



Bright at last close of a dark day the sun shines out at last and goes down. Sitting quite still at valley window normally turn head now and see it the sun low in the southwest sinking. Even get up certain moods and go stand by western window quite still watching it sink and then the afterglow. Always quite still some reason some time past this hour at open window facing south in small upright wicker chair with armrests. Eyes stare out unseeing till first movement some time past close though unseeing still while still light. Quite still again then all quite quiet apparently till eyes open again while still light though less. Normally turn head now ninety degrees to watch sun which if already gone then fading afterglow. Even get up certain moods and go stand by western window till quite dark and even some evenings some reason long after. Eyes then open again while still light and close again in what if not quite a single movement almost.

Samuel Beckett fizzle 7:still

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EIN BLATT, BAUMLOS FÜR BERTOLT BRECHT: WAS SIND DAS FÜR ZEITEN, WO EIN GESPRÄCH BEINAH EIN VERBRECHEN IST, WEIL ES SOVIEL GESAGTES MIT EINSCHLIESST?

CELAN. *Die Gedichte: Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, p. 333

WHAT TIMES ARE THESE, IN WHICH
A CONVERSATION ABOUT TREES IS ALMOST A CRIME
FOR IN DOING SO WE MAINTAIN OUR SILENCE ABOUT SO MUCH WRONGDOING!
B. BRECHT. 'To Those Born Later'

A LEAF, TREELESS
FOR BERTOLT BRECHT:

WHAT TIMES ARE THESE ,
WHEN A CONVERSATION
IS ALMOST A CRIME
BECAUSE IT INCLUDES
SO MUCH MADE EXPLICIT?

CELAN. *Die Gedichte: Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, p. 333

WHAT TIMES ARE THESE, THAT ANY ATTEMPTS TO
AN ARTICULATION THROUGH LANGUAGE SEEM A
CRIME?, THE POET SAYS

Paul de Man, *Critical Texts*, 1948-73

3

Metaphors, he claims, are structured vertically, so that a second, superior meaning stands above the literal one and determines its meaning from above. Metonymy, on the other hand, takes place on a flat, frictionless plain: one meaning turns into another, without hierarchy, without authority, and without end. For Barthes, in *Story of the Eye* the eye is not a metaphor for the sun, or the sun a metaphor for the egg: instead there is only the metonymic chain: eye—sun—testicle—egg—etc. Therefore there is no conclusive or overarching significance to the novella – except, of course, for that lack of finality itself: that leveling, or liquification.

4 Phasmides

Absence / presence / Apparition - the moment / event of appearing

Signs, as objects representing something, do not exist in a literal way and they do not / did not just appear. Objects can be established as signs over shorter or longer periods of time through iteration in a certain context. Meaning is not a given, it has to be established through usage of such signs.

You can look at something, contemplating it very intensely without contemplating the object itself but something completely different. From a purely operational perspective, the meaning, the functioning of a sign, its materiality does not matter but our perception tends to be distracted by it. Distraction is productive. Distraction is a movement towards something else, it means that our attention gets diverted to a different question, a different line of thought, it does not mean we do not pay attention to anything.

Distraction also means amusement or that something is emotionally upsetting. All that can happen while observing a sign and getting caught up in its materiality. As this is often not helpful in everyday life we get used to reading signs in a specific way. Reading means to ignore most of the materiality of a sign – we do not look at the tone of black of a letter on a sheet of paper, we are taught to not reflect the font and the size of a letter. Instead, we just read, which means that we recognize shapes, not of letters, but usually of entire words and sequences of words (if we know the language). In this sense, script is an example of a sign system becoming transparent. Its transparency is a necessity, as it otherwise would not be efficient, operational, functional as a sign system. Learning how to read means learning to ignore most of what we see by looking right through it and to recognize shapes and structures instead. This can obviously only work with sign systems we know. Learning how to read, getting to know a sign system is hard work as one has to configure one's visual perception in a certain way. And what is more dramatic on the long run - there is no way out of this configuration once you know the system.

Looking at something we always look at some thing – i.e. we define it, we see a certain shape, a form, a sign, a letter etc. We are determined to make sense of what we see, we cannot stop our mind from producing meaning, this is part of the human condition as it is the way we navigate the world. Our visual perception is crucial for that, as we are not animals whose other senses (smelling, hearing) provide as much orientation. (This changes of course if we lose our eyesight / vision.) We cannot look at nothing or no thing, this would be scary as it would mean that we look at something we do not understand, we do not know. For that reason we cannot bear looking at nothing, voids have to be filled. Every possible explanation for what we look at as unintelligible is unsettling to us.

