THE TRANSPOSITION OF THIRD MEANING DISCOURSE FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL CINEMA

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Abstract

A consistent theme in Roland Barthes writing was his interest in, yet resistance to, the image. Exemplary of this is the Third meaning essay, published in the July 1970 issue of *Cahiers Du Cinema*. The essay uses film stills including from Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* and *Ivan the Terrible* to articulate political aesthetic neither confined to the intentionality of the author, or limited to affectual reception. This research proposes a taxonomy of political aesthetics based on the Third meaning essay and Barthes' other theoretical film essays. The Third meaning is a site of resistance where the image is irreducible to the surety of signification; it unlocks a panoply of meanings, undermining the univocity of bourgeois ideology and instead proposing heterogenous engagement with neo-Marxist and postcolonial politics. The research argues three distinct movements of Third meaning: Soviet Russia 1920-45; France 1960-1980 and international digital Third meaning c.2000-present. Key Third meaning practitioners are identified beyond Barthes' nominees, including Jean Luc Godard, Chris Marker and Göran Olsson. These filmmakers work in the interstices between fiction and documentary, between scepticism of the contemporary and its embrace; between impassioned support and constructive criticism of social movements and their representation. Using Barthes' methodology, the research argues that Third meanings third act takes place in the digital age. Ability to cheaply produce and widely disseminate digital film make it efficacious for the spread of Third meaning's political aesthetic. The research advances digital Third meaning as a necessary ideological confrontation within the contemporary image: the decisive Kairos moment. Digital Third meaning is proposed as having more theoretical cogence than Deleuze's virtual image, which falls short of articulating a consistent political response to contemporary conditions. In particular the valency of the Third meaning aesthetic in general lies in its versality across time periods, culture and conveyances of media.

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Introduction

> A Klee painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned towards the past. When we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward (Benjamin, W; Zohn, H (trans): 'Theses of the philosophy of history', section IX in Illuminations; essays and reflections [1940], 2007: p.257).

> 'He [Roland Barthes] was definitely the one who most helped us to shake up a certain form of academic knowledge that was non-knowledge […] I think that he's someone very important when it comes to understanding the dramatic changes that have been taking place over the last ten years. He was *the greatest precursor* (authors Italics)' (Foucault, M; 'Radioscopie' interview with Chancel, J: 10th March 1975: Quoted in Samoyault; Brown (trans): *Barthes, a biography*; 2017, intro p.15).

Two decades into the 21st century, the digital image is ubiquitous. In a world where the cheap production of digital film texts and widespread dissemination through streaming platforms and the internet is possible, Roland Barthes concepts of the death of the author and of the completion of the text by the reader/viewer have never been more pertinent. His analyses of the image, from his first account of the image-text in *Mythologies* (1957) until his dissection of photography in *Camera Lucida* (1980) just before his death amount to a substantial corpus of work that tracks the development of the image across the latter part of the twentieth century and showcases a political aesthetic that amounts to not only a way of reading cinema, and images more generally, but a way to intervene in them. In this thesis I pinpoint Barthes Third meaning essay (1970) as the key moment in Barthes' development of a political aesthetic.

In the Third meaning essay, Barthes notes the importance of how the image is connotated by its context, how the signification of an image establishes a wider historical and cultural context, and imparts something of the autobiography of the filmmaker. Signification is the obvious meaning; what Barthes adds by way of the Third meaning is the obtuse meaning, that which is neither limited to its compositional qualities, the intention of the director, or the reception of the viewer. Rather meaning opens up entirely, allowing for a multiplicity of interpretations, a panoply of critical readings. Barthes calls this the founding of the filmic. The contemporary condition of the image is one in which a viewer with the access to a digital camera can record history around them, can begin intervening in events, can begin catalysing them.

My contribution to knowledge in the area of digital political aesthetics is two-fold. The first element centres around siting the application of Third meaning precepts to contemporary

digital cinema in the work of several important filmmakers with different strategies. In the satirical art cinema of Hito Steyerl, in the philosophically thoroughgoing and somewhat technologically sceptical latter- day cinema of Jean Luc Godard, in the repurposing of the countercultural image that Hugo Göran Olsson curates, in each of these cases can be traced Barthes' Third meaning precepts as a guiding principle. Barthesian concepts from the Third meaning essay including the haiku, the inside of the fragment, gestus and counternarrative are found in the contemporary digital cinema of these, and other filmmakers. The second element to my contribution to knowledge rests in the extension of Barthes own taxonomy through related concepts that he developed in his later writings, namely the numen and Kairos.

The numen accounts for our changed affectual and perceptual experience of digital cinema, to the extent that we have become gradually attuned to it; from the once numinous presentation of something of awe it becomes incorporated into our frame of reference. This represents the ontological ground upon which the once novel image becomes intelligible. The Kairos image Barthes identifies as the moment of political decision; we are orientated to these political decisions through the articulation of an ontological and affectual *dispositif*, combining the aforementioned 'canonical' Third meaning precepts with the numen and the contestation of ideology implicit in the presentation of the taxonomy. The malleability of Third meaning discourse means it can be applied to multi-media texts, traversing boundaries of genre and modes of conveyance even as those texts are traversing Third meaning and changing it in turn. This method of reading cinema is unconstrained by a rigid pedagogy, since each of the concepts was never fully completed, nor had clearly defined boundaries.

Nevertheless, Barthes methodology is posited as a more coherent and consistent way of reading the digital contemporary than the methodology of Giles Deleuze, whose theory of the Time Image and the virtual does not perform the essential task of conjoining the ontological and affectual, and neither does it account for the experience of modernisation on the reciprocal relationship between the producers of culture and those who complete it. It is envisaged that Third meaning will ultimately outlive the eventual demise of the digital when it is replaced by a new mode of conveyance; until then it is expected that Third meaning filmmakers will continue to utilise the digital with some appreciable success. The involvement and depiction of the politically radical counterculture in film continues. Cinema and social movements have been linked throughout time. Cinema documents our achievements and mistakes and filmmakers offer poetic solutions to our problems.

Definitions

Undertaking a theoretical investigation that pivots around understandings of visual aesthetics and their impact, requires some clarity about the   terms of reference. Cinema itself is the first conceptual definition to consider. A definition of cinema here departs somewhat from cinema as entertainment, though it would be counterintuitive not to recognise that as an element of both its historical role and as a facet of its survival as part of the culture industry. In this thesis, the intervention of cinema in our lives is foregrounded; how it shapes our thoughts and feelings. The subject of the cinema is not merely a passive

consumer but a producer of meaning. Cinema is also meant in the sense of an event with an audience present that is separate from having a status where its only purpose is as an art object, in a gallery; though potentially it could be also be screened there, as some of Hito Steyerl's films have. This could be an audience of one person amongst millions streaming film on their computer, or it could be hundreds of people in a cinema. The key point here is that the cinema experience is one not just of private contemplation, and that contemplation occurs simultaneously with others.

The notion of the cinematic producer is not confined to the act of picking up a camera and recording events. The viewer of the cinematic text is a producer in the sense that each new viewing of a cinematic text produces a range of interpretations of those texts and alternate 'completions.' Cinema that lends itself most amenably to an opening out of interpretations is the cinema of Third meaning, which is the cinema of the unconstrained signifier. Cinema that bears a family resemblance to Third meaning is also known as expanded cinema and mythopoetic cinema.

The digital is the second concept that requires definition. A starting point is to see the digital encounter as one not bounded by place: the digital image can be seen on a mobile phone in our hand, or can be sent to the other side of the world in an instant. The contemporary encounter with the digital is one where we confront a screen. The image on that screen is the result of a digital mode of conveyance. Sean Cubitt has done some very useful genealogical work on the transformed nature of the encounter with various modes of conveyance; the common denominator is the a culturally informed changing utilisation of light.

He proposes that both analogue and digital photography can be treated as a dataset (Cubitt, S: 2014, p.244) and notes that the visibility of analogue and digital film stock both rely on chemical reactions in order to fix an image. It is his contention that the treatment of mediation and media forms in the humanities is typically dismissive; that it should be instead important to acknowledge that: 'each new act of making including those in serial form and those using automated processes is a new concatenation of forces' (15). An important part of mediation is our relationship to the tools that facilitate mediation: '. tools mediate a relation with an environment that is inevitably altered in its meeting with the human population. Their relation is always unstable, an instability which grows out of the history of that relation'. (14).

The instability of the cathode tube, of the pixel, these are as fragile and as fragmentary as the matter of human social relations, and the historical stagger of human progress. In this thesis I tend to emphasize the continuity between analogue and digital media as Cubitt does. It is neither my intention to stage an argument for the comeback of the analogue form, nor to uncritically valorise the digital form. Several strategies are advanced whereby the digital can be of use to the countercultural political filmmaker, however it is also acknowledged during the course of the text that digital cinema is still controlled for the most part by a multi-million dollar industry for which political and countercultural cinema is low priority.

The experience of watching films in this thesis will be referred to as cinema. To avoid confusion, the term 'film', where used will refer to the physical artefact of film. Film should

be understood to have an equivalency to analogue production. Contemporary production is almost always digital unless there is a stylistic reason for producing physical film. Production of analogue film is now viewed as somewhat kitsch, though some physical films are still produced for art exhibitions.

The cinema is 'us' and also 'not-us'. Understanding this requires a new understanding of cultural production as a sphere of life and also 'not us': operating outside essential human needs but something that has the capability to provoke and unnerve, even to alter us physically. The sensate is an important part of the contemporary cinematic experience .[1] Throughout the history of cinema, both studios and avant-Garde filmmakers have experimented to investigate which modes of visual text are effective in conveying a message, or in stimulating a response.

The latest such experiment has been the most extensive of all. Digital Cinema has been a common mode of cinematic production during the 21st century. In 2014 Paramount pictures stopped distributing films on 35mm and other major film studios followed suit.[2] This investigation is primarily about Roland Barthes' theory of the image, and the network of associations he conceptualised from his analysis of political discourse in cinema. Moreover, it is about how those thematic concepts can be applied effectively to modern digital cinema. The 'Third meaning' essay allows Barthes to further develop material on the image that he prepared in earlier essays. Roland Barthes' status as a cultural theorist of substantial importance is most often attested by his close contemporaries. Only in recent years has Barthes been subject to extensive academic review, with the majority of his writings having now been published.[3]

The research contends that Barthes' cinematic philosophy is that which most closely prefigures the digital experience. Barthes' Third meaning theory represents a healthy scepticism of the image, mindful of the ways in which the image has been manipulated by authoritarian regimes, and yet finds in it the potential for calibrating political responses to ideological oppression. The significance of his writing on Third meaning in particular is that it also responds to the affectual experience modern capitalism has on us. The Third meaning essay not only produced further writings by Barthes himself on the ideological and affectual impact of cinema, but recently Barthes' theoretical importance to understanding political aesthetics in cinema has been reappraised. A major new work by the late Phillip Watts in 2016, *Roland Barthes' Cinema*, preceded Laurent Binet's novel with Barthes as the central character, *The 7th Function of language* (2017). In the last decade several cinema blogs have taken as their starting point Roland Barthes' Third meaning theory. These developments posit Barthes as an alternative to the theorist previously most associated with digital cinematic theory: Giles Deleuze.

Third meaning concepts

Third meaning concepts can be divided up into three categories. The first category are the concepts particular to the essay itself, the second are concepts that Barthes uses later in his writings that have such a strong family resemblance to Third meaning that it is difficult to see them as emerging from a different theoretical and epistemological wellspring. The third are concepts pertaining specifically to digital Third meaning. This third category are my own

designations based on their likely trajectory of development were Barthes to have survived post-1980. Central to Barthes analysis of Third meaning is that he is referring to still images when writing his comments. That this is occurring is reflected by the full title of the essay. Barthes addresses his preference for the still image in what seems to be the least formal reflection of the Third meaning essay:

> I at first ascribed this taste for stills to my lack of cinematic culture, to my resistance to film; I thought of myself as like those children who prefer the pictures to the text, or like those clients who, unable to attain the adult possession of objects (because too expensive) are content to derive pleasure from looking at a choice of samples or a department store catalogue. Such an explanation does no more than reproduce the common opinion with regard to stills which sees them as a remote sub-product of the film, a sample, a means of drawing in custom, a pornographic extract, and, technically, a reduction of the work by the immobilization of what is taken to be the sacred essence of cinema- the movement of the images (Barthes: Heath, (trans) [1970], 1977, p.66).

Barthes goes on to posit that the filmic may lie in an inarticulate Third meaning which a photograph or a figurative painting cannot assume because 'they lack the diegetic horizon, the possibility of configuration (66). Movement does not become the equivalence of a copy of life 'but simply the framework of a permutational unfolding, and a theory of the still becomes necessary.' (67). The theory of the still is that of **the inside of the fragment**, and is the way in which a quotation from a film is not confined to a realm internal to the story, but relates to both the aesthetic space outside the frame and narratively to the wider world outside the cinema:

> It is not a specimen chemically extracted from the substance of the film, but rather the trace of a superior distribution of traits of which the film as experienced in its animated flow would give no more than one text among others. (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.67).

 Gestus is the second example of a concept mentioned in the Third meaning essay. Gestus is a unifying aesthetic principle that encapsulates 'historical grammar' in its evocation. Usually the origin is gestural, an image that links a present given example with the past and the generality of an established, known gesture with a particular example. It does for the movement image what the inside of the fragment does for the narrative of the still; except in the case of gestus, the image is reliant on a sedimented understanding of the everyday in its unfolding: the language of the movement image linked to history and immediacy. The unity of these elements forms the 'social gest'. A key aspect of filmmaking for Barthes is that cinema cannot be removed from the socio-political circumstances in which it was produced, nor can it be said to be a distillation of those circumstances. Rather, cinema is an ideological representation of a particular moment, that carries with it consequences of previous moments, and possible future moments.

The 1960s was a particularly fertile time for cultural production as the western working class and lower middle class had for the first time the means and leisure time to explore an increasingly globalised world. A politically radical counterculture grew throughout the 1960s. One of the themes of Barthes' Third meaning essay is a recognition of both the excess of the 1960s and of the excesses of imperialism:

The importance of the 1960s, leading to the events of 1968, can be seen in the excess constituted by literature and the image, an excess that goes beyond the structuralist project, while providing it with many more objects for study (Samoyault: 2017, p.302).

The haiku is an appropriate term for that which demarcates the excessive in discourse. Third meaning draws our attention to what we cannot ignore. In Barthes Third meaning essay, the haiku is a 'raised gash of meaning', an 'accent' that: 'subverts not the content but the whole practice of meaning' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.62). The haiku points to overdetermination and excess being part of the way we live, and present in the images we consume. Politically informed cinema cannot help but depict it if it wants to depict an intelligible reality. Present too is *erethism*; a lack, that reminds the viewer of the dreams they are sold: the fetish character of capitalism. The excessive in cinema is, for Barthes, that which does not need communication but nevertheless communicates. It is a surfeit of image in which the endpoint is often base and blunt. He uses George Bataille's image of *The Big Toe* to illustrate this point, comparing the image to the luxuriant images of *Ivan the Terrible.*[4]

Signifiance, is a concept coined by Barthes' former PhD student Julia Kristeva, and also appears in the Third meaning essay, where she is credited for her theoretical contribution. (54) [5] Signifiance is a third connotative level beyond communication and signification. Here the obvious meaning is that which establishes a system of destination between Eisenstein, in the cited example and the viewer that, 'which comes ahead…which comes to seek me out.' (54). The filmic, or the obtuse Third meaning is the area that exists between articulated approximative language and where a new language begins. The Third meaning can be seen 'as the passage from language to *signifiance*' (65). The new language of signifiance is therefore one of asymbolism. In a capitalist culture, where the metalanguage is overwhelmingly proscribed by the ruling class, this space of asymbolism is an important site of resistance.

Barthes writes that the Third meaning disturbs and sterilizes metalanguage, after which he parenthesizes 'criticism' (61). Barthes here demonstrates the importance of the caption that undercuts the prevailing narrative, destabilising it. Third meaning as a taxonomy of concepts is only ever provisional and its asymbolic language of signifiance is only ever provisional too, marking the point where the givens of political and economic culture are not yet supplanted by a fully formed alternative culture but are radically questioned and subverted.

Barthes' defining quality in pinpointing Third meaning is when he describes it as 'the epitome of a **counternarrative'** (Barthes [1970], 1977, p.63). Here he means that there is always something inescapable about Third meaning, that subverts and displaces, that offers an alternative description of the world. Barthes writes that counternarrative is 'disseminated, reversible, set to its own temporality…' (63). The specific image Barthes refers to is the image of a clenched fist in *Battleship Potemkin*. (55). The context is that the fist is being clenched in memoriam of the death of a revolutionary. In counternarrative the ambiguity of other aspects of Third meaning is surpassed; resistance to the dominant culture is the message.

Counternarrative represents a new way of assimilating the image; as partial, as an untold or alternative story. There is an invitation to see a film in a different way, from a counter-

ideological perspective where there is a measure of intentionality about the presentation of ideas in the film, with one set of ideas in apparent conflict with another. This is in contrast to the conventional presentation of visual ideas in cinema, which have tended to reflect or even impose the ruling ideas of the period. Barthes develops other concepts during his writing career than seem to be bywords for Third meaning, as if he was developing the taxonomy of Third meaning without explicitly acknowledging it. This is perceptible particularly in his evocation of **the neutral,** an umbrella term encompassing a type of proletarian ethnography, a set of precepts of lived experience in which the affectual aspects of Third meaning have assumed a more prominent role. The neutral was considered so important by Barthes that he delivered a lecture series on it spanning several months at the College de France. **The punctum** further develops the empirical aspects of the contemporary experience in tandem with the affectual. Here how we see images is connected to our 'feeling' for them. A raw experience of modernization conditions a hyperreactive response.

The numen is a concept that Barthes uses several times throughout his writing. The 'numen' is a concept that dates back to Cicero, for whom the numen was 'a divine power…which pervades the lives of men' (sic). (Cicero, MT: [44BC] 1921, p.119-120). The development of the numen historically links to 'spirit', and more specifically to divinity and the conceptual separation between divine essence and the human agent in the material world[6]. When considering how the aura of original art is perhaps analogous to 'divine spirit' working through the author, the reproducible art of digital film is the embodied secular version of the zeitgeist where the product of our Labour is estranged and yet retains a purity of form that is recognisable as something 'essential'. The version of the numen that Barthes uses that has the strongest correlation with Third meaning generally is the version in his 'The World as Object' essay from *Critical essays* (1972). This essay delineates an example of the numenal, namely *The Battle of Eylau* painting as having the excessive qualities, the gestural features and the phantasmagorical decorativism of Third meaning cinema. In the conclusion I advance the proposition that the numen undergoes development during Barthes later writings and becomes the theoretical underpinning of an ontological account of the digital political subject. **Kairos** is the second of the digital third meaning concepts I explore. Kairos develops out of a particular political subjectivity, from an encounter with the subject as they arrive at an enlightened *rapprochement* with the subject matter on the screen. That enlightenment may not be the one exactly intended by the author of the work but it nevertheless instils a realisation within the recipient that the presentation is authentic, or that they can see themselves or their situation in the work. There may be a fulsome appreciation of the political aesthetic or there may be some prompt from a reconfiguration of the archive that shows a dialectical understanding of history with a need for political praxis foregrounded. Kairos is both the realisation of the necessity for that political praxis and the beginning of its actualisation.

Structure of the work

In chapter one, Barthes' relationship to Marxism is considered. This is presented as not just a formative influence-as some theorists have suggested- but one that continued through his

life. The only period where this argument becomes more difficult to sustain is in the last five years of his life, in what might be called Barthes' 'autobiographical' period. This too is explicable in view of the fact that the death of his mother produced a good deal of cathartic writing and less political work. Yet as more and more obscure articles by Barthes have been anthologised, so too have even very late texts revealed an enduring affinity with Marxist thought. A second section of chapter one addresses the status of the image in Barthes work. Barthes is one of the first theorists to consider cinema as a series of images that reflects and advances thought external to it.

In *Mythologies* (1957), Barthes definition of 'image' is not bounded by cinema but includes a range of spectacles that have cinematic qualities, or have influenced cinema. This intertextual view of the image is one that is echoed throughout his corpus.

The image has an ambivalent status for Barthes; it is argued that he allowed for this ambivalence because he saw the potentiality of a cinema that was philosophically thoroughgoing and did not want his 'resistance' to it to effect interest in cinema's possible society- transforming valences.

A third section of chapter one considers philosophical influences on Barthes thought. Barthes' cross-genre influences include Proust's dreamlike aesthetic, the political pedagogy of Bertholt Brecht and the ontological interrogation of Jean Paul Sartre. Barthes' pivotal argument with Raymond Picard in the mid -1960s is highlighted as a juncture where Barthes was able to define his political aesthetics in opposition to the cultural critics of the day. As the turbulence of the late 1960s presented a chance for Barthes' countercultural methodology to gain traction, there was a reassertion of ruling class power and conservative values that served to fracture this countercultural resistance. An analysis of Barthes' aesthetics and discourse will demonstrate the way in which he continued to subvert, undercut and outplay established narratives. A provisional taxonomy for Third meaning is outlined to close chapter one.

In chapter two, I will assess Barthes' central focus in the Third meaning essay; the aesthetics of Sergei Eisenstein. An initial section charts the position of Eisenstein and other radical filmmakers in the period following the Russian Revolution. The unprecedented nature of being an ostensibly liberated cultural producer is considered against the realisation that the initial gains of the early Leninist state would be short lived. Barthes' Third meaning essay demonstrates how Eisenstein's utilisation of counternarrative was effective in articulating a language conversant with a radical audience, whilst fooling Stalin with a message aimed at him that 'went beyond' him.

A second section of chapter two deals with Eisenstein's theatrical training under Vsevold Meyerhold, which provided the background to the physiognomic imperatives of Third meaning. Barthes' appellation of Third meaning was conceived as a response to a number of features that, more than any other filmmaker, he saw in Eisenstein's work. Early versions of Third meaning formulated by Eisenstein are considered, including 'organic unity and pathos', whereby the coherence of the political aesthetic is undercut by a movement of pathos that reflects the social conditions of the time. The second aesthetic position considered is intellectual montage, where thought is conceived to be the basis of physical activity.

In separate sections of chapter two, two texts are considered as emblematic Third meaning cinema. The first such text is one that has a teleological imperative where the culmination of the film is also the culmination and fulfilment of history. Vsevold Pudovkin's *The end of St Petersburg* (1927) uses transitions throughout to elucidate an accent redolent of Barthes' haiku formulation in the Third meaning essay. Esther Shub's *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (1927) is an early example of a formally heterogenous mixed media, that in combining elements of archival material with newly shot renderings of historical events, deftly blends the line between fact and fiction and calls into question both. Working in these interstices allows Shub's work to stand as a ready- made critique of the upcoming Stalin regime.

Dziga Vertov's 'Interval' is presented as an aesthetic variant of Third meaning. The interval is the transition from one movement to another in cinema, rather than focus on the 'content' of a specific moment. Vertov saw intervals as a way of converting 'energy' to bind contents of montage and present it as coherent. Barthes references the interval in an interview in which he discusses the exhibition 'ma. space time in Japan' from 1978. The resemblance between Eisenstein's intellectual montage and Dziga Vertov's interval that he evokes shows a commonality of practice between the filmmakers, and that in their respective ways both contribute to Third meaning theory.

Chapter three concerns the development of French Third meaning filmmaking in the period leading up to and during the events of May 1968, and immediately after. This was the period in which Chris Marker and Jean- Luc Godard advanced their variants of Third meaning cinema. Marker's *La Jet*ée (1961) in its articulation and seeming animation of the still, evokes the fragment of Barthes' Third meaning essay. It is argued that much like the Eisenstein films that Barthes addresses in the Third meaning essay, the images in *La Jet*ée exceed the referential motif they are given, which means their meaning is both obvious and transversal.

La Chinoise (1967) and *Weekend* (1967) are analysed in the second section of chapter three. These films, preoccupied with finding a new language of nature, also elevate civilisation to a hysterical state where it teeters on the brink parodically. The 'object lesson' of *La Chinoise*, as Rancière contends is in rethinking both Marxism and representational democracy.[7] This return to first principles is very Barthesian in its articulation. The film was prescient in its view of universities as a site of class struggle, a year before the first events of May 1968 began with student protests. In *Weekend*, the contrast between high culture and mass culture is an extended coda around which a cast of historical characters permeate the present as society collapses into degradation. This dystopian parable of the dangers of excess emphasises the excessive aspect of Third meaning whilst also utilising Third meaning aesthetic touchstones.

A section on the founding of the Dziga Vertov group considers Jean Luc Godard's rethinking of his film practice and a growing commitment to independently distributed documentaries, the first of these being *Cinétracts* (Godard, Marker et al, 1968) made in collaboration with, among others, Chris Marker. The section 'Revolutionary Poetics' reflects mainly on the fictional films Jean Luc Godard created while filming independently under the Dziga Vertov group banner. There is a significant amount of political commentary in these films, either

obliquely or obviously.

British Sounds (1968b) and *Le Gai Savior* (Godard, 1969) are both almost plotless and to the extent that 'characters' are established, they are created to convey philosophical and political discourse. *Tout Va Bien* (Godard, 1972b) is regarded to be Jean Luc Godard's return to notionally mainstream cinema, with a recognisable plot and two international film stars Jane Fonda and Yves Montand. As a reflection on May 1968 and the four years after, and using a panoply of aesthetic Third meaning traits, it is perhaps the apotheosis of his radicalism. A corresponding section on 'lyrical history' assesses the Dziga Vertov group cinema that were documentaries envisioned as lyrical political interventions.

Foremost among these is *Letter to Jane* (1972), a film that presides overwhelmingly over a photographic image of Jane Fonda and a Vietnamese man. The image was a press photo published in *L'Express* shortly after Jane Fonda visited Vietnam subsequent to *Tout Va Bien*. Godard and co-producer of *Tout Va Bien*, Jean- Pierre Gorin discuss the status of this image, how the close up captures a variety of meanings, and how the Vietnamese man was elided from the image despite being present in it.[8] *Letter to Jane* has several Third meaning traits, among them gestus and 'the inside of the fragment'. Third meaning inflected French Films in the 1960s are analysed, including the cinema of Phillipe Garrel, which with its religious symbolism is imbued with signifiance.

In chapter three, Godard's media films are analysed. *Ici Et Alleuirs* (1976) sees Godard and Miéville in a reflective autobiographical mode as they examine the abandoned footage of *Jusquʾâ La Victorie* (1970), abandoned because on returning from Jordan they discovered that almost all the protagonists, members of the Palestinian Liberation Army, had been killed. *Numero Deux* (1975) again focuses on the making of film, set against a fractious domestic backdrop. Godard's television series *Six Fois et Deux: Sur et sous la communication* (1976) is an early example of Godard's ability to traverse new media. Jean Luc Godard's interest in the archive is advanced as a portent of his belated advocacy for the digital in a closing section of chapter three.

In Chapter four, a digital Third meaning is proposed; the theoretical grounding for digital Third meaning and the main proponents of the form. The counterculture and its relationship to digital cinema is the first aspect to be considered. Here digital Third meaning is considered to be a visual and affectual *dispositif* that orients the viewer towards prioritising selected images from the miasma of images that everyday life demands we deal with. There is some authorial aspect to this, but the contention is that the viewer is doing some of the work of completion.

When Barthes penned his 'leaving the movie theatre' essay, what it conveyed was the frustration of experiencing cinema as a passive recipient of images, and how a new engagement with cinema might be forged. This section outlines features of a mainstream proponent of digital Third meaning; the director Mike Figgis. His films *Time code* (2000) and *Hotel* (2002) are rigorously theoretical and utilise an aesthetic approach in debt to both Bertholt Brecht and Jean- Luc Godard. Section two of chapter four deals with the language of digital cinema and the varied approaches of those who have theorised it, including Malcolm Le Grice and Jean Baudrillard.

In section three of chapter four, the digital sublime is considered apropos of Jean- Francois

Lyotard's writing and cinema that references excess and the degradation of the image; Bill Viola's proto-digital *Hatsu Yume* (1981) and Bill Morrison's *Decasia* (2002). The digital sublime was a prism through which the new technology might be understood; this tended to emphasize the qualitative difference from the period of historical time that immediately preceded it. The argument here is for a certain eliding of historical difference so as to establish a continuum that neither overstates the vicissitudes of modernisation on culture and the human subject, or indeed elevates a particular period as a model for progress. A section on disappearance and Third meaning considers the 'hyperreal' spectacular image posited by Jean Baudrillard and that image's digital Third meaning counterweight in the art films of Hito Steyerl. These films combine 'hidden images' with images that source virtual reality technology.

A section on the cinema of Göran Olsson focuses on the repurposing of archival material and how the advancement of an alternative official narrative of a countercultural movement can, with the use of hindsight create a better understanding of how to amend the course of history and strive for a society with new, different strategies.[9] Jean Luc Godard's later digital films are reviewed, in light of their contribution to digital Third meaning theory. My principal focus of interest is *Notre Musique* (2004), which is discussed as a reimaging of European ethics and aesthetics and a critique of imperialism. Julia Kristeva's concept of *signifiance* is considered in light of the development of digital cinema and the late period Barthesian concepts of the neutral and punctum are considered as developments of Third meaning.

In the conclusion of the thesis a return to the taxonomy of Third meaning in light of the transition to the digital is explored. Surviving aspects of analogue Third meaning are revisited. These include 'the inside of the fragment', gestus, the haiku and counternarrative. In this section, two concepts are introduced as emblematic of digital Third meaning. These concepts were both referred to by Barthes in his later writings. The numen which appears in *Camera Lucida*, and Kairos, which appears in his writings on the neutral are modifications of Third meaning taxonomy.

The numen is a gesture apprehended at the point in its normal course where the eye cannot arrest it (Barthes: 1980, p.32). This description dovetails with the painterly aspect of many digital films, of their ability to evoke something of the aura before mass distribution; even as the digital has the potential to reach every person with a digital device. The numen says something of the purity of digital Third meaning as a new form of the counternarrative. Kairos is the ontological decision, and a recognition of the affectual *dispositif* where ruling class ideology and the ideology of the counternarrative appear in the same presentation; their struggle becomes visible.

To illustrate the extent to which digital Third meaning can intervene in political discourse the Kairos moment of decision is applied to the methodology of Georges Didi- Huberman who in his *Images in spite of all*[10] reflects on the role digital technology has played in defining and preserving images captured by a prisoner from inside one of the crematoriums at the extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944. Jean- Luc Godard's *L'Historie Du Cinema* (1988) was a major influence on Didi- Huberman. A section analysing counternarratives in Third meaning considers that Barthes' contribution to the political philosophy of the image is both more prescient and apposite evocation of the digital politic

aesthetic than Deleuze's virtual.

Roland Barthes' interrogation of the image is counter to acceptance that it is inevitable that the image is and will be controlled by capital and bourgeois interests, that there is no popular discernment possible of the mystique of the images of capital and denies that the visual fragments of images we might produce and reclaim from this continuum cannot tell us anything about our society. On the contrary, Barthes' taxonomy of the image, confined not just to the Third meaning essay but sedimented deep in his conceptual progression across a variety of disciplines is political aesthetics that takes as a starting point intertextuality and an account of the image and its subversion. 'The epitome of the counternarrative' is not merely discrete fragments of images or their aesthetic juxtaposition by way of montage techniques but of the accent of images and how political counternarrative displaces and circumvents convention and discourse, while traversing the boundaries that conventionally segregate one art form from another and one mode of conveyance from the next. The cinema analysed in this thesis gives the viewer pause for thought in not only refracting something of the essence of capitalist culture, provoking ontological ruminations, but in showing that culture does not have be bounded by genre specificity or received ideas about the separation of different types of media for simply the sake of tradition. It is the contention of this thesis that no other political account of the image manages to provide this range of critical strategies, while simultaneously able to provide the resources to understand and inhabit the changing modes of visualisation generated by digitalization.

Political filmmakers have not ultimately found the changing mode of conveyance a challenge. Central among the themes analysed in this investigation is how key political filmmakers including perhaps the most influential of all, Jean- Luc Godard, have followed the path of Barthesian Third meaning in their transition from the analogue to the digital and implemented it successfully. The alacrity of cinema's development has been in tandem with an experience of modernization that has transformed us as human beings. Barthes' origins make him the ideal person to theorise the digital image. He is an anti-imperialist from a colonising nation; a Marxist often too ill to work; a member of the petit Bourgeoisie fascinated by the populist spectacle; in defiance of his own high-cultural learning. He is a sentimental family man with a *dispositif* for the complexity of feelings and affect that advances his liberation as a gay man. He is compelled to observe the image, he resents yet entreats it's influence on him.

Third meaning 'teaches us how to dissociate the technical constraint from what is the specific filmic and which is the indescribable meaning'. (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.68). It is this double movement of the obvious articulation of the time- specific meaning and the obtuse permutational unfolding of possible futures and open- ended meanings that is the combinatory dialectic present in digital Third meaning. The digital rendering of Third meaning political aesthetics is one version in an intertextual series of possible renderings of Third meaning political aesthetics. The concept of the virtual favoured by Deleuze is a phenomenological construct and focuses instead on the purely affectual. In this conception the possible foregrounds the actual, which is in fact its opposite. Digital Third meaning takes account of the ontological acknowledgement of the political decision. Actuality is a

precondition of its own transformation. Third meaning works inside elements of the actual/given to subvert it, and bring about new possibilities. In advancing a Barthesian digital taxonomy of Third meaning, this research aims to elucidate a methodology that can intervene in political and cultural discourse and transform it.

Chapter one

Introduction: 'The founding of the filmic'

> The past continues to weigh heavy on the brain of the living. And just when they [humankind] seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time- honoured disguise and this borrowed language. Marx, K: [1851], 1979, p.103-p.104).

> From the start, to keep this thought in view, and to weigh its constructive value: the refuse- and decay-phenomena as precursors, in some degree mirages, of the great syntheses that follow. These worlds <?> of static realities are to be looked for everywhere. Film, their centre *Historical materialism*. Benjamin, W; Eiland, & Mc Laughlin, K (trans), [1927-1940], 2002, p.672 [Y1, 4].

Karl Marx envisioned a society transformed by humankind. However, as the poetic language of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* suggests, he realised that it would not be a smooth transition to a society based around need, rather one of continual setbacks, with a struggle over productive forces and ideology. The very first manifestations of visual culture outside of painting had begun to make an impression on the public imagination. Photography was still in a primitive state; the first photographic images, initially impressionistic and then of monochrome clarity were around a decade old when Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto*.

By the early 1910's, the cinema industry had been established; a production line that largely centred around Hollywood. Yet, subsequent to the first lasting Communist revolution just a few years later, in 1917, the newly formed Soviet Union had begun to produce numerous films. These films were part of a state- sponsored drive by the newly established Bolshevik Government to tell the story of the Russian revolution through films. These often occupied a narrative space between pure documentary and fictional stories depicting revolutionary events and mixing historical footage with fictional constructs. Rarely were the films either wholly fact or fiction.

Against this background, several filmmakers emerged that held pivotal roles in the development of a visual archive of the revolution. Vsevold Pudovkin chronicled the disintegration of an autocracy, Dziga Vertov utilised the camera as an extension of the transformed human body and Esther Shub developed the mixed media proposition of factography, which merged archival material with staged recreations of historical events. Of the inter-war Soviet filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein produced perhaps the most visually startling images: representations of characters where the conceptual narrative accentuated their physiognomy to freakish proportions; humanity that loomed against the frame, barely containing it.

This was in tandem with a depiction of life that was conversant with the contemporary political situation, even if the film depicted quasi- historical events of the past. These combinatory effects seemed to conjure up images that even today appear to be three dimensional; the images seem unconfined by the frame and irreducible to mere visuals. The

accentuations are at their most extreme by the time of *Ivan the Terrible* in 1944. Whilst even now these images seem to belong to the future despite their monochrome presentation, they also seem conscious of continuing a classical iconography of film discernible in *Battleship Potemkin*. At the time of Eisenstein's last major release, a twenty nine- year old Roland Barthes wrote one of his first significant essays, entitled 'Pleasure in the Classics' which advances a rather skeletal defence of the iconography of classical works [11]: 'He makes a veritable apologia for the classical style based on economy, decency, clarity and brevity' (Samoyault: 2017, p.136).

Third meaning discourse as a theoretical proposition began with an article that Roland Barthes published in *Cahiers du Cinema* magazine in July 1970 entitled 'The Third Meaning; research notes on some Eisenstein Stills'. Throughout 1969, with the exception of the May issue; and in every 1970 issue up to and including July, *Cahiers du Cinema* ran serialisations of Sergei Eisenstein's writings on film. This interest wasn't extended to all of Soviet Cinema until the May/June 1970 issue was given almost entirely over to Soviet Cinema in general; with a section on Russian Formalism and over twenty pages of writing from Dziga Vertov. The extraordinary hundred- page plus dedication to Soviet cinema, with a large portion dedicated to reproductions of four decades old writing on that cinema took on a pedagogic role, Soviet cinema of the twenties and thirties being advanced as a model to emulate. In this context, Roland Barthes essay, arriving one issue later acted as somewhat of a pause. The Third meaning essay reviews political aesthetics in the light of near -revolution in France in May 1968.From Barthes' essay emerged a taxonomy of political aesthetics of which elements had been previously developed in essays such as 'The photographic message' and 'Rhetoric of the image.[12]

It is a taxonomy that is preoccupied with several of Barthes' ongoing interests: codification; intertextuality, autobiography and non-linearity. In terms of the visual element of film, this is conceived as both excess and lack, and vacillates between indefinability and precision. In examining still photographs from *Ivan the Terrible*, Barthes describes them as 'the founding of the filmic': 'The filmic…that region where articulated language is no longer more than approximative [sic] and another language begins' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.65).

Filmic does not mean a commonality of quality that might be found in all film, but indicates something specific to the filmic experience. It is suggestive of both a film occupying a pivotal moment in film history, and history more generally. Cinema at this time in history is passing from the realm of the transitory to a classicised celluloid iconography. The film under analysis was made more than a quarter of century before, by a man who had been making cinema for over twenty years. 'Third meaning' is intractably linked to the history of cinema as it asserts itself as new theory.

It is a contention of this research that what Barthes pursued as the filmic was another manifestation of a project that he continued throughout his writing; to establish a loosely formulated method of reading cinema that could be transposed across media, in order that an immediate expression of lived historicity could be posed as readily understandable political imperative. The political imperative required both a reconfiguration of an ontological engagement with culture and an attempt to radically alter the existing society on the basis of these new terms of engagement.

The reason for Barthes choosing to primarily focus on two generation-old Soviet films as examples of political aesthetics is as much about how the conditions expressed in *Ivan the Terrible* and *Battleship Potemkin* foreground an analogous situation to that in France in the late sixties and early seventies. The content of the works suggests situations where the respective societies showcased are poised delicately between rebellion from below and the societies being crushed by an inept and repressive ruling class that in both cases is also divided within itself.

The films might seem to be quite arbitrary choices at first. The former choice is Eisenstein's penultimate film. It was intended to be the first of a trilogy of films about Ivan the Terrible. Eventually only two were made. (Leyda, J; Voynow. 1982, p.146). Ostensibly the subject of the film would have been appropriate to an ageing director wishing to evoke a time of imperialist grandeur to celebrate the exceptionalism and expansion of Soviet Communism. In reality Eisenstein was only in his mid- forties during its genesis, and though he was not in the best of health it was still somewhat of a shock when he died aged 50. Nor was it the case that Eisenstein was a part of the soviet movie cognoscenti when *Ivan the Terrible* was made.[13]

The film evokes the pomposity of unlimited power, presaging the second film, *The Plot of the Boyars*, which pinpoints the paranoia of a decaying regime, analogous to the Stalinist autocracy. Yet the analogy is somewhat clouded by obfuscation. That same imprecision allows for general principles of Third meaning aesthetics to be applied analogously to De Gaulle's France. The second film that Barthes analyses, he does with brevity. Barthes concentrates on the funeral scenes when examining stills from *Battleship Potemkin* because the viewer is being invited to mourn Vakulinchuk's death as symbolic of missed opportunities for revolution. There is no repudiation of Stalinism in *Battleship Potemkin* because it comes after Lenin's death, but before Stalin's accession to power. Nevertheless, it served to haunt Stalin. The original version, released during the power struggle for leadership of the Bolsheviks, had an introduction written by Trotsky, Stalin's nemesis. Though it would be 1940 before Stalin had Trotsky killed, it is likely that viewers would have conflated the death of Vakulinchuk with an alternative history as Stalinism sought to erase Trotsky from revolutionary history.

These alternate narratives are the material from which Third meaning is forged. Whether or not Barthes' Third meaning can be equally well applied in the 21st century remains largely untested, though this research argues that several filmmakers have used a similar theoretical framework when composing digital cinema. The survival of a political aesthetic concept across the reconfiguration of a medium, as has occurred in film, is remarkable, and in itself makes profound claims as to the valence of those ideas. The way cinema is now produced and distributed has changed irrevocably in the last twenty years. All films are now distributed to cinemas in digital form. The usual showcase for analogue film is now as art installations.

Celluloid as material designed to record and preserve film is almost obsolete, and in order for analogue film to escape degradation and eventual decay, digital preservation is a cheap option. The affordances offered by digital film are manifold for both studios and independent filmmakers. The cleave between the film industry and independent

productions has grown so great that political films are rarely made by major studios. Barthes' Third meaning aesthetics is beginning to be proposed as a methodology for analysing political film after decades of Giles Deleuze's film aesthetics having been a convergence point for cultural theorists.

The time and space specificity of Third meaning in terms of its regularity as practice is determined by a set of historical and political confluences. It manifests with intensity in moments of historical struggle in particular places, when the ideological and political stakes are high. These pointed interventions still persist within contemporary filmmaking, but also alongside an increasing tendency to reinterpret the analogue archive, and revisit historical struggles for control over their narrative legacy. Through a reinterpretation of the documentary archive, the image can be 'remixed'. This means that totalising narratives of the past can be challenged to better represent an experience of the oppressed and their contestation of the image.

The first moment marked out for analysis is the Soviet Union of the mid 1920s-mid 1940s. Third meaning manifests here in several forms; in Sergei Eisenstein's 'Organic unity and pathos, in Dziga Vertov's 'Kino eye' naturalism, in Esther Shub's 'factography' films that conjoin 'found footage' with fictional set pieces and in Vselvold Pudovkin's affectual historical recreations. A second strand of analysis is of the France of the 1960-1980 period. This is a period of immense cultural change that Jean Luc Godard bestrides as a filmmaker, from his Hollywood tributes in the early 1960s, through his avant-garde political experiments in the 1968-1972 period, to his 1970's reflections on mass media. Phillipe Garrel's films, with their focus on iconic images and alternate histories, are analysed as Third meaning texts. Chris Marker's mixed media work and his strong interest in symbolism and the archive, are considered.

The third period under investigation is digital cinema from around 2000 to 2020, with a focus on the digital art films of Hito Steyerl. This period is informed by the film *Videogrammes of a revolution* by Harun Farocki (1992) which begins with the recording of a Ceausescu speech on state television being interrupted by the beginnings of the Romanian revolution. The changing of the gaze from that of the oppressor to that of the oppressed is the key aspect here. In addition, Göran Olsson's 'remixed' digital archive films are assessed in their reconfiguration and rearticulation of a shared history of the oppressed. The later, digital films of Jean Luc Godard are evaluated, and an account of what has survived from the Third meaning analogue taxonomy is made. Finally, an assessment of what digital Third meaning might mean as a site of resistance are explored in returning to the location at which Barthes began exploring Third meaning-the still image.

1.1. Marxism in Barthes' visual texts

Marxism is a preoccupation of Barthes that never really leaves him. His philosophy of the image is at least partially grounded in Marxism. For Barthes the image demands to be interrogated, but in light of history and pre-existing class struggle; manifestly Barthes vision of the image is not an ahistorical deconstruction. The Marxist elements of Barthes' work in relation to 'Third meaning' persisted long into his immersion in linguistic work. Barthes' Marxism is not classical Marxism, it is Marxism that is as conversant, if not

more so, with the superstructure as a political determinant than the economic base. This is the Marxism of the contemporary cultural writer rather than the Marxist shaped by political struggle. Barthes' Marxism is that of the flaneur, who agglomerates *political experience*. This Marxism of the everyday is not a particular type of Marxism that would have necessarily resembled Marxism as it mutated along with the prevailing conditions. Classical French Marxism in particular had meanwhile given the impression of being hypostasized in its ability to shape discourse[14].

Barthes' idea of language, which is somewhat 'wrought' through the struggle of competing interpretations is very Marxist in tenor and he retains this in his analysis of the image. In a sense Marxism is the 'hidden hand' in Barthes' aesthetic writings. The most important moment regarding this is in the 'obvious meaning' section of the Third meaning essay. Throughout this section, Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin is given a Marxist treatment. The first point to make is regarding the 'proletarian fist' of Image IV, an image that the viewer is led to alight on. The image is from Vakulinchuk's funeral. Barthes writes that it is the formulation of the fist, 'kept by it's owner in a sort of clandestinity' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.55) that marks it out as distinct from 'the fist of some hoodlum, of some fascist' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, P.56).

This particular image is clear in its meaning. Barthes suggests that it 'devastates ambiguity' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.56). This is done with the addition of emphasis. Moreover, what Barthes calls Eisenstein's 'decorativism'; 'has an economic function: it proffers the truth' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.56). Building on this point, Barthes utilises evidence from Image III in his selection of stills. The attention is given to two elderly women, also at Vakulinchuk's funeral. Barthes notes that the arrangement of the pictorial order here is supposed to remind the viewer of the gestures exhibited by icons and *pietà* [15] (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.56).

The accentuation of the meaning dealt by this decorativism is effective because the implication is that ordinary people's lives are rarely treated with such prestige. The two images when viewed in concert emphasize the importance of the death of someone in the course of their work and the injustice of that. It is notable that Barthes draws these images together with a quote from the revolutionary poet Charles Baudelaire, stating that they demonstrate: 'the emphatic truth of gesture in the important moments of life and here opines that it is 'the truth of the 'important proletarian moment ' which requires emphasis; and that in Eisenstein the obvious moment is always 'the revolution' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.56).

French Marxism in the 20th Century is a unique proposition, in that France is the only society to have experienced visible Bourgeois and Proletarian revolutions in, respectively, the 18th and 19th centuries. That these revolutions partially succeeded yet neither fully achieved their aims is relevant when considering the events of May 1968; events which were undoubtedly foremost in Barthes mind when conceptualising Third Meaning. While other countries experienced these bourgeois revolutions as a relentless encroachment on the aristocracy where the bourgeoisie rose to power and effectively elected to tolerate parts of the old system, including the monarchy, this was not the case in France; bourgeois revolution acceded to an empirical category, at once a visible testament to the power of

revolution and the power of the Bourgeoisie. Both of these facts instilled themselves in the French imaginary as potent emblems when the moment of proletarian revolution presented itself, first in 1871, then in 1968.

Once the bourgeoisie had at least substantially wrested power from the aristocracy, it adopted an immovable aspect. Even in 1871, when France seemed poised for socialist revolution, the Paris Commune fell and an uneasy relationship between France's populace and the Bourgeoisie resumed. This narrative has been a thread that extends through French history to 1968 and beyond. The fact that opposing class interests became a point of contention so openly on the streets of France in three separate centuries, and that power in those periods was so closely contested is significant. No French theorist could escape this dynamic. It was the duty of a French filmmaker to take account of this ultimately internecine conflict between classes.

Foregrounding Barthes' political commitment as a consistent feature of his writing across time allows the reader to read the development of Barthes' cultural theory in a new light. Rather than succumb to the idea that Barthes branched off into being a literary theorist, or a media theorist, or an autobiographical writer, or a theorist committed to psychoanalysis there is still the rarely countenanced possibility that Barthes became interested in all of these aspects of theory without ever completely abandoning Marxism. Some theorists have been keen to prove Barthes' disavowal of Marxism. Other than evidence that he was deeply disillusioned with the Chinese version of Communism after a trip there in 1974, there is no proof of a rejection of Marxism.

To talk of Roland Barthes in terms of a Marxist position and a post-Marxist position is tenuous, not least because his range of concepts persist across this putative 'break'. Hill sees Marxism as a function of Barthes writing from 1953 to 1970. In an essay called 'Barthes' Body' Hill delineates a putative 'break' as beginning in his writing subsequent to the events of May 1968:

> After the events of May 1968, as the claims of political discourse became more and more inflated and imperious, Barthes's political preoccupations were transposed into an ethics of enunciation, an ethics of language which eschewed the assertiveness of political statements to the point where political considerations seem almost non-existent in his work. In the 1970's Barthes no longer made political statements; he questioned the language of politics. Many of his previous admirers, especially in Britain, never forgave him. (Hill, L in Gane, M; Gane, N ed: 2004, p.348-p.349).

Hill regards Barthes' 'Discreet discourse to Marxism' as a 'legitimating discourse'. (Hill, L: 2010, p.113). In other words, Barthes' Marxism was important for his own self-identity as well as in establishing a position counter-posed to the French cultural elite. It also implies that while Barthes did incorporate Marxism into his work, he didn't see himself exclusively as a Marxist. Nevertheless, there is a philosophical sense in which Barthes always continued to dispute the terms under which politics are conducted. As Hill himself admits:

> Barthes attempt to redefine the relationship to politics and henceforth to conceive of the political dimension primarily, if not exclusively, in terms of an ethics of language obviously carries with it the risk of a falling back into a discourse which is simply pre-political. But it

must be remembered that the whole point of the exercise was the need to reject the authoritarian ideology implicit in that judgement. (Hill, L; in Gane, M & Gane, N (eds), 2004, p.349).

Barthes corpus returns to several Marxist or quasi-Marxist positions in his later works. In particular, this is true of his writing on photography and film. Barthes' focus on otherness in the late text *Camera Lucida* is demonstrative of the mutation and estrangement that the subject goes through in the process of capitalist alienation. In 1975's 'Leaving the movie theatre' essay, Barthes' act of resistance is to explain the uncomfortable and passive nature of modern movie going. There is a palpable desire for conditions in which that uncomfortableness could be subverted or removed: these are not the musings of either a member of society or film theorist who is happy with the contemporary state of affairs. Barthes' Marxism is difficult to pin down because he does not align himself with any specific movement. Yet this both provides him with a critical, if assiduously polite voice of considerable authenticity.

It also bestows him the apparent power of foresight. Patrizia Lombardo states of *Writing Degree Zero* in 1989:

> One could say that this book articulated, *ante literam*, those very conditions which today we call postmodern: frenetic pluralism, the encounter between the excessively historical and what has been extrapolated from history while remaining marked by the absence of historicity and the lack of affiliation with any school. (Lombardo: 1989, p.19).

In order to understand Barthes' Marxism as well as his philosophy of the image it is important to refer to the visually-orientated philosophy of *Mythologies*. With regard to *Mythologies*, it seems that Barthes' idea was to provide an antidote to bourgeois analysis. Barthes' methodology in *Mythologies* is to apply attention to fragments of culture, the lacunae of life. The book was a guide to both the spectacular and the monad in capitalism; the excessive elements of capitalism and also the fine grain of its detail was important to him.

Mythologies is an unveiling of proletarian life just as much as bourgeois life. As someone who was born into the lower middle class, but whose work life suffered constant interruption through illness, Barthes was one step removed from leisure as a category of choice, achieved through consistent work. Rather leisure for him was a category that was imposed but that nevertheless he felt compelled to experience in order to understand contemporary life. Work bled into Barthes' periods of enforced rest in anticipation of his next formal assignment.[16] There is a sense in *Mythologies* of always being in pursuit of the fragment; of catching a still frame before it passes to the next scene and with the memory only able to retain a trace element. Yet *Mythologies* does, conversely, deal with glimpses of reality. Hill outlines Barthes role in breaking through the mythological sheen of capitalism to expose its divisive core:

> Barthes analysis proceeds by way of dissymmetrical binary oppositions. For if the contrast between nature and history is what best enables the mythologist to understand bourgeois ideology, it is not because bourgeois representations are truly more natural than others. It is because they are pseudo-nature: a sham, a deception, a charade; which it is the task and

duty of the analyst to unmask, both in the name of signs and on behalf of the progressive, but perhaps unwitting consumers. (Hill, L: 2010, p.87).

Barthes was an expert, therefore, in divining the fetish character of capitalism: it's novel attractions. In this sense Barthes, by dipping into accounts of wrestling, soap powders and French toys, Barthes evokes an 'arcades' project for the 20th century.
In an article on the 'Dialectics of Form(s)' in Barthes' *Mythologies*, Andy Stafford writes: 'Mythologies foresees the later Barthesian tactic of taking 'classical' culture (Racine, Balzac, Proust, Flaubert) and recuperating it, 'stealing' it back. *Mythologies* does not wish (as de Koven would have it) to vent 'utopian rage' on 'repressive bourgeois forms.[17] Stafford also writes:

> …it would seem that a dialectical strategy was at the heart of Barthes acts of criticism in Mythologies: one in which he positioned himself in opposition to Bourgeois critics, but one which constantly shifted position and Bourgeois criticism and ideology shifted its emphasis and/or requirements. (Smith, D (ed), *Nottingham French Studies* 47:2, 2008, pp.6-pp.18; p.10).

This flexibility in approach that Barthes uses is a prescient anticipation of technological advancements that would ultimately see cinema's movement to the digital. Barthes is 'mapping' in *Mythologies* the slippery logic of capital by attempting to follow its diversions and intensities through a mutable critical practice. Already this type of Marxism is separate from the Marxism that primarily addresses issues of political economy. Rather, and in anticipation of Louis Althusser, Barthes is analysing the ideological state apparatus. Though Barthes vignettes in *Mythologies* provide the reader with potent imagery that allows them to unpack for themselves the ideology that nestles just below the surface of an innocuous advertising image, or in the staging of a sporting event, it is in the accompanying essay 'Myth today' that Barthes outlines the mythological system in explicit theoretical terms. Barthes pinpoints mythology as one part of a 'science of signs' that Saussure postulated forty years earlier. Barthes suggests that Saussure's search for meaning helped open up a section of contemporary research dedicated to this search for meaning, including subjects such as:

> Psychoanalysis, structuralism, eidetic psychology, some new types of literary criticism of which Bachelard has given the first examples…'. These; '…are no longer concerned with facts except inasmuch as they are endowed with significance. (Barthes: 'Myth today' [1957], 2011, p.219-p220).

Barthes brands semiology as 'necessary but not sufficient' in a search for meaning. He makes clear that in semiology we are dealing with three terms; the signifier, the signified and the sign. Regarding the relationship of the terms, which progress from thought to reality, Barthes describes Saussure's formulation thus: '…the signified is the concept; the signifier is the acoustic image[18](which is mental) and the relation between concept and image is the sign (the word for instance), which is a concrete entity.' (222).
This formulation will be intrinsic to understanding Third meaning thirteen years later. In

terms of what Barthes calls the 'language object', he already appears to have an early conceptualisation of Third meaning in mind, when he writes in 'Myth Today':

> the idea is expounded in one of Barthes' more revolutionary-romantic passages. In it, he absolves the left from myth-making as an essential function, and offers the Revolution and the oppressed proletarian or colonial peoples as exemplars of immediate speech, stripped of metalinguistic myths. (Gane, M (ed); Gane, N(ed), Kelly, M: 2004, p195).

Ultimately, Barthes persists in a quest for filmic language despite his misgivings, because an emancipatory and contemporary Marxist application of the image can unlock an understanding that communicates on an ontological and affectual level. This contemporary Marxism incorporates postcolonial struggles and breaks from the Eurocentric views that persisted even in 19th century Marxism. Third meaning is a methodology that in its utilisation of both factual and fictional narratives, and the shaded areas in-between, draws on recognisable conceptual articulations that demonstrate the ideological antagonisms that transculturally drive history.

1.2. The status of the image in Barthes work

> History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled with the presence of the now. [Jetzeit] Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of the now which he blasted out of the continuum of history. (Benjamin; Zohn: [1940], 1968, p.261).

 When Barthes analyses the image, he often opts for the image- in- stasis. This is true of 'The photographic message' essay from 1961, although here the image has a direct connotation. The photographs are analysed individually and not in any syntagmatic filmic sense. Connotation is the primary method whereby Barthes establishes the photographic image as archival. The connoted image is often related to media text, a theme that Barthes will return to later in his writings.[19] His first consideration is perhaps surprising: trick effects and of the potential for image manipulation.

The particular situation Barthes refers to is the period in the early 1950s where manipulation of the image was sometimes contrived to stoke a McCarthyite opposition to Communism, or perceived Communism. (Barthes: [1961], 1977, p21).

The trick effect highlighted as the first of the connotation procedures signals Barthes interest in the media image. The independence of the image aside from its origin and destination is signposted as being important (15). Nevertheless, the anthropological background from which it derives is key: 'The emission and reception of the message both lie within the field of a Sociology; it is a matter of studying human groups, of defining motives and attitudes, and of trying to link the behaviour of these groups to the social totality of which they are a part.' (15).

