Rocco and his Brothers*, the arrival of the family who, with all their eyes and ears, try to take in the huge station and the unknown city: this will be a constant theme in Visconti's work, this 'inventory' of a setting – its objects, furniture, tools, etc. So the situation is not extended directly into action: it is no longer sensory-motor, as in realism, but primarily optical and of sound, invested by the senses, before action takes shape in it, and uses or confronts its elements. Everything remains real in this neo-realism (whether it is film set or exteriors) but, between the reality of the setting and that of the action, it is no longer a motor extension which is established, but rather a dreamlike connection through the intermediary of the liberated sense organs.<sup>5</sup> It is as if the action floats in the situation, rather than bringing it to a conclusion or strengthening it. This is the source of Visconti's visionary aestheticism. And *The Earth Trembles* confirms these new parameters in a singular way. Of course the fishermen's situation, the struggle they are engaged in, and the birth of a class consciousness are revealed in this first episode, the

only one that Visconti completed. But this embryonic 'communist consciousness' here depends less on a struggle with nature and between men than on a grand vision of man and nature, of their perceptible and sensual unity, from which the 'rich' are excluded and which constitutes the hope of the revolution, beyond the setbacks of the floating action: a Marxist romanticism.<sup>6</sup>

In Antonioni, from his first great work, *Story of a Love Affair*, the police investigation, instead of proceeding by flashback, transforms the actions into optical and sound descriptions, whilst the tale itself is transformed into actions which are dislocated in time (the episode where the maid talks while repeating her tired gestures, or the famous scene with the lifts).<sup>7</sup> And Antonioni's art will continue to evolve in two directions: an astonishing development of the idle periods of everyday banality; then, starting with *The Eclipse*, a treatment of limit-situations which pushes them to the point of dehumanized landscapes, of emptied spaces that might be seen as having absorbed characters and actions, retaining only a geophysical description, an abstract inventory of them. As for Fellini, from his earliest films, it is not simply the spectacle which tends to overflow the real, it is the everyday which continually organizes itself into a travelling spectacle, and the sensory-motor linkages which give way to a succession of *varieties* subject to their own laws of passage. Barthélemy Amengual produces a formula which is true for the first half of this work: 'The real becomes spectacle or spectacular, and fascinates for being the real thing . . . The everyday is identified with the spectacular . . . Fellini achieves the deliberate confusion of the real and the spectacle' by denying the heterogeneity of the two worlds, by effacing not only distance, but the distinction between the spectator and the spectacle.<sup>8</sup>

The optical and sound situations of neo-realism contrast with the strong sensory-motor situations of traditional realism. The space of a sensory-motor situation is a setting which is already specified and presupposes an action which discloses it, or prompts a reaction which adapts to or modifies it. But a purely optical or sound situation becomes established in what we might call 'any-space-whatever', whether disconnected, or emptied (we find the passage from one to the other in *The Eclipse*, where the disconnected bits of space lived by the heroine – stock exchange, Africa, air terminal – are reunited at the end in an empty space which blends into the white surface). In neo-realism, the sensory-motor connections are now valid only by virtue of the upsets that

affect, loosen, unbalance, or uncouple them: the crisis of the action-image. No longer being induced by an action, any more than it is extended into one, the optical and sound situation is, therefore, neither an index nor a synsign. There is a new breed of signs, *opsigns* and *sonsigns*. And clearly these new signs refer to very varied images – sometimes everyday banality, sometimes exceptional or limit-circumstances – but, above all, subjective images, memories of childhood, sound and visual dreams or fantasies, where the character does not act without seeing himself acting, complicit viewer of the role he himself is playing, in the style of Fellini. Sometimes, as in Antonioni, they are objective images, in the manner of a *report*, even if this is a report of an accident, defined by a geometrical frame which now allows only the existence of relations of measurement and distance between its elements, persons and objects, this time transforming the action into displacement of figures in space (for instance, the search for the vanished woman in *The Adventure*).<sup>9</sup> It is in this sense that the critical objectivism of Antonioni may be contrasted with the knowing subjectivism of Fellini. There would be, then, two kinds of opsigns, reports [*constats*] and 'instats',<sup>10</sup>\* the former giving a vision with depth, at a distance, tending towards abstraction, the other a close, flat-on vision inducing involvement. This opposition corresponds in some respects to the alternative as defined by Worringer: abstraction or *Einfühlung*. Antonioni's aesthetic visions are inseparable from an objective critique (we are sick with Eros, because Eros is himself objectively sick: what has love become that a man or a woman should emerge from it so disabled, pitiful and suffering, and act and react as badly at the beginning as at the end, in a corrupt society?), whilst Fellini's visions are inseparable from an 'empathy', a subjective sympathy (embrace even that decadence which means that one loves only in dreams or in recollection, sympathize with those kinds of love, be an accomplice of decadence, and even provoke it, in order to save something, perhaps, as far as is possible . . .).<sup>11</sup> On both sides these are higher, more important, problems than commonplaces about solitude and incommunicability.