A vague sign, some thing that is underdetermined, is unsettling as it requires the capability of dealing with different meanings, scenarios at the same time. (Is this a stick or an animal? Can I take it and break it or will it attack me?) If we cannot or do not decide for one meaning or one option which is the response to one meaning of some thing we find ourselves in a situation of stasis. Stasis might mean inactivity or equilibrium. We can perceive this situation of being confronted with underdetermination as an unhealthy standstill/deadlock or as a delicate balance of different possibilities that allows us to be in a floating state of mind.

And we can look at some thing and it is something completely different. Looking at phasmides is a good example for that. It is an example that is exotic to many people as phasmides only live in certain parts of the world. But there are phasmides all over the world – objects that look like something else and objects that look like something else as long as they do not move. Stillness and movement are two states of being (of signs, images etc.), two qualities which make all the difference i.e. the shift from one state to the other – from movement to stillness or from stillness to movement – produces difference. Signs change their meaning when they start to move and when they stop moving. It might not be their meaning that appears and therefore becomes intelligible or legible. It is just their appearance that changes, which is not to be confused with their meaning. Also time becomes visible only through movement, an almost metaphysical occurrence.

Examples of signs / icons which change their meaning by shifting from one state to the other.

Writing & filming as much as reading & watching are processes based on a constant shift between absence and presence. As soon as we see a clear image it is gone. As soon as we understand doubt makes its appearance and what was clear becomes opaque.

Transparency / Opacity

Materiality of the sign / Iconicity of the sign

When we forget about the materiality of the sign we contemplate the icon as such (?)

Absence / presence of an idea / concept while filming, writing, observing

Filming something that doesn't move, that is invisible

Fragility / Ephemerality of the sign

Opacity of the sign. If we focus on the materiality of the sign, it loses its representative capacity. We need to see 'through' it.

Opacity / Figure / Background

Imitation of movement based on still images - when film is projected

Stillness transformed into movement by repetition of almost identical forms/signs (iterability?!)

A sign becomes legible through iteration

Vagueness - Appearance / disappearance

The graphism quality of the phasmides

The deep forest as a mythical place (without history)

The migration of forms

5



<http://es.7digital.com/artists/john-cage/four-walls/>

6

LUÍSA ELVIRA BELAUNDE: In a recent article, you show that according to Amazonian cosmologies animals, plants, spirits, gods, and also objects have their own perspectives. What is required to have a perspective? Just to be, just to act? Is enough to be made, to be felt, to be desired, to be thought by others?

EDUARDO VIVEIROS DE CASTRO: To respond quickly, I'd say: is just enough to exist to be thought of as (as if thinking as a) subject, and therefore to think oneself as a subject, i.e. as the subject of a perspective. But this attention to the "of a": is the subject that belongs to one perspective and not vice versa. The perspective is less something that one has, and more something that has the subject, that possesses the subject and carries it (in the sense of French tenir), that is, that constitutes something into a subject. "The point of view creates the subject" - this is the perspectivism proposition par excellence, the one that distinguishes perspectivism from western relativism or constructionism, who would argue instead "the point of view creates the object."

But, if the perspective is something that constitutes the subject, then it can only appear as such in the eyes of others. Because a point of view is pure difference. So it's like you suggested, in fact: Its necessary to be thought of (desired, imagined, fabricated) by the other in order for the perspective to appear as such, i.e. as a perspective. The subject is not the one who thinks himself (as subject) in the absence of others. he is the one who is thought (by others, and before this one) as a subject.

That's not to say that "everything" in the world is necessarily thought of as a subject of a perspective, in Indigenous thought. In other words, it is necessary but not sufficient to be thought of by another one to think oneself. There are existents that are not thought as subjects of perspectives, or to say it closer to what you read in ethnographies that are "not people", or "have no soul," "just are [tree, turtle, vase]"