In this essay, the documentary status of the photograph is referenced, with the caveat that that it may not be all that it seems:

> Certainly, the image is not the reality but it's perfect analogon and it is exactly this analogical perfection, which, to common sense, defines the photograph. Thus, can be seen the special status of the photographic image: it is a message without a code; from which

proposition an important corollary must immediately be drawn: the photographic message is a continuous message. (17).

 In addition to the model of reality being presented; somewhat always askance of the copy, Barthes notes two supplementary meanings. The first is the style of the reproduction[20], the second is the 'treatment' and its relation to the culture of the recipients of the image. (17). The analogon is 'the message that the image maker imparts; a denotation, and the connotation is the manner in which the society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it.' (Barthes [1961], 1977, p.17).

The second part of this formulation is vaguer, has more slippage. Barthes realises that prior to his conceptualisation of the 'reader' as the agent of completion in *Death of the Author*,[21] the ontological status of those who receive images is somewhat ill-formed:[22] they are less a subject of focus than the author of the image, and the intention of the author. There is only the tentative sense of the viewer as a recipient. In terms of the structure of the photograph itself, Barthes refers to its plenitude (18); that is, to describe that the photograph itself is so full that attempts to describe it fall short and this changes the structure of the image, signifying something different to that shown. (18).

A modern reading of Barthes' section on trick effects in the photographic message essay brings into focus modern concerns around manipulation of the digital image whilst indicating that the narrative around the image has always been one where political propaganda has staged interventions. These might have been less easy to execute convincingly in the early 20th century, nevertheless they were a factor in image production. An earlier example is of Josef Stalin's inculcation into the legacy of Vladimir Lenin as his 'natural successor', by ordering the insertion of images of himself into pre-revolutionary photographs of Lenin.

One of Barthes' most compelling conceptual formulations relating to the image is that of 'historical grammar'. He will go on to develop this concept further in the Third meaning essay. Barthes highlights six connotation procedures in photography: trick effects; pose; objects; photogenia; aestheticism; syntax-in the first three the connotation is produced by a modification of the reality itself. Pose uses the example of President Kennedy praying in a photograph. The signification here is in the typology of the gesture, which has a historical grammar. The pose:

> …derives its effect from the analogical principle at the basis of the photograph. The message in the present instance is not 'the pose' but 'Kennedy praying': the reader receives as a simple denotation what is in actual fact a double structure- denoted-connoted. (22).

The pose transmits the message, but it is the 'star quality' of that person that we are all supposed to note, either as an emblem, or in the specificity of their renown.[23] In the Third meaning essay the layered pose re-emerges as gestus. The 'historical grammar' nine years later remerges as 'the general and the particular', establishing a historical relay from one age to another.

Points 3 and 4 in 'the photographic message essay are concerned with forms of decorativism. The first of these; 'objects' concerns how the photograph is 'dressed'; what ensemble is created around the main focus of the photograph. The second element of this is

'photogenia'; this is the informational structure represented in aesthetic effects. These draw from a classical lexicon of images and are said to be distinct from purely technical effects; although, Barthes writes that a combination of the technical and these classical images could mark an important break in the signifying chain, allowing real meaning to be interpolated.

It is important to consider that Barthes' cinematic vision is consistent with his views on literature and photography. He is not interested in the text for its own sake, or how it may fit into an accepted pantheon. This is as true of visual texts as literary texts. Barthes is interested in how texts articulate something of the current situation, and struggle against their context. Barthes' makes some important contributions to the political aesthetics of photography that have implications for cinema. One of these is photography's status as a message without a code.

Barthes states: 'From the object to its image there is of course a reduction-in proportion, perspective, colour-but at no time is this reduction a transformation (in the mathematical sense of the term)'. (Barthes [1961], 1977, p.17). The difference between photography and film, is that similarly to drawings, paintings and theatre, film delivers a supplementary message, 'in addition to the analogical content itself.' (17). The posing; spacing, and placing of objects often confer signification- because these arrangements can be central to its message. They can also act as symbols:

> They are [thus the] elements of a veritable lexicon, stable to a degree which allows them to be readily constituted into syntax.' (23).

Aestheticism refers either to when photography takes on the materials of art to represent itself as art 'or to impose a generally more subtle and complex signified than would be possible with other connotation procedures.' (24). Syntax is the representation of object-signs within the photograph.

Since the photograph can never be fully represented in words as all the image wants to say, Barthes asserts that: '…the text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to 'quicken' it with one or more second-order signifieds. In other words, and this is an important historical reversal, the image no longer illustrates the words; it is now the words which, structurally are parasitic on the image'. (25). The implication is that the image is preeminent in our modern, ideologically weighted culture: 'Formerly, there was a reduction from text to image: today, there is an amplification from the one to the other.' (26).

This essay is prescient in the sense that it anticipates the cultural admixture of the late sixties onwards when Barthes envisions the 'imitative' arts coalescing to form a 'cultural system':

> one can only anticipate that for all these imitative arts-when common-the code of the connoted system is very likely constituted either by a universal symbolic order or by a period rhetoric, in short by a stock of stereotypes (schemes, colours, graphisms, gestures, expressions, arrangements of elements). (Barthes [1961], 1977, p.18).

Somewhat counterposed possibilities for the digital image can be noted in the photographic message essay. Here it seems as if Barthes' conception of aestheticism has a relationship to Walter Benjamin's concept of 'the aura'. In 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' essay, Walter Benjamin describes artistic reproduction thus:

> In principle a work of art has always been reproducible. Manmade artifacts could always be imitated by men. Replicas were made by pupils in practice of their craft, by masters for diffusing their works, and finally by third parties in the pursuit of gain. Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, remains something new. Historically, it advanced intermittently and in leaps at long intervals, but with accelerated intensity. (Benjamin, W: [1935], 1968, P.219).

Benjamin's interest in mechanical reproduction is of the loss of the 'aura' of the work of art: that is to say the immanent quality of a painting and its affectual impact on us is somewhat degraded when we experience it 'second-hand', through reproductions. Nevertheless, this fact of reproduction ever was the case, the important point is how those reproducible materials are utilised.

In a similar fashion, Barthes notes that 'aestheticism' is the transformation of other materials: 'painting, composition or visual substance' treated with deliberation in their reproduction to signify 'art' or to convey a subtle message through the reproduction that might not have otherwise been achieved by connotation. He gives the example of a photographic reproduction by Cartier – Bresson of an early master:

> The resulting photograph however, is in no way a painting: on the one hand, its display of aestheticism refers (damagingly) to the very idea of painting (which is contrary to any true painting); while on the other, the composition signifies in a declared manner a certain ecstatic spirituality translated precisely in terms of an objective spectacle. (Barthes; Heath, (trans): [1961], 1977: p.24).

In 1970, the same year Barthes' 'Third meaning' essay was published in *Cahiers du Cinema*, Adorno's near complete *Aesthetic Theory* was published. In that posthumous work, Adorno states: 'Experimentation is a kind of striving for art to assert itself, since it is dispossessed when set against wider mainstream culture.' (Adorno, T.W: [1970], 2007, p.47). Barthes' aesthetic seems in accordance to some degree; his work on art in its manifold forms, whether of the literary, photographic or filmic mediums prioritise a reading where the foregrounded narrative is that of a conflict between received establishment perspectives on art and their dissenting opposite. For Barthes, the confluence of competing class interests at work in the same piece means that even a blatant example of bourgeois propaganda is of interest to the cultural archaeologist. This transforms products of popular culture into readable art, the point at which he diverges from Adorno's views on administered culture. Everything in a 'semiotics of cinema' is intelligible, moreover: 'everything is meaningful, even nonsense (which has at least the secondary meaning of being nonsense).' (Barthes in Hillier ed [1963], 1986, p.281).

That Barthes even called an essay 'Semiotics of Cinema' suggests he took such an exercise more seriously than many contend. The oft rehearsed appraisal of Barthes' view on cinema was that he cared little for it, less certainly than the photographic medium. There are

contrary views on this, and Barthes himself fuels the argument by appearing to vacillate. In an interview that appears one month after the publication of *Camera Lucida*, he states:

> I should [also] say that if I chose photography as the subject of my book, I did so, in a way against cinema. I realized that I had a positive relation to photographs, I love to look at them, whereas I have a difficult and resistant relation to cinema. I'm not saying that I don't go to the cinema, but in the end, paradoxically, I put photography above cinema in my little personal pantheon. (Barthes [1980] quoted in Badmington, N: 2016, p.47).

Yet Barthes' interest in the image, and the obvious intersection between photography and cinema, meant that Barthes continually returned to the 'small screen'. In an essay called 'En sortant du Cinema', written subsequent to the 'Third meaning' essay, it emerges that his preference is actually a hybrid of the two: 'Barthes well known interest in the film still is often mentioned to exemplify his preference for the photograph over the film. The 'photogram', however, is strictly neither photograph nor film. It is the material trace of that moment of arrest that establishes a space between the photograph and the film.' (Burgin, V: 1997, p.25).

The affectual logic that Barthes' develops in 'En Sortant du Cinema' is a precursor to the debates that would continue for several years in the British journal *Screen*, between proponents of a Marxist-Structuralist position and those of a Lacanian perspective. Ostensibly, the 'En sortant du Cinema' essay marks the point at which Barthes conceptual narrative maps from the former position to the latter, though there is evidence to mitigate this. This evidence will be explored in depth in the later sections of this investigation which deal with two important developments of 'Third meaning' narrative; 'the neutral' and 'the punctum'.

The code without representation compels Barthes because it is materially significant and bypasses representation, whilst also evidencing it. Barthes provisional system of aesthetics seeks out whatever distorts, bypasses, undercuts. The staccato moments of film, the pregnant pauses, the clash of sounds and images. His avowed interest in *The exterminating Angel* film by Luis Bunuel, that takes place almost entirely in one room is a good exemplar of the aesthetic that Barthes favours. The film is claustrophobic, coarse. Time is dilated. Both the viewer and the characters begin to wonder about the veracity of the world outside the room in this film, where members of high society are gathered. Contemplation is invited. For Barthes, it was the silent pauses that invited communion to see whether time or reality would deliver these characters from their fate.

1.3. Philosophical influences on Third meaning

In a reflective selection from the collection *On Signs*, Barthes looks back on his autobiographical work *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*, implying it marks a full stop in his career. He advances a summation of the theoretical forms within his corpus, and considers his position to the French literary establishment. He does this in third person:

> Let us try to put him in his proper place, since he himself has bowed out (and since no-one expects us to blame him from doing so.) What is the meaning of a book? Not what it argues, but what it argues with. As an individual, bodily subject, Barthes is visibly at grips with two

figures (two Allegories in the mediaeval sense: Value (which grounds everything in taste and distaste) and Stupidity; as a historical subject he is at grips with notions of the period: The Imaginary and the Ideological. (Barthes, Blonsky (ed), 1985: 'Barthes to the Third power', p.190).

Value here references emotional attributions Barthes makes to his relations with the world over and above any inherent qualities in what he views or experiences. In contrast, stupidity references the obtuse features of surplus value, of excess which cannot be ignored. It is difficult to envisage stupidity as doing anything other, visually, as accompanying a grotesque and distorted image. Images of Ivan the Terrible are brought to mind; so too are fleeting glimpses of a history of that parodic excess: *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Rabelais: [1564], 1694) being perhaps the earliest and most far- reaching influence on French thought of this type of text. The depletion and erethism that characterises Third meaning images is precisely articulated in the illustrations of Gustave Dore that accompanied 19th century versions of the book. These images are compelling yet somewhat repellent in their engorgement.

Value and stupidity[24] in forming one dialectic obverse pairing are matched in the above Barthes paragraph with the imaginary and the ideological. In the imaginary of Barthes, it is 'The image of Proust' that is the best reflection of Third meaning; an incessant, permutational unfolding of the Bourgeois way of life. In Third meaning one of the effects on the viewer is one of time dilation- indeed, there is no better example of time dilation than in the first 150 pages of Proust's *In search of lost time*. The imaginary of Barthes occupies some of the same territory as Proust. Suspension of the image is common to both of their imaginaries. Where time can be dilated it can also be regained. In suspension[25] the historical sweep can be preserved in minutiae and in the grain of its lacunae; lacunae in Proust being the delicate social mores that are constantly on the precipice of being shattered. Barthes' lifetime of inconsistent health and of being outside of work for long periods of time has a significant parallel to Proust's own situation, though Barthes' situation was seemingly, a far more severely straightened one. Both writers became seasoned observers of the *mores* of life. Barthes' reflective prose at times recalls Proust's style with some precision:

> …only the images of my youth fascinate me. Not an unhappy youth, thanks to the affection which surrounded me, but an awkward one, because of its solitude and material constraint. (Barthes, R, Howard, R (trans) 1977b, p3).

Thus, for Barthes, the site of the reverie is a site of deprivation; the contested site is one of excess. Value is established through the dialectical discourse that occurs in this site of contestation; the interpretation of a work is never definitive, though the summative tendency of interpretation may change as objective social conditions require it. It is the ideological in which truth rather than interpretation which is most keenly contested, however.

Third meaning images are ideological first and foremost, whether that is obviously so, or as a result of their dialectical presentation. Existentialism is a current that runs through French thought of the post war period. The astonishing achievement of Jean- Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943) is one of the key reflections on 20th century ontology. In 1959,

Sartre stated: 'For the last fifteen years I have been looking for something- I was trying, if you like, to lay the political foundations for anthropology'. (Sartre, JP; Matthews, J (trans.): [1959], 2008, p.9). Barthes is trying to do something similar with Third meaning, that is to say, that having established ontological precepts, he is advancing from the inner world of the viewer to the outer world where the text is completed. Sartre was to pinpoint Barthes' method accurately and in praiseworthy terms when he stated, in reference to Barthes' reflections on the differences between 'literal writers' and 'literary writers:

> The literal writer uses language to transmit information. The literary writer is a custodian of ordinary language, but he goes beyond it, for his language is material as non-significance or misinformation. He is an artisan who produces a certain verbal object by writing on the materiality of words; for him, meaning is the means and non-meaning the end. (Sartre, [1965], p.272).

These thoughts were presented five years before Barthes' Third meaning essay, in a lecture given in Japan, the location that inspired Barthes' *Empire of Signs*, which also appeared in 1970. Barthes' methodology, when dealing with literary texts, is approved by Sartre; to a large degree it can be said that a direct transposition of Sartre's methodology is utilised in Third meaning. The teleology of Third meaning is that its goal is to provide an endpoint to meaning only in that the viewer is given co-ordinates to determine either the ideological intention of the image, or a dialectical presentation in which ideological contestation is clear. This supposed endpoint then becomes a 'staging post' from where the filmic language of Third meaning opens out from that intentionality into a panoply of meanings which the viewer completes.

Barthes' challenge to the literary establishment in France is part of his theoretical distinctiveness. Barthes is keen to draw attention to resemblances in his work; the idea of linkage is the principle whereby he connects art to life. *On Racine* was a critique of the French theatrical establishment. Barthes believed that Racine's theory of dramaturgy, having become the pre-eminent vehicle of the spectacular failed to provide the necessary 'captioning' that would have illuminated moments of antagonism in society. One of Barthes' biographers reflects on Barthes' critique of Racine:

> *Sur Racine* analyses, without celebrating. It plays down the aesthetic dimension of Racine's oeuvre, both as poetry and theatre: more precisely, it discusses it's aesthetic effects (peripeteia, antithesis, verse-structure) not as a sum of particular 'beauties' but in terms of the overall creation of a signifying spectacle which represents irreconcilable contradictions but through an aesthetic mediation that means what we see in the end in Racine's theatre is not the contradictions themselves but their transcendence in and through the spectacle.[26] (Moriarty, M: 1991, p.59).

On Racine was a compilation of essays on Racinian theatre that was published in 1963, containing material that dated from 1958 onwards. However, it was two essays subsequently published by Barthes in, respectively, the journal *Modern language Notes* and in *The Times Literary Supplement*, both also published in 1963, that prompted an irritated response from Sorbonne Professor Raymond Picard in the Le Monde of 14th March 1964, where he also made a number of criticisms of *On Racine*. Alain Robbe- Grillet depicts

Barthes as particularly upset by Picard's rejoinder: '…the wrathful glare of the old Sorbonne paralysed him with a complex feeling of hate and terror.' (Robbe-Grillet, A, quoted in Calvet, 1994, p.151).

Nevertheless, the reception *On Racine* received was not entirely negative: 'Despite some questionable guesswork, the book contains a number of profound insights which bring a new perspective to bear on our vision of the Racinian world, and thus shed light on previously unrecognised aspects of the oeuvre.' (Le Pensee, quoted in Calvet, 1994, p.150). The journal *Critique* went further: 'today it is only Marxist and Psychoanalytic criticism that can discover the meaning of Racinian tragedy…Humanist criticism will not explore anything outside poetic discourse itself.' (Critique, quoted in Calvet, 1994, p.150).

Later Barthes attempted a rapprochement. In *Criticism or truth*, Barthes sought to resolve his dispute with Picard, and moreover: 'to resolve the tension in his own writing between prescription and description, between an enduring commitment to critical but largely negative ideological norms and a responsiveness to that which was unpredictable, inventive and interruptive in writing.' (Hill: 2010, p.89). Barthes wanted to confront change in society and the image of society critically, to respond to meaning while suspending the ideological presentation of it.

To do this, the tasks of criticism were to deal with the transcendental and empirical. In the first category Barthes placed a theoretical science of literature, the aim of which was to pinpoint: 'the underlying, transcendental structure of literariness'. (Hill: 2010, p.89). Such a science would be indebted to linguistics: '…made up not of personal inspiration or desire, but of rules accumulated at a level far removed from that of the author'. (Quoted in Hill: 2010, p.101). Barthes' philosophy tends to eschew auteurship, prizing the process whereby consciousness changes as a part of an encounter with the work of art, and the affectual qualities this encounter produces. A science of criticism was proposed in *Criticism and Truth*: '…it's function was more limited, localised and specific, it's purpose being to elaborate as exhaustively as possible one or other of the meanings implied or permitted by the underlying structure of the literary artwork.' (Hill: 2010, p.101).

Barthes wanted to go beyond his assessment of criticism as practice, as Hill puts it: '…it seemed both thematic and ideological criticism and the petty-bourgeois imagination that Barthes had so successfully lambasted in *Mythologies* were again victim to the same myopia, in that neither was able to imagine otherness without reducing it to a reflection in the mirror.' (Hill, 2010: p.104).

Barthes had gained a certain amount of notoriety in his argument with Picard, but this intellectual deadlock meant that continued criticism of the literary establishment had to proffer something new. A new, closer association with the radical publishing group *Tel Quel*, for whom this was his first major work was to prove fruitful, offering Barthes a sympathetic intellectual milieu. This period in Barthes life saw his attention turn from French intellectual sources to Eastern philosophical and cultural influences. Barthes' work with Julia Kristeva, also a member of the *Tel Quel* group was to produce the key concept of *signifiance* informing Third meaning.

1.4. The image of revolution

>…if one is amused by a contradiction, it is because one supposes it's terms to be very far apart. In other words, kings have a superhuman essence, and when they temporarily borrow certain forms of democratic life, it can only be through an incarnation which goes against nature, made possible through condescension alone. (Barthes: 'The Blue Blood cruise' [1957], 2000, p.32).

 By the late sixties, French Marxism had achieved a measure of mainstream acceptance. The *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF)[27] regularly polled 20% in national elections and could claim 300,000 members. (Singer, P: 1970, p.277). The image of revolution appeared as an almost tangible mirage on the distant horizon. Consciousness was gradually shifting leftwards. With enough sheer agency the French capitalist monolith could crumble in a bloodless revolution. And yet:

> A striking feature of the early Fifth Republic was the outward stagnation and inner ossification of the French Communist Party. That once formidable revolutionary movement had lost its elan well before the advent of De Gaulle; even in 1956 when it polled a record vote, it's appeal to youth had gone, its intellectual prestige had waned, the enthusiasm of its followers was in decline and its revolutionary potential was spent… (Williams, P; Harrison, M: 1972, p.128).

As such, 1968 presented a belated possibility for the PCF to redeem itself. De Gaulle had presided over several embarrassing diplomatic incidents in the period up to May 1968 including the 'empty chair crisis'; and an unchecked impromptu interjection at the Expo 67 World's Fair led to a falling out with the Canadian Prime minister. He had dealt with the political crisis of May 1968 badly. One of the major weaknesses of De Gaulle was to initially fail to control the media narrative. After eight days of student protests there was a partial and farcical attempt to shut down state media reporting, but ORTF Radio correspondents were still allowed to make live reports. (Sherman, D.J ed: 2013, p.20). This was neither convincing as a draconian measure, nor effective in quelling discontent. Moreover, it provided radicals across the country encouragement to stage similar protests to those at Nanterre University and the Sorbonne.

With up to 9 million people on the streets of France, there was hope of an alliance between the workers, the students and the PCF that would topple President De Gaulle. De Gaulle fled to Baden- Baden, threatening to send in the army in his absence. Striking a deal securing the support of the army meant he was able to return to France. The PCF ultimately decided to concentrate its energies on shadowing the Popular Front Government, headed by the Gaullists, instead of lending support to the May 1968 movement in its critical moment. The image of revolution was shattered and fragmented. Daniel Singer's contemporary account of the PCF's betrayal is scathing. He devotes a whole chapter to a denunciation of the PCF, opening with:

> Between the promise of a new French Revolution and its fulfilment stands the French Communist Party. The PCF has appeared since the beginning of this story as the villain, the main obstacle to a revolutionary conclusion, or, depending on your standpoint, as the hero,

the unexpected pillar of the regime, the surprising darling of the traditional upholders of capitalist society… (Singer: 1970, p.126).

Conversely, the impact of Maoism on French youth, despite the numbers of paid up converts only numbering a few thousand, was massive. The tumult of May 1968 had begun quietly in Nanterre, in a grass roots student dispute that the Maoists tailed. A Maoist atmosphere had penetrated the Parisian universities by the following summer, however. A prescient observation on the growing importance of Maoism to French youth culture was the Jean- Luc Godard film *La Chinoise* (1967). This film and Godard's 1972 *Tout Va Bien* neatly bookend the period in French Culture between the momentary confluence of the youth quake and Marxist politics and its temporary defeat and dissipation into a putatively 'postmodern' French culture.

In France, as in many other European countries and the United States, there was a bourgeoning anti-imperialist movement as well as a youth movement, who for the first time had an appreciably high level of education matched with a certain amount of affluence. Cinema was an intrinsic part of French youth culture. In the 1960's, the cinema that began to be made in France moved from largely classical adaptations of famous novels and plays to films that were often frivolous but highly enjoyable tributes to Hollywood culture. These included Francois Truffaut's' *400 Blows*[28](1959) and Godard's *Breathless* (1960). Young filmmakers seemed to take the reins of culture and were often film critics themselves; they watched cinema, they wrote about cinema, they made cinema. Jean Luc Godard explains in an interview from 1962 how the last of these activities came about:

> All of us at *Cahiers* [*Du Cinema*] thought of ourselves as future directors. Frequenting cine-clubs and the Cinematheque was already a way of thinking cinema and thinking about cinema. Writing was already a way of making films, for the difference between writing and directing is quantitative not qualitative. The only complete hundred per cent critic was Andre Bazin. The others –Sadoul, Balazs or Pasinetti are historians or sociologists, not critics. (Hillier ed. 1986, p.59).

The French intellectual class were by turns paralysed, co-opted by the establishment or out of the country entirely during the events of May 1968. Louis Althusser had a depressive breakdown at the time of May 1968, and did not participate in the events, though many of his students including Regis Debray did. At the time, protestors who didn't know of Louis Althusser's predicament wrote on walls: 'Of what use is Althusser?'. Subsequent to his rehabilitation Althusser adopted the official PCF line and expressed the need for reconciliation between students and the PCF. In contrast Jean- Paul Sartre was arrested for civil disobedience during the May protests, though Charles De Gaulle made an intervention and pardoned him, stating: 'You don't arrest Voltaire'. (Hayman, R: 1996). Alain Badiou managed to both commit to a Marxist- Leninist Communist Party group during the protests and debate Giles Deleuze and Jean Francois Lyotard for what he regarded as deviations from Althusserian Marxism. (Badiou, A; Macey, D & Corcoran, S (trans) 2010). Etienne Balibar remained a member of the PCF until 1981, when he was expelled.[29] Michel Foucault was teaching in Tunis, when student protests engulfed the city prior to the May 1968 protests.[30] Foucault attempted to defend students from prosecution, even hiding the printing press of

a group of students, but ultimately most prosecutions were conducted in private. Foucault returned to a prestigious post in France in 1969. The fracture of French theory and unity of practice at this time was stark, when it should have been one of the easier tasks of world history to form a coherent opposition to an unpopular government. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the De Gaulle government in 1968 was that it did not resemble the social composition of France; overwhelmingly white, with no female cabinet ministers. Thus, with no cogent image that could be formed from the shards and cracked image of revolution, there was a pressing necessity to make some sense of this political conjuncture in the cultural sphere, in catharsis at least. There was also a need to address how political consciousness had calcified into a hypostasized bureaucratic form. Perhaps most importantly, however, was that the voice of oppressed peoples continued to be muted by French colonialism, partly as a result of the bureaucratic depoliticization of the French opposition to colonialism.

A new political language was necessary to reflect the experience of people across the world, to contend with the image of reality shown and posit the image of what reality could be; and also, to contest the reimplementation of bourgeois power as it gathered pace. Roland Barthes was able to contribute to this change in approach, through his Third meaning essay, and in the work on the image that followed.

1.5. Third meaning discourse

The contention that Barthes greatest intellectual contribution is a thoroughgoing recapitulation of our terms of enunciation as social beings only seems to be part of the story. His contribution to an unmasking of hidden political discourse of some extension, a mythological system, is arguably a greater part of his legacy. It is in evidence in all eras of his work in some guise or other. A crucial dimension of this work on mythology is to see how intrinsically mythology demands a visual aspect, often encompassing some form of spectacle. The spectacle stands as the screen obscuring, or delimiting what the viewer or reader is able to perceive of capitalist myth in its raw state. In Barthes' 'Third meaning' essay, he is interrogating the mythological fragment as a site of contention. The 'missed opportunity' of May 1968 looms large as an aspect of this essay. Andy Stafford suggests May 1968 had a profound effect on Barthes' method:

> Barthes view in 1968 was that it was now necessary to read the event as text, written literally and metaphorically. The real revolution had to involve a break with the symbolic order, which 'the marginal fragments of ecriture' represented by the explosion of graffiti because not printed, could not effect. As *S/Z* was to point out in Balzac's short story, the events of May 1968 had in them a 'mise en abyme', the very rupture which the events symbolised but did not accomplish. (Stafford, A: 1998, P.135).

After the initial tumult of the 1968-9 period there is a pause where the left seems to take stock of what has just transpired. In France events of great political significance have happened with alacrity; a cultural 'youth quake' has part inspired a student revolt followed closely by mass solidarity actions across the country. These falter as De Gaulle stages his political comeback from Belgium. In the 1969 elections the PCF capitulate to the Gaullist

party in forming a coalition with them, in which the Gaullists remain the dominant party. Although waves of industrial action continue across Europe, the 1969 PCF 'sell-out' marks a defeat for the massed ranks of the French youth movement and their unionised comrades. In this climate culture expressly reflects a rethinking of the approach of the organised left. Mindful of Marx's maxim that man creates society, but not in conditions of his own choosing, the counter- cultural producers of the early 1970's seek not just to open up new discourses capable of transmitting sets of new ideas that might challenge Capitalism, but to find new ways of mediating those discourses. Innovations in digital technology come at just the right time to make good on this, and as with the medium of analogue film, it is sometime before Capitalism has success in controlling and regulating it. This marks an intermediary period in the creation of a new cultural form where neither the establishment nor the countercultural vanguard have much of a grasp of the constituent properties of their object.

Barthes' reflections on *Ivan the terrible* concentrate on the observation that the images used in the film represent interplay between communication and signification that goes beyond the sum of the two aspects to produce images of significance. Barthes analyses the scene in *Ivan the Terrible* where the two supernumeraries rain gold down upon Ivan's head. Three meanings can be drawn; firstly, an informational level of communication that gathers together the ensemble of elements- secondly a symbolic level composed of reference and diegesis; thirdly, a Third meaning that compels an interrogative reading, yet cannot be conflated with the dramatic meaning of the episode. Here a composite of communication and signification point to significance. Barthes states that the Symbolic meaning is both intentional (aimed at me) and goes beyond me; 'closed in its evidence, held in a complete system of destination'. (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.54). The Third meaning, the one that is 'too difficult to absorb' is delineated by Barthes as the obtuse meaning 'that which is blunted, rounded in form.' (55).

The obtuse meaning is composed of a collection of traits which 'have as their vague reference a somewhat low language, the language of a rather pitiful disguise…. In connection with the noble grief of the obvious meaning, they form a dialogism so tenuous that there is no guarantee of its intentionality.' (57). This particular quote refers specifically to an example used from *Battleship Potemkin*, where the facial features of an elderly woman change to reveal an altogether different impression. *Battleship Potemkin* is referenced in six of the fifteen film stills, in 'The Third meaning' essay, though none of Barthes chosen stills from the film warrant more than a couple of sentences, bar images V and VI of the grieving women. *Battleship Potemkin* is chosen by Barthes as a Third meaning film for its totemic value as the archetypal film where a decisive politico-ontological question is posed.

There is no explicit or implicit repudiation of Stalinism in *Battleship Potemkin* because it comes after Lenin's death but before Stalin's accession to power. Nevertheless, it served to haunt Stalin as the original version, released during the original lengthy power struggle for leadership of the Bolshevik party had an introduction written by Trotsky, Stalin's nemesis. Though it would be 1940 before Stalin had him killed, it is also likely that some viewers contemporaneous to the time would have conflated the death of the rebel Vakulinchuk with

an alternative narrative history, and drawn an analogy with Trotsky's disappearance from Bolshevik history, airbrushed out by Stalin. More specifically, the images of the grieving woman, callously distorted, as Barthes sees it, so that her face resembles a fish, are callous only in their articulation of an objective situation that is bereft of consolation, where the hero of the revolution has been struck down, acting in that temporal moment as symbolic of the death of the revolutionary author.

Kristin Thompson states with regard to Third meaning's gestural suggestiveness:

> Probably no-one ever watches only these nondiegetic aspects of the image through an entire film. Nevertheless, they are constantly present, a whole ''film'' existing in some sense alongside the narrative film we tend to think of ourselves as watching. (Thompson, K: 2004, p.515).

This intertextuality is a key part of Third meaning discourse; textual commentary that exists as a 'caption' while the main narrative film is being created. Barthes opines that it is difficult to imagine an image without some form of caption. Barthes states in an interview from 1966:

> The idea that we're now in a *civilization of the image* has been repeated time and again. But we forget there are virtually never any images without words, either as commentary, subtitles or dialogue etc. I'm more inclined to think that humanity has so far lived through the prehistory of articulated language and we're now at last coming into a civilization in which language will be properly understood and exploited. (Barthes interview in Barthes; Turner [1966] 2016, vol 4, p.80)

Certainly by 1970, Barthes seems more confident about what type of captioning produces clearer images. When Barthes writes about Eisenstein he accords a more directed aesthetic to his practice, writing that the characteristic of Third Meaning is to blur the limit separating expression from disguise, whilst allowing that oscillation succinct demonstration. This is to emphasize an artful disposition described by Eisenstein as 'just short of the cutting edge'. (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.58). Barthes characterises Third meaning as 'a multi-layering of meanings which always lets the previous meaning continue, as in a geological formation, saying the opposite without giving up the contrary- a (two term) dramatic dialectic that Brecht would have liked'. (58).

Gestus is the gesture that simultaneously evokes the general and the particular. An example would be the final handshake of John F Kennedy, at once a mundane and everyday gesture, yet imbued with significance i.e., speculation as to whether the last person who shook his hand could have been in some way connected to his assassination, one of the most significant world events of that decade. Though Barthes cites several examples of Eisensteinian Third meaning, he emphasizes that the conception and practice of Third meaning is not the product of one director, nor is the concept complete: 'It may be that there is a certain constant in Eisensteinian obtuse meaning but in that case, it is already a thematic language, an idiolect, this idiolect being provisional...' (60). Moreover, there is slippage in identifying it, which is left somewhat up to the viewers interpretation: 'It is 'not situated structurally, a semantologist would not agree to its objective existence...' (60). On this reading, then, it does not fit a model that lends itself easily to deconstruction. Barthes

does state that even describing the obtuse meaning is difficult as it is like Ferdinand Saussure's anagram with no starting point, and no definite trajectory:

> The obtuse meaning is a signifier without a signified, hence the difficulty in naming it. My reading remains suspended between the image and its description, between definition and approximation. If the obtuse meaning cannot be described, that is because in contrast to the obvious meaning, it does not copy anything-how do you describe something that does not represent anything? (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.61).

Barthes asserts that 'the obtuse meaning is outside (articulated) language whilst nevertheless inside interlocution.' (Barthes, R: [1970], 1977, p.61). The meaning is implied, as if you are reading over someone's shoulder. It is apparent even to the untrained eye as it imposes itself atop the narrative flow in order to be seen. Unease can be the response to such interpolation, though the key is that this interpolation is at the same time woven into the plot. In this way, obtuse meaning disturbs metalanguage (criticism). (61).

Barthes asserts that the Third meaning keeps a permanent state of depletion and yet cannot empty itself. (62). This is because appearances and reality overlap as Third meaning reveals the ideological contestation between two counterposed positions and the rhetoric that captions and obfuscates every moment of political clarity. The image is brimming with political discourse even as it embodies a binding lack. Barthes essay on the 'Rhetoric of the image' is instructive here. In that essay, Barthes states: 'Rhetorics inevitably vary by their substance (here articulated sound, there image, gesture or whatever) but not necessarily by their form; it is even probable that there exists a single rhetorical form, common for instance to dream, literature and image. '(Barthes: [1964], 1977, p.49).

Rhetoric within a film still or advert may appear to us as a distilled image but conceptually exists outside the frame. Within the frame too, it is partial. It is made understandable to us by what the filmmaker is able to convey of a rhetorical interpolation within the frame. Barthes writes:

> The most important thing …is not to inventorize the connotators but to understand that in the total image they constitute discontinuous or better still scattered traits. The connotators do not fill the whole of the lexia, reading them does not exhaust it. (50).

Barthes seems to be suggesting that the impressions it creates provoke contemplation, and prompt a reading that is subject to an altered time scale. The process of working through the images cognitively dilate and distort the perception of time, even as time stays constant. This is true of Barthes' description of the images from *Ivan the Terrible* as representing the 'founding of the filmic' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.65) where meaning opening up totally creates a template for understanding cinema. The constraints of image and discourse on the image no longer passively reflect the status quo, or argue against it from a defensive position. Rather, in conceiving a new vision of the readerly Barthes encourages a panoply of viewpoints that reinterprets resistance for his time, and beyond; for the women's movement, for the gay liberation movement and for the postcolonial movement. Allen contextualises the importance of the 'readerly' as applied to Third meaning cinema:

> For Barthes…the filmic' must resist chronology, narrative and the development of character and plot which most commentators would describe as the essence of filmic or cinematic art. What Barthes means by the 'filmic', however, is something which functions like the radical textuality of avant-garde literature, resisting narrative and chronology and involving the reader in a pleasurable, open, unending engagement with the signifier and thus significance. (Allen, G: 2003, p.122).

1.6. The irreducible in Third meaning

Published in the July 1970 issue of *Cahiers du Cinema*, the reach of Third meaning's' influence goes far beyond what could have been considered a minor theoretical contribution in support of that years *s/z.* The Third meaning essay rarely escapes commentary in the major intellectual biographies on him; scholarly interest in it has increased since his death. While it can be argued that this essay marks Barthes' Marxist apotheosis, it comes too late to have any influence on the events of May 1968. Rather it appears as an afterthought of a concerned intellectual, poring over what lessons can be learnt of May 1968.

The Third meaning essay took on appreciable importance as a piece of work not just in terms of its content, or even the prescience with which Barthes' made his points but in terms of the company it was required to keep in the particular issue of *Cahiers du Cinema* in which it ran. Almost every issue of *Cahiers* for the previous two years had ran extracts of the writings of Sergei Eisenstein, with this particular issue the serialisations were drawing to a close. It was as if Eisenstein had been appointed the filmmaker to guide France through the celluloid revolution that was presumed would follow the social revolution. When that prospect appeared to be a false dawn, something else was required; new theory. In drawing on Eisenstein's work to elucidate his theory, Barthes was both giving the seal of approval to *Cahiers'* support of Soviet cinematic theory and in a rare example, drawing on an established corpus of work that was both progressive and credible. In a further boon, large sections of Eisenstein's work had been previously unpublished in any language before this. The further consequence was the ascendancy of Barthes' to the higher echelons of the French intellectual establishment, moreover that this establishment was to increasingly numbered with radicals.

The international, long- term reaction to Barthes' corpus in general was diverse. Even scholars who may regard themselves as Barthesian found themselves having to develop a particular interpretation of Barthes which could be considered at odds with certain periods of Barthes' work. Stephen Heath, for example, who was a chief translator of Barthes had this quite unequivocal statement to make in 1980: 'The field of semiology of cinema, its 'delimitable object', is the analysis of cinematic language, where language is to be understood not as the technico-sensorial unity immediately graspable in perceptual experience, the combination of matters of an expression, but as a particular combination of codes.' (Heath, S; Laurentis, T & Heath, S ed: 1980, p.3). Remembering the Barthes of the photographic message, where he states that none of the 'imitative arts' produce images are reducible to a code, the cinema being amongst these imitative arts, it is pertinent to also recall the Barthes' of 'the Third meaning' where meaning is not reducible but rather extends

outward.

Apparatus theory was a developing vogue by 1980, enlisting some psychological theory to explain some of the more apparent affectual aspects of the cinema. Heath's next consideration shows a certain amount of migration from his usual structuralist position to one where he assimilates these developments with a nod to Christian Metz:

> Specificity is defined not by technology or technico-sensorality but in terms of codes, this particular combination; some of the codes being themselves specific to cinema, a point at which the technico-sensorial can reappear in the analysis in as much as the specificity of the specific codes can be seen to be connected with certain traits of a matter of expression or the combination of matters of expression, derives from the particular nature of the technico-sensorial unity (3).

All of which appears to be removed somewhat from Barthes' historical sense of cultural mythology playing out a war with the forces that threaten to usurp it, as suggested by the Third meaning essay. However, it does more accurately reflect Barthes writing from the later 1970s. Furthering this consideration, Kristin Thompson says of Heath's essay 'On Touch of Evil' in relation to Barthes' conception of excess:

> Heath... resorts to a psychoanalytical explanation for excess, indicating that it is the material which must be repressed by the film.... [   ]. But none of this comes to terms with Heath's own claim (possibly derived from Barthes) that the excess arises from the conflict between the materiality of the film and the unifying structures within it. Heath, in fact, in fact, never analyses a scene into its material and structural components to find examples of excess. (Thompson, K in Rosen P ed: 1986, p.132-p.133).

Metz tends to play down excess as a part of Third meaning too, as evidenced by this passage from 1974: 'There are many characteristics to the filmic image that distinguish it from the preferred form of signs-which is arbitrary, conventional, and codified. These are consequences of the fact that from the very first an image is not the indication of something other than itself, but the pseudo-presence of the thing it contains.' (Metz, C: [1971], 1974, p.17). Excess or the lack of it draws attention to a preponderance over an ideological point of contestation; from the Marxist perspective a film that possesses this over-determination draws attention to its oppositional stance. However, Heath does quite skilfully manage to incorporate a sense of the necessity of techniques designed to produce affect springing from the historical impetus of a mutative relationship to production:

> Technology itself [] is always found and finally confirmed as an autonomous instance, with ideology involved-should the argument envisage it-in the creation and maintenance of the various techniques, even if (just because)-again should the argument even pose the problem-technology is also acknowledged as bound up with the determinations of economic forces guiding its development in this or that direction. Effectively, a kind of base/superstructure model is deployed in which technology provides a base for techniques which are the point of the relations of ideology. (Heath, S; Laurentis, T & Heath, S ed: 1980, p.3).

The persistence of Barthes method as a framework for understanding cinema has continued into the 21st century. The irreducibility that Barthes evokes in the Third meaning

essay stands as an appropriate metaphor for this piece of work; it has not yet been effectively diminished or dismissed, or falsified. Moreover, where it has been ignored it has become obvious that this is the case.[31] Barthes Third meaning has gained a heretofore unprecedented level of dissemination through the attention dedicated to it recently by several blogs. There is a Roland-Barthes.com run by an editorial team, where 'we talk about everything under the sun'. The content is diffuse, and not politically informed, however. Paul Ramaeker calls his blog 'The third meaning' with its strapline; 'about Cinema and other media'. (https://3rdmeaning.wordpress.com/about/ [Accessed 12/05/2021]). Ramaeker pinpoints the centrality of Third meaning to Barthes visual aesthetic:

> For Barthes, the third meaning has fruitful implications for his interest in semiotic liberation and open textuality. For one, "it outplays meaning- subverts not the content but the whole practice of meaning." For another, because it points to the filmic, properties of the image specific to cinema's basis in photography, and yet can best be grasped within film stills, he can argue that studying the film still breaks with the tyranny of 24-frames-per-second. This aligns nicely with his attacks on the authority of the text elsewhere ("The Death of the Author" for one); to study the film still becomes a kind of resistant act. (https://3rdmeaning.wordpress.com/2011/06/27/about-third-meaning/).

1.7. Establishing a Third meaning taxonomy

A provisional taxonomy of third meaning concepts requires a look at the process of signification in Third meaning and how the key concepts are mobilised. One can identify three levels of meaning in Third meaning film. The informational level is the combinatory indicators of a 'message' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.52) The symbolic level is the diegetic qualities that tell the story by way of themes; also, through historical reference and by personal filmic signature of the filmmaker (52). The third level is that of *signifiance*. (54). With this established, Barthes details the composition of the obvious meaning. The obvious meaning is the image in a raw state (55). The devastation of ambiguity is the key technique: the filmmaker must eliminate any questions around their intentionality. This is done 'By the addition of an aesthetic value, emphasis.' (56). Decorativism accentuates meaning and the use of quotation reinforces it.

The obtuse meaning is subtler and lies somewhere in the composition of the image. Barthes admits some confusion in initially divining it himself. The tenuous relationship between various traits; in this case the relationship between the physical expression on her face and the arrangement of her headscarf, is that which eventually teases out the intentionality of the obtuse image (57).

Barthes decides that the obtuse meaning has to do with disguise. In Eisenstein's work, he states, 'artifice 'is at once 'falsification of itself-pastiche-and derisory fetish, since it shows it's fissure and it's suture.' (58). Barthes notes that Third meaning images are difficult to resist; sometimes because they are compelling, at other times because they are ugly. (59). At all times the 'Eisensteinian people' as Barthes calls them remain lovable, the sense of a communal imperative to the images is clear. Barthes refers to this as an ethnographical aspect. Barthes identifies 'the contemporary problem as not to destroy the narrative but subvert it' (64), just as Eisenstein managed to do in *Ivan the terrible* , subverting the

narrative sufficiently to obscure the perceptions of Stalin so that he would not see the weakness in Barthes' evocation of the dictator Ivan, but that it would also see the empty hubristic power that Ivan exhibited as familiar to Stalin sufficiently that they would invite favourable comparison, or at least sure that a tribute had been made to him. This was due, Barthes implies to diegesis: 'the story (the diegesis) is no longer just a strong system (the millennial system of narrative) but also, and contradictorily a simple space, a field of permanences and permutations.' (64).

In an analysis of *S/Z* Sarah Turvey uses Barthes' rules for a written text as the basis for rules for a filmic text.[32] This seems to be safe theoretical ground given Barthes' tendency for migrating across media applying similarly formulated concepts in each instance. The umbrella term Turvey uses to do this is the familiar term 'lexia':

> Barthes' analysis is contingent upon an ability to break up the text into a series of relatively discrete units, which are threaded by at most, three or four of his codes. He stresses the arbitrary nature of these lexias and the fact that no attempt is made to systematise the divisions with respect to syntactic structures. (Turvey, 1982, p.14).

Turvey quotes a Barthes passage that refers to the lexia as being a few words up to several sentences, where meaning will reside, the visibility of these meanings determined by the density of connotations. Turvey notes that a single word does not amount to a lexia, but we can reduce a film to the unit of a frame. However, the familiar conceptual framework for discussing film is not to talk about it frame by frame but to refer to it by way of the language of art and art criticism.

According to Barthes' formula in *S/Z*, film can be reordered in a nonlinear way or be recompiled as an intertext. Barthes describes intertextual codes as a 'mirror of citations' with readers the authors of a further intertextuality: 'The 'I' that approaches the text is itself already a plurality of other texts, of infinite, or more precisely, lost codes (whose origins are lost)' (Turvey, 1982, p.14).

The subversion and reordering of linearity in film is a persistent Third meaning component. Robert Beverly Ray underlines the importance of linearity in the conception of Third meaning discourse and links it explicitly to the Avant Garde: 'In suppressing [*Ivan the Terribles*] …continuity…he [Barthes]… had, in effect, managed to simulate the experience of travelling in a foreign country without knowing the language. More exactly, he was reinventing Bretons' experiment of entering an unidentified film in medias res and leaving when its point became too clear.' (Ray, R.B: 2011, p.100). Moreover: 'In effect, Barthes was converting fetishism, with its overvaluation of apparently trivial details, into a research strategy, one that would enable its practitioner to enter a problem at other than the designated points' (100).

From Barthes' earliest writings there is an expressed interest in classical imagery. Barthes develops this from understandings of ancient Greek mimetics. Classical iconography is examined in 'Romans in the movies', and physiognomic detail is scrutinised in much the same way as Barthes will later do in the Third meaning essay. In this discussion of a film adaptation of the life of Julius Caesar, Barthes homes in on hair of the characters, specifically, their curled forelocks:

> What can it be which is attached to these persistent fringes? Quite simply, the announcement of Romanity. So that we see the spectacle's mainspring exposed here: the sign. These forelocks flood us with evidence, therefore there can be no doubt we are in Ancient Rome. (Barthes; Howard & Lavers (trans); [1957] ,2011, p21).

An early formulation of the Third meaning is expressed by counterweighting the Classical iconic image with the way that image has been replicated in modern film:

> …the sign functions to excess, discrediting itself by letting its function show. But that same fringe produced on the one naturally Latin forehead in whole film, Marlon Brando's, ''works'' for us without earning a laugh, and it's not unlikely that a share of this actor's success is due to the perfect integration of Roman capillarity with the general morphology of the character. Conversely, Julius Caesar is incredible, with his Anglo-Saxon lawyer's phiz already familiarised by a thousand- bit parts in thrillers or comedies, his compliant skull carefully raked by a stylist's hairpiece (20).

In a study of the faciality of Portia and Calpurnia, Barthes also draws signs that are suggestive of *signifiance*: '…these signs are at once excessive and absurd: they postulate a naturalness which they lack the courage to honour completely: they are not ''open and above board''. Barthes contends that sweat is supposed to represent 'laborious virtue'; only one man doesn't sweat- Julius Caesar, 'the object of the crime.' In discussion on 'the morality of the sign', Barthes reflects that 'The sign ought to present itself in only two extreme forms: either frankly intellectual, reduced by its distance to an algebra, as in the Chinese theatre, where a flag signifies a regiment, or else deeply rooted, somehow invented on each occasion, presenting an inward and secret face, the signal of a moment and no longer of a concept.' (21). Then the following statement seems to refer again to an early version of the Third meaning: 'But the intermediary sign (the bangs of Romanity or the perspiration of thought) betrays a degraded spectacle, one which fears the naïve truth as much as the total artifice.' (21). The key manoeuvre in the ideological image is then elucidated:

> …if it is a good thing that a spectacle be created to make the world clearer, there is a culpable duplicity in confusing the sign with what is signified. And this is a duplicity peculiar to bourgeois art: between the intellectual sign and the visceral sign, this art hypocritically arranges an illegitimate sign, at once elliptical and pretentious, which it baptises with the pompous name natural. (21).

A taxonomy of Third meaning film was being assimilated from the early 1960s, even if Barthes did not operationalise it entirely until 1970. In the essay 'The problem of signification in Cinema' he returns to the lacunae-like presence of signifiers, writing that: 'In film, the signifieds are simply episodic, discontinuous elements – often marginal ones' (Barthes, Turner [1960] 2016, vol 4, p.31). Nevertheless, though he opines that ''The essential function of film isn't of a cognitive order' (31), he does nevertheless draw attention to these facets as they act as a competing narrative to the official, given meaning of the film.

At this point Barthes has not developed a clear sense of what he will call the counternarrative in the Third meaning essay. Nevertheless, what is 'outside the frame'

becomes an important part what he gives the appellation of 'the filmic' (31) to, for what appears to be the first time: '*What is signified is everything that is outside the film and needs to be actualized in it*. [33] (Barthes [1960] 2016 in Barthes; Turner (ed), vol 4). This recognition of film as reifying social circumstances equal to its status as an aesthetic and narratively coherent piece of work is key to the development of Third meaning and its future connection to rapidly changing social relations and the development of social movements. Third meaning discourse in its modern form developed in part from a necessity to assimilate 'other voices' to reflect a democratisation of culture, be it the 'youth quake' of the sixties; the Postcolonial narratives of the seventies onwards and concurrent and continuing Feminist discourses. There is a sense in which the narrative of Third meaning film has to continually diverge whilst maintaining its political objectives. Lucy Fischer in her book *Shot/Countershot* provides a good framework for dealing with these issues, and signposts the continued reflexivity intrinsic to Third meaning discourse as a tool which is amenable to digital technology.

In Third meaning the subtextual, the 'just out of view' and the 'over the shoulder' elements that are hidden in the visual text surprise us by emerging from shadow. Facial features take on unexpected aspects, reminding us of other animals, or inanimate objects; conversely, inanimate objects seem to come to life. This can be merely a physiognomic aspect, but the more profound echo of this can be found in gestus or social gest, that contextualises the text in such a way that the viewer is compelled to confront a general situation. The most crucial, and final aspect of a taxonomy of Third meaning is counter-narrative. Counter-narrative is the arrival at a position of ontologico-political decision. The cultivation of this in the viewer is achieved through a simple dialectical presentation evoked as an intractable antagonism. In the next chapter I assess Eisenstein's versions of Third Meaning; Organic Unity and Pathos and Intellectual montage through applying them to *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* by Esther Shub and *The End of St Petersburg* by Vsevold Pudovkin.

Chapter Two

2.1. Eisenstein and Soviet film after the Revolution

When Roland Barthes sets out to find a cinematic language in 1970's Third meaning essay he is trying to find a methodology of a former period in cinematic theory that might work in the contemporary cultural climate, keenly aware that confrontation in the political sphere both in France and in the rest of the world had not translated into permanently altered consciousness for the oppressed, nor had it established a lasting counterculture. Third meaning theory is synthesized by Roland Barthes in France in 1970 during an attempted revolution, but its conceptual origins can be found more than fifty years prior in an initially 'successful' revolution in Russia that led first to civil war, then to the preservation of an authoritarian state machinery, enabling the rise of the autocratic Joseph Stalin. The passage from revolutionary ecstasy to disillusionment is palpable in Eisenstein's theory and in Barthes' Eisenstein- informed theory.

Swift successive changes in the governance of Russia, first by the liberal government and then by the Bolsheviks when they stormed the Winter Palace on 7th November 1917 undoubtedly had a transformative impact on the Russian population. The revolution of the Bolsheviks was ostensibly done in the name of the people. As with any period of rapid change there was also confusion. For many, Sergei Eisenstein included, the expansion of cultural possibilities seemed remote initially.[34]

Third meaning as a branch of political aesthetics takes this history and its possibilities as an entry point, though that is certainly far from the sum of its considerations. The task is always to utilise the elements of the past to point to a nowness informed by the past's lessons. In *Battleship Potemkin* Eisenstein's aim is to provide an account of recent political history that focuses on a notable turning point in the path to the Russian Revolution of 1917. It's credentials as a distilled Marxist account of recent revolutionary history are arguably at issue as Eisenstein prefers to make the film of an adjacent event of the previous generation- the mutiny on the *Battleship Potemkin*- a study in humanity, and the microcosmic, a fragmentary explanation of the failed storming of the winter palace in 1905 and its legacy.

The most explicit examples of humanity in the film are the powerful emotions of horror and grief, in respectively the scenes depicted on the Odessa steps and the funeral scene, both of which are recounted in Barthes' Third meaning essay. The subject of *Ivan the Terrible*, by contrast, is of baseness and inhumanity. Ivan conveys the absolute excess of power as a veil to hide behind; but the veil is transparent, and reveals the internal corruption that lies behind it. The difference in approach between the films is evident, yet they are linked by the intention to express the *historical materiality* of a situation. The situations identified are those of the dates of the respective production of these works; 1927 and 1944, with their historical simile's the failed revolution of 1905 and the post-medieval unification of Russia in the late 15th century.

Eisenstein's aesthetic achieved maturity as the revolution played out, and began to fall into disarray. Though he somewhat ran 'against the grain' in terms of his fidelity to Bolshevism per se, he certainly approved of the idea of a state funded film industry. Yet Eisenstein was

both a man of his time and also separate from it. His positioning as a cultural revolutionary was to see him fall in and out of favour with the Bolshevik establishment. This dialectical relationship with the new Soviet society was rooted in his personal circumstances at the time of the revolution. Peter Wollen paints the circumstances of his personal predicament vividly:

> During those heroic days Eisenstein was a student at the Institute of Civil Engineering in Petrograd. He was nineteen years old. He was not prepared for the overthrow of the existing order of society, the collapse of his culture and ideology and the dissolution of his family as his parents departed into exile. The Revolution destroyed him, smashed the co-ordinates of his life, but it also gave him the opportunity to produce himself anew. (Wollen, P: 2013, p13)

After the revolution, one of the first institutional developments in the arts was Anatoly Lunacharsky's decision as commissar for education to form an avant-garde organisation called the IZO, a government department of fine arts, which had branches in Petrograd and Moscow. This was an overwhelmingly avant-garde led organisation, until the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921 led to a purge of IZO. (Wollen: 1982, p.65-66). Lunarcharsky made another important decision for the Russian arts in deciding to support the Proletkult. The philosopher Alexander Bogdanov headed up operations. Bogdanov was a spiritedly antithetical scientific rationalist with innovative ideas that later bordered on the esoteric. As Peter Wollen states:

> Bogdanov believed that the proletariat should have its own specifically cultural organisation, as well as political and economic organisations. The proletariat must create a new cultural order as well as a new political and economic order. A new proletarian science must be produced by worker scientists and worker artists. (66).

Collaboration amongst the two tendencies was possible, and in cultural magazines such as LEF, avant-Garde work was published alongside the work of then-theatre directors Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein although 'the only time there was collaboration between the avant-garde and the masses was during the early years of agit-prop, street art, and mass fetes and festivals.' (76). However, as the twenties progressed, more attention was given to the medium of cinema. There was an aesthetic blossoming too, as Eisenstein makes clear:

> …what is most essential is that cinema as an art in general, and further, as an art not only equal to, but in many respects superior to, its fellow arts, began to be spoken of seriously only with the beginning of socialist cinematography. (Eisenstein [1939] 1977, p.181)

Eisenstein's disavowal of the past is a selective one though. Soviet Cinema certainly wasn't independent of international influences. Eisenstein has acknowledged the influence of Hollywood in writings about film. An aesthetic touchstone for Eisenstein was the controversial director D.W Griffith, in particular D.W Griffith's *Birth of a nation* (1915). The first ever Hollywood production had been Griffith's *in old California*. *Birth of a Nation* became somewhat the aesthetic template for historical epic cinema, and generated a point of comparison for Soviet cinema. Yet it was a film with manifold problems, particularly its overarching racist narrative.

In 1944 Eisenstein dedicates a dissertation sized essay to a comparison between Charles Dickens and D.W Griffith. He makes some complimentary points about Griffith and his montage aesthetic but notes: '…he made no attempt at a genuinely thoughtful abstraction of phenomena-at an extraction of generalized conclusions on historical phenomena from a wide variety of historical data; that is the core of the fault.' (Eisenstein, [1944] in 1949, 1977, p.244). Eisenstein is here highlighting the deficiency in historical grammar; that the aesthetic particularities of DW Griffith's montage, while internally consistent do not refer to a conceptual form derived from the historical content. The ideological depiction is weighted and obscured. The break from this form of montage is fully articulated a little later in the essay:

> We, our epoch-sharply ideal and intellectual- could not read the content of a shot without, before all else, having read its ideological nature, and therefore find in the juxtaposition of shots an arrangement of a new qualitative element, a new image, a new understanding. (Eisenstein, [1949] 1977, p.245).

Thus, Eisenstein demonstrates a clear methodological break that interrogates the source of images and their relation to a political imaginary. In order to understand the approach of a director of post-revolutionary soviet Russia in relation to the fictional depictions of recent historical events, it is worth noting the thoughts of Vselvod Pudovkin, who in 1927 directed the film *The End of St Petersburg*. Pudovkin states:

> When we set out to produce a cinematic treatment of a real event rather than a simple record of it-i.e., to replace its uninterrupted flow with an integration of creatively chosen elements, we must bear in mind the laws that link the recipient viewer with the director who is editing the exposed footage. When we were talking about a random chaotic combination of shots, we maintained that this would strike the viewer as a meaningless disorder. Making an impact on the viewer involves finding a sequence and rhythm for the combination. (Pudovkin, [1927] 2006, p.87).

