

Cut is a Form of Thinking

Isiah Medina

Abstract: With the cinematic cut, philosophical thinking can be recast in a form that is non-linguistic, while still being able to condition itself via a set-theoretical idea of infinity. A movie-set theory. Working through events in the history of cinema, as well as the idea of “mathematics = ontology” as explored in Badiou’s philosophical system, an approach to filmmaking as truth process and philosophy is sketched out.

Keywords: Parmenides, Plato, Lumière, Griffith, Kuleshov, Eisenstein, Godard, Frampton, Mao, Badiou, cinema, philosophy, cut, frame, infinity, nothing, same.

But how does one dictate the law? By writing it down. When it states on your passport: 'Forbidden to enter Russia', it's not an image that does that. How would an image do that? Images don't do that, because images are freedom and words are prison. An image is necessarily freedom. It doesn't forbid anything; it doesn't permit any thing because it's an ensemble of other things. [...] It's written: 'This citizen is undesirable'. No photograph expresses this 'undesirable'. That's what I mean, that words became—after all, the alphabet is two or three thousand years old, at one time it hadn't been invented. Today it is overused [...]

Jean-Luc Godard at Concordia University, 1978¹

The way they go about it in the universities at present is no good, going from book to book, from concept to concept. How can philosophy come from books?

Mao Zedong, Talk on Questions of Philosophy, 1964²

1. Preamble

Thinking happens, even when it is not written. That philosophy is a Western invention³ is to say that truth has existed even when philosophy has not. There are truths before their conceptualization, and philosophy simply takes up what is before it. So why is there, sometimes, philosophy at all? It must be because a truth has become saturated and at the point of saturation there is truth's waste, called philosophy. In the real movement of truth there is no distinction between truth and philosophy, practice and theory, they are indiscernible. It is when they begin to split, that we know that we are coming to the end. Philosophy is the history of the end of truth procedures, it is the final point where we left off. We can start again, and philosophy is this shelter where we can start. If philosophy is this shelter it almost means its shape doesn't remain the same, or rather, its form of the

same itself changes with each truth. It's the idea of the same that is held by the philosopher.

For the philosopher Alain Badiou, there are four truth procedures: art, science, politics, and love and philosophy is conditioned by these truths outside of itself. So we have to think that art, science, politics, and love existed before philosophy, before they were named beauty, truth, and the good, they are post-philosophically graspable pre-philosophic. What philosophy does, with its limpid schema, is allow us to continue where we stop. Wilfrid Sellars talks of a manifest image and a scientific image, but with Badiou we can talk about philosophy as a montage that is produced by cutting together four forms of cutting: art, science, politics, and love. And in this cutting we see images. Philosophy creates this montage on the basis of nothing and we live in this montage created by philosophy. Which is to say we live in truth, even if it has been extinguished or obscured, we live in its residue.

But is there a necessity for this residue to be written in language? Or again: why must philosophical thought be thought linguistically? Is there a necessity that philosophy exist in particular languages?

That philosophy be written in language at all is a proof that we have yet to truly exit the age of poets. The age of the poets is not only the 20th century; we have been in its saturation since at least Parmenides. The event of thinking has been written poetically, and for Badiou poetry can write the event. Poetry is eventual – it's not that poetry is a result of language but that ordinary language is the debris, the *déchet* of poetry. We use language because it is a finite detritus of an infinite truth. And finitude has no being. For Plato the poem is interrupted by the matheme and this inaugurates philosophy. But still, philosophical labour most often consists of using the imaging powers of language to describe mathematics poetically.

There is no necessity for philosophy, but that in Ancient Greece there was deductive mathematics, democracy, tragedy, and Plato's love for his friend Socrates, all together, we had a thinking of the present. Philosophy thinks the present which is equal to the presentation of truths, at the same time. Without all four we risk saturation. In fact most of us live lives of saturation as it is difficult to live with all four, to live philosophically and in the present of four truth procedures all at once. After the poetry of Parmenides we have the theatrical writing of Plato, beginning with the writing of Socrates' death by the state.

The death of Socrates so affected Plato, and he wrote his trial – there is something of philosophy that responds to those killed by the state. And if we film industrial mass murder by a state, what can philosophy think? The death of loved ones by the state is not to make a point of finitude within philosophy but rather is a proof that death happens and comes from outside. Those we love will die and that is something that is thought. If we didn't love those who die then death would not have to be

registered. For it is a death that is counted as nothingness, as part of what makes the flicker possible between framed worlds possible. It is death as rule. As Godard put it in *JLG/JLG* (1995): “The rule is a question of culture, the exception a question of art. Everyone speaks the rule: cigarettes, computers, t-shirts, tourism, war. No-one speaks the exception. It cannot be spoken. It can be written: Flaubert, Dostoyevsky. It can be composed: Gershwin, Mozart. It can be painted: Cézanne, Vermeer. It can be filmed: Antonioni, Vigo. Or it can be lived, and is thus called the art of living: Srebrenica, Mostar, Sarajevo. It is part of the rules to want the death of the exception. It is the rule of European culture to organize the death of the art of living.” We can add Gaza and Socrates to the art of living.

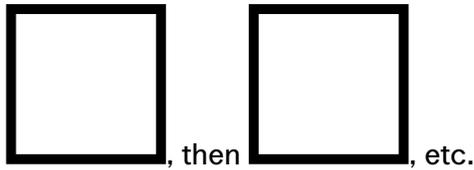
Fredric Jameson has said the 20th century, is as distant, and classical to us, as Ancient Greece. If that is so, is there also a form of philosophical practice that is possible that must be anamnetically retrieved from that century? There are many events of the 20th century, but I want to focus on making present communism, post-Cantorian mathematics, cinema, and love.

Badiou has described human history as Neolithic or we can say in another variation, for a brief period in the communist century, from 1917-1976 there was an attempt at a non-Neolithic form of life. We have proofs of this non-Neolithic period of life, and these proofs are cinematic. If historically philosophy has been written, is there a possibility for philosophy to be recorded, which is to imply, cut? If the art of painting and of music, together with science, are superior and universal then why philosophize with words? Cinema combines the superior arts and science in its cut, directly absolute in its “oneness with humanity.”⁴ If the work of art is the paradigm by which we think the work of truth, there is no necessity to install poetry as the form that philosophy takes as its model as writing. Instead philosophy should endeavour to take cinema as its form through cutting.

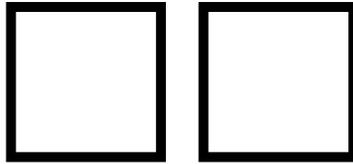
2. Parmenidean Reflection

I like to read Parmenides as if he’s writing film criticism because he’s describing what I can’t see as poetic revelation. And the great writing of the classic era of *Cahiers du cinéma* is like that too. Imagine if you are watching a movie, apparently full of movement, and a critic looks and says, within the duty of thinking: “there is no movement”. Imagine if Parmenides made movies and showed it. The power of film criticism is the enthusiasm for what you can’t see in words. The passion for non-being. In fact I’d go as far as saying it’s almost important that the description is wrong – enthusiasm must take over for it to be eventual, screenshot culture has us writing on still photography, not cinema. The wrongness of description is when non-being takes part in thinking. Bad criticism makes the film too recognizable, it should be far off enough, distant and true in

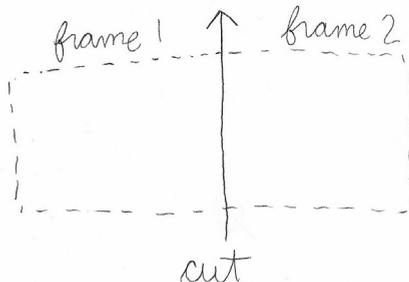
its free association, bad criticism is like gallery text, too on the nose, both writing and object disappear into non-thinking. Great film writing revels in the gap between being and thinking, revels in the cut of its revelation. If Parmenides is a father of Plato it's because he is a poet, and poetry writes the event at the edge of language, but poetry need not be lettered, nor its letters be mathematized, the event can be written in frames and cuts. It's not that poetry is a result of language but ordinary language is the debris of poetry, and in the same way, our manifest image of the world is the debris of cinema. If Plato wanted to think things and not words we cannot blame him for not having a camera but we can place blame after 1896. Truths are the cut in language, all of language is nothing but debris, déchet, trailing description of events in art, science, politics, and love, strengthened and changed by this encounter and always in last place – it is but a trailer for truths. We are the children who will have witnessed the passing from the age of the poets to the age of the auteur – from the law of words to the cut of truth. Imagine a moviegoer sits down in a cinema and sees frames of a film,



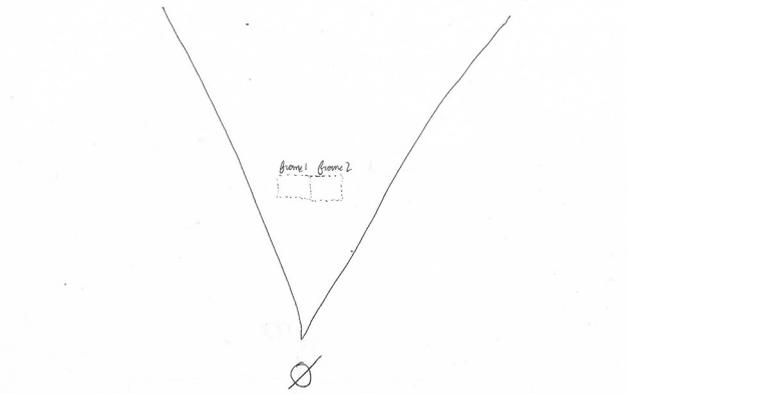
Knowing its form, the moviegoer can imagine the film as a series of marks as one once saw on a film strip.