But the question is not to determine the conditions that must be met by any existing one so that it can be thought of as a subject. The problem lies elsewhere, namely that there isn't "everything", or that "everything", in the indigenous thinking as I imagine, does not mean an actual whole. There isn't a finite collection, closed and countable, of subjects, along with another equally finite and countable of non-subjects, as two mutually exclusive and exhaustive classes, that would constitute an "everything" as ontological horizon. We are not facing a System of Nature, a taxonomy or fixed classification, contained in the official lists. The Amerindian perspectivism is not a kind of typology (and therefore can not be object of meta-typologies, such as that proposed by my friend Philippe Descola in his recent "Pardelà nature et culture), it is not a "primitive form of classification." Everything may be a subject in the native mind, but it is impossible to know if everything (we mean anything that exists) is a subject. In fact, it makes no sense to ask if everything is a subject, or how many existents are subjects, and so on. Because it is more a virtuality than anything actual. All (not the same "type" of "everything" that I spoke up now, it should be noted) is highly contingent here: with which dreams dreamed by which people, which visions experienced by which shamans, which myths told by which elders, which visions are evoked by which particular indigenous community, at a given time. Everything can be subject, but only account what matters and what interest historically (micro-historically) to a specific indigenous collective.

The Upper Xingu peoples claim that there are pots-spirit that are people, that spirit-pots date back to mythical times, that shamans can interact with such people-pots under certain conditions, and that these pots can cause disease in humans. On the other hand the Araweté with whom I lived, and who live far from the Upper Xingu, would find this idea slightly absurd. Where did you ever think that pot is people?! But if an Araweté shaman had dreamed that he spoke with a pot of corn beer, and that it responded ... I'm pretty sure that the jars would, for a while (contingently) more or less long, to be evoked in speculation about what spirits are causing this or that notable event. The context and the personal experience (singular or collective) are decisive here. Not every thought is scholastic. The indigenous thinking rarely is.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro In "perspectivism is the resumption of Oswaldian anthropophagy in new terms"
Originally published in *Amazonia Paruana* in 2007. *Coletânea Encontros*, Açoague editora, 2010 (Renato Sztutman org.)

7 "IT IS THE INSIDE THAT COMMANDS. I KNOW THAT IT MAY SEEM PARADOXICAL IN AN ART THAT IS ALL ABOUT THE OUTSIDE. [...] ONLY THE CONFLICTS THAT TAKE PLACE INSIDE THE CHARACTERS GIVE ITS MOVEMENT TO THE FILM, ITS REAL MOVEMENT. [...] WHAT THE DIRECTOR HAS IN SIGHT, IS AN EFFECT TO PRODUCE OR A SERIES OF EFFECTS. IF HE IS CONSCIENTIOUS, HIS PRELIMINARY WORK WILL CONSIST PRECISELY OF GOING BACK FROM THE EFFECT TO THE CAUSE. STARTING FROM WHAT HE WANTS TO OBTAIN, THE EMOTION OF THE AUDIENCE, HE LOOKS FOR THE BEST COMBINATIONS TO CREATE THAT EMOTION. IT'S A PATH WALKED BACKWARDS, WITH CHOICES AND REJECTIONS, MISTAKES, INTERPOLATIONS, THAT FATALLY LEADS HIM TO THE ORIGIN OF COMPOSITION, THAT IS TO SAY THE VERY COMPOSITION."

L'ECRAN FRANÇAIS, NOVEMBER 17, 1946.

"WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR, IT'S NOT REALLY THE EXPRESSION THROUGH GESTURE, WORDS, MIMICS, BUT EXPRESSION THROUGH RHYTHM AND A COMBINATION OF IMAGES, THROUGH THEIR POSITION, THEIR RELATION AND THEIR AMOUNT. BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE, THE PURPOSE OF AN IMAGE MUST BE THE EXCHANGE. BUT FOR THAT EXCHANGE TO BE POSSIBLE, IT IS NECESSARY THAT THESE IMAGES HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON, THAT THEY PARTICIPATE TOGETHER IN A SORT OF UNION.

"[...] YES, FOR ME, THE IMAGE IS LIKE A WORD IN A SENTENCE. POETS ELABORATE A VOCABULARY. THEY WILLINGLY USE DESPERATELY COMMON WORDS. AND IT'S THE MOST COMMON WORD, THE MOST USED, WHICH, BECAUSE IT'S IN ITS RIGHT PLACE, ALL OF A SUDDEN SHINES EXTRAORDINARILY."

SUPPLÉMENT LETTRES ET ARTS À RECHERCHE ET DÉBATS NO. 15, MARCH 1951.