The distinctions, on one hand between the banal and the extreme, and on the other between the subjective and the objective, have some value, but only relatively. They are valid for an image or a sequence, but not for the whole. They are still valid in relation to the action-image, which they bring into question, but already they are no longer wholly valid in relation to the new



image that is coming into being. They mark poles between which there is continual passage. In fact, the most banal or everyday situations release accumulated 'dead forces' equal to the life force of a limit-situation (thus, in De Sica's *Umberto D*, the sequence where the old man examines himself and thinks he has fever). In addition, the idle periods in Antonioni do not merely show the banalities of daily life, they reap the consequences or the effect of a remarkable event which is reported only through itself without being explained (the break-up of a couple, the sudden disappearance of a woman . . .). The method of report in Antonioni always has this function of bringing idle periods and empty spaces together: drawing all the consequences from a decisive past experience, once it is done and everything has been said. 'When everything has been said, when the main scene seems over, there is what comes afterwards . . .'<sup>12</sup>

As for the distinction between subjective and objective, it also tends to lose its importance, to the extent that the optical situation or visual description replaces the motor action. We run in fact into a principle of indeterminability, of indiscernibility: we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental, in the situation, not because they are confused, but because we do not have to know and there is no longer even a place from which to ask. It is as if the real and the imaginary were running after each other, as if each was being reflected in the other, around a point of indiscernibility. We will return to this point, but, already, when Robbe-Grillet provides his great theory of descriptions, he begins by defining a traditional 'realist' description: it is that which presupposes the independence of its object, and hence proposes a discernibility of the real and the imaginary (they can become confused, but none the less by right they remain distinct). Neo-realist description in the *nouveau roman* is completely different: since it *replaces* its own object, on the one hand it erases or *destroys* its reality which passes into the imaginary, but on the other hand it powerfully brings out all the reality which the imaginary or the mental *create* through speech and vision.<sup>13</sup> The imaginary and the real became indiscernible. Robbe-Grillet will become more and more conscious of this in his reflection on the *nouveau roman* and the cinema: the most objectivist determinants do not prevent their realizing a 'total subjectivity'. This is what was embryonic from the start of Italian neo-realism, and what makes Labarthe remark that *Last Year in Marienbad* is the last of the great neo-realist films.<sup>14</sup>