We can philosophize with cinema because it can cut. There is no cinema without the cut. The hallmark of cinema is its motion via the intermittent mechanism –

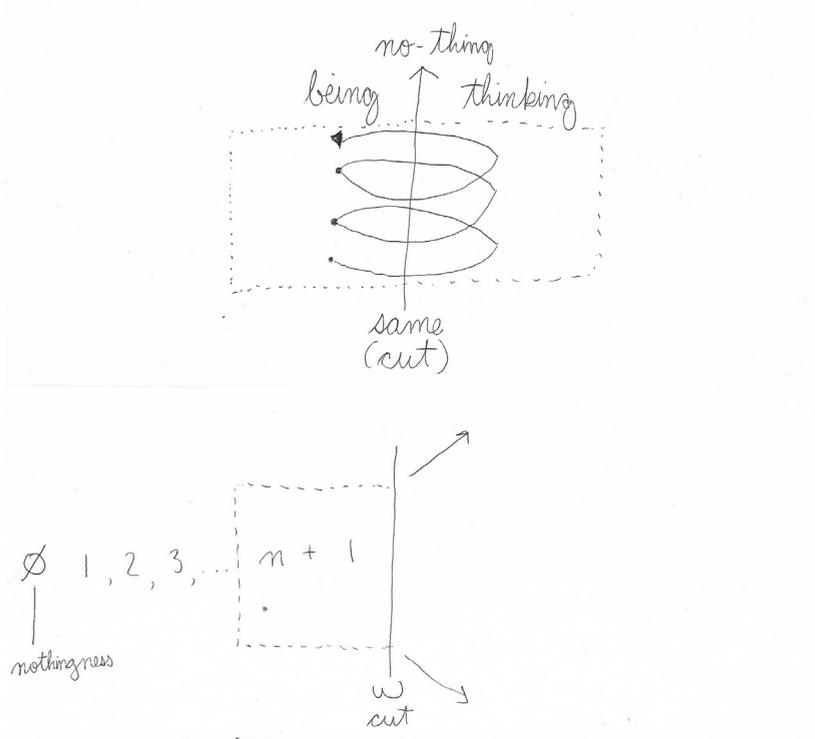


motion is impossible without the cut, you can even say the immobile nothing of the cut is before any movement. Motion does not pre-exist the cut. It seems counterintuitive because in cinema there must have minimally been two frames: with only one frame we are still within the instantaneous painting of photography. On a first approach we think that when there are two frames together, a cut is produced. But in fact we know that on an editing timeline, we have an absolute place where we place our frames. Where are these frames placed? These frames are placed in V . In set-theory mathematics this is the very space where thinking takes place. And we can map this set theory to a movie-set theory. Like the Lumière cinématograph, the shape of the projection from the top looks like this V ,



and it is a V that records and projects. All the possibilities of cinema also take place in this V . But we can't see V without making attempts at seeing it via cutting. Both V and cuts inexist. We have to make some sort of model of V . We can call this model M for montage. Because of the world market and enormous pressure by the military, most movies are not seeing V , but seeing L . L is for limited, but also for language. V is the absolute place and in cinema we can say V is for vision and L is for language's finite limitations with a special focus on the visible properties in the picture. As Badiou puts it, "The expressive or participatory function that we are examining here assumes that we start from a 'vision' or a perspective that, at least virtually, is related to the absolute V as a whole."⁵ Or, as in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988), "1a: Toutes les histoires": "the cinematograph never meant to create an event, but a vision."

Within language, Parmenides said: "Thinking and being are the same." Is there a way to see it? As a materialist reading *Theory of the Subject* while editing the *Semi-auto colours* (2010) 16mm workprint on a Steenbeck, it was clear to me that its philosophical table⁶ can be seen as a film strip, with a frame for *being* and a frame for *thinking*, brought together and pulled apart by the *same* cut, with the proper retroactions that occur when you watch a movie, the second frame having to appear for the first to appear as first at all.



But let's talk about infinity, and for now, the smallest infinity. To count, let's start with the empty set, \emptyset (void) as the beginning of a form of succession and then go $\{\emptyset, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$ and then we can say $n+1$, and it goes on as a form of repetition. Then we make a cut, and start another form of succession, called ω . This is the first infinity. So the natural whole numbers do not build towards ω , because there is no x such that it is before ω . There is a cut. It is decided by an axiom – it is a decision that is not contained in the prior repetition. In the same manner, a shot's frames are the finite repetition interrupted by a cut of infinity. ω immediately recollects all the numbers before it as its limit. In this respect it's like the way cinema recollects all the arts that came before, and allowed us to move forward, $+1$ from there. When we cut in cinema we immediately, mentally recollect what we have just seen, while seeing nothing. With a succession of cuts of different types, of different sizes, we can recollect not just what we have seen but imagine what we will have seen. Cinema as a form of thinking is a question of recollecting what can be thought in the cut, new forms of anamnesis, thinking how we remember as we remember how to think. From there we are no longer in a space where we compare repetitive pictures that are visible, but those pictures are sharpened by the inexistent cuts that surround them, the mental images that retroactively place them, and these images themselves start to be placed in an intermittent mechanism that gives them motion, until a yet

higher succeeding cut allows us to see their space of placement – and we continue from there. And when we rewatch films, these cuts carry the thoughts we formed the last time we saw them, encrustations even more irreducible to what is seen. When Socrates is told the city he speaks of cannot be seen and exists in Idea only, and he says he thinks there is a pattern of it which he who desires may behold and whether it exists or will ever exists does not matter because he will live in the manner of that city, we should hold to the fact that so many of us are influenced not simply by the movies we see but the cinema of our mind and its pattern of cutting. Since Plato there exists a philosophical ambition to think with “things, not words” precisely because, as Socrates put it: “All I know is I know No-thing.” Not until the invention of the cut in cinema did we have such a thing; we are able to see this No-thing. Parmenides said, “being and thinking are the Same” or “it is the Same, to think and to be.” I prefer the second phrasing, emphasizing sameness as preceding being and thinking, much like the cut precedes any frames. This Nothing appears the Same, but under particular conditions is in fact different: the cut is the same that is not the same as itself. This non-same is *created*, historically – because reality is incomplete we can consistently invent new cuts. The in-itself in-itself changes with each new infinity, each new nothing, as it is the same. We know some cuts, and there are still more to think. Heidegger asked “why are there beings at all instead of Nothing?” but in fact, all there is is Nothing – we have to parse the infinite infinities of the forms, and create the next -thing to think with. *This* is the meaning of Jean-Luc Godard’s phrase “change nothing so everything will be different” that appears at the very beginning of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. His nothing is the same as Socrates’. We can point to this nothing, because it is the part of change that does not change; it makes registration of change possible.

3. Lumière and Griffith

Cinema begins in silence, without language. Gabriel Veyre shot *Repas d'indiens* (1896) in Mexico City and you can see an Indigenous person’s face forcibly being made to look at the camera by Claudio Fernando Bon Bernard, director of Lumière operations in Mexico, Venezuela, Guyana, and the West Indies. This is one of the beginnings of cinema. We should be happy this was not edited out. We have a glimpse of the reality of these actualities. The baby’s face in the *Baby’s Meal* of 1895 is not forced to look in the same way by Auguste Lumière. But even here we begin to see the need for something like a cut, in order to compare these two meals. We see all these single shots, and identities and differences begin to make themselves visible to us. But there was no cutting yet. In the same year of *Repas d'indiens* there was *Demolition of a Wall* by Lumière. In this film, the first reverse appears, which anticipates the idea of the cut. What is a reverse? It is what makes negation appear.⁷ The thought of this cinematic

beginning is the beginning of cinematic thought: in the film there are people using tools on a wall to tear it down and continue breaking it down, and then there is a point of reverse: the wall comes back up, everyone does the same actions backwards. At the point of reverse, we now have what can be counted as two shots. We have the first part of the shot, p , and its reverse $\neg p$. Within a world, here, the ‘forward’ part of the shot constituted by frames of workers being directed to tear down a wall, when put in conjunction with the reversal of each frame, the backward motion, takes the value of zero, the minimum, μ . It can also be marked with \emptyset , the void, though of course, indexed to this particular world, is the beginning of counting, that makes frames appear as frames. There is a moment when the same frame is seen twice in a row, so, a minimal freeze, before the shot continues. If plucked out, you could not discern the difference between the two frames. Indiscernible, we can already think all that a cut, in its nondescript appearing, is: part of the moving picture, an extension that doesn’t add new properties. This not being a cut, the minimal freeze isolates the existence of the flicker that keeps the frames consistently appearing. This isolate marks out that the only element smaller than it is μ . It is an isolated element in the following sense: “no ‘complexity’ ‘separates it from the nothing.’”⁸ We can even relate it to the flicker of doubt, which, when itself is doubted, will lead to the cut. So when we look at that V shape, we see \emptyset at the bottom of the V, that’s *Demolition of a Wall*. It’s the starting point for thinking. The \emptyset , the nothingness that is counted for finite multiples, often is not considered or thought of because it is its inappearance that makes appearance consist. It’s the first time we see what makes persistence of vision possible.

In the same way we may desire to compare the Lumière film with the Veyre film around the meal because of a similarity, here we have an absolute similarity in two parts. If we cut the two meals together, we may say one shot is A, and one shot is B. And then ideas of comparison appear to us, perhaps related to class, colonialism, racism, composition, et cetera. These ideas only appear to us because the picture becomes marked by the scission in which it is placed. But here, in the first reverse, a picture comes into contact with itself. You can say this first part is A, and after the point of the reverse, we have B. And we can then compare a thing to itself. So rather than a tension between two different shots, we can think of a tension inherent in every shot, in regards to itself. But isn’t this what we see every time we edit? When you have a shot on your timeline, do you not run your mouse over the image and as you swing back left to right and back again you see this very motion, this demolition? The empty set is constructible, validating “for any x , x does not belong to \emptyset ,” or, in other words, “ x has no elements.” \emptyset is also the pure beginning of the hierarchy of constructible levels.⁹ And we see the reverse and the reverse of a reverse: this is the beginning of editing. This tension inherent in every shot in regards to itself is why we can say the reverse of the

reverse of a degree is always greater or equal to that degree, $p \neq \emptyset \emptyset p$, or: that double negation does not affirm the first term means we are not in a classical world when we move through the frames but will have been classical when we cut. We see the shift from the appearance of physical laws to that of a picture as picture, the possibility of emptying out the meaning of a picture. This is the movement from something as appearing to have a nature, and a past, and then instead a history in the nothing of the cut. Appearance appears as appearance. Reversals show us that other paths in history are possible. We will talk later of the shot-reverse-shot in linguistic dialogue with the advent of sound, which traditionally is a shot of one person talking, and then a reverse shot of the interlocutor, and a back and forth between them. But there is already a shot-reverse-shot here, a shot coming into non-linguistic dialogue with itself. This is also called 'shot, counter-shot' – there are many names. So we can also see this as a shot-counter-shot, which is to say the beginning of counting, in this reverse movement, there is a count-as-shot. The \emptyset marks nothingness which is not to be confused with no-thing, in the same way the flicker should not be confused with the cut, or the void with infinity. We should also mention it is this reversal that allows us to cognize that what appears intuitionistic, all the degrees of light within a frame, can be reorganized in a classical logic of p or non- p : a frame can be cut, removed, or it can stay. Or the appearance of the minimal, what is included in every shot is the unique intermittency of the void, points towards its reverse, a maximal change with a cut. And we should relish in the logical beauty of the reverse, since, as Badiou put it, "I regard the usual linguistic interpretation of logic as an entirely secondary anthropomorphic subjectivism, which must itself be accounted for by the intrinsic constitution of being-there."¹⁰ This beauty is linked to the fact we can mark the \emptyset without reference to an onscreen human subject's actions, since this reverse is not related to a close-up, in fact it is a wide shot of people simply working. We can intimate at the outset that the cut, which has yet to appear, will perform its incision without regard to action or necessary narrative: it can happen anywhere at any time.