"[...] CINEMA IS NOT THAT: IT HAS TO EXPRESS NOT THROUGH IMAGES, BUT THROUGH THEIR RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER, WHICH IS NOT THE SAME THING AT ALL. JUST LIKE A PAINTER WHO DOES NOT USE COLOURS, BUT THEIR CORRELATION; BLUE IS BLUE IN ITSELF, BUT NEXT TO GREEN, RED OR YELLOW, IT IS NOT THE SAME BLUE ANYMORE: IT CHANGES. THE AIM IS FOR THE FILM TO BE MADE OF SUCH A CORRELATION OF IMAGES, YOU TAKE TWO IMAGES; THEY ARE NEUTRAL, BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN, NEXT TO EACH OTHER, THEY VIBRATE, LIFE ENTERS THEM: AND IT IS NOT REALLY THE LIFE OF THE STORY OR OF THE CHARACTERS, IT'S THE LIFE OF THE FILM.

"[...] THERE IS ALSO WHAT YOU DID NOT PUT IN IT. YOU HAVE TO PUT THINGS WITHOUT PUTTING THEM; I MEAN THAT EVERYTHING WHICH IS IMPORTANT MUST NOT BE THERE AT THE START, BUT END UP THERE IN THE END.

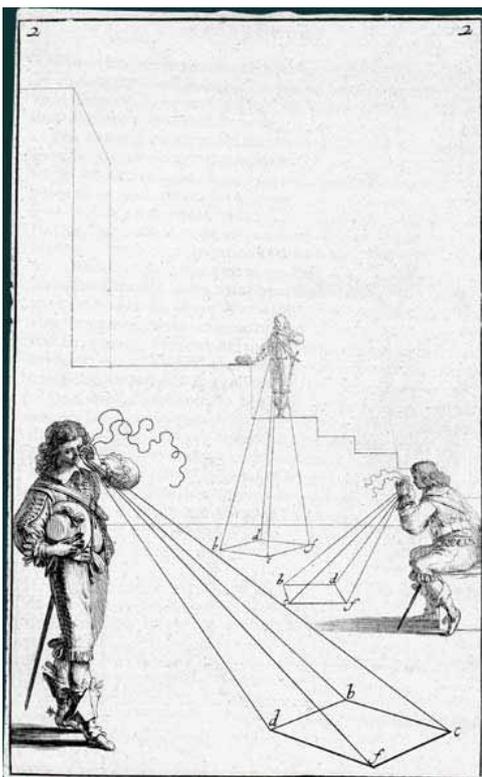
CAHIERS DU CINÉMA, NO. 75, OCTOBER 1957

NOT THE SAME DISTANCE. ON THE CONTRARY, IT'S NEVER THE SAME DISTANCE. IT'S THE NECESSARY DISTANCE. THERE IS ONLY ONE PLACE IN SPACE WHERE SOMETHING, AT A PRECISE MOMENT, ASKS FOR BEING SEEN.

CAHIERS DU CINÉMA, FEBRUARY 1960. INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY JACQUES DONIOL-VALGROZE AND JEAN-LUC GODARD.

MICHEL ESTÈVE: ROBERT BRESSON, COLLECTION CINÉMA D'AUJOURD'HUI, 1962, NO. 8, ÉDITIONS SEGHERS

8



Abraham Bosse Plate 2 (p. 60): (The Perspectiveurs)

Sergio Martins

"Just as walking would grind to a halt if there were no excess of movement over and above the simple addition of one step to another, so, too, would signification and thinking stop dead in their tracks if thought did not exceed the simple succession of signifiers or logical steps. Each step, signifier or thought must not merely follow its antecedent, but emerge from within it."

Joan Copjec

It may be hard to imagine, in the absence of moving images, how indebted to cinema this exhibition is. Or maybe one can notice it negatively, by exclusion, for the very web of relationships woven by the works resists any attempt to order them according to a strictly spatial axis: to take them separately, as a sequence of objects, is to overlook their closeness and their subtle conceptual gravitation around one another. On the other hand, to speak of them as subordinate parts of an organic whole, as if we were dealing with the elements of an installation, is also questionable. Each individual work seems to shine on its own, for sure, but this is also what paradoxically reveals their openness to other works.

My point is not to describe motion in vitalistic terms, but rather to grasp movement as something internal to signification. As Copjec explains, affect (which is how this kind of movement is inscribed in the subject) is nothing but 'a surplus of the signifier over itself.' In other words, the signifier cannot exist by itself: to signify means to be always in a relation of difference with another signifier. If the work of Daniel Steegmann follows an additive principle, as the artist himself maintains, that is, if each work is thought of as an additional slippage in a topological sequence (as in the free play of signifiers), this also involves the recognition of a gap at the heart of experience. For such movement is by no means indifferent or docile to the subject (hence the term affect), and provokes the oscillation of representations that might have been experienced by the subject as familiar. To think is to expose oneself to a certain kind of vertigo.

