

Cinema of Resistance:
Manifesto for a Minor Cinema to Come

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Abstract

This thesis explores the necessity of constructing a new way to conceive and produce political cinema, in recognition of the ever-growing difficulties filmmakers have in doing so outside a system that assimilates and overcodes almost anything. Engaging with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the research presupposes the filmmaking event as an act of resistance, and analyses the conditions under which this occurs. The work of Deleuze & Guattari will serve, firstly to examine the current state of the modes of production in capitalism (within which cinema is produced), and secondly to suggest new lines of action to escape these constraints and liberate cinema from its commodification. In developing the concept of what I term Cinema of Resistance (CoR), I will articulate four propositions that emanate from the collision between Deleuze & Guattari's thought, the work of a number of filmmakers whose works embody the political potentialities of cinema's form, and my own practice.

My film *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* was shot amongst, and with the collaboration of, the mining community of Asturias during the final years of an incremental decline in the coal industry and in the working-class movement. The film and the accompanying case study of its production will manifest that regardless of whether a film's subject matter is political, it is largely the methods by which it is produced and its experimental nature that qualify it as a form of resistance.

The conclusions of this study take the form of a manifesto, a call to action directed to other filmmakers with the necessity, artistic volition, and duty to abandon industrial structures and homogenising systems, in order to engage with cinema's full artistic potential.

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Table of contents

Introduction	5
Research questions	8
Methodology. A cinema-affect, a cinema-thought: abandoning representation..	9
Propositions	17
CoR: a case study	21
 Chapter 1	
Proposition 1: the abstract line traverses the CoR - a cinema that operates by means of encounters, constituting assemblages of which relations are in the form of exteriority.....	24
 Chapter 2	
Proposition 2: The CoR is a minor cinema - everything in it is political, it has a high coefficient of deterritorialisation and everything acquires a collective value.	39
On how minor cinema deterritorialises and acquires a collective and political value: <i>Every Revolution is a Throw of the Dice</i>	50
 Chapter 3	
Proposition 3: CoR enters the realm of nomadology, hence freeing itself from ideology: there is no ideology and never has been.....	54
The importance of the political gesture or how to change the relations of production.	64
 Chapter 4	
Proposition 4: CoR's movements towards becoming occur by means of style, a style that is allocated outside the realms of subjects and objects, a style to come that doesn't exist yet, a non-style.	67
 Chapter 5	
<i>Work or To Whom Does the World Belong. A case study of the CoR</i>	82
Between theory and praxis.....	82
Context.....	85
How to paint the smoke of the chimney?	87
Fabulation - the people are missing.....	89
Between documentary and fiction	92
Mise-en-scène and/or montage	97
Kuhle Wampe and the distancing effect	104
Some notes on film and work.....	108
Postscript about an emerging minor cinema: Asturian cinema.....	110
 Manifesto of the Cinema of Resistance	125
 Bibliography	
Books	131
Articles	138
Electronic Sources.....	140
Online Video	142
Filmography	143

Introduction

*Art is resistance: it resists death, slavery, infamy, shame.*¹

The death of cinema has been foretold countless times: with the emergence of television, with the arrival of analogue and subsequently digital video, and lately with the proliferation of digital streaming platforms promoting the domestic consumption of audiovisual content. Yet this premise presupposes that cinema's function (like the mediums it has been compared to) belongs to the realm of communication, and as such the rise of these mediums represent a menace to cinema's survival. This study will sustain that cinema, as a creative practice, has nothing to do with communication – but is rather a discipline concerned with resistance.² Inasmuch as cinema and art have nothing to do with communication, they become acts of resistance: “art resists, even if it is not the only thing that resists. Whence the close relationship between an act of resistance and a work of art. Every act of resistance is not a work of art, even though, in a certain way, it is. Every work of art is not an act of resistance, and yet, in a certain way, it is.”³

The ethos behind this hypothesis and this project originates in the thought of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, whose body of work will both serve as its foundation, and reveal its underlying political nature. But what and how does cinema resist? In unpicking this fundamental question by engaging with Deleuze's philosophy and examining the work of filmmakers that have had a significant impact in my practice, I will build on the concept of Cinema of Resistance (CoR), of what has been, is, or could become. The outcome is intended to prove that the creative possibilities of cinema today are still unlimited — as long as those making it have the commitment to do so outside the systems of communication, consumption, and control. If they do, their films necessarily become political gestures, acts of resistance.