We can already see in Fellini that a particular image is clearly subjective, mental, a recollection or fantasy – but it is not organized into a spectacle without becoming objective, without going behind the scenes, into ‘the reality of the spectacle, of those who make it, who live from it, who are absorbed in it’: the mental world of a character is so filled up by other proliferating characters that it becomes inter-mental, and through flattening of perspectives ends ‘in a neutral, impersonal vision . . . all our world’ (hence the importance of the telepath in *8½*).<sup>15</sup> Conversely, in Antonioni, it is as if the most objective images are not formed without becoming mental, and going into a strange, invisible subjectivity. It is not merely that the method of report has to be applied to feelings as they exist in a society, and to draw from them such consequences as are internally developed in characters: *Eros sick* is a story of feelings which go from the objective to the subjective, and are internalized in everyone. In this respect, Antonioni is much closer to Nietzsche than to Marx; he is the only contemporary author to have taken up the Nietzschean project of a real critique of morality, and this thanks to a ‘symptomatologist’ method. But, from yet another point of view, it is noticeable that Antonioni’s objective images, which impersonally follow a becoming, that is, a development of consequences in a story [*récit*], none the less are subject to rapid breaks, interpolations and ‘infinitesimal injections of a-temporality’: for example, the lift scene in *Story of a Love Affair*. We are returned once more to the first form of the any-space-whatever: disconnected space. The connection of the parts of space is not given, because it can come about only from the subjective point of view of a character who is, nevertheless, absent, or has even disappeared, not simply out of frame, but passed into the void. In *The Outcry*, Irma is not only the obsessive, subjective thought of the hero who runs away to forget, but the imaginary gaze under which this flight takes place and connects its own segments: a gaze which becomes real again at the moment of death. And above all in *The Adventure*, the vanished woman causes an indeterminable gaze to weigh on the couple – which gives them the continual feeling of being spied on, and which explains the lack of co-ordination of their objective movements, when they flee whilst pretending to look for her. Again in *Identification of a Woman*, the whole quest or investigation takes place under the presumed gaze of the departed woman, concerning whom we will not know, in the marvellous images at the end,

whether or not she has seen the hero curled up in the lift cage. The imaginary gaze makes the real something imaginary, at the same time as it in turn becomes real and gives us back some reality. It is like a circuit which exchanges, corrects, selects and sends us off again. From *The Eclipse* onwards, the any-space-whatever had achieved a second form: empty or deserted space. What happened is that, from one result to the next, the characters were objectively emptied: they are suffering less from the absence of another than from their absence from themselves (for example, *The Passenger*). Hence, this space refers back again to the lost gaze of the being who is absent from the world as much as from himself, and, as Ollier says in a phrase which is true for the whole of Antonioni's work, replaces 'traditional drama with a kind of *optical drama* lived by the character'.<sup>16</sup>

In short, pure optical and sound situations can have two poles – objective and subjective, real and imaginary, physical and mental. But they give rise to opsigns and sonsigns, which bring the poles into continual contact, and which, in one direction or the other, guarantee passages and conversions, tending towards a point of indiscernibility (and not of confusion). Such a system of exchange between the imaginary and the real appears fully in Visconti's *White Nights*.<sup>17</sup>

The French new wave cannot be defined unless we try to see how it has retraced the path of Italian neo-realism for its own purposes – even if it meant going in other directions as well. In fact, the new wave, on a first approximation, takes up the previous route again: from a loosening of the sensory-motor link (the stroll or wandering, the ballad, the events which concern no one, etc.), to the rise of optical and sound situations. Here again, a cinema of seeing replaces action. If Tati belongs to the new wave, it is because, after two ballad-films, he fully isolates what was taking shape in these – a burlesque whose impetus comes from purely optical and, in particular, sound, situations. Godard begins with some extraordinary ballads, from *Breathless* to *Pierrot le fou*, and tends to draw out of them a whole world of opsigns and sonsigns which already constitute the new image (in *Pierrot le fou*, the passage from the sensory-motor loosening, 'I dunno what to do', to the pure poem sung and danced, 'the line of your hips'). And these images, touching or terrible, take on an ever greater autonomy after *Made in USA*; which may be summed up as follows: 'A witness providing us with a series of reports with neither conclusion nor logical connection . . . without really

effective reactions.<sup>18</sup> Claude Ollier says that, with *Made in USA*, the violently hallucinatory character of Godard's work is affirmed for itself, in an art of description which is always being renewed and always replacing its object.<sup>19</sup> This descriptive objectivism is just as critical and even didactic, sustaining a series of films, from *Two or Three Things I Know about Her*, to *Slow Motion*, where reflection is not simply focused on the content of the image but on its form, its means and functions, its falsifications and creativities, on the relations within it between the sound dimension and the optical. Godard has little patience with or sympathy for fantasies: *Slow Motion* will show us the decomposition of a sexual fantasy into its separate, objective elements, visual, and then of sound. But this objectivism never loses its aesthetic force. Initially serving a politics of the image, the aesthetic force is powerfully brought out for its own sake in *Passion*: the free build-up of pictorial and musical images as *tableaux vivants*, whilst at the other end the sensory-motor linkages are beset by inhibitions (the stuttering of the female worker and the boss's cough). *Passion*, in this sense, brings to its greatest intensity what was already taking shape in *Le Mépris*, when we witnessed the sensory-motor failure of the couple in the traditional drama, at the same time as the optical representation of the drama of Ulysses and the gaze of the gods, with Fritz Lang as the intercessor, was soaring upwards. Throughout all these films, there is a creative evolution which is that of a visionary Godard.