This implies two important points about Third meaning films; the critical role of linearity and that of duration. It was important for Eisenstein, who is the focus of Barthes' attention in the Third meaning essay to articulate a de-anecdotalised historical narrative. The sense of rupture in many of Eisenstein's films is linked to the first- hand experience of revolutionary assumption of power. Strongly implied in Eisenstein's aesthetic is the contemporaneous influence of Esther Shub, whose factography incorporated historical found footage with specially arranged fictitious recreations. Her archive was not just utilised as fictitious interpolation, however:

> other filmmakers would [later] turn to her negatives to "borrow" and never return sought-after footage. As a result, Shub's originals suffered mutilation and material from her archives was disseminated, unacknowledged, in countless historical films. http://brooklynrail.org/2011/09/film/difficult-factsesfir-shub-and-the-problem-of-realism (Osipova, A: 2011).

The evidence of the marginalisation of Shub as a cultural innovator in Russia is almost lost to posterity,[35] but some trace of it remains in that her works remain a well- kept secret.

Osipova notes that part of this may be due to an unfashionable at the time but also prescient erasure of the author that anticipates Barthes work:

> My suspicion is that it was precisely her commitment to minimising her authorial presence in favour of offering ''raw'' documentary material- irreducibly complex, full of details, and objectively existing outside of artistic will and hence never fully assimilable by aestheticization-that made her work too difficult for modern audiences longing for the personal ''melodrama'' of the auteur. (Osipova, A: 2011).

The early Soviet films incorporate a collaborative sense of production; even where, for example Eisenstein's aesthetic choices often have the mark of an auteur, the ensemble performance defines the film. The viewer always is compelled to look at the fulsomeness or emptiness of the performance. It is not just the lead actors that are required to express emotion; every character is required to indicate their disposition. This disavowal of the 'star turn' is equalising in that many of the characters display iconic qualities. This is acknowledgement that subsequent to the revolution and putatively at least the populace are no longer anonymous.[36]

Barthes' description of Third meaning as 'the epitome of the counternarrative' is a thread that runs through *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *Ivan the terrible* (1944), *The end of St Petersburg* (1927) and *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (1927). Each of these films' narrative is contingent upon, but not reducible to the expression of historical counternarrative articulated through a contemporaneous, partially obscured positing. Third meaning is not alternatively called the obtuse meaning for nothing.

Yet, while the intention of the director and or/producer is always a factor in steering cinema in a particular direction, there is also the undeniable sense of historical reflection; or, refusal to reflect, that marks every film to some extent. In Third meaning cinema historical discourse is foregrounded and the image in raw conceptual state is presentation of historical antagonism. The dramatic template for the particular evocation of this in Eisenstein's film comes from his experiences in the Prolekult theatre.

2.2. Eisenstein and Theatre

Eisenstein's tutelage under Vsevelod Meyerhold is an important part of his artistic development and yet it is just as true to say both that the alacrity of Eisenstein's development as a theoretician and aesthete is often understated, and that Meyerhold was one of several key figures linked to Eisenstein through professional and personal relationships that at this foundational time had an impact on his theoretical outlook. Robert Leach draws out the prominent theoretical threads of the theatre of the early 20th century in his essay on 'Eisenstein's theatre work' (Christie (ed), 1993, pp110-125). The third of the forms of theatre he alights upon is that of Brechtian theatre, which he argues owes less to German expressionism and the fairgrounds and cabarets of Brecht's youth than its direct utilisation subsequent to the Russian Revolution by those who wanted to create an 'October in the theatre'. His contention is that Meyerhold should be regarded as the founder of it, yet states 'Eisenstein is probably the practitioner who most clearly crystallised it'. (Christie, (ed) 1993, p110)

Some of Eisenstein's most important compositional devices were derived from his involvement in theatre. Leach describes Eisenstein's first major theatrical work on Jack London's *The Mexican* as being comprised of a Cubistic set with the actors wearing 'fantastic, clown-like costumes' (111). These 'montage' like elements contrasted strongly with the last scene, a boxing match, that was staged as a 'real' event.[37] The contrast between utilitarian and expressive would form the theoretical template for Eisenstein's future theatrical works. (112). Moreover, the significance of the fight[38] lay not just in its compositional or aesthetic innovation but:

> Given the artificiality of the circus-style costumes and settings, this [more] realist, even gritty, presentation certainly highlighted the metaphorical significance of the fight itself as both the key turning point in the narrative and a signifier of the Bolshevik revolution (Mahony, 2009, p32).

Not for the last time, Eisenstein was drawing inference from the compositional material he had assembled to make a 'meta' point that had both historical significance and contemporary currency. Eisenstein's essay on 'The Montage of Attractions', which was his first major theoretical contribution, was composed in response to the production of A.N. Ostrovsky's *Enough Simplicity for Every Wise Man* at the Proletkult theatre, while Eisenstein was a member of that group. In that essay he states that:

> Proletkult's theatrical programme consists not in 'using the treasures of the past' or in 'discovering new forms of theatre' but in abolishing the very institution of theatre as such and replacing it by a showplace for achievements in the field at the level of the everyday skills of the masses (Eisenstein, [1925] 1988, P.33)

Eisenstein cites two strains of theoretical approach within the Proletkult; the figurative-narrative theatre, which he ascribes to a right-wing tendency represented by 'the former Worker's Theatre of the Proletkult Central Committee' and the 'agitational theatre of attractions (dynamic and eccentric-the left wing).' He states: 'It is the line devised in principle for the Touring Troupe of the Moscow Proletkult Theatre by Boris Aratov and myself.' (33). More than a modicum of inspiration for what Barthes would later call Third meaning seems to come from Eisenstein's time at the Prolekult.

Notes he made for three of his own lectures while there are of particular interest in this regard: 'Notes on Biomechanics'; 'The principles of movement in our theatre' and 'What is a raccouri and what is a pose?'. In 'Notes on biomechanics' he emphasizes the importance of the practice as both beneficial for the actor and their audience. 'Uninterrupted muscular activity' (Eisenstein, [1922] 1996, p.164) is, he states, required in a production to achieve authentic biomechanical theatre. The guiding principles of how to map theatrical techniques onto Third meaning film are clear:

> The fixation of uninterrupted muscular movements is achieved by means of a raccouri of the body and not a pose, that is, by an active, nonstable body in space. A position of racourri is impossible without the biomechanical method. The racourri position is the only position of the actor's body which dynamically acts on the spectator. In this lies the meaning of Biomechanics for the spectator. (Eisenstein [1922] 1996, p.164-p.165).

The imputation is one of sharing a post-revolutionary expressive naturalism with the audience, one that abstracts itself from all previous tyrannies of movement. Like Third meaning, the sense evoked is of a technique that is 'aimed at me, but goes beyond me'. Yet there is a more precisely pedagogical element for the audience to absorb. In 'Principles of movement in our theatre' he writes:

> Man [sic] is distinguished from the marionette by the fact that he can consciously make movements, but he still makes them incorrectly. The expressing of an expressive movement are notes of a rhythmical, temporal and spatial structure. Man can consciously build a movement, change its direction, speed it up, slow it down, and so forth. Thus, the expressive schema changes. The persuasiveness of motor work is convincing if the motor elements are being performed in all seriousness. If the inertia is interrupted, then the possibility of an enormous dynamic effect is achieved. (167-168).

The first suggestion here is not only that there is an approved revolutionary method of movement but that the tyrannies of former physiognomics persist. It is an acknowledgement that the overlaid naturalism that existed in a pre-revolutionary age was false 'second nature'[39] that still exacts pathological influence on the post-revolutionary audience. The marionette here is the manqué of natural movement, that is evidently animated but not of its own accord, or in a manner of its liking. The marionette resembles humanity but is subject to manipulation. Eisenstein's implication is that the physiognomics of Capitalism allow us to think our movements are uncontrolled in so far as we do not transgress certain boundaries, or wander where we are not supposed to. At this point the 'strings' are pulled.

The second suggestion is that there is a correct method of physiognomics that can be applied to acting, and this is biomechanics. The 'antidote' to incorrect movement is to gain mastery of rhythmical, temporal and spatial structures. This seems to suggest that the use of movement in film can create a correspondence with the world outside the film frame. It can dilate time for the viewer and distort space through duration. Non- linearity is not a technique employed regularly in this period of filmmaking. Yet the close-up is a variant of this as it takes a physical depiction out of its context, and displaces the whole composition of what 'should' be in a frame. This is an oft used technique of Eisenstein's. A close up provides its own, unspoken caption. If there is an intertitle the close up communicates still more than the intertitle.

The third suggestion is of ideological fidelity and its affectual component, or the recognition of what Barthes would call *signifiance*. The question of authentic delivery here is interesting because the conveyance of Third meaning is not dependent on authenticity as such. Rather it is sometimes the inauthenticity of performance that engineers the reveal. Perhaps here we can see the disjunction between the physiognomics of theatre and that of film. In film the capture has gained increasing importance as recording mediums have developed, but even in films earliest days the technique of editing was possible; as was the possibility of enacting more than one take. The fidelity of theatrical movement requires absolute commitment; because though there may be more than one performance, on a given night there is only one chance to perform a sequence of movements with fidelity. There are no

second takes or re-edits.

In the essay that Eisenstein writes on the raccourci, the importance of this technique and its relationship to the still is clearly evoked. Eisenstein writes that: 'In fine arts, a raccourci is defined as 'the position of the body as depending on the point of view of the spectator' (Eisenstein: [1922] 1996, p.168) This was obviously something often at the forefront of Eisenstein's mind when making film. Perspective is imbricated into almost every shot. In *Ivan the Terrible* the viewer is often invited to look upwards at Ivan. Several shots look as if they were achieved by the cameramen lying on the floor. These shots are poised. The viewers eyes seem to have to scale a skyscraper or a mountain: that which invites awe but makes us queasy.

The following description of raccourci is striking in its evocation of the Third meaning still. It is reminiscent of both the general principle of Third meaning in its description and shares some of the more specific terms mentioned in relation to third meaning:

> A raccouri is a fixed movement pulled out from the general movement, a break between two movements or a potential movement, the dynamics frozen for a moment. It is always utilitarian. There are also secondary raccourcis. In a pose, the movements are blurred and defined by a curve. In a raccourci the mechanics of movement are not blurred. They (the movements) are defined by a broken line. (Eisenstein [1922] (1996) p.169).

The interpretive force of the actor is key here; the role of the director as auteur almost disappears, except in their ability to 'channel' the raccourci. It is the actor who puts biomechanics to work but the director who captures it.

> The director must know how:
>
> a.   To catch an idea for a given movement.
>
> b.   To give it a form. (169).

Raccourci capture has the quality of image that is arresting, that assumes an iconic quality in its poise, whether this iconic quality is serious or parodic. The raccourci capture in a departure from normal movement suspends meaning. There is an angular quality to the movement. Eisenstein's interest in hieroglyphics seems to be indebted to Meyerhold. Meyerhold is quoted as saying that 'Each movement [in biomechanics] is a hieroglyph that has its own meaning' (Meyerhold, V [or 'one of his assistants'] quoted in Eisenstein [1922] 1996, p.143)

Eisenstein's considerations on biomechanics inform the composition of his films. The organic quality of this interpretation of biomechanics is a theme that runs throughout his filmmaking and reaches its apotheosis in the *Ivan the Terrible* films. The theatrical techniques of biomechanics are an important backdrop to the founding of Eisenstein's Third meaning. In this regard the theoretical transference from his theoretical writings on theatre to his theoretical writings on cinema is sizeable. Two slightly different versions of Third meaning can be divined from his theoretical work and his films. The first under consideration is that of 'organic unity and pathos'.

2.3. Eisenstein: Versions of Third Meaning 1: 'Organic Unity and Pathos'

If the dynamic of class struggle can be represented as such in audio visual language, this was certainly a key aim of Eisenstein's political aesthetic. Although in the mid-twenties, for a few years at least, he was a cause celebre of the Bolshevik regime as far as film was concerned, the drive behind Eisenstein's films was not to articulate a passive reflection of the state of Russia as-was, but how it had arrived at that historical moment; what forces had propelled it to that point and what their continued transformation suggested about the future of Russian society and culture. Readings of Eisenstein as a Bolshevik propagandist have never held up, not least because Eisenstein was not what could be called in any way an ideologue:

> …there is little evidence that Eisenstein rushed to become a fully committed supporter of the new regime. He rarely attended meetings and spent far more time reading the works of Meyerhold and Yevreinov than Marx and Engels. As Oksana Bulgakowa has noted, he even dabbled in occultism when such esoteric activities were heavily frowned upon. (Mahoney, 2009, p23).

'Organic Unity and Pathos' retains this early interest in the esoteric. Organic Unity and Pathos encapsulates "wholeness and an inner law" where the work is "governed by a law of structuring, all its separate parts are subordinated to this law". The second element is that the canon of natural phenomena is present in the work and replicates itself in the structure. (Eisenstein [1938] 1987, p.11-12). A synthesis of the two elements represents the embodiment of an "organic unity of a particular or exceptional order'. (27).
Or, as Jacques Aumont suggests, this is how the ecstasy of the natural order structures the work:

> perhaps the keystone of the entire edifice, this ecstasy which is common to the spectator (whom the work lifts ''outside of himself'') and to the film (for which it provides the formal logic) is also what guarantees that both of them are in conformity with the laws of nature. Aumont, [1979] 1987, p64).

The pathos in the Meta element generated by this synthesis therefore takes the work past a mere internal dialogue and into a relationship with the reality outside the frame. The auteur generates an effect that allows the viewer to double in objectivity, to "be beside oneself." (Eisenstein [1938] 1987, p.27). Aumont regards this representation of reality to be one in accordance with: 'the great dialectical laws of incessant transformation by leaps and bounds' (Aumont [1979] 1987, p64).
Eisenstein's earliest writings on Pathos precede this theoretical intervention by twelve years. There the focus is on his own film *The General Line*. Pathos emerges in this film from a recognition that technical language insufficiently explains certain facets of organicism that are apparent in a silent film. Aumont does acknowledge that many writers have retrospectively applied the concept of ecstasy to Eisenstein's work. Yet the fact that a theoretician is writing about his own work and theorising it does not lessen the pertinence of his own observations.
In a portion of *Film sense* called synchronisation of senses, Eisenstein describes how the concepts of geometry, ritual and pathos combine to form an expression of religious ecstasy

in *Old and new* aka *The General Line*. These incorporate aural lines (men's and women's voices); the:

> line of those who kneel under the passing ikons (increasing in tempo); the line of mounting ecstasy, shown through the dramatic content of the close-ups' and 'the line of grovelling, uniting both streams in the general movement of the sequence, from heaven to dust (Eisenstein, [1943], 1968, p.65).

 Stan Brakage's perceptive account of Eisenstein's films takes particularly close account of the physiognomics employed. The decontextualized images of physiognomic excess he references in one part of his lecture are drawn from Eisenstein's earlier work, and are prime examples of 'organic unity and pathos' in operation:

> By means of rapid, even 'jump' cutting-and by intercutting for association-of-image- he made animal totem polarities of human agony which have haunted the world ever since…the stone lion in *Potemkin*…the dead horse as the flailing spirit of 'the people' in Ten Days that shook the world [aka October]-this image, also derived of sculptured statue in previous shots, fallen limp as flesh…its white mane replacing the black hair of a dead woman…its body dangling from a draw-bridge rising, in a series of almost symphonically visualised criss-cross lines, to a singular diagonal-from which the body of the horse drops, finally, to watery death. (Brakhage, S: 1972, p.95).

Here the ecstasy of the natural order wrenched from its context provides the structuring moment of pathos; the extremity of death symbolised in metaphorical form, then in a visceral form. Some of this overstated and decontextualized physiognomic practice may have been drawn as much from surrealist film as from theatrical practice. There was also a necessity to encapsulate 'everything in one shot', determined to an extent by the technical and monetary constraints Eisenstein operated under. The excess portrayed in some images, while never accidental, was also a by-product of Eisenstein's desire to not waste a frame. Barthes' has no doubt that such decontextualized images have an intentional quality about them too; they are too striking to suggest anything but. Some of these 'baser' physiognomics make a return in *Ivan the Terrible*: 'There is in the obtuse meaning an eroticism which includes the contrary of the beautiful, as also what falls outside its limit- inversion, unease.' (Barthes [1970], 1977, p.59)

Barthes provides several examples; Euphrosyne in Image XII and XIII is ugly, as is the monk (Image XIV) but also the 'Children in the fiery furnace' (Image XV) display traits which are parodic in their evocation of angelic constraint, their mufflers tight around their necks as if strangulating them. Bordwell notes that the origin of Pathos in Soviet film theory demarcated a type of 'heroic realism', (Bordwell, 1993, p.192) As Eisenstein came to develop the concept it altered somewhat to exultation and grandeur, as is evidenced in *Ivan the Terrible*. No doubt a cultural influence in this reading of pathos was the fractured image of the heroic under Stalin's rule, as it became evident his rule was anything but heroic.

Organic Unity and Pathos is still present by the time of *Ivan the Terrible*, but certainly the compositional element tends towards a pathos reveal that has an ugly aspect. The usage in *Ivan the Terrible* is also a backhanded reference to Stalin's conquest of power: '' the struggle

between the old and the new, between that which is dying away, and that which is being born.'' Accompanying this was a new interpretation of Engels work on the transformation of quantity into quality; 'as when by increasing the velocity of water molecules a liquid becomes a gas; this occurs via a 'leap' (skachok) into a new quality'. (192).

Perhaps the incorporation of a new version of Pathos along the lines of Stalinist dialectic into his work was partially ironic, but as of 1929 Eisenstein did also realise that techniques of editing meant that quantity could be transformed into quality, via a leap: 'The later Stalinist version of the dialectic allows Eisenstein to posit pathos as a quality that emerges from the structural unfolding of the artwork. Pathos arises when the artwork is constructed according to principles of unity characteristic of the dialectic.' (192).

The first of these principles harks back to Eisenstein's distinct contribution to the theory of biomechanics; of the actor as an autonomous physiognomic entity. Here Eisenstein 'suggests that actor can achieve pathos by fusing antithetical traits within a performance.' (Eisenstein: 'Pathos' in *Nonindifferent Nature,* ref. in Bordwell, 1993, p.192) The second trait is the achievement of pathos by way of transforming quantity into quality. The example used is the Odessa Steps Massacre, when the downward movement begins with the soldiers, then the crowd, then we see the descent of the baby carriage: 'Eisenstein sees these as ever greater leaps in- tempo, in symbolic force, in emotional expressivity.' (Bordwell, 1993, p.193) The moment of culmination comes with the ''aroused'' Stone lion, which Bordwell states 'incarnates the final dialectic movement from literal to purely figurative imagery'. (193).

Bordwell articulates a position that neatly conjoins elements of Third meaning with 'organic unity and pathos'. Other critical theory on this subject is less persuasive. Phillip Watts' emphasis on a sentence in the Third meaning essay distorts his reading. Whereas as part of a longer passage, Barthes' concludes that certain affectual moments in Third meaning are 'antiquated' with 'little that is revolutionary or political about them', Watts uses this to short circuit to a position that 'Barthes' affect is not the revolutionary pathos that usually accompanies such scenes' (Watts [2013], 2016, p.52) and the crucial quote that Third meaning is the 'epitome of the counternarrative' is bypassed. Rather the quote that Third meaning 'outplays meaning- subverts not the content but the whole practice of meaning' takes centre stage. In fact, these elements are two halves of Barthes' countercultural dialectic.

2.4. Eisenstein: Versions of third meaning 2: Intellectual montage

Eisenstein's interest in physiognomy and the 'organic mechanics of film mark the first, underdeveloped form of Third meaning. The phrase 'Organic unity and Pathos' suggests an incomplete explanation of what Eisenstein's films convey. In short, it links organic composition to the affectual result, but not by fully incorporating the political. A shift from a 'montage of attractions', which valorises a mechanistic objectivity, albeit one that works organically on the viewer; to an 'intellectual montage' is a key move in fully incorporating a theoretically rigorous and dialectical third meaning. Though Bordwell has not written specifically on Third meaning, he explains appositely this theoretical change: 'The urge to explore an intellectual Cinema leads Eisenstein to extend reflexological assumptions to the

realm of ideas. Like emotion, thought becomes a physical activity, involving the brain and the nervous system' (Bordwell, 1993, p.124).

In other words, Eisenstein had further developed his biomechanics away from the behaviourist tendencies of some of his contemporaries to address not just physiognomic projection[40] , but how the actor is transformed by the process of thought; and how political context is shaped by the transformation of thought. The transition to this form of Third meaning was already being mapped in Eisenstein's films. *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) is from Eisenstein's early period, and demonstrates a physiognomics that nevertheless draws on a more developed form of Third meaning. In the Third meaning essay, Barthes' analyses some images from Vakulinchuk's funeral. Two images that relate the obvious meaning are presented as image II, showing the three ages of life and the unanimity of meaning; and image IV, where Barthes' asserts that the proletarian fist must belong to a proletarian, it's meaning is clear. Barthes believes that Eisenstein 'devastates ambiguity' with the addition of an aesthetic value- emphasis.[41] His statement with regard to image III in this regard is particularly persuasive:

> in extremely classic fashion, grief comes from the bowed heads, the expressions of suffering, the hand over the mouth stifling a sob, but when all this has been said, very adequately, a decorative trait says it again: the superimposition of the two hands aesthetically arranged in a delicate, maternal, floral ascension toward the face bowing down (Barthes [1970] 1977, p56).

 Barthes fails to complete his own point here, however. Image IV, coming as it does, subsequent to image III marks the point at which the mantle of revolution is passed on. Symbolically the moment of revolution has passed in the embodiment of Vakulinchuk, and this is emphasized by the exaggerated traits shown in the women's grief. Yet no sooner has the moment passed than it is revivified in the shape of a proletarian fist. It does not matter who the fist belongs to, only that it is emblematic of a continuing struggle. We are reminded of the Marxist imperative that 'Capitalism creates its own gravedigger'. (Marx [1848], 1975, vol.35, p.751).

Nevertheless, it is important to note Barthes' remarks apropos of Baudelaire, that 'the emphatic truth of gesture in the important moments of life' (Barthes, [1970] 1977, p.56) is always tied closely to Eisenstein's' preference on a personal level. The Einsteinian obtuse meaning is one commensurate with the 'proletarian moment', which is the revolution. (Barthes, [1970], 1977, p.56).

Part of the purpose of 'intellectual montage' was to illustrate an immediate political cognate, and the endpoint of this cinematic enunciation is a move towards a 'plotless' cinema.[42] Eisenstein's conceptualisation of a filming of Marx's *Capital* would have been the most extreme form of this, had it been realised. Adaptations of plays or novels were gradually becoming an important facet of film production. In most cases they were easy to mimetically 'bring to life'. In the case of Capital, amongst the many problems was the difficulty of filming depictions of the economy acting in the social sphere; after all, it was difficult to encapsulate what an essentialist example of exchange value or surplus value would be. Eisenstein said of the project:

> The "proclamation" that I'm going to make a movie of Marx's *Das Kapital* is not a publicity stunt. I believe that the films of the future will be found going in this direction (or else they'll be filming things like The Idea of Christianity from the bourgeois point of view!). In any case, they will have to do with philosophy … the field is absolutely untouched. Tabula rasa (quoted in Eisenstein at Work, eds. Jay Leyda and Zina Voynov (London: Methuen, 1982), p.35.).

The plotless cinema[43] in some sense presages the intertextual cinema for Eisenstein. Bordwell reflects:

> The *Capital* film was to be an essay in which the development of ideas would hold central place. This cinema of intellectual discourse would, Eisenstein believed, transcend the distinction between newsreel and fiction. Showing nonfiction events and dealing with history, it would also present a poetically charged argument about the abstract laws of social change. (Bordwell, 1993, p.124).

Ultimately Eisenstein's vision of creating a film of *Capital* was fulfilled by another filmmaker. In 2008, Alexander Kluge was the director and screenwriter of *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike: Marx/Eisenstein/Das Kapital*. The film was nine and a half hours long. Julia Vassilieva compares the 'archaeological' work Kluge does on this film to both Jean luc Godard's *Film Socialisme* (2010) and his *L'Historie du cinema* (1998). The multi-media collage includes film excerpts and stills, newspaper clippings, home movies, diagrams, pop music and operatic arias. The film interrogates the conceptual space prior to the image in order to see how Marx's *Das Kapital* may be filmable. A film of pure theory turns out to be theory for a potential film.

By the time of *Qué Viva México!* the intertextual elements of Eisenstein's films had a structuring function. Significantly, while this multi-media approach prefigures the aesthetic of Chris Marker several decades later, Anne Nesbet has argued that the Diego Rivera SEP murals showcased in the film are strongly indebted to a pre-existing historical vision of Mexico. (Nesbet, p.123-126). The particular building that she states is the inspiration for Eisenstein's aesthetic in this film is the Ministry of Education in Mexico City, which she neatly describes as having an 'architecturally sophisticated two-dimensional surface'. (123-126).

The tension between the old and the new, the flat lines that perform a hieroglyphic cohesive function in *Qué Viva México!* and are yet also informed by modern civic architecture, are analogous to the very oldest forms of art. This flat surface aesthetic was also to some extent underwritten into his early work; the desire to harness completeness in each frame gives some of the images in *Battleship Potemkin* an 'overlaid' quality. By the time of *Ivan the Terrible*, this sense of 'overlaidness' is palpable to the extent that the physical attributes of the characters seem to 'scream' against their backdrops. Hence even the stills that Barthes' analyses in his Third meaning essay have a structural quality, as if their flat surfaces have had plotted human constructs foisted upon them. To say the stills Barthes' employs in his study of Third meaning have life is an understatement by some degree; they glow with life.

This could be no more mysterious than obtuseness, a major component of Third meaning in

action. Barthes states in relation principally to images of Ivan to illustrate his point about Obtuse meaning: 'Obtusus means that which is blunted, rounded in form. Are not the traits which I indicated (the make-up, the whiteness, the wig etc.) just like the blunting of a meaning too clear, too violent?' (Barthes [1970], 1977, p.55).

The extent to which Japanese culture had an influence on the development of the film language that Eisenstein seeks to encapsulate cannot be understated. The importance of the ideogram in Japanese culture is significant for third meaning film because of the combinatory processes that produce a new sign out of existing characters. Crucially:

> Eisenstein sees this process as analogous to film editing, which creates a meaning that cannot be represented in either shot. The process is figurative because the meaning is not denoted in either sign; it emerges through juxtaposition. (Bordwell,1993, p.126).

Barthes undoubtedly was familiar with such elements that Eisenstein employed in his writing and film practice; he mentions Kabuki theatre, ideograms and haiku poetry in the Third meaning essay and references their use as part of the third meaning family of concepts. Japanese culture was at the forefront of Barthes mind as he had embarked on a trip to Japan the same year to write *Empire of Signs*. Intellectual montage, as with organic unity and pathos, is not completely satisfactorily resolved,[44] and there is the unwritten sense in Barthes writing that Third meaning is an attempt to synthesize these Einsteinian theories. There is also the sense that Barthes' is tilting at the possibility of digital film that may be possible by drawing on this synthesis of physiognomy and codifiable 'film language'.

2.5. Pudovkin and alternative history in *The end of St Petersburg*

In Pudovkin's reading of Louis Delluc's work on Photogeny, he draws out certain aspects pertinent to a filmmaker. In one passage, he prefigures Barthes by contrasting the still with its moment as a theoretical thread running through the film. Removed from its context, the stills assume physiognomic and affectual power:

> A scene that has been stuck together from fragments is in turn joined to others, forming a certain sequence of scenes in the plot development and, as a result, the whole film turns out to consist of fragments of varying length succeeding one another in sequence. That is how matters stand on film. Now, if we look at the finished film on screen, the viewer will always notice each moment when one shot changes to another (a kind of jump), even if this change is carried out smoothly, as for instance with a dissolve, and will perceive this as a sort of visual blow- or an accent, as I call it. (Pudovkin, 'Photogeny' [1925] in Pudovkin, Taylor (ed) 2006; p5-7).

This is the skeletal formation of what Barthes details in the Third meaning essay. As such, Barthes performs an elaboration. Here the still takes on full *signifiance*; the removal of the adjoining frames, or the dropping of the 'c' from significance as per Barthes maps the transition from one state to another. Wrenched from its context, we can more easily approximate the accent that drew our attention; still, something about it escapes us fully. While Pudovkin states that these 'accents' (moments of transition) will be distributed throughout the film', there is an art to effectively elucidating an accent. The comparison Pudovkin makes is one of the composition of a song[45]:

> Precise, accented moments arranged in time and separated by varying intervals surely represent a form of temporal rhythm? (I understand rhythm to be a simple succession of accented or unaccented moments)'. It follows then, that: 'A precise rhythmic structure for a film is like a special net that will only permit entry to anything that does not disturb it. (Pudovkin, [1925] in Pudovkin, Taylor 2006, p7).

What is less analogous to Barthes' Third meaning work is the insistence on clarity. This provokes a diversion on inanimate objects showing up better on celluloid than faces. Yet this too is somewhat the point. Early film needed to be clear, and capturing faces required 'precise alternation and expedient organisation'. (Pudovkin [1925b] in Pudovkin, V; Taylor (ed) 2006, p13). The restrictive impositions in place in terms of money and technology only serve to make the director's meaning more apparent. In any case: 'We should not consider the essence of the photogenic to be linked exclusively to the abstract quality of form.' (Pudovkin [1925b] 2006, p12).

Were that the case, the images would not be able to make their intended impact:

> If a face, filmed for two metres (the average length of a take) can make a clear impression on the viewer (as a freak, a beauty, a villain, a kind and congenial fellow, and so on) then that face is photogenic. (13).

Certainly, the examples presented on the third page of the essay (Pudovkin [1925a] in Pudovkin, Taylor (ed) 2006, p.6) bear a dramatic resemblance to the images selected for the Third meaning essay that go beyond a stylistic resemblance or similar lighting effects. The images that accompany 'The film script and film material' [1926][46] still more closely resemble the Eisenstein stills chosen for the Third meaning essay, although the essay pre-dates the film from which they are taken, [*The end of St Petersburg*, 1927] so their inclusion is unlikely an editorial one made by Pudovkin.

Pudovkin expresses his admiration for Eisenstein's work in an essay 'On the Battleship Potemkin'. From his invocation of certain Eisensteinian phrases, there is little doubt that he has read Eisenstein's theoretical work. Yet there is also a clear empathy towards Eisenstein's method that suggests a unity of purpose in the two directors' political aesthetics:

> The whole of the raw material is given depth on an exclusively cinematic level. The intertitles, which are an organic part of the whole work, are broken down into separate words for the first time and serve as rhythmic elements. The montage forcibly directs the spectator. Eisenstein masters it brilliantly and leads the spectator almost into pathos. (Pudovkin, [1926b], 2006, p.22).

It is interesting too that Pudovkin notes the underscoring of banality into key scenes in *Battleship Potemkin*. Both physiognomic banality and banality as a function of the plot are two important Third meaning devices that act as preparation for one of the 'reveals. Pudovkin pithily concludes this very short review of Battleship Potemkin by noting the clear affectual quality of Eisenstein's films:

> Generally speaking, it only needs two or three more films like this for Soviet Cinema to occupy first place for its ability to convey social factors, to influence the masses, to convey a

particular enthusiasm, and to force even people with opposing views to be disturbed, directly and against their will. (22).

Pudovkin talks again in glowing terms about Eisenstein in an essay from 1928. He is particularly enthused about an enaction of cinematic pathos in Battleship Potemkin, of which he states 'The first phrase in real independent cinema language was spoken with this method'. He goes on to explain:

> The three different lions (sleeping, rising, standing) were joined together in such a way that on the screen a granite lion jumped up swiftly. These unusual jumps of bronze and stone, suddenly interrupting the flight of clouds and smoke and the collapse of stone columns, were so stunningly unexpected in their emotional effect, they matched so perfectly the shots of the explosion, that the effect on the audience was one of unprecedented force (Pudovkin [1928], 2006, p.135).

Pudovkin's admiration of these compositional qualities is reflected in the first seven minutes of *The end of St Petersburg*, though the pace is more sedate. In fact the touchstones in terms of Eisenstein's celluloid oeuvre are the opening minutes of *Enthusiasm*, with its close-ups of facial features; and *The General Line*, both in terms of its tribute to geometry in the shape of the sharp screen splitting revolutions of the windmill (Pudovkin, V: *The end of St Petersburg* 1927 1:44-1:48); which is the opening shot, and is cut to three times in the opening seven minutes; and the image of the two peasants, marching (6:30) to the nearest town in search of food.

Nature is foregrounded in these opening minutes, the windmill powered by, yet seemingly doing battle with the sky. The peasant child being born could represent freedom from serfdom, as the peasants lay down their farming tools; now they have to confront the capitalist machine in order to escape poverty. The new technology of wooden telephone pylons is set against gathering clouds; the effect is menacing. (7:16-7:25). This juxtaposition of man-made objects and nature is a recurrent theme.

The scene shifts to St Petersburg. An intertitle tells the viewer we are in the 'capital of the Tsars; Alexander III; Nicholas I; Peter the Great' (7:27). Stockbrokers gather in the city centre, celebrating the success of Lebedev the businessman and his rising stock. In the city centre, discombobulating images of icons abound- the shadow of a statue seems to come to life; a classicised civic building is distorted to appear ghostly; over the right shoulder of another statue, we look down on an ant-like civilian.

Barthes' assessment of Eisenstein applies here: 'The indifference or freedom of position of the supplementary signifier in relation to the narrative allows us to situate with some exactitude the historical, political, theoretical task accomplished by Eisenstein.' (Barthes [1970] in Barthes, Heath (trans) 1977, p.63). The nod to classical iconography is indicative of a culture where hierarchy is resistant and eternal- seeming. The ant-like civilian is in a stage prior to self-actualisation; hence the viewpoint is from behind the statue.[47]

There are vivid depictions of the experience of work; one of the few films that comes close to actualizing the experience of work; if not in the sense of duration, then in the sense of vigorous physicality and overwhelming toil. Workers drive the machines viscerally, sweat dripping from their bodies in globules. These extreme physiognomic manifestations are

Third meaning hallmarks that delineate the fidelity of the worker to their labour and their ability to fashion a new society; and also serve to emphasize graphically the extreme conditions they are expected to endure. There are odd physiognomic examples of gesticulation and decorativism that are Third meaning in character. When the factory manager flaps his arms in exaggerated fashion, it is reminiscent of an agitated ostrich attempting to fly (Pudovkin: 1927, 40:26). Here it is imputed that the bourgeoisie have difficulty in absorbing criticism.

One of the most effective uses of Third meaning technique occurs in the scenes that attempt to depict the horror of the Great War, where images of soldiers in the trenches rushing forward into no man's land are juxtaposed with images of the 'no man's land' of financial speculation that follows. The scene shifts alternately between the two: A soldier plaintively seems to address the camera in fourth wall fashion: 'What are we dying for?'. (55:52).

A cleverly orchestrated scene highlights the victory of the provisional government transposed to a theatrical setting (1:00:40-1:01:28). After the proclamation of 'All power to the soviets!' is made though, it is only a matter of time till the Bolsheviks victory, as illustrated by a swinging pendulum. (1:04:37). In the crucial moments before the Winter Palace is stormed the soldiers are ordered to shoot at which point a 'dream sequence' is constructed that invokes solidarity and stops them from doing so. (1:14:29). The final intertitles convey the sense of completion: 'St Petersburg is no more…long live the city of Lenin!' (1:26:42). However, this does not seem to be an invocation that the revolutionary process should stop. Rather, in Pudovkin the path of progress is restless, and the fulfilment of history is revolution. This is postulated as a model to emulate in perpetuity.

2.6. Esfir Shub, Factography and *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*

If Sergei Eisenstein's quasi-historical cinema marks the point at which Third meaning finds full expression, then Esfir Shub must be credited with doing some of the groundwork for its theoretical conception. She taught Eisenstein how to edit, and in 1925 he consulted with her on the script for *Strike*. Dziga Vertov was inspired by her and would watch her: '…at the state-owned film studio Goskino, recut imported films to create coherent narratives that would suit Soviet tastes.' ('Primal Screen: The world of silent cinema' Dixon, B in *Sight and Sound* vol 25 no.4, April 2015, p.57).

Although a substantial amount of the output of Soviet Cinema was fiction in the years subsequent to the Revolution, much of it reflected on often recent historical events. In this sense, a shift towards documentary and films that used combinatory elements of fact and fiction was not conceived as being a striking a development as we might imagine through a 21st century lens. As Joshua Malitsky states:

> Filmmakers took advantage of these more ''open'' historical moments-when revolutionary achievement sparked utopian dreams capable of sustaining visions like Trotsky's ''new man'' and when many of the goals of leftist political and artistic revolutionaries converged to create new social imaginaries and to do so at an accelerated rate. (Malitsky, J:2013, p.5).

Esfir Shub's status as a female director is noteworthy. She was working at a time when even in many ostensibly enlightened western countries women had not experienced full suffrage. Bryony Dixon notes that this conceptualisation of women as somewhat still occupying the place of 'second class citizens' was even a factor in post-revolutionary Russia. Referring to Shub's *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*, and acknowledging it's attempt to tell a history of the Russian Revolution through only 'actuality' footage,[48] Dixon states:

> The film company denied her a director credit: instead, her credit reads simply ''Work by Esfir Shub'', though it has also been translated as ''A work by Esfir Shub'', which makes all the difference: ''A work by'' suggests intellectual ownership, but also concedes to the constructivist idea of filmmaker as worker, in a process where all were expected to work for the common goal. This was not history for idle interest but history as revolutionary act, designed to inspire and agitate. ('Primal Screen…'; Dixon, W: *Sight and Sound* vol.25, no.4, April 2015, p.57).

Key to the film's critical and commercial success was Shub's expertise as an archivist. Shub shot a sixth of the entire film herself. It was the first of three compilation films she made in 1927-1928; the others being *The Russia of Nicholas II* (1928) and *Lev Tolstoy* (1928. It is so difficult to see the 'join' in her work that even when a scene is suggestive of fabrication, the tendency is to second guess that assumption without an attempt at fact checking. Shub's practice is often called compilation film but this somewhat understates the way the mixed media source material juxtaposes. Moreover, the films are not just mere assemblages, but add new material to the archive. More apposite to the way the material is juxtaposed; and the way in which new fictive material acts on old factual material is the appellation factography. A factogropher was socially responsible filmmaker that strove to tell the truth in inventive ways; an aesthetician never far from the document. This was over the contention of the 'deformation' of non-fiction material:

> For Tret'iakov, deformation is the ''random personal factor in any given film'' realized through ''the arbitrary distortion and displacement of 'raw' elements''. One of the central ways this gets negotiated in factographic criticism concerns the rootedness in a particular time and space of the object in a photograph. Shlovsky and Tret'iakov each have argued that a work's 'documentary value' is dependent upon the audiences' ability to locate the event covered in a particular time and space. But that concern with rootedness intersects with what many politicians and cultural producers consider its requirement to travel across contexts. (Malitsky: 2013, p.165).

The implicit argument was that constructed material, or even particular factual material, may focus too specifically on individual particularities. This would have potential consequence of not communicating in a broader register, one that would strike an agitational chord. Malitsky suggests that factographers were well aware of this charge, and endeavoured to undertake a process of bounding, separating and integrating utterances, texts and interactions through respectively entextualization, decontextualization and recontextualization. This is a process of juxtaposition that creates an intertextual dialogue. Malitsky explains that it is important for:

Any analysis of cinematic or photographic entextualization [to…] account for the relation between the viewer and the text at the moment of projection as well as the relation between the text and the historical context ''it carries''. (Malitsky, J: 2010, 'Ideologies in fact: Still and moving-image documentary in the Soviet Union, 1927-1932' in *Journal of linguistic anthropology* Vol.20 issue 2, p.355 [pp.352-pp.371]).

Malitsky suggests that factography escapes from the bind of indexicality, where the image's iconicity is: 'physically forced to correspond, point by point, to nature' by through deictics. These are indexical denotationals; words such as 'now', 'I', 'You', 'this'. Like indexicality as trace, they 'partake of the symbolic order, which allows their enunciation to transcend the token-specific historical uniqueness marked by the index as trace and creatively transforms their context of enunciation.' (355). The 'assertive moment' replicates indexicality in the diectic field: 'If the index as trace speaks to the historicity of the photographic image, the index as dieixis marks the enunciative moment itself as critical to the establishment of spatial and temporal context.' (355).

Thus, factography operates in the realm of the general and the particular; is able to decontextualize and project elements of its composition as discrete aspects of its whole that are disseminated as politico-aesthetic 'emissaries'. It was a new way of telling history in the cinematic format; involving the viewer as reader, that anticipated Barthes' writings on the subject by almost four decades. Just ten years after the Russian Revolution, the tendency was already to look back, to invoke that moment in the hope that society could move forward from it; to present the iconography of that already iconic moment anew. Reappraisal of the archive could suggest a new direction for Russia, with Lenin three years dead and a power struggle yet to deliver a new leader. Shub's *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* was released in 1927, the same year as Pudovkin's *The end of St Petersburg* and Eisenstein's *October*. Each in their way represent an itinerary of the previous decade, though there are moments of commonality clearly expressed through a unity of Third meaning political aesthetics.

Esther Shub's *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* can be called a countercultural film, despite this term not yet being part of language. From the offset the film shows numerous examples of officialdom, and portrays the interwoven nature of the church and state. The intention seems to be to make the sense of the corruption of the Tsarist regime palpable. The composition of the Duma is stated in an intertitle: Gentry-Landowners: 241; Borgeouisie:79; Priests:43. These figures are a damning indictment of the policy of Russification and the extent to which the Feudal landlords had re-monopolised swathes of land despite the abolition of serfdom. This is underlined when shortly after some shots of the Duma and the quiet suburbs. The words ''holy fathers'' are parenthesized in ironic speech marks, and the subsequent intertitle reads: 'The landowners lands covered enormous expanses' (Shub, E: *The fall of the Romanov Dynasty*: 1927, 06:45).

The scene shifts to the country and painterly depictions of workers picking the corn. This is at odds with the sudden appearance of the bristling Kulaks, barrelling across the farms with their jutting beards: a real-life template for the gestus of *Ivan the Terrible*. Then, with the scene set and the cast assembled, the intertitles inform us that: 'All are loyal subjects of ''his majesty''. A pointed cut is made to a scene of Rasputin bowing opposite Nicholas II,

somewhat pointedly. (Shub:1927, 12:02-12:21).

The travelogue and long pans are set aside for a much more claustrophobic atmosphere, with the film seemingly speeding up, the players now having an air of comedic unseen propulsion. Then a neat juxtaposition to Russia's aristocracy on a sea-cruise,[49] where they danced: '…until they perspired.' (15:08). A more frenetic movement is then enacted by more shots of workers toiling the land. Gradually the focus of the narrative shifts to the towns and cities. Here the counternarrative is building to the pivotal confrontation: 'Landless, pursued by want, the peasants deserted the old familiar places' (18:44).

Malitsky identifies this contrast between the time bounded fashions in which the different classes are portrayed as being a pointed one:

> Shub's use of titles and editing patterns function ironically to juxtapose the two social and economic spheres. The first part concludes with images of the Romanovs and other Russian nobility parading above a crowd. [50] Whereas this procession is rhetorically, if not formally, contrasted with the marching of needy peasants, the parade scenes also anticipate the forthcoming images of the Bolsheviks. While the images of the nobility emphasize inactivity and distance from the crowd, shots of the revolution articulate dynamism and an organic connection with the people-one of the central themes of the film. This argument is communicated via contrasting spatiotemporal logics. The old order is presented through images and sequences with longer duration and less velocity than those pointing to revolutionary change. (Malitsky, 2013: p.170-p.172)

Barthes perhaps had Shub in mind when he wrote an essay on Cinema called 'On left wing Criticism'. The sense of restlessness, of the proletariat as an endlessly reconfiguring, incursive mass is present, as is the assertion that this is a natural state. By contrast, the stilted, paralysed aspect of the ruling class make them anathema to historical progress; the temporal march of progress cannot continue; it is freeze-framed:

> I believe that for whatever Left we are talking about, this theme is that man is mobile, never a prisoner of himself, there is no essence, there is only human history. Thus, any work that immobilizes man, enclosing him in an essence of love or of unhappiness, which leads us to say ''man is made this way, or that way'' leads implicitly to tragedy, be it of the cheerful or the glib variety-all works should (albeit with all imaginable nuance) be the target of leftist criticism (Barthes, [1960] in Watts [2013], 2016, p.125).

Barthes' puts an experience of temporality at the heart of counternarrative when he links his definition of Third meaning to an experience of temporality in the same sentence:

> It is clear that the obtuse meaning is the epitome of a counter-narrative; disseminated, reversible, set to its own temporality, it inevitably determines (if one follows it) a quite different analytical segmentation to that in shots, sequences and syntagms (technical or narrative)-an extraordinary segmentation: counter-logical and yet 'true'. (Barthes [1970], 1977, p.63).

The aesthetic of Esfir Shub is influential on later generations of filmmakers to a greater extent than might be expected given her fairly low profile when making films. She is an early proponent of the long pan. In *The fall of the Romanov Dynasty* a long pan is prefaced by the intertitle 'Factories were preparing the instruments of destruction and death' and scenes of

workers checking and stacking weapons. (Shub: 1927, 28:13). The long pan used here is a precursor to the pan of the industrial scene at the end of Godard's *Tout Va Bien*. Although workers are present, they are not immediately obvious. A cursory glance would not necessarily reveal the workers scurrying across the length of the screen, seemingly trying to avoid the 'gaze' of the camera. It is on the second or third glance that the viewer becomes aware of them. It is almost as if they have become invisible to the war machine that they have helped construct.

The excesses that Barthes addresses in the Third meaning essay is in evidence in the 'ships of death' scene in *The fall of the Romanov Dynasty*. In the moments following the Intertitle (29:20) the ship is so enormous in close- up it temporarily fills the screen, until it slowly drifts away. The plenitude of the image is such that at first the viewer may think they are experiencing a still image, and this quote from 'The third meaning' essay seems to perfectly capture the experience of the still that we mistake the image of the ship for:

> The still, by instituting a reading that is at once instantaneous and vertical, scorns logical time (which is only an operational time); it teaches us how to disassociate the technical constraint from what is the specific filmic and which is the 'indescribable' meaning. (Barthes [1970], 1977, p.68).

The second sequences of devastation are prefaced with the intertitle 'Faces of death'. (55:32). The irony exacted here is two-fold. In the previous scene we have not been allowed to countenance the faces of the men who walk by the abandoned bodies. Shub seems to say that reportage of war events does not take note of the effects of war on the living; and the dead cannot be ignored, because we cannot fail to see them, such are their number- but they cannot speak. The true horror of war can only be recounted by those who survive it to tell of it.[51] The second irony is that the appearance of death and destruction is not thus represented by the destruction of humanity but by the destruction of 'things'; 'Peaceful towns and settlements destroyed'. (55:35).While the images shown are acknowledged as human habitations there is only the merest trace of them having been so.

The trace marks evidence of ideological contestation, and of war that is impossible to remove without comprehensive revisionism. Trace can be a remnant of trauma or of the persistence of history. Shub draws attention to trace elements by identifying and classifying them. Barthes touches on some elements of Third meaning when outlining the photography of trauma in 'the photographic message' essay. Though he states that 'no photograph has ever convinced or refuted anyone', he goes on to remark:

> Is this to say that a pure denotation, a this-side-of-language is impossible? If such a denotation exists, it is perhaps not at the level of what ordinary language calls the insignificant, the neutral, the objective, but on the contrary, at the level of absolutely traumatic images. The trauma is a suspension of language, a blocking of meaning. (Barthes [1961], 1977, p.30).

Non-linearity is suggested when Shub shifts to the home front as the Great War ends. This is a move back in linear time that offers a parallel view of events charted previously, that serves as an explanation as to the alacrity of the passage to revolution. The denouement of *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* is the account of the year 1917, beginning with scenes of

the freezing Russian winter of 1917, and details how reinforcements were sent to the frontline. Then an indictment of the failing Royalist ideology is revealed with: 'The ''holy fathers'' tried to prop up the troops fighting ability with ''the word of Christ''.'(Shub: 1:03:59).

The form that *The fall of the Romanov Dynasty* takes is reminiscent of Pudovkin's strategies in the telling of the Russian Revolution. There are scenes of the Russian countryside, then the action shifts into the city. There are images of war, and then images of the bourgeoisie takeover, then the military siding with the revolutionaries. As the masses sense victory, they seem to take on an organic form separate from their individuality, as in the ripple- like evocation suggested at (1:18:03). The imagery here is an encapsulation of what Barthes meant by 'resistance'. (Barthes, Howard (trans) 1977b, p.54).

It would be too simple to convey the meaning of the revolution as self-identical with the physical act of overthrowing the existing order, which was a minor part of the revolution. The ideological overturning of long established historical 'givens' also carries with it a leap forward in imagination and perception. The moment of revolution escapes celluloid capture; it could be argued that the essence of it is unable to be assimilated. Here resistance is Barthesian in that: 'Resistance is a sort of compromise between fascination and repulsion, or rather the alternation of critique and fascination, of turning away from while turning toward the sensual delectation of the image.' (Watts [2013], 2016, intro. p1).

The visible outcome of this political aesthetic is the dismantling of Tsarist iconography. (Shub: 1927; 1:20:14).

The close-up of the statues hand, wrenched from its context, is an image of excess torn down, an affront mutated through retribution. The attention of the viewer is held as the statues hand represents the spectral fetishization of the classicisation and eternalisation of Capital.[52] It is a strikingly Einsteinian image. In Eisenstein the images of 'statues' are more often than not humans transmogrified into a mimetic resemblance of a statue. In Shub's hands this image, which is lost to posterity as to whether or not it is an actual staged image; or a found image, adopts a perverse largesse that instantly demarcates it as an image that is aimed at me yet goes beyond me. In terms of a Shubian taxonomy of Third meaning, this affectual aspect that references excess can be added to the elements of gestus, the trace/indexicality, non-linearity and intertextuality indicated as being present in *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*.

2.7. Dziga Vertov and the interval

If Sergei Eisenstein articulated his version of Third meaning through organic and esoteric means and Esther Shub did so by way of historical assemblage, Dziga Vertov did so through his unique vision of 'kino-eye', where the camera performed a stand-in function, 'replacing' a human viewpoint, and passively and objectively recording events as they unfolded. Dziga Vertov is a pathfinder for digital technology in that his principle was to conceptually and physically minimise the human element in the production of cinema and to instead foreground the camera as an objective recording device. Dziga Vertov's earlier writings pre-date both those of Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevold Pudovkin. This is significant because the more esoteric aspects of both Eisenstein's and Pudovkin's theoretical writings were perhaps

less an autonomous aesthetic choice and more profoundly grounded in the necessary obfuscation of theory in the period where Stalinisation was occurring. Vertov's writing style was agitational; and yet there is a sense that prior to 1924 at least, Vertov feels able to openly criticise state policy on the funding of films, which in an essay of 1923, he outlines in polemic:

> ...two extremities of viewpoint are present. One-that of the Kinoks-has as its goal the organization of real life, the other an orientation toward the propagandistic-artistic drama of emotional experiences and adventures. All state and private funds, all technical and material resources are mistakenly being poured into the latter end of the scale, into the propagandistic-artistic. As for us, we're grabbing hold of our work as hitherto, with our bare hands, and we confidently await turn to control production and win our victory. (Vertov [1923] 1984, pp.35-pp.38).

This particular essay advocates using actors in the same way that Eisenstein would later do in several of his films, and Pudovkin would do in *The End of St. Petersburg*, where previous experience as an actor; or evidence of acting as a former profession, was no requirement. The act of removing a person from their real life to enact an approximation of life may seem at odds with conventional ideas on how to assemble a film, but part of the premise was undoubtedly to experiment with the structure of film before there was agreement on an industry standard.

There is a sense too, that if revolution was an ongoing process that could deliver gains for the people continually, there was no reason why cinema could not do the same. Dziga Vertov's contribution to Third meaning theory can be sited in even his very earliest writings. There is a fascination in Vertov's writings with the mechanical and the kinetic. Because Vertov's theory of film is one step removed from the organic sense of the filmmaker in his studio, and is more about how the mechanics of filmmaking have taken on an independence from the filmmaker as an entirely necessary chronicler of found life, there is also a relentless sense of the uncanny manifesting itself as an inevitable corollary of this abstraction. If Eisenstein's versions of Third meaning have a theme of the organic running through them, then Vertov's version emphasises the inorganic. It is in one of the earliest of all of Vertov's surviving writings that the interval makes an appearance, in the agitational piece 'We: Variant of a manifesto.' It is fascinating, yet perhaps not so strange considering the sense of a new society in Russia in 1922 that agitating for a new sense of time and linearity should be a consideration. The palpable sense is of a psychologism in film being the key target of Vertov's ire and an overwhelming need to address what he sees as the complacency of the 'psychological Russo-German film drama' (Vertov [1922],1984, p.5).

Vertov outlines the mathematical precision of the interval as a technique:

> Intervals (the transitions from one movement to another) are the material, the elements of the art of movement, and by no means the movement themselves. It is they (the intervals) which draw the movement to a kinetic resolution. (8).

If this appears to be too 'neat' to bear any equivalence to the Third meaning of Eisenstein, then it might be best to recall the 'still' as a holding position. If the still is removed from its

place in the composition of film it continues to retain an autonomous integrity, it represents a transition embodied. Therefore, the still represents the same place in the time space continuum as Vertov's interval. This is somewhat confirmed by his next use of the term, in an address to the council of three, on 10th April 1923, when he advocates the development of a kinok newsreel: 'an impetuous survey of visual events deciphered by the camera, bits of real energy (as opposed to theatre) joined through intervals into a tectonic whole by the great craft of montage.' (Vertov [1923], 1984, p.20). The montage involved is thus reflexive, conceptually allowing for the development 'of any given theme, be it comic, tragic, one of special effects, or some other type.' (Vertov [1923], 1984, p.20). Yet the cohering force is 'entirely a question of the particular juxtaposition of visual details, of intervals.' (Vertov [1923], p.21).

Contemporary filmmaker and artist Trinh T. Minh-ha has dedicated a whole treatise to the practice of interval filmmaking. Their analysis on Vertov's interval, while noting that Vertov had an idea about what the interval that was somewhat underdeveloped, does show us how his theory might appeal to modern filmmakers and artists keen to articulate profundities about modern life:

> Stressing the gaps between film images, it constitutes the foundation of a filmmaking that is decisively 'non-narrative', unplayed, and engaged in the act of life; a visual study of events, a simultaneous cine-writing of living processes, or as Vertov also called it ''fragments of actual energy'' (Trinh, 2013, intro xii).

Roland Barthes uses the term 'interval' in an article on the exhibition 'ma. Space time in Japan' published in *La Nouvel Observateur* on 23rd October 1978. Japan has been a focus of Barthes' work previously in Empire of Signs; the encapsulation of Japanese culture is here much as it was then; suffused with symbolic content- but, for all that very clear in its meanings. Barthes writes:

> Is there at least a theme (for we too have themed exhibitions)? There is, but that theme is quite a peculiar one-it is a concept but one not familiar to us, for while we are more or less at home with the ideas of time and space, Japan doesn't seem to make that distinction. What it feels, and expresses, is something common to both space and time- ma, which is any relation between two moments, two places, two states. (Barthes, [1978] 2016 pp.130-pp.134).

This has a close correspondence to Dziga Vertov's sense of the interval; Barthes' version may be a general statement of relations rather than an analysis that emphasises the mechanistic aspects of the Vertovian interval, nevertheless, what Barthes' performs in the article is a suture[53] between Eisensteinian third meaning and Dziga Vertov's interval that means that he, at least, conceptualises that the two differently- toned approaches have a strong family resemblance. Barthes' states that there is an intersection of these two positions in the exhibition. The lay out of the exhibition 'plays variations, from one room to another and one display to another, on this idea of the interval' (132). On this basis, the short circuit between Vertov's interval and Eisenstein's Third meaning becomes automatically and imminently apparent. The automatic aspect of the formulation is the Vertovian instant of transition that valorises the mechanic; the imminent aspect is the

dialectical transformation of the esoteric; Eisenstein's messianic 'Organic Unity and Pathos'. The 'certain subtleties' in the folds of the two sutured concepts unite them:

> For example, yami: that which flickers, twinkles or emerges briefly from the half-darkness; utsuroi: the moment when the flower is about to fade, when it is as if the soul of something is suspended in the void, between two states; or sabi: surface wear, rust, patina. (132).