For Parmenides there is no thinking of non-being, there is only a thinking of being, and the prohibition on thinking non-being founds the sameness of thinking and being. Non-being is reduced to a name, and all experience is simply names. Parmenides founds philosophy by thinking outside of names which is to say language and experience. By thinking outside of names, he is thinking outside of narrative. We can all interpret what's in the frame, and name what's in the frame, but when it comes to the cut, we simply say there is a cut. The frame can only cover in constructive reasoning where A implies B , whereas cutting can begin indirect reasoning, *reductio ad absurdum*, using not- A to prove A , not-cut (frame) to prove cut, rational cutting, or reasoning which breaks with empirical experience (of the frame).¹¹ The reversal of *Lumière* produces

an experience of the impossible and at the point of sameness between two frames produces a minimal freeze that frees us from constructibility, the wall is demolished. Which is to say it's an image that produces its own self-cancellation as inherent in all pictures as pictures. At that point cinema decides itself as a ciné-matheme. That Plato names non-being as 'other' and begins a new use of naming that which is not, which François Truffaut will take to the end: cinema as nothing but names (of the auteur), a metempsychosis of matheme-psychosis. Plato thinks non-being by naming it 'other', and auteurism organizes non-being as being nothing but a history of names of the auteur that mark the other forms of the same.

It is important to mention unlike the films of Edison at this time, the Lumière films have a sense of composition and depth in the image, whereas Edison is often flat. What's also key is that Edison's films were looped, and viewed individually, which is to say finite, while Lumière films were watched as a mass audience and would cut, which is to say infinite. So you already see some beginnings here of a division between a finite social media and an infinite cinema.

And yet in some way today we can say D.W. Griffith is closer to the question of social media than he is to a maker of mass art. D.W. Griffith made 200 short films before he made *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, which is like the first blockbuster, a film of the democratic type, and these terms come together, because whether box office or voting, the unsaid pressures and institutions around it sully any real idea of the popular, or to be of the people. It is the popularizer of a model of realism, which is to say L. He's credited with either the invention or popularization of the close-up and the crosscut; he combines techniques that came before. The legacy of Griffith to the present can be linked to the axiom of constructibility where in a limited universe things can only be constructed from what already is defined and exists. Today most films are constructed from Griffith's tools, the way he combined what came before him. When films are made from popular extant tools they are described as well-made. Many critics and civilians defend films, even ones they don't like, by saying "we can't deny it's well made," which is really to say it is above a certain budget, or it is a real film with a real budget and works within the style of realism. It is a common inaccessible point beyond critique. Well-made limited realism is the L of cinema.

The Birth of a Nation begins with language, a title saying a "plea for the art of the motion picture" and "we do not fear censorship." 100 years later, Meta relaxed its content moderation in favour of not fact-checking in order to be against censorship. In the same year, Meta created a controversial "AI user", an account that communicates as if it is a queer Black woman. Like Griffith, we have here, blackface, albeit digital, and a prizing of the close-up. Race doesn't exist but racism does. The cinematic realism that the name "Griffith" stands for is a realism that includes blackface — and we can't simply remove blackface from this

style: it is part of its limited sense of what is real. It's not only that those who oppress us want us separated or crosscut from any possibility of mass movement and rather have us socialized into individuals; the type of individuals desired will be invented if needed. Close-ups will be shot: this "AI user" is another form of the close-up, as is an American dollar bill with a close-up of a president's face, and there is a line connecting American movies with the love of the close-up and the star system, and the democratic system of voting, and finally the passport photo demanded by ICE. Privileging close-ups with a name and stated gender are an integral part to the limitations of our world. It creates singletons of all of us so we can be counted.

And we have the famous crosscut. When we look at the crosscut, what do we see? We see the KKK riding on horses on one side to save a white woman who is about to be raped by a man in blackface on the other. The film crosscuts between the two sides, back and forth until the KKK arrive just in time. Crosscuts abound in cinema for different and similar scenes: look at Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008) and we can see rather than a white hood we have a black hood with Batman and instead of blackface we have the whiteface of Joker, and the same crosscutting technique as Batman tries to save Maggie Gyllenhaal. Then there's *Intolerance* (1916), with the subtitle 'Love's Struggle Through the Ages.' *Intolerance* was not an apology for his *The Birth of a Nation*, which helped revive the KKK, it is its true sequel. The film is four narratives from different historical periods that crosscut together. He wanted to make a film on the idea of intolerance. He worked like some curators do: he had the theme of intolerance, and then he built around this theme. This model is a limitation of cinema as a form of thinking. Here, language legislates all possibilities: we do not start with cuts, frames, images, and sounds, but instead, an external judgment via language. Or we can think of AI prompts in this manner. This is again what I called universe L. Definability *before* creation is the essence of finitude. Invent a theme, invent a race, find the pictures and people after. Most films you see at the cinema use Griffith's tools of readable space, the close-up, the crosscut, narrative filmmaking. We see the development of the crosscut in *The Birth of a Nation* taken to the end in *Intolerance*, crosscutting different stories across time to build a cyclical tension. There's even a character named Eternal Motherhood rocking a baby, purely disconnected from the action in a wide. In one of the narratives, we see an image of the hangman's test, three unequal lines, parallel, to be cut, so no one feels responsible for the death of the person who is hung. So, four stories, without responsibility. Looking at this form is not an antiquated concern. In a time of live-streamed genocide in Gaza, many of us received it on Instagram Stories. Instagram Stories are organized in this Griffith manner: I am here, you are there, parallel stories happening simultaneously, but it cannot touch. So today we still see the world through D.W. Griffith's eyes. He is less thinkable today as an

inventor of mass art than the designer of a user's experience of a social media. The difference between mass art and social media is this: the concept of mass resists the division by the social and forms of art are not reducible to the communication of media.

And when we think of this comparison between different stories we can imagine these stories are all the same size. In a way when we talk about how large the set of all the even numbers is, we know it is the same size of the set of all the whole numbers, or odd numbers. It may seem counterintuitive but the point is we can make that one-to-one-correspondence. It's what Griffith is doing here, making these stories across time comparable. But they all share the same size and the size is ω . This parallel montage is still popular today. And how does *Intolerance* end? We see the abolition of prisons. Really, the maker of *The Birth of a Nation* ends *Intolerance* with the abolition of prisons? But look again: the prison walls become flowers. It is a religious vision, he turns it into a miracle. God literally appears, the only way to bring the parallel worlds into contact. So in fact it is a true sequel to *The Birth of a Nation*: he abolishes the very possibility of abolishing prisons by making it an act of God. And of course all the prisoners are white. So he represents all real change as impossible or more precisely, inaccessible. Today when we see the world through parallel montage, thinking change becomes inaccessible. We have to change our form of change. We need to transform the very form whereby transformation is thinkable. It is important to note all of Ancient Greek mathematics takes place within ω , and so does the editing of Griffith. We should try to move beyond it, modern enough to be in the present. *The Birth of a Nation* begins with an intertitle stating «[...] but we do demand the right, the liberty to show the dark side of the wrong, that we may illuminate the bright side of virtue” implies a dark side of virtue and a bright side of the wrong that Griffith cannot think, and finally that we must begin with *negation* to think. An affirmative dialectics allows us to think from an event, affirming an Idea, where negation happens later, to defend this newness. As Badiou put it, “[...] any principle that is based only on a negation, even if a radical one, is ultimately only a somewhat arrogant version of the finite.”¹²

4. Kuleshov and Eisenstein

The Kuleshov experiment by Lev Kuleshov was accomplished in 1918, and affirmed a new Idea of the cinema. What is called the Kuleshov effect starts with a face, a human subject that looks like it's looking, then we cut to a bowl of soup, and then we cut back to the face, and then a baby in a crib, and back to the face, and then a beautiful person on a divan. There are variations on what human subject is looking at. It is crucial to note that the facial expression does not change, but because of the juxtaposition, the audience imagines the face as showing nuance, or we project some

minimal idea of what the face on screen is thinking. Not only does the facial expression not change, it can be the same piece of film. This move is also related to what is called suture, so the audience, through this abstraction, ‘forgets’ they are watching a movie and projects themselves into the situation and point of view or that which looks. But we can also talk about philosophical suture, which is to say a philosophy that forgets that it is thinking through a condition, that its means of thinking comes from a generic condition. So when we cut from the face to the soup, we imagine the face is hungry. The question of conceptual digestion can appear here as well. We can imagine philosophy taking the place of the face, and rather than a bowl of soup, we can imagine a condition, of art, of science, of politics, or of love. And we can, for example, imagine a face that only sees politics. We can also imagine a face that sees all four truths, never suturing itself only to one. This type of cut structures the face as a witness.

The Kuleshov effect functions because there is a sameness that keeps reappearing, in this instance a face. But this is also true with the sameness of the intermittent mechanism, or the cut itself. Which is to say it is sameness that structures itself as a witness, and not the human face. If there is a Kuleshov effect, κ , then $V \neq L$. In fact the constructible continuity of L , especially the shot, reverse shot (SRS), is derived from κ . The objects are removed and there are only faces looking at each other, speaking. Speaking being over thinking being. L only exists if the space is readable and continuous. But where does the Kuleshov take place? What place has this bowl of soup, this crib, this funeral, this wedding, this beautiful person on the divan, et cetera? There is no ‘whole’ place, no establishing shot (E) that shows where this sequence takes place, and the Kuleshov effect makes it appear undecidable whether what we are witnessing is someone thinking of a bowl of soup in one’s head or someone who actually sees it – we are clearly in an imagined absolute place. And this absoluteness of place is never questioned in the experiment; no one rushes into a finite paradise of a constructible place.

If the mark of \emptyset can stand for something like Descartes’ subject, we decide for ω as an infinity-witness, from there, we cross the limit to $\omega + 1$, but it is never the same subject, because for Badiou the void is on the side of being. If the void was on the side of the subject all witnesses would share the same form. However, new forms of cutting invent new forms of witnessing and thus subjects. The subject is less the place of witness but the crossing into the $+1$ itself. It is to say we need stronger forms of witnessing events in relation to truth and their obscuration. If things are seen but not registered we do not succeed, we only repeat, even repeatedly see industrially produced mass murder. To say there are new subjects is to not accept the singleton of the death drive, because the void is on the side of being and not of the subject – negativity isn’t everywhere, it is localized, and it is its localization that begins to engender infinite infinities.

In 1929, *after making Strike (1925), Potemkin (1925), and October (1927)*, Eisenstein says “the interaction of the Two produces and determines Dynamism. (Not only in the sense of a space-time continuum, but also in the field of Absolute thinking).”¹³ Very remarkable, because he makes a separation between the space-time continuum and the field of Absolute thinking. A couple lines later, he repeats this Two in another form: he says, “Shot and montage are the basic elements of cinema.”¹⁴ So his idea of the Two is not simply a dualism. As Two, shot and montage are not opposites. We can say the Two is a set and its subsets, a shot and its montage. If we have three shots, think if we had a set S of three elements {a, b, c} and then we have 8 subsets {a}, {b}, {c}, {a,b}, {a,c}, {b,c}, {a,b,c}, {∅}. So there are always more subsets than sets, and the set of the subsets, the powerset, is always larger than the initial set. This is true of infinity as well – the powerset is always larger than the set, even if the set is infinite, which leads to the idea that there are larger and larger sizes of infinity. Let’s say if we can imagine the shots in relation to each other in this manner, finite shots producing finite associations, can we think infinite cuts producing infinite associations with each other? Imagine a shot with racist police violence, and then we cut to a reaction shot, a close-up of a racialized face seeing the action: there are not that many associations one can make. We are still within a finitude of thinking. But we can have a potentially infinite amount of mental associations between cuts when there is a greater equality between the frames when the frames are thought as units not already collected into a “shot”. So in my mind someone who cuts like D.W. Griffith is trying to control our associations, in the same way the state in a time of riots will say 5 people together is a riot, controlling our associations with each other. And in Griffith’s *Intolerance* he’ll allow for 4 or 5 stories. But in a mass movement there are more than 5 stories and potentially infinite associations they can make between each other, the Idea they share, and the situation altogether. So there’s this density of associations between people who have meetings, provide self-defence, and other forms of organization that achieve a density that cannot be easily separated. When someone wants to oppress you, they separate: like police at a protest breaking up the mass of people so the masses return to themselves as socialized individuals, or a mass of moviegoers immediately rating a film on Letterboxd during the credits.