For Rivette, *Le pont du Nord* has exactly the same perfection of provisional summary as *Passion* for Godard. It is the ballad of two strange women strollers to whom a grand vision of the stone lions of Paris will present pure optical and sound situations, in a kind of malicious snakes and ladders where they replay the hallucinatory drama of Don Quixote. But, from the same starting-point, Rivette and Godard seem to mark out the two contrasting sides. This is because, with Rivette, the break in the sensory-motor situations – to the benefit of optical and sound situations – is connected to a knowing subjectivism, an empathy, which most frequently works through fantasies, memories, or pseudo-memories, and finds in them a unique gaiety and lightness (*Celine and Julie Go Boating* is certainly one of the greatest French comic films, along with the work of Tati). Whilst Godard drew inspiration from the strip cartoon at its most cruel and cutting, Rivette clothes his unchanging theme of an international conspiracy in an atmosphere of fable and children's games. Already in *Paris*

*Belongs to Us*, the stroll culminates in a twilight fantasy where the cityscape has no reality or connections other than those given by our dream. And *Celine and Julie Go Boating*, after the stroll-pursuit of the girl with a double, has us witness the pure spectacle of her fantasy, a young girl whose life is threatened in a family novel. The double, or rather the woman double [*la double*], is herself present with the aid of magic sweets; then, thanks to the alchemical potion, she introduces herself into the spectacle which no longer has viewers, but only behind the scenes, and finally saves the child from her appointed fate as a little boat takes her off into the distance: there is no more cheerful a fairy-tale. *Twilight* does not even have to get us into the spectacle; the heroines of the spectacle, the solar woman and the lunar woman, who have already passed into the real, under the sign of the magic stone track down, make disappear or kill the surviving characters who would still be capable of being witnesses.

Rivette could be said to be the most French of the new wave authors. But 'French' here has nothing to do with what has been called the French quality. It is rather in the sense of the pre-war French school, when it discovers, following the painter Delaunay, that there is no struggle between light and darkness (expressionism), but an alternation and duel of the sun and the moon, which are both light, one constituting a circular, continuous movement of complementary colours, the other a faster and uneven movement of jarring, iridescent colours, the two together making up and projecting an eternal mirage on to the earth.<sup>20</sup> This is the case with *Twilight*. This is the case with *Merry-go-round*, where the description made of light and colours constantly begins again in order to obliterate its objects. Rivette takes this to the highest level in his art of light. All his heroines are daughters of fire, all his work is under this sign. In the end, if he is the most French of film-makers, it is in the sense that Gérard de Nerval could be called the supreme French poet, could even be called the 'Good Gerard', singer of the Ile de France, just like Rivette, singer of Paris and its rustic streets. When Proust asks himself what there is behind all these names that were applied to Nerval, he replies that in fact it is some of the greatest poetry that there has been in the world, and madness itself or the mirage to which Nerval succumbed. For, if Nerval needs to see, and to walk in the Valois, he needs this like some reality which has to 'verify' his hallucinatory vision, to the point where we no longer have any idea what is present or past, mental or physical. He needs the Ile de France as

the real that his speech and his vision create, as the objective in his pure subjectivity: a 'dream lightning', a 'bluish and purple atmosphere', solar and lunar.<sup>21</sup> The same goes for Rivette and his need of Paris. Here again, we have to conclude that the difference between the objective and the subjective has only a provisional, relative value, from the point of view of the optical-sound image. The most subjective, the knowing subjectivism of Rivette, is utterly objective, because it creates the real through the force of visual description. And conversely what is most objective, Godard's critical objectivism, was already completely subjective, because in place of the real object it put visual description, and made it go 'inside' the person or object (*Two or Three Things I Know about Her*).<sup>22</sup> On both sides, description tends towards a point of indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary.