Thus, Barthes highlights that this exhibition showcases two intertwined facets that were foregrounded in his Third meaning essay; the imminently historical and the excessive. The artist who curated the exhibition, Arata Isozaki incorporates calligraphy into his work, recalling the ideograms that so fascinated Eisenstein. Haiku is also a feature, bringing to mind that Barthes himself stated that Third meaning resembles a haiku. Barthes' idea of the haiku is directly compared to an accent or fold; 'marking the heavy layer of informations and significations-like a Japanese haiku'. An example of a haiku is given in image V in the Third meaning essay: 'Mouth drawn, Eyes shut squinting, Headscarf low over forehead, She Weeps' (Barthes [1970], 1977, p.62).

The image is apposite when addressing the content and layout of Isozaki's exhibition; 'Because of this very scarcity of exhibits, a kind of contemplative atmosphere descends.' (Barthes, 'The Interval' in *Signs*…p.134). Barthes implies that the exhibits are shrouded in half-light and difficult to comprehend; again, this is a reminder that Third meaning imagery can escape our ability to cognate it, until it is slowed to the point of being frozen. The excessive quality of Third meaning dovetails with the descriptions of Isozaki's exhibition several times in the article. The evocation of excess in particular relates to an eloquent juxtaposition of ma as objects that 'bridge the gap between modern materials and ancient nobility' and the subsumption of, or encroachment into that nobility 'by an ever-increasing quantity of vulgar, gaudy objects.'(Barthes [1978], 2016, p.133) Instantly bringing to mind the opening image of the Third meaning essay, where Ivan the Terrible is being showered in Gold by two courtiers; Barthes outlines the 'historical question' posed by Isozaki: 'Why and how are objects-and, even more to the point, the spirit of their daily arrangement-degenerating into enormous quantities of worthless trinkets?' (Barthes [1978], 2016, p.133) The original title of the 'interval' article 'between anxiety and love' recalls one of Barthes other assertions on Third meaning. Barthes writes in 1970:

> I believe that the obtuse meaning carries a certain emotion. Caught up in the disguise, such emotion is never sticky, it is an emotion that simply designates what one loves, what one wants to defend: an emotion-value, an evaluation. (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.59).

Third meaning is not just an abstract concept of how the image of the world should be shown, it shows an engagement that is subjective as well as objective. The fondness for how Eisenstein shot his subjects is derived from the fact that the people on screen often were not professional actors, but workers and peasants. They were not just present because they had to do a job, their contribution was in the service of revolutionary Russia. Their authenticity lay in the reactions and the physiognomic eccentricities that they brought to the performance; a sense of unschooled reality in their acting. Barthes pinpointed the value of Eisenstein's actors as well as their characters: 'Maternal, cordial, virile, 'sympathetic'

without any recourse to stereotypes, the Eisensteinian people is essentially lovable'.(Barthes [1970], 1977, p.59).

If the organicist/esoteric aesthetic aspect of Third meaning is the perfect encapsulation of Third meaning in France as May 1968 plays out, in many ways the interval- as- distance in the aesthetic of Vertov becomes a determining principle in Barthes' later work. The interval is defined as a pause in order to point to a designated moment of signifiance, and as such clearly looks forward to the techniques of digital cinema. Barthes' idea of cinematic language was to articulate political aesthetics so that it could be understandable as a code of the countercultural. The code of the countercultural necessarily has 'slippage', determined by being always-in-part 'reactive', determined by circumstances, and Vertov's cinema is commensurate with this.

A key film conceptually that builds on the work of Dziga Vertov is Jean- Luc Godard's *Tout Va Bien*, which maps the political and affectual fall -out from the 1968- 1972 period. Like Vertov, Godard was an impassioned chronicler of everyday life; a cultural life that showed its own intrinsic importance as society changed around it. Godard felt such a connection to Dziga Vertov that he named a film production company after him and *Tout Va Bien* was the last major film produced by that company. Aesthetically, Chris Marker anticipates the digital Avant -Garde by a full decade. His most influential cinematic work is analysed in the next chapter, along with *Tout Va Bien*. Chapter three will suggest linkages between Eisensteinian-era Third meaning and the Third meaning contemporaneous to Roland Barthes, through the prism of the counter-cultural zeitgeist of the time.

Chapter Three

Introduction: The repudiation of the Nouvelle Vague

Art is dead. Godard can do nothing about it.

May 1968 protest slogan (Williams, JS: 2016, p.29).

By 1966, Jean- Luc Godard was growing tired of the manifold demands of the film industry and was keen to break the mould once again, having been one of the figureheads in the nouvelle vague movement. Godard's 'parting shots' to the mainstream industry were designed primarily to make a qualitative break with the demands of making conventional films and, as such, to engineer a situation where he could eke out an autonomous space to make cinema on his own terms. Godard's last two mainstream films of the 1960s were to prepare the ground for films that had an aesthetic and narrative structure that were untried in late 1960s France. Godard was particularly prescient in predicting future contours of French thought. *La Chinoise* (Godard, 1968) was a morality tale about what could go wrong if questions posed by radical change were misunderstood; the dialectical flipside was presented in *Le Weekend* (Godard, 1967): the consequences of fidelity to the acquisitiveness of late capitalism.

In this chapter, Roland Barthes' Third meaning theory will be mapped onto this abandonment and repudiation of mainstream cinema by Godard. Godard's fiction and non-fiction collaborative projects developed out of this political and aesthetic decision to implement a Third meaning cinema. If Godard's utilisation of countercultural resources is not yet complete by the time of the interrelated films *Tout Va Bien* and *Letter to Jane* in 1972, it all the same reaches something of an impasse, where his desire to make films that challenge the economic base of the class structure shift marginally to a practice more concerned with dealing with superstructural symptoms. At this point, the Sonimage project with Anne-Marie Miéville dovetails with a historical period of visual production with particular ideological and economic priorities that I suggest lays in part the foundation for the advent of digital cinema, no matter that earlier in the 21st century Godard was to radically disavow the popularisation of this medium. It also finds theoretical company with Barthes' 'sequel' to Third meaning, a modification of the taxonomy that he called 'the neutral'. 'The punctum' is the third in a trilogy of Third meaning strategies, coinciding with the dissemination of digital media in its present form. These theories will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Four.

Godard's apparent rejection of mainstream filmmaking is influenced by contemporary events, conditioned by the strikes and demonstrations underway in France; equally, it is part of a foreseeable trajectory for Godard, given his rejection of consumerism and imperialism in the films he produced leading up to the decision to leave nouvelle vague behind. The repudiation of the nouvelle vague values were not complete because negation is rarely a process of complete finality. The rhetorical gesture of a theoretical break is apparent though. What Godard seeks to do with his last two mainstream films up to this point is to rub the notional blackboard free of personages and precepts, as Jean- Pierre Leaud does in *La Chinoise* when he rubs Brecht's name out. In this way Godard can explore new celluloid

territory unburdened by the past.

In Alain Badiou's *Cinema* there is an essay from 1983 that provides an account of what Badiou calls 'cinema's second modernity'. It reads rather like a list of bullet points as to what this second modernity might contain. The first point reads:

> Mention Godard first. He was also part of our historical frame of reference: The New Wave. The line of demarcation, the difference between the New Wave and what we are attempting to call cinema's second modernity, passes through him. (Badiou: 2013, p.58).[54]

In this quote Godard is identified as the architect of the implementation of a new visual regime, significant because Godard is usually linked to the founding of the new wave; this piece instead implicates Godard as being key in the establishment of two successive contemporary visual regimes. Any analysis of social and political dynamics of the 1960s should take account of the tendencies within this period that ultimately were the undoing of the potential for radical change in that moment. These tendencies are not easy to delineate, although an approximation of them can be gleaned from the cultural products of the time. Roland Barthes' Third meaning as reflective of the sixties is an easier case to make than any other period, simply because the essay was formulated in the immediate aftermath of that period. As critical reflection on the political presentation of film, the essay is an intervention.

Barthes is clear in his Third meaning essay that the concept is not just limited to an articulation of revolutionary discourse. Rather as a presentation of the dialectic it includes within it traces of reactionary elements that prompted a countercultural response. As with the examples that Barthes uses in the Third meaning essay, Godard allows his characters to speak. The cultural output of the sixties and seventies for the first time is reflective of a panoply of voices. If neither Barthes or Godard can claim to be representative of all of those voices, then a Third meaning practice that incorporates elements including intertextuality, non-linearity, gestus and the fragment points towards possible radical political resolutions of societal problems.

To highlight the 'epitome of the counternarrative' aesthetically and politically is a goal common to Godard and Barthes. Other filmmakers both inside Godard's Dziga Vertov collective, principal among them Anne- Marie Miéville and Jeanne Pierre Gorin, as well as other significant filmmakers that Godard collaborated with including Phillipe Garrel and Chris Marker pursued a practice that could be called Third meaning. Ultimately Godard ekes out an aesthetic political space that is amenable to Third meanings transposition across media. Godard's and Miéville's video experiments are early examples of this. Ultimately, in the face of Godard's initial scepticism, it is Chris Marker who helps to successfully transpose Third meaning to the digital. Before Godard's late 60s experimental period, Marker produces *La Jetée* (Marker, 1962).

This film uses the still in such a way that it evokes the nuclear anxieties of the time. Marker evokes a cultural aesthetic that carries the anxious burdens of such a catastrophic war. These anxieties are trans-historic; being on the brink of war is an all-too familiar experience. The intensity of the experience of *La Jetee* , is that the prospect of the annihilation of the world has never been as total.

3.1. Chris Marker: *La Jetée*

La Jetée is not an expressly political film, as later Chris Marker films are. Nevertheless, it is subtly countercultural film with many of the features of a political film. It also suggests the basis of a digital Third meaning aesthetic that Chris Marker will later be a foremost practitioner of. It seems that initially there was some accidental quality to this. Certainly, the film is just as redolent of a slightly frantic response to WWII,[55] (Harbord, J: 2009, p.12) even as it is undoubtedly referencing the more immediate anxieties of the nuclear arms race and the Cuban missile crisis.

As Janet Harbord relates in her book on *La Jetée*: 'Describing the impulse to make *La Jetée*, Marker has remarked that he began to shoot images for a story he 'didn't completely understand', as though *La Jetée* was an almost unconscious rendition of contemporary anxieties.' (Harbord, J 2009; p.7). In 1952 the first Hydrogen Bomb[56] was tested; many hundreds of times more powerful than the nuclear bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1961 the most powerful H-Bomb of all was dropped.[57] In the year Marker makes *La Jetée*, the two most powerful world leaders engage in the Cuban missile crisis and bring the world to the brink of nuclear destruction. Marker's task in *La Jetée* appears to be to suggest that the power of the image is life affirming and history changing; with all the iterations such a consideration implies.

Ultimately, the time-travelling protagonist is doomed to die and set in motion the events leading to the apocalypse that he is trying to prevent[58]. The image of the woman on the pier that dominates the story is entirely arresting; her face half in shadow, she cradles her face with her right hand, a half-smile on her face and her hair blowing to the right. It is an image that almost suggests that it couldn't possibly predate 1961; and the fact that the viewer knows the story is set in the future implies that she is still in the future from whatever moment the viewer watches it. The narrator at once notes the haunting quality of the woman's face, an image that has haunted the male protagonist's dreams through his childhood; and yet also invokes her as 'a unique image of peacetime.' (Marker: 1961, 2:18). The story of *La Jetée* itself is about who owns images; whether they are 'public domain' for all of us to access, or if they are the property of a class. Moreover, the story addresses what we learn from returning to them.

In a sense the face of the woman and the desire of the time travelling protagonist to understand the meaning of her image becomes a tale about what is seen and what is not seen in the 20th century; what is created and what is destroyed, and what is valued and what is lost. In a post -apocalyptic world where Paris has been all but destroyed, the male time traveller[59] is chosen to be 'thrown through time' with other 'emissaries', chosen for his ability, along with them to conjure '*Narrator*: strong mental images…if they were able to conceive of or dream another time, would they be able to live in it?' (7:30). A curious facet of the film is that despite only being 27 minutes, a lot seems to occur: the viewer is taken on a journey through time with the protagonist. From vague associations he fixes on one image, that of the mysterious woman; this ability to fixate on a single image is instrumental, it seems in his success at being able to time travel. He establishes a relationship with her, they date. Time has an inconstant status; in the future, his body is still occupying space

while scientists track the progress of his mind in the past. In his relationship with the woman, he seems consumed with her as an archetype of all that is good and yet their fates are bounded by terror: 'Narrator: There comes a moment when he feels ahead of them…a war.' (Marker: 1961, 16:34). *La Jetée* is an uneasy watch[60]. At one point the male and female protagonists lie in bed together; there is a soundtrack of what seem at first to be chirping crickets (18:20). This noise gradually becomes more indeterminate until it more closely resembles discordant electronic screeching; then the image returns to the laboratory where the time traveller is being experimented on.

Conceptually, *La Jetée* offers a lot of material to the viewer that can be read as Third meaning informed. We are invited as viewers to participate in a journey of the readerly two full years before the 'Death of the author' essay. There is a lot unsaid and unseen; as viewers we are invited to fill the gaps. Where we learn that: '*Narrator*: The childhood image had been used as a bait to condition him', (24:18) the feeling of solidarity with the protagonist is instinctive; he is the plaything of forces bigger than himself: being used not for the good of humanity, but to complete a terrible manifest destiny that will seemingly usher in a totalitarian world.

The fragment and intertextuality are Third meaning facets most strongly to the fore in this film. The fragment is evoked by the use of still images sped up to suggest the illusion of movement. This monadological[61] approach to making films helps us as viewers to see more clearly the narrative fabric of the film; the way in which it is woven together. In 'seeing the join' we are able to get an insight into the production process. This has political implications because it is a rarity to gain an insight into production processes. A Marxist position holds that intentional obfuscation of the logic of production processes is a way in which capitalism maintains its dominance. Intertextuality in the film focuses on a consistent return to the idea of the tragic hero consumed by their task; given a contemporary resonance in view of the prescient subject matter of looming nuclear apocalypse. The 'double-movement' relates here to the reference of experiencing the ideological precepts under which film operates:

> The hero is never really sure whether he really remembers this past, whether he has invented it, or whether the doctors have pushed him into it for their own purposes. His destiny is tragic, because he seeks- and fails- to avoid his fate, by believing in the illusory experience of life through movement. This is, of course, the primary illusion offered by cinema itself. (Lupton, C; 2005, p.94)

Although, as Lupton points out, we do ostensibly follow a conventional narrative structure[62] (Lupton, C; 2005, p.87) in *La Jetée* it also seems to stress the discontinuous elements posed by dream and trace which figure heavily; quite apart from the parallel linear realities suggested by the central protagonist intervening. As Lupton states later in her analysis of *La Jetée*:

> Like shots in a conventional film, the photographs are separated by straight cuts, fades and dissolves of varying duration, while individual sequences are broken down into the recognisable patterns of classical narrative cinema, with establishing shots, eyeline matches, shot-countershot, close-ups and so forth, all working to create a sense of narrative coherence and momentum. Yet this structure does not explain the aura of cinema that

clings to the individual images of *La Jetée*. They are like memories of a film, which in our mind seem to be motionless and quantifiable, but if we search through the print never correspond exactly to one individual frame, or to the frozen drama of production stills. (Lupton, C; 2005, p.91)

 Much like Barthes' Third meaning images, the frames of this film contain images that exceed the 'referential motif', but cannot be 'conflated with the dramatic meaning' of the episodes therein. (Barthes [1970] 1977, p.53). The sense of irreducibility in Marker's aesthetic gives his films a reflexive quality. This will later be an efficacious facet in transposing his films to the digital format. Godard is not a committed political aesthetician at this point in the early 1960s, but he is surely assiduously noting Marker's use of aesthetics to make a socially conscious intervention.

3.2. Intimations of Third meaning *in La Chinoise* and *Weekend*

As Grace An states in her essay on *La Chinoise* from 2014:

> The film followed the process by which eager youths travelled the continuum between, on the one hand, a searching and idealistic engagement with thought and politics, and on the other, the dangers of reckless utopianism, with terrorism as a precipitous conclusion. Conley, T; Jefferson Kline, T (ed, 2014), An, G: pp.282-pp.285.

In contrast, the attempt to build a new society in *La Chinoise* is at odds with what Robin Wood calls 'a world that is disintegrating primarily from its own perverted viciousness and debasement'. Godard, J-L; Wood, R; MacBean, JR: Wood, R (1972): p.12.The narrative is skewed and the images come thick and fast. Indeed, the first thing the viewer notices about *La Chinoise* is its primary colour scheme. When the action is frenetic this is an aspect of the film that is reliable; red, white and blue, the colours of the Tricolore. Barthes never suggests that Third meaning has an affinity with particular colours; nonetheless *Ivan the terrible part II* had its own garish colour scheme; sickly sepia tints that surely could have been surpassed given the technology of the time. *La Chinoise* likewise revels in the baseness of its own amateurish aesthetic. There is even the suggestion that the colour code is a code of praxis; after all, as the song suggests in the film: *It's the little red book that makes it all move*. Jacques Ranciére writes in his essay 'The Red of *La Chinoise'*: 'We might start with the following formulation: Godard puts "cinema" between two Marxisms; Marxism as the matter of representation, and Marxism as the principle of representation.' Ranciére, J; Battista (trans) (2006).

This is an important distinction to make. Ranciére suggests that both there is a particular depiction of Chinese Maoism in Godard that refers specifically to a European understanding of Maoism in the 1960s. This conception is, in fact, an overdetermination, filling in the gaps of knowledge about Maoism in gestaltist fashion. Yet simultaneously the rhetoric espoused in *La Chinoise* does expose a lack; a lack that understands that the Marxist project is incomplete, is always evolving:

> The method of the "object lesson" happens to align perfectly with the specific Marxism that serves as the principle of representation, namely Althusserian Marxism, which, in 1967, was essentially a doctrine that held that Marxism for the most part still had to be invented, and

that inventing it was like relearning the sense of the most elementary actions. (Ranciére; Battista (trans) 2006.)

Beyond the striking aesthetics and the anticipation of Maoism as a significant ideological force in European universities over the next few years, *La Chinoise* also prefigures the development of countercultural social forces on a wider scale. Though it is imputed that the revolutionaries of the film live 'in a bubble', the viewer sees that their actions have consequences beyond their Maoist 'cell'.

Pedagogy and the philosophy of the staged image are recurring themes in *La Chinoise*, and within this framework, Brechtian concerns are a major influence. This staging is asking the viewer to consider how authentically committed to Maoist ideas the students are, and if their reading of Maoism is doomed to failure beyond their cell. The routine and constructed 'ordinariness' of a Marxist cell are ironically advanced towards a succession of events where reality asserts itself as surprise.

Events in *La Chinoise* such as Veronique's botched assassination of the minister for culture, where she at first kills a civilian (Wiazemsky, A in Godard: 1967, 83:30-84:50) or Serge's suicide (de Brujin, L in Godard: 1967, 82:00) are not just shocking in themselves; rather the shocking thing is that we are entreated to accept them as part of ordinary life without seeing the actual events. There is a dialectical counterweight in this; that revolutionary history is hidden intentionally, by the mundanity of often more trivial news stories or the veracity of its truth as a set of struggles over a disputed history. In any case, the pointed whitewash of revolutionary histories in *La Chinoise* is a comment on that very thing in mainstream culture. In drawing attention to the absence of revolutionary histories as a significant thread in modern discourse, Godard endorses a counternarrative position and a Third meaning perspective.

Part of the meta construction of *La Chinoise* is that we are being asked as 'readers' of the film text to accept all that we see earnestly. But there are several hints in the film that rigorous thinking is instead required. For instance, when Yvonne is relaying her biographical details to the viewers, (Berto, J in Godard: 1967, 10:54-14:26) stating that she came from humble farming stock, her speech is underscored ironically by a recurring faux-classical motif, (12:06-12:10, 12:37-12:49) scored by Stockhausen. The clear implication is that what she is relating is a falsehood.

Above all, *La Chinoise* deals with the growing conceptualisation of modern ambivalence. Ambivalence here is the self-cognition of the condition of the world as it is in terms of class relations and oppression conjoined with the understanding that the chances of appreciably changing those conditions are in the short term remote. This perception became more conceptually anchored after the disappointments subsequent to 1968 and is arguably present because Godard had seen the inner workings of the capitalist machine just as he had seen conditions that lay outside it.

There are elements within the concept of Third meaning that only stop being neutral when they are utilised ideologically. One such element is that of excess. The concept of excess is entirely in relation to the determinations of society and culture. Excess is not limited to understandings of measurement and extensity, but what those things may also mean in a social context. *Weekend* is a film that portrays the sixties as a time in which freedom is a

bedfellow of danger, and freedom when achieved is depicted as unconstrained. From the first intertitle, capitalised as A FILM ADRIFT IN THE COSMOS (Godard: *Weekend* 1967b, 00:15) the viewer can see that the film has totally removed itself from its social context. If this is an inference that what is to follow is a fantasy, then certainly the scene between Corrine and her friend that follows for eleven minutes is an excessive piece of fantasy sharing. (00:50-12:20) *Le Weekend* does not leave the viewer entirely without co-ordinates, however.

The context that there is in *Weekend* is self-reflexive and intertextual. As Robin Wood writes in his essay on *Weekend*, with specific relation to the work: '…his [Godard's] films are characterised above all by the continuous tension between the desire to show what is real and the desire to keep one aware of the film as film.' (Godard, J-L; Wood, R; MacBean, JR: Wood, R; 1972, p.7).

In *Weekend* the idea of a commonplace motor vehicle pile- up gets stretched to the limits of credulity[63] (1Godard: 1967b, 4:10-22:06) and serious issues such as the breakdown of civil society are lent a farcical aspect. Pop culture makes an unlikely appearance in the shape of the contemporaneous Dalida song too.[64](37:00-38:21). It is not that Godard exactly 'makes light' of serious issues, rather that he highlights the impact of the deadening modernization experience on our feelings. The reference to *The Exterminating Angel*, Luis Bunuel's film from 1962, and mentioned in Godard's 'On Film' essay, best known from its appearance in *The Grain of the Voice* is very appropriate; the collapse of civilised society and descent into madness of that film is merely transposed from the confines of one room to the madness of 'capitalist nature'.

There are pointedly Barthesian moments. One of the lead characters is called Roland but it does not stop there. When Corrine and Roland have their car commandeered by the mysterious Joseph, he demands to know Corrine's name. When she hesitates, he says: '…You see, you don't even know who you are. Christianity is the refusal to know oneself. It's the death of language.'. When Corrine asks him what he does he proclaims: 'I am here to proclaim to these Modern Times[65] the end of the grammatical era and the beginning of flamboyance in every field, especially that of the cinema.' (Roland in Godard: 1967b, 24:00). The connection that Godard makes here between language and cinema is very Barthesian. Spoken by a crazed prophet character, this is also peculiarly Godardian and it is likely that he is poking fun at himself.

The seemingly random assemblage of historical characters that manifest in the second half of *Weekend* serve to underline the spirit of Marx's *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* that History repeats itself first as tragedy, then as farce. (Marx, K; Engels, F [1851], 1979: Collected Works volume 11; Marx and Engels 1851- 1853). Towards the end of *Weekend*, a surreal set of interpolated images accompanying an attempted conversation between Corrine and Roland are interspersed with the alternate capitalised intertitles 'A FILM FOUND IN A SCRAP HEAP/ A FILM ADRIFT IN THE COSMOS.' (1:19:00). This is pertinent to Corrine and Roland, who here seem to have become self-identical with the film and have been shunted from one situation to another. Corrine and Roland are Cartesian subjects looking for identity in *Weekend*. When an earthworm slithers across the screen (46:58) and they proclaim themselves ignorant of their own natures it is quite believable; and as Corrine

finishes the film by blithely chewing on human bone, (1:29:30) viewers are asked to consider that in the absence of society, any such degradation is possible. The collapse of civilised behaviour mirrors a breakdown in cinema narrative. Godard prepares us for the restructuring of film philosophy that the Vertov group films represent.

3.3. The *Dziga Vertov* group

 Having established himself as one of France's figureheads of the youthquake Jean Luc Godard desired not just to produce cinema that was more reflective of his own rapidly developing interests but to take his audience with him. Aesthetically and conceptually his films had always been well organised but his new work in some sense required the obverse of pedagogy. Godard's political interests required that his audience became self-acknowledged members of the counterculture. Godard sought to form a team around him; if the project failed there would be a certain amount of shared responsibility-perhaps he could resume a mainstream career if it did. As Godard scholar Michael Witt states in his doctoral thesis from 1998:

> Godard's transition from auteur to quasi-anonymous group participant constitutes a remarkable concrete demonstration of the impact of the Structuralist challenge to authorship on a then massively feted living artist. The revision of auteurism, desire to enact Maoist contradiction, and theoretical assault on the idealist conceptions of subjectivity, all converged for Godard around 1968 in the desire to redistribute received production relations via collaborative practice, constituting what he later termed 'la veritable rupture' of 1968. Witt, M (1998) [Thesis], p.7

Identifying the exact time, the *Dziga Vertov* group began making films is a little difficult. Certainly, there was a sense in which the group existed informally prior to its formal recognition. The Brazilian Scholar and filmmaker Jane de Almeida curated an exhibition on the *Dziga Vertov* Group with Jean-Pierre Gorin and was able to ascertain the following:

> *Un film comme les autres* is the precursor of the series, while not yet being named as a Dziga Vertov Group film. It is only later on, probably after *British Sounds*, that the group took on the name of "Dziga Vertov", due to the influence of Jean-Pierre Gorin. With *Vent d'Est*, the group is established and Godard announces that for the Russian filmmaker Vertov, the definition of Kinoki is not of filmmaker, but rather of filmhand, differentiating moviemaker from film worker. http://janedealmeida.com/jane_dziga_vertov.pdf (accessed 30/10/2017).

 This means that Godard saw both his role in the production process of cinema and his political positioning in relation to its dissemination as qualitatively changed. There is a dissolution of the authorial agent here. In some sense this is a disingenuous abdication. Conceptually Godard remains the driving force behind the Dziga Vertov films. Yet there is also the sense of an 'opening up' in order to necessitate broader changes in film practice and beyond. If Godard can be seen to strip away the trappings of his prestige and share his laurels then it is at least demonstrative of a different way of thinking about society and artistic practices within that society.

Godard's decision to name his collective after the founder and foremost proponent of 'kino-eye' contains a certain contradiction. If Godard's aim was to produce a type of film that

portrayed objective truth, then the Dziga Vertov films that the collective ultimately made were films that also conveyed Godard's own views in a direct manner. There was certainly a recognition in these films though that either poetically or literally, Godard was addressing a bourgeois media whose relationship with the truth was becoming ever more tenuous. even as news became more accessible and globalisation both extended the reach of propaganda and brought it into the living rooms of people living in repressive regimes and colonial outposts across the globe.

Godard's reassessment of his filmmaking came amidst a fast -moving political situation. The French state moved to have Henri Langlois removed as Cinémathèque Française curator prior to May. Godard supported the resulting strike, but was lambasted by some young protestors who associated him with the establishment. By now he was at least playing the part of a Maoist convincingly, even selling *Le Cause du peuple* on the streets. (Williams, JS: 2016, p29-30). Godard acknowledged that his work was not yet reflective in an increased level of personal activism, when at the 1968 Cannes film festival he and other directors stopped proceedings and Godard proclaimed: 'There's not a single film showing the problems of workers or students today- we're late! We must show solidarity.'[66] (Williams, JS: 2016 ch.1 n.10, p257).

An early concerted attempt to document what was going on in the streets of France was the compilation film *Cinétracts*. The idea belonged to Chris Marker, according to Jean- Luc Godard (Godard, J-L, Socialist Tribune 23/1/1969). *Cinétracts* has Marker's indelible stamp on it; the aesthetic principle of still images that appear to be animated is a technique that he had perfected as long ago as La *Jetée*. Although *Cinétracts* is not a Dziga Vertov group film the collaborative nature of the project provides a fertile testing ground for shared counternarrative. Chris Marker was part of the collective Besancon Medkevdin; they produced eight newsreels of the bulletin *Nouvelle Société*. (Lupton: 2005, p.120). Almost certainly, Godard drew inspiration from he and Marker's collaboration. It was distributed in a way that was more in keeping with 21st century methods of distribution:

> The *Cinétracts* were distributed outside of the commercial system of distribution. Owing to the moderately successful private distribution and availability within France, the project succeeded in reaching audiences interested in the shared ideals of workers and students in the May revolt. (elshaw.tripod.com/jlg.Cinetracts.html accessed 23/10/2017).

 The fast -paced images are taken from photographs of the clashes around May 1968. Each of the cinétracts is between two and four minutes long: there are 41 in total. Repetition is a feature; but almost certainly images that are repeated are not authored exclusively by one contributor. Collaboration and the erasure of the author are implicit features of the work, and so who did what in the composition of *Cinétracts* has never been officially acknowledged.

Nevertheless, there are some interesting clues, perhaps some of them 'red herrings'; for example, in cinétract 11, where Anne Wiezemsky appears as part of a collage, and other shots from *La Chinoise* are used iconoclastically. If Godard did not produce this work, then another member of the collective is very adept at emulating his authorial style.

'Camera Eye', a short film from *Loin du Vietnam*, showcasing the talents of several of the

Dziga Vertov group is somewhat of a mini-manifesto for the collective, though the impetus seems to have come from Chris Marker, who co-produced the film with Godard. A twenty-second shot into the eye of a camera begins the film; as the shot pans out the viewer sees a camera being manipulated into various positions. Godard addresses how the media relate the experience of war to their viewers, and how the US and Soviet news stations do not accurately represent what is going on in the Vietnam war. He admits that *La Chinoise* represents a certain alienation from Vietnam and suggests it perhaps adopts a 'falsely noble' approach. He draws out several Third meaning tenets in the narrative that follows. His idea that 'We all have a Vietnam within us' is both self-referential and intertextual, combining the personal and the political.

He then notes that recent strikes in France are connected to the war in Vietnam. He is suggesting that his next forays into film will have an international flavour. Recalling Barthes' 'proletarian moment', (Barthes [1970] (1977), p.56) he suggests the contemporary situation is part of a period of 'pre-revolutionary patience'. One of the notable aspects about the short film is how long the image of the camera stays in the mind of the viewer, almost to the exclusion of all else. If the camera is standing in for the clenched fist of the 'proletarian moment' from *Battleship Potemkin* as expressed in the Third meaning essay, suggesting that Godard's next cinematic work will be memorably countercultural.

3.4. Godard: *Revolutionary poetics*

> When a work exceeds the meaning it initially seems to convey, that is because there is a poetic element in it: the Poetic is, in one way or another, the supplement of meaning. (Barthes in Barthes; Turner, C (trans): [1980] 2016, *Essays and interviews vol 4*, p.145).

It could be argued that Godard is a Third meaning practitioner through much of his career, but the point at which Third meaning political aesthetics manifests itself most obviously is during his 'Dziga Vertov' period. His narrative fiction films and his documentaries in this period have a commonality of theoretical form and aesthetically are strongly redolent of each other, in the pared down or natural surroundings they tend to occupy. In *Le Gai Savoir* the soundstage in which the main narrative takes place is entirely aesthetically threadbare. The philosophical discussion that is the centrepiece of the film acts as a prop to accompany the simple staging of chairs and umbrellas. In some sense it represents Godard's surprise at the events that were occurring in the wake of May 1968 as the Third republic re-established itself.

If Third meaning can be called the raised mark or accent (Barthes [1970] (1977), p.62) of the counterculture in the dialectic, then *Le Gai Savoir* is the non-aestheticized restitution of that counterculture from first principles, conditioned by the period of its production, which began before the events of May 1968 and was completed just after. It is no accident that Godard goes back to the philosophy of antiquity in *Le Gai Savior*. He is trying to find a new philosophical language not just for film, but for the whole of the counterculture, to make sense of what has occurred.

There is a link here too between the development of film theory and the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche on film. The title *Le Gai Savoir* (Joy of learning) refers to Nietzsche's work *The Gay Science*, sometimes translated as *The Joyful Wisdom*. This was retranslated by

Pierre Klossowski in France in the 1960's to some acclaim and is cited by Ashley Woodward to have been a major influence on poststructuralism and postmodernism. (Woodward, A: 2011, p.81). Further to this milieu of ideas, Georges Bataille was the first to publish Klossowski in his review *Acephale*. (Woodward, A: 2011, p.81). Bataille appears in Barthes' Third meaning essay where his essay 'The Big Toe' is cited as an example of Third meaning excess. (Barthes, R: [1970]1977, p.60). To square the circle, it should be recalled that Deleuze, who praises Godard in his *Cinema* books, wrote extensively on Nietzsche in the 1960s. (Woodard, A: 2011, p.81).

At the Berlin film festival, the response to *Le Gai Savior* was one of bafflement and a certain amount of antipathy but at least that was better than in New York on 27th September 1969, when around half the audience walked out thirty minutes in. Almost certainly, this was due to a calculated use of Ostranenie[67]. After building up an edifice of theory through dialogue between the two main characters, their conversation rendered more powerful still by the fact that they are speaking in the dark with no visible setting, (Godard 1969a, 4:40), the focus changes (27:40). A boy and an old man are interviewed, to negligible illumination. The interviews might have been intended to give the audience a break from theory. Yet if Godard had wanted the audience to stay, it was a misfire. Certainly, the atonal sounds that accompany sections of the second half of the film indicate that Godard wanted to alienate his audience, though in the light of *Le Gai Savior*'s pedagogic concerns, that in itself seems strange[68].

British sounds (1969) is the film after *Le Gai Savoir* in Godard's corpus. It is of a piece with *Le Gai Savoir* in that it is rigorously theoretical. Some elements of the theory that are adopted make it pointedly Third meaning cinema. From its first scene, *British Sounds* manages to capture the authentic voice of the British working class; this is one of its key achievements. The narration opens with: 'In a word the bourgeoisie creates the world in its image: comrades we must destroy that image.' (Godard 1969b: 00:17). Speedily read Marxist theory accompanies a long tracking steady tracking shot down a car production line. It is another Godard attempt to capture the experience of work and thereby show the futility of that exercise.

The serrated metallic noise that accompanies this visual journey along a production line is just tolerable, if entirely atonal. Vying for attention is a child's voice that recounts significant events in British revolutionary history, beginning with Wat Tyler rising up against feudal oppression in 1381[69] (7:29). A later scene features a politician making a racist speech; it is clearly staged, (15:30) but shot in a documentary style. This is juxtaposed with a scene of 'found life', unadorned by music or speeches, of workers talking between themselves at their workplace, on a cigarette break. (Godard: 1969b, 21:00). Each of these examples refer to fissure/ suture and expose the presentation of an image. In the case of the factory scene, we are being asked to consider how the actuality of the production process resists theorisation. A key quote that delineates the problematic of the Barthesian image also notes another facet of Third meaning; the dialectic of image and sound in opposition: 'Sometimes the class struggle is also the struggle of one image against another image, of one sound against another sound. In a film this struggle is between images and sounds. '(Godard:1969b, 18:20).

Certainly, there is an antagonism between image and sound in *British Sounds*.[70] A passage near the end of the film seems to make Godard's new aesthetic manifesto particularly clear and dovetail explicitly with a Barthesian aesthetic: 'Television and films do not record moments of reality but simply dialectics, areas of contradictions. Let us illuminate these areas with the blinding light of the class struggle.' Before this, he has already acknowledged that: 'To break with the Hollywood system induces a radical change of aesthetics.' Then he asks what seems to be one of the most pertinent questions of all in relation to Third meaning: 'Is the Marxist concept of surplus value the best weapon with which to mask the bourgeois concept of presentation? The first task of the anti-imperialist cinema is to answer that question.' (33:00).

In *Tout Va Bien* there is no subtlety to the presentation of artifice, rather the film is candid about every aspect of its construction. A lengthy introductory sequence lists the ingredients for the execution of a film: Money; star actors; story (Godard: *Tout Va Bien* 1972 ,1:48). Then we are given the information that Yves Montand and Jane Fonda are playing commercial maker Jacques and film maker Susan. What follows is an artful drawing together of previous Godard triumphs, with Godard standing askance, satirising himself. As Jacques and Susan are gradually given context, the viewer is transported back to *Le Mepris*, the characters given the lines from the famous Brigette Bardot 'I love you' scene. (3:06-3:36). This part of the film combines intertextuality and self-referentiality; it is rigorously indebted to Third meaning practice.

Non- linearity is also invoked as we are being asked to experience some of Godard's former work in a new context. A Deluezian reading of *Le Mepris* in which Hunter Vaughan imputes the significance of *Le Mepris* as an essentialist treatise then perhaps by implication overstates *Tout Va Bien* as a 'postmodern break'. Vaughn states:

> When Godard says that *Contempt* is the story of this world, I would argue that he is referring to the story of Cinemas attempt to accommodate and codify- to represent and affirm- the connotative roots of objectivity, the cinematic desire to learn the inside by showing the outside. (Vaughan, H, 2002: p.186).

From this reading we might impute that in *Tout Va Bien*, because the referent is being satirised for a new purpose that the quest for connotative roots of objectivity has been abandoned. Yet the alternative view is the more likely one; that meaning is no longer constrained by the intention of the filmmaker, where the author, apropos of Barthes has 'died'. In some sense this freedom from authorial constraint is equivalent to 'the founding of the filmic' in Barthes from a prior interest in code. The interest in code was never delimited to the essence of the object, and with the recognition that each object carries a trace, the narrative can be extended to incorporate other interpretations. Moreover, these interpretations carry with them a modicum of the essence. So, if *Tout Va Bien* stands askance of Godard and cinema, it also helps to deepen our understanding of them. Another point to make about the opening scenes of *Tout Va Bien* is that it is very redolent of Barthes' 'sequential analysis' in the 'Struggle with the Angel' essay, which involves;

> 1. The inventorization and classification of the 'psychological', biographical, characterical and social attributes of the characters involved in the narrative…The inventorization and

classification of the functions of the characters; what they do according to their narrative status, in their capacity as subject of an action which remains constant...3. The inventorization and classification of the actions, the plane of the verbs. Barthes: [1971] (1977), p.127-p.128.

The conceptual framework of *Tout Va Bien* revolves around being able to tell a story about 1968, four years on. The conceit devised to do this is masterful. Jacques and Susan have conflicting interests. Susan works as a reporter, Jacques creates adverts. We see their integrity, and also the way in which that integrity is compromised in various ways by their media jobs. We also see their empathy for a range of characters and the stultifying effect that their expectations of their work have on their own relationship. Set against this, the authentic voice of the reporter that recounts what they see without fear or favour is becoming if not a thing of the past, then drowned out in the corporate machine, an issue that Susan addresses in her monologue three quarters of the way into the film. (Fonda, J in Godard:1972a 1:00:15-1:03:20).

One aspect of *Tout Va Bien* that relates to this is its confrontation with the problematics of depicting an experience of work. The engagement with this issue -the seen and the unseen of labour-is a Third meaning touchstone. Godard even goes some way to rectifying this problematic. There are significant monologues from Susan and Jacques working in their respective workplaces; Jacques bemoans how his career has panned out, having to work on producing adverts in order to make money, (52:10-58:10) and Susan similarly dissatisfied, specifically with the constraints of not being able to adequately express herself through her work. The viewer sees less of the stories of the striking factory workers, though there is somewhat of an explanation as to how they have come to this impasse with their boss. (17:06-22:45). As far as we get to see any experience of work it is a selective representation; necessarily, because we are subject to the confines of a ninety-minute feature film.

Tout Va Bien is arguably Godard's most apposite depiction of a moment in contemporary life; what makes it even more impactful is that, as with *La Chinoise* he again notices trends in French and international politics, and extrapolates from them both, to plot a likely trajectory.

Badiou is quite precise with the perspective that Godard evokes in the film. He pinpoints it as 'an allegory of gauchisme on the wane'. Badiou's interpretation is this:

> Let's agree (this suffices for understanding the film) to call ''gauchisme'' a form of revolutionary political consciousness, that on the one hand preserves and even revives the major categories of Marxism, and on the other, strenuously opposes the interpretation and use of these same categories by the official organisations that the French Communist party and its Labour Union lackey the CGT [General Confederation of Labour] have become. (Badiou: 'The end of a beginning- *Tout Va Bien*'2013; pp.242-pp.251, p.243).

Amongst the startling forethought evidenced in *Tout Va Bien* is the speech of the kidnapped boss who advances a position that acknowledges Marxist thought but avers that it is impractical in modern society. He uses some of the justifications that would become commonplace in the postmodernist-inflected managerial speak of the more self-reflective members of the Capitalist class in the eighties and nineties. (Boss in Godard 1972a: 13:35-

17:05).

More than perhaps in any other Godard film, a panoply of voices feature. Badiou in his essay on cinema's second modernity comes to mind here:

> Godard [again], the only one who really takes on the question of what a truth for today might be; his willingness to be truth's traffic cop [agent de la circulation de la verite], not by putting the causes of a crisis on trial but through an encounter with present conditions. (Badiou: 'Reference points for Cinema's second modernity', 2013; p.59).

In astonishing fashion, as the film nears its end, Godard- Gorin perform a tripartite narrative coup that articulates further thematic preoccupations of the early seventies. The first is the scene between Susan and Jacques where we realise the relationship has run its course. (Godard:1972a, 1:06:15). In amongst their argument, a Freudian phallic still (1:08:51) denotes Jacques' insensitive perspective; this is a nod to the psychoanalysis that was becoming a key player in film theory in the day, and moreover, apropos of Barthes:

> …the still throws off the constraint of filmic time; which constraint is extremely powerful, continuing to form an obstacle to what might be called the adult birth of film (both technically, occasionally even aesthetically, film still has to be born theoretically). (Barthes: [1970] 1977, p.67).

To underline this, there is a Third meaning informed sense of non-linearity where Susan collects the mugs after the argument. The action replays for a few seconds, but the movements differ; this is indicative of a possible alternate history where work and the relations between men and women were not the content of the argument; or there was not an argument; or their relationship hadn't ended. (1:10:10). Still more distortion of time and duration is achieved in the extraordinary ten- minute long take in the supermarket. Supermarkets were in their infancy in the early seventies; this would have contributed to the unfamiliarity that this pan shot provokes. The pan shot serves as a meditation on capitalist history, the contestation to that capitalist history not arriving till several minutes into the scene. The viewer has been moved from the breakdown of a relationship to a treatise on confrontation in late capitalism as several minutes into the shot a scuffle around a Marxist book stall results in a fight, the truncheon-wielding Gendarmes eventually chasing several people out of the supermarket. The citizens are then rounded up, hands clasping their heads.

The action quells, cutting to a resolution made by Susan and Jacques to part; then the viewer is back in the industrial landscape, snatches of industrial noise and discombobulating music punctuating the pan along what appears to be a train line. The feeling afterwards is of a fulsome and slightly exhausting account of contemporary life, of several films within films. *Tout Va Bien* is reflective of the years that have immediately preceded it and points to ideological discourses of the coming years, notably the imperatives of ambivalence couched within the guise of postmodernism. There is a lack that Godard and Gorin pick up on however, and its only resolution is by way of rethinking the issues explored in *Tout Va Bien*. This lack is addressed by recourse to documentary.

3.5. Godard: *Lyrical History*

Godard and Gorin sought to make documentary cinema that was a repository of new ways of thinking about a particular issue. Part of Godard's interest in Bertholt Brecht was about the conceptual and physical positioning that was part of Brecht's theatre. This political aesthetic features prominently in the Dziga Vertov Group documentaries. Godard's documentaries are perhaps even more of a showcase of Third meaning than his fictional cinema since there is a relentless interrogation of the image in these films that is fragmentary and discontinuous.

The location in which *Un film Comme les Autres* (Godard, 1968c) is shot is significant in that Nanterre University is the locale for the first of the student protests in 1967. The narrative is a discussion between Nanterre students and some workers from the Renault-Flins plant. Godard managed to subvert the documentary form in not following the typical procedure where 'talking heads' are filmed, interspersed with footage of the subject they are referencing:

> By refusing to show faces talking, once again Godard contested a television interview style, which accustomed viewers to hearing people speak but not to consider the act of listening. Intercut among that footage was newsreel-type, black-and-white footage of the May events themselves, which the group was talking about in retrospect. (https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC28folder/GodardGorinPolitics.html). [Accessed 12/05/2021].

Pravda (1969) is an effective exercise in the subtly pedagogical. The 'truth' in the title of the film is significant both in terms of its relation to 'Kino-Pravda' the film by Dziga Vertov, and in terms of a first sustained Godardian critique of the media. This is not just a critique of the western media, but the propaganda of the Soviet media machine, as Godard deals with the silencing of an anti- Soviet opposition in Czechoslovakia. The film deals with the erasure of images as well as their replacement with images that mask the nature of reality:

> the voiceover says, "that's a picture of a girl in a bikini," but the image is missing, replaced by a black screen: the image had been sold, the narration corrects itself, to the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation, and thus could not be shown. (http://seul-le-cinema.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/pravda.html). [Accessed 23/10/2017].

A more nuanced view of socialism than the one Godard articulated in the pre Dziga Vertov Group years is present. Godard is prepared to acknowledge the human fallibility in forging a new society, and how that can sometimes result in falling far short of the desired goals:

> For all the seemingly humourless didacticism of Godard the polemicist, there's still a strain of bitter, ironic humour in this film's wordy narration, and also a lingering appreciation for beauty, as in the image of a solitary bright red flower, alternately blooming brilliantly or trampled in a mud puddle, a classically beautiful symbol for socialisms bold promises and its often, disappointing betrayals. http://seul-le-cinema.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/pravda.html [Accessed 23/10/2017].

Letter to Jane (Godard:1972b) achieves the distinction of both being the apotheosis of Godard's forays into Third meaning and the beginning of a preoccupation with

communication that would mark the beginning of the Sonimage period. The narrative is an exposition addressed to Jane Fonda, explaining why an image of her and a Vietnamese citizen has been used to promote the film that Godard and Gorin have directed, and in which she has just starred, *Tout Va Bien*. Godard explains that talking about the photograph is '…not a way of changing the subject, nor is it a way of not talking about *Tout Va Bien'*. Godard then says that a direct detour will explain the purpose of the subject matter, which is: 'what part should intellectuals play in the revolution?' He notes excitedly that: 'some really new questions are being asked over there. And you went there after being with us.' Although this associative and subjective take on the photograph does not immediately have the effect of leading us towards enlightenment, Godard then states: 'A film is a detour into ourselves. To talk about the machine, we are going to go outside the factory that produces it.' (Godard: 1972b, 7:10).

Godard and Gorin delineate clearly over the remainder of the film subtle changes in perspectivism that allow us to see that ruling class leaders transmit certain modes of expression to their subjects. So, an intellectual from a country other than a colonised one is likely to express a certain quality of expression when confronted with a colonised subject. Before the viewer is presented with this assertion, a contrast is noted between the types of identities we are expected to adopt as part of Capitalism. Most strikingly in relation to Barthes, we are told that it is a '…necessity for capitalism to describe what is real at the same time as it reveals it. In other words, the necessity of tricking the customer about the product.' (23:00).

This is familiar to a scholar of Barthes as describing a process of connotation. In the 1960 essay on photography, Barthes describes how the addition of a caption under a photograph can change the meaning of it entirely. (Barthes [1960], 1977, p.15). Godard refers to the photograph of Jane Fonda as physically mute, yet communicating by way of its caption. For the Western media the assertion was that Fonda was questioning rather than listening, despite it being self-evident to the contrary in the photograph. The connotation process has taken away some of the meaning of the photograph. Still, the face of Fonda imparts something insistent. The viewer is entreated to return to the photograph and take another look.

Godard and Gorin ask us to examine the aesthetic of the photograph. When Barthes refers to the jutting of the chin of Ivan, there is nothing as stark as that here. Fonda cannot help but appear slightly stylised, if only because we are appraised of the fact that she is a star but she is no way caricatured. What Godard and Gorin do draw attention to, is the shot position. It is an unusual one, angling up, impressing on us Fonda's elevated position. She is in the foreground. The contours of her face are visible. She has an evident look of concern on her face.

Godard and Gorin draw our attention to the figure in the background, an indistinct Vietnamese citizen. We do not know who he is, other than the information that was furnished to the Vietnamese press, that he was 'a devoted militant for peace in Vietnam'. (Godard in Godard: 1972b, 21:24). The Vietnamese press also tell us a little about the photographer, that he was 'one of the most well-known and moderate journalists' of the western media'. (21:17). As Godard and Gorin state, *L'Express* supply us with no information

as to whether or not the Vietnamese subject of the photograph is a well-known militant, or moderate militant in Vietnam. In fact, he is not mentioned. It is almost as if his capture in the photograph was accidental. The erasure of the identity of the Vietnamese man is two-fold erasure; his name was not provided in the captioning of the photograph in the Western press, and he fades to ontological indeterminacy in the framing of the shot. The shot selection sharpens the image of Jane Fonda and blurs the Vietnamese man's image. Godard states that this is preferable for the Vietnamese man who spends his life in sharp focus; the implication being either that the media coverage of the conflict in Vietnam has reached a ghoulish saturation point, or that the Vietnamese man's identity as a soldier is one where he is always in the crosshairs.

The viewer is being asked to assimilate an excess of information from an indistinct image. Reminiscent of the female mourner at Valunchik's funeral[71], the image of the man contains a sense of grief, the mouth of the person is agape in a contorted expression of pain. The fact of the open mouth identifies other facets: it is an underscoring of a type of hunger, for instance. The starkness of the open mouth against a distorted background indicates an unfulfilled desire to speak, yet the almost parodic shape of the mouth denotes an inability to adequately encapsulate all that might be said; or as Barthes says, the photographer has managed to:

> …blur the limit separating expression from disguise, but also to allow that oscillation succinct demonstration- an elliptic emphasis, if one can put it like that, a complex and extremely artful disposition (for it involves a temporality of signification). (57-58).

So, the signification could yet be one of irreducible anger; an encapsulation in one image of both anger and sadness that do not allow for precise recognition. Were we to first encounter this image in the Western press there would be no sense of historical context; here, also, is where that sense of indeterminacy lies, that is not fully alleviated with knowledge. The ultimate resolution of *Letter to Jane* is that Jane Fonda's support of the Vietnamese people does not achieve its aims not because of a lack of commitment to them but because the ruling class sets the ideological agenda and they increasingly do this through the media. Godard will along with his partner Anne- Marie Miéville interrogate this relationship between the media and ideology throughout the rest of the seventies.

3.6. French Third meaning Cinema in the pre-revolutionary period: a taxonomy

Barthes is in a sense marking the passing of a pre-revolutionary period passing as he writes the Third meaning essay for *Cahiers Du Cinema*. At this point the PCF have completed their accord with the establishment. De Gaulle dies in 1970 but the betrayal is fresh in the minds of the public. From Barthes' perspective there is no reason to yet abandon hope. The Third meaning is rethinking of a situation that is still in play. One of the key messages of Third meaning is not to trust bureaucratic institutions, as they have a tendency to become corrupt. Furthermore, that while these corrupt institutions exist, they can still be overturned if the populace see fit. Ivan the Terrible maintained his power through the subservice of his court, the ruling class maintained their power partially through the capitulation of the PCF. Barthes still had some faith that the French population could remake France and help

to reshape international politics.

A taxonomy of specifically French Third meaning situates itself in relation to the subversion of French structures of power. It interrogates the role of France in imperialism and how post-imperialist France could be reshaped in its relations through the relationship between the subjugated in France and the subjugated internationally. The cinema that Barthes examines in the Third meaning predominantly are artefacts of the previous generation, that are primarily quotations of historical fragments, that when held up to the light invoke different outcomes. In parodically displaying the physiognomy of the most ridiculous of rulers and the most cowering of their subjects we are invited to consider alternative possibilities for history, and therefore how the reification of the same stories of history without this subtextual, intertextual commentary risks repeating this reification.

The moments that Barthes alights on are chosen because they are recognisable moments of history where change is posited as question and, and as such, how history can take one path or another. There are more subtle examples of Third meaning where the meaning is predominantly in the aesthetic, but Barthes is trying to speak for his contemporaries by reusing the past. In using examples of films from several countries he is demonstrating the pan-cultural nature of Third meaning aesthetic as well as the ability it has to traverse history.

If what Barthes' definition of Third meaning is at times slippery, there are sufficient hints in some of his other texts as to his specific brand of political aesthetics. In an essay written for *Positif* entitled 'On left- wing criticism' section 3 has the heading 'Is there a left-wing aesthetic?'. His key research question in this section is: 'How could form itself not also be politically 'committed', or to put it more accurately, responsible?' Immediately Barthes identifies what he sees as a barrier to committed, affectual political aesthetics:

> here again we run up against the damage done by Zhdanovism. Because a particular form of realism was imposed as the expression of a particular politics, and because that realism has been generally recognised as having no aesthetic value, the conclusion has been reached that all politically orientated art is inevitably an impoverished art.….going to the opposite extreme, the gates have been opened wide to un-realism, as though, through a special privilege granted to the artist, 'form' somehow hovered in the sublime heavens of the Universal. (Barthes, R; Turner, C trans; 2015), p.84.

Barthes' general aesthetic position is one that centralises the importance of politics but never to the extent that it is dogmatic or takes on an entirely pedagogical political role. Moreover, it is clear that the representation of 'reality' as such is problematic since the essential components of that objective 'reality' are not accessible to an individual filmmaker. Barthes aesthetic is non-representational in the sense that though the images he is fascinated by tend towards the iconic, those iconic facets are often distorted. He provides many examples of this, not just amongst the central characters in the films he focuses on but amongst the supporting cast.

Peter Wollen strongly imputes in an essay from the Sonimage exhibition publication from MOMA in 1991 that Godard had a unity of purpose with Barthes' intellectual project, and in the process reveals a little of what might constitute Third meaning practice. The Dziga

Vertov period was part-characterised by the survival of old strategies, suggests Wollen, including ''real people'' mingled with fictional roles, genres [were] mixed in the same film, dialogue was replaced by direct address to the camera/audience, cinematic devices and techniques were foregrounded, image track and soundtrack were filled with quotations.' Bellour, R; Bandy, ML (eds) (1991); pp.187-pp.195; p.193. In addition to this, there was, as Raymond Bellour writes:

> also a new emphasis on the semiotic character of the cinema, it's codes and ''signifying practices'', which were explicitly interrogated within the films themselves. Here we see the influence of Roland Barthes…both in his inquiries into the rhetoric of the image and in his insistence on the necessity of verbal language to anchor the meaning of photographs. (193).

The figures of excess and lack continue to figure strongly in this period of Third meaning cinema. Phillipe Garrel's extraordinary *Le Revelateur* draws in the viewer through subtraction of an element that contemporary cinema goers have become accustomed to: sound. Because access to the sonic quality of the film has been removed; or more precisely was absent in the first place, there is a tendency for the viewer to 'fill in the gaps.' Patrick Ffrench views *Le Revelateur* as fulfilling the criteria that Giles Deleuze specifies in his *Cinema 2* book, that cinema can sometimes use the potential inherent in art to tap into the nervous system. In the first instance there is something Cartesian about this[72]:

> What it gives us is not bodies whose voices and whose language is lacking, not yet having been given or having been taken away, but these bodies before speech and discursive action, in what Deleuze calls pre-hodological space. (Ffrench, P; 2008, pp.159-pp.172)

There is an instinctual recognition of everyday practices in the film that contributes to this short circuit between the intention of the director and the affectual impact. There is a lexicon at work here; that could be called, apropos of Barthes' Gestus, the gestural language that at once evokes the general and the particular. Ffrench emphasizes the pre-cultural aspects of such gestures, that they exist in a state prior to codification:

> The gestures are those of ritual and ceremony, but before they have attained the rigidity demanded by the ceremony, before it becomes a spectacle and their meanings are ordained by scripture or allegory. They are everyday gestures, but gestures nevertheless liberated from habit and functionality (167).

There is a differential tension between the Deleuzian position and the Barthesian one with regard to the ceremonial and symbolism. Barthes has a particular interest in the spectacle and the ceremonial as potent referents of the mythological. Ffrench contends that the ceremonial denotes the transformative possibilities of the human and is less about the relation between the human and the historical but about the human world of relationships: 'The ceremonial body is not the figure of myth. For Deleuze, the ceremony at stake is an initiation which prepares the body for its transformation'. (167).
Le lit de la vierge (1969) is a continuation of the theme of the outsider, using a familiar template to convey the allusive and allegorical. The template of the story is the life of Jesus; just as in the accepted gospels the tale moves from Jesus as a young child to his ministry and death. The intertextual element here is straightforward but all the more powerful for it.

Contextually, the only reason the viewer knows that the tale of Jesus has moved to the contemporary age is due to an exchange which happens between Jesus and his mother in the first few minutes where it transpires that Jesus is a fugitive from East Berlin who is presumed dead. Jesus' appearance at the start of the film is discontinuous; for one, he bears wounds as if he has just been crucified, and is wearing a crown of thorns; for another, in a variation of Jesus' supposed last words in the gospels, he challenges God to manifest himself on earth in his place.

This opening scene is conducted on a white sheeted bed on a beach. The informational level conveys the displaced fact of a bed on a beach, and a woman joined by a man after a few seconds. She is in mourning black, he is in white. This then imparts the first bit of referential symbolism to the viewer. As the crown of thorns is produced, the viewer is offered an understanding of the referential symbolism of the man's role. Jesus is a revolutionary in *La Lit de la vierge*, which would even be obvious without the composite elements of his presentation. The referential symbolism demands that the viewer conflates aspects of religious symbolism with broader narratives of an evangelical quest for the salvation of mankind through its liberation.