Similarity in image allows for this sort of comparison to be made mentally. What does the Kuleshov effect look like if not a person either editing a film, or watching a film? We see the face, and what the face is looking at. You see this in the history of painting too. If you look at Caravaggio’s *Boy Bitten By Lizard (1596)*, you can see his hand being bitten, but what happens here is in fact the artist painting themselves painting, the hand being bitten you can imagine a paintbrush in it, the raised hand as if it’s holding a palette.¹⁵ You also see it in paintings of

a man with a sword and shield, if you look closely you can see that the sword is clearly the paintbrush and the shield is the palette, because artists often paint themselves in the mirror. And this is true in cinema too. We make allegories of our own creation. You see this in *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) with Cary Grant surrounded by what looks like lights on set when he ‘directs’ the arrival and departure of airplanes, looking like a filmmaker. So with the Kuleshov effect, we see a face and an object in the same way one thinks of the editor’s face looking at the objects on the editing table. If Caravaggio paints what it looks like to paint, Kuleshov thinks what it looks like to think, thinks what it is to think while thinking thinks. And with intellectual montage in Eisenstein, we lose the reference to the face, it’s Kuleshov without the face. We just cut to different objects, people, and events. We don’t need to always refer to a person thinking these ideas, as the “I think” is implicit in all judgments.

In 1927, Eisenstein’s *October* is released. We read Hegel’s writing on the French Revolution, but the truth is we still haven’t witnessed Eisenstein’s *October*. Intellectual montage begins in *October* and we have rarely been faithful to its artistic innovations. Where better than *October* to present not only the idea of revolution but the revolution of ideas’ presentation? It is a film made 10 years after the revolution, with many real revolutionary participants taking part in the filmic event. That scenes from the film are often used in historical documentary contexts as newsreels are an index of the fact the film documents the idea of “October” itself for all time.

The revolutionaries were able to resist partition and so does the film’s montage form. If there is the Kuleshov effect, there is a subset that is homogeneous to the partition, and there are two parts, we can even say, the face and the bowl of soup, and they come as a pair. The pair resists a partition into two halves and is infinitely higher than the inaccessible infinity of ω , which is Griffith’s crosscut. A subset H of κ of cardinality κ such that all the pairs of elements of H are in the same half: $\kappa \Rightarrow (\kappa)_2$.¹⁶ What Eisenstein does with his intellectual montage in the God and Country sequence is resist the partition into two halves by removing the necessity of making the face appear, as the “I think” is always included, and the Kuleshov effect was already the speculative identity between the editor and the audience, as audience thinks the cuts, and editor watches the film. He removes the Griffith close-up as a necessary point of suture. If all the finite, repeating pictures, are in one half, which is the looping face that does not change, and all the others are in the second half, the objects of religion, war, and state, et cetera, its compactness is of greater strength than the inaccessible infinity: $\kappa \Rightarrow \kappa_2 <^{(\omega)}$.¹⁷ A Ramsey cardinal defeats Griffith’s God. Griffith has God Himself appear, here we see the idea of God instantiated in different objects that refuse to be separated. The intertitle says “In the name of God and Country” and for “In the name of God” we see various religious objects without the need to cut to a face looking. But even more: the religious

toys take the place of the human face in the Kuleshov effect: we project on both the face and the religious figure a sense of agency and control of our lives. So there's a reversal: rather than a human face in a Kuleshov effect we see the inanimate religious toys' face in close-up, and rather than a bowl of soup and the like, we see military medals on humans who serve as background ("and Country"), like a table the bowl of soup rests on. This is followed by a reverse motion of a dismantled statue of the Tsar whose pieces start to reconnect. Rather than crosscutting at the level of time's passing, this cutting finds a similar shape, in this case across religious objects, to imitate the persistence of vision's compactness that grounds all appearing, and in the absolute difference between the pictures, finds identity within motion (a 'false' animating motion between religious objects) and stillness as such (these objects aren't moving). Rest, motion, what is, the same and its other. We see a match between Kornilov on a horse and a toy Napoleon on a horse, and then Kornilov's putsch via a forced creative geography of a tank that in false continuity crushes the Napoleon figurine on Kerensky's desk in the Winter Palace. Intellectual montage uses different objects and happenings at different scales and links them as if they share the same scale — Eisenstein forces opposition into the appearance of motion,¹⁸ intermittent mechanism becomes intellectual montage. Rather than the givenness of time's elapsing being compared in Griffith, the montage removes it from any time whatever, into the absolute place of thinking where time is decided. Or even stronger, a reversal of the cogito into "I don't think and I am not" — like science that doesn't assume a human observer, Eisenstein often loses reference to a single character or perspective. He sees the event seeing itself. Rather than identify with a close-up of a face, we can find identification in the cut itself, and desubstantialize the thinker thinking.

The ending anamentically retrieves previous cuts: the machine gun flicker during the July Days, the gun's lines at diagonals to the frame that burst, then later the aforementioned religious flicker of the Baroque Christ's halo's beams intercut with the egg-shaped Uzume, which in its movement from egg-shape to star-shape back and forth, also have the burst effect, and finally the the victorious revolutionaries clapping with Lenin, the applause's hands are diagonal and lightly matching the hands on the clock like the beams as machine gun as hands on the round-shape clocks around the world, recollecting all the other burst effects into the burst of eternity. Like the isolate of *Demolition of a Wall*, the isolates that begin to move, or rather, restructure what movement is through its stillness, is eternity's stillness bursting through. We often incorrectly think of the first close-up as being on the face, but these celebrating hands remind us that the first close-up was in fact of hands, shot by Eadweard Muybridge. There's a brief sequence when a soldier of the 1st Petrograd Women's Battalion of Death looks at a Rodin statue of lovers in embrace, herself posing with a hand under her chin ready to defend the

Winter Palace and we are reminded of a later student of Eisenstein, Hollis Frampton: “I will simply invert Rodin’s remark (he was, in fact, speaking of Muybridge’s work) to read thus: ‘It is the photograph which is truthful, and the artist who lies, for in reality time does stop.’”

To repeat Eisenstein: “the interaction of the Two produces and determines Dynamism. (Not only in the sense of a space-time continuum, but also in the field of Absolute thinking),” but this Two as the two different sizes of infinity that produces the dynamism of a finite work or Two forms of the cut can produce an unknown persistence of vision that allows finite pictures to appear as part of a new dynamism of a truth process. Or as Eisenstein put it, “this same principle-giving birth to concepts, to emotions, by juxtaposing two disparate events-led to [...] Liberation of the whole action from the definition of time and space.”¹⁹ The resistance of $\kappa \Rightarrow (\kappa)_2^2$ and $\kappa \Rightarrow \kappa_2^{<(\omega)}$ defeat Griffith’s form which re-popularized the KKK in the United States.

5. Intermission: Auteurs after sound’s linguistic turn

Cinema is of seeing V, a vision of V, rather than a linguistic and limited medium, L. Looking at painting, hearing music, thinking mathematics, all at once: the absoluteness is clear. Adding a title to a painting or a contextual caption to a filmed murder is already to add a narrative to it and destroy our vision in the name of L. The introduction of sound brings a victory for those who see the cinematic universe as that of L. The many advances in the form, clear in silent works by Abel Gance and Sergei Eisenstein for example, come to a halt. The dynamic strength of silent cinema is de-absolutized and slowed down so actors can individually speak clearly into ‘hidden’ microphones; the universality of a Chaplin picture disappears in favour of particular languages focusing on sync sound, coincidentally around the time Fascism is on the rise. Sound is consolidated with *The Jazz Singer* in 1927, about a man who defies his Jewish family to perform music in blackface, again in the name of realism. Someone’s face is always painted unrealistically in the heights of realism, whether its *The Birth of a Nation* or *Hatari!* (1962). We must also think of the use of radio for Nazi propaganda, as another instance of hearing particularist language without an image, Hitler on the radio, a voiceover, a subtitling of reality. Much later we can think of the Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines broadcast from 1993-1994. In the continuity tradition of cinema, often a sound, whether music or words, makes transitions smoother, and we must hear that this is true for attempted political transitions as well. Syncing makes a false equivalence between V and L, we can even say in the cinema, sync sound makes V=L, in sync with each other, a two fused into one in the name of the old one of L. The hallmark of continuity style is the 180 degree rule, popularized by Hollywood, developing shot/counter-shot, or shot reverse-shot (SRS).

Often used for dialogue but not necessarily, it operates within a form of film space that in some sense still belongs to the theatre, all taking place on one side of an imaginary line we cannot cross. The 180 degree rule is finite and intuitionistic, endeavours to stay on one side to make cuts appear as invisible, preserving a continuity of space. The indexation of every multiple to a transcendental of continuity is also linked to the concept of coverage, the covering-over of events with this ‘invisible’ style, a style that makes cuts appear as invisible. The cut is a discontinuity, and a collection of discontinuities can form its own continuation beyond finitude. Thus, indexation can be divided: a multiplicity can be indexed to the transcendental of the world or it can be part of the full index as an attribute of the absolute. One can be indexed in continuity to this world, or be marked by inexistence and force discontinuity. One can think the minimum and maximum of a world, but also the minimal and maximal indexing of a truth: if there is a hierarchy of infinities it is to say there is a progressive history of truths; if there wasn’t, then the artistic avant-garde would be without points: atonicity would reign. The point of making the cuts invisible puts a primacy on words, language, and narrative – this is coverage in the cinema. But *mise en scène* maximizes visibility and puts a primacy on image, sound, and truth.

When Marcel Pagnol would shoot his early films, he would stay with the sound equipment, listening on headphones, not watching the scene being shot. He thought that if it sounded good, then the acting was good too. This explicit favouring of language and performance over image shows in miniature what the purpose of coverage is: to cover what is being said and prizing narrative beyond what is being thought. There is a loose charm to the early Pagnol as in *Marius* (1931) and *Fanny* (1932) because he would shoot until the magazine was empty, there’d be simple unregulated wide compositions with unexpected pans, the rules have not set in. The Marseille accent was so thick that the Parisians needed subtitles, so the recording of voice and performance again relates to a realism but this realism is a provincial realism that leads to a scene of in *The Well-Digger’s Daughter* (1940) where a Pétain speech in favour of an armistice with Nazi Germany is listened to on the radio, and later he gives in to classic SRS such as in *The Pretty Miller Girl* (1949). But, even with the SRS structure, what do we see? Two faces looking at each other talking. But SRS is in fact derived from Kuleshov: it simply replaces the Kuleshov effect’s image of someone thinking with someone talking. Speaking beings over thinking beings. If we have typical “*mise en scène*” with establishing shots, E, which can start a scene like \emptyset begins a count, and then we have different forms of coverage, like 1, 2, 3...n+1, the interruption, however obscured, of SRS, finds a traction in its subtraction from coverage. Not entirely, but enough. Imagine if there was no dialogue and it was simply the faces cutting back and forth, or even better, there was dialogue, but the sound was cut: the dignity of thinking would be

preserved in the image. Thinking triumphs over speaking, or rather, speaking is filtered out.