¹ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 174.

² “Creating isn't communicating but resisting.” Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 143.

³ Deleuze, “What is the creative act.”

The critical work is inseparable from the practice, and as such my film *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* (2019) constitutes an essential part of the research, both parts (theory and praxis) having been in continuous dialogue throughout the process. Hence the intention of this research is to expose the ways in which the interaction between form and substance in the cinematographic work produces a potentiality that instigates thought and resistance. On the one hand, the text will serve as a plane of experimentation to deliberate a new and necessary way of looking at and making political films; and on the other, the film delivers some of the ideas developed theoretically even while it bounces others back for reconfiguration. Collectively, these two sides of the same coin are both regarded as creative practices, so much so that in attempting to dissipate the boundaries between theory and practice, the natural result of the research is not only a film but a conclusion in the form of a call to action to other filmmakers.

The manifesto form in art and cinema contains within it the existential need of the artist to proclaim a commitment towards their art form, and when explicitly political, an obligation towards the world within the creative task. This latter (often militant) manifestation signifies a cry, a protest, a belief in the transformative nature of the art form – which further conveys a social position and awareness of how one’s work does not merely function as individual expression, but entails a collective duty. Untold numbers of artists and filmmakers have expressed (through their writings and other mediums) this vital urgency, and by doing so they not only display a responsibility towards the place and the people for which they create, its history, its present and future, but they inspire political engagement in generations to come. I have always been fond of such texts and read them with eagerness and fascination, as their authors talk directly to us about their concerns and intentions, more often than not in a style that evidences the immediacy of someone with an urge to speak to the world where she belongs – and as a filmmaker I can’t help but identify with that yearning.

Many have been the manifestos that have accompanied me over the years: Dziga Vertov’s “We: Variant of a Manifesto” (1922) or “Kinoks: A Revolution” (1922); Bertolt Brecht’s “A Short Organum for the Theatre” (1949); Maya

Deren's "A Statement of Principles" (1961); Glauber Rocha's "The Aesthetics of Hunger"; Pier Paolo Pasolini's "The Cinema of Poetry" (1965); Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's "Towards a Third Cinema" (1969); Anita Dube's "Questions and Dialogue" (1987); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848) to name but a few. Most of them share an underlying rejection of an established order which subdues art and people to forms of power and repression, while celebrating and reimagining the potential of film, theatre, plastic art and politics by freeing them from these restraints. This essay shares their spirit, and despite being formulated within the limits of an academic task (to which requirements it attempts to comply as best it can) I must insist that I have undertaken this endeavour as a film practitioner and not as a scholar. And my intention with this piece of writing is first and foremost to serve film practice – therefore the articulation of the conclusion of this project in the form of a manifesto implicitly reflects this purpose. Although the idea of a manifesto surfaced early on the process, I consciously made the decision not to write it until the whole body of the text and the film were finished, in accordance with my desire to make it a conclusion of the work. Its aims are to present the theoretical findings in a more accessible and straightforward manner that would satisfy the academic requirements as well as my will as an artist to speak directly to the world where I belong.

A primordial aspect of this project is the creative process itself and the importance of experimentation over outcomes, both on paper and on celluloid. Therefore, it's my intention that what springs from the project is not a closed system of new rules of how to make political films today — or in the case of the film, a message and viewpoint about working class movement in the Asturian mining areas — but instead the aim is exploring new possibilities, facilitating new connections, opening new avenues, for thinking and producing films differently. In order to engage with and articulate this new conception of a praxis we must commit to the anarchic philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and his work alongside Félix Guattari. Their writings illuminate the way to connect to the world outside of the systematisation of life in capitalism, as well as contributing towards forms of resistance against the repressive apparatus. This is precisely, I will argue, what a number of filmmakers concerned with experimental and political discourses and methods, have done throughout their oeuvre. In

examining the films of directors such as Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Marguerite Duras, and Harun Farocki, I will demonstrate a distinct correspondence between their working practice (which manages to escape the dominant culture) and Deleuze's philosophy. Finding the conditions under which these correlations of forces occur will help me enunciate a number of propositions describing what the Cinema of Resistance is. In turn, and as the conclusion of the process of conceptualising the CoR, I will extract a series of core points which will take the form of a manifesto. The theoretical document is inextricable from the production of the film, *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* — and as the propositions took shape so did the writing, filming and editing of the film. In other words, the influence of the theoretical research is such that it informed the decisions in the making of the film, and vice versa — making *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* a paradigm of the CoR.