This brings me back to one historical case where such a gap can be felt: Robert Smithson's *Enantiomorphic Chambers*. Conceived as the negative of a stereoscope, it consists of a pair of mirrored boxes, whose purpose is to prevent the convergence of each eye's particular perspective, thus prompting the failure of visual impressions to become mentally synthesized as an image. Hence Smithson's talk of pointless vanishing points: devoid of this synthetic horizon, visual perspectives lose their sense. The viewer loses his reflected image, but gains in exchange a means of reflection. 'Thinking about one's sight' says the American artist, 'enables one to build or invent a structure that sees nothing': what is at stake in this anti-humanist (and dual) perspective is a fundamental disjunction between seeing and thinking that sets about to divest - and therefore to free - thought of its illusory self-evidence. It is the very synthetic activity of the self, its conviction of being grounded in a 'here-and-now' which seemingly supplies it with a starting point for grasping the world, that is shown to be built on a fissure.

We can imagine this show as a flow of incompleteness, or perhaps like a relay race where a fleeting idea is passed on when we are just about to grasp it (an illusory expectation, for the idea at stake lies precisely in this constant slippage). This is very much tangible both in this folder, which points to several references, fragments of thoughts and dialogues that move the artist, surrounding the exhibition like footnotes (it is worth remembering here that Smithson also produced 'decentred' texts, i.e. mere pretexts for peripheral arrays of notes), and in the concise visual insights scattered throughout the gallery: a representation that is both the inside and the opposite of another one; a drawing whose own formal logic turns it into its reverse; a sculpture that is barely there, where two threads are kept apart by a stick, itself a figure of split. In the four slide projections, this logic gains in intensity, as their very structure say it all: we slip in the midst of an invisible, but significant, grid of intervals between each light source and its respective projection screen, in keeping with the legacy of structural cinema. These are intervals in which the image literally becomes estranged from itself. In one of the projections, for example, a trapezoid carved in the slide is projected on the wall at such an angle

that, by anamorphosis, it becomes a square - a rare case of a geometrically perfect figure whose form is a product of its being deformed.

This last point leads us to a striking aspect of the artist's way of thinking, which can be best introduced by relating the Catalan Steegmann to a series of encounters, remarkable in the history of Brazilian art, between the foreign gaze and the native forest.¹ The German Johann Moritz Rugendas, for example, was stunned by the 'vegetable chaos' of the rainforest, where the painter's gaze, anxious for a better perspective, found no space to step back. The Belgian photographer Marcel Gautherot, on the contrary, preferred to go forward with his camera into the jungle. What both attitudes similarly attest to, albeit in quite different and often-suggestive ways, is the impulse to constitute the forest as an object of representation. Steegmann's approach is remarkably different, as evidenced by his interest in the Tupí term Ka'aeté (deep forest), 'a place without history where things are not formed and the animals can metamorphose.' The forest in this view is no longer the object of a representation or even an ordinary signifier. It is rather the site of movement per se, in the strict sense of something exceeding itself in order to become an other.

Such reading is further strengthened by a Yawalapíti narrative in which, according to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, 'metamorphosis is indicated by a disorderly behavior, whose paradigm is the act of "running in the forest", typical of shamans in deep trance.' The challenge posed by Steegmann's work is not so much that of apprehending the forest, but rather, and more dauntingly, that of thinking with it, that is, of following its transformative movement (it's the very indistinctiveness of the 'vegetal chaos' in Kiti Ka'aeté that allows the image to be rearranged according to Guarani geometric patterns). There is little point then in speaking of moving forward or backward as ways of seeking a position vis-à-vis the forest - the notion that the Self may be able to find a good 'vantage point' (Rugendas's term) for itself misses what is truly essential in this encounter. This is why, like Smithson (an avid reader of Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind*), Steegmann also builds structures that see nothing. Or rather, that prompt vision to exceed itself, eroding certainty so that, as in cinema, movement can emerge.

1. I take the following examples from the excellent introduction by Milton Hatoum and Samuel Jr. Titan North for the book, Marcel Gautherot (São Paulo, Instituto Moreira Salles, 2009).