A final question: why does the collapse of traditional sensory-motor situations, in the form these had in the old realism or in the action-image, allow only pure optical and sound situations, opsigns and sonsigns, to emerge? It will be noted that Robbe-Grillet, at least at the beginning of his reflections, was even harsher: he renounced not merely the tactile, but even sounds and colours as inept for the report, too tied to emotions and reactions, and he kept only visual descriptions which operated through lines, surfaces and sizes.<sup>23</sup> The cinema was one of the causes of his evolution, because it made him discover the descriptive power of colour and sounds, as these replace, obliterate and re-create the object itself. But, even more, it is the tactile which can constitute a pure sensory image, on condition that the hand relinquishes its prehensile and motor functions to content itself with a pure touching. In Herzog, we witness an extraordinary effort to present to the view specifically tactile images which characterize the situation of 'defenceless' beings, and unite with the grand visions of those suffering from hallucinations.<sup>24</sup> But it is Bresson, in a quite different way, who makes touch an object of view in itself. Bresson's visual space is fragmented and disconnected, but its parts have, step by step, a manual continuity. The hand, then, takes on a role in the image which goes infinitely beyond the sensory-motor demands of the action, which takes the place of the face itself for the purpose of affects, and which, in the area of perception, becomes the mode of construction of a space which is adequate to the decisions of the spirit. Thus, in *Pickpocket*, it is the hands of the three accomplices which connect the parts of space in the Gare de Lyon, not exactly

through their seizing an object, but through brushing it, arresting it in its movement, giving it another direction, passing it on and making it circulate in this space. The hand doubles its prehensile function (of object) by a connective function (of space); but, from that moment, it is the whole eye which doubles its optical function by a specifically 'grabbing' [*haptique*] one, if we follow Riegl's formula for indicating a touching which is specific to the gaze. In Bresson, opsigns and sonsigns cannot be separated from genuine tactisigns which perhaps regulate their relations (this is the originality of Bresson's any-space-whatevers).

## 2

Although he was subject, from the outset, to the influence of certain American authors, Ozu built up in a Japanese context a body of work which was the first to develop pure optical and sound situations (even so he came quite late to the talkie, in 1936). The Europeans did not imitate him, but came back to him later via their own methods. He none the less remains the inventor of opsigns and sonsigns. The work borrows a trip/ballad [*bal(l)ade*] form, train journey, taxi ride, bus trip, a journey by bicycle or on foot: the grandparents' return journey from the provinces to Tokyo, the girl's last holiday with her mother, an old man's jaunt . . . But the object is everyday banality taken as family life in the Japanese house. Camera movements take place less and less frequently: tracking shots are slow, low 'blocs of movement'; the always low camera is usually fixed, frontal or at an unchanging angle: dissolves are abandoned in favour of the simple *cut*.<sup>25</sup> What might appear to be a return to 'primitive cinema' is just as much the elaboration of an astonishingly temperate modern style: the montage-cut, which will dominate modern cinema, is a purely optical passage or punctuation between images, working directly, sacrificing all synthetic effects. The sound is also affected, since the montage-cut may culminate in the 'one shot, one line' procedure borrowed from American cinema. But there, for instance, in Lubitsch, it was a matter of an action-image functioning as an index, whereas Ozu modifies the meaning of the procedure, which now shows the absence of plot: the action-image disappears in favour of the purely visual image of what a character *is*, and the sound image of what he *says*, completely