If Pagnol's sync sound and preservation of accent leads to Pétain on the radio, the fact of Roberto Rossellini shooting *Rome, Open City* (1945), without sync shows that it is by de-linking picture and sound that we attain a realism of the new. It is the gap between sound and picture, a subtraction of language, that allows us to make do with being. Even if the words are dubbed later, the truth that language is always a covering-over, a transcendental that marshals itself, is maintained. The body's attachment to language is imposed. Or again, sync makes it easier to assume there are only bodies and languages, the *and* being a point of unity that counts speaking being as thinking beings, that counts-as-one. Syncing, which links sound at a precise frame of the picture, makes its void, that which separates frames, countable so there is a common root between the frames and sound. Sound is synced to the frame, so there is a primacy of the frame, the world, rather than any eventual cut. The picture becomes part of the state of sound, whose unbinding is prohibited. Bound, we also begin to assume continuity, and coverage. Unbound, there is discontinuity and *mise en scène*. For coverage, there is only the frame that is invisible, but for *mise en scène* there is a frame that is being framed, a transcendental exposed.

The key thinker of the necessity of this framing is François Truffaut: a thinking that is for the primacy of direction against the screenplay, $V > L$. That a frame is framed means we see the world as world, returning to *Demolition of a Wall's* exposition of the void. The reversibility of fiction and documentary is apparent here. Truffaut has said that cinema became an art when it sheds its attempt at documentary. The choosing of fiction rather than documentary is a siding with *reductio ad absurdum*, the fictitious forcing of Cohen against Gödel's constructible documentary of what exists. Great filmmakers such as Chaplin, Eisenstein, Hitchcock, and Welles continued within sound as if silent film simply continued, with sound. Much later, George Lucas will say his Star Wars films are "silent films with sound." That is, unlike the poem *interrupted* by mathematics, cinema *includes* language without giving it primacy.

So when we look at Alfred Hitchcock, look how he brings back the Kuleshov effect with *Rear Window* (1954). Scott's Theorem simplified states if κ exists, then V is always bigger than L . And for me if Kuleshov exists, then vision will always triumph over language. Again think how cosmic Kuleshov is: it doesn't have a continuous space like the continuity style: where in fact is the soup, the baby, or the beautiful person? It is in one's mind. So the place of absolute thinking, V , is victorious against the space-time continuum of L . And what Hitchcock does here is re-introduce that absoluteness into continuous space. So as cinema normalizes, standardizes into SRS, we can see how Hitchcock repeatedly interrupts SRS with κ , in the same manner the finite succession of $n+1$ is interrupted

by ω . Hitchcock finds new ways to use κ . If intellectual montage removes the subject from the subject-object cutting of κ , what Hitchcock does is treat the subject-object relation in variant lengths. But as we think of Kuleshov not taking place in time, it is the very suspension of time that builds suspense. The art of Hitchcock is making long events seem short and short events seem long: he is the Master of Suspense, the master of suspending us from space and time. When Thorwald comes into Jimmy Stewart's room and Stewart uses the flash of the camera to momentarily stop him, isn't it clear that this is the same shot of Thorwald taking off his glasses again and again? Time does not pass, it must be decided.

There is a temptation to hold that editing as such will always be the future of cinema and we can call this the leftist deviation, and those who focus on the recording of an actor's performance the rightist deviation. When I say that cinema is a thinking of the cut, I mean also that a director must exist, explicitly saying the word 'cut' on set. It is the word of the auteur that ties the leftist and rightist deviations in a single utterance, that which appears on set to disappear in the edit itself. The director is the actor who says cut for the editor. The left deviation is a sophism of the edit and the right deviation is anti-philosophy of the actor. In fact every antiphilosophy prizes the act and the actor, and this is why if cinema is to be philosophy, there is always its opposing, historical foe which allows it to re-articulate its conditions in the *present*, whether it's the performance of sound, television, or the internet. Philosophy always overcomes the antiphilosophy of its time, as did cinema when it recuperated sound, television, and continues to do battle with the internet's linguistic organization of frames and cuts. The director is that which philosophizes with one word, and one word alone, and it is with the word 'cut'. A word without language linking the cut's being to the being-there of the frame. The problem with both deviations is on its own it cannot treat the problem of coverage, which is to say finitude. Even further, without a director one risks de-linking cutting from the idea of an event. You can edit coverage and you can cover a performance but without direction we risk losing the absoluteness of axiomatic thinking, what is thinkable on the basis of nothing: editing coverage assumes the existence of something to edit as does covering a performance but we know to begin with something de-absolutizes. The name of the auteur is that which is an identity non-identical with itself, as non-identical as the reasons why a director will say the word 'cut'.

6. Godard and Frampton

But 'cut' is not always said, there are times it must be found. The jumpcut was found in the edit of Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) because contractually he was to produce a 90 minute film, and his initial cut was 2 hours and 30 minutes. Rather than cutting out scenes, he cut within

scenes, leaving the cut itself visible as we jump from frame to frame. That nothingness which is marked out by Lumière's *Demolition of a Wall* appears to return in *Breathless*. The jumpcut is the almost nothing. Godard will eventually die by suicide. There is something of the thought of suicide in the jumpcut but we must be more precise. Life can end at anytime, a shot can end or begin at anytime. As does love. The love story between Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo deals with its paraconsistency; "It's crazy, but I love you", "I wanted to see if I'd be glad to see you again", "to make sure I didn't love him anymore", "I don't want to be in love with you" "I shouldn't be thinking of her but I can't help it" – the film has the terror of all love being paraconsistent at every turn of the intermittent mechanism's void. If I think the cut can formalize the event, when Pasolini says the cut is death he is wrong. So instead, the jumpcut can think the subjective formalism of resurrection without relation to death. Which is to say what it is to live must be subtracted from a thinking of death lest life be naturally finitized. If the cut is death it is because the cut is totalizing, naturalizes death as the horizon of meaning; against (the one) totality, the cut as event thinks infinity as the equality of parts to other parts, sets and subsets. Counterintuitively, infinity is the thinking of equality, whereas finitude naturalizes inequality, of death, social death, and death drive. Here, the cut can happen at any time, there is an equality of any time to be chosen over another. Or to put it another way: the idea of infinity is not intrinsically linked to finitude, though it can be thought to other sizes of infinity. We can think resurrection in relation to other subjective formalisms, of fidelity, reaction, and obscuration, and we don't necessarily need to think its relation to death. Death is not immanent to life, it is external. And if the cut is ontological and can mark the event, death, not being ontological but logical, that is, of the realm of appearances, is more akin to light going out than the absoluteness of the cut. This harbouring of nothingness is spoken of in the hotel scene where Belmondo says "[b]etween nothingness and grief, I choose nothingness", the almost nothing over any grief within L.

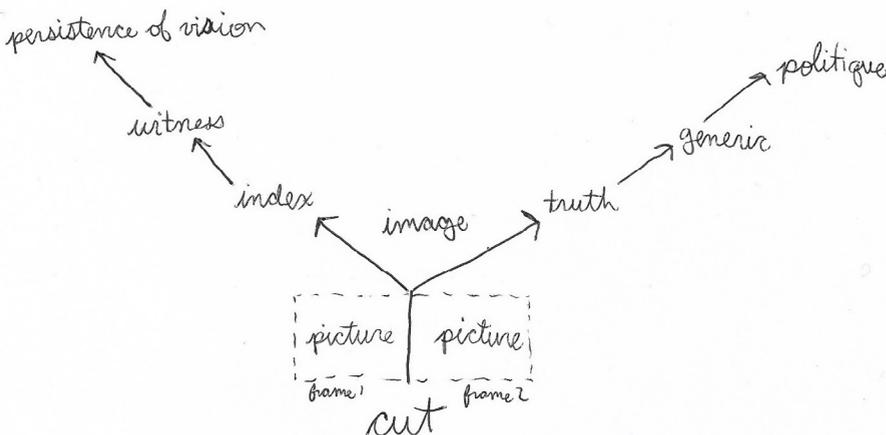
It is both impossible to prove that $0^\#$ exists or that it doesn't. But this is true of the jumpcut as well: the intermittency of the flickering void, the 24 frames per second's persistence of vision is always present, the gap between one frame to another always is already abyssal. Neither continuity nor coverage, sticking with $0^\#$ rather than 0, and even though analysis can show *Breathless* followed some conventional shooting practices such as SRS, finite coverage is avoided. The jumpcut is "the very first difference from nothingness", it cannot be concealed. It proves that V is larger than L: all attempts at continuity, which makes what appears appear as a one, 180 degree rules, establishing shot, shot-reverse-shot patterns are filled with indiscernibles. Jumpcutting as Skolemization? The 'there is' of the composed frame is removed, instead there are functions: all that is left are cuts, the frames were retroactive presuppositions for

what we are seeing. We do not see skipped frames we see jumpcuts. The jumpcut is what makes the $0^\#$ appear as a point: any frame can end in a cut, as isolate, nothing separating it from nothingness. The world is tensed. We see what is not. The constant denial of the non-being that appears, the quantity of cuts against the quality of picture which consists and is covered. Appearing harbours points. That $0^\#$ exists is to say $V \neq L$, because only if jumpcutting does not exist can we say that rigid continuity in the last instance is all that can be seen. With the existence of the jumpcut's $0^\#$, Griffith's ω_0 is regular in L. The realism of constructibility disappears under the realization of all that the jumpcut indiscerns. One can exit the cave, see L, continuity, from the standpoint of V because $0^\#$ is "located at threshold of the exit from the cave".²⁰ Continuity is the endless cave that makes an exit invisible. The jumpcut, $0^\#$, reveals each frame a cave, the cut is the sun that you can't look at directly, your eyes have to become accustomed to seeing it. There's also a Copernican side to this: the frame is not at the centre, the frames revolve around the cut, like the earth around the sun.