The moment at which we finally believe that Jesus might have some charismatic power is in his ethical dealings with Mary Magdalene. When Jesus meets her, she is throwing stones into the pool of water. Here the stones are clearly a symbolic substitute for money that satirise the ludicrousness of exchange value on a number of levels. We are being asked to consider under what circumstances an inanimate object might represent the equivalence in value to a transaction of sex, of company, of time. We are also being asked to consider the bodily and emotional investment Mary Magdalene is being asked to place in pursuit of these stones which she then throws away. A third consideration is the arbitrariness of exchange value in a more general sense, and between types of exchange value. In Barthesian terms, the stones are connotative of an obvious meaning; they take the place of money. The fact that the stones are so precious and can yet be so easily thrown away without a care is an allusion to consumer society. The use of the inanimate as statues and stones as repositories of memory in Third meaning cinema is notable.

Les statues mereunt aussi (1953) by Marker and Alain Resnais evokes the art of permanence as a site of resistance and could certainly be viewed as Third meaning cinema. The epitome of the counternarrative is here not explicitly revolutionary nevertheless it acknowledges the presence of polysemous voices as part of the dialectic. Ultimately, the irreducible aspect in Third meaning discourse is its ability to produce alternate significations while capitalist ideology persists, that it is a taxonomy of counter-argument.

3.7. Godard/Mieville: Sonimage and video

'I was ill for a long time and it made me think of a factory'

Jean Luc Godard: *Numero Deux* (1975).

By 1973, European Maoism was on the wane as the early Mao supporter Simon Leys and others for the first time brought to light the corrupt and dictatorial extent of the Chinese regime, including the purging of intellectuals that was part of the Cultural Revolution.

Godard's political aesthetics were reflexive enough that they did not require being wedded to Maoism, but nevertheless political reorientation occurred for Godard in this period. Subsequent to his motorcycle accident there are already traces in *Tout Va Bien* of a reconsideration of his former adventurous spirit and traversal around the world and filmmaking in a variety of different places to take stock of what had happened in France in the years of the Dziga Vertov group. The sequel to this rumination comes with *Letter to Jane*. Both of these films demonstrate a more intense interest in the media, with *Letter to Jane* displaying a clear Barthesian analysis of the image. Barthes own disillusionment with Maoism begins after a visit to China in 1974. This too seems to focus his mind on the media, and the context in which we view it, a key example being the 'Leaving the movie theatre' essay.

The Sonimage films are a natural progression on from the narrative structure that Godard conceived in the last of his non-fiction cinema and managed to pick up successfully with *Tout Va Bien*. Godard is still making Third meaning cinema in the sense that the films are reflective of an objective reality, insofar as they interpolate into that reality and interrogate aspects of it. The quest for a unity between sound and image is reflected in the name of the project; this is more of a harmonious quest than the counterposed sound/image of *British Sounds*, for instance. His task in articulating a political narrative that might be called 'the epitome of the counternarrative' is made more difficult by his approach, which relies less on counterposing elements of the zeitgeist, as he had done previously in favour of an encapsulation of them.

Luckily for Godard, the technology driven media machine provided plenty of subject matter for new cinema, even if the political elements of his narratives became seemingly somewhat adjacent to an experience of the everyday. Peter Wollen sees elements of continuation in the Sonimage work with the Dziga Vertov collective work:

> Godard began to be seriously interested in video as a form and to develop an ongoing semiotic inquiry, not only into the meaning of photographic images as such, but also into the specific differences of video and film, as opposed to television and cinema. This period saw a revival of Godard's interest in semiotic investigation and the contrast between the cinematic and the televisual sign. Bellour, R; Bandy, ML (eds) (1991); pp.187-pp.195; p.193.

The *Moi Je* proposal ends up being the basis of the Sonimage project. Godard gave the bulk of it to Cinema Pratique. The content reflects a move away from internationalist concerns, 'towards an engagement with the domestic, with the local.' (White, J ;2013, p.46). The combination of storyboards and cut outs from newspapers and magazines have a resemblance to the feature- narrative style that Godard and Miéville were to try out in (White, J: 2013, p.46) their next three films, where *decoupage* takes the place of classical editing. This form of practice comes very close to Barthes. As Michael Witt states in 1998:

> For Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and the theorists of *Tel Quel* in the 1960s, textual disjunctions and ellipses were accorded enormous importance: if such shifts broke with conventional language (which, from a Poststructuralist perspective, underpins the entire Symbolic order), then they also served to forge a direct link between the modernist text and the actual

cultural and social revolution which, it was argued, it both prefigured and paralleled. (Witt, M; 1998 [Thesis] p.69).

Ici et Alleuirs (1976) is the first of the central trilogy that frames the Sonimage period. Just as *Letter to Jane* is a rethinking of *Tout Va Bien*, so *Ici et Ailleurs* is a reconsideration of *Jusquˈâ la victorie* (1970), an unfinished work from which five minutes of footage is used at the start of *Ici et Alleuirs*. The difference with the *Ici et Alleuirs* theoretical interrogation that follows is that Letter to Jane focuses on the broadly objective political question 'what part should intellectuals play in the revolution?', whereas Godard subjects himself and his former collective to an interrogation that is suffused with the subjective in *Ici et Alleuirs*. Even the title itself refers to Godard's guilt at the Dziga Vertov group's leaving the filmset of *Jusquˈâ a la Victorie* in Jordan to do some editing only to find that the subject of their documentary, the Palestinian liberation army, had been massacred on their return with almost all of those filmed having been killed. Here or elsewhere is an existential question that would have deepened still further for Godard after his near fatal motorcycle crash in 1971; but more specifically it again references the idea implicit in the *Letter to Jane* question, making it explicit that intellectuals, for all their well- meaning support, can sometimes intrude on the process of revolution.

The fact that Godard and Miéville were prepared to go back to this footage even after six years shows a bravery in asking themselves some difficult questions. In particular, they mock their naivete in believing that a Palestinian revolution was likely to follow a pre-existing model, when four dates flash up on the screen, accompanied by the ironic comment 'we must have made a mistake in our calculations'. The dates are 1789. 1968, 1936 and 1917 and refer specifically to the French Revolution, May 1968, the Popular Front and the Russian Revolution: all periods of revolution or near-revolution. (Morrey, D; 2005, p.106-107).

The discontinuous nature of splicing these two films together and then superimposing an interrogative and self-reflective structure is a stage further than any Soviet Third meaning cinema is able to manage. The preponderance of interest in machines in *Numero Deux* is not quite what it seems. This is a film about the production of identities. Godard seems no longer keen to achieve an overarching truth, yet there is a sense in which modalities of truth might yet be achieved. This is suggested by its aesthetic composition, which makes assimilation of all that is happening challenging. White says of *Numero Deux*: '*Numero Deux* is a difficult film to watch. That is not to say it is unpleasant or disagreeable. But it is hard, in that the screen is always divided into two or more smaller screens with entirely different images, and some of these screens have densely layered images.' (White, J ;2013, p73).

The process of 'Ostrananie' is at work in *Numero Deux*. Just as Godard's best films of the 1960's seemed to be somehow more than part of the zeitgeist yet prescient, so *Numero Deux* has that relationship to the 1970's. A domestic setting should ordinarily evoke homeliness, but this is a domestic setting where infidelity and alienation have driven wedges between the protagonists. Ironically, *Numero Deux* gives Godard a chance to depict work appositely for perhaps the first time as the closing scenes depict Godard finalising the production of his film. This intertextual and self-referential ending is redolent of a continuation of third meaning techniques, and also has a modernist cast about it, as White

states: 'This is the basic modernist position, one defined by an awareness of the inadequacies of form and a consequent self-conscious approach toward them, but still containing a residue of belief in the abilities of those forms.' (White, J; 2013, p.77). Godard became increasingly interested in the possibility of home video at this time, even if his take on technology was somewhat dystopian in *Numero Deux*. In 1973 he had said:

> '…technical matters became important once I realized that I did not know anything, and the technical level of most technicians is very low. But there is a way of speaking of technical matters: saying that it is the materialized code of a certain social desire, in as much to speak of machines helps you to understand yourself as a machine.[73]' (Godard in White, J :2013, pp.165-pp.172).

Here, a Barthesian cinematic code takes on a psychoanalytic aspect. Human existence is so suffused with technology that it becomes habitual to view ourselves only as an appendage of the machine, one step removed from our species being. The overlaid naturalism of capital alienates ourselves from our true selves and we can only see ourselves as a distorted mirror of our real image. If all this suggests Godard has been feverishly reading Lacan's *Ecrits*, there is also the sense of the capitalist machine as far from being a neutral influence on technology. He states that 'the real popular cinema is the ''home movie'', but also that this is 'something that makes the Kodak corporation happy'. (White, J: 2013, pp.165-pp.172, appendix 1).

In 1982, Godard makes a convincing attempt to revivify Third meaning, with *Passion*. Jerzy Radziwilowicz plays an artist with his own name whose project is to make a film, also called *Passion*, of tableau vivants of paintings by some of the old masters, including El Greco, Rubens, Rembrandt, Delacroix and Goya. The problematic of *Passion* is to make the viewer consider the impossibility of finishing the film and relate it in sympathetic terms to the Solidarity movement. The intertextual element of *Passion* is clear, and the aesthetic recalls Sergei Eisenstein. Radziwilowicz was a carefully chosen lead actor, having appeared in Andrez Wadja films such as *Man of Iron*, and therefore was strongly associated with the Solidarity movement already. (Mazierska, E ;2011, p.169-p172). Ewa Mazierska is entirely apposite in her analysis when she suggests:

> Radzilowicz was so strongly identified with these roles that he became one of the symbols of Solidarity along with its real leaders. I suggest that in *Passion*, Godard wanted to check what happens to a symbol when it is dislocated to a foreign soil and to a different type of cinema. (Mazierska, E :2011, p.169).

Godard is still making films of resonance at this stage that aren't confined to explorations of meaning at the expense of a political narrative, contrary to what White suggests of the Sonimage films of the 1970's (White; 2013, p.87). While Godard is considering video as a means of future dissemination, Chris Marker is already exploring the possibilities of the digital.

3.8. The recapitulation of The Archive

Godard's entire oeuvre is the ceaseless trawling over both essential and inessential moments alike, to pore over them and set them next to each other. He juxtaposes high and

low culture; he captures the antagonism of opposites in their historical reflection and in their moment of decision. Godard's medium was the archive image before he even made declared archival cinema. He realised the iconography of images was in the grand gesture and its base opposite. This is one of the qualities that makes his approach so similar to Roland Barthes. Nevertheless, Alain Badiou suggested that Godard set himself somewhat of an impossible task to chart the history of cinema when he undertook the project in 1988:

> Godard's subject was said to be the genealogy of cinema's power. But isn't it just as much a question of its powerlessness? The impossibility of filming certain things has always haunted Godard: the factory, sex, extermination. So, the aim of this enormous palimpsest, the ''film'' might be to identify, by using the cumulative resources of omnipotence (we can make whatever we want of the conglomeration of images and sounds) the point of impotence, which in the end is cinemas entire real, and the ultimate reason for its downfall. Badiou, A [1998] (2013): 'Surplus seeing; Jean Luc Godard' pp.132-pp.137; p.132-p.133).

 Even the title of the project was recognition that it is doomed to fall short of fulsome representation of cinema. Thus, a *historie(s) of cinema* is one in which the attempt to express an authorial voice has been surrendered to a reality in which a panoply of narrative streams run concurrently. The website 'senses of cinema' encapsulates a description of the structuration of Godard's *l' historie(s) du cinema* that is strikingly analogous to the filmic qualities of Barthes' Third meaning films:

> As is often the case with critical discussion of Godard and his films, writing on *Histoire(s)* emphasises the works difficult-to-summarise multiplicity of concerns and techniques coupled with an experimental leaning that resists being reduced to a grammatical formal strategy[74] (A. Brown, https://senses of cinema.com, March 2008).

In other words, Godard's work is affectual but he cannot be indicted as an auteur with a clearly defined political programme; he inhabits the world of ideas- advancing them by turns in a tentative or occasionally heavy-handed way: nevertheless, he cannot be reduced to the appellation of Maoist, or Avant-Gardist. The essay goes on to list the clear oppositions Godard constructs in his cinema, including: 'overriding the divide between high and low culture; merging theory and practice; and equating reality with the image'[75]. (Brown, A: 2008).

Moreover, there can be detected 'a denial of the opposition between fiction and documentary'[76] (Brown: 2008) that had first been explored comprehensively in his Dziga Vertov films, and in the later Sonimage films. Juxtaposition agglomerates the authentic and inauthentic and blends them together, so that the original separation is not clear. This methodology is not relativistic for Godard, but a process of deciding what to keep for the next synthesis of images. There is no harm in exposing the 'junk' as long as the best ideas are retained: a Hegelian *Salon de Refuses*. Badiou suggests that he points to the future in foreclosing just before the end of the film by using an intertitle stating 'THIS WAS CINEMA':

> through his zeal to infinitely complicate (a baroque style a la Liebniz: the monads of cinema) the foldings and unfoldings of the image and the real; through his exposing of what every fraud takes away with it in terms of truth, the artist ushers in a new age, even if he doesn't know what it is. Badiou, A [1998] (2013): 'Surplus seeing', p.135.

Godard was to spend years disavowing the digital when it would have allowed him a chance to update his *L'Historie Du Cinema*. While Godard was tentatively looking for something in the digital that would theoretically cohere with his practice, his collaborator on *Cinétracts* forged ahead regardless. Chris Marker's *Immemory* is a CD-rom that is technically all but obsolete now. It collects together a collage-like array of items accessed by Marker on his travels. The liner notes that Marker wrote himself suggest a quest to establish an authentic image through interrogation of the trace:

> About *Immemory*s structure, all I can do is show a few explorer's tools, my compass, my telescopes, my jug of drinking water. As compasses go, I went looking quite far back in history to take my bearings. Curiously, there is nothing in the recent past that really offers us models of what computer navigation on the theme of memory could be. Everything is dominated by the arrogance of classical narrative and the positivism of biology (Marker, C: 1998, *Immemory* liner notes [accessed online 24/11/2017]).

This Marker quote suggests that he saw the imperative need for a recapitulation of the archive should be orientated around a panoply of voices rather than established capitalist and colonial narratives. This archive would admit the full diversity of lived human culture, and no longer assume an authorial and authoritative voice from a narrow viewpoint. The autobiographical element to *Immemory* is here an element of resistance; it uses modern tools to assert the importance of the life of an individual and their place in society. The curator here is Marker himself and the archive is not a posthumous assemblage of artifacts collated to represent him; it is his selection of snapshots, and that is what he important; he must tell his story.

The autobiographical had always been important to Godard too, but he slowly came to accept that there was a way of utilising modern technology to interpolate his story into the films he made, that his story of resistance could be told through the visual archive, just as the visual archive could tell ever more stories of the people.

For all Godard's initial disavowal of the digital medium, he initiates digital Third meaning in film theoretically when he states in *Letter to Jane* that he wants to analyse the photograph by way of a 'photographic molecule of structure' and 'a kind of social nerve cell'. (Godard: 1972, 16:34). Godard was theorising the social body in terms of the pixel before such a thing even existed. The following chapter will continue to explore Godard and Marker's explorations into Third meaning and look at how Barthes conceptions of the neutral and the punctum; variants of third meaning might be applied to their late period films. The relationship between art film and digital Third meaning will also be more broadly considered as this was the genesis of its manifestation.

Chapter four

Introduction: 'Time is out of joint'

'What is passed by the Cinema and what is still marked by it? What do I have to do with this? All this light? All this darkness?'

Jean- Luc Godard, *L'Historie du Cinema* (1988).

The change from analogue to digital cinema was, if not one of necessity, cogent with the particular capitalist regime of accumulation in the media having shifted decisively to one that favoured digital technology during the course of the 1990's. This was a consequence partly of a move away from the cinema as the main locale in which film was screened. 'Cinema' has been commonplace in people's homes for some time, from analogue to video, and more recently through digital programming, streaming and mixed-media services such as Netflix. Filmmakers that had utilised Third meaning as a political aesthetic now had to adapt to the digital medium or make films that self-consciously referenced the obsolescence of analogue media.

Barthes discusses analysing the narrative and compositional aspects of cinema purely at a level of critique. It is in the second and third levels of filmic meaning that Barthes contextualises Third meaning beyond cinema. When he references obvious meaning as containing 'historical grammar' Barthes' considerations of radical film as a potential conveyance of a 'new language' become explicit. Obvious meaning is also the 'natural presentation to the mind'- this has some equivalence to the 'Kantian sublime'.[77] This is at the level of the affectual. *Significance* or obtuse meaning are the alternate nomenclature Barthes also uses for Third meaning.

Third meaning exceeds the copy, that is, it proffers more than the scene's existence, invites an interrogative reading; but exceeds the dramatic without coming down to issues of physical obstinacy. The external world is the inescapable rubric by which Third meaning makes itself understandable. The referent acts as an anchor. The zeitgeist implicates itself in Third meaning 'models' that are specific to their time, with general features that transcend time.

A central tenet of Third meaning discourse is that it arrives as a methodology and practice at a point of fracture in the univocity of the political strategies of the ruling class and consequently in the administration and dissemination of culture. The digital extends this point of fracture, by putatively opening up possibilities to convey a multiplicity of vantage points from a vast range of heretofore unheard voices. The production of enormous amounts of media, by large companies and small collectives or individuals means political, historical and culturally informed cinema is only a small amount of output, in competition with entertainment that often is not particularly insightful about contemporary life. Nevertheless, democratisation of the ability to produce, distribute and disseminate films are increased affordances of digital cinema. Whereas a small percentage of people, largely from the western world can afford to hire a professional cast and camera crew, around half of the world can afford a modern camera phone. This is no guarantee of quality image capture, or that a film will be seen by many; however, the chance of producing political cinema has

increased exponentially.

With the advent of the digital, the emphasis of Third meaning discourse has shifted towards an account of media as a vehicle for ruling class ideology. Harun Farocki has shown how the manipulation of media can both favour the ruling class, and also be used to compile a counter-narrativized response to their prevailing media domination. Hito Steyerl; the avant-Garde filmmaker, has built on this work and added a poetic resonance to it. More recently Göran Olsson has produced *The Black Power Mix Tape 1967-75* and *Concerning Violence*, two films that recontextualize countercultural movements. From the previous generation of filmmakers Chris Marker managed to bridge the transition from analogue Third meaning to digital Third meaning with a series of films that explicitly referenced a theory of the phenome including *Theory of sets* and *Three video haikus* before his death in 2013. Jean Luc Godard continues to produce a range of both narrative fiction films and documentaries that utilise digital Third meaning to critique the ideological superstructure of capitalism.

Other filmmakers such as Andrei Tarkovsky and Mike Figgis have also shown how utilisation of elements of Third meaning can subvert mainstream film. In this chapter I will apply both 'classical' Third meaning and Barthes' later conceptual variants, 'the neutral' and 'the punctum' to a variety of modern political films and also discuss Julia Kristeva's role in the formulation and development of Third meaning and the point at which her analysis changes slightly to one more substantially informed by psychoanalysis. A more general theoretical stock-taking of the late 20th and early 21st centuries precede an analysis of each of the filmmakers in this chapter. Amongst the important considerations are what the theoretical and cultural context of the 1960s produced, how this fed into social movements; and what reaction to and reframing of this theory and cultural politics meant for a nascent digital culture. This includes reflections on psychoanalysis and postmodernism as concepts both internal to and external of digital Third meaning cinema; and more general questions of aesthetic presentation and the foregrounding of the documentary medium within digital Third meaning practice.

4.1. Third meaning, the counterculture and digital cinema

Visual culture continues to assume a centrality in modern life. This process grows rather than diminishes with the advent of digital technology. There are a number of formative criteria that led to digital cinema and the survival of Third meaning cinema through this transition. The first point to make is that the lifeblood of Third meaning as an approach to cinema is its attachment to the existence of a counternarrative at any given time or conjuncture. That is to say that the oppressive conditions under which many people exist require reflection and articulation in the cultural field, of which cinema has become an increasingly important part. Yet, more than that, digital Third meaning has been catalysed by oppressive conditions and been a catalyst in the struggle against these conditions, as was the case in the pre-digital age. More than ever, technology pervades our lives both in work and in leisure time. Moreover, it simultaneously insinuates itself into our consciousness. There is a symbiosis to this in the 'soft' sense and the beginnings of a cognitive 'hard wiring' in a technological sense; the slow creep of cybernetics into everyday life:

> Cyberneticians raise a certain number of questions for discussion. What indexes make it possible to distinguish an automaton from a living creature (leaving aside operations that would destroy their object, submitting it to radiation etc, etc)? Are these indexes on the physiological level, the psychological level, or the social level? (Lefebvre, H: [1965] 2016, p.163).

Under the capitalist cultural paradigm, the impetus to innovate is predicated partly on anticipating what the consumer needs, and also on generating needs. In the case of cinema, many innovations of the last century have been present in some form for a long time; 3D technology has been available for over ninety years. However, in terms of an ideological and financial commitment, the roll-out of digital technology across multiple forms of media has been a determined process that is designed to establish it as a key mode of not just representation, but of *living*. This almost certainly has to do with its profitability. The ability to make low- cost media on digital platforms is key, though this creates an interesting dilemma for capitalism. In making media production accessible to many millions of people, capitalism potentially cedes ground in the ideological control of the means of production. This does not mean that the average unsupported filmmaker has the resources at their disposal of a major studio; but they can make and distribute a film cheaply to a huge audience by way of streaming. Third meaning therefore is no longer limited to a set of counter-narrativized precepts that are only available to a supported, well- known filmmaker with all of their resources. It becomes an accessible template that has the potential to 'go viral'. There is, however, a countervailing trend and that is that low budget, curated films tend not to have the same potential to be picked up by the media or the film industry as 'meme' trends.

Philosophically, the roots of digital cinema coincide with the birth of cinema as a whole. This is the period in which Henri Bergson and the phenomenologists are writing. Mike Figgis goes back further in time, and works Leibniz's monads into the narrative of his film *Timecode*[78] . *Timecode* was the first American studio production executed entirely in digital (Fabe: 2004, p.230), and the first mainstream digital film to be shot all in one take. Using Able Gance's split screen technique, Figgis positioned cameras at four different locations and set them running. The action avers on one of these screens at any one time. A staged 'earthquake tremor' (Figgis, M:2000, 11:50) signals reorientation around the next highlighted screen. The actors 'hear' this tremor; for the next actors in the sequence, it becomes their cue to act around a limited set of instructions that form a loose limbed 'script'. The 'earthquake tremor' as a Brechtian positioning device prompts philosophically rich dialogue from the actors. In one of these scenes, a film executive gives an impassioned speech about how Eisenstein and Vertov were the vanguard of their age, about how capitalism has since absorbed all technological revolutions but that with digital video there is chance to go forward; but by going forward we need to go back to thinking of film as matter, a Liebnizian monadology' (Figgis, M: 2000, 1:18:30).

This arresting pedagogical shock produces what seems to be the very opposite of spontaneity, yet it is very effective in giving the impression of spontaneity. The long take component in *Timecode* is the conceptual evolution of Godard/ Gorin's utilisation of the form in *Weekend* and *Tout Va Bien*. By further layering that technique with a Gance-

informed split-screen, a formalistic intertextuality is invoked. A multi-media intertextuality is also a key component of the follow-up *Hotel*. The film concerns a restaging of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* play. After a time, a sense of what is real in the narratives, and what separates them becomes blended; it becomes unclear if the actors in the film are acting out the play or becoming the characters in Webster's play within the film. Some scenes are very visceral; this dovetails with the play itself and also recalls the more grotesque aspects of Third meaning that Barthes mentions when providing a couple of examples from *Ivan the Terrible*.

Mike Figgis' cinema texts are Third meaning works, but in a pared down, pedagogical way. In some sense he reimagines what formalism there is in the Soviet filmmakers practice. There is a very direct style: everything is intended. In terms of imagery, his memorable use of Jeanne Tripplehorn's features, framed in panic in *Timecode* is effective and has the feel of Sergei Eisenstein's iconic close-ups. Figgis' films set somewhat of a precedent for mainstream digital cinema. His narratives contain determinations external to the main action that intertextually penetrate the plot. This fourth wall feature is just as present in many mainstream digital animations as anything that is suggestive of the avant-Garde. What sets Figgis' work apart in the early years of the digital age is the blending of surprise elements into the fabric of the film so it is difficult to separate fiction and fact. The ontological shock value is to question what you have just seen as a viewer:

> There's always some ingenious way of dealing with reality. One of the main structural points of new digital film-making is the way it has more of a relationship with documentary than with the conventional feature film, even though, at the end of the day, it's a drama. But audiences have become more familiar-and I think, much more comfortable- with naturalism in terms of the environment than with fake naturalism, as characterised by Hollywood film-making. (Figgis: 2007, p.55).

The blended nature of reality in Third meaning cinema, and it's liminal siting between states of reality and unreality is as much a statement of authenticity as an attempt to affect the viewer's cognition and disposition. This is a continuing theme in Godard's work and also in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979) where the zone represents not just a physical place but a contemplative dream state, an arena of conceptual reflection. Film literacy depends to an extent on expectation and predication, however. A combination of the strictures of environment in which cinema is usually shown and established narrative tropes lead to expectations about duration. In terms of the generalised narrative, films are expected to have a linear start, middle and end, with the closing scenes expected to perform a resolution. The long takes made easy by the digital allow for a greater number of possibilities to occur. A certain amount of authorial control may be lost inside the frame; yet the digital's increased capabilities in extending the frame through ease of repositioning[79] is another opportunity to inscribe the polysemous possibilities of a Third meaning approach. Herbert Marcuse was an influential theorist that was both a touchstone for the counterculture in the 1960s and also foregrounded a sense of the importance of control and utilisation of technology in his work. In *One Dimensional man* he states:

> Today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine process and over the technical organization of the apparatus. The government of advanced and advancing industrial societies can maintain and secure itself only when it succeeds in mobilising, organizing and exploiting the technical, scientific and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilisation. And this productivity mobilises society as a whole, above and beyond a particular or individual group interests. (Marcuse, H: 1964, p.3).

A key aspect of controlling and administering culture is making it intelligible. This is not just a matter of either understanding culture abstractly or feeling it keenly; but a combination of both. A digital Third meaning approach is a visual and affectual *dispositif*[80] that orients the viewer towards processing and prioritising selected images from the miasma of images that everyday life demands we deal with. *Dispositif* is more accurate in conveying the connectedness of the 'nub of facets' that make up Third meaning than Barthes own descriptive term is. What is more, there is an active element to it. Adrian Martin describes it: 'the arrangement of diverse elements in such a way as to trigger, guide and organise a set of actions. Michel Foucault stressed the heterogeneity of those elements-bits and pieces from all over the place- and thus grasped the logic of a *dispositif* as the 'nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogenous elements' (Foucault: 1980, p.194 quoted in Martin, A: 2014, p.179).

The particular admixture that informs Barthes *dispositif* is borne out of questions foregrounded by the events of 1968 and the immediate aftermath. Though Barthes does not apriori question the truth content of received Bourgeois narratives, he sees them as contingent. This contingency within ideology is a crucial feature of Third meaning's articulation. The counternarrative of the 1960s is born simultaneously out of an opposition to Bourgeois univocity but also out of a questioning of Enlightenment values more generally; one strand of thought advanced by Adorno and Horkheimer in the wake of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia points to Enlightenment rationality as a logic of domination (Harvey, D: 1989, p.13-p.14). Barthes Third meaning does not question Enlightenment rationality as such, but occupies a position where the application of that rationality is keenly observed. In showing the ideological counterweights within examples of political cinema he is able to show that a presentation of the dialectic can orient a viewer to adopting a critical political perspective.

4.2. The language of digital cinema

> 'Society imposes divided languages on us (we live in a division of language which is a sign of our society's alienation). But, when we place ourselves outside certain types of language- we should do this, and we all do it-we mustn't forget that we all do this from the standpoint of another language, never a nonlanguage. (Barthes, R, Duflot, J [interviewer]: 'The fatality of culture, the limits of counterculture', originally published in *Politique- Hebdo*, 13/1/1972; from *The Grain of the voice*, pp.150-pp.156).

Barthes' conceptualisation of Third meaning as the basis of a filmic language, albeit a provisional one means he is a key figure in poststructuralism as well as in the area of countercultural media. He invents a new language for cinema, one that identifies the underlying capacity for cinema to represent a multiplicity of voices; but also, the capacity for

cinema to be controlled by that multiplicity of voices. Barthes does not fit easily amongst the pantheon of poststructuralists. He is a subtle iconoclast. Despite appearances, he doesn't do deconstruction in the way that Derrida does. He does not have a systematic way of approaching his many cultural interests in the way that Michel Foucault approaches his work on society's constructions of the pathological or on the history of sexuality. The difficulty with Barthes is that his concepts are irreducible to single definitions, and reappear as composites as his theory develops.

Barthes is mindful of continually avoiding a fixity in his use of concepts because of the precise problem he highlights in the above interview; in a capitalist society there is an inevitability, he suggests, that Avant Garde activity will be 'recuperated' as he puts it; transformed into something that can be put into the service of capitalism. In terms of cinema, he says this process is 'even more pronounced' (151). Jean-Luc Godard predicts the recuperation of the ideas of the counterculture in the factory bosses' soliloquy in *Tout Va Bien*, as previously noted: Barthes is wary about the self-same thing in this interview on the counterculture[81]; there is a possibility that in making concepts too readily discernible, they become shared with the ruling class. Third meaning escapes fixity as a set of ideas because it is not the just out of view and over the shoulder, but also the wink and the proletarian fist; communication borne of common experiences; a language of the everyday that Stalin for example, failed to initially decode.

One key problematic in trying to apply Barthes' approach to cinema is terminology: crucially; how the terms Barthes uses were meant, the cultural context in which they were conceived; and how their usage has developed. With regard to the concepts of analogue and digital, Barthes uses the terms more in conjunction with language: in fact, a specific use in relation to cinema is hard to pin down, even where the essay is principally concerned with it. This isn't necessarily a problem; in outlining a view of film-as-language, Barthes conceptual alignment of language with analogue and digital as binary oppositions is useful to make a Third meaning point: if analogue and digital are aspects of a dialectic, there should be no conceptual or technical barriers to the implementation and transmission of political material across these media from one to the other.

Third meaning as a corpus of ideas within that loose-limbed formulation is conceptually fulsome. The descriptive traits Barthes applies to Third meaning in its *signifiance*/obtuse meaning phase are numerous. Complexly, some traits conceptually overlap; there are around two dozen, of which about half could be said to be conceptually distinct; though most of these traits too are related. What is striking about Third meaning theory is where the blunted image 'seems to open the field of meaning totally, that is infinitely' (Barthes: [1970] 1977, p.55). This appears not to be a relativist impetus but a technical consequence. Barthes wants to draw attention to neglected voices and forgotten images. This in itself isn't relativism of the Postmodern variety that consigns metanarratives to history. Rather, it acknowledges the superimposition of bourgeois capitalist ideology heretofore as a received metanarrative that blurs clear distinctions The clearest demarcation of Third meaning as radical aesthetic and political theory is where Barthes calls Third meaning 'proletarian ethnography'. He is keen to highlight the critical potentiality of what might be called the 'contemporary everyday'. The value of this radical aesthetic is to provide a counterpoint to

established bourgeois capitalist ideology. When Barthes refers to meaning opening out, it is a challenge to oppressed people everywhere to re-inscribe meaning for a new age.

Since the digital in its modern filmic utilisation hadn't occurred when Barthes was addressing Third meaning and related concepts of political aesthetics in the 1960s and 1970s, where might his conception of the digital have come from when its fixity was more in question? As late as 2012 Charlie Gere was elucidating the many different definitions of the digital in the Oxford English dictionary in his book *Community without community in digital culture*. When Gere cites a definition of the digital as 'designating a computer which operates on a date in the form of digits or similar discrete data…Designating or pertaining to a recording in which the original signal is represented by the spacing between pulses rather than a wave, to make it less susceptible to degradation' (Gere, C: 2012, p7). Barthes' techno-enunciative binary of phenomes and genomes comes to mind. The early theorisation of digital cinema allowed for the eking out of a radical space in which to practice it. In the literal sense this meant showcasing it in art galleries. Malcolm Le Grice was one of the early digital cinema theorists who also incorporated the digital into his work. In an essay 'The History we need' he writes that a 'continuing, consistent, and explicit rejection of the dominant narrative cinema' has been a feature of countercultural cinema, and uses quotes from Dziga Vertov, Fernand Leger and Peter Gidal.[82]He continues:

> On the one hand, this rejection is of the commercial cinema institution with its constriction of independent experiment and radical concept by the stranglehold high finance has on production, publicity and the presentation system- a deep cultural control. On the other hand, and clearly undifferentiated from it, it is the rejection of forms and devices of narrative- identification with characters, story structure extending to a more general rejection of work whose images are broadly 'expressionistic' or 'symbolic'. That the dominant cinema has grown up on the basis of the forms of identificatory narrative indicates a correspondence between them and the social effects desired (consciously or otherwise) by that sector of society controlling its finance (Le Grice, M: [1979] 2001, p.31)

This passage is explicit in outlining a particular logic governing a dominant film language, but clear also that a counterpoised language has been a historical facet of film since the silent age and remains so as digital film becomes a significant medium. It also very strongly implies a regime of cultural production and accumulation that could be seen as an important subsidiary aspect of David Harvey's characterisation of regimes of economic production and accumulation within capitalism. Yet the administered quality of ideology here seems a little too overarching. The passage somewhat diminishes the agency of radical filmmakers, and ignores the reasons filmmakers did not revolt wholescale against the transition to digital, which surely could have been possible. Conceptually Le Grice is very precise in his terminology when dealing with this continuum of countercultural cinema. The simple designatory phrase he uses throughout the essay is contemporary practice. Contemporary practice is this sense is not cinema that just reflects the conditions of an age, though it can also be said to do that. Rather it is film that makes a decisive intervention in the conditions in which it prevails. There is also a clear rejection of techno-fetishization in Le Grice's disavowal of cinema 'essences' in terms of both equipment and presentation:

> Instead of treating the attention to the photo cinematic basis of film or any other definable aspects of its machinery or materials in terms of fundamentals or essences of cinema, they should be considered instead as problematic predominant of the medium in its historical placement and signification. (Le Grice, M in O'Pray, M: 1996, p.201)

The realm of aesthetics is a secondary political manifestation of conceptual tendencies in Capitalism. It is a symptom. This is a slight difference in tone to Barthes, who seems to regard the iconic aspect of cinema[83] as having a certain fixity within it that also helps us see beyond that iconic aspect to the real conditions of capitalism[84]. Clear from Le Grice's account also is the importance of cultural and historic specificity in forming versions of representation in cinema. This is less of a divergence from Barthes. Le Grice's underwritten position is that the digital format is not markedly different in its efficacy for conveying capitalistic or countercultural discourses. Yet this bypasses Barthes' continual references to a digital or quasi-digital code[85]. The nagging suggestion in Barthes writing is of an affinity between the digital and cinema that was only beginning to be operationalised at the time of Barthes' death in 1980. Media, as a growing industry in the 1960s was bound to mutate; as one of the few arenas where the populace could keep pace or even innovate, side-stepping or pre-empting capitalist innovation[86]. At times the innovations of the modern age have been used to highlight the shortcomings and injustices that are a part of that society. Digital filmmaking has the potential to undercut, subvert and circumvent those challenges but it is one front of many where the struggle for ideological supremacy between the ruling class and the ruled looks as if it may continue for some time. Jean Baudrillard believed capitalism sustains its power though invoking the hyperreal and the simulated. Whilst a modern simulacrum no longer achieves full ideological coverage, Baudrillard argues that:

> …'reality' is a particular form of simulacrum produced western culture in the rupture of the symbolic order. When the 'real' as a particular simulacrum of a specific historical period itself disappears (along with the dialectic, history, 'man') a new phase of simulation occurs, the hyperreal, since the 'referent' is no longer imagined as the 'exterior' (though it was a simulacrum, but as the model 'interior' to culture (but one which dissolves the border zones, and the order of law, and thus paradoxically approaches the schizophrenic state of utter loss of the subject into total exteriority) the triumph of the code, and the structural law of value. (Gane, M: 1991, p.162, f8, summary of Baudrillard, J: 1988, p.133).

The idea of replacement histories that subsume the agents of historical change is nothing new in culture; it is, for example a familiar trope in science fiction novels and pre-digital film. In *Film after Film; or, what became of 21st century Cinema*? J. Hoberman approaches the idea of films that evoke a cyborg simulacrum, populated by anthropomorphic replacements for humans. Two of the examples he cites are pre-digital. Indeed, he notes that in *Tron* (1982) the action takes place entirely in a supposed computer world, 'where all of the characters, except the Hacker Flynn (Jeff Bridges), were in longstanding Disney tradition-anthropomorphized computer code' (Hoberman, J: 2013, p.8) The other example he cites is that of *Jurassic Park*. Here he draws on the writing of Lev Manovich. Manovich wrote that *Jurassic Park* shows 'the future of sight itself': 'Just as Socialist realist paintings blended the perfect future with imperfect reality, *Jurassic Park* blends the future

supervision of computer graphics with the familiar vision of the film image…' (Manovich in Hoberman, J: 2013, p.9) Conversely, an approximation of the past returns to remind us that the digital is a transient moment in the present[87].

Guy Debord stated just before the advent of 24-hour news in 1988:

> What is false creates taste and reinforces itself by knowingly eliminating any possible reference to the authentic. And what is genuine is reconstructed as quickly as possible, to resemble the false. (Debord, G: [1988] 1998, p.50).

Perhaps it should follow that being confronted with an approximation of truth would necessarily provoke a political response. This is assuming that an aesthetic can harness the qualities of a time appositely including the approximation of the voice of the ruling class as well as the response of a counterculture. The second and more complex assumption is the one that the viewer will not just passively accept this tableau but feel moved to act on it. The task of a digital Third meaning is thus to reaffirm the ontology of the subject as a political actor.

4.3. Misrecognition: reflecting/refracting the Sublime

In order to move from a state where consciousness is passive to one where it engages with political cinema initially requires a step away from the image, since: 'as Berg has aptly suggested, the Barthesian Third meaning does not reside in the image at all but in the highly variable and contingent relation between the image and the beholder' (Yacavone, K: 2012, p.142) In as much as there can ever be said to be a 'psychic zeitgeist' of a particular time, we can recognise that particular characteristics of culture belong loosely to particular age; shaped in part by the political economy of the age: and these manifest in specific ways due to cultural and historical particulars.

As such, digital art from the proto- digital and early digital period tends to have an ontological and psychoanalytic focus that stages a subjective rumination on the affectual impact of capitalism's recovery and reconfiguration as a neo-liberal economic system with new imperialist and cultural strategies subsequent to the period of challenges it faced from the countercultural movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Some cultural discourse, particularly in the nineties began to focus on a fin de siècle aesthetic in cultural discourse that exemplified a totality of experience under late capitalism that was technologically sublime. An evocation of this experience was staged in several ways, and the intersection of what Raymond Williams has called a 'structure of feeling' accompanying the reconfiguration of capitalism at this time gave form to what could be called 'Postmodern' film or art. The curiousness of this is the fact that the postmodern age as such stopped being talked about so widely in discourse at about the time that digital film began to be ubiquitous as a mode of conveyance, though putatively the aesthetic of digital has more in common with a capitalist mode of accumulation that stages the society of the spectacle.

Where a film aspires to no more than a simple presentation of a sublime aesthetic is where the visibility of Capitalism disappears. A highly aestheticized sublime serves an obsfuscatory purpose that blends fact and fiction. A Third meaning evocation, meanwhile, has aesthetic qualities that tend towards the self-identical but distort that essentialism. The overlaid

intertextual narrative of a Third meaning film simultaneously provides a critique of form. So, the digital as techno-fetishism is immediately subject to enquiry as digital Third meaning cinema.

Deleuze's conception of the periodization of cinema and its aesthetic components is worth noting at this point. from predominantly organising around a 'movement-image' that begins from an 'objective' perspective and: 'In so far as it relates movement to a whole which changes, it is the mobile section of a duration'. (Deleuze, G [1983] 1986, p.23). Deleuze, like Barthes is interested in sign production within the image. Deleuze proposes three moments in the development of the movement image. These sub-divisions are: the Perception-image, for which is used an example from Lubitsch's *The man I killed* where a perspectivism that starts from ostensible objectivity results in an engineered reveal; the action-image, exemplified by *Dr Mabuse the Gambler*, where segmentation and synchronisation of the images serve as signs; and the affective montage that Dreyer achieves in *The Passion of Joan of Arc* through framing gives it the appellation of an affective film. (Deleuze, G [1983], 1986, p.71-72).

Helpfully, Deleuze establishes a relationship between these types of movement image and aesthetic shot prioritisation:

…three kinds of spatially determined shots can be made to correspond to these three kinds of varieties: the long-shot would be primarily a perception image; the medium shot an action-image; the close-up an affection image. (Deleuze, G: [1983] 1986, p.72).

Vertov and Eisenstein are brought into play around this formulation, Vertov named as the 'inventor of properly perceptive montage' but Eisenstein implicated as a theoretical unifier of practice:

according to one of Eisenstein's instructions, each of these movement -images is a point of view on the whole of the film, a way of grasping this whole, which becomes affective in the close-up, active in the medium shot, perceptive in the long-shot-each of these shots ceasing to be spatial in order to become itself a 'reading' of the whole film'. (72).

Where Deleuze differs from Barthes in this comprehensive attachment of a signification system is that his 'thirdness' exhausts itself with the crisis of the action image; entirely before the contemporary period that Deleuze states is demarcated by the 'time image'. Deleuze believes the new period of filmmaking interventions must attempt to fill out the void left by the exhaustion of the movement-images' relationship to signification.

Key to understanding Deleuze's 'thirdness' and comparing it to Barthes' Third meaning is to understand that both are presumed to evoke a representational reality. Thirdness evokes this representational reality through 'relation' (Deleuze: [1983] 1986, p.202) whereas Third meaning can be sited in an 'epitome of the counternarrative' that is a presentation of the dialectic. The latter is a representational reality in as much as it is not always manifest in depiction but implied (Barthes: [1970] 1977, p.61). Nevertheless, Deleuze suggests an equivalence with Thirdness as a 'mental image' when he states of it:

…it is an image which takes as of thought, objects which have their own existence outside thought, just as the objects of perception have their own existence outside perception. It is

an image which takes as its object, relations, symbolic acts, intellectual feelings. (Deleuze: [1983] 1986, p.202-p.203).

Deleuze sites the origin of the crisis of the action image as being of the period of Italian neo-realism and the French nouvelle vague. For Deleuze there are three main components to this. The first is that 'the image no longer refers to a situation which is globalising or synthetic, but rather to one which is dispersive.' (211). The second is that 'the line or the fibre of the universe which prolonged events into one another, or brought about the connection of portions of space, is broken' (211). The third point is that 'the sensory- motor action or situation has been replaced by the stroll, the voyage and the continual return journey... it has become urban voyage, and has become detached from the active and affective structure which supported it, directed it, even gave it vague structure' (212). These statements are suggestive of a visual regime that has been totally recapitulated; but the key points to consider here are to what extent this change in the visual regime is prompted by empirically verifiable events- and what this new visual framework means in terms of the viewer's interpretation of film and its affectual impact. The passage that Deleuze suggests occurs from the crisis of the action image to the institution of the Time-image is one in which interpretation has changed very rapidly for the viewer with no concrete singular reason.

The second point Deleuze makes is of a change in the affectual experience of time itself. Early accounts of Postmodernism, including Harvey's generally plausible version (1991) tended to overstate the havoc wreaked by modernization on our experience of time. The truth is that there is no consistent practice of accepted duration times in film, whether that refers to the length of a film or of a shot. Jean Luc Godard used his pan shots for aesthetic reasons primarily, they were not immediately a signifier for a change in the experiential qualities of time specific to a period. In any case it is unclear what Deleuze means. This line of the fibre of the universe, if it is replicated in film; what that would be is unclear. If he mourns the intertitle, perhaps that brought about connections between portions of space. If the sensory motor action or situation has now been replaced by the stroll, the voyage and the continual return journey, this is exemplified in the later work of one of his favoured filmmakers, Jean Luc Godard. In *Cinema 2* Deleuze states:

> ...the movement-image gives rise to an image of time which is distinguished from it by excess or default, over or under the present as empirical progression: in this case, time is no longer measured by movement, but is itself the number or measure of movement (metaphysical representation). This number in turn has two aspects... [] it is the minimum unity of time as interval of movement or the totality of time as maximum of movement in the universe. The subtle and the sublime. (Deleuze: [1985], 1989, p.271).

This excess is ascribed in Deleuze to qualitative change in the temporal order. As such, excess is linked to an overdetermination of time. This skews critical appraisal somewhat- with time removed as a barometer of ground, never mind an essentialism, the image exists in a permanent 'now'. This seems in keeping with Jean Francois Lyotard's writings on the modern Sublime in his *Lessons on the analytic of the sublime*. Lyotard in his interpretation of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* suggests that the experiential quality of the sublime

is one where judgement simultaneously confers upon an object as the viewer 'feels' it. That is to say that we both measure its quality in a comparative sense reflectively as we intuit its greatness in the sense of being emotionally overwhelmed by it:

> In reflection, a manner of comparing objects under the heading of identity/difference corresponds to the category of quantity in understanding. Referring as it does to the reflective judgement of sublime feeling, this manner can be glossed in the following way: when I judge ''this'' to be great, do I experience the sensation of one greatness among others (difference) or that of greatness plain and simple, of greatness itself (identity)? Tautegorically speaking is ''this'' felt to be great, or more or less great? Answer: ''this'' is felt to be great, absolutely. (Lyotard, J.F; Rottenberg, E [trans], 1994, p.78-p.79).

Barthes prefigures the post-Kantian sublime's key place in a Postmodernist aesthetic when he states the following about third meanings' relationship to excess:

> As for the [other] meaning, the third, the 'one too many', the supplement that my intellection cannot succeed in absorbing, at once persistent and fleeting, smooth and elusive, I propose to call it the obtuse meaning. The word springs readily to mind, and, miracle, when its etymology is unfolded, it already provides us with a theory of the supplementary meaning. (Barthes [1970] 1977, p.54-55).

If a post-Kantian modern sublime is concerned primarily with a direct reflection of 'nowness', then manifestations of a specifically digital sublime unerringly tend towards not only a shrinking of history but a fin de siècle aesthetic that seems to shrink the future. Thus, some digital films that might be called digital sublime films focus primarily on subjects such as ontology in general: the presence of nature, rather than 'just' humans and evoke history only in the omniscient sense; history is happening, but humans are part of a permanent present, unable to significantly impact on history other than as actors in an Aristotelian play where change is an enormous natural event of decay and reformulation. Bill Viola's *Hats Yume* is interesting primarily for its distortion of time and its preponderance on naturalistic settings. When human figures eventually appear shoots of bamboo are in close up, and the figures move silently behind them. (Viola, B: 1981, 5:00). The soundtrack is ambient with no actual speaking- the natural sounds are foregrounded. The presence of rocks is one of permanence and simultaneously change- volcanic rocks bubble and froth with magma and in the time-lapse sequences the rocks appear to weather and change shape. Lyotard states in his *Lessons on the analytic of the sublime*, apropos of Kant:

> The mountain masses, the pyramids of ice, the overhanging, threatening rocks, thunderclouds, oceans rising with rebellious force, volcanoes...everything ''rude''[88] to be found in nature is sublime in presentation because it is at the limit of what can be grasped in a single intuition...it is ''almost too great'' and too great even for our faculty of apprehension. (Lyotard; Rotenberg, E [1991] (1994), p.127).

 When the action shifts to the city, the nameless, anonymous protagonists drift aimlessly amongst the Japanese streets. The emphasis on the narrative as one encompassing history is clear- a shift from nature, to images of artisanal and industrial work to the hyper technological mesh of the metropolis. The effects prefigure digital ones- for instance, the

sheen of the squid and octopus' carcasses as they are pulled out of the ocean by the trawlermen (Viola, B:1981, 8:13) is almost certainly not a 'natural' sheen but visually doctored. In the time lapse sequences, the mist appears artificial, and has probably been added at a later date. (00:30-5:00). The grandiosity of Viola's work signals the intention of going beyond 'mere representation'; but in using broad brush strokes to universalise a common ontological experience, the fine points of characterisation that demarcate Third meaning are missing[89].

Decasia is primarily involved with obsolescence, and is a striking example of the sublime aesthetic. The film opens with a spinning male Sufi dancer, (Morrison, B: 2002, 00:08) followed by images of spinning film reels (00:30-03:00). The soundtrack is one of building certitude. Smoke fills the screen, dissipating to reveal film on which the aesthetic of decay is clear. The viewer cannot tell if the film stock has been damaged by water, or fire, or a chemical process. (04:23). Images emerge gradually from the maelstrom; a Japanese Geisha (4:50) some rocks; (5:10) a butterfly (7:41). As the images become clearer, and the degradation of the film recedes back into a 'normal' state of how we might expect film to degrade, a procession of figures on camels set in shadow cross the film. (Morrison, B: 2002, 8:06). This appears to be both stately and mundane, reminiscent of how a viewer may picture the nativity scene. The soundtrack is performing a role of counterpoint as the figures cross the screen; building in substance, a cello and a keyboard are set against violins that play stretched notes, cascading down in sequence sounding as if music itself is decaying[90]. (8:50-9:50). As a nun leads children in what is also a procession, the music builds to a cacophony of whistles. (14:00-20:30).

A train steams past, unseen[91] and the music is pared down to a single high-pitched whistle as once again the dancer spins. (22:07-22:30). The music builds again as the visuals shift to a liner seemingly populated with soldiers; eventually they are subsumed under the shifting and distorting film image (25:30-28:00). At this point the degradation of the image is so complete that the viewer can pick out images in gestaltist fashion. Some tampering of linear movement seems to have been achieved; when nuns again drift across the screen, they do so in what appears to be menacing fashion- the children behind them are moving supernaturally fast. (31:47).

The degradation of the film stock obscures what we as viewers know logically must be there, as when the object of a boxer's punch can only be a punchbag but we cannot see it because a thin band of distortion masks the place where the punchbag would be. (35:46-36:26). Decay leads ultimately to rebirth and one of the clearest images is of people emerging from a stream in early 20th century clothes having just been baptised. (37:59). The obsession of the film with the period from which much of the stock footage is drawn seems purposeful imputation of encroaching decay of memory of the period in which film was birthed.

As bi-planes appear, (50:54) and violins assume pre-eminence over all other musical signification, their cascading notes seem to presage a menacing destruction for which visuals seem inadequate. The film is quite distorted, but the shadow is clear enough to pick out parachutes as they head for a line of trees. (54:32). The music building again[92], *Decasia* palpably approaches a conclusion. The 'nativity' figures march across the screen in the

opposite direction from before. The nuns appear in their nunnery again. A farmer is working his field as the sun descends, the music breaks down and stutters with portent of closure. The dancer spins around a final time.

As both a reflection on aesthetics and the impermanence of art, as well as a more general reflection on decay as change *Decasia* is particularly effective and memorable. Some of the images, the spinning Sufi in particular- seem to have been instructive in influencing Avant Garde musician Scott Walker's promotional videos- most strikingly 'Epizootics!' from the 2012 album *Bisch Bosch*[93]. The Kantian -inflected disinterestedness of some early digital films in part relate to a simultaneously palpable attempt to inscribe the importance of both the individual works and the digital medium as a whole into the overarching history of film. *Hatsu Yume* and *Decasia* are films that are engineered to deliver affectual impact but in attempting to deliver a form of eternalisation for themselves, wallow somewhat in the preoccupations of film art of the period; the tendency of grand gestures without a delineated context. A key criterion for digital Third meaning is intelligibility and both fall short of this to some degree.

Around the same time as a profoundly ontological sublime; partially linked to an ideological subsumption of capitalism's drive to eternalise itself emerges, Julia Kristeva develops the conception of *signifiance*, the term attributed by Barthes to Kristeva in the Third meaning essay. Barthes further develops this concept in the Third meaning essay, elucidating what its fine contours mean for film. It is, however, pertinent to consider what Kristeva meant by the term. Her initial reading interestingly explains somewhat the urge to create; whilst at the same time detailing how the dialectical fulcrum of experience finds expression in art not just as a replication of ruling class ideology but as a presentation that includes varying amounts of counternarrative, intentioned or otherwise. Though this passage refers to literary analysis, the principles Kristeva employs apply just as readily to film. She states:

> …the questions we will ask about literary practice will be aimed at the political horizon from which this practice is inseparable, despite the efforts of aestheticizing esoterism and repressive socialising or formalist dogmatics to keep them apart. We shall call this heterogeneous practice *signifiance* to indicate on the one hand, that biological urges are socially controlled, directed, and organized, producing an excess with regard to social apparatuses; and, on the other, that this instinctual operation becomes a practice- a transformation of natural and social resistances, limitations and stagnations-if and only it enters into the code of linguistic and social communication. (Kristeva [1974] 1984, p.17).

There is then an ontological prerequisite to recognising *signifiance*, which is a central tenet of Third meaning discourse. Kristeva guards against the historicization of the 'eternal now' as she continues by providing a critique of Laing and Cooper, as well as Deleuze and Guattari, as she praises their recognition of the destructuring nature of the unconsciousness but notes their use of examples of the 'schizophrenic flow' in modern literature, displacing the signifier 'to practice within it the heterogeneous generating of the ''desiring machine''.' (17).

A lack of distanciation from a paradigm allows us no objectivity with regard to its properties;

the tendency is to conclude that a style is redolent of, or captures a zeitgeist, but there is no external explanation as to why. So, Kristeva both counsels against, to some degree, but ultimately approves of signifiance, concluding: 'What we call signifiance, then, is precisely this unlimited and unbounded generating process, this unceasing operation of the drives toward, in, and through language; toward, in and through the exchange system and its protagonists-the subject and his institutions' (17). In Kristeva's analysis of the philosophy of language there is always a tension between, on the one hand, the symbolic function as a psychological by- product, and on the other hand the economic superstructure impinging on the symbolic and expressing itself directly through it. In Barthes can be sensed the influence of psychoanalysis and apparatus theory, though his essay on 'Leaving the movie theatre' does signal in its very title the idea of 'breaking the spell' of the cinema. As Phillip Watts states:

> In some respects, the article shows Barthes support for a French apparatus theory that was triumphant in 1975. Yet at the same time, this essay is one of the first to put into question the claims of apparatus theory, and in particular what scholars have since rightly labelled its tendency to generalise audiences. (Watts, P: 2016, p.75).

Voloshinov in an essay published for the first time at the same time period that Kristeva is writing her thesis, and just before Barthes writes the 'leaving the movie theatre' essay states stridently:

> the study of ideologies does not depend on psychology to any extent and need not be grounded in it... it is rather the reverse: objective psychology must be grounded in the study of ideologies. The reality of ideological phenomena is the objective reality of social signs. The laws of this reality are the laws of semiotic communication and are directly determined by the total aggregate of social and economic laws. Ideological reality is the immediate superstructure over the economic basis. Individual consciousness is not the architect of the ideological superstructure, but only a tenant lodging in the social edifice of ideological signs. (Voloshinov, V.N: [1929] 1973, p.6)[94]

One such filmmaker that grounds her work principally in unpicking the ideology behind ruling class economic, social and military domination is Hito Steyerl. Her thought- provoking films draw on a number of central third meaning tenets including multi-media intertextuality, non-linearity and *signifiance*, the non-reducible excess of signification.

4.4. 'We see absence': Hito Steyerl

The phrase 'We see absence' has a resonance far beyond its usage in the title of Ken Jacob's *Circling Zero: We see Absence*, though its direct usage has a particular relevance too, to the particularities of third meaning film. The film is about the attempt on the part of Jacob and his wife to re-enter the militarised zone subsequent to the attack on the World Trade Centre. When Baudrillard wrote in 2001 about the destruction of the World Trade Centre it was shocking, and somewhat distasteful, characterising it as a spectacular event. (Baudrillard, J: 2003, p.31)[95]. Nevertheless, the reaction of the film industry and the image production industry as a whole was curious; to elide the image of the World Trade Centre immediately. At one level, their responses were in sympathy with the traumatic; nearly

3000 US citizens and several other hundred people from other countries had been killed in the World Trade Centre attack. The reaction was ultimately knee-jerk; to excise the image of the World Trade Centre from every upcoming film release, and from every major advertising campaign.