# Notes

## 1 *Beyond the Movement-Image*

- 1 Bazin, *What Is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, Vol. II, p. 37 (and the whole of the chapters on neo-realism). It is Amédée Ayfre who takes up and develops Bazin's thesis to give it a pronounced phenomenological expression: 'Du premier au second néo-réalisme', *Le néo-réalisme italien, Etudes cinématographiques*.
- 2 On these films, cf. Jean-Claude Bonnet, 'Rossellini ou le parti pris des choses', *Cinématographe*, no. 43, janvier 1979. This review devoted two special numbers to neo-realism, 42 and 43, with the very apt title 'Le regard néo-réaliste'.
- 3\* Translators' note: Deleuze uses the word 'bal(l)ade', an untranslatable pun on the words *ballade* (ballad) and *balade* (trip or voyage).
- 4 James Cain's novel, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, has given rise to four pieces of work in the cinema: Pierre Chenil (*Le dernier tournant*, 1939), Visconti (1942), Garnett (1946) and Rafelson (1981). The first is part of French poetic realism, and the latter two, of American action-image realism. Jacques Fieschi does a very interesting comparative analysis of the four films: *Cinématographe*, no. 70, septembre 1981, pp. 8–9 (the reader is also referred to his article on *Obsession*, no. 42).
- 5 These themes are analysed in Visconti, *Etudes cinématographiques* especially the articles by Bernard Dort and René Duloquin (cf. Duloquin, on the subject of *Rocco and his Brothers*, p. 86: 'From the monumental staircase of Milan to the indistinct countryside, the characters float in a set whose boundaries they cannot reach. They are real, and so is the set, but their relation is not and approaches that of a dream.').
- 6 On this 'communism' in *The Earth Trembles*, cf. Yves Guillaume, Visconti, Editions Universitaires, p. 17 f.
- 7 cf. the commentary by Noël Burch, *Praxis du cinéma*, Gallimard, pp. 112–18.
- 8 Barthélemy Amengual, 'Du spectacle au spectaculaire', *Fellini I, Etudes cinématographiques*.
- 9 Pierre Leprohon has emphasized this notion of report in Antonioni: *Antonioni*, Seghers.
- 10\* Translators' note: 'Instats' is a neologism coined by Deleuze.
- 11 Fellini has frequently claimed this sympathy for decadence (for instance, 'it is not a trial by a judge, it is a trial conducted by an accomplice', quoted by Amengual, op. cit., p. 9). In contrast, in relation to the world, and the feelings and characters which appear



in it, Antonioni retains a critical objectivity in which there has been discerned an almost Marxist inspiration: cf. the analysis by Gérard Gozlan, *Positif*, no. 35, juillet 1960. Gozlan points to Antonioni's fine text: how is it that men rid themselves with ease of their scientific and technical concepts when they turn out to be lacking or unsuitable, whilst they remain attached to 'moral' beliefs and feelings which no longer bring anything but their unhappiness, even when they invent an even more harmful immoralism? (Antonioni's words are reprinted in Leprohon, op. cit., pp. 104-6).

- 12 Antonioni, *Cinéma 58*, septembre 1958. And Leprohon's formulation, op. cit., p. 76: 'The story can only be read in filigree, through images which are consequences and no longer act.'
- 13 Robbe-Grillet, 'Temps et description', *Pour un nouveau roman*, Editions de Minuit, p. 127 (English translation: *Snapshots, or Towards a New Novel*, trans. Barbara Wright, London: Calder & Boyars, 1965). We shall have frequent recourse to the theory of description in this text of Robbe-Grillet's.
- 14 André Labarthe, *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 123, septembre 1961.
- 15 Amengual, op. cit., p. 22.
- 16 Claude Ollier, *Souvenirs écran*, *Cahiers du cinéma*, Gallimard, p. 86. It is Ollier who analyses the breaks and injections in Antonioni's images, and the role of the imaginary gaze which gives parts of space continuity. The excellent analyses by Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier may also be referred to: she shows how Antonioni does not simply move from a disconnected space to an empty one, but, simultaneously, from a person who is suffering from the absence of another to a person who is suffering still more deeply from an absence in himself and in the world ('L'espace et le temps dans l'univers d'Antonioni', *Antonioni, Etudes cinématographiques*, pp. 22, 27-8, reprinted in *L'Ecran de la mémoire*, Seuil).
- 17 cf. the analyses by Michel Esteve, 'Les nuits blanches ou le jeu du réel et de l'irréel', *Visconti, Etudes cinématographiques*.
- 18 Sadoul, *Chroniques du cinéma français*, I, Paris: UGE, p. 370.
- 19 Ollier, op. cit., pp. 23-4 (on the space in *Made in USA*).
- 20 In Volume I we saw this special sense of light in the French pre-war school, particularly in Grémillon, but Rivette carries it to a higher level, picking up Delaunay's most elevated conceptions: 'In contrast to the cubists, Delaunay does not look for the secrets of renewal in the presentation of objects, or more precisely of light at the level of objects. He holds that light creates forms by itself, independently of its reflections on matter . . . If light destroys objective forms, what it brings with it is its order and movement . . . It is then that Delaunay discovers that the movements which enliven light are different depending on whether the sun or the moon is more prominent . . . With the two fundamental spectacles of light in movement he associates the

image of the universe, in the form of the earthly globe presented as the locus of eternal mirages' (Pierre Francastel, *Du cubisme à l'art abstrait*, Robert Delaunay, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole pratique des hautes études, pp. 19–29).