Research questions

The ways in which life is organised, homogenised, structured or codified in capitalism is challenged by Deleuze's critique and reformulation of a new philosophy of joy and of affirmation of life that resists the reactionary, dogmatic and sad forces that dominate the world. It is in this sense that art and thus cinema, as creative forces become acts of resistance: liberating life and its potentialities.⁴ Art becomes a necessity insofar as it is able to effectuate a breach within ruling structures and transform the ways of being and of seeing the world. Therefore, I shall sustain here the hypothesis that art, and thus cinema, ought to be an act of resistance. But how and through what means do films become an act of resistance? This question constitutes the foundation of the whole study, and through its analysis the concept of CoR is created. Beyond this, the research brings forth other questions: What does the CoR resist? What are the attributes that differentiate the CoR from other types of cinema? Is it really possible today for cinema to entirely resist capitalism's machine of capture?

⁴ In this sense Deleuze's thought converges with Nietzsche and Foucault's - to whom he refers here: "It is no longer a matter of determinate forms, as with knowledge, or of constraining rules, as with power: it's a matter of *optional rules* that make existence a work of art, rules at once ethical and aesthetic that constitute ways of existing [...] It's what Nietzsche discovered as the will to power operating artistically, inventing new 'possibilities of life.'" Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 98.

Deleuze and Guattari's examination of capitalism enlightens the manner in which the capitalist system, assisted by the State machine, overcodes any production of life to serve its own purpose: to normalise everything, and turn it into a commodity. Art, poetry, music and film have the revolutionary potential of creating the new, and escaping the overcoding of capitalism and the mechanisms of power.⁵ In doing so they resist becoming a commodity. But there are other acts of resistance that take place within artistic expressions that function on a different scale. As Godard points out in his *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1998), in a time of war, from 1940 to 1945, when there was no resistance cinema, the only true film that "resisted American occupation of cinema and a uniform way of making films" was *Roma Città Aperta* (1945).⁶ What is more, there is a cinema that resists by escaping colonialist societies and entering those of the colonised (*Moi, un Noir* [1958], Jean Rouch), by letting those with no voice become the creators of their own story (*Pour la Suite du Monde* [1963], Pierre Perrault, *Vitalina Varela* [2019], Pedro Costa), by persistently emancipating images from their absorption into the codes of consumption (*Film Socialisme* [2010], Jean-Luc Godard). In doing these things, these films create history — but not the history of the dominant classes, those who win wars, who evict communities for speculative profit, who fabricate products from all things including art. Cinema democratises history, as long as it is an act of resistance.

Methodology. A cinema-affect, a cinema-thought: abandoning representation

In an interview, Abbas Kiarostami remarks how much harder it is to talk about the things he likes in cinema (because they are manifestly present in his films), than it is to talk about the things he doesn't like: "I don't like to engage in telling stories, I don't like to arouse the viewer emotionally or give him advice, I don't like to belittle him or burden him with a sense of guilt. Those are the things I

⁵ "...phenomena of centering, unification, totalization, integration, hierarchization, and finalization" Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 41.

"As such, these phenomena are processes that seek to stratify and normalize subjects, and the best way to resist these processes is to "decode," or to put these processes in flux." Genericpronoun. "What is Postanarchism?"

⁶ Godard, *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, "3a: La Monnaie de l'Absolu," 00:20:34.

don't like in the movies.”⁷ Similarly, I find that in order to explain what this project is trying to be, it is rather easier to start by describing what it is not. This thesis is not a comparative analysis, or an interpretation between the relations of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy and cinema. Nor is it a mere exercise of extracting certain concepts from his and Guattari's project and applying them to the dissection of art and cinema's praxis. After all, there is extensive literature that achieves precisely that (e.g., Martin-Jones [2006], Zepke [2005], Colebrook [2006], Bouhaben [2011], etc.). Deleuze himself made two books (*Cinema 1, The Movement-Image* [2005], *Cinema 2, The Time-Image* [2005]) which rigorously scrutinise the ontology of cinema, creating specific concepts, in the service of an unprecedented perspective which leaves very little room for improvement. These books, which are described by Deleuze himself as a taxonomy of images and signs,⁸ however, won't serve as the rationale of this thesis, although they will assist me in illustrating certain elemental points.