The absence of the World Trade Centre newly reflected reality; yet it's instant omission seemed as much historical revisionism as sympathetic gesture- the emblematic symbol of US Capitalism had gone- better to not acknowledge the defeat of the US' defences by pretending the World Trade Centre had ever existed and by implication that they had ever been breached. A strange facet of this period was that the TV Stations had focused on the destruction of the World Trade Centre almost to the point of ghoulishness; yet the retaliatory attacks on Afghanistan by the US were rarely shown by the TV channels and war was invisible to western viewers in the sense that the images depicted were often covert attacks under cover of darkness. The ideological construct of the 'War on Terror' demarcated clear lines along which Western Imperialism required adherence to a particular set of 'Western Values'. The re-emergence of apperception and quiet contemplation as a prominent aspect of visual and affectual regime[96] that had accompanied a period of détente in the Cold War and establishment of a neo-liberal re-configuration of Capitalism gave way to a more visceral sense of apperception as the just-out-of-view and the nascent threat[97]. The idea of a changing perceptual narrative and experience of War had been theorised some time before. In 1988, Paul Virilio had stated:

> From the first missiles of World War Two to the lightning flash of Hiroshima, the theatre weapon has replaced the theatre of operations. Indeed, the military term 'theatre weapon', though itself outmoded, underlines the fact that the history of battle is primarily the history of radically changing fields of perception. In order words, war consists not so much in scoring territorial, economic or other material victories as in appropriating the 'immateriality' of perceptual fields. (Virilio, P [1984], 1989; p.10.).

The Avant-Garde film artist Hito Steyerl has referenced some of Virilio's terminology in speeches explicating her film art. She suggests that camouflage is a useful concept to understand everyday reality and the reality of War, and how they interpenetrate each other. In a discussion on her film: *How not to be seen; a fucking educational.MOV file* she sources a Monty Python sketch to illustrate the concept of becoming part of the scenery in everyday life. https://www.artandeducation.net/classroom/video/66423/victoria-hattam-and-hito-steyerl-photography-and-political-agency (Steyerl, H: 'Photography and political agency? Image and truth', May 2014, 7:48 [Accessed 12/05/2021]). In this sketch, bushes are randomly detonated to find a concealed individual. This is utilised to show how difficult it is to live a peaceful existence when war seeks you out; the cold war of surveillance that States perpetrate upon their citizens has provoked a response where we seek to become 'video installations' in order to conceal ourselves. This manifests itself even in our most ordinary behaviours. Conformity is an imposed 'second nature' where: 'if we don't manage to look like a Bush[98], then it might be lethal'. (9:30-9:40).

The actual film itself is a sixteen- minute multi-media meditation on visibility, divided up into five segments called 'lessons.' A narration is provided by a distorted male voice

providing somewhat of an arbitrary, though fairly well- rationalised inventory of 'How to make something invisible for a Camera' for instance; in this case the list is 'to hide, to remove, to go off screen, to disappear…' (00:29-00:53). In each case Steyerl silently enacts these facets: in the case of 'hiding' she holds one of her hands right in from of the camera, completely momentarily obscuring the action. (00:29). As part of the first lesson, we are also taught about resolution imaging and its history. We are taught that resolution determines visibility. (1:00-1:53). In the third lesson we are told that analogue resolution imaging was precise to 12 metres; as a result, digital resolution imaging began to be used by the military which is precise to one foot. (5:30- 6:11). No human can therefore escape detection from digital resolution imaging, and by way of surreal satire a number of people with pixel masks occupy the screen. (6:15-7:08).

As Steyerl makes clear, it is curious that in a world of digital surveillance, 170,000 people have gone missing, (7:59) due mainly to wars and conflicts. Conversely, the moment people disappear their images appear online in the search for them; if their image hasn't already been 'eternalised' through social media forums. The extent of the usage of digital technology in War has progressed to a point where a pixelated camouflage pattern has been devised in order to disguise the presence of a soldier from digital surveillance. The original pattern of 'Marpaut' was patented by two US citizens. When the US military spent $5 Billion dollars trying to emulate it, they failed. Steyerl states:

> Reality consists of failed images; we cannot understand images without understanding cinema and imaging techniques…these constitute realities…the world is imbued with shrapnel of former images; it's edited, photoshopped and cobbled together from spam and scrap. Reality is post produced and scripted, and reality is rendered as an after-effect…by now we live in an afterlife of images.
> Steyerl, H; 'The photographic universe: Photography and political agency?' With Vittoria Hattam and Hito Steyerl, March 2014 (15:26- 16:30).
> https://www.artandeducation.net/classroom/video/66423/victoria-hattam-and-hito-steyerl-photography-and-political-agency [Accessed 12/05/2021].

Steyerl believes that we live in the 'wreckage of images', (Steyerl: 2014, 00:55) where images became more non-representational, and started catalysing actions and events. A key moment in the development of this new visual regime she suggests was a transition in political theory. The collapse of the Stalinist regimes at the end of the 1980s coincided with the birth of 24-hour satellite news- for the first time ever there was no way for dying regimes to escape the scrutiny of the world; likewise, the capitalist imperatives that drove the satellite channels had no adequate way to explain a desire for democracy that did not fit its own model of administered democracy, with a measure of street protest apparent that could threaten its own edifice.

There are three essential strands to *How not to be seen*. There is the pedagogical input, which Steyerl interpolates herself into. There is a 'real world' of media represented by the illustrative depictions of resolution imaging, (Steyerl, H: *How not to be seen, a fucking didactic educational mov. File* 2013: 00:58- 01:51) and the footage of The Three Degrees singing *When will I see you again*. (12:25-15:32). The third strand is the digital world, which appears as a full construction in the shape of a piazza style arrangement replete with

running digital fountains and also as a partial construction overlaid onto a more basic desert background with a cracked runway along which the viewer 'rides.' This more basic background seems to simultaneously represent an age of less developed technology, being ostensibly a digital representation but somewhat obviously 'unreal'; and also, a representation of land that has been colonised by the technology of the West. (First appearance 3:08).

Most obviously it is intended to evoke the desert dominated landscape of recent conquests; Afghanistan and Iraq. It is periodically populated by zentai-clad 'quasi-humans', for whom it cannot be said are intended to be human characters as we can see none of their features. (13:00). These 'quasi-humans' appear in two versions: as clearly defined 'solid' beings (6:45) and as 'media ghosts', some of whom wear invisibility cloaks; they appear translucent, and we can see part of the rudimentary desert backdrop through their bodies. (12:00). From time to time clunkily conceived digital birds fly across the screen at speed.(13:03).This rapidly mutating and somewhat confusing presentation is an evocation of the way in which the analogue and the digital co-exist and are not mutually exclusive; they can be utilised in a composite way to tell a story about the disparity in distribution of both technological and more essential resources in the world.

Although Steyerl's methodology is very similar to Barthes' Third meaning, her aesthetic has little in common with other Third meaning filmmakers such as Jean Luc Godard, though in her use of mixed media and disavowal of conventional film duration she recalls some of Chris Markers later work. Partly the difference in aesthetic is a logistical one, as a Third meaning artist producing a lengthy film wouldn't be a sensible choice, as most of her work is shown in art galleries. When she discusses the specific operations of the image and its transposition from the analogue to the digital the emphasis is on the affectual and the 'closeness' of the images to our lived experiences:

> Images are not objective or subjective renditions of reality or pre-existing conditions but they are rather nodes of energy and matter which migrate across different supports[99], which shape and affect people and landscapes and social systems, whole political systems… these images acquired an uncanny ability to proliferate and transform and activate…and around 1989 television images started walking through television screens as if they were a fourth wall, right into reality. Steyerl (15:26- 16:30).
> https://www.artandeducation.net/classroom/video/66423/victoria-hattam-and-hito-steyerl-photography-and-political-agency [Accessed 12/05/2021] (3:23-4:09).

Ultimately Steyerl's theoretical point is that in intervening in a world of images we can transform the perceptions of people to an orientation of thought that questions the societies we live in and the terms under which those societies are conducted. Taking control of the image means having not to hide; having the ability to use a portable digital camera can transform the narrative of even the most profound and life altering historical events.

4.5. Into the Universe of technical images: Harun Farocki

In her speech at 'The photographic universe' conference, Steyerl pays particular reference to the Harun Farocki film *Videogrammes of a revolution* (1992) In this extraordinary documentary archive footage of the Romanian revolution of 1989 is sourced from official TV

footage, unofficial TV captures and amateur filmmakers to provide a more complete picture of what suddenly occurred in Bucharest on 16th- 27th December 1989. It was the persecution of the Hungarian reform church pastor Lazlo Tokes that had caused an initial period of riots. Tokes had been evicted from his church by the Government. The catalyst to the rioting had been an interview he had given on national TV stating that Romanian's did not know their human rights. He had been denounced by the Government for this who claimed he was inciting ethnic hatred; and crowds had come out in support of him, chanting anti-Communist slogans. With martial law declared on 18th December, Ceausescu took the unwise decision to hold a televised rally on state television on 21st December. He misjudged the mood and began to list the Government's achievements. Only the front rows cheered Ceausescu's speech.

As loud sounds in the crowd distract Ceausescu, his face freezes in the realisation that all might not be going to plan. (Farocki, H; Ujica, A: 1992, 7:39). A red screen descends. (7:44). Here Farocki introduces the first of two alternative vantage points of the action. When the official broadcast resumes, (9:32) Ceausescu looks uneasy, (10:12) and a pan away to the crowd reveals that some sections of the crowd are already rioting. State television having realised that dissent is occurring, the cameraman receives instructions to pan upwards to the sky. The first alternative view we are provided with is 'from a film camera from the weekly news reel' (12:13). The first of these views gives no indication as to what caught Ceaucescu's attention, and seems to suggest that order has been maintained. The second of two alternative views of the action come from amateur footage. This allows the viewer to see the official version alongside the intervention, because the footage begins in a flat where TV coverage of Ceausescu's speech is being played, then pans out to the street, where the massed and clearly dissenting ranks of protest are headed towards the rally. This demonstrates that dependant on vantage point, several very different perspectives of the same event are possible.

The cut or gap is a technique that is important here. The pause in the action has provided a chance to interpolate perspectives other than the official perspective; as Thomas Elsasser has suggested in his work on Farocki, what shapes our everyday lives has disappeared 'almost entirely' from the visual plane- which is why the cut or gap is such an important tool, both technically and conceptually. (Elsasser, T (ed) 2004, p.19).

Further amateur footage shows us a clash in the streets between protestors and police the following day. This demonstrates the nature of how a sustained cultural revolution is not determined by a single event, or even necessarily shaped by it; but acts as a catalyst. This catalysing process is captured in the official version of events by accident. Farocki presents his own record of the Romanian revolution, but it sits alongside other records that form part of his larger collage. The viewer sees the initial stages of the overthrow of the Ceausescu Government from the fleeing of Ceausescu and his wife by helicopter (Farocki, H; Ujica, A: 1992, 24:41) and the occupation of Government buildings by the protest leaders. Rudimentary aspects of discussion between the protestors and the army are glimpsed; what the viewer doesn't see are the discussions that signal that the Ceausescu regime is no more. The success of the revolution was conveyed by the protestors through Romanian state television; the viewer sees them in the Television studio, both behind and in front of the TV

cameras.

The process of revolution, enacted largely through the medium of television, is reaching a denouement; which comes in the shape of tense footage of the Ceausescu's capture several days later, their palpably disbelieving state whilst in custody, and their lifeless bodies shown thankfully briefly. *Videogrammes* gives the viewer a more complete view of a historical event than was possible just a few years before; partly due to the advent of 24-hour news, but also due to the fact that images can now be sourced from amateur footage. Thus, Harun Farocki has a compiled a film that draws on multiple viewpoints to create a multifaceted meditation on historical change.

A clear influence on the composition of *Videogrammes* was Farocki's encounter with Vilem Flusser, which he recorded in the short film *Schlagwolte-Schlagbilder. Ein Gesprach mit Vilem Flusser (*1986). In this film the two men discuss some newspaper images in a way very reminiscent of Godard and Gorin's discussion of the image of Jane Fonda in Vietnam in *Letter to Jane*. Flusser theorises that there are three types of relations between the image and the text: the image illustrates a text; a text clarifies an image; and then the two types of communication start to penetrate an image. This is explicitly Third meaning[100]. He draws attention to a front page of a newspaper with an image of a fallen protestor. An outstretched arm performs a 'literal penetration' when the arm penetrates the text 'blood night'. For graphic effect, to make the hands of the outstretched arm seem more real than reality, the text of 'blood night' has been whitened against a dark background in a reversal of printing conventions. Flusser states that this is because text is normally a code for critical thinking, so a departure from that is signposted; a sensation of violence must be evoked. This works on several levels- firstly, to establish that these events are authentic, that they happened. Also, to manufacture a chaotic situation and break through our consciousness. The strategy of the tabloid is for us to consume these images at a low level of consciousness; and the aim is that the message imparted by the headline 'winks at us'- that we accept that the violence implied by the picture of a fallen protestor is part of society, that we should accept it.

Flusser states in this film that photography is the beginning of technical images. He expounds a little more on this in a video interview from 1988, stating how this has developed: 'this ideographic code, which is the code of numbers, has been developed, in a very refined way, lately, by computers. Numbers are being transcoded into digital codes, and digital codes are being transcoded into synthetic images. So, it is my firm belief that if you want nowadays to have a clear and distinct communication of your concepts, you have to use synthetic images, no longer words'.[101]

When Harun Farocki put together his *Workers leaving the Factory* (1995) film, the idea was to draw on a communal experience that was also an originator of the image; the original workers leaving the factory film having been one of the first Lumiere Brothers films in 1895. This was a mundane image that was at the same time open to a range of interpretations- how workers might leave a factory during a strike. Perhaps the reason we are seeing them outside a factory is because their work cannot be seen. Using archival material, Marker put together several examples of workers leaving the factory at various points in history. In a couple of examples, they literally flee the scene. This non-linear and discursive approach to

what is an ostensibly mimetic duplication and extension of the same experience is curious and is an affectual prompt for consideration of the conditions under which we prevail in work.

Farocki's film is therefore the definitive Third meaning subject; both articulating a shared experience of humanity and a superimposed exteriority to that shared experience recognisable only as trace under everyday conditions. The leaving of the factory refers to implicit oppression contained in the Labour relations; the separation of one part of a life from another inside the confines of a factory environment. In the first sections of this chapter the focus his tended to be around an affectual paradigm that has coalesced around a new conceptualisation of the visual regime. Third meaning has intervened in this regime subtly and as a reflection of prevailing conditions; as a sublime postmodern aesthetic, and as a counternarrative opposing war, totalitarianism and the experience of work. The second part of this chapter deals primarily with digital Third meaning films that have attempted to deal with the events of the post-war period historically, whether it be a reconfigured account of cultural and political movements, or counternarrative that has emerged in the 'post war' period that requires understanding historically in the context of how new imperialist strategies might be opposed in a period of 'war-after-war'. The archive and its productive utilisation in order to best understand history and effect the consciousness of the Cinema audience is first explored through an analysis of Göran Olsson's work, specifically his historical reconfiguring of archival footage of the Black Power movement in *The Black Power Mix Tape 1967-1975* and his intertextual account of postcolonial movements in *Concerning Violence*.

4.6. 'The epitome of the counternarrative': Göran Olsson

Roland Barthes' status within the milieu of radical late 20th century thought and his continued currency to contemporary debate is obfuscated by his reputation as a rigid structuralist with a cause-effect notion of ideology. As Mc Quillan (2011) states in his reflections on Barthes:

> It should…be said that for Barthes, his structuralist episode really represents only a fraction of his sizeable output and in many ways might be thought of as an aberrant interlude in a writing career that begins in critique and ends in self-analysis but that is committed throughout to the avant-garde…[   ]…We might describe his structuralism as 'aberrant' in the sense that it is only one Barthes in a series of 'Barthes' that has been given singular attention and raised above other equivalent moments in Barthes' oeuvre by the anthologisers and editors of Theory. (Mc. Quillan, M: 2011, p.33).

More than this Barthes is a philosopher, a label he applied to himself (Mc. Quillan: 2011, intro, p.3) and just as pertinently a cultural theoretician; but as Mc Quillan suggests, while he is a central point of reference for the branch of Humanities that has become known as cultural studies, consistent readings of him in this regard are few and far between (30). Yet one of Third meanings attributes is that it is not just a discourse allied to the circumstances of France in 1970. Rather, in its elucidation of the malleability of ideology and the persistence of cinematic counternarrative, Barthes points to the nascent postcolonial

narratives that will assume a key role in shaping the politics of the 1970s; as well as harnessing a sense of Black and ethnic minority struggle that was contemporaneously a worldwide response, but no more obviously than in the United States. In revisiting that era, in each of these two contexts, Göran Olsson tenaciously reconfigures Third meaning discourse for the digital age.

The currency of *The Black Power Mix Tape* rests as much in the necessity of the issues it raises to be addressed again as anything else. *The Black Power Mix Tape* is a reminder of a former age when Black communities made significant legal and social gains in American society. In the opening section of the film[102] reference is made to Martin Luther King's evolving radicalism in the years leading up to his death and his desire to see the US undergoing a transition to a Scandinavian model of high taxation, greater state intervention and increased welfare with free Healthcare at the point of need, following its successful implementation in the UK. In a sense the authorship of Göran Olsson's works is incidental. As Ed White writes of Barthes' 'Death of the author' essay:

> If we consider narrative across history, we will not find the author significant in most historical moments. In more traditional societies (which Barthes calls ''ethnographic'') authorship would have been an absurd concept; it was more common to think of the narrative as an expression of some narrative code outside of people, to be taken up ''by a mediator, shaman or relator. (White, E: 2012, p.114, Quoting Barthes [1964] 1977, p.142).

Such it seems, is Olsson's role in the production of this reformulated archive of the Black Power movement. A combination of rarely sourced material juxtaposed historically, with each segment telling a different part of the story of the Black Power movement is an effective way of providing an engaging narrative that is simultaneously if not a completely new view of the linear story, then an alternate view that sources the viewpoints of some of the principal participants of the time. The interviews were conducted largely in 2010, by which time many of those involved were in their late 60s or early 70s, thus providing one of the later opportunities to get a clear picture of the events unaffected by failing memories and yet with enough time since the events in question for the participants to use hindsight effectively.

Much of the original footage was shot not by Olsson, but by two Swedish filmmakers of the age; thus, further blending issues of authorship, and casting Olsson as a curator above all else. It also further ferments the idea of a continuing radical legacy being passed from one generation to the next. It is the original filmmakers' voices that we hear first. The filmmakers disembarked at Florida, their task being: 'To understand and portray America, though sound and image as it really is.' (Olsson: *The Black Power mix tape*; 2014). They acknowledge how difficult this is. This brings to mind Barthes' taxonomy of the Neutral; specifically, a couple of elements that relate to the 'active in the neutral':

> …the subject in the neutral abstains from taking on the task of ''correcting'' the work of others; for example, he doesn't want, or doesn't know how to make others work, how to have one ''rework a manuscript''- '' I spent my life not making others rework''- ''its selfish''…

> (Barthes [1978] (2005; p.82).

The assertion here is that if the dialectic is therefore to be thought of as an interplay of oppositional yet overlapping narratives, which the filmmaker is then to not merely just 'present', but make a decisive intervention in, then his repository of materials should not be used to de-historicise or misrepresent the context in which those films were made, or the way in which those actors are presented. Similarly, Olsson doesn't in showing unseen material attempt to detract from the tableau; rather his intention is to make it a more complete archive that 'would not fear contaminations' (82). This is the second qualification of a depiction of the 'active in the neutral'. The third qualification is a disavowal of the hierarchical, which is a very important idea to Göran Olsson's work. Foremost among the qualities of *The Black Power Mix Tape* is the sense that it wants to puncture the idea of white American colonisers as being the 'first among all…and, even worse, the inflation that consists of turning ''the first'' into ''the only'' (83). In all, there are nine qualities that Barthes states relates to the 'active in the neutral'; probably the most pertinent of the remainder being that 'Neutral: would look for a right relation to the present, attentive and not arrogant. Recall that Taoism= art of being in the world: deals with the present.' (83)[103]. Olsson only alludes to it in passing in interviews, but in drawing on opinions of the principal actors in the Black Power movement, and how they view the events in hindsight; the spectre of the present and the palpable lurch of America towards the right under a reactionary American regime is foregrounded, and the importance of updating the archive of progressive movements and showing their relevance to the situation today becomes imperative.

The first interview is with a middle -aged café worker who opines that Americans have the best standard of living and opportunities in the World. This contrasts sharply with the opinions of two black men who have returned from serving in Vietnam. In quick succession the first of the nine sections begin with Stokey Carmichael talking about the Montgomery bus boycott led by Martin Luther King. (Carmichael, S in Olsson, G: *The Black Power mixtape 1967-1975*: 2011, 5:20-7:10). The rare footage of Carmichael is compelling. In a brief interview he contrasts himself with MLK, saying he has not the compassion or patience of MLK, and that the fact the US does not want to deal with King means they will have to deal with the younger generation. (8:24-9:02). Probably the most effective part of this segment is where Carmichael interviews his mother who candidly tells him about the conditions his father encountered on an arriving in the US from Trinidad and not being able to find work. (Carmichael, M in Olsson:2011, 9:35-12:06). Kweli's thoughts on Carmichael include a reflection on his ordinariness away from the cameras; there is a broadside here directed at the press for their depiction of Carmichael as two- dimensional. (Kweli in Olsson: 2011, 14:56-15:21).

Questlove in the section on 1968 describes how Martin Luther King was becoming an anti-War activist whom the establishment would no longer tolerate (15:53-16:30) and Harry Belafonte states that a conversation with King the night before his death included talk of a radical programme of proposals that included free healthcare at the point of need. (17:00-18:48). Although 1968 is often thought of as a year in which radical gains were made at least in terms of visibility, the film's selection of events to highlight at this point is downbeat, considering the major progressive figureheads that were killed that year. As if to

corroborate this, the voice of Swedish reporter Bertil Askelof reports contemporaneously from where Robert Kennedy is lying in state after his assassination, opining that 'Many fear that the US was too late in introducing social reforms that could have provided over 30 million poor in the slums with a better existence…'(Askelof, B in Olsson: 2011, 23:40-24:12.) Ideology is visited in the film in several ways; most potently when Erika Badu describes having to learn the song 'I want to live in a world like America' in kindergarten. (Badu, E in Olsson: 2011, 25:30- 26:42).

Phillip Watts writes: 'For Barthes, ideology, or doxa, not only forces us to produce, to speak or write in a certain way; it forces us to take sides and compels us to choose a camp.' (Watts: 2016, p.57). The Black Panthers formulated a counter ideology to the prevailing imperatives of Capitalism. Kathleen Cleaver describes how they became known for their confrontational stance but also tried to model solutions that were not Capitalist based solutions, such as free healthcare and free breakfasts for children in the mornings- 'the only organisation based in ghetto communities that did it'.(Cleaver ,K in Olsson: 2011, 31:41-32:39).Bobby Seale is then interviewed both in 1969, describing the Black Panthers as Socialist party (Seale, B in Olsson:2011, 33:00-33:40) and then 2010 reflecting on his aims of community cohesion.(33:41-34:20).

In the 1972 segment there is an extraordinary interview with Dr Angela Davis conducted while she was in prison. (Davis, A in Olsson:2011, 55:37-1:00:00). She is wearing bright clothes and her hair is styled into a huge afro. The starkness of the aesthetic of the interview is underlined by the fact that this is a very early colour broadcast on well preserved film. Davis speaks with erudition and composure, though she is a little taken aback when her interviewer seems to want to concentrate on the question of whether violence is necessary to achieve revolution. Davis answers by stating that revolution is about the principles and goals, not how you get there though you have to expect in a violent society that these things will occur. She relates how growing up racists would plant bombs in her neighbourhood: 'From very small I remember the sound of bombs across the street.' (Davis, A in Olsson: 2011, 57:40).

Robin Kelley summarises eloquently the legacy of the Black Power movement. He characterises three strands that have developed. (Kelley, R in Olsson:2011, 1:25:10-1:26:33). Firstly, building Black institutions but not a revolutionary ideology; this has fed into a cultural offshoot that valorises Black success in business. Secondly, cultural nationalism that had a worldwide impact in the establishment of black- led postcolonial states and also in the growth of institutions such as the Nation of Islam. Lastly, the continuation of the radical black tradition from which you can trace the development of feminism and gay liberation in their organising principles and slogans. (1:26:10). Kelley suggests that there is a direct link between the use of radical language in the Black Power movement and its use in other radical post WW2 formulations. One of the closing statements in the film is courtesy of Erikyah Badu, which performs an introduction of sorts to Olsson's next film- stating 'we have to write and document our story, or allow somebody to be written out'. (Badu in Olsson: 2011, 1:27:00-1:27:28)

The source material for *Concerning Violence* is Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, a text expressly written for European colonisers to demonstrate the depth of feeling that

colonisation had provoked. The text is superimposed over footage from a range of colonised countries, only extending as recently as the Burkina Faso of 1987. This archival material includes interviews of both the colonized and their colonizers. The voice narrating the film is that of singer and actress Lauryn Hill.

 Barthes writes of the political text:

> The political is, subjectively, a continuous source of boredom and/or pleasure; it is, further and in fact (i.e., despite the arrogances of the political subject) a stubbornly polysemant space, the privileged site of a perpetual interpretation (if it is sufficiently systematic, an interpretation will never be contradicted here, to infinity. One might conclude from these two observations that the political partakes of the pure textual; an exorbitant, exasperated[104] form of the Text, an unheard-of form which by its excesses and its masks, perhaps exceeds our present understanding of the Text'. (Barthes; Howard, R trans. [1975], 1994, p.147).

This exorbitance and exasperation run throughout *Concerning Violence*, where the subtext of the narrative thrust through the various contributing sources is to pose the contemporary question of why so little has changed for the better in countries that were colonized, even in the instances where self-determination has been partially or wholly achieved. *Concerning Violence* articulates Third meaning discourse through the presentation of a dialectic; namely, the counter position of the colonialist and the colonized[105]. Moreover, Fanon and Olsson exhibit the pluralist thinking that Barthes implicates as part of the Third meaning essay. Of *Empire of Signs* Barthes stated that the idea was 'to write of a foreign (alien) language and yet not to understand it- to perceive the difference in it without that difference ever being recuperated by the superficial sociality of discourse, communication or vulgarity.' (Barthes: 1970, p.6).

The full title of *Concerning Violence* itself is evocative of the Third meaning essay. The subtitle of the Third meaning essay is 'research notes on some Eisenstein stills.' The subtitle of *Concerning Violence* is: 'nine scenes from the anti-imperialistic self-defence'. These scenes are therefore conceived as snapshot interventions, 'still-frames' seized from the usual, imperialistic depiction of the colonial archive. The subtitle makes it clear that this will not be a colonisers account but one spoken with the voice of the oppressed. So, it proves; the colonisers that do appear in the documentary seem one dimensional compared to the colonised.

In both *The Black Power Mix Tape* and *Concerning Violence* the presentation Olsson constructs a presentation that has an overdetermination that exceeds the confines of the images, the principal 'actors' and the subject matter. In *The Black Power Mix Tape*, it is an aural narrative constructed both decades past and in the recent past that helps achieve this overdetermination; in *Concerning Violence* the overlaid text is static and unspontaneous, ostensibly unchanged since it was conceived in 1961. Yet the text achieves a new life through its interplay with these historical images that have never been juxtaposed before; and a second new juxtaposition is the unique way in which this collage both reflects and speaks anew through these images, some of them from colonies that Fanon did not write about in *The Wretched of the Earth*. The methodology and conception of ideology employed

by Olsson thus reflects that which Fanon speaks of with foresight; one which becomes visible as a globalised media presents the hitherto uncharted pillaging of Capitalism across every part of the world.

Nevertheless, the film still notes the distinctness of the colonizers ideology and contrasts it with that of the colonized. Two extraordinary interviews that follow one after the other from what was Rhodesia, chart the experiences of Dr. Tonderai Makoni, who was imprisoned without trial for five years, and a settler that employs black servants. Makoni relates how the experiences of the colonised ethnic minority is one of feeling like an object. He explains how he was tortured to such an extent that his feelings are deadened, and on leaving prison he still feels like he is in prison. (Makoni T in Olsson: 2014, 14:40-17:29). The second interview presents the raw, unfiltered ideology of the colonial settler. The interviewee claims in the interview that 'The whole world in supporting the terrorists' and opines that 'they all (the colonized subjects) think they are going to own houses.' (Uncredited settler in Olsson: 2014, 18:37-20:51). It is a revealing interview in the sense that this representative of the ruling class is aware that Rhodesia is on the brink of radical change and is reacting in the paranoid manner of someone desperately trying to cling to power and privilege.

A postscript to these two interviews is with Robert Mugabe a little later, who states: 'We accept the white man, providing they accept the system we institute…overly we will not perpetuate the system where people are organised on the basis of race or colour.' (24:50-25:51). The application of the Fanon quote 'The colonized man is an envious man' (Fanon, F in Olsson: 2014, 24:08) is of particular import to understanding the vindictive policies that Mugabe was to pursue in later years in Zimbabwe.

In *Concerning Violence*, Olsson takes up the challenge of Jacques Derrida, in his 'Archive Fever' essay. Derrida utilises the Greek meaning of the archive to evoke the sense of the archive being 'a house, a domicile, an address.' In exploring and bringing to light the oft ignored Postcolonial counternarrative, and showing the ways that it has been both successful and not so, the nomadic, elusive sense of that counternarrative is made palpable and material to the western viewer and recognisable to those it depicts.

4.7. Memories of the future: Chris Marker

Chris Marker's place as a Third meaning practitioner rests not only on his relationship to the image, through which he undoubtedly foregrounds a dialectical range of contemporary concerns, but also in his evocation of the ordinary-as-extraordinary. To paraphrase Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*, Marker is concerned with the everyday lives of 'real men', (Marx, K [1844] 1970; p.42) and to extend and linguistically update the conceptualisation an interest in the everyday lives of 'real people'. Internationalism and the centrality of women are two key features of his corpus. When Barthes produced the Third meaning essay, he drew on generation-old images to articulate an aesthetic prescient to the 1968 generation. This utilisation of old formulations was not an indication of an out of step theorist, as can be seen from his consistent references to modern culture, evidential in *Camera Lucida* (1980), where he references photographer Robert Mapplethorpe in his description of the punctum:

Mapplethorpe has photographed Robert Wilson and Phillip Glass. Wilson holds me, though I cannot say why, i.e., say where: is it the eyes, the skin, the position of the hands, the track shoes? The effect is certain but unlocatable, it does not find its sign, its name; it is sharp and yet lands in a vague zone of myself; it is acute yet muffled, it cries out in silence. Odd contradiction: a floating flash. (Barthes [1980] 2000, p.52-53).

Barthes analysis of the punctum in *Camera Lucida* is evocative of the work of Chris Marker. Certainly, the description 'sharp and yet lands in a vague zone of myself' are reminiscent of films that are often self-referential in the most personal of ways; his interest in owls and his love of cats for example. *Immemory*, his CD-ROM multi-media collection from 1998 is much like a scrapbook and parallels the later work of Barthes. Marker's interest in multi-media archival practice was a tradition that had a far- reaching history, as noted by Foucault in his writing on Manet and Flaubert: 'He [Foucault] demonstrates how Flaubert weaves a new space where archival elements (religious texts, commentaries, histories, painted and printed images) merge to form a network that, while dependent on the past, is wholly original. (Tanke, J.J: 2009, p.64). This form of a new artwork formed out of the juxtaposed relations of smaller 'nodes' is analogous to Marker's media collages. As a radical filmmaker that never stopped working and who tended to fully embrace each new technological development that occurred in filmmaking, Chris Marker's films are a good indicator of the malleability of third meaning and the ease with which it can be applied as a conceptual tool across changes in media.

In *The Sixth side of the Pentagon* Marker states just after the opening titles that if the five sides of the pentagon appear impregnable, then attack the sixth. In this Marker refers to the march on Washington, in 1967, a demonstration numbering 100,000 that mainly was composed of students protesting against the Vietnam War. Marker effectively counterposes mainly black and white still images of the build -up and aftermath of the march with mainly colour live footage. As part of the demonstration a thousand draft cards were to be deposited at the ministry after the march. This symbolic gesture is signposted prominently in the middle of the film. Close up shots of soldiers with rifles policing Washington are suggestive of a distorted physiognomy; perhaps it is just the camera angle but the soldiers appear to loom towards the camera, their bodies stooped forward at the torso. Many of them seem to be wearing similar glasses, and their upper bodies seem to be elongated. In Barthes Third meaning essay the closest relation to this is the soldier in Mikhail Romm's *Ordinary Fascism* (1965) where the obtuse meaning is described as:

'The disguised, blond silliness of the young quiver-bearer, the flabbiness of his hands and mouth (I cannot manage to describe, only designate a location) Goering's thick nails, his trashy ring (this already on the brink of obvious meaning, like the treacly platitude of the imbecile smile of the bespectacled man in the background- visibly an 'arse-licker' (Barthes; Heath, S (trans) [1970] (1977), p.60).

Marker states that 'once back at the campus the Washington march will turn out to be an hour of mutation' (Marker: 1968). The mutation is the passage from a single demonstration to a desire to change the order of things. He is charting the progress of political consciousness from its gleaning to its fulfilment. *Theory of Sets* is a philosophical and

technical treatise that reflects on the communal and the individual, starting from the story of Noah's Ark and considering the Aristotelian theme of classification and Third meaning themes such as juxtaposition and collage. The images are simple line drawings and slightly more elaborate, albeit childlike drawings processed by a simple early computer system known as Hyperstudio.

Three Video Haikus is extraordinary. The first sequence is of a bridge with water flowing under it[106], that glistens until the viewer has the impression of a flowing shape passing under two static brick humps, with the occasional white shape of a bird flying past. This sequence is unnamed. Barthes says of the punctum: 'What I name cannot really prick me. The incapacity to name is a good symptom of disturbance.' (Barthes [1980] 2000, p.51). The feeling of a haiku is achieved as the camera stages a close-up, at which point all the surroundings are outside the frame and there is no context in which to recognise what is happening. The trees, which were almost invisible up to this point, or perhaps more precisely the shadows of trees now dominate the screen, and the water flow of the river seems to speed up as the viewer examines it at close quarters. (Marker, C: 1991, 00:30-00:59). The camera pans out, then briefly focuses back in, a passing white bird dramatically stopped by freeze frame. (1:00-1:34). The second haiku is called 'Owl gets in your eyes', and for a few seconds we focus in on a woman who we might be expected to regard as a femme fatale, but her eyes are full of tears. (1:42).

At this point, her face takes on an indeterminate, ghostly aspect, half fades, and part of her profile is replaced by an owl flapping its wings. (2:07). She pulls on a filter tip cigarette and seems give the viewer a brief steely glare through the fourth wall. Then the sequence ends. The third haiku is entitled 'Tribute to the Lumiere Brothers'. (2:48). We are supposed to view this piece as dating from one of their experiments from 1894, the intertitle informs us. What we actually experience as viewers is a strange early digital sequence with a purple 'sepia' tint. Visually this is very like Bill Viola's work, as is the first haiku. What is different is that this film actively draws on the history of film by showing us a train track following the information about the Lumiere Brothers. This is drawing on the true story of people being physically affected by the first public showing of a Lumiere film at Paris in 1895, when a train appeared to leap from the fabric of the screen and into the crowd. In the tribute, at first the sound builds as if a train is about to breeze past but the aural suggestion mutates into a fast-moving digital cacophony.

Catherine Lupton has suggested that the latter-day foray into narrative cinema that Marker's *Level 5* represents is notable in a number of ways. Having a female protagonist as the main character is in itself a departure from the norm: 'Marker has jokingly referred to *Level 5* as a semi-documentary, on the basis of the remark by Harry S Cohn, the Columbia Studios boss, that a documentary can't have a woman in it.' (Lupton: 2005, p204). Another astonishing first given that *Level 5* appears more than forty years into his filmmaking career is that Laura is the first fictional character ever to appear and speak directly in one of his films (204). Marker utilises her much as Godard utilises some of his main characters, as a theoretical detective though the quest is simultaneously personal for the character as well. Laura also embodies an interest in the archive for Marker that Godard shares. Marker

claimed *Level 5* would be his last feature film, from then on, he would use a computer, and so it proved (205).

4.8. The intertextual- a living archive: *L'Historie du Cinema*; Jean- Luc Godard (1988)

> In a society deprived of any socialist practice and hence condemned to ''discourse'', theoretical discourse is provisionally necessary (Barthes: 1970).

The archive assumed a greater importance for film as the oldest produce of the film industry slipped out of living memory and became subject to the continual process of recategorization of vintage celluloid. When Jean Luc Godard decided to make a film that drew together significant moments from the first century of film in 1988 there was a definitive sense about it. His view of which images to juxtapose, and the order in which they would appear seemed to be an unmissable reading.[107] They carried some weight as a filmmaker that had attempted to catalogue aspects of the human condition in his thirty plus years of filmmaking. Godard's choices had a narrative all of their own too. As Derrida was later to state in his Archive Fever essay: 'archivization produces as much as it records the event' (Derrida, J: 1995, p.17)

The first of four parts of *L'Historie du Cinema* include ruminations on the birth of cinema. Much of the narration concerns its emergence, and appearance. 'Don't show every side of this', Godard seems to counsel himself. 'Allow yourself a margin of indefiniteness'. (Godard: *L'Historie du cinema* 1988; pt1. 00:30). Godard has arrived at the point in his career and life where to view himself as an auteur is not what he wants to project, rather of the sense of film flowing through him and around him; he is merely presenting it. On a second and third viewing, the first part in particular of *L'Historie du cinema* seems more discursive than anyone should expect of a narrative history of cinema. Godard is telling more of a story of capitalism and war; however, the important aspect to consider is the role that the image had in the production of the 'dream factory' of the 20th century and the way in which the image was manipulated for propaganda purposes in the 1930s. These are stories that are anything but discursive; they are part of our lives, and of the lives of the image. 'Even scratched to death a simple rectangle of thirty- five millimetres saves the honour of the real' (pt.1 32:56) means that the image does not have to be clear in order for us to see its value. Each image and each interpretation of that image tells an important story. This isn't just a matter of individual stories and histories being processed visually but of history as a collective repository of the visual. There is also a sense of being able to repurpose a visual narrative; after all, this is what the juxtaposition of images in new formulations is about; the creation of new narratives. Hence the concern that: 'life never rendered what it stole from film' (pt.1, 38:30).

As a successor to photography, Godard suggests, film has a right to reproduce reality, and a duty. A clear and important facet of the success of film, however, is noted as its soundtrack, whether this be music, words, or merely noise. At various points in the narrative, multiple soundtracks are overlaid. One of these soundtracks is Godard typing at speed on an old- fashioned typewriter. This cacophonous interpolation seems to dominate parts one and two. The suggestion seems to be that the authorial agent is at this point producing the images. The typewriter noise vanishes around the time Godard explores, in a very

enigmatic, diffuse and counterintuitive way the nouvelle vague. Perhaps Godard is implying that the nouvelle vague is the last example of auteur cinema and heralds in 'the death of the author'.

The opening section of part four of *L'Historie du Cinema* is very reminiscent in its focus on the feminine smile used so devastatingly by his collaborator Chris Marker in *La Jetée.* The recognition is one of the gaze subverted: 'The whole sun crushed in a half smile...this smile, dismissing the universe'. (pt. 4, 00:42-01:39). The breakdown in univocity that a recapitulation of the archive offers is clear. There is no singular voice.

Godard notes that the flipside of entertainment-as-compulsion is entertainment-as-horror. This link he draws out by interpolating the paintings of Caravaggio, which have elements of both. Some discussion of the grotesque leads onto cinematic reformulation as the televisual, designed for private consumption rather than public display. Perhaps the key moment in the first episode is when Godard labels film 'an art without a future', which is filmed by a man throwing a film reel as a discus would be thrown: in other words, film in its familiar mode is to become obsolete, as video mounts a challenge. Ultimately Godard's *rapproachment* with the digital, of which prior to 2002 he is an avowed sceptic seems partly to do with the acknowledgement that to keep current he must work with the latest mode of conveyance and utilise it in the best way he can. A recurring interpolated theme is the horrors of war, and specifically the aftermath of war and the traumas thereafter. Images of the holocaust make several appearances:

> By naming the first two segments of the video essay *Touts les Histories* (all stories) and *Une Historie Seule* (One story) 1B, Godard asks us if there is a ''proper'' way to historicize events like the Holocaust. Tout les Histories suggests not only that history, like public memory is comprised of multiple histories from a variety of competing perspectives, but also that such a history must include all voices, events and perspectives, including those versions of history we consider to be contemptible and falsifying (Ravetto-Biagoli, in Conley, T; Jefferson-Kline, T (eds): p.456-p.487).

The sheer weight of this task is manifest and Godard seems to has identify himself as the guardian of the archive, as per Derrida's 'Archive Fever' essay. The archive still does the work itself without an attendant curator, however. Torlasco pinpoints the nature of the archive as designating its own truth not just at the historical level but at the level of *signifiance*: 'Lineage, inheritance, transmission, according to family or state law- the state that the archive needs to realize itself as such is inextricably physical and symbolic' (Torlasco:2013, p.1).

Moreover, Ravetto-Biagoli states that there is no necessity to establish the veracity of the images, or the accuracy of testimony in relation to the holocaust since the documentary footage is juxtaposed with fiction films from films such as *To be or not to be* and *The Great Dictator,* and these fictional narratives do not cast any doubt on the actuality or extent of the holocaust. What makes the video-essay form that Godard uses in *L'Historie du Cinema* particularly effective is that it works at a different cognitive level than conventional narrative cinema. The montage creates associations in the mind of the viewer that couldn't be achieved through a linear narrative format:

> Weaving together a series of (filmic, photographic, musical and textual) citations, with found footage, advertisements, and various iconic references to art, history, religion and philosophy, the video essay is formally experimental, closer to conceptual art than narrative cinema. (Ravetto-Biagoli, in Conley, T; Jefferson-Kline, T (eds): p.456-p.487).

Attraction/repulsion, and what holds an audience or repels them is a common theme in *L'Historie Du Cinema*. Archetypal romance and horror images are used. The alternation of an image from Tod Browning's *Freaks* and a pornography film makes us reflect on what makes a compelling image and what repels us; curiously the image of the 'circus freak' is so well composed, it is compelling, and makes us want to study it more- even if we do not find the image 'attractive'. As someone who has worked with images for many decades, Godard has an instinctive feel for what makes an image iconic, and his choices of images are exemplary. Godard's *L'Historie du Cinema* foreshadows the digital age in its use of mixed media and uses painting and comic strips[108] amongst other formats to site film in a wider world of images and influences. Some of the images are also secondary to their use as formal propaganda, causing the viewer to pause and consider aspects such as what destruction these images have wrought, and to what extent we accept them as viewers, or they unnerve us.

4.9. The theatre of War, and love: Jean- Luc Godard

The title of *Notre Musique* alone imparts to the viewer a communal experience, separate from the discordant imperatives of the capitalism. Yet Godard introduces the concept of 'our music' as filtered through a confrontation with the image. Subsequent to a rolling piano, an intertitle breaks a sentence in two with the legend 'Kingdom 1 Hell' (00:50) while a voice intones: 'And so in the age of fable there appeared on earth…men ready for extermination'. (0:55). For several minutes bloody and grotesque images dominate the screen, both fictional and factual. The images include the dramatized depiction of Wild west cowboys and Native Americans; and depictions of The Crusades. These are set alongside real and extremely graphic images from wars of the last century. The images of hanging bodies and corpses with flayed and burnt skin are horrifying. (1:00- 5:54). The music stops as The Lord's prayer is intoned: 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' (5:55-6:05). An additional line of text is added: 'As we forgive them, and no differently.' (7:10).

In *Mythopoetic Cinema: On the ruins of European Identity*, Kriss Ravetto- Biagioli sees Godard's essay films, including *Notre Musique* as a reimagining of European aesthetics and ethics. Mythopoetic cinema is: 'a response to creating new coherent understandings of Europe or relating to old formulations' (Ravetto-Biagoli, K: 2017, introduction). In addition; 'Mythopoetic cinema does not set out to establish what is good and evil but mimics and parodies conventional stereotypes, proliferating many cultural resemblances as competing historical and mythic narratives.' (introduction). There is a strong resemblance to Third meaning in this approach, particularly Barthes expansive version set out in his 'neutral' lectures. Certainly, the cinema that Barthes draws heavily on in his analysis of Third meaning initially is heavily invested with the physical manifestation of European mythology; *Satyricon* is a literal example of the heroic European myth that is referenced in the Third meaning

essay.

The narrative sequences of the film concentrate on a disparate collection of people transposed to Sarajevo. They range from fictional, almost quasi-mystical characters to Jean Luc Godard, who is 'playing' himself, from the beginning of the second section of the film: 'Kingdom 2: purgatory' (9:06). The use of native Americans as a prominent conceptual touchstone is an interesting one, in regard to the story Godard wants to tell about Sarajevo and analogously about Israel and Palestine. The native Americans that appear by the side of the canal appear to be quasi mystical icons. (Godard:2004, 54:48- 54:57). They stand motionless and proud, separate from linear history yet woven into the fabric of it in their distinctness. The use of native Americans in the abandoned building scene is affecting in a different way. (29:44-32:02). We know intuitively as viewers that this abandoned building is the remnants of a war zone, and are being asked to parallel the destruction that they temporarily and anachronistically inhabit for the duration of the scene with that of the carnage that was wrought when native American land was taken over in the 15th-19th Century. Godard appears intertextually in *Notre Musique* as narrator and character. The two are almost self-identical, since the purpose of Godard's character in the film builds towards a Godard lecture on the image.

The interview between the Jewish journalist from Tel Aviv and the Palestinian poet Marmoud Darwish[109](from 34:26)- both transposed to another war zone is somewhat of a conceptual exercise in the disappearance of the colonised subject, and what an awareness of this means for a self-actualised member of the colonial oppressors and their rejection of statist ideology. The journalist reflects on the decimation of culture when people are displaced, and effectively 'disappear': 'I wanted to speak in the name of the absentee…can a people be strong without its own poetry?'[110] (36:39). The Israeli journalist goes onto adopt the position of a questioning Palestinian 'Do you know why we Palestinians are famous? Because you are our enemy… You've brought us defeat and renown.' (37:35-38:44). Darwish confirms: 'We are your propaganda industry'. (38:45). Fame here is an inversion, because the real experience of the Palestinians has disappeared, to be replaced by the Israeli version of events. The significance of casting Darwish as himself is to recapture some narrative ground for the Palestinians. His presence in *Notre Musique* as a poet who was both respected as a poet of the Palestinian cause by the counterculture and also was respected by progressive Israeli's means that he was the ideal person to engage in a conceptual discussion of this kind. Ravetto- Biagoli writes:

> A counter-concept is a notion designed to produce asymmetric forms of power by producing two duelling identities predicated on binary oppositions. Such distinctions or counter-concepts between what is European and what is not recall the spirit (but not the letter) of Herodotus' dilemma: how are the conceptual borders drawn when the definition of the border requires a group self-recognition that excludes others on grounds of culture, intelligence and language (Hellene as opposed to Barbarism) or morality (Christian as opposed to heathen)?' (Ravetto-Biagoli, K: 2017, introduction).

European mythology still looms large even in Israel, since the creation of Israel was always as much about establishing a western power base in the middle East as it was about

establishing a homeland for the Jews; and Israel is very much a consequence of the European balance of power subsequent to the end of World War II, of which the division of Germany was another important aspect. The well-meaning Jewish journalist in this scene takes the place of Jane Fonda in the photograph interrogated in *Letter to Jane*- sympathetic to the experience of the oppressed subject, but without any experience of colonial oppression, assuming a 'western gaze'. The difference is that Marmoud Darwish is given a fulsome 'caption' by way of a right of reply. This is to some extent the centrepiece of the film.

Yet in terms of Barthes' Third meaning, Godard and the digital, and how these coalesce with politics, the most revealing part of the film is the closing sequence, beginning with a Godard lecture. When Godard shows an image from 1865 to his lecture class, he labels it as the sacred- it is iconic in the sense of it having 'no movement, no depth, no artifice'. Godard's explication of the image in context is this: 'Yes, the image is joy. But bedside it lies the void. All the power of an image can only be expressed through it.' (42:37-42:43) Godard mentions Racine's *Phaedra*, Barthes' critique of Racinian theatre being the basis of Picard's attack on Barthes in the 1960's. In the next narrative breath, Godard demarcates shot/reverse shot as the basis of cinematic grammar (44:10). Godard is poised with regard to his approach to the digital in 2004; he indicates the digital as having some utility when he states: 'The principle of the cinema is to go towards the light and shine it on our night. Our music.'(48:06-48:13). When a student asks him: 'can the little digital cameras save the Cinema?' he silently fades into darkness. (49:05-49:20).

Godard's documentaries of the early 21st Century make quotations from his own oeuvre, and from others. They are intertextual in an old-fashioned sense, but in their multi-media approach they also dovetail aesthetically with the early digital films of the turn of the century. *The old place* is a conceptually dense rumination on perception. It also deals in some measure with embodiment and absence. Godard draws on cultural theorist Walter Benjamin to articulate the confluence of teleology and the presence of the human subject, creating and making ourselves felt: 'This image that you are, that I am that Walter Benjamin speaks of, that point where the past resonates with the present for a split second to form a constellation.' (24:40-24:55). Another theme is social reproduction and a half- conscious complicity of the subject: 'When I talk to myself, I talk to myself using the words of the other.' (7:41).

A conceptual revisitation of an auratic art is posited towards the end of the film through the explication of a story. Godard tells the tale of the A Bao a Qu, a creature that is described by Jorge Luis Borges in his *Book of imaginary beings*. This shapeless creature, based on Malay mythology, lives at the foot of the Tower of Victory in Chitor. Each climber that ascends the steps is stalked by this creature; the only chance for the climber to ascend to the top and see 'the loveliest landscape in the world'. The creature gives off an illuminating blue light the higher it climbs, so that the climber might see the sight more clearly. (42:06). If the climber is unable to ascend to the top of the stairs, the creature retreats to the bottom of the steps and once more assumes it's globulous mass. The creature has only ascended to the top once and fulfilled complete illumination. (45:12). Godard's take on this story is that the blue light the creature gives off is aura- the climber's goal is to capture the auratic. This

perhaps is Godard considering cinematic forms: early distillation (s) of a new mode of conveyance could be considered auratic. For instance, the capacity of the digital to disassemble and disseminate 'shapelessly' across the internet in data streams, reformulating as an image having reached its goal-is analogous to the story of the auratic in the A Bao a Qu story.

l'Eloge d'lamour is Godard in self-conscious mode. It is about wresting control of the narrative from the ruling class but also a softer reflection on his own failings at keeping pace with current debates. At the start of the film, four forms of narrative are posed to encapsulate a narrative: Film, play, novel and opera. The story intended to be told is a love story, told by the main male protagonist Bruno; one with 'the meeting'; 'the physical passion'; 'the separation' and 'the reconciliation'. (Bruno in Godard: 2001, 00:30-01:45). The scene shifts from Bruno to the Louvre, where an older curator has just received a painting of a woman[111].

As he studies it carefully, he addresses a younger man: 'I don't know what it's about. An opera maybe. A film. A film in the documentary tradition. But I don't understand the term'. And what's it called? 'Something to love'. (Curator in Godard: 2001,12:00-12:19).

Immersed as this scene is in references to 1968 including the director of the film institute Henri Langlois, this could be citing the passage in the Third meaning essay that states of love's relation to Third meaning: 'I believe that the obtuse meaning carries a certain emotion. Caught up in the disguise, it is never sticky, it is an emotion which simply designates what one loves: an emotion-value, an evaluation.' (Barthes [1970] 1977, p.59). Shortly afterwards, *Blue of Noon*, a novel by Bataille with a print run of only 300 is mentioned. In the Third meaning essay the little known Bataille essay 'The big toe' is referenced. It could be coincidence or it could be that Godard wants the viewer to play detective.

The first hour of the film is in black and white and has a well-produced feel. It appears as high-quality celluloid sometimes does; as in the films of Dreyer where light and contrast are used to good effect. The last 34 minutes of the film are in contrast to this. Each scene in the black and white portion of the film is prefaced by 'In praise of love', whereas each scene in the colour portion is prefaced 'archives. Once the film becomes colour, the edges of the figures in relation to the landscape blur. This is also particularly apparent in the first colour scene, where there is a fuzzy aspect of the trees shorn of leaves. (Godard:2001, 1:00:40). In keeping with Godard's usual aesthetic, there are bright colours but they are muted around the edges.

The two principal aspects of politics covered in the film are the bombing of Kosovo, and the story of an elderly couple involved in the resistance during the war. Their story is marginal to the main plot and is only really told with some success by them, near the end of the film, other characters having failed to tell it. The bombing of Kosovo is covered meanwhile in general theoretical terms, the analysis being that: 'the US needs other people's stories, other people's legends. They have to seek history elsewhere'. Probably the most pertinent scene in relation to Third meaning is a conversation conducted by a female protagonist, who is in shadow, standing in front of a glass door, and a male protagonist, who we don't see.

Berthe: 'When did the gaze collapse?'

Male protagonist- '10 Years ago? 15? Maybe 50. Before TV'.

Berthe: Be more precise.

MP: Before TV took precedence over current events? Over life?

Berthe: Yes. I feel our gaze has become a program under control. Subsidized. The image, sir, alone capable of denying nothingness, is also the gaze of nothingness on us.

MP: I hope not. (Berthe to male protagonist, in Godard: 2001, 1:19:57- 1:20:40).

The archive is an obsession of *Eloge de L'amour* that continues from *L'Historie du cinema.* Moreover:

…A typically complex intertextual patchwork, Berthe's dialogue here is at the same time and intra-textual borrowing from *Histories du cinema*, Chapter 4B, in which Blanchots words are intoned by Godard in voice-over. (Morrey, D; Stojanova, C; Cote, N (eds) (2014): p.86).

The sub-plot that involves coming up with a Tristan and Isolde script for Juliette Binoche could also be viewed as having a relation to Third meaning, as it is a new plot for mythological peripheral characters. (Godard:2001, 1:18:08). Two statements near the end of the film reference Godard's new relation to the digital: 'A petition to dub Matrix into Breton. Image and sound are vital to history. And most important is that basic element, not knowing how history will end.' (Berthe and elderly man: 1:28:30). The second of the statements seems to hark back to a Kantian view of apperception. This is not a postmodern sublime but a neo-classical version of the aesthetic: 'I see a landscape that is new to me, but it's new to me because I mentally compare it to another landscape, an older one, one that I knew'. (1:31:15-1:31:45). Godard explains in a contemporary interview how non-linearity was a key component of the film:

I had in mind something usually known as a so-called love story; my idea was to relate it counter-chronologically. Something of that idea remains. I thought of starting with the end, then say, four days earlier, six months earlier, a year earlier, and so on, and conclude with the beginning… I didn't want to treat it chronologically. (Godard interviewed by Halberstadt, M: 3/6/2001).

 In the interview, as in the film it is apparent that Godard is struggling to grasp the new digital medium, having disavowed it only months before as totalitarian:

 In Hollywood, there's no more production, all that's left is distribution, which is under the thumb of exhibition and television broadcasting. In television, there's no more production, except a few pockets from time to time, certain sporting events or interviews…directors take a camera but they put themselves in the camera's place. The camera needs its independence. (Godard interviewed by Halberstadt, M: 3/6/2001).

Something of his coming to peace with the new medium is almost certainly to do with a revivification of his early methodologies:

…a post- Marxist, 21st century film like *Eloge de L'Amour* demonstrates how far Godard has travelled from his proto-postmodernist aesthetic towards a kind of renewed modernism, eschewing in classical Godardian style the very popular culture with which his early cinema was deeply engaged. (Morrey, D; Stojanova, C; Cote, N (eds) (2014): p.88).

The key component that links Godard to modern filmmakers such as Göran Olsson and Hito Steryl is a rigorous reapplication of first principles: the story is never complete, it can always be reordered; the viewers aesthetic assumptions should be challenged. What stages a cleave of departure in Deleuze from the radical filmmakers is an absence of polemics. In Godard:

> … it is against historical actuality that cinema's unactualized powers are affirmed as powers of the false. In his works of the 1990s, Godard in contrast with Deleuze, is thus not content to offer an image of thought that actually existing film is supposed to have perfected. Rather, he produces the memory of the virtual, not only as the unthought of the cinema of movement, but as what the history of cinema has excluded or repressed (Durham, S in Conley, T; Jefferson-Kline, T (eds) (2014): p443-p.455)**.**

4.10. Kristeva: Mimesis, the Thetic and Digital transposition

Some of the key concepts relating to Third meaning can be found in Kristeva's *Revolution in poetic language*, which is published four years after Barthes' Third meaning essay. In this work she does not propose a Third meaning taxonomy, but she does demonstrate the transposition from one media to another using Third meaning discourse. She writes:

> We shall distinguish the semiotic (drives and their articulations) from the realm of signification, which is always that of a proposition or judgement, in other words, a realm of positions. This positionality, which Husserlian phenomenology orchestrates through the concepts of doxa, position and thesis, is structured as a break in the signifying process, establishing the identification of the subject and its object and preconditions of propositionality. (Kristeva: [1974] (1984, p.43).