With Parmenides I endeavour to think the subjectivity of the 'cut' rather than the substance of 'film' or 'digital' in the manner that Parmenides thought 'being' rather than 'fire' or 'water'. Parmenides is a critique of the myth of narrative as Marx is a critique of political economy. And with that, Plato thinks the being of non-being, and Mao thinks the negation of 'negation of negation' – the effects of this idea on Godard and Badiou will have to be looked at another time. However, if 20th century French philosophy deserves to be a cumulative achievement on par with Ancient Greece and German Idealism, I don't think it's simply because philosophy was written, or that it was simply 'French'. The interest in what is called 'French philosophy' is precisely this break regarding what is 'Frenchness' with May 68 and a thinking conditioned by the Cultural Revolution, and how it marked thinkers and inventors like Badiou and Godard in what can be thought in *Cahiers pour l'analyse* or *Cahiers du cinéma*.²¹

In 1964 in Mao's "Talk on Questions of Philosophy" he says "negation of negation doesn't exist at all" and, "[t]here is no such thing as the negation of the negation. Affirmation, negation, affirmation, negation . . . in the development of things, every link in the chain of events is both affirmation and negation. Slave-holding society negated primitive society, but with reference to feudal society it constituted, in turn, the affirmation. Feudal society constituted the negation in relation to slave-holding society but it was in turn the affirmation with reference to capitalist society. Capitalist society was the negation in relation to feudal society, but it is, in turn, the affirmation in relation to socialist society."²² Affirmation and negation? A classical logic. And we know if we admit the Axiom of Choice we admit a classical logic, a classical world, the same world as ontology. In 1970 Hollis Frampton made the film *Zorns Lemma*. Zorn's Lemma is equivalent to the Axiom of Choice. The film itself can be said to present

the Axiom of Choice.²³ Its middle section shows, for one second, each of 24 letters from a Roman alphabet where I/J count-as-one as does U/V. Then we see words alphabetically sequenced within an environment that starts with such a letter (like on a store sign), one second each, which can be interpreted as if being chosen from bins of that letter, and then these signs are replaced with pictures, which can be interpreted as if being chosen from bins, until all we are looking at are pictures. It is suggestive that there are 24 letters in the way there are 24 frames per second. The choice of picture exceeds the finite ordering and name of the bin: there's a retroactivity which allows us to think this very ordering as contingent, since, even the alphabetized words are pictures that only so happen to have words in them. It wasn't just words: for example, we begin with a picture of a hand holding the letter A for the first "A" word. So one has to choose to find letters within a frame, but anything can serve the function of a letter, it need not be a letter. The choice function was with us at the beginning: every picture will have been chosen by the artist, including the Roman alphabet we began with. It being Roman is another clue. Or rather every frame is chosen from an infinite bin and the finite letters and words are results of this choosing. What is implied then is within the persistence of vision, each framed picture can be decided. Pictures side by side produce the illusion of repetitive movement, or allow us to think a new form of succession. Perhaps there was the possibility of each of the 24 frames per second being replaced in this manner, but technologically with the film strip such a frame by frame cutting would come apart at the splices – maybe it can be realized digitally. But what was seen is this ordering via letters only proved that not-letters, cuts, reign supreme. In the cut that is unpictured, anything can be chosen, anything can be thought in the anonymity of the cut as generic subset.



7. Badiou and Godard

But an image doesn't exist. This is not an image, it's a picture. The image is the relation with me looking at it dreaming up a relation at someone else. An image is an association.

- Jean-Luc Godard, interview with Gavin Smith, 1996²⁴

—The finitist skeptic: I'm fed up. They abound and you can't even show me one. That's the way it always is with the Axiom of Choice. The thing exists, there are tons of them, but you can't show a single one!

—Me: That only proves that there's a major difference between what is and what can be shown. Show infinity? Hard to do. Think it? Experience it? Subjectivate it? Create it? Yes, a thousand times yes. Down with the finitude of showing! If we stop thinking that thinking equals showing, that to be is to be able to be shown, we'll all be a lot better off.

- Alain Badiou, Immanence of Truths²⁵

An image doesn't exist, it inexists, and cinema is a passion of inexistence. At the press conference for *King Lear* (1987), Godard quoted Picasso as saying that if he were in prison he'd paint with his shit because that'd be all that he has. Every time we make a picture we are doing it with all that we have. *King Lear* takes place in some sort of future where all art has disappeared after Chernobyl, so William Shakespeare Jr. the 5th must somehow re-create the work of his ancestors. But are we not in such a situation today? With all that AI slop, unsearchable Google, (and we must also say the original search bar was invented by Sergei Eisenstein, intellectual montage was the first real search and it was better because it was without language and you had to really search with images, and shoot your search, nothing was given), et cetera, or the opposite, all these paintings are owned by museums and rich losers who want to act like their eclecticism is a sign of culture, if you want to make a film and use your favourite song that defines your life you must pay 100 000 dollars perhaps to the rights holder. So we are in fact always like William Shakespeare Jr. the 5th, we are in this wasteland with no access to art, no real access to our ancestors, so we have to invent. And it seems funny because sure you can download this and that, but you can't see the films anymore, you must see it at home, and if you can't see it in a theatre we only see a hint of it, its reproduction. We only have the shoebox of cinema and not the cinema itself at instant access. There is no history of movies. Nothing is given, or rather, as an intertitle in the film has it, NO THING is given. When we make a picture, all of the history of art has the possibility

of starting again. The entirety of the history can be retold, re-ordered, or resurrected. What we find in this film is that in thinking there are no births, there are only resurrections.

So when we see the intertitle of NO THING, there is another truth, not only does thinking begin from NO THING but art in general begins like that because the tradition is never given to us, it is only given to us in pieces at most. There is a character, played by Godard, named Professor Pluggy and he is working on making an 'image'. What is seen on the monitors on the set is what his later *Histoire(s) du cinéma* will look like. There is a sequence (and these next endnotes will be related to what is seen on screen) where you hear his voice say over Molly Ringwald lying down with a Gustave Doré book's cover adding a light pattern to her face, "[a]n image is not strong because it is brutal²⁶ or fantastic but because²⁷ the association of ideas²⁸ is distant and true. The result is obtained immediately and controls the truth of the association. Analogy is a medium of creation²⁹. It is a resemblance of connections. The power or virtue of the created image depends on the nature of these connections. What is great is not the image, but the emotion it provokes. If the latter is great, one esteems the image as its measure. The emotion thus provoked is true because it is born outside all imitation. All evocation. And all resemblance."³⁰

In 1988: the first part of the *Being and Event* trilogy and the first two episodes *Histoire(s) du cinéma* appear around the same time. This is as moving in its truth as the dual appearance of Jules Janssen's *Passage of Venus* and Georg Cantor's first diagonal proof in 1874. The point is to see both at once, and in seeing it, do more than separate out what is already there, and instead think something larger, a net that can catch both, a witness that sees the image they may produce together, an image that will have retroactively produced them.

Badiou says "'Ultrafilter' is actually just the name of a mental device for 'measuring' what a very large set of large subsets of a given set might be."³¹ Imagine an image as an ultrafilter. An image that does not contain the empty set, it contains the set E, contains the intersection of parts A and B, and if the image contains subset A and A is in subset B then B is in the image because B is larger than A, and with regard to any subset of E, it is either in the image or its complement, its negation, is in, and finally an image that can be described as a non-principal ultrafilter must be without the singleton, which means quite plainly that the association produced is not only one association. If it is one association, we have a singleton, that is, we are still linked to the One. In *Demolition of a Wall*, if the reverse counts as a cut then the image that appears to us is the picture we just saw: the forward motion as comparison to the backwards motion we are now seeing. A single image.

Gavin Smith asked what Godard was trying to evoke in the first part of *Histoire(s) du cinéma* when he "intercut two shots very rapidly, cut to the rhythm of a word processor" and Godard said "it was only to try to

meet the images without cutting—very fast superimpositions so that there is only one image but we understand there are two.”³² The cutting to the rhythm of the word processor can be thought of in the opposite way, that cutting produces the writing that separates out what is presented. This is because language separates out from a given existence³³, it does not induce it and struggles with such simultaneity. Language will always be a smaller infinity than image, music, and mathematics, and when something like cinema thinks with all three, there will always be a trailing behind (which is why the subtitles are necessarily incomplete in these videos)³⁴. What cinema can do that language can't is swim in this simultaneity of painting, music, and cutting. Language makes things smaller, while cinema projects things to be larger. Belonging to an infinity of worlds we participate in many truths at once and language makes what appears as more complicated in its separating gesture. With cinema it's obvious and clear that you can hear music and see a picture and hear dialogue and see an image without any difficulty. The simple simultaneity of cinema allows us to think, and to be, conditioned by multiple truths at the same time, the time of the same.

And to meet images without cutting is to imply the only way to 'meet images' is via cutting, except here we see either very fast superimpositions or very slow dissolves, so we can see the intersections of A and B, and they are both in the image, and if they are pictures of pictures, pictures from other films, they come with other associations, and the image will contain all those associations, and when there actually is a cut, the association will not be a single one. The complement or its negation is in, or as Godard has it, all the films either made or unmade are part of his history. Even more, if the person who watches the film does not know what painting, photograph, movie, et cetera the movie is showing, there is even less a relation to the One of origin, or of reference; this lack of reference brings us closer to the absolute reference. Smith then says the rhythm reminded him of the “24 frames per second effect of persistence of vision in film” and Godard agreed that he was trying to “elaborate on that”. Which is to say the fast/slow superimpositions transform the given appearance of the 24 frames per second, allowing us to think of other ways the pictures/images can be received. And if the image constructs a huge cardinal κ , a witness that is almost absolute, one can imagine there is something like V that (in)exists.³⁵

Imagine a family of images that form “a network of subsets whose links with each other, as well as what they exclude or constrain, show that most of them are at any rate so “large” that they can be said to be “almost” equivalent to the initial situation, to the set of which they are subsets.”³⁶ The situation? Cinema itself, what Frampton called ‘the infinite film.’ Now think of the classic picture of a film strip, and all its frames, think of the being/thinking frames, and now think of a fish net. The ultrafilter functions like a fish net with large holes that keeps what is large.

If movies were only their pictures, we would never catch large ideas, but if cuts are distant enough, it forms a net to catch the greatest associations, the images of the largest size. The equality of images to each other and the associations they can themselves make changes the nothing of our vision. This fish-net is calendrical.

And what is it to watch a movie? We have called our medium ‘moving pictures’, but pictures are not images. In pictures we have an intuitionistic becoming that must be also paraconsistently what it is not, and a classical decision is made, there is a cut. Then another picture, another cut. An image is not the same as a picture. An image is an association without pictorial resemblance to what is seen. We can think of two pictures producing an image, but there is a retroactivity, where the visible pictures are nested in these invisible images. These images themselves can collide to create a higher order association. It is in this spark that we see almost all the possible associations. It is less that we witness this infinity than the fact the infinity witnesses us. It is that these images can be looked at without being seen that escape the laws of constructibility and instead are generic. These associations are always included even if they do not belong to the pictures. Truth is a process of anamnesis: attempting to remember what you saw, you will have been forcing yourself to look at what you imagine. These images bear the mark of the *politique des auteurs*. This image itself can be cut: there is an immanence without identity that maintains a gap between the absolute referent and the place of absolutization of singular truths which is to say: no image makes V, as vision, itself appear, since it inexists, but it can make a new persistence of vision inappear to structure the appearing of pictures. If we can go from V to V it would mean I can simply see what there is to see. But there is nothing to see, and seeing what is invisible has its freedoms. And once you can look at the image produced by the cut, it is an image that will be included. The finite frame has no being which is to say that the picture we see is not, and exists only as result of two infinite cuts of different types and sizes.³⁷ That the finite frame has no being is also to say that until we find out new ways of cutting, everything will remain in some sense invisible to truth while being visible to the world as it is, the weakest form of negation, paraconsistent.