What this work is, originates from a will to comprehensively embrace Deleuzian thought and assume its politics and ethics as a filmmaker. Nonetheless, in welcoming this autonomous, complex and puzzling philosophy, one must be open to the connections it produces with other thinkers and practitioners, even (and especially) outside the realm of film (Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Susan Sontag, Wilhelm Worringer, Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin, Frantz Fanon, Karl Marx, etc.). Therefore, its contribution shouldn't be measured purely in the field of film academia (to which it doesn't aspire to solely belong) but as a contribution to practitioners in contemporary cinema.

It is important to note that a great many films and filmmakers have been left out of these pages. Works in the territory of documentary filmmaking such as Shinsuke Ogawa's, Joris Iven's, Thomas Harlan's, Jacqueline Veuve's; in experimental cinema such as Joyce Wieland's, Chick Strand's; in fiction, Glauber Rocha's, Lino Brocka's, to name some, could have been significant in developing the concept of CoR. However, I have set a framework focusing primarily on filmmakers that I consider significant influences on the progression of my own work over the years, and particularly over the making of *Work*.

⁷ Kiarostami, interview.

⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, Preface to the French edition.

Consequently, and although the conception of the CoR aspires not to be representative of individual expressions of film authors but rather to reach for a collective enunciation, the fundamental methodological choices that impact this study (Deleuze, Guattari, and the filmmakers aforementioned) are greatly entwined with my concerns as a filmmaker, and they are, thus, hugely personal.

Furthermore, these filmmakers don't embody an ideal of a new political cinema, but their choice shows an intent to discuss very specific conditions of how cinema resists and what it resists. My aim was never to generalise or categorise by creating a new canon, but to look at particular examples discussed in particular circumstances. Therefore, this project is open ended, welcoming the inclusion of new propositions, new filmmakers, new films. In line with this I will be considering preceding approaches to political cinema to explain the genealogy and deviations of CoR. "Political cinema often relies on the formation and transformation of subjectivity", Matthew Holtmeier rightly points out.⁹ Most commonly, there is a 'becoming political' of the subjects in the film, in a search to express their common interests while striving to achieve an ideal democratic society (i.e., early American Cinema) or to overcome subordination to a ruling class (i.e., Soviet Cinema). This latter trend, I will argue, which posits the actuality in dialectical terms, saw its greater reflection in the influence of Marxism for the most part of the 20th century (some representative films are Eisenstein's *Strike* [1925], Slatan Dudow's *Kuhle Wampe* [1932], Joris Iven's *Misère au Borinage* [1934] Solana y Getino's *La Hora de los Hornos* [1968], The Medvedkin Group's *Classe de Lutte* [1969]; while in the theoretical field we can account for the influence of theoreticians such as Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, of Franz Fanon in Third Cinema/Third World Cinema, or theories/movements such as Situationism, Apparatus theory, Feminist Film Theory, Counter Cinema). However, Deleuze points to a shift in cinema in general (and political cinema in particular) coinciding with the end of the Second World War. In the post-modern world there is a disconnection between man and the world which is attributed to new phases of the capitalist system. In this new era of control, the processes of subjectivation are essential for the current functioning of capitalism, acting as means of oppression, accentuating divisions. To this end, a political filmmaker finds it impossible to

⁹ Holtmeier, "Modern Political Cinema", 303.

subjectify the masses, to articulate a people – because ‘the people’ are no longer there. Instead, the function of contemporary political cinema must be to show this disengagement and to invent a people yet to come. The intention of this essay is to analyse the social, historical, cinematic and philosophical conditions under which this kind of new political cinema come to pass. With this in mind, a series of strategies will be identified and discussed through the practice of the filmmakers mentioned above – whom not only perfectly illustrate the lines of action indicated, but, as previously noted, have had significant influence on my work.