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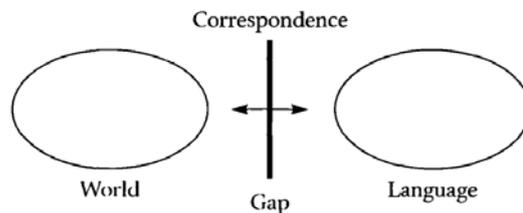


Figure 2.20 The "saltationist's" (James [1907] 1975) conception of the feat of correspondence implies that there is a gap between world and words that reference aims to bridge

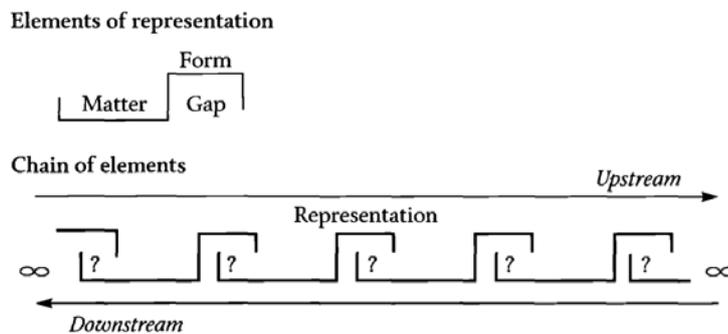


Figure 2.21 The "deambulatory" conception of reference follows a series of transformations, each of them implying a small gap between "form" and "matter"; reference, in this view, qualifies the movement back and forth as well as the quality of the transformation; the key point is that reference, in this model, grows from the center toward the two extremities.

11 *But why does everything in Godard come in twos? You need two to get three... Fine, but what are these twos and threes about?*

Oh, come on, you know better than anyone it's not like that. Godard's not a dialectician. What counts with him isn't two or three or however many, it's AND, the conjunction AND. The key thing is Godard's use of AND. This is important, because all our thought's modeled, rather, on the verb "to be," IS.5 Philosophy's weighed down with discussions about attributive judgments (the sky is blue) and existential judgments (God is) and the possibility or impossibility of reducing one to the other. But they all turn on the verb "to be." Even conjunctions are dealt with in terms of the verb "to be"-look at syllogisms. The English and the Americans are just about the only people who've set conjunctions free, by thinking about relations. But when you see relational judgments as autonomous, you realize that they creep in everywhere, they invade and ruin everything: AND isn't even a specific conjunction or relation, it brings in all relations, there are as many relations as AND, AND doesn't just upset all relations, it upsets being, the verb... and so on. AND, "and... and ... and..." is precisely a creative stammering, a foreign use of language, as opposed to a conformist and dominant use based on the verb "to be."

AND is of course diversity, multiplicity, the destruction of identities. It's not the same factory gate when I go in, and when I come out, and then when I go past unemployed. [...] But diversity and multiplicity are nothing to do with aesthetic wholes (in the sense of "one more," "one more woman"...) or dialectical schemas (in the sense of "one produces two, which then produces three"). [...] Because multiplicity is never in the terms, however many, nor in all the terms together, the whole. Multiplicity is precisely in the "and," which is different in nature from elementary components and collections of them.

Neither a component nor a collection, what is this AND? I think Godard's force lies in living and thinking and presenting this AND in a very novel way, and in making it work actively. AND is neither one thing nor the other, it's always in between, between two things; it's the borderline, there's always a border, a line of flight or flow, only we don't see it, because it's the least perceptible of things. And yet it's along this line of flight that things come to pass, becomings evolve, revolutions take shape. [...] Between North and South we'll keep on finding lines that derail the big groups, an AND, AND, AND which each time marks a new threshold, a new direction of the broken line, a new course for the border. Godard's trying to "see borders," that is, to show the imperceptible. [...] The clockmaker's movements when he's in his clockmaking sequence and when he's at his editing table: an imperceptible border separates them, belonging to neither but carrying both forward in their disparate development, in a flight or in a flow where we no longer know which is the guiding thread, nor where it's going. A whole micropolitics of borders, countering the macropolitics of large groups. That's what Godard's done in *Six Times Two*: made this active and creative line pass six times between them, made it visible, as it carries television forward.

*Gilles Deleuze, Three questions on 6x2
Cahiers du Cinema no 271 (November 1976)
in: Gilles Deleuze, Negotiations*

12 "I have nothing to say. Only to show."

The notes for The Arcades Project contain the provocative statement: "Methode dieser Arbeit: literarische Montage. Ich habe nichts zu sagen. Nur zu zeigen. ('Method of this project: literary montage. I have nothing to say. Only to show.')" Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge MA and London: Belknap Press/ Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 460, as discussed in Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, (Cambridge MA and London: MIT Press, 1989), p. 222. See Part I, p. 18.

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