- 21 Proust, *Against Sainte-Beuve* 'Gérard de Nerval'. Proust ends his analysis by noting that a mediocre dreamer is not going to see again the places that he has caught in his dream, since it is only a dream, whilst a true dreamer goes there all the more because it is a dream.
- 22 Godard already said in relation to *Vivre sa vie* that 'the external side of things' must allow 'the feeling of inside' to be given: 'How do we do the inside? Well, precisely by staying prudently outside', like the painter. And Godard presents *Two or Three Things* . . . as adding a 'subjective description' to the 'objective description' to give a 'feeling of a whole' (*Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, Belfond, pp. 394–5).
- 23 Robbe-Grillet, op. cit., p. 66.
- 24 Emmanuel Carrère has clearly demonstrated this 'attempt to approach tactile sensations' (*Werner Herzog*, Edilig, p. 25): not only in *Land of Silence and Darkness*, which puts before us some deaf and blind people, but in *Kaspar Hauser* which has grand dream-visions coexisting with little tactile gestures (for instance, the pressure of the thumb and fingers when Kaspar forces himself to think).
- 25 Donald Richie, *Ozu*, Editions Lettre du Blanc: 'When he was about to get down to the script-writing, confident of his list of themes, he rarely wondered what the story was going to be. He asked himself instead which people were to occupy his film . . . A name was assigned to each character along with an arsenal of general characteristics appropriate to his family situation, father, daughter, aunt, but few recognizable traits. This character would grow, or rather the dialogue that gave him life would grow . . . beyond all reference to the plot or story . . . Although the opening scenes are always full of dialogue, the dialogue seems to turn on no particular subject . . . The character was thus constructed and modelled almost exclusively by virtue of the conversations he had' (pp. 15–26). And, on the 'one shot, one line' principle, cf. pp. 143–5.
- 26 Paul Schrader, *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer* (extracts in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 286, mars 1978).
- 27 Maurice Leblanc, *La vie extravagante de Balhazar*, Le Livre de Poche.
- 28 On colour in Ozu, see the remarks of Renaud Bezombes, *Cinématographie*, no. 41, novembre 1978, p. 47, and no. 52, novembre 1979, p. 58.
- 29 Reference should be made to Noël Burch's fine analysis of the 'pillow shot' and its functions: suspension of human presence, passage to the inanimate, but also reverse passage, pivot, emblem, contribution to the flatness of the image, pictorial composition (*Pour un observateur lointain*, Cahiers du cinéma Gallimard, pp. 175–86).

We simply wonder if there is not room to distinguish two different things in these 'pillow shots'. Similarly for what Richie calls 'still lifes', pp. 164–70.