In a 2004 conversation with Elias Sanbar, Godard said “[i]n regards to the counter-shot, I’ve read this anecdote about the physician Niels Bohr, who liked cinema a lot and who said, while watching a western with Tom Mix, that ‘the rogue’s elopement with the young girl was logical. This is how it always happens. That the bridge collapsed under their carriage is improbable, but I readily accept it. The heroine hanging over an abyss between the skies and the earth is even less probable, but I accept even that. I even accept as true that at this very moment her saviour rides past on his horse. But it is beyond me that at the same time somebody with a camera happens to be on the spot and films all this idiocy,” [...] And

the presence of this cameraman gives the impression of a real counter-shot.”³⁸ Compare it with Badiou, “[i]ntuitively, we understand that *if* there can exist an elementary model M of V , and if there is an elementary embedding $[j]$ of V into M , and if M is extremely large, then M will really be very close to V and will contain, as a witness to its large size, a new type of infinite cardinal. That’s a lot of “if’s” . . . The trick is to put together a “suitable” class M , which, assuming that there exists an elementary embedding of V into M , reveals in its construction the need for a new type of infinity to exist.”³⁹

This new type of infinity that is witness to this large size, is what ‘films all this idiocy’, a ‘real counter-shot’. In a way we can say that these filmed events which are so improbable appear as impossible because one cannot imagine a cameraperson was there to film all of it. So in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, “1a: Toutes les histoires”, Godard says: “And if George Stevens hadn’t used the first 16mm colour film in Auschwitz and Ravensbrück, the happiness of Elizabeth Taylor would never have found a place in the sun. 1939, 1944, Martyrdom and resurrection of the documentary. How marvellous to be able to look at what we cannot see. What a miracle for our blind eyes.” Somehow, George Stevens shot both the 16mm colour film in Auschwitz and Ravensbrück as well as Elizabeth Taylor on 35mm in *A Place in the Sun*. To escape the cave and find a place in the sun, is to look at what we cannot see in the flickering shadows. In another context, Badiou said the image is a reverse of the shadow. That there is a link of resemblance between Elizabeth Taylor holding Montgomery Clift in her arms and images of bodies in concentration camp, at one point as if she’s holding the bodies, cannot be exhausted, made finite, because it does not appear: it inappears.⁴⁰ The idea is not indexed to the transcendental, but is immanent to an index of absoluteness. How far can the images be from each other, what is the maximal distance, maximally just? Like a jumpcut, one is forced to see the continuity, the intermittent mechanism will always have been there, the continuity between these pictures, that *A Place in the Sun* would be able to follow the concentration camp pictures from Ravensbrück as simply as going from one frame of Muybridge’s horse to another, hooves leaving the ground. And he who jumps into the void owes no explanation to those who watch. Images of images. How far from what is before us. When we are dealing with the idea of intermittency in the cinema, we see that a jumpcut from Jean Seberg twirling on the curb and then appearing right beside Jean-Paul Belmondo’s car door, or Elizabeth Taylor is about to open her mouth and we cut to a mouth agape of an emaciated face show that in cinema the continuum hypothesis is false. Looking at cuts relieves us of the perceptual relativity of the large and the small in pictures. We can talk of cuts of different sizes. A “localized system of power zones, their possible overlapping, that characterizes a real infinity”⁴¹ can be seen in the overlapping between Elizabeth Taylor holding Montgomery Clift and the concentration camps, a

real infinity, so large that it is almost equivalent to the situation of cinema. We see Elizabeth Taylor's hands reach for Montgomery Clift like Mary Magdalene for Jesus Christ from Giotto's *Noli me tangere* (1304) which is superimposed to almost match the hands. "Martyrdom and resurrection of the documentary" – what is documented is the resurrection of the image from pictures altogether real, indexed to a world, and yet with the Giotto, the history of representation, is also included, and seen in the present, all we know of these stars, this cinema, and this resurrection of pictures of genocide today.

And what follows? A real counter-shot: a Palestinian boy holding a burned American flag with a hole in it and in that hole is a superimposed face from the Cameron family to fight in the Civil War from *The Birth of a Nation*, with the words HIS / TOIRE / (S) on the top part of the picture. Such moments invite us to imbue what we see with a new level in our persistence of vision. Are most of us minimally George Stevens? Who has not seen the moving pictures of the genocide against the Palestinians perpetuated by Israel and its allies? Who has watched films with Elizabeth Taylor and other stars who have in their personal lives declared their support of Israel? You have seen these pictures, and encounter the associations, and then you take iPhone video of winter's first snow; you are George Stevens. Working on your film, you will be witnessed.

In *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, "4b: Les Signes parmi nous" (1998) we see Godard (quoting his own film *JLG/JLG*) recording a picture off of a television with his video camera, seeing how he works, self-portraiture, and thus we see the picture twice: once on television and in the monitor of the camera – and during this we hear: "an image is not strong because it is brutal and fantastic" and atop the image, some text DE / L'AUTRE / CINÉMA / QUI / DEVINT / AMI / DU / MONDE / ENTIER then "but because the association of ideas is distant and just." The quote is carried from *King Lear* to *JLG/JLG* to *Histoire(s) du cinéma* and the association carries not only what is present but the other times it was quoted. Its sameness assists in its travel, allows us to recall its other associations, and a cut functions in the same way but it quotes nothing. There is a distance between a picture on the TV and on the monitor of the camera, but it is the same picture. The picture will always be in at least two frames, to merely think of a picture appearing is to split it. There can be a maximum distance between a picture and itself by its grace of appearing in multiple worlds. The other cinema, a friend to the world entire, that is, a friend, like Plato to Socrates, who witnesses what has happened to him. Philosophy begins in friendship, minimally, for those that do not know love will never know philosophy.

A little further on, the word ALLEMAN and black and white moving pictures in shades of grey showing an emaciated body in a concentration camp being dragged, then the word JUIF appears, then we hear "when philosophy paints its grey on grey" then the word MUSULMANN, "a

manifestation of life finishes growing old” and then a black screen with gray letters L’ESPÈCE / HUMAINE, “we cannot rejuvenate it with grey on grey, only understand it.” (This is referring to the story of a German prison guard at an extermination camp calling a Jewish person who was completely emaciated and near-death, a Muslim). If an elementary embedding, j , can cause new types of infinity to emerge, should we think the embedding of V into V itself or is the lack of a non-trivial embedding of V into V , as Kunen proved, equal to a triviality of philosophy’s grey on grey? Or rather if *philosophy* paints grey on grey, minimal difference or otherwise, is the problem that it cannot be understood as a picture that is painted? It must be thought via an image?

And further than that, a cartoon cat by Tex Avery is vigneted by a picture of a page in a book, and as the words MONTAGE / INTER / DIT appear in frame we hear “with a turn of the screw put reality into reality.” The turn of the screw of reality into reality is another way to say ‘elementary embedding’ of V into M , or as Badiou calls it “the way you drive a nail into the wall”,⁴² *demolished* or otherwise, a very large infinite cardinal emerges as witness. Elementary embedding forces what is large into something that is smaller. An image is larger than a picture, and what is thought in the image is invisibly encrusted on to the picture. So what is higher in V plunges itself into M by a relation j .

Truth never happens all at once, if it did we would only need one cut, rather than the resultant weaving of what marks the persistence of vision with the cuts in question. There is not only one persistence of vision as there is also not only one class, because the 24 frames per second is not the only form of frame rate, but at the same time, this persistence is not reducible to the frame rate, because each frame can be in different relations to the cuts, each frame’s interactions and retroactions with the cut deregulate where an idea begins or ends in what counts-as-one shot. There are “shifting projections”⁴³ regarding singular truths and absolute terms – we need a concrete analysis of the cuts and their relation to the flicker and back, in question. We do not see a framed movie-set S as belonging to V , $S \hat{=} V$, but $j(S) \hat{=} M$. It must operate with j for the ‘shifting’, without j we have a static projection, a copy of V .⁴⁴ A pure projection is without the localized difference of M , which is trivial, which means there is no complete cardinal κ . That it is non-trivial means that the κ appears obligatory, because “truth’s taking-place operates in a continuous temporal relation with the absoluteness underlying it. Only infinity attests, by an actual local existence, to the fact that the absolute tolerates being differentiated, in order to finally be, as Hegel’s fine phrase has it “with us”⁴⁵ Very simply: the flicker in its ‘continuous temporal relation’ is not the same as the cut, but there is not only one cut, and thus the flicker itself can be placed differently. Yes, in any cinematic writing of motion, there is a nothingness separating the frames. Obvious in film, somewhat declared in digital. Yes, if we believe we are in Griffith’s limited universe

of L, or Lacan's psychoanalysis we can only go as far as ω . But if we risk differentiating between different cuts, different infinities, in the dialectic between motion and stillness, cut, flicker, new persistencies, M, emerges. V as such cannot be seen but each cut marks its place within it. And if M, this model of Vision, which as Montage, can montage forms of montage, cut together cuts, that form forms higher and higher persistencies of vision which enable us to see new images in our mind. There can be a picture, set S, but $j(S)$, is the elementary embedding, the turn of a screw of reality into reality, that gets us closer to seeing V. And if j exists, so does a witness, κ .

So again, this turn of the screw to put reality into reality: somehow, no amount of pictures has put reality back into reality regarding genocide. We can see directly but we cannot look at it. An image \neq picture (and we can also say again that $V \neq L$), the picture is what we see, and the association of pictures can push us to make an association in the cut, and this is called an image. What's distant and just is a picture in regards to itself, that its image would not be the same as its pictures of itself. It is the Same, to think and to be, and this sameness of thinking and being is the ultimate montage interdit. And thus it is a cut to be made, especially if it's not well made. Do we dare such comparisons between painting grey on grey to the calling of an emaciated Jewish person a Muslim, as a j that allows to see V in M? The banned edit, the comparison one must not make, is a comparison that does not hold a minimal determination, the void indexed to a world, a comparison without a world. What is at stake is the comparison between two infinities, two no-things. Two different no-things indexes the fact that being and thinking are the same only insofar as the same is not always the same as itself. Thus we cut in order to actively participate in the local infinite differentiation between the absolute and the singularity of a truth that, when saturated, becomes a world with a new minimal determination.

Today we have so many pictures but haven't created a persistence of vision to see its image. We cannot see the pictures in relation to the entire situation. If we did, we would know how to live differently. Or rather what is live? What is live recording, live-streaming, of such pictures, what is life living under the aegis of images? In *In Praise of Love* (2001), Berthe stands in front of a sliding door with framing green and yellow-orange leaves, her face covered by her hair, and she says "the image, sir, alone capable of denying nothingness, is also the gaze of nothingness on us". I'd force the sentence to say 'is also the gaze of nothing on us' – because, yes, the pictures which are the waste of an image, still deny nothingness as all there is, since it does witness what happens, but, the gaze of nothing on us, is the gaze of an infinity: we do not witness infinity, it does not show itself, but we think it, and in thinking it, it witnesses us.