From earliest childhood, the thetic, or point of enunciation, is always bound up with a 'complicity' (Kristeva: [1974] (1984, p.44) between the object and the proposition. So, there is an inextricable link between language and the visual. A corollary between Third meaning and a heretofore underdeveloped link to psychoanalysis is proposed; this is the break from Barthes' version, though the thrust of the explication is materialist:

> In our view, the Freudian theory of the subconscious show, precisely, that thetic signification is a stage attained under certain precise conditions during the signifying process, and that it constitutes the subject without being reduced to his process precisely because it is the threshold of language. Such a standpoint constitutes neither a reduction of the subject to a transcendental ego, nor a denial [de-negation] of the thetic phase that establishes signification (Kristeva: [1974] (1984, p.44, p.45).

This concurs with Barthes' description of the Third meaning image; that it does not remain at a subconscious level because it is irreducible to its constituent parts. When Kristeva deals with the literary construct; and here the analogous step to the visual construct can be easily

negotiated, she uses words very similar to Barthes in the third meaning essay when evoking the ancient Greek concept of mimesis:

> Mimesis is precisely, the construction of an object, not according to truth but to verisimilitude, to the extent that another object is posited as such (hence separate; noted, not denoted); it is, however, internally dependent on a subject of enunciation who is unlike the transcendental ego in that he does not suppress the semiotic chora but instead raises the chora to the status of a signifier, which may or may not obey the norms of grammatical locution. Such is the connoted mimetic object. (Kristeva: [1974] 1984, p.57).

Kristeva draws an equivalence of modern poetic mimesis with that of third meaning, and explains why it has more resonance that older forms of mimesis:

> In imitating the constitution of the symbolic as meaning, poetic mimesis is led to dissolve not only the denotive function but also the specifically thetic function of positing the subject. In this respect, modern poetic language goes further than any classical mimesis- whether theatrical or novelistic- because it attacks not only denotation (the positing of the object) but meaning (the positing of the enunciating subject) as well. (Kristeva: [1974] 1984, p.57-p58).

Kristeva addresses the Freudian concepts of displacement and condensation, and their reformulation in structural linguistics as metonymy and metaphor. She asserts that a third process should be added: that of the 'passage from one sign system to another' (59). Intertextuality is mentioned as a variant of this and mixed media is implied as another: 'the transposition from a carnival scene to a written text, for instance.' (59). Intertextuality is substituted for the word transposition; these have an equivalence for Kristeva: 'we prefer the term transposition because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic-of enunciative and denotative positionality'. (60). The subsequent passage recalls precisely what Barthes evoked, of ideology hiding in plain sight, and how third meaning might irrupt and expose it: 'Mimesis and poetic language do not…disavow the thetic, instead they go through its truth (signification, denotation) to tell the ''truth'' about it.' (60). The terms of Third meanings prescience in a postcolonial world with the progress of identity politics opening up a multiplicity of progressive communal permutations are then explicitly addressed:

> …mimesis and poetic language do more than engage in an intra-ideological debate; they question the very principle of the ideological because they unfold the unicity of thetic (the precondition for meaning and signification) and prevent its theologization.' (61).

A very technologically involved section in the next chapter decides that 'We…maintain that what we call the semiotic can be described as both analogue and digital: the functioning of the semiotic chora is made up of continuities that are segmented in order to organise a digital system as the choras guarantee of survival (just as digitality is the means of survival both for the living cell and society) the stases marked by the facilitation of the drives are the discrete elements in this digital system, indispensable for maintaining the semiotic chora '(66).

Kristeva suggests that the formative transposition from the analogue to the digital is easy to

negotiate. What the underlying assumption seems to be however, is that a digitally dominated world: what some writers have latterly called a 'posthuman' world is both a consequence of our biological drives and is underwritten as a processual stage on the way to revolution. The contention of this research is that there is not any essentialism that the digital provides in which a path to radical change is blocked without it. Yet now the digital image is more than two decades old, there is a useful affectual tension between a gradual attunement to the digital image as a utilitarian image and yet of it as a contemporary image resistant to its total assimilation as a tool of the capitalist class or of the film industry. The staggering reach of the digital image means it can never be simply an ideological weapon, there is always a possibility for those images to tell stories about the peoples whose lives it records and for those images to affect and inspire. Yet as society develops, so too do views on how people think society should be depicted. Barthes was conscious of this, and while Kristeva ultimately concentrated on the abject image as a resistant positing, the growing aesthetic utilisations of the digital image as well as its accessibility entail that the abject image is but one in a series of resistant images that can challenge the ideological imperatives of capitalism.

Ranciére opines that Barthes, in concentrating on images that once were the 'scaffolding for revolutionary faith' in the Third meaning essay, avers ultimately on their lack of content. He contends that Third meaning may have had consequences for his later work that nevertheless clung to the conception of the ideological battle at the heart of signification:

> If something changed at that point and later moved towards valorising the fetish and the punctum, it still did so in the context of an allegiance to the reign of the signifier in the late 1960s, as much as an even more than as an attraction to the sensible or to cinema as a form of sensory experience. (Interview with Ranciére, J, 5/12/2014; in Watts: 2016, p.100-p.112).

4.11. Barthes: Kairos, the Neutral and the Punctum

Signifiance, or the opening up of meaning in Third meaning is the crucial manoeuvre that allows for a continuum that includes the development of Third meaning aesthetics across media, irrespective of form of conveyance and also dispels the univocity of the Bourgeois dominated era. *Signifiance*, having been co-conceptualised by Kristeva is somewhat reformulated by herself and Barthes as a psychodynamic category, one that largely extricates itself from economic categories but exists in a limbic materialist category somewhere similar to Baudrillard's retreat from use value. Alienation of the Lacan-inflected variety is then applied to a particular aspect of third meaning by Kristeva; this is the horror image evoked by Barthes in the Third meaning essay which appears as a grotesque punctum[112] .

In Kristeva's work this is reformulated as abjection. Barthes' by this time has inflated Third meaning into the 'Neutral' formulation, and has also applied a Taoist dialectic to it[113]. The conceptual links between the two versions are adjacent. Ultimately making sense of the neutral in relation to third meaning means excising the aspects that seem more decorative. Linking conceptual terminology that straddle Third meaning-neutral-punctum is difficult but the key concept of proletarian ethnography survives each mutation and reformulation. Proletarian ethnography is the dialectical presentation of Barthes' Third meaning that

specifically becomes 'active' in the 'proletarian moment'. The proletarian moment is also the 'right moment'; it has simultaneously an ontological and ethical dimension that is articulated as Kairos in both the published lectures Barthes gave on the neutral in the College de France, Paris in 1968, and in *Camera Lucida*. In 'the neutral', Kairos is presented first of all in relation to the scepticism of the ancient Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus, and its associated 'silence'. The approach cited is very much the approach the viewer of the dialectical image should adopt; an internal cogniscence that takes account and learns from a presentation: this is not the silence borne of a lack of understanding, of the passive viewer. The precise operation Barthes describes is: 'keeping silent as the obligation of an inner ''morality''. (Barthes [1978], (2005, p.25). Yet this silence is ultimately broken by the necessity to speak. Pyrrho is evoked in the following to delineate Kairos as a form of scepticism separate from dogmatism:

> …the phyrronian doesn't contradict himself when he speaks or keeps quiet according to the occasion, which is to say, like everyone else does: what's important for him (the neutral isn't far) = that the game of speech and silence need not be systematic: that, to oppose dogmatic speech, one does not produce an equally dogmatic silence. (Barthes [1978] (2005, p.28).

In general, Barthes states of Kairos: 'The idea is useful to signal the asystematic character of the neutral: its relation to occasion, contingency, conjuncture, extemporising' (Barthes [1978] (2005, p.169). More specifically, he delineates two types of Kairos; a sophist version and a sceptical version. Of the sophist version, he writes: 'opportunity= bottom line of sophistic skill: instinct, subtle sense of touch, psychological sense for seizing which words and which attitudes are called for by the moment'. (169). Note that there is no intrinsic radical aspect to this reaction; it only requires a knowledge of the zeitgeist. Of sceptical Kairos, Barthes writes: 'The sceptic is free to renounce his scepticism at every moment, without his doing so contradicting what he used to say when he was speaking sceptically: ''He would contradict himself, however, if he argued that something must be said by necessity, that is everywhere and always, even if this were limited to things said by himself in the course of his (discursive) life. This is the reason why authentic scepticism appears only in certain places and at certain times but can't triumph everywhere and always.' (170). In the case of Barthes reading of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*: what was at stake was a version of Third meaning that evoked a historical situation that was analogous to that in Soviet Russia as Eisenstein was scripting the film.

The scepticism Eisenstein expresses is one that questions more than anything else the authenticity of the post- revolutionary society; how far it has strayed from its original aims, how it now represents a parody of revolution far more closely allied to the autocratic appearance of Ivan's rule. Ivan himself is less Ivan the terrible than Stalin, or more exactly, Stalin is poetically self-identical to all what would be considered the obverse of a revolutionary character; tyrannical and self-aggrandising. Mimesis is used in the sense that the copy is an ironic, yet perfectly serious re-enactment of historical moments as they might've occurred, with no-one living who can remember them. Likewise, the ideological copy of Stalin is so opaque that he might represent a distillation of Marxism, but no-one can remember. Barthes reading is a sceptical injunction used to dispel false consciousness.

What confuses matters slightly is that by the time of *Camera Lucida* Kairos has become inextricably linked with psychological states rather than as a material intervention with true consequence.

Kairos becomes the 'Kairos of desire', and somewhat analogous to an inverse presentation of an image of abjection. The discussion that conjoins the punctum and Kairos is of a topless image of Robert Mapplethorpe, the photographer, which is alternately given the nomenclature of an erotic and pornographic picture by Roland Barthes[114]. The image in itself is very basic and the focus is actually the physiognomic distraction of his partially opened hand. The punctum meanwhile, is a very much scaled down version of Third meaning from the neutral, and with the obtuse meaning the key component, with the excess and the trace attendant concepts: '...whether or not it is triggered, it is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph and what is nevertheless already there'. (Barthes [1980] (2000, p.55).

Phillip Watts reflects in his account of Roland Barthes' cinema the cognitive and affectual aspects of his cinematic dialectic. He analyses some of the *Mythologies*-era work on the visual to highlight Barthes dual role as the 'interpreter and the sensualist'. The first part of this involves Barthes deep mining of the ideological; a particular talent in unpicking the tangled meanings and hidden agendas of the Cold War era. But what is curiously current about this dialectic, and why it survives the transposition to an age where immateriality and the surface are foregrounded in discourse, is that he also pays attention to the closeness of film, it's invasion of the senses: a pillaging of culture and the remaking of ideological materials to sell back to the viewer. That claustrophobia is where the viewer both recognises the fine demarcations of modern culture and begins to question them. In the conclusion I will draw out a definitive taxonomy of what is useful within the Third meaning corpus for utilisation within digital film using recent Jean Luc Godard films *Film Socialisme* and *Goodbye to Language* as exemplars. Closing comments will posit Third meaning as a productive tool for political aesthetic conveyance across multi-media platforms and suggest how a digital counternarrative could be a progressive force in the coming years.

Conclusion

Introduction

'The prison house is the world of sight' [115]

> It is natural that every historical stage dictates to the master of its epoch a given treatment with a given norm. The most elaborate variety of style in one. The baring of the device[116] as if hacked out by the pioneer's axe in the other. A convulsive, spasmatic construction in the third. Each sings with the voice of his stage of cultural development. But something else is more interesting for us at this point. A different stage of development dictates a different voice. A different voice here affects the different use of one and the same norm. And this historically different treatment of it determines a different objective stage of the intensity of the effect. The emotional ''degree'' of resonance of all three-is very different.

> Eisenstein S [1945] (1987); Marshall, H (trans) 'Pathos; Section II: Twenty-two supporting columns' in *Non-indifferent Nature*.

With this quote, Sergei Eisenstein presciently and metaphorically anticipates the tumult of the 1960's and the demands it would place on visual culture. The 1960's so radically transformed culture that a new visual regime seemed a necessary corollary. Roland Barthes' Third meaning essay, arriving in the summer of 1970 is a reflection on the consequences of near-revolution in France, and a meditation on what the subsequent capitulation of the PCF to the Gaullist regime means. More obviously it is an analysis of some still cinematic fragments. Ostensibly, the Third meaning essay published in *Cahiers du Cinema* is about Sergei Eisenstein's work, but references other filmmakers and films also. The important theoretical contributions of the Third meaning essay are aesthetic and political. These are interlinked in the essay itself; part of Barthes interest is in the reciprocal exchange between the philosophical-affectual and the ontological-political. The first consideration is that which asks the individual to ponder what their response to a visual stimulus might mean more generally. The second is that which orients the individual being in their political subjectivity towards a conclusion.

Third meaning is a methodology that reads political ideology in its conceptual and aesthetic articulation within a text, and is not confined to passive depiction. I have contended in this investigation that though the Third meaning essay has no clearly defined repository of thematic concerns, there are nevertheless Third meaning traits that recur and are conceptually significant in the production of a political language of cinema. These traits have affectual qualities. The Third meaning essay references media other than cinema, and implies strongly that Third meaning should be used in a loosely pedagogical way to analyse and complete other media.

The reader is invited not just to accept Barthes' own reading of the films showcased but apply their own interpretation. By this stage in his writings, subsequent to the 'Death of the Author' essay, Barthes has posited the author/auteur as being conceptually redundant. What matters most to Barthes is the ideological construction of a film and the aesthetic presentation of competing ideological positions. Several authors have questioned Barthes commitment to the medium of film and the problems this may pose in accepting the

concreteness of his arguments. In this regard, a convincing argument is made by Phillip Watts, who contends that it is Barthes' partial 'resistance' to the Cinema that make his arguments for a radical engagement with cinema convincing. (Watts, P; Andrew, D; Citton, Y; Debaene, V & Di Iorio, S: 2016, p.1). Barthes has also described his 'resistance' to film.[117] Digital Cinema does not exist as such at the time Barthes writes, but a codified Cinema is implicit in the third meaning essay, and in some of Barthes' essays that precede and follow it. In Plato's allegory of the cave, the occupants of the cave only have first- hand knowledge of their immediate surroundings; Barthes, to draw on the analogy, is akin to the escaped prisoner who has seen 'reality' and reports back to the cave to a disbelieving reception. This analogy was clearly in Barthes' mind when he reported on the possibilities of Cinemascope:

> The darkness itself is transformed: in the ordinary film, it is tomb-like, I am still in the cave of myths, I have a little flame of illumination which flickers far above me, and I receive the truth of the images like heavenly grace. Here, on the contrary, the cord that binds me to the screen is no longer thread-like, it's a full volume of brightness that is established apart from me, I don't receive the image by those long threads of light that one sees transfixing and feeding the stigmatists, I lean forward on my elbows, becoming as horizontal as the spectacle, and out of my larval state emerge as a little god because here I am, no longer under the image but in front of it, in the middle of it, separated from it by this ideal distance, necessary to creation, which is no longer that of the glance but that of the arm's reach (God and painters always have outstretched arms).
> https://legacy.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v3i3/barth.htmc (Barthes, R; Rosenbaum, J (trans): 'On Cinemascope'; accessed 04/08/2019).

Barthes' interest in the capacities of film technologies and their potential for enlightenment is evident. There is a sense of 'positioning' in which the viewer is in control[118]Moreover, Phillip Watts notes the ideological imperative at the centre of Barthes interest in film technology:

> …this short text speaks to a dream that he located in cinema, a dream in which technological innovation could lead to a radical transformation in the perception of the world and thereby, a radical transformation in the spectator's relation with the common people, the workers whom a feature like *On the Waterfront*[119] attempts to lure down the wrong path. (Watts, P; Dudley, A (ed); Citton, Y (ed); Debaene, V (ed); Iorio Di, S (ed) (2016), p.27).

From this analogical point, in line with the Baudry -informed apparatus theory that was the cinema orthodoxy of the time[120] we immediately arrive at a Post Aristotelian conceptualisation where utopian mimetic impulse and mass consumption meet, and the working class are pitched in ideological contestation with the ruling class, the prize being mastery over this new mode of cinema production. For the audience, the reception of the production is one of tacit understanding, and of completion. The viewer has become a 'productive element'.

Since Barthes made his utopian case for Cinemascope, capitalist investment in control over the creative industries has been enormous. What sets film apart as a case for discourse analysis is that the Bourgeois revolutions have already occurred as this new form of visual

media becomes established, and indeed the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 occurs in Russia while the film industry as such is still in its infancy. From the unique moment in French history Barthes speaks, his proposition is to reference an aesthetic system that can provide a historical account of the image that makes the last two hundred years understandable. Although the number of films referenced in The Third meaning essay are limited, they provide a range of perspectives on contemporary culture. One of the ways they do this is to draw on a repository of myth and quasi-history. Hence, *Ivan the Terrible* is a film about a historical character of whom there are limited historical records. *Battleship Potemkin* is about real recent events that haven't been properly recorded because it was politically exigent at the time not to. *Ordinary Fascism* is a documentary charting the rise of Nazi Party from a critical viewpoint, an endeavour that would have been suppressed or turned into an instrument of propaganda had the production of the film been discovered when the party was in power in Germany. *Satyricon*, mentioned briefly, is an ancient myth of the hero that may have been historical fact. These films show us how fiction and fact rarely have a fixed status in filmmaking.

This research has sought to demonstrate how Roland Barthes set the scene conceptually for a political aesthetics of digital film. Some theorists have noted a change in teleological approach since the advent of the digital and regarded Giles Deleuze to be a more apposite candidate for establishing the ground given his work in *Cinema 2* on the 'Time Image'. However, for an approach that traverses developing media with an ability to adapt its inherent power to new cognitive and affectual regimes, the unique qualities of Third meaning theory seem clear. Jacques Ranciére said of Roland Barthes in a recent interview:

> Looking back, I can see that for me, Barthes embodied what it meant to be a Marxist critic of literature and of images in the 1960s-and to reverse that position later on[121].He exemplified the reversal that made the image into a kind of reality emanating from the body itself and coming toward the spectator. At a time when I needed to think about how images affect us, Barthes was an absolute must-read, he was the keenest observer because he always had the integrity to consider all the possible consequences of the interpretive consequences he adopted. (Ranciére, J in Watts; Andrew, D (ed); Citton, Y (ed); Debane V (ed) Di Iorio, S; p.111).

The digital aesthetic paradigm within cinematic production prevailed as a mode of conveyance in the last twenty years to the extent that it now dominates it. The exigency of being able to produce digital images cheaply in a world beset by continual economic instability is a notable aspect of being able to extend the affectual reach of the independent filmmaker. In the context of a 'flattening' of the aesthetic of the digital in its ubiquity, against which a third meaning digital aesthetic appears as a 'raised mark', Third meaning can be seen as 'the numenal': a presentation to the mind in which the digital form makes best sense.

The historical status of the image is ideologically contested. For some the digital image represents a chance to construct worlds of pure escapism, the viewer in attendance as a 'virtual' attendant. Other filmmakers see it as important that viewers recognise the political importance of being attendant at history and how the image can shape our experience of history. Jean- Luc Godard and more recently Göran Olsson have been proponents of using

the mutability of the digital to construct a combinatory archive of materials that can show how capitalism has been contested in ways that may have been missed in official histories, how countercultural voices may have previously been suppressed. This is the 'excavation' of an archaeology of the image, exposing the metaphorical sediment to analyse how 'layers' of ideology are internalised.

A certain amount of extrapolation needs to be done when approaching how Barthes might have viewed modern utilisations of Third meaning. Digital art films were the only type of digital film in production at the time Barthes died, and they were not for mass consumption. Continuity of the application of Third meaning concepts that in the first place are not entirely fully formed is difficult to visualise. There are clues from Barthes' last ten years of writing; for instance, an evident shift towards an autobiography of the image in *Camera Lucida*. Barthes is as interested in the affectual as in the material aspect of aesthetic discourse. He sees that the environment in which film is typically screened has limited horizons, but also sees that cinema has transformative potential beyond any other cultural form in conducive conditions. In a paper delivered to a group of teachers in Bordeaux in 1970, Barthes states:

> There has been a development or, more precisely, an extension of the methods of linguistic analysis, on the basis of the articulated language we speak, to all the other kinds of language that exist in social life but do not have articulated language as their vehicle. In this way we have begun to study messages or sets of messages made up of images using analytic concepts originating in linguistics, such as, for example, the still image in the case of photography and drawing and the moving image in that of cinema (we may also cite a number of studies currently being undertaken on the theatre). (Barthes, R; Turner, C (trans): [1970], 2015, p.90).

The diegetic method is one Barthes explains in The Third meaning essay (Barthes, R; Heath, S (trans.) [1970] and is one that has gained currency in modern film studies. This thesis has advanced Third meaning as a set of ideas beginning with the *Mythologies* book in 1957, and continuing in writing through Barthes' life; noting that Julia Kristeva's concept of *signifiance* is the central connotative concept linking text and image that informs Third meaning. The later Barthes' writing is inflected with psychoanalytically informed discourse. He did, however, regard this notion of the subject transformed by desire as in a constant dialogue with politics. In an essay on Utopia from 1974 he makes explicit their intertwined nature:

> Utopia is the field of desire, and opposed to politics which is in the field of need. Need resents Desire's irresponsibility and triviality; Desire resents needs strictures and its reductive power. Sometimes the Wall is penetrated and Desire manages to explode into Politics. This produces something like May '68, a rare historic moment, the moment of an immediate utopia- the occupied Sorbonne lived for a month in a utopian state (it was, in effect, 'nowhere'). (Barthes, R; Turner, C [trans] [1974], 2015: p.106).

From these indeterminate co-ordinates, radical filmmakers have attempted to make sense of a post-1968 political landscape. Some, such as Hito Steyerl have adopted a 'techno- Avant Gardist' approach, challenging Capitalist ideology through Third meaning informed digital art film. Documentary has been the favoured approach of Hugo Göran Olsson; an attempt

to rearticulate radical discourse through the digital archive. Before him, Harun Farocki anticipated how the digital could intervene counterculturally in a world bombarded with ideologically driven 24-hour news. Jean Luc Godard has continued to utilise Third meaning in both fiction and documentary films; sometimes using archive footage to blend the two typologies. These closing remarks will focus on their work through analysing key Third meaning traits and how they continue to be posited politically in the digital age: the inside of the fragment, gestus, the haiku and counternarrative. Two concepts that further expand the Third meaning corpus from Barthes later writings are also considered- Kairos- the transversal 'decisive moment' that cuts across all historical modes of filmmaking, and the 'numen' that applies more directly to digital Third meaning.

5.1. Third meaning as digital material: 'The numen'

Barthes becomes a before-the-fact theorist of digital cinema with all the deterritorialization that is implied by its ability to traverse media when in 1960 he writes:

> Is the modern image spiritually good or bad?... On the one hand, the diffusion of images is part of the world and a product of technical society: hence to condemn the image is apparently to condemn modernity. On the other hand, however, not only is the image a vehicle for drives, affects, irrational and instinctual forces (at least, this is the assumption), but most importantly, it spreads in an uncontrolled way, which cannot trouble any organised ideology. (Barthes, R; Turner, C [1961], 2016, p.37).

The subversive element to the digital implied in this passage is to suggest that the modern image is reflexive and easily disseminated; that it escapes the attention of those that fail to perceive something of the zeitgeist. Moreover, that the image is a metaphorical tabula rasa in terms of its utilisation; that whoever is able to control it is often able to purpose it in an effective way. This is almost certainly because it is not only the current affective mode in which we view film that is novel, but indeed that the whole history of viewing produced image is new.

Pertinent to Barthes use of the concept of the numen in *Camera Lucida* is that he links the concept to a 'system of shock' in photography in which the system traverses from painting to photography and back again thereby demarcating the numen as having family resemblance to Third meaning. It is also relevant that Barthes updates his understanding of the numen to something that is more contemporary. The images in the Third meaning essay have been replaced by images that have moved to account for the media images of the 1970s in *Camera Lucida* and are responding to that; some of the images are freakish in their distortion but not salacious and this in itself is a point of resistance to tabloid culture. Others such as the nuns juxtaposed with the soldiers in the same photograph (Koen Wessing; Nicaragua in Barthes, R; Howard, R: trans. 1980, p.22) illustrate the proximity of war in a globalised world. It is notable that Barthes uses only pre-World War II images in the Third meaning essay, and they are mainly from fiction films. The images in *Camera Lucida* are all purposely photographs only, though their contextual variety within that is remarkable in their formal and non- formal iterations; from accidental capture to clearly staged. The numen makes its appearance in *Camera Lucida* when Barthes outlines five elements of

surprise in photography in *Camera Lucida*. (Barthes, R; Howard, R trans: 1980, p.32-33). The most pertinent elements of surprise vis-a- vis Third meaning are the first two. The first is 'the rarity of the referent'; which we might interpret as it's auratic quality[122], but also the extent to which it can be codified. The closer to perceived originality an image is, it also makes it easier to say something qualitative and in-depth about it; the image can be contextualised. An indistinct image is likely to be discarded, unless indistinctness marks it out.

For the second element of surprise, Barthes refers to the 'numen' of historical painting; a gesture apprehended at the point in its normal course where the eye cannot arrest it. A rendition of the animated numen is presented in Godard's *Passion* (1982), and the painterly animation of the 3D effect on the water as the yacht drifts into and out of port in *Goodbye to Language* (2014) is affecting in a slightly different way. Barthes undoes his encapsulation of surprise and its subsections thereof. He writes that: 'all these surprises obey a principle of defiance (which is why they are alien to me)' (Barthes: 1980, p.32). He writes that the photograph only becomes truly surprising in transcending these categories. In fact, he suggests, the true surprise is in not knowing why a photograph has been taken. The problem for Barthes is not the act of defiance, but the construction of a schema of defiance, blunting the counternarrative.

Raymond Bellour sees the digital cinema as being the third filmic periodization of the spectator. The first period is of the spectator-as-mass-subject. This period is characterised by the birth of big studios and the prevalence of film as political propaganda. The second phase of the spectator, Bellour contends is from the end of WWII, a period of 'a more open, constructive critical relation to the Cinema'. He adds that: 'This phase significantly corresponds to the theoretical notion of the shot.' The third period of the spectator that Bellour outlines seems a particularly accurate characterisation of the present age. He opines that there are two stark extremes of digital cinema:

> On the one side, a globally dominant, commercial cinema that is ruled by its own by-products, a falsely spectacular art still supposed to attract a large audience-above all, those young spectators enamoured of technological mutations, especially the video games with which film must compete: A cinema based on a degraded aesthetic of stereotypical shock and the unspecific violence of images. On the other side, a cinema that one can describe as subtly shocking still develops: A cinema that is increasingly local, diversified, at the same time as it becomes ever more international, seeking everywhere to gain spectators attention-avowedly or not, an art of resistance. (Bellour, R: 'The Cinema spectator: A special memory' in Christie I (ed), 2012, pp.206-pp217: p.208).

In concert with Phillip Watts' writings on Barthes, who suggested that Barthes approach to cinema was distracted yet attentive to detail, Bellour uses Walter Benjamin's conception of tactility in his 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' as a method of viewing post war film. It was this 'closeness' to the material that seems to have informed Barthes writing in the Third meaning essay. Bellour poses the question 'what is the crisis in Cinema?' and answers with:

> … a dual response, on the one hand it is the dark theatre, and on the other hand, Cinema's means of recording. What they have in common is a certain passivity of the celluloid and/or the spectator. This *dispositif* is all of a piece. (Bellour, R: 'The Cinema spectator: A special memory' in Christie I (ed), 2012, pp.206-pp217; p.210).

Bellour charts the passage from ontological reception to the affective, using the theorist Daney, who writes that the 'time of the maturing' of the film within the spectator's body and nervous system is crucial. From this we pass from 'the passivity of he who looks to the passivity to the activity of he who writes.' (210). The imbrication of film as memory as part of this process conjoins the digital and the archive meaningfully. In the course of a few sentences Bellour travels from a point of ambivalence about the digital to an advocate. The key is the change in seeing the digital as defined by its constituent parts to seeing the digital as aligned with an ethical approach- a *dispositif*. Using that approach to shape the trajectory of the visual arts is in sensing their contestation. An irreducible excess exists within digital Third meaning films that notably diverge from capitalist ideology, even allowing that trace elements of that ideology exist. Digital film is more than its product: it is also the phenomenal aspect that is irreducible to mere exchange value[123].

The art films of Hito Steyerl have a tacit quality where the viewer can experience her work without ever being immersed in ideology, or subsumed in an emotion-suffused narrative that characterises some mainstream films. Rather the affectual experience is one of dipping in and out of visual constructions while maintaining autonomy and objectivity as a viewer. While there is a pedagogical element attached to her work, it is more couched in the terms of a demonstration. The medium is not self-identical with the meaning, but the work of Steyerl continually returns to the theme of authenticity; and its status as a contested concept. There is an authenticity in her work of rigorous experimentation with the tools of contemporary filmmaking. Her films are more than just future artefacts of the digital age, however. Marcuse wrote, in 1977:

> Art can be called revolutionary in several senses. In a narrow sense, art may be revolutionary if it represents a radical change in style or technique. Such change may be the achievement of a genuine avant-garde, anticipating or reflecting substantial changes in the society at large. Thus, expressionism and surrealism anticipated the destructiveness of monopoly capitalism, and the emergence of new goals of radical change. But the merely ''technical'' definition of revolutionary art says nothing about the quality of the work, nothing about its authenticity and truth. (Marcuse, H: [1977] 1978, preface p.xi.).

What Steyerl is able to do is to utilise technology in a numenal way, where her conceptual presentation is in its barely concealed point of enunciation where the speech act is the epitome of the counternarrative.

5.2. The inside of the fragment

A description of the inside of the fragment immediately follows that of the still in the Third meaning essay. The still has a reciprocal relationship with the inside of the fragment. A visualisation of Eisenstein's is drawn upon initially, of 'new possibilities of audio-visual montage:

the basic centre of gravity…is transferred to inside the fragment, into the elements included in the image itself. [Barthes italics follow] *And the centre of gravity is no longer the element ''between shots''-the shock-but the element ''inside the shot''-the accentuation within the fragment…* (Eisenstein quoted in Barthes, R; Heath, S (trans) [1970], 1977, p.67).

The inside of the fragment can be a still, but it is not merely that; each still maintains a dialogue with the rest of the film. It is an evocation of the film, but it may be extracted from any point in the narrative. Barthes describes it as 'not a sample (an idea that supposes a sort of homogenous statistical nature of the film elements) but a quotation (we know how much this idea presently accrues to this concept in the theory of the text): at once parodic and disseminatory' (Barthes [1970] 1977, p.67). Just as Third meaning films as a whole underscore the excessive, so the inside of the fragment suggests more than the image contained within the edges of the individual frame. These are not just physical elements but the manifest reality of societal change. Badiou argues that the poetics of cinema work on a linkage principle, where 'genuine ideas are mixtures' and 'Every attempt at univocity signals the defeat of the poetic' (Badiou [1994] 2013, p.91).

The Third meaning image pulls in associations from outside of the film, outside of cinema entirely. This is continual and critical extemporisation that the viewer is invited to complete. In the case of *Ivan the Terrible* the historical referent is obvious; the archetype is presented so that the viewer can divine the parodic and disseminatory meanings in contemporary analogous content. Third meaning maintains a continual relationship with contemporary historical material that contributes to the discourse of the counternarrative and also with the historical material that has contributed to ruling class discourse. Jean- Luc Godard's *Letter to Jane* is somewhat of a conceptual if not aesthetic forerunner of digital Third meaning.

As mentioned in chapter three, an important physical aspect of the photograph is to note that the Vietnamese man's face is blurred whereas Jane Fonda's face is sharply in focus. This contrast is given explicit attention to by Godard and Gorin. Barthes states in the Third meaning essay that the advantage with being able to study the still image is that [Barthes' italics]: 'the basic centre of gravity…*is transferred to inside the fragment*, into the elements included in the image itself. And the centre of gravity is no longer the element ''between shots''- the shock- but the element ''inside the shot''- *the accentuation within the fragment*…' (Barthes: [1970], 1977, p.67). Gorin remarks that the man's face is the 'face of revolution'; for this statement, the camera focuses on one part of the still: the viewer is palpably 'inside the fragment'. (Gorin. J-P: *Letter to Jane*, 1972). Like Eisenstein's 'proletarian fist' there is a trajectory to the image; it embodies a *dispositif* in an approximate affectual configuration.

Godard states that people will have something to say about this man because they know he is Vietnamese, and the Vietnamese are trying to kick the US out of Asia. It is a reflection that codifies the fragment. The analysis conducted by Godard and Gorin points us consistently beyond the framing of the shot, mentioning other images, mentioning other events. Godard also draws attention to the implicit deficiency of the image that occupies the screen during almost the entire film: 'No reverse shot is possible'. (Godard in Godard: 1972b) states Godard, about the photograph that compels us to gaze at Jane Fonda's face. Yet the image

has captured a moment that is poised between the image and history, and this is what compels us. The moment has captured our gaze of interest in Fonda as something other than her Hollywood image, and her awareness of our realisation. It goes deeper than the staging of the photograph, and deeper still than ideological invocation, to an element that is moving towards the cognate. As if to confirm this, Godard considers the image of Jane Fonda as representing a 'model of Cartesian thinking'. (Godard in Godard: 1972b).

In terms of philosophical linearity, the produced image is always subsequent to thought; the rumination here is akin to the aprori of: *I think therefore I am the image.* Part of Barthes contribution to a philosophy of the image is that the image is an extension of modern life. Contemporary identities are inextricably linked to the produced image; no-one alive can recall a world before the moving image. The subversive function of reordering linearity is to break up conventional narrative and expose the join. Barthes writes in 'The structural analysis of narratives' essay from 1966: '…one could say that the origin of a sequence is not the observation of reality, but the need to vary and transcend the first form given man, namely repetition: a sequence is essentially a whole within which nothing is repeated.' (Barthes [1966], 1977, p.124).

The imbrication of history *per se* is not a structuring element of Third meaning, but historical process is. An understanding of historical culture is at the forefront in *Ivan the Terrible* and *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* and is a prominent theme in *Notre Musique*. This is not history that moves in a narrative chronology, but history that draws on the properties of the past, both mythic and historic as it anticipates the future. The image of Ivan is constructed from history, hagiography, guesswork and poetic license. The materials it draws on are also cited in the present, for example an analogous casting of Ivan-as Stalin. Notre Musique as a digital third meaning film, implicates the media as having an effect on our experience of historical process.

While current affairs shape the film, the representations of mythological figures that appear intermittently in *Notre Musique* reference the present, as they did in *Weekend* 37 years previously. Barthes in 'Digressions' (*Promesse* no.25, spring 1971) states: 'Today I propose this metaphor: the stage of the world (the world as stage) is occupied by a play of decors (texts); if you raise one backdrop, another appears behind it, and so on.' (Barthes: [1971] quoted in *The Grain of the voice* (1981). In this representation time is not so much linear as layering, with different elements in different ratios at different times, fading in and out of materiality. This inconstance of 'stories', and fluctuations in the prevalence of ideologies is analogous to the dialectic of Third meaning.

In the 'Answers' interview recorded with Jean Thibaudeau, Barthes speaks at some length on the intertextual; he states it has 'initially, a polemical significance-it serves to combat the law of context.' He explains that in the first instance, intertext reduces the panoply of possible meanings by taking account of the context and thereby reducing signification to *significance*: the imperative of context relates back to communication. Yet: 'The context is, all in all, an asymbolic object. Take anyone who invokes context and, if you push a little, you'll always find resistance to symbols, an asymbolia.' (Barthes, R; Turner, C [trans] [1951] 2015: p.31).

The kernel of intertext is narrative that cannot be constrained. Simultaneously, the abstract

level of intertext traverses writing; it both traverses and is being traversed. This is acknowledged as the ability of the intertext to migrate across genres, but there is also a distinct implication that this is not the limit of its mutability. Rather, the possibility is enabled of intertextuality across media rather than having to append a text to existing literature, or derive a film conceptually from multiple films. In Eisenstein's autobiography, he cites his love for James Joyce's *Ulysses* for its linkage of the factual 'documentary' realm with the fictive and sensuous. This follows the clear statement: 'The year that gave birth to the idea of intellectual Cinema was the year that I became acquainted with Joyce's *Ulysses*' (Eisenstein, S: [1946-1950], p.213).

Just as within *Ulysses*, Eisenstein's Third meaning films are built upon layers of intertext that are not constrained by framing and maintain a dialogue with contemporary events. Discrete sections maintain a dialogue with an intertext internal to the film. In *Ivan the Terrible Part II: The Boyars Plot*, the original black and white presentation changes to colour in the scene immediately subsequent to Ivan awarding himself his nom de plume. Here a colour scheme foregrounding deep red denotes his transformation into Ivan the Terrible. The colour shifts to an overwhelmingly royal blue palette when the doltish Vladimir is sat on the throne. For the third time in three minutes the colour scheme again shifts to black and white. Finally, as the triumphant Ivan prevails the red colour scheme returns. Partly this is a dramatic device but also experiment for its own sake, marking a departure from the expectation inherent in either the presentation of a historical fiction or a documentary; namely that they obey the principle of a stylistic constant from beginning to end. Eisenstein's use of this new colourisation technology in a notably different way to any other contemporaneous usage of colour in *Ivan the Terrible Part II* is an anticipation of the video and proto-digital Avant-Garde experiments of the 1980's and 1990's. It is a Third meaning utilisation that Barthes himself did not draw attention to in the Third meaning essay; however, it provided a template for the confluence of Third meaning and technologically literate aesthetics.

5.3. Gestus

Gestus is, as the simultaneous expression of the general and the particular, a dialectical 'bringing forth' that eternalises an aesthetic moment. 'Definition and approximation' (Barthes [1970] 1977, p.61) are at work in the presentation of gestus. Gestus is a unifying aesthetic principle that encapsulates 'historical grammar' in its evocation. Bertholt Brecht, the originator of the term gestus states that the social gest is ''the mimetic and gestural expression of the social relationships prevailing between people of a given period' (Brecht, B quoted in Rossler, N (ed); Squires, A: 2018, p.66). Jeremy Spencer writes that Barthes conception of gestus is different from that of social gest. His contention is that there is no necessary social element to Barthes conception of gestus. Rather, in Barthes reading of Brecht:

> Subject-matter should not be allowed to speak for itself or be simply expressed: the artist should take a definite position towards it when it is represented. For Barthes, representation itself, as an act of separation is gestural but not necessarily social in the way Brecht means. All representation, Brecht argues, has its origin in the subject who gives meaning to what he sees, taking the position of its support and point of departure. For

Barthes, it is ultimately the law embodied in the revolutionary party which cuts out and originates Brecht's epic scene or Eisenstein's filmic shot. (Spencer, J: 'Brecht and Film theory' in Rossler, N (ed); Squires, A: 2018, p.66).

Eisenstein's political gest is clear in *Ivan the Terrible*. The *dispositif* is entirely one of the revolutionary party; though perhaps not best expressed in those formalistic, bureaucratic terms. Rather the *dispositif* amounts to the expression of an ethical mass set against the established bureaucracy. In the case of Ivan, as with so many corrupt figureheads he is sustained by the machinations of the bureaucrats who keep him in power. Ivan's modest success, such as it is, is about holding onto power whilst those around him jostle for position.

The status of the image in this is a study in loyalty, of fidelity to ethics. The surface level is that to which our attention is drawn; the loyalty or otherwise of those around him. The camera takes explicit note of each physiognomic expression that he makes and accentuates it for us, whether denoting malevolence or suspicion. The viewer is also given the chance to follow the changing loyalties amongst the royal court. Quite apart from the fact that Stalin had previously censored his films, and even stopped him making *Behzin Meadow*[124], the imputation is clear in the film that Stalin is self-identical with the fictionalised version of Ivan the terrible. His hubristic physiognomy[125] has no logical purpose other than to draw a pointed parallel to the then contemporary autocracy of the Stalin regime. This is no bland scientism of form but pointed commentary. The particularities of the gestures are understandable. Eisenstein reaches past the intertitle through articulation of concept and form.

An important aspect of gestus, is that it does not seek to play upon the emotions.[126] The ostensible removal of the auteur as director proposes the individual actors as auteur-performers. The role of the actor foregrounded as self-determinant showcases physiognomy as an important corollary of their performance. This aspect of gestus is reflective of Eisenstein's attempt to transpose the revolutionary physiognomy he attempted to articulate in the Prolekult theatre to screen. Most compelling of those ideas is the suggestion that expressions of racourri in the theatre can be authentic, communicable gestures that have a conscious affectual impact.

Gestus is a productive intervention in the specific sense of the way the viewer is prompted to view themselves as other than spectator. Gestus, in articulating the general and the particular simultaneously, allows the viewer to interpolate themselves into the historical experience demonstrated by the conceptual disjunct between the ideal form and its parodic dissemblance. Thus, the ontological role of the spectator is in completing the narrative. Following on from this, Adam Lowenstein notes a revival in what he refers to as enlarged spectatorship within digital cinema. The radical intertextual properties of the digital transformation of cinema can elicit multiple readings of even realist texts, imparting a sense of superimposed surreality; the source novel, the digital film, the DVD (Lowenstein, A: 2015, p.12)

Moreover, this harnessing of the digital intertext is lived experience rationalising a surplus of everyday images:

Barthes definition of himself as a realist underlines his commitment to photography as a unique experience for the viewer that distinguishes it from any of the other arts- an experience ultimately linked more intimately to a surrealistic uncovering of reality than to a realistic reproduction of reality' (Lowenstein, A: 2015, p.18).

Grundgestus seems to be the variety of gestus utilised in *Ivan the Terrible*. Grundgestus is, as Jameson states, where:

the formal questions-the structure of the form or fable or parable, the function of the Grundgestus- meet those of content- the nature of the dialectic, the didactic substance and narrative and the nature of the judgements we are called upon to make, if any. These of course, are the political parables, mostly contained in the collection Me-Ti, or the book of twists and turns, in which political events and historical figures are transposed to an imaginary ancient China and endowed with Chinese names. (Jameson, F: 1999, p.135).

Grundgestus makes a 'return of the repressed'[127] intervention in several Godard films, where several mythological or historical figures are brought forward to share space with contemporary narratives to illustrate allegorical similarity. This is memorably done in *Weekend* (Godard, JL: 1967), when figures such as Napoleon and Rousseau are resurrected into a France where civilisation is breaking down, satirising the tenuous nature of respectively, French military success and colonial conquest, and in the case Rousseau, the fragile social contract.

Notre Musique achieves an equal level of success in this regard by drawing an equivalence between the ghostly return of an American Indian Native and the plight of Palestinians, dispossessed since the Nakba of 1948. An extended, philosophically rich discussion between a Palestinian woman and a sympathetic Jewish journalist demonstrates this equivalence sensitively, also allowing Godard to return to another topic he often references, that of the holocaust. But Godard's true psychoanalytic masterpiece is *L'Historie du Cinema*, where the return of the repressed is the structuring principle, and the archive a chance not only for Godard to discuss properties of the image and their relation to history, but a chance for Godard to affirm a kind of therapy or perform a self-exorcism where he unloads the surplus of images of a life in film for completion by the viewer.

5.4. The Haiku: Third meaning as contemporary fiction

Haiku is described in 'The third meaning' essay as both 'a raised gash of meaning' and a 'desire for meaning'. (Barthes, R; Heath, S [1970], 1977, p.62). This tension that fills film to the point of abundance is synonymous with Third meaning itself. If it is true that Third meaning fiction is often present in film that imitates or distorts real events it is also true that the surreal is implicit in this formulation. Adam Lowenstein makes a strong case for Third meaning as a unity of the practice of Breton and Bataille, dismissing the caricature of the former as a 'blindly romantic idealist', and the latter as a 'hopelessly perverse materialist'. (Lowenstein, A: 2015, p.24).

Barthes advances a utopian element of Bataille in the Third Meaning essay where we see the fetish character of a fealty to Capitalism. The attention to detail, the moments of care in the composition and the decorous moments expose the conceptual join between the

images that we routinely consume and the depth of what we would see in a conceptually committed account of the image. The breaking apart of resemblances in the physiognomic caricatures present pricks our consciousness. The Haiku is invocation to imagine, and to wonder why conceptual spaces are ideologically repressed, how those conceptual spaces might be subverted, converted, shown and reconstituted. Fictional stories have been reconstituted since before the advent of writing, in the bardic tradition. Those stories mixed fictional events and history; myth is the word we usually ascribe to these stories. The mythic returns in the fusions of Third meaning, most often by asking the viewer to consider what is real and what is not.

Fictional narratives in Third meaning films are sometimes self-conscious in their nervous acknowledgement of the difficulty of their task: to tell a fiction that doesn't lie. In this sense it is worth reflecting on exactly what a fictional narrative is meant to do. One approach in the construction of a fictional narrative is to create a world that is unique to the film. This presents a number of problems. There should perhaps be an internal consistency about the created world. It could be a utopia or dystopia or something in-between. In each case, so as to vary the tempo of the film, and introduce surprises there has to be some departure from this basic model with an element that brings either excitement to the film or something that provokes cerebral reflection. A resolution may be reached in respect of the original premise or it may not.

Where it is the filmmaker's intention to make a film for pure entertainment value only, an escapist world can be constructed with putatively no relation to the world of the filmmaker that exists outside it. Yet the unconscious tendency for ideological transmission is high. This is true of even the consciously and stridently political filmmaker. Social and formal considerations impinge even as imagination and elements of innovation may be strived for. Third meaning fiction films often have a strong relationship to events that have occurred in the real world.

There may be mix and match approach to this, as in Chris Marker's *Level Five* which utilises a real event to demonstrate a poetic search for truth conducted by fictional characters. The theme of Chris Marker's *Level Five*; of the missing, the displaced and a disconsolate feeling of lack is one that the Third meaning filmmaker keenly feels. The fictional Third meaning film is an attempt to 're-tell historical narratives monopolised by the ruling class to the extent that others have been snuffed out or disappeared. In order that the filmmaker is able to tell fiction, a recognition of this truth must be approached, resulting in a montage of fiction with fact, self- conscious that the story might be deemed inferior to an establishment version of events.

Barthes own travels mark him out as an internationalist and a traveller who had a particular interest in South East Asia and the symbolism that permeated Japanese culture, as evidenced by his book *Empire of signs* (1970). In this investigation one of the strands dealt with Barthes and Eisenstein's shared interest in kabuki theatre and ideograms and how the earliest images in ancient culture act somewhat as a template for the earliest developments in film. In the case of both Eisenstein and Barthes it seemed they were looking at iconic images in order to understand how to rethink the relationship between the image and history and how the dialectical image could be newly thought and felt. The post-

revolutionary soviet filmmakers may at times evoke a nostalgia for a depiction of a Bolshevik history that never really existed but this is part of an ideological presentation that at first coincides with a counternarrative that prevailed and subsequently was subsumed by 'official' Stalinist history.

The Haiku specific to Soviet film is the raised mark that matches the ideals of the revolution against its lived reality. Barthes choice of a Haiku to delineate Third meaning is raised in particular to connect the esoteric and the poetic with the symbolic; the symbolic belonging part to fiction and part to history. Part of the art of constructing narrative in a contemporary fiction film is that the conditions of rupture under which we live do not obey a continuous narrative as we might see in a Hollywood film. The Haiku draws attention to unevenness in a film. A film can have narrative discontinuity, narrative folds and not depart from a conventional linear structure. What the Haiku does is unify the sensible elements to draw attention to the insensible.

Stephen Heath argues:

> 'Homogeneity is haunted by the material practice it represses and the tropes of that repression, the forms of continuity, provoke within the texture of the film the figures — the edging, the margin — of the loss by which it moves; permanent battle for the resolution of that loss on which, however, it structurally depends, mediation between image and discourse, narrative can never contain the whole film which permanently exceeds its fictions' Heath, S "Film and System: Terms of Analysis. Pt. l," *Screen*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring, 1975).

In terms of this excess Jean Luc Godard's *Film Socialisme* deals with the problem that modernisation poses and the overlaid inauthenticity that accompanies it: the betrayal of humanity that is the construction of borders and the perpetual and simultaneous historical need for traversal across them. This is one of the consequences of superimposed categories of 'natural relations. Commodity exchange meanwhile penetrates into areas where many humans are forbidden.

The sea and its refusal to be tamed is a key theme in *Film Socialisme*, and footage of it, which is continually returned to, is often accompanied by ominous music. A soundtrack which is sometimes pared down to buffeting wind is also used as counterpoint. In the first shots of the sea, (Godard:2010, 00:50-01:09) the sea is black and somewhat sensuous; it resembles oil. This is a slightly different conceptualisation of nature than a filmmaker such as Bill Viola, however. For Viola there is more emphasis on the inexplicability of nature: the vastness of the mountains and the putative incomprehensibility of the time they have taken to form, for example. The emphasis on the sublime in early digital film is a facet of both the sublime as an ideology that cross-pollinates between mainstream political culture and the counterculture of the 1990s, such as in the art of Anish Kapoor. With Godard's *Film Socialisme* the emphasis on nature where it manifests is less on the sublime and more to do with the collective experience of the journey metaphorically travelling from port to port, stations on life's journey; hence 'Our Humanities'. (Godard: 2010, 1:27:30). There is also the sense of how individual experiences of globalisation may have resemblances but are not perceived from a single *dispositif*.

The historical sweep suggested by *Film Socialisme* is followed by the 3D essay film *Goodbye to language*, something of a vignette about a couple unable to express themselves. Their pet dog is the continuity between the two phases of the film and somewhat of a proxy for communication. This can be read as tongue in cheek ambivalence to the digital, as could the first narrative in the film, seemingly intoned by Godard himself: 'Those lacking in imagination take refuge in reality if non-thought contaminates thought'. (Godard: 2014, 00:01).

Conceptually the film resumes from the point of departure of *Film Socialisme*; the overwhelming theme is nature. Rather than about traversal and command of nature Goodbye to Language is about how we might navigate nature through communication. Godard's collaboration with Fabrice Aragno produces cinematography that is affectual and potent in its closeness. The quality of the cameras used varies; though the effect of 3D on water lapping against the side of a boat is glorious. (15:00). A key theme of *Goodbye to Language* is of moving from a sense of ontology to one of decision: 'Not our experiences but the silent tenacity we affront them with'. (1:08-1:15).

The fictional image is just as worthy of investigation as the factual image in terms of value as a site of resistance. This resistance is rarely found in an escapist narrative but rather in how the reader of films is able to provide context to the fictional film, to provide linkage to an overarching historical theme. The image of Elizabeth Taylor stroking her lover's hair in *L'Historie Du Cinema* only became of interest to Jean Luc Godard after he realised the cinematographer was the same man that had captured colour images of holocaust victims for the first time, himself a prisoner. This technically defined visual testament of world significance is also the root of the making of refined iconic images of Hollywood, after the cinematographer's entry to the US. Godard placed the images next to each other in *L'Historie Du Cinema*.

Godard's *The Image Book* is somewhat of a coda to *L'Historie Du cinema*. The concept was an extension of one he first voiced in 1988; *The image book* is the eloquent punctum that makes clear that Godard regards the cinema as another form of text, that the novel or the political treatise is by itself insufficient. Rather the image provides another dimension whereby the political filmmaker can connect with us both ontologically and affectually. We live in a world of images and thus we must think through a miasma of images with clear images as Godard's *La Chinoise* would suggest, as our guide[128]. In *The image book* Godard interpolates himself into a film more than possibly any of his career; snippets from *Tout Va Bien*, (Godard: 2018, 40:26) *Notre Musique,* (19:28) and several of his other films appear. This is not just a recapitulation of the archive but a pointed reflection on how we can intervene in it, and change the image. This is an autobiographical work which returns yet again to the irreducibility of the text to the image, but of also the extension of the image ever outwards. It is in the diffuseness of the image that can now be found intelligibility. As such, and in making the point that a multiplicity of voices are still being shut down he concludes what is around four fifths of a montage of film archives, with a newly filmed section depicting the fictional island of Dofa, (Godard:2018, 1:00:00) under attack from imperialism and narration provided by inhabitants of this fictional island. In the closing moments of the film Godard reflects on the political interventions of individuals, that

'Brecht said in reality only a fragment carries the mark of authenticity' (Godard in Godard: 2018, 1:21:00). His final reflection in *The Image Book* is that:

> and even if nothing would be as we hoped, it would change nothing of our hopes, they would remain a necessary utopia, and the field of expectations would be larger than that of our time. Just as the past was immutable, expectations will remain immutable, and the ones who when we were young, fed (coughs) ardent hope (Godard in Godard: 2018, 1:22:20-1:24:00).

5.5. Kairos: The 'right moment'- Third meaning documentary

> When a century slowly dissolves into the next century, some people transform means of survival into new means…it is the latter we call art. No activity shall become an art before its time is over. Then this art will disappear. (Godard: *The Image book*, 2018; 22:24).

Kairos is a concept not mentioned in the Third meaning essay, though it appears in Barthes' later writings. In the Third meaning essay a placeholder is created for it where the merely gestural becomes a general category; the gestus- appearing-as-haiku that is the proletarian fist. This is not merely on the level of signifiance but indicates a call to action. There is no necessity to interpret it as merely a call to violent action either; the fist is symbolic[129] : as Barthes writes: 'the emphatic truth of gesture in the important moments of life' (Barthes [1970] 1977, p.64).

Frederic Jameson alludes to it in a passage on Barthes in his *Valences of the Dialectic* book:

> In Barthes (who however benefitted from a double lesson on the subject, having also learned it from his other master, Sartre) we find the fundamental Brechtian insistence on the primacy of the situation, whether this has to do with political choices, subject-positions, literary theories, or forms. (Jameson, F: 2009, p.289).

The importance of the event is not in Barthes political confrontation but rather the political and aesthetic decision in context and the sense in which it is apposite to the situation. Harun Farocki's *Videogrammes of a revolution* (1992) shows the role Kairos can have in transforming consciousness of people to intercede in history and appropriate visual means to reflect the oppressor's gaze back.

The Romanian Revolution was no pre-planned uprising; it was almost entirely spontaneous. The opportunity was seen to overthrow a corrupt regime and making good on that moment. The Romanian Revolution occurred at the interstices between the slow death of the analogue age and the advent of the digital age; some of the events of 21st December 1989 that are showcased in the film were recorded as a result of the staging of state TV, others are 'chance captures' on amateur film. The value in Farocki's work is in demonstrating how official media can be subverted and replaced with a counternarrative. The crucial aspects here are timing and being present. There is no suggestion that digital capture would have been any more vital to capturing the moment but in terms of the higher resolution and the ability to disseminate such a crucial document swiftly and efficiently the advantages are clear.

Dziga Vertov saw no necessity for documentary film to be precise. In 1926 he asserted, somewhat polemically:

The allegation is false that a fact taken from life, when recorded by the camera loses the right to be called a fact if its name, date, place and number are not inscribed on the film. Every instant of life shot unstaged, even individual frame shot just as it is in life with a hidden camera ''caught unawares'' or by some other analogous technique- represents a fact recorded on film, a film-fact as we call it' (Vertov, D; Michelson, A (ed)/O'Brien, K (trans.) [1926] 1984: 'The same thing from different angles', p.57).

It has been proposed in this investigation that Ernst Romm's *Ordinary Fascism* (1965) is the conceptual partner of *Ivan the Terrible* in Barthes' Third meaning essay. *Ivan the terrible* is a quasi-history masquerading as fiction whereas *Ordinary Fascism* is so bleakly and blandly articulated that were these features not so clearly accentuated it could easily pass for a propagandist film. Alongside documentary footage of Fascist rallies there is also footage of Germans performing tasks such as smelting, calligraphy and book binding. There is a dark pathos to images of Hitler practicing his oratory, his arms high in the air and his hands contorted into grotesque shapes. Then the footage reverts back to the blandness of a doctor's surgery, and two bureaucrats absorbed in their newspapers.[130]

Michael Witt cites it as an inspiration of Godard's, and that it likely 'nourished' his filmmaking from the late 1960s on. Witt provides an inventory of the shared archival footage used for *Ordinary Fascism* and *L'Historie Du Cinema*, and cites an interview with Godard where he implies that *Ordinary Fascism* was a direct influence on *L'Historie Du Cinema*. (Witt, M: 2013, p.99-100).[131] Though this may be a documentary and *Ivan the Terrible* a fiction film it is evident that their aesthetic shares a commonality of purpose; to show social forces in operation.

In *Ordinary Fascism* the forces are almost entirely atavistic; the volk reacting to the most sinister appeals to their basic instincts. The documentary as a putative agent of truth is the pathfinder in the building of a definitive archive of film. In concomitance with this the contingent nature of truth becomes apparent. There can be no sense of truth without an archive that takes into account each perspective with truth content; or even a perspective that has no inherent truth in it, to thereby measure the truth against which it is held to be untrue.