The oeuvre of Jean-Luc Godard will manifest its relevance on different fronts. Principally, I will consider how the multiplication of the points of view in his early films and his path to abstraction contribute both to the dissolution of the subjectivity as accounted for in pre-war cinema, and to combat capitalism’s projection of its own *raison d’être* in film. What’s more, Godard’s work exemplifies the abandonment of the dialectical method in a world no longer comprehensible with the Marxist dictum “oppressor and oppressed” or identity dichotomies (*Ici et Ailleurs*, 1976). Marguerite Duras’ work is also instrumental in elucidating how cinema can project the invention of new subjectivities by drawing on the destruction of the self (*Détruire, dit-elle*, 1969). And both filmmakers demonstrate the necessary engagement with the creation process, by steering away from formulas that are easier assimilated by a system which transforms any production in life into consumer products. The exposure of this purpose of capitalism is precisely what drives Harun Farocki’s project. Specifically, his works are of interest because he focuses on revealing the processes of subjectivation through which capitalism makes us compliant and turns us into universal consumers. The invention of new subjectivities - an essential task in the resistance to capitalism’s processes of subjectivation - will also be studied *apropos* of Jean Rouch and Pierre Perrault and their becoming-other with their characters. All of these examples (the collective approach and becoming-other, the multiplication and erasure of the subjectivity, the engagement with the creative process) not only illustrate certain aspects of Deleuzian philosophy and its rendering into a CoR, but they exemplify my own search in the making of *Work*.

In engaging with Deleuze & Guattari's work in order to elucidate the idea of the CoR, a necessary methodology is given by the nature of their work, their alliances and their points of discord with the theories of others. Their conception of the world is recorded in a philosophy whose function is the creation of concepts, and whose practice is realised by dealing with processes, with the relations between things and what emerges from them — a pluralist philosophy of multiplicity, difference and intensities¹⁰: “the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but find the conditions under which something new is produced.”¹¹ They, therefore, reject transcendental and structuralist notions that precede formations within the real resting on given concepts such as identity, representation, or the subject as the centre of all apprehension of the world. Within this latter consideration it is presumed that there is always a transcendental subject from which or within which all life is formed (God, the State), or a grounding subject who ‘thinks’ the world (Man), in all cases, the real is comprehended through some pre-existing filter. Deleuze proposes instead a non-anthropocentric perspective of reality: life as a continuous flow of intensities and connections where “thinking is a creative event within life, and it is the event or act of thought that produces the subject”¹² and not *vice versa*. Hence, Spinoza's notion of the *affect*,¹³ Foucault's genealogy of power relations, and Marx are important references. Conversely, I will be ruling out doctrines and methods of investigation, accepted and relevant within film studies, that employ representational systems of knowledge which use *a priori* principles to provide sense and meaning, i.e., structuralism, psychoanalysis, semiology, phenomenology. The use of this methodology allows for a conception of cinema not as a mediator or mode of representation of life, but rather as a fundamental producer of affects, that makes thought emerge. Art and cinema, from this perspective, ‘think’ as much as philosophy does, but they

¹⁰ “There's no question of difficulty or understanding: concepts are exactly like sounds, colours or images, they are intensities which suit you or not, which are acceptable or aren't acceptable. Pop philosophy. There's nothing to understand, nothing to interpret.” Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, 4.

¹¹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, vii.

¹² Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*, 85.

¹³ Understanding affect in the Deleuzian-Spinozian sense, not as expression of an emotion but an autonomous power independent of a subject. For Spinoza affectus “is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act.” Massumi, “Notes on the Translation,” *A Thousand Plateaus*, xv.

do so through affects and percepts.¹⁴ And these, affects and percepts, are asygnifying signs that represent relations of exteriority inasmuch as they are autonomous and can be produced without the existence of a recipient subject, thus they must not be confused with feelings or perceptions.

“No art and no sensation have ever been representational.”¹⁵

“There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author).”¹⁶

These two quotes by Deleuze & Guattari probably break with many assumptions of how a work of art, a book, a film are normally conceived. Claire Colebrook explains it well: “Rather than question just how images emerge from life we [tend to] explain life from some already formed image.”¹⁷ And that’s why I must ask the reader to engage with a thought that will consider the virtual potentialities cinema has to produce, influence, transform life, and to consider cinema as part of the process of life production and not as a mere representation. Consequently, I propose a cinema as producer of asygnifying signs and intensities, in which *there is nothing to understand and nothing to interpret*; a cinema that flees representation in order to create the new; a cinema that operates through encounters and produces thought. As Belmondo-Ferdinand utters in *Pierrot le Fou* (1965): “I’ve found the idea for a novel... Not to write the life of a man, but only life, life itself. What there is between people, space... sound and colours... There must be a way of achieving that; Joyce tried, but one must be able... to do better.”