The intervallic place where truths are received forms a dialectic with the absolute place and as picturemakers and moviegoers we think with

both at the same time. The interval $\kappa-j(\kappa)$ registers the equality of images absolutely, and differently from the absolute place, changing the nothing of our vision. Their interaction jam-packs the cuts with associations, creating an immanent measure of what can be seen. Thinking being possible it is imperative we continue to think which does not imply continuity with the world as it is. There are infinite cuts to see and think in equality with each other intervening equal to its world frame and cut. Persistence of vision must be persistent enough to change its form of change lest we fall into the problem pointed out by Kunen regarding the finitization of infinity. Without new forms of infinity, without new forms of cutting, our infinities will fall into the repetitive forms of intermittent mechanism. Or to put it brutally, orthogonalizing the same method of infinity will be like simply changing the frame rate of the regular mode of appearing. Changing the frame rate is not a form of cutting as repetition itself is not a form of succession. For example, endless SRS can begin to be its own persistence of vision. When we see the reverse that puts a picture in tension with itself, when we think a generalized parallelism with Griffith, the separation from the world of Eternal Motherhood, the Kuleshov subject as separate when looking at a bowl of soup, the coming together of the different scales and the 'bursts' in *October*, which can be collected in thought, its own persistence of vision, whose scission reorients the other persistencies that surround it, if they belong to a smaller infinity's +1, that even if it exists in 24 frames per second, changes the appearance of the intermittency, or the jumpcuts of *Breathless*, the frames even when they return to their regular motion retains a mark of what was out of place, out of frame, yet constitutes their dynamic placement, and this place may appear the same, but is not: it happens on different levels in *V*, or again, *Zorns Lemma* is like *October*: its sequential appearing combines the crosscut, Kuleshov, and intellectual montage and if we focus not on the pictures but the images that can be seen, the very choice of image becomes an image of choice, of what to see, and what the continuum of images may look like as what follows this discrete lettering of pictures. There are the +1s of repetitions and the limits of what succeeds. The appearance of a new persistence's phantom is the appearing of an attribute of the absolute. These forms of persistence are models of the absolute place. But we can never close the gap between the absolute place and the attributes, because there always new cuts to make, and that there are persistencies of vision means there is no vision of vision. All that we see may be constructible. So when you wake up do you frame your world or do you see the persistence of vision and risk a cut?

What is j , such that $j(\kappa) > j$? In the case of Godard I think it is the attempt to see an image of the constructible concentration camps of the Holocaust, within *M*, witnessed by κ . Slavoj Žižek made a key remark regarding Badiou's settling of accounts with the Cultural Revolution, as he was surprised that the lesson was negative: neither within nor

without the state, but subtracted. Badiou would say through the Cultural Revolution we learned that emancipatory politics cannot be thought “under the paradigm of revolution, nor remain prisoner to the party-form. Symmetrically, it cannot be inscribed in the parliamentary or electoral apparatus.” One must ask a similar question regarding Godard and the cinema. Must we begin neither under the paradigm of the camps, nor the prisoner of Hollywood form, neither the box office nor the studio nor its schools, where in “sombre genius [...] prescribed for the decades to come, an *affirmative* realization of this beginning. But their fury was still so enmeshed in what they were rising up against that they only explored this beginning from the standpoint of pure negation.”⁴⁶ So, affirmation and negation. For Godard, we were missing both pictures and images, a cinema, that would witness the camps, but today we see so many pictures, though perhaps not an image that would allow us to witness genocide happening today, live. But is there another elementary embedding that doesn’t have its fury enmeshed in what is being risen against, a mesh, that ultrafilter, that catches what is large in the first step of witnessing the beginning of an affirmative dialectic in all its non-constructible glory?

In 2010 I asked Badiou what is the link between the fact that at the level of being, there are subjects and human animals, and on the other hand, at the level of being-there, there are faithful, reactive, obscure, and resurrected subjects. He said that ‘human animal’ is a name invented by the obscure subject. Today I understand it in this manner: within ontology we use a name derived from obscurity within it, something of appearance that is discovered in a truth process can find its support-set in being and this can assist us in our continuation of treating points. In the process of truth we risk an absolute ontology, *«histoires avec un s»* a forcing that allows us new decisions in the point by point embedding of an event, and in this we risk becoming obscure in our defence of ontology over truth. But it is always better to risk a disaster over non-being. At any point one can move from any of the subjectivities towards resurrection, a non-trivial embedding of fidelity into resurrection. That there is something to retrieve even from the obscure disaster is part of the infinity of thinking as long as our adventure does not become a waste. Which is to say what will be resurrected? When it comes to Socrates, what was important was not only that he died but that he thought. Not only the footage of the many human beings murdered by states worldwide but images of their experimental emancipatory politics. Resurrection and martyrdom of his documentary: we should think what these thoughts can be while we are alive, and through this we can think the distinction between what is to live, what is live, what is recorded, and what is cut. “Withering away the state” is another way to think the class struggle of the cut’s autonomy against the frame.

8. Final Remarks

To know nothing – to begin with things, not words. What is thought and not what is named. What is a cinema that starts from there? Godard once remarked that, “During the New Wave we always spoke of the *politique des auteurs*. What we were interested in was this word *politique*, not in the political sense. What ended up enduring is the word *auteur*.”⁴⁷ Perhaps there is a clue in focusing on ‘*politique*’ rather than ‘*auteur*’ in order for cinema to find what a non-principal image can be and what is the non-principal production model that can create it.

There are infinities in mathematics that we can map to extant cuts in cinema. There are many infinities that perhaps we have yet to map to the cuts. But let’s say we map extant infinities to extant cuts, or make the cuts that will map to the infinities. What’s next? To invent cuts mathematics, as written, hasn’t yet thought, cuts that exceed that one-to-one correspondence. The index is what maintains the dynamism of the image. We can be prompted to make almost any picture today, we can have proofs of so many atrocities, personal and historical, and even the indexical relation of cinema to reality appears to be losing its hold. But cinema’s relation to reality is in the cut, not pictures. We can produce images that are proofs of our loves, mathematical beatitude, new sensibilities structured by artworks, and violent political justice – we can decide if the image produced is worthy of being part of such filiation and filtration. The infinitization of our lives as lived, imagined, and classed must continue beyond all continuity through the transformation of the intermittency of the Idea via cutting. Or as Socrates put it in Roberto Rossellini’s *Socrates* (1971): “And how do you class those who escape death? They are classed as immortals.” What is is cut and cut is a form of thinking.

1 Godard 2014, p. 149
 2 Mao 1964
 3 Badiou 2025, p. 24
 4 Badiou 2022, p. 475
 5 *ibid.*, p. 347
 6 Badiou 2009b, p. 117
 7 Badiou 2009a, p. 384
 8 *ibid.*, p. 444
 9 Badiou 2022, p. 216
 10 Badiou 2009a, p. 173
 11 I reconstruct arguments from Session 7-9 from in Badiou 2025b.
 12 Badiou 2022, p. 268
 13 Eisenstein 1977, p. 46
 14 *ibid.*, p. 48
 15 Fried 2010, p. 10
 16 Badiou 2022, p. 286
 17 *ibid.*, p. 288
 18 You see this in an earlier form in *Potemkin* (1925) when the stone lion looks like it is moving because we cut to three different stone lions.
 19 Eisenstein 1977, p.58
 20 Badiou 2022, p. 400
 21 In his book *Post-Europe* (2024), Yuk Hui wants to think a post-European thought, as if it hasn't *already began to happen* with the historical experience of French Maoism. It is symptomatic that he talks of the 'Israel-Hamas war' rather than genocide, and of course will not think of the way Palestinian revolutionaries have been inspired by Mao, and the pressure this put on European filmmakers like Godard. For Hui, thinking only happens in Greece, Germany, and France, and the thought of the 'post-' happens with a 'two fuse into one' with the Kantians, Hegelians, and Heideggereans from Japan and China, sometime in the future. But thinking marked by 'one divides into two' will know post-European thought already happened, and not only at this 'cultural' level, but at the level of writing which is not writing: via the cinema. When Godard visually quotes *Rear Window's* windows of one's neighbours all in one frame in *Here and Elsewhere* (1976) but rhymed with TV screens to ask how we are responsible for what we see, we know cinema will always be ahead of the philosophers trapped by language, waiting for a thinking outside of language, when we can point to what is already here, a thought has been conditioned by a cultural revolution, one that is incomplete, the cultural revolution of the image over words, the no-thing that thinks. Or we can talk about the ridiculous detail of Nishitani enjoying "Japanese rice" for the first time in a year while living in Germany and how this is linked to *Heimat*, spontaneity of mother tongue and its relation to fatherland, taste and language...as if this "Japanese rice" is unrelated to the fact Korea supplied 98% of Japan's rice imports. There are many 'four olds' that remain to be destroyed and the idea that thinking only happens 'at the top' is one of them. The question of 'who thinks' needs its non-principal ultrafilter.

A great example of what's called 'philosophical oppression'.
 22 Mao 1964
 23 Enns 2016, p. 158
 24 Smith 1996
 25 Badiou 2022, p. 319
 26 (a lighter's flame making a painted face visible, and we also hear birds on the soundtrack)
 27 (toy dinosaurs in a shoebox with a lightbulb making them visible)
 28 (two video monitors with matching pictures on the right rhythmically fading into 'unrelated' pictures that share similar shape and his acolyte Leos Carax standing in the middle, with sound controls to the left, we hear trains on a track)
 29 (the two monitors show a fast back and forth fade between Henry Fuseli's *The Sleepwalking Lady Macbeth* (1784) and the eye being sliced in Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un chien Andalou* (1929))
 30 (we see a lightbulb in a shoebox imitating a cinema with what looks like cut-out human figures)
 31 Badiou 2022, p. 291
 32 Smith 1996
 33 Badiou 2005, p. 47
 34 In *Film Socialisme* (2010), which coincidentally also has Badiou in part of the movie, has another example of language separating out what is presented: we would hear on the soundtrack "Money is a public good. Like water? Exactly," and we see this over sharply pixelated black/white greenish water whose frame rate accentuates the images digital nature so it doesn't flow 'naturally', but the subtitles themselves say "money public water". One can end up with money public water, but cannot induce the scene we have seen with just 'money public water' in a screenplay. The entire film is presented in 3 or 4 word subtitles.
 35 Badiou 2022, p. 313
 36 *ibid.*, p. 292
 37 *ibid.*, p. 41
 38 Kantcheff 2006
 39 *ibid.*, p. 263
 40 The importance of pictures of the concentration camps lies in the fact that if you don't have the pictures there is the threat of revisionists, but also if we are going to have a total history of cinema, its V, it must be included. To not include those pictures is to repeat the logic of antisemitism: as if the history of cinema would have been 'perfect' without them. Part of *A Place in the Sun* is this idea that Montgomery Clift's life would have been 'perfect' without Shelley Winters.
 41 Badiou 2022, p. 291
 42 *ibid.* p. 262
 43 *ibid.* p. 361
 44 *ibid.* p. 351
 45 *ibid.* p. 362
 46 Badiou 2009a, p. 518
 47 Dargis 2004

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