Göran Olsson's films provide the viewer with rarely or never before seen footage that features both key protagonists of the Black Power movement and the Postcolonial world. There is also the opportunity to hear those speak about colonialism or the post-war US that might not otherwise have spoken on these matters in another visual archive. The point is rather that just like any other dialectical process of contingency and supercession, the sifting and sorting never stops to better approximate truth; but neither does the inclusion and completion of the narrative. The archive is never complete. The 'remix' quality of Göran Olsson's films is not an attempt to give any complete account of the movement. Rather, it is an attempt to acknowledge marginalisation of the past. In bringing to light new elements of a story that was assumed to have been told, there is also the possibility to resume discussion of what images may still be suppressed; what voices may be missing. Andre Habib states of Godard and his pursuit of an exhaustive, and exhausting modernist project:

The Godardian archive-probably more than any other artist, including Welles, who is notorious for his ''failings''- is an accumulation of unfinished, rejected, or unaccomplished

projects (scripts, collaborations, associations with institutions, commissioned works.) They inhabit a great ''salon des refuses'' with other great moments of modernism's history. One can probably argue that modern art is the history of refusal, failure, ruin (in all its dimensions). If only in this respect, Godard is probably the most powerful-the last? - continuator of this ''incomplete project''. (Habib, A: 'Godard's Utopia(s) or the performance of failure' in Morrey, D; Stojanova, C; Cote, N (eds) pp.217-pp.233; [p.226].

What the digital allows to identify and append relevant material to the corpus of existing material on a given subject. The intention of the filmmaker in their pursuit of an accurate documentary is only one aspect, and leaves out the crucial Barthesian reception to the film; the completion of the film by the viewer. Production of political consciousness in Third meaning discourse is dependent on an agglomeration of material that generates both an affectual response and ontological orientation towards a political decision. Here the Third meaning, the one that mediates between image and history makes an appearance. A Kairos consciousness is a critical and simultaneously self-critical consciousness which comprehends suffering of those who are most vulnerable and offers prophetic critique, calling for prophetic resistance. (Boesak, AA: 2015, p14).

Barthes uses the term Kairos several times in the later years of his theoretical writings. It is used in his writings on *The Neutral* and in *Camera Lucida*. In the former instance, Kairos is closer to an emergence from an ambivalent state. In the latter, Kairos becomes a category of aesthetic space that individualises a moment as decisive. Since Barthes' writings the concept of Kairos has grown from a rhetorical one to one at the heart of anticolonial struggles. In 1985 a Kairos document was formulated by a group of anti-apartheid Christians which was critical not only of Boer colonial domination but of elements of the church that had helped to facilitate oppression of the Black majority. The prescience of the South African document was such that it had import over and above the intervention of a typical circumstances-influenced messianism. Boesak notes that a progressive Kairos theology of the 21st century should take up the struggle:

> …for the dignity and rights of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and intersex persons who by all indications are under renewed onslaught in frightening, and far too often deadly ways in different parts of the world and to whom in so many places the church has so scandalously closed its doors, so that they find themselves cast by the wayside and left to die at the hands of self-appointed, self-righteous avengers of God. It shall also have to take account of the fearsome uncertainties of the Palestinian struggle, the Arab Spring in North Africa and the Middle East, the promise, the temptations and the hard lessons; the battles between the forces of violence and non-violent transformation for ownership of those revolutions. (Boesak, AA: 2015, p.20).

The counter-narrativized imperative of such a discourse cut across religious and national boundaries, and was influential in the formation of a Palestinian Kairos document in 2009 (9). Crucially to an understanding of political aesthetics in film, filmmakers such as Göran Olsson pursue the sense of the affectual transference of the viewer to a situation not of their own without the emotive keening of many films in debt to establishment perspectives. Combined with this is the ontological sense of political necessity that emerges from the aesthetic sensibility of the film; the combinatory elements, the reordered archive and the

move away from the univocal to a narrative composed of a plurality of voices. Barthes small number of writings on the history of movements are applicable to Third meaning Cinema. Barthes states in the very early essay 'On a metaphor (is Marxism a church?)':

> The modern historian's facts are losing their individual character, and the dilemma of an ordered 'becoming' [devenir] of history is moving toward a resolution. We are on the way to a new conception of history, in which it will be a science of the irreversible and yet also of the repeated. (Barthes; Turner, C [trans] [1951] 2015: p.25).

The importance of the juxtaposition of even grotesque documentary images in Godard's *L'Historie Du Cinema* is in establishing this science of the repeated as a historical warning. In Georges Didi-Huberman's reflection *Images in Spite of All* he reflects on what the existence of four genuine surviving images from Auschwitz mean for the historical archive and for historical memory:

> By attempting to ''read'' the four photographs from August 1944, we had to produce-by intersecting memories (Herman Langbein or Primo Levi evoking this exact period) topographical knowledge (according to the archives gathered by Jean-Claude Pressac) contemporary testimonies (Zalman Gradowski) and retrospective testimonies (Filip Muller) by the members of the Sonderkommando- a sort of interpretive montage which, even if woven as tightly as possible, will always have that inherent fragility of the ''critical moment''. (Didi-Huberman, G; Lillis, S.B (trans.), 2008, p.89).

Didi-Huberman uses the Godard quote from *L'Historie Du Cinema* to open his *Images in spite of all*: 'even scratched to death a simple rectangle of thirty- five millimetres saves the honour of all of the real.' (Godard, JL (1998). *L'Historie Du Cinema* quoted in Didi-Huberman, G; Lillis, S.B (trans.), 2008, p.2) The SonderKommando were prisoners chosen by the SS to participate in assisting mass murder; if they resisted, they would be killed. The images survived because an SS canteen employee, Helena Danton, smuggled them out to the Polish resistance in a toothpaste tube (16).

The existence of these images cannot be underestimated, not least because the obliteration of the tools of the obliteration (21) occurred as the Nazis realised, they would lose the war and in Jan 1945 Auschwitz Crematorium V, from where the photographs were taken was razed to the ground. Most documents pertaining to concentration camps were destroyed, and particularly most of the evidence concerning the usually separate extermination camps where more than 6 million people were killed, around 90% of them Jewish. (Fischel, J.R: 2020). The images' status as documents is incredibly important as those who liberated the concentration camps were constrained in their attempts to evidence the horror of the Holocaust as they were confronted by buildings reduced to rubble even as surviving prisoners were freed.

In transferring these photographs onto a digital archive, they have avoided the eventual degradation implicit in maintaining them as physical film. As investigation into this valuable archive continued, developing technology allowed the images to be enlarged and made more visible through cropping and enhancing the image. This has not diminished their verifiable status; rather it aids in establishing their veracity, as the images are more discernible than before.

Images in spite of all is written as a polemic in response to several objections to the images being shown as part of an art exhibition. One of the criticisms was that the images told only part of the story and in that way were unrepresentative of the Holocaust, and inadequate to explain the Holocaust; because of this, said Didi- Huberman's critics, they did not explain anything. Part of the problem for some historians was that there was no appending spoken narrative, and that this was in contrast to the many hours of interviews conducted for the Shoah documentary. Another allegation was that the photos were too voyeuristic. Didi-Huberman, G; Lillis, S.B (trans), 2008, p.55). A third issue was that critics of Didi-Huberman's approach shared a view that the Holocaust was unimaginable. (158).

Didi-Huberman deals with these criticisms at length. To the suggestion that the images were unrepresentative, Didi-Huberman countered that the images were not captured in a situation where any attempt was made to mark them out as representative; rather, they were intended in their fragmentary nature to communicate with the outside world the existence of the camps, and of their hellish reality. In addition, he pointed out that no completely representative archive of the camps was possible, as so many images had been destroyed, but that many images taken by the liberators of the camps still existed. So too did images taken by Nazi's despite the fact they were ordered to destroy them in 1945. The difference with Didi-Huberman's focus on the images of resistance is that these are the only images that show the prisoners viewpoint rather than the gaze of the Nazi's or the gaze of the liberators.

Didi-Huberman expands on this point in terms of the images' supposed voyeurism: the viewpoint shown is that of the oppressed, seizing the moment in order to catalogue the destruction of human life that was occurring, in order to show to the world. In terms of the images attempt to articulate the unimaginable; this is partly to do with the fact that documentaries such as *Shoah* (Lanzmann, C) had concentrated on verbal testimony rather than images, which, argues Didi-Huberman is a perfectly valuable decision but that in not allowing ourselves to imagine the conditions by reference to images the possibility lay open of some disputing the veracity of the events as time passed beyond living memory. Didi-Huberman criticises the totalising viewpoint of the 'image-all' that theorists such as Wacjman advocate (Didi-Huberman, G: Lillis, S.B:2008, p.65); that without a complete image of the Holocaust we cannot imagine anything of it at all. Rather, Didi-Huberman advances that the partial image is more accurate[132] and in the case of the images in question allows 'the dead to speak': the man who recorded these snapshots was killed a few weeks later. As such they represent a document in which the unimaginable becomes imaginable and rather than the distant voice of the objective historian telling us what happened, an alternative is provided: the living history of a moment of resistance. The images are a replacement for language when it fails to convey the horror of genocide and a point of enunciation for those who lived through it. Didi-Huberman suggests it is the dual image contained in the photographs that are the most troubling aspect to the viewer. They demonstrate a 'paradoxical condition':

> 'the immediacy of the monad (they are snapshots, the impersonal and ''immediate givens'' of a certain state of horror captured by the light) and the complexity of the intrinsic montage; the shooting probably required a collective shot, a ''prediction'' and each

sequence constructs a specific response to the constraints of visibility: to snatch the image while hiding oneself in the gas chamber, to snatch the image while hiding the camera in one's hand or clothes' (32).

Each snapshot preserves the reality of those moments to transform not only future accounts of the horror of the holocaust but also to show that resistance can never be reduced to nothing.

5.6. Counternarrative

In the fields with which we are concerned, knowledge only comes in lightning flashes. The text is the long roll of thunder that follows. Benjamin, W; Eiland, H & Mc Laughlin, K (trans.) [1927-1940] 2002, p.456 [Convolute N1, 1]

This investigation has sought to establish counternarrative as a descriptive category that is articulated by Barthes several times, in the 'Third meaning' essay and the 'Structural analysis of Narratives' essay. For Barthes counternarrative in film is the objective expression of a multiplicity of voices. Barthes assigns a 'syntagmatic responsibility of the Third meaning' in the 'movement of the anecdote, in the logico-temporal system' (Barthes [1970], 1977, p.63). He asserts that Third meaning is 'disseminated' and 'reversible' and also 'set to its own temporality'; in the technical or narrative sense of shots, sequences and syntagms, it is 'counter-logical and yet true', that is to say that it is the epitome of the counter-narrative'. (63).

In 'Digressions' Barthes talks about the need for a Capital of linguistics to be written. Here he reflects on the possibility of language-as-superstructure; by this he means ideological code. He states:

> …even if language is not a superstructure, the relation to language is political. This perhaps not readily apparent in a culturally and historically ''compressed'' nation such as France' (Barthes [1971], 1981, p.121), nevertheless he identifies a post-imperial language ready to be uncovered in France. He also identifies the language of liberation to already be present 'in countries that are less well-off', where 'language is a burning issue; in the formerly colonized Arab countries, language is a state issue of great political weight. (121).

The key moment in the development of counternarrative is, conversely, in the closure of heterogenous language in the early days of capitalism; in its ceaseless traversal of the globe and establishment of a univocal language of oppression that the enslaved were expected to echo. There is a strong sense of this in Göran Olsson's *Concerning violence*. What Third meaning cinema is able to do very effectively is to harness a vast archive of film from the last century and foreground the voices of groups of people who have hitherto not had the opportunity to be heard.

Digitising the images of people from the past brings them closer to us. It is harder for the viewer to imagine them as identical to us in grainy black and white analogue film, subject to water and heat damage- they appear as figures that resemble us more than share our characteristics. For the most part the news images from the early days of Television that people most often encountered were speeded up Pathe news reels. These events seemed distant and the people that inhabited the reels unreal in their movement. Analogue capture

in the early days of factual film was not something that could be said to be steeped in objective reality; rather it was distorted, which is more often the charge levelled at digital cinema.

In Third meaning cinema, there is a sense of the ordered-affectual; of stratified ideological points of enouncement that take account of bourgeoning movements. In Godard's *Tout Va Bien* this is evidenced by a militant working class with several strategies to improve their situation; a boss that has read Marx and philosophy, appraised not only of the arguments against capitalism but also how they can be subverted to ensure capitalisms survival; and a couple who are reflexively aware of their contradictory class location and how it makes demands on them in their quest to deliver fulfilling media by parameters defined by the ruling class.

The dialectic in Barthes acknowledges that counternarrative can be compromised, a partial or complete result of a previous counternarrative's failure or displacement. Contrasting this with Deleuze's approach, in which ideas shift on the surface of a moving metaphorical grid, is essential. One key difference in methodology is that Deleuze starts from a position of the axiomatic in Capitalism rather than the ideological. In terms of strategies of accumulation, the axiomatic is a factor Deleuze's description of Eisenstein's practice, for instance, is a perfectly apposite articulation of an auteur's methodology and the transmission of ideas:

> The third moment: if first of all there is the passage from precept to concept, and secondly a movement from concept to affect, then the third moment-the synthesis-is the combination and unification of these two. As Deleuze puts it, this third moment is the completed circuit, a circuit which goes from the image to thought, then from thought back to the image. (Rushton, R: 2012, p.106).

Deleuze's description of Eisenstein's methodology is perfectly appropriate but there is an abstraction in Deleuze's approach and it is on the level of connectedness of thought.[133] The image is not formed by thought in the real sense, nor is thought formed by the image. This circuit may exist but the relationship between thought and image is mediated by ideology, which in turn has a complex relationship to productive forces rooted in political economy. Deleuze references modernization abstractly in proclaiming the end of the movement-image, and the beginning of the time-image, and frantically tries to downplay the assertion reached in Cinema 1: The movement image: "We hardly believe any longer that a global situation can give rise to an action which is capable of modifying it – no more than we believe that an action can force a situation to disclose itself, even partially" (Deleuze, G [1985], 1989, p206). He does this by proposing that:

> The great spiritual automaton indicates the highest exercise of thought, the way in which thought thinks and itself thinks itself in the fantastic effort of an autonomy; it is in this sense that Jean-Louis Schefer can credit cinema with being a giant in the back of our heads, Cartesian diver, dummy or machine, mechanical man without birth who brings the world into suspense. But on the other hand, the automaton is also the psychological automaton who no longer depends on the outside because he is autonomous but because he is dispossessed of his own thought, and obeys an internal impression which develops slowly in visions or rudimentary actions. (263).

Not only is this conceived with no explanation as to why such a differential may occur, but the auteur is then ahistorically evoked as the replacement for the counternarrative that has been eschewed in the previous book. The imputation is of historical change without any obvious cause and without the ruptural process that might be expected. As Eisenstein states in *Non-indifferent nature*: 'Inner bifurcation, which in varying periods of history permeates the temperaments of great creators, doomed to live in such social conditions and epochs does not permit unity and harmony.' (Eisenstein, S: [1945], 1987, p.366).

The particular formulation of counternarrative that Barthes envisages for Third meaning is one that has an ethical reflexivity. It is a modern conceptualisation that draws on classical Marxism but also on the bourgeoning emergence of discourse informed by postcolonialism and progressive elements of postmodernism. The status of the image in Barthes' counternarrative is one that is open to continual reinterpretation. The image is clear in its ideological presentation but it's meaning does not stop with the individual viewer that receives it.

This investigation has been an attempt to highlight that Barthes conception of Third meaning has more to recommend it as a methodology for reading political film, and indeed in assembling political film. It has been suggested that some of the rather hagiographical accounts of Deleuze's work, foregrounding him as the leading proponent of political film in a digital age tend to ignore Barthes film work, or aren't aware of it. The most striking example of this is contained in Slavoj Zizek's book *Organs without bodies: Deleuze and consequences*:

> Recently, while watching again Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* I noticed a wonderful detail in the coronation scene at the beginning of the first part when the two (for the time being) closest friends of Ivan pour golden coins from the large plates onto his newly anointed head, this veritable rain of gold cannot but surprise the spectator by its magically excessive character- even after we see the two plates almost empty we cut to Ivan's head on which golden coins ''non-realistically'' continue to pour in a continuous flow. Is this excess not very ''Deleuzian''? Is it not the excess of the pure flow of becoming over its corporeal cause, of the virtual over the actual? (Zizek, S: 2004, p.3).

Zizek here constructs a paragraph similar to the first paragraph of the Third meaning essay, describing exactly the same scene. Another noticeable aspect is the identical location of the observation; it opens his book. The point of entry is to therefore repurpose an iconic opening of Barthes' as an introduction to the work of Giles Deleuze and to realign conceptually the material with Deleuze's worldview. Zizek then equates an attractor in mathematics with the virtual, equating the virtual in turn with the symbolic; which borrows in equal parts from Deleuze and Barthes. The key problem apart from the possible active disavowal of Barthes work on the symbolic is this; the virtual as the symbolic doesn't work. The virtual is for Deleuze the 'sense-event'. Apropos of Alain Badiou, a key axiom of the event in Deleuze's schema is: 'Axiom 3: The event is of a different regime than the actions and passions of the body even if it results from them' (Badiou, A: *Parrhesia* no.2 2007; pp.37-pp.44).

Badiou suggests, in a reversal of the axiom, that Deleuze has it back to front. That the event is not the outcome of the actions and passions of the body, but rather that it does not differ in nature from them. This Badiou intervention is a clear linkage of the cognitive and

affectual realms, set against Deleuze's concept of the virtual which is implied to be a metaphysical category:

> We must here reverse Deleuze-in the sense in which, after Nietschze, he himself wanted to reverse Plato. These are the actions and passions of the multiple which are, under the title of an immanent result, synthesized in the event. It is the blow of an eventual One which animates multiplicities and forms them into a subjectivisible body. And the trace of an event, which is in itself incorporated in the new present is clearly of the same nature as the actions of this body. (Badiou, A: *Parrhesia* no.2 2007; pp.37- pp.44).

The last sentence of Badiou's quote is italicised to illustrate the level of contrast between Badiou and Barthes position on this topic of the virtual and the symbolic. The referent of the symbolic is material grounded in history. Real events leave real traces. Traces shape dreams that are based in reality. The virtual is a purported dream, without a referent. Later Badiou reflects that 'In maintaining that the event belongs to the register of sense the entire project finds its ground on the side of language.' (Badiou, A: *Parrhesia* no.2 2007; pp.37-pp.44). Badiou uses an example of what this results in: '[The event] is the pure expressed in what happens which makes us signify.'[134] At this point, opines Badiou, 'event-effects', are no longer determinants, and still less an essence. Zizek's attempted transformation of the signifier to the realm of the virtual comes to nothing, though it would have been influential on his significant readership.

That Lacanian writers are consternated with Barthes is relevant. For Barthes Lacan was of interest but not a pre-eminent interest. McGowan takes issue with the concept of excess in how it is characterised by Barthes, Kristin Thompson and Julia Kristeva:

> …the act of pointing out excess is an act of subverting the dominance and unity of narrative. Here, the political dimension of excessive cinema (and of the critical act of noticing excess) stems from the relationship between narrative and ideology: to subvert narrative is to subvert the way in which the social order creates ideological justifications. However, the problem is that this vision of excess wrongly sees it as external to the narrative structure of film rather than internal to this structure… Because they posit excess as the subversion of narrative, Barthes, Heath and Thompson imply that excess occupies a transcendent position beyond filmic narrative. But if it actually were beyond the narrative, we would have no way of understanding excess at all: we would lack even the ability to point it out. (McGowan, T: 2012, p27).

This point does not seem to demonstrate a clear understanding of the ebb and flow of political consciousness. Plato's analogy of the cave is again instructive: the prisoners in the cave have a restricted view; the full narrative is not available to them. Perhaps the escapee who has reached the surface does not have a 'full view' himself: nevertheless, he has seen the 'excess' of the *Real* world. The point is one of gradations of vision and consciousness; it is not that 'the outside' is entirely beyond the realms of experience.
McGowan continues:

> The only properly conceivable excess is the point at which filmic narrative exceeds itself. This excess is the product of sense, not its external limit or subversion. To put it in Barthes language, the obtuse meaning is not a barrier to signification but the signification of a

> barrier. Even as the excess resists signification, it does so within a world of signification-or else we would not be able to register it. This means we can actually do much more with filmic excess than simply point it out. (27).

This is an error in understanding the function of counternarrative as the driving force of Third meaning. Counternarrative is not confined to a reading of cinema as a genus separate from life. Moreover, it is not intended to be a totalising account. Barthes in saying excess is irreducible does not mean that the excessive is not part of the narrative. Rather, it is the partial character of the counternarrative set against the metanarrative of capitalist ideology that draws attention to it. It is the unevenness of the reciprocal relationship.

Mac Gowan alleges an externality that proclaims transcendence, but asserts that excess should be construed purely in terms of what happens in a cinematic text. If Third meaning is transcendent, it does not make sense that the epitome of counternarrative is in discourse grounded in the diegetic structure. The idea that representation of material excess can only be interpreted as a facet which is purely formal, does no more than attempt to denounce Eisenstein as a formalist whilst denying external ideological impact of any kind on the making of the work. Even a brief consideration of Eisenstein's fractious relationship with the Stalinist bureaucracy would suggest that as a fallacious reading. The proposed set up is one where the internal dynamic of the film text is mimetic of the director's psychological make up, which is alienated from the *Real* world.

To wit: the directors world is a fallen version of the Platonic world of forms. This is the cognate element. The affectual element is the reception of the audience. This is the Aristotelian realm of experience, marked in the modern age by the dialectical presentation to the mind of a contestation of ideology that affects the viewer. According to McGowan's reading, never the twain shall meet. Rather than appreciate the reciprocity of these two elements as Barthes does, this rather non-materialist reading suffers from the same malady as Deleuze does; the inability to conjoin the cognitive and the affectual realms. It is not that a psychoanalytic approach should be rejected out of hand, but rather that it becomes impossible to account for the influence of modernization on cultural production without a sense of reciprocal agency and some level of interaction between producers and those who experience and complete cultural production. Where psychoanalysis does not account for materiality as a precursor to the alienated self, behaviour can have no more explanatory value than mere phenomena.

Roland Barthes taxonomy of Third meaning traits is not supposed to be a pedagogical guide to political intervention in cinema. Rather it is a template with 'movable parts' that can be applied across a range of media. The image is still a site of ideological contestation but the terms under which the images were interpreted have changed a little. There is a little more control over interpretation in terms of the breadth of the milieu of people that are able to produce cinema. People have an increasing amount of say in how to compose an image, and how to distribute it.

The challenge for countercultural filmmakers over the last twenty to twenty- five years has been to consider how to approach a medium that allowed for the possibility of extreme aestheticization; that could effectively elide the possibilities of recognisable traits of an everyday experience and replace it with a techno-fetishization of the spectacular. While

such films undoubtedly exist, this has not been the overarching story, and the simulacrum is not the visual or affectual mode we inhabit. Perhaps more importantly, the audience for countercultural cinema that exists both in independent filmmaking and in a fragmentary sense in mainstream cinema has grown exponentially, as the cinema is no longer just the theatre which Barthes decided to 'leave' because of its soporific, womb like qualities. We can now experience cinema in the surroundings of our homes at any time we want, connected to our immediate surroundings, yet keenly aware of the shared struggles we have with people across the world. If the affectual has become an understandable default survival mechanism in a world ravaged by a pandemic and continual war then the capacity to conjoin the affectual with a rational way of organising the world has never been so pressing and still palpably within reach while the capitalist system that was meant to sustain us lurches from one crisis to another.

This thesis has posited Third meaning as a way of reading contemporary cinema. Barthes was a contemporary figure who almost certainly would have been a celebrated public intellectual had he lived into his dotage. I would suggest his influence would have been yet broader. Barthes theoretical contributions in the area of the digital would have continued, and developed as the medium itself developed. Had Barthes ever truly left Marxism, then I strongly suspect he would have maintained a theoretical relationship to it that was adjacent to it. The corruption that has permeated world politics since the neo-liberal age began in the year of Barthes' death has been systemic. His would have been an authentic voice against oppression and for international liberation. His fascination with the image as a repository of truth would have continued and it seems likely that he would have been convinced by the ethical arguments of Georges Didi-Huberman as they concern the preservation of the image as an account of resistance. In this sense too he would have supported digital countercultural cinema.

Political images are no longer the preserve of one political class. They can be subverted, captured, reversed and manipulated. They can also demonstrate the truth of a historical event, for nothing is more truthful than the snatched, 'over the shoulder' image. Digital cinema is no longer the discordant proposition that Jean- Luc Godard regarded as 'totalitarian' twenty years ago. It suffuses culture. Digital visual culture is the mode of conveyance in which filmmakers operate. The role of the digital director as a producer of culture implicitly requires the development of a kairotic imperative to ideologically contest ruling class thought. This imperative aligns contemporary aesthetic presentation and the affectual consequences of an uncanny encounter with the ontological necessity to orient the viewer towards strategies of reshaping the world, and to challenge ideologies of repression whenever and wherever they become manifest.

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Vent d'est (1970): dir/prod *Dziga Vertov* Group: Godard, JL; Gorin, JP; Martin, G; prod. Brauner, A; West Germany.

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Weekend: (1967) dir Jean Luc Godard; perf Mireille Darc, Jean Yanne, Jean Pierre Kalfon; Comacico; Ascot Cineraid. [DVD].

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1: Introduction

[1] Some of this strange discordant sense of seeing ourselves replicated is given partial explanation by Sigmund Freud's sense of *Heimlich/unheimlich* in *The Uncanny* and Lacan's 'mirror stage'. Nevertheless, both of these seem to fall a little short of a complete description of the feeling. While part of this investigation takes into account the affectual, the conceptualisation of the affectual is to see the impact of the moving image as first one that originates in the cognitive domain: the affectual 'decision' prompted by viewing a film is a material consequence of the cognitive functions in both the immediate and broader environment of the cinema and the world respectively by which they are influenced.

[2] https://www.newstatesman.com Alexander, H; Blakely, R :'That's all folks: what the end of 35mm film means for cinema' published 08/14 [accessed on 21/01/2021]

[3] Notable examples of this have been the Seagull books series of essays, interviews and short articles, with many of the selections published in English from the *oeuvres completes* for the first time, in 2015-2016. The neutral series of lectures weren't published in France until 2002 and in not in English until published by Columbia University Press until 2007. His last ever lectures and lecture notes, published until the title *Preparation of the novel: Lecture courses and seminars at the College de France* wasn't published until 2010.

[4] An influence on Barthes' Third meaning theory is Bataille G; Hurley, R, trans. [1949], 1988: *The Accursed Share; An essay on general economy*; New York: Zone Books. This book explains Bataille's advocacy of a 'General economy', one based on *depense* (waste and expenditure) as opposed to an economy of production and exchange.

[5] As acknowledged by Barthes himself in the text.

[6] This compelling idea is analogous to the relationship we find ourselves in with the media that has an awe inspiring influence over us, yet also acts as a 'social glue' that helps us make sense of our lives.

[7] Ranciere, J; Battista, E (trans): 'The Red of La Chinoise' published to www.Diagonalthoughts.com 3/8/2012 [accessed 21/01/2021]. Originally published as 'Le Rouge de la Chinoise' Trafic no.18, spring 1996. The English version first appeared in Film Fables, Berg Publishers, 2006.

[8] Letter to Jane is one of a few examples of Godard films where an actor or actress appears as a 'character' and as themselves. Another example is Godard himself in *Notre Musique*. *Letter to Jane* is unique in that the premise is partly a discussion of Jane Fonda's constructed media image in the aftermath of the film that Godard and Gorin have produced. The reflection they do not seem to spend much time on is to what extent they themselves have a role in the authorship of the post-*Tout va Bien* Jane Fonda image.

[9] The amendment of visual material has the potential to be far more potent in this regard than the revision of classic countercultural written text. Consider the revision of Marx's texts by Althusser into an early period and a late period, an 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' Marx. This was to address criticisms of Marxism and suggest that the 'failure' of revolution was in the following of the 'wrong' Marx. In the altering of visual material there is no right or wrong presentation of a countercultural movement. The altering of the material may be made to address a previously depicted narrow ideological view of the movement or a 'captioning' or emphasis of the time that has more recently been shown to be imprecise. However, this is an endless permutational process in which the apologia is not central. This is because the same weight is not placed on film to account for certain historical uprisings that may not have succeeded, or workers movements that have changed to dictatorships as texts that are unchangeable such as *The Communist Manifesto* (or at least unchangeable without questionable historical revisionism a la Althusser). Film is absolved of a lot of responsibility for historical events. This freedom is somewhat a blessing and a curse.

[10] Didi-Huberman, G; Lillis, S.B trans. (2008): Images in spite of all; *Four photographs from Auschwitz*: University of Chicago Press.

Chapter One

[11] In Barthes Third meaning essay, as in the images he will later analyse in *Camera Lucida*, the iconography of the image is a hook that draws the viewer in. It is only ever meant as a placeholder however. These images are not necessary; that is why they are remarkable.

[12] Both reproduced in Barthes, R; Heath, S (trans) 1997: *Image, Music, Text*; London: Fontana Press, Harper Collins.

[13] By the close of the 1920s Stalin and his advisors had decided that there was a dissenting tone to Eisenstein's films. Ultimately this lead to the banning of *Bezhin Meadow*, a film clearly supportive of the Kulaks, whose livelihood and safety was being threatened by collectivization.

[14] Barthes' Marxism, as French as he was, was far more avowedly internationalist than for example, Louis Althusser; who simultaneously embroiled himself in a quest to divine a 'pure Marxism' whilst clinging on to the gradualist hope that mass membership of the PCF might deliver Communism through convention structures.

[15] A *pietà* is a very specific iconographic configuration (there are three types) of the Virgin Mary mournfully holding a dead Jesus Christ. de Bles, A (2004) *How to Distinguish the Saints in Art by Their Costumes, Symbols and Attributes*, p.35.

[16] By the time Barthes first significant works were published he was nearing his fortieth birthday.

[17] Here he quotes from de Koven, M: 'Modern mass to Postmodern popular in Barthes' *Mythologies*; Raritan 18:2 (1998).

[18] Acoustic is the perfect choice of word here- the signifier is that which resonates. He will provide a much more comprehensive account of the signifier in the Third meaning essay.

[19] The connoted media image will also be a major concern of Jean Luc Godard from 1972's *Letter to Jane* until the end of the decade and will sporadically reappear in his work. There seems to be some evidence this is in debt to Barthes.

[20] This is also the first element the reader is asked to consider in the Third meaning essay nine years later.

[21] And, perhaps more crucially, prior to his argument with Raymond Picard.

[22] In the sense of the viewer's founding, Death of the Author is somewhat the Discourse on Method of the 1960s; it is here they are given full ontological presence: the auteur is somewhat the demon that seeks to disavow the active viewer's full manifestation.

[23] These can coincide. We might not instantly be able to recognise an image of Billy the Kid (and the scarcity of these images contributes to this, there only being two known examples), nevertheless the iconic qualities of the one clear image that exists of him has meaning as a historical referent. The image of the wild west outlaw that becomes a recognisable category, in large part due to the popularity of Westerns from the early days of cinema to the 1970's means we don't have to realise the image is of Billy the Kid to understand how his specific traits have come to denote something of the outlaw.

[24] In the second of only two lengthy notes to the Third meaning essay (both curiously labelled '1'. in the 1977 Harpers Collins edition, as is the single textual reference) Barthes says of the diegesis of photo's novels causing a slight trauma of signifiance: 'their stupidity touches me' (Barthes, R; Heath, S (trans.) [1970], 1977, p.66).

[25] The only way suspension can be indexed is through the literalism of the still; only a well- executed Third meaning image can convey suspension effectively; the evocation of suspension remains outside the frame.

[26] Moriarty suggests that, as a disciple of Brecht, this was enough of a reason for Barthes to 'take against' Racine.

[27] Hereafter referred to in the text as the PCF.

[28] Produced in 1959 but released primarily in 1960, for instance on 3rd March 1960 in the UK, and therefore nominally a 1960's film.

[29] Balibar's article pertaining to this '(The right to) tendencies, or the right to set up organised groups within the party' was published in 1982. An English version can be found at viewpointmag.com/2017/1.

[30] He was also active in the anti-imperialist movement there, see for instance Medien K: 'Foucault in Tunisia: The encounter with intolerable power'; *The Sociological review* 68 (3), pp.492-pp.507.

[31] As in Slavoj Zizek's *Deleuze and Consequences: Organs without Bodies* (2004) book.

[32] This work is later taken up by Jean Luc Godard. He more clearly elucidates what it seems Barthes was trying to articulate: that the image *completes* the written word. This is a strong theme in both *L'Historie Du Cinema* (1988) and *The Image Book* (2018).

[33] Barthes' Italics.

Chapter Two

[34] Arguably, part of this was an initial stasis on the part of Russian intellectuals to see what was required Shlapentock, D writes in The French Revolution in Lenin's Mind: ''The case of the False Consciousness'': *World Futures: The Journal of new paradigm research*, Vol 44, issue 4, 1995: 'One of the characteristics of Russian history is the dichotomy between the nature of Russian political tradition and the perception of it by the

majority of the Russian intellectuals. While Russia is a country with no democratic institution, most of the Russian intellectuals saw Russia as following in the footsteps of the West. The image of the revolution is also incorporated in this context ie the intellectuals viewed the revolution as being essentially humane, and leading Russia to a democratic society'.

[35] Osipova mentions that no monograph specifically concentrating on Shub's work had appeared up to 2011.

[36] Ostensibly- in Ivan the Terrible there is no character development of the masses at the gates; they are indistinct. Members of Ivan's court receive a more substantial amount of character development.

[37] In Barthes' *Mythologies* we are reminded of the staged nature of the wrestling match that Barthes' recounts, and his interest in the event as a mythological spectacle.

[38] Although this was a collaboration between Nikitin and Eisenstein in design terms and Arvatov was script writer, Eisenstein from several accounts led the design composition and conceived the fight scene.

[39] Note too that Barthes ascribes the first movement of third meaning, the 'obvious meaning' as that 'which presents itself quite naturally to the mind'. Barthes: 'Third meaning…' in *Image, music, text*; Fontana Press, 1977, p.54.

[40] He had already addressed the actor as a sentient, self-directed architect of their physiognomy.

[41] Naum Kleiman in Christie, I (ed); Taylor, R (ed): 'Arguments and Ancestors' Eisenstein rediscovered: London & New York, 1993, p.94: 'One of the most frightening things that Eisenstein ever said in his arguments with Dziga Vertov was 'It is not a Cine-Eye we need but a Cine fist!'

[42] As exemplified particularly by several of Jean Luc Godard's films, especially films such as British Sounds or Le Gai Savior from the 'Dziga Vertov' period.

[43] The plotless Cinema was also of interest to Pudovkin, particularly how the sense of 'Montage rhythm' could work towards eliminating a need for it. See Pudovkin, V; Taylor, R (ed); Fillipov, E (trans): 'On Montage Rhythm' in *Selected Essays*, pp.154-pp.158.

[44] In brief departures from his concept of intellectual montage, Eisenstein makes allusions to a montage of collision, though it is unclear if this is a separate concept.

[45] In a promotional interview for his film *Happy Lamento* (2018) Alexander Kluge stated: 'If you have music, you have always contact to the film. The film is related more to music than to pictures. They are invisible pictures which have to do with film…It has to do with linear montage; Eisenstein, Godard and also my films, they have linear montage which is something interesting, but you can also have a third picture, not in mind of the spectator, but really on the screen. Better you have three screens, you have cinema in a room. This will be part of the future. The industry for example, already has virtual reality, and for this algorithm of virtual reality, which is only to do with fighting…you should have a counter-algorhythm This is the triptych.' https://cineuropa.org *Venice 2018 Alexander Kluge, director ''The film is more related to music than to pictures''*. [Accessed 13/09/2020]. Kluge also mentions the fact that cinema is a new art that has only been in existence for 120 years, and mentions that innovation in film will include changes in duration, citing his own film *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike: Marx/Eisenstein/Das Kapital* as an example of a very long film containing many different shorter films.

[46] Pudovkin , V: 'The film script and the film material' [1926] in *Selected Essays*; Pudovkin, Taylor, R (ed); Oxford, UK; New york, USA; Calcutta, India: Seagull Books; 2006, pp.65-pp.120. The film stills appear on p.92-p.93.

[47] The viewpoint of Capital is not self-identical to the statue's viewpoint because the statue merely represents the classicised, eternal form of Capital. Rather the over-the-shoulder viewpoint is adopted to imply the obscured view of the proletarian peeping back; mistaking the classicised image as immovable and eternal, whereas the statue merely protects the formal structures through ideological projection. The pre-actualised subject is accepting of this classicised projected image and has not grasped that Capitalism hides behind it, and that a move to topple the statue would reveal the prevailing material conditions.

[48] Often known as 'found footage'; which is some ways is more apposite to this film, as Shub collated it 'from cellars and attics across the land, including home movies plundered from the Tsars palace' Dixon, B : 'Primal Screen; the world of silent cinema'; Sight and Sound; vol.20, no.4, p.57.

[49] Godard's *Film Socialisme* (2010) seems to have used this scene as a touchstone.

[50] From 20:28 in. The procession is one dating from 1913, prior to World War One.

[51] And yet the survival of images from the war leave a trace; in a way these non-captioned images can tell us more than the captioned images often do.

[52] A counterargument can here be posited, on the grounds that Russia was an atypical Capitalist society, even an anomalous Capitalistic society in its formation. But here the autocratic nature of that society dovetails

perfectly with the torn down classical image-surely the perfect analogy for an extreme form of Capitalism torn asunder, the hands of the earth organically bringing down the spectral hand of Capital.

[53] Suture here is an entirely appropriate word as it means two things; here I emphasize the quality suggested by a suture that stitches rather than a suture that cleaves.

Chapter three

[54] Badiou, A: 'Reference points for cinema's second modernity' in Cinema; Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013, pp.58-pp.63; p.58.

[55] The potent images of destruction used in the film were photographs shot in France during WWII.

[56] Ivy Mike, detonated on 1st November.

[57] Tsar Bomba, detonated on 30th October.

[58] See image D in Appendix: The Image book.

[59] At times absolutely a doppleganger for *Transformer* -era Lou Reed (replete with shades), perhaps this film was important to the culturally literate Reed.

[60] The tension is evoked in curious ways; the still frames add to the anxiety. We are invited to share in the gaze of the male protagonist intermittently, but the gaze here is never tacky. Rather it evokes the anxiety of being outside events, unable to intervene, and the import of that impotence we feel as viewers as almost physically present in the room. We know the image of the woman in the protagonists dream-memory represents the unlocking of a mystery, and this is alluring, we also somehow feel instinctively it represents humanity's intractable fate.

[61] Described by Saville, A (2012): Routledge Philosophy *Guidebook to Leibniz and the monadology* p.145 as 'atoms of substance'. Liebniz's metaphysical ontology of the body marked a development from the separation between mind and body that was a hallmark of Descartes thought. Lieblnizs 'atoms of substance' are more suggestive of autogenerative process that is analogous to the process of making films.

[62] Lupton, C (2005): 'La Jetée is a model of spare, stripped- down linear narrative fiction in which nothing is superfluous and every element builds inexorably to the film's fateful conclusion', p.87.

[63] Just two minutes after the excessive fantasy sequence; this is Godard clearly seeing how far he can push the conventions of narrative film.

[64] The song itself 'Allo…Tu M'entends?' is existentialism exemplified, beginning 'I call into the void/I call you in the middle of my night/my pink words go fast/will they go to you today/Hello, hello can you hear me? /is the weather good?/ over there, under your sky/Here, even in the rain, the smell pursues me.' Darida's words are sung by Jean Pierre Leaud, who we see ducking in and out of a phone box shaped like a child's wendy house. Later in the song, Darida sings 'How are Laurent, Jean Luc and Joelle doing'? This is answered by another question: 'Tell me, do your friends always go near the Islands?' Fifty years after *Le Weekend*'s release Laurent Binet released the detective story featuring Barthes, *The 7th Function of Language*. In 1985 Jean Luc Godard released the film *Detective*.

[65] I have capitalised Modern Times as it is prefixed by the suggestive 'these'. Was the Chaplin film on his mind here?

[66] Vogel, A (1974) relates how Godard described himself as having become 'hopelessly Bourgeois', p.129.

[67] Defamiliarization, or the technique of making the mundane or normal seem strange.

[68] Although not unprecedented. Godard may have heard of the New York band The Velvet Underground, whose early gigs in 1966-1967 were sometimes played with their backs to the audience, presumably working on the premise that the 'true fans' would stay.

[69] Though in the film the year of the peasants revolt is given as 1368, presumably to strike up an equivalence with 1968.

[70] Later Godard productions also deal with this antagonism as a prominent feature: *L'Historie Du Cinema* (1988) and *The Image Book* (2018), notably both fact/fiction composites, and interestingly following British Sounds chronologically by respectively almost exactly 20 and 40 years.

[71] Image V in the Third meaning essay (Barthes 1970 [1977], pp.52-pp.68).

[72] Descartes is an obsession of Godard's in this period too, with implied reference to his work in *La Chinoise, Vent d'est* and *Letter to Jane*.

[73] White, J (2013), pp.165-pp.172 Appendix 1; 'Cinema Pratique's interview with Jean Luc Godard, first published in Cinema Pratique, Durand, P: ''Jean luc Godard fait le point'', June 1973, pp.156-pp.160

[74] http://sensesofcinema.com/2008/cteq/histoires-cinema/ [accessed 20/11/2017]

[75] http://sensesofcinema.com/2008/cteq/histoires-cinema/ [accessed 20/11/2017]

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[76] http://sensesofcinema.com/2008/cteq/histoires-cinema/ [accessed 20/11/2017]

Chapter Four

[77] 'Just as the *ideality* of objects of sense as phenomena is the only way of explaining the possibility of their forms admitting of an *aprori* determination, so, also the *idealism* of the finality in estimating the beautiful in nature and in art is the only hypothesis upon which a critique can explain the possibility of a judgement of taste that demands *aprori* validity for every one (yet without basing the finality represented in the object upon concepts'. Kant, I; Meredith, JC: [1790] 1952: Oxford University Press, p.221.

[78] Liebniz's monadology is made explicit reference to in the final scene of the film.

[79] Particularly bearing in mind the manifold positioning possibilities of a digital camera phone.

[80] Marcuse calls consciousness a 'disposition in *One Dimensional Man* (p.165), and the character of the mind's reality is described 'tentatively' as the manner of mode in which these particular acts (and behaviour), are synthesized, integrated by an individual.' He avers that this is a form of ''transcendental apperception'', though ends up dissatisfied with this term.

[81] Which notably, is conducted the same year as *Tout Va Bien*'s cinematic release.

[82] Respectively: 'Film drama is the opium of the masses' (Dziga Vertov, 1920) ; 'All current cinema is romantic, literary, historical, expressionist etc (Fernand Leger, 1926) ; 'Narrative is an illusionistic procedure, manipulatory, mystificatory, repressive (Peter Gidal, 1971).

[83] In Mc Luhan's work our modern, high-tech era stages a comeback for the iconic.

[84] '…in every society various techniques are developed intending to fix the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques. At the level of the literal message the text replies- in a more or less direct, more or less partial manner- to the question what is it?' (Barthes [1964], 1977, p.39).

[85] In the 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein' essay, Barthes states 'certainly, theatre and cinema are direct expressions of geometry' (Barthes [1973], 1977, p.70.

[86] The psychedelic movement held multi-media events that anticipated 21st Century technology in their conjoinment of sound and image. One such event was the famous Pink Floyd event 'Games for May' of 12th May 1967. It was described as a 'Space age relaxation for the climax of spring' and incorporated 'electronic composition, colour and image projection…' Manning, T (2006) *''The underground'', the rough guide to Pink Floyd*.

[87] the caveat being that this is somewhat dependent on a judgement about the audience's credulity; Ray Harryhausen's models of dinosaurs a la *The Lost World* were perfectly serviceable in another age, but are they adequate for a modern audience? [The rejoinder would be that his more sophisticated models combined with more sophisticated film technology were adequate for 1981's *Clash of the Titans*].

[88] ''Rude'' is clearly used here as a metaphorical synonym for the excessive.

[89] In *Direct theory: Experimental Motion pictures as a Major Genre* (1994, 2013), authors Small and Johnson describe Hatsu Yume as 'recalled as largely realist and representational rather than transformative' (p.107) but at the same time as 'difficult to describe properly.' (p.106). The latter seems more pertinent since the reason for it's 'slippage' seems to be it's attempt to represent in extraordinary terms. The scale of it's representation is thus so enormous that it's attempt to communicate ontologically and affectually fails somewhat.

[90] Roland Barthes self-reports his favourite sounds as emanating from his singing teacher Charles Panzera in an essay called 'answers'. He states that: 'If I want to know what the French language is, I have only to put on his record of Faure's Bonne Chanson, though that is, sadly a re-pressing. It was Panzera's misfortune that he had to stop singing just before the advent of microgroove vinyl records…' (Barthes, R; Turner, C [trans]: 'Simply a Particular contemporary', essays and interviews volume 5; Interviews 1970-1979, p.5).

[91] The accompanying images are of fairground rides.

[92] It is pertinent to mention that *Decasia* was performed as a multi-media piece in Basel, Switzerland by a symphonic orchestra on 4th and 5th November 2001. Initially the film was conceived to accompany the music: on the films release in cinema theatres the music came to accompany the film. There is a very interesting interview with Michael Gordon and Bill Morrison on the DVD of *Decasia*, broadcast on PRI's Studio 360 with Kurt Anderson, Reporter: Peter Crimmins. From this interview it appears that not a great deal of sifting and selecting was done to create the images for the film, it was just fortuitous that they evoked the menace that Morrison wanted to evoke; to be redolent of the holocaust, of Hiroshima, and 9-11.

[93] Some of *Decasia*'s physiognomic tropes are also perhaps directly influenced by some of the footage used by Jean Luc Godard in *L'Historie du Cinema*; for instance, the footage of a man throwing a film reel like a discus in the first episode.

[94] The study of ideologies and philosophy of language' Sourced from Efimova, A; Manovich, L: Teksura; Russian essays on visual culture: University of Chicago Press, 1993, p.6.

[95] Baudrillard, in comparing the potency of the images to a 'Manhattan disaster movie' nevertheless concludes that: 'There is no good use of the media; the media are part of the event, they are part of the terror, and they work in both directions' Baudrillard, *Spirit*, p.31.

[96] See for instance the sculptures of Anish Kapoor that reflect the temporary boom in British Capitalism between the mid-eighties and early nineties; imbued with the promise of the embourgeoisement of heterogenous culture.

[97] These ideological imperatives were reinforced in a period where world recession was becoming a regular feature of the World market, culminating in the far- reaching consequences of 2008s financial crash.

[98] A nice double meaning here- the Bush dynasty of presidents having initiated the devastating wars in Iraq and the 21st Century war in Afghanistan. The epitome of conformity is therefore to imitate the most powerful person in the most powerful country in the world- hence 'acting like/looking like a Bush' is fitting in/ camouflaging perfectly, with requisite 'western values' in check. The necessity of this is compounded by the racial profiling of Muslims that has been a feature of Western Societies most recently in relation to terrorist attacks.

[99] 'Support's here I take to mean differential dissemination and hosting of media.

[100] In a video interview from 1988, Flusser states his two major influences are Marshall Mc Luhan and Roland Barthes, but then says: 'I started from his thought but now consider it totally wrong'. He does not specify why. https://youtube.com/watch?v=lyfOcAAc0H8 [video removed as at 12/08/2018]

[101] Taken from the same video, https://youtube.com/watch?v=lyfOcAAc0H8

[102] Which is divided up into 9 roughly equal segments, each detailing relevant Black Power events from the year.

[103] Ryan Bishop's essay: 'A circle of Fragments: Barthes, Burgin and the interruption of rhetoric' in *Theory Culture and Society* May 2020 reflects on the neutral as somewhat of an irreducible yet expansive concept and one of Barthes' 'circle of fragments' whereby he could avoid rote applications of language and rhetoric. He writes that similarly Victor Burgin's recent gallery installations have taken elements of Barthes' aesthetics and his biographical details as a starting point to explore digital and multi-media utilisations of discursive engagement that challenge traditional notions of receivership. The image and the viewer are changed by a reciprocal and active engagement.

[104] Hill's descriptions of her difficulty correctly nailing the metre of her narrative recall this exorbitancy and exasperation.

[105] In a conversation with I had with Fanon authority Dr. Peter Hudis on November 11th 2018 he opined that *Concerning Violence* skews the message of the Fanon text somewhat by weaving a narrative that foregrounds the early part of the book; he believes the film is valuable but avers too long over the violent aspect of the reaction to colonialism.

[106] It does also have cars passing over it.

[107] In 2018 film critic Mark Kermode was to complain in a review of *The Image Book* that many of Godard's films since *L'Historie Du Cinema* had used such quotation and juxtaposition with diminishing returns; in fact there is a strong case to be made that quotation was an essential part of the period of Godard filmmaking that Kermode appreciates, and appeared far more often pre-*L'Historie Du Cinema*. The only difference was that Godard was quoting himself, or quoting others but shooting original material more often.

[108] Barthes ascribes relevance to the comic strip as an art which 'combine(s) still(s) (or at least drawing) and story, diegesis' (1977, p.66f1) in terms of an ameniability to Third meaning:'their stupidity touches me'.

[109] Described as the Palestinian national poet in a BBC News obituary dated 9th August 2008.

[110] Godard spoke in interviews of the time about the dissymmetry in the Israeli- Palestinian conflict and the 'othering' of Palestinians. He stated that the use of shot/reverse shot in this scene was an attempt at a 'forming of relations between terms that poses questions rather than equates them' Godard, JL (2004:20) in Williams, J.S (2016): *Encounters with Godard; ethics, aesthetics, politics*; State University of New York Press.

[111] It isn't quite clear who the painting depicts, but it could be Berthe.

[112] He uses Bataille's 'Big Toe' essay as an example.

[113] See also Jameson, F: *Brecht and method* for a discussion of Brecht's relationship to Taoism.

[114] Barthes is somewhat self-conscious in his choice of words here. At a stretch the image could be called erotic: but pornographic doesn't feel quite right, as it is a topless image with nothing else exposed; and the image doesn't feel meant to titillate either. As Barthes also suggests, our attention is drawn primarily to the oddness of the outstretched hand.

Conclusion

[115] Plato; Jowett, B (trans) [c380BC] (1970): *The dialogues of Plato vol.4*; *The Republic*; London; Sphere Books. The full quote in which this aphorism is contained in Plato explaining the allegorical qualities of his story of the Cave, which is a narrative about consciousness, and the senses and the difficulty of reaching philosopher-king status: 'The entire allegory, I said, you may append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the power of the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world 'according to my surmise, which, at your desire I have expressed- whether rightly or wrong God knows'. p.299.

[116] Marshall, H(ed) notes, in relation to this assertion: The 'baring of the device' is a concept from the Russian Formalists of the 1920s where a work of art was not supposed to 'substitute reality' Instead the perceiver was supposed to be consciously aware that what he was perceiving was a work of art, and one means of producing this effect was to expose the devices typical of a particular art form.

[117] See Barthes, R; Howard, R (trans) (1977) *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*; Berkley, University of California Press: p.54.

[118] In the version of this essay contained in Watts P et al (2016), pp.116-pp.117 the editors' note states, apropos of Barthes' reference to Henri Chretien: 'Barthes here displays his chauvinism and some knowledge of film history by opening his essay with reference to the Frenchman who invented the anamorphic process that could squeeze a wide image onto standard 35mm film. Henri Chretien could never capitalize on his invention, leaving it to Hollywood to do so more than a century later.

[119] This is one of several films that Watts identifies as an example of Barthes' taking a strident radical or even Marxist position on the articulation of class relations within a film- Barthes' criticism of *On the Waterfront* is that it adopts a position that notes the corruption of unionised politics as being a pre-eminent evil, and not the Capitalist system. Another film Barthes is critical of is Sacha Guitry's *Si Versailles m'etait conte* (1954) for it's extreme relativism vis-à-vis the idea that all political regimes are inherently corrupt. *Modern Times* is praised meanwhile for articulating the ideological differences between those suffering from absolute poverty, and the working poor.

[120] Cultivated particularly in the pages of *Screen*.

[121] This assertion in isolation is questionable. What would a 'reversal' of Marxism look like? It also seems that if Barthes does make a decisive break with Marxist ideology it is only subsequent to his trip to China in 1974.

[122] Apropos of Benjamin's 'The Work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' essay.

[123] The theme of irreducibility and surplus is a recurring intrinsic trait of Barthes' Third meaning.

[124] Stalin believed the film to be Kulak propaganda.

[125] There is no evidence that Ivan the Terrible bore these extraordinary features even while animated by life. Indeed, archaeologist and palaeontologist Gerasimov was able to reconstruct a supposedly accurate 'death mask' from his remains displaying only a passing resemblance to Eisenstein's creation with not unusual physical characteristics for a 54 year old man. Gerasimov was also at pains to refute from his analysis of the skeleton that Ivan had been killed by either poisoning or strangulation. Gerasimov, MM: 'Documentary portrait of Ivan the Terrible' Brief reports of the institute of archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1965, no.100S, pp.139-pp.142.

[126] A suggestion of gestus appears in the 'Semiology and Cinema' essay from 1964: 'The individual's attributes are not his essence, he is first defined by his place in the narrative network' from Image et Son, July 1964, interviewers: Pilard, P; Tardy, M; accessed in Barthes, R; Coverdale, L (trans) [1964], 1985; 2010: *The Grain of the voice*; London, Vintage books. Here the image is tied to a pre-history of associations.

[127] Apropos of the Freudian formulation. In "The Dissection of the Psychical Personality," Freud posited the unalterability of the repressed in the following terms: "impressions, . . . which have been sunk into the id by repression, are virtually immortal; after the passage of decades they behave as though they had just occurred" (1933a [1932], p. 74)

[128] See image C in Appendix: The Image book.

[129] Though Barthes does also acknowledge that the intended meaning of Eisenstein is of revolution. The symbolism is meant to presage developments in the social sphere, just as much as it is a simplification of a historical emotion.

[130] There seem to be two prominent theoretical touchstones to this film: firstly, it is heavily cogniscent of the 'reveal' implicit in Hannah Arendt's work *On the Origins of Totalitarianism* and her reportage of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, which suggested that the most striking aspect of Nazism was the 'banality of evil'- the capacity for ordinary people to commit horrific crimes and how the bureaucratic structure of society facilitated that. The second major influence seems to be Adorno and Horkheimer's Frankfurt School work, particularly the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

[131] Though the footnote provided in relation to the source of the interview gives no more information than ''Jean Luc Godard: Des Traces du cinema''. This aside, Witt provides very strong circumstantial evidence linking Godard to a Barthesian Third meaning approach, given that the film evidenced to be a key repository of footage for his masterwork appears as a cited example of third meaning filmmaking in the third meaning essay itself.

[132] Noteworthy here is the excellent *Son of Saul*, the debut feature by Lazlo Nemes, that follows the plight of a Sonderkommando trying to provide a child with a religious burial in the midst of the holocaust at Auschwitchz-Birkeneau. Matyas Erdely's cinematography focuses on the face of one man throughout; we as viewers see 'over the shoulder' glimpses of the horror that is happening. We also see glimpses of the rare escapes from the camp that were attempted and sometimes succeeded. Georges Huberman praised the film with a 25 page letter to Nemes, beginning: 'Your film, *Son of Saul* is a monster. A necessary, coherent, beneficial, innocent monster'('In *Son of Saul*, Lazlo Nemes expands the language of holocaust films'; Donadio, R: *New York Times*, Dec 14th 2015. The film was also praised by Claus Lanzmann.

[133] Rushton is good at emphasizing how important apprehension of the image is to Deleuze; in this sense we can see how the non-materiality of the digital image might have been an apposite fit for Deleuzians. See in particular Rushton, R: Cinema after Deleuze, p3-6.

[134] There is no direct reference attributed here, though it seems as per footnote 18 which is the next footnote this may be an excerpt from Badiou/Deleuze's correspondence.

Appendix: The Image Book (included as a fair dealing exception to the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents act; section 32-illustration for instruction. Full reference information for these films can be found in the filmography).

Image A: The hubris of Ivan in _Ivan the terrible_ (Sergei Eisenstein, 1944) is expressed in physiognomic terms throughout: it clearly points to an analogous evocation of corruption at the heart of the Stalinist regime.

Image B: A close up from _Ordinary Fascism_. (Mikhail Romm, 1965). The fact that Third meaning was meant to be applied to documentary films as well as fictional films often goes unmentioned.

Image C: From _La Chinoise_ (Jean Luc Godard, 1967). 'We must confront vague ideas with clear images'. Ultimately, the mode of conveyance Jean Luc Godard was working with did not matter to him as much as creating philosophically rich counternarrative.

Appendix: The Image Book cont.

Image D: The palpable unease that dominates every frame of *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1961) is heightened by use of light and shadow and an eerie soundtrack. The dystopian horror element revolves around the idea of history as predestination: the sliver of hope is that the protagonist will usurp the pattern of history and save humanity.

Image E: The film *Letter to Jane* (Jean Luc Godard; Jean Pierre Gorin, 1972) revolves primarily around a philosophical discussion between Godard and Gorin about everything from capitalism and imperialism to the nature of fame and the status of the image; and how a caption can transform that image.

Image F: Göran Olsson (*The Black powermixtape 1967-1975,* 2011) revisits and reformulates archival footage documenting the US Black liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In foregrounding and restoring rare, forgotten or previously edited footage, Olsson sheds new light on the movement and posits it as a repository of future inspiration.