- 30 Dôgen, *Shôbôgenzo*, Editions de la Différence.
- 31 cf. Antonioni, 'The horizon of events' (*Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 290, juillet 1978, p. 11) which insists on European dualism. And, in a later interview, he returns briefly to this theme, pointing out that the Japanese raise the problem differently (no. 342, décembre 1982).
- 32 Paul Rozenberg sees in this the essence of English romanticism: *Le romantisme anglais*, Larousse.
- 33 J. M. G. Le Clezio, 'The extra-terrestrial', in 'Fellini', *L'Arc*, no. 45, p. 28.
- 34 On Marxist criticism on the evolution of neo-realism and its characters, cf. *Le néo-réalisme, Etudes cinématographiques*, p. 102. And on Marxist criticism in Japan, especially against Ozu, cf. Noël Burch, op. cit., p. 283. It must be emphasized that in France the new wave, in its visionary aspect, was deeply understood by Sadoul.
- 35 cf. *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 392.
- 36 Marc Chevrete analyses Jean-Pierre Léaud's playing as 'medium' in terms close to Blanchot's (*Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 351, septembre 1983, pp. 31–3).
- 37 Criticism of metaphor is equally present in the new wave, with Godard, and in the new novel with Robbe-Grillet (*Pour un nouveau roman*). It is true that, more recently, Godard has taken inspiration from a metaphorical form, for instance, in the case of *Passion*: 'The knights are metaphors for the bosses' (*Le Monde*, 27 mai 1982), but, as we shall see, this form draws on a genetic and chronological analysis of the image, much more than on a synthesis or comparison of images.
- 38 D. H. Lawrence wrote an important piece in support of the image and against clichés in relation to Cézanne. He shows how parody is not a solution; and neither is the pure optical image, with its voids and disconnections. According to him, it is in the still lifes that Cézanne wins his battle against clichés, rather than in the portraits and landscapes ('Introduction to these paintings', *Eros et le chiens*, Bourgois, pp. 253–64). We have seen how the same remarks applied to Ozu.
- 39 'Lectosign' refers to the Greek *lekton* or Latin *dictum*, which indicates what is expressed in a proposition independent of the relationship of this to its object. Similarly for the image when it is captured intrinsically, independent of its relationship with a supposedly external object.
- 40 Text of Antonioni's quoted by Leprohon, op. cit., p. 103: 'Now that we have today eliminated the problem of the bicycle (I am using a metaphor, try to understand beyond my words), it is important to see what there is in the spirit and heart of this man whose bicycle has been stolen, how he has adapted, what has stayed with him out of all

his past experiences of the war, the post-war and everything that has happened in our country.' (And the text on Eros sick, pp. 104–6.)

- 41 Noël Burch is one of the first critics to have shown that the cinematographic image ought to be read no less than seen and heard; and this in connection with Ozu (*Pour un observateur lointain*, p. 175). But already in *Praxis du cinéma* Burch showed how *Story of a Love Affair* inaugurated a new relation between story and action, and gave the camera an 'autonomy', rather like that of a reading pp. 112–18; and on the 'continuity grasped through discrepancy', p. 47).

## 2 Recapitulation of Images and Signs

- 1 On all these points, reference may be made to Christian Metz, *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, Klincksieck (particularly Vol. I, 'Langue ou langage?', and 'Problèmes de dénotation' which analyses the eight syntagmatic types). Raymond Bellour's book *L'analyse du film*, Albatros, is also essential. In an unpublished work, André Parente makes a critical study of this semiology, underlining the hypothesis of narrativity: *Narrativité et non-narrativité filmiques*.
- 2 Metz, op. cit., I, pp. 96–9, and 51: Metz takes up Edgar Morin's theme which is that the 'cinematograph' became 'cinema' by committing itself to a narrative direction. cf. Morin, *Le cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire*, Editions de Minuit, ch. 3.
- 3 Metz had begun by underlining the weakness of paradigmatics, and the predominance of syntagmatics in the narrative code of cinema (*Essais*, I, pp. 73, 102). But his followers propose to show that, if the paradigm assumes a specifically cinematographic importance (and likewise other structural factors), there result new modes of narration, 'dysnarrative' ones. Metz returns to the question in *Psychoanalysis and the Cinema: the imaginary signifier*, trans. Celia Britton et al., London: Macmillan, 1983. For all this, nothing changed in the hypothesis of semiology, as we shall see.
- 4 On this view, it must first be shown that a judgement of resemblance or analogy is already subject to codes. However, these codes are not specifically cinematographic but socio-cultural in general. It must therefore be shown in addition that the analogical utterances themselves, in each area, refer to specific codes which no longer determine resemblance but internal structure: 'It is not only from the outside that the visual message is partly invested by a language system . . . but equally from the inside and in its very visuality, which is only intelligible because its structures are partly non-visual . . . Not everything is iconic in the icon . . .' Once one has opted for analogy by resemblance, one moves necessarily to a 'beyond analogy': cf. Christian Metz, *Essais*, II, pp. 157–9; and Umberto Eco, 'Sémiologie des messages visuels', *Communications*, no. 15, 1970.