The influence of Marx has to be explained in more detail, as it constitutes a foundation of Deleuze & Guattari’s analysis of capitalism, despite their rejection of certain concepts commonly accepted by more dogmatic adherents to Marx’s thought. To a great extent, 20th century political cinema has been influenced by principles such as dialectical materialism and the notion of ideology, however these are not elements of Marx to which the pair subscribed, and in my

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 66.

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 193.

¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 23.

¹⁷ Colebrook, *Perplexed*, 154

formulation of CoR I similarly reject them. And perhaps the dismissal of these rather notorious Marxist notions is the reason why Deleuze & Guattari are not considered Marxist thinkers. Having said that, and as Deleuze himself admitted in one of his last interviews, Marx traverses their work, especially the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, comprised of *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).¹⁸ It is in these works that we can find many correspondences: the focus on production and the relations of production; on the processes of subjectivation; on the State as an apparatus of capture within capitalism that produces and reproduces its axiomatics: that is, as a necessary part to sustain and perpetuate the system. If Deleuze & Guattari are distinctly relevant today it is because their theories encompass elements of the world which simply didn't exist in Marx's time, and as such they can provide a post-structural analysis of the relations of power in contemporary capitalism which are necessarily more nuanced. These subtleties that Deleuze & Guattari extract from the envelope of Marxism prove very valuable in assessing structures of control in the realm of visual culture and thereby in finding ways to resist these ingrained and largely concealed values. And their analysis concerns us because a CoR has to fight its absorption into capitalism's codes of production, distribution and consumption, as a requisite to be purely an act of creation, an act of resistance. In conceiving cinema as a potency of life production, and not as an intermediary whose function is reproductive, one has to question the relations of production, the operations in which we humans are made into subjects within the system that exploit and alienate us, and the institutions,

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari talked clearly about the influence of Marx on their work: "I never joined the communist party (I have never psychoanalysed myself either, I have escaped all that). And I have never been a Marxist before the 60's. What prevented me from being a communist was to see what they forced the intellectuals to do. Also, I have to say that I wasn't a Marxist because, ultimately, I didn't know Marx then. I have read Marx at the same time as Nietzsche. I thought he was brilliant. And to me those concepts are always valid. They contain a critique, a radical critique. *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* are completely traversed by Marx, by Marxism. Today I can say I feel completely a Marxist. [...] I don't understand what people mean to say when they pretend that Marx was wrong. And I understand even less when they say that Marx has died. Today there are urgent tasks: we need to analyse what the global market is, what are its transformations. And to do so, we have to go through Marx." Deleuze, "Últimos textos", 232. (My translation).

"Marx made a considerable contribution to us by complicating social outlines, introducing the notion of social conflict at the heart of the relations of production. It seems to me that today there is a tendency to schematize, to reify Marxist thought, instead of following its movement. There is not a single Marxism, but a Marxist phylum, a Marxist thought that is enriched, and differentiates itself; but which has then been fixed, dogmatized." Guattari, *¿Qué es la Ecosofía?* 263. (My translation).

discourses and cinematographic forms which presuppose the relations of power and are “content to ‘fix’ them.”¹⁹

As a politically engaged filmmaker, one cannot be concerned with representing class, race, gender inequalities, or transmitting a message of social justice, if one draws on the system that maintains the relations of production that give rise to injustices in the first place. But this, I will argue, is exactly the case in contemporary mainstream cinema, as well as in many so-called authorial films. To that end, this project intends to expose those relations and the aesthetic form they take, at the same time as it conceives new ways in which films can be made formally and financially (and also distributed) without reproducing the values of an apparatus which turns everything into a consumer product. Hence, I deem making a manifesto addressed to filmmakers (and not so much to film scholars) the most valuable contribution I could offer and also the natural synthesis of the two elements (praxis and theory) of this work. After all, it is as a filmmaker that I undertake this academic task. Having said that, I do not conceive the thesis as a platform to analyse and justify my practice — that is to say, the thesis won’t be a consequence of the film. Rather, I envisioned the film as a consequence of the theoretical research, given that I regard this latter to be part of its creative process. So, it is important to me to experiment in the text with certain forms that might, to some degree, be considered unorthodox in the academic field. Most doctoral theses, like most films, make use of similar storylines, classical structures of beginning, middle and end. Jean Epstein said “[t]he cinema is true; a story is false [...] There are no stories, there never have been stories. There are only situations, having neither head nor tail; without beginning, middle or end. [...] I want films in which not so much nothing, as nothing very much happens.”²⁰ If, in the end, the CoR manages to subvert Aristotelian forms, then it seems necessary to me that an essay on the CoR should do so also.

¹⁹ “The integrating factors or agents of stratification make up institutions: not just the State, but also the Family, Religion, Production, the Marketplace, Art itself, Morality, and so on. The institutions are not sources or essences, and have neither essence nor interiority. They are practices or operating mechanisms which do not explain power, since they presuppose its relations and are content to ‘fix’ them, as part of a function that is not productive but reproductive.” Deleuze, *Foucault*, 75.

²⁰ Epstein cited in Abel, *French Film Theory & Criticism*, 242-243.

Propositions

In order to articulate the idea of the CoR, the construction of the critical essay is conceived as the drawing of a cartography which will help navigate a concept that is far more open and contains more possibilities than this text alone. The text will present a set of propositions or axioms, that are *sine qua non* of one another. The exposition of the problematics of each of the propositions could very well explain another proposition, since they are all so closely intertwined.

Proposition 1: the abstract line traverses the CoR - a cinema that operates by means of encounters, constituting assemblages of which relations are in the form of exteriority.

Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy is based on an ethical stance which emphasises the importance of the movements, expressions, and processes within the real, over a transcendental anthropocentric understanding of the world, which finds its basis in predetermined structures. As such they reject the conception of a Western philosophical tradition which focuses on representation, and gives pre-eminence to forms of interiority such as the subject/object principle by which all apprehension of the world occurs through a subject and a system that precedes that apprehension. This model leads to processes of subjectivation by which human subjects are turned into moral and dutiful citizens, making them obedient to power and to institutionalised life within capitalism. In other words, subjects are created to fulfil the expectations of the system: to simultaneously contribute to the production of surplus and to its consumption. And this, I will argue, is the basis of the cinema industry, an industry based on the overproduction laws of the market, which among other things applies division of labour, and gets its content across through modes of representation that exploits subjective emotions and empathy. To emancipate cinema from these forms of interiority is to concurrently produce films outside the industrial modes of production, and to engage with the very processes of filmmaking (setting aside any principles or dogmas) that constitute it as a creative practice. Moreover, I would suggest that, for cinema to become an act

of resistance and overcome the model of interiority it has to employ a nomadic approach and take the route to abstraction.

To sustain this and address the specificities and circumstances on how it occurs, I will be looking at the work of Marguerite Duras and Jean-Luc Godard. Both filmmakers invent new forms of subjectivity — a condition necessary, according to Michel Foucault, to oppose the kind of individuality and subjectivation promoted by the apparatuses of power. In the case of Duras this is found through the destruction of the self, and in Godard it has to do with the multiplication of the subjective. Additionally, Duras' absolute search towards the process of creation, and Godard's rejection in recent years of the obsessive drive towards technically 'perfect' images, exemplify the abstract line that traverses the CoR. On the whole, the analysis of their work focuses on the ways their cinema overcomes the model of the object/subject. Their formal approach, which amounts to a political attitude, achieves the multiplication and dissolution of a subjectivity present in industrial cinema, by means of abstraction. A nomad, abstract but also primitive machine necessary for the CoR to operate.

Proposition 2: the CoR is a minor cinema, namely, everything in it is political, it has a high coefficient of deterritorialisation and everything acquires a collective value.

In defining a new framework for political cinema, I will be examining the impact of Marxism both in 20th century aesthetics, and in the work of Deleuze & Guattari, to then outline what movements follow from this trend and what new approaches must be taken. In the first instance I will outline the two aesthetic (and highly influential) tendencies regarded as Marxist by Martin Walsh, namely, a conservative tendency (defended by Georg Lukács) and an *avant-garde* one (supported and practiced by Bertolt Brecht). The latter will be considered the antecedent of the CoR given its favourable approach toward formal experimentation, and the influence it has had on filmmakers that are discussed in these pages. More importantly, the Brechtian influence in cinema, just as Marx's influence on Deleuze & Guattari, comparably, is urgent inasmuch as it puts into question not merely class relations but the relations of production

that cause them. This, I will argue, is lacking in a type of cinema which might disguise itself as political by tackling a political subject matter, but that follows the formal methods and makes use (through the cinema industry) of the modes of production of capitalism.

Having said that, and despite the great effect of Marxism, significant distinctions must be identified in our new line of action. A CoR cannot aspire either to be part of mass culture just as industrial cinema does, nor have the masses as a true subject, just as Soviet Cinema did. It has to originate in the margins, it has to be made *with* the people and not in their name, it has to invent new forms within cinematic language which mainstream forces tend to make immobile, sedentary. In other words, CoR has to become minor. In defining minor, I will extract its three fundamental attributes (enunciated in the proposition) from Deleuze & Guattari's *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986). Furthermore, through the work of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet — and specifically their film *Every Revolution is a Throw of the Dice* (1977) — I will examine how in practice, the attributes of this proposition produce acts of resistance, and *vice versa*, how their acts of resistance produce a minor cinema.

Proposition 3: CoR enters the realm of nomadology, hence freeing itself from ideology: there is no ideology and never has been.

Expanding on Marx's influence both on Deleuze & Guattari and on 20th century politics and cinema, we inevitably encounter the concept of ideology. Although Deleuze & Guattari do not elaborate on it to a great extent (one has to forensically examine their whole literature, written together and apart), there are, in their body of work, explicit rejections of it: "Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology. There is no ideology and never has been."²¹ Ideology is seen as an obstacle to changing the existing state of affairs, more than it is a reliable illustration of them. We must instead dissect the system in terms of its production of subjectivity, and its modulation of desire. The moment that we acquire a conscious understanding of how we are turned into subjects

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 3.

(with the purpose of not only producing but desiring and consuming what is produced) we can invent new subjectivities that cannot be assimilated by the system. The moment that we acknowledge capitalism as an immanent system in constant transformation and expansion of its limits, insatiably overcoding and reterritorialising intensities and movements, endlessly shutting lines of flight, we can begin to make films which resist this transformation into commodity.

Considering, through the theories of Louis Althusser, Guy Debord, or Jean-Luc Comolli, how ideology and the apparatus theory has greatly influenced political cinema of the 20th century, I will propose a cinema that rather than being a representation, a reflection of reality, withstands the artificiality of life production within capitalism by escaping modes of signification and subjectivation. Then, how can cinema be part of life production, while simultaneously eluding the production and signification chains we are subjected to? How can cinema help us resist loving the very structures of power that repress us? And lastly, is it possible for cinema to be political but not ideological? As to this, the political gestures in the cinema of Straub and Huillet, Jean Rouch, and Pedro Costa will be discussed as evidence of it.

Proposition 4: CoR movements towards becoming occur by means of style, a style that is allocated outside the realms of subjects and objects, a style to come that doesn't yet exist — a non-style.

The style of a work of art, literature and, naturally, cinema is a paramount object of study in each of those fields (Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History* [1915]; Fredric Jameson, *Sartre: The Origins of Style* [1961]; André Bazin *the Evolution of the Language of Cinema* [1950-55], to name but a few). In all of them there seem to be a recurrence, an explicit differentiation between the inherent technical and formal qualities of the discipline, and the personal expression the artist makes of them, both of these being constitutive elements of style. Today more than ever, I will argue, there is a tendency to elevate the role of the author, the auteur, with his original, distinctive and recognisable traits, as the principal attribute of the work's artistic value. This reliance on the artist's temperament, as Wölfflin terms it, abets the commodification of

cinematographic works inasmuch as it turns individual styles into selling points, stripped from their *raison d'être*, assimilated and vacuously reproduced by the system.

Disputing this use of style, and putting forth a way to contest it, this proposition suggests that the true style of a film is only actualised through the process of the creative act, stripping away the *a priori*, the bad copies, the preconceived imposed and void mechanisms. Accordingly, the style of a work is one to come, one that doesn't exist yet, in other words a *non-style*. This asignifying, impersonal, and intensive non-style, which is a result of experimentation, comes to pass within a plane of immanence, i.e., an affective plane where things emerge 'in-between'. In contrast to this, I discuss the plane of transcendence (or organisation), where formations are subject to pre-existing rules and structures, and the idea of totality in a work becomes essential — the author acting as totalising agent. Examining the working process of directors that rebel against the latter (despite the fact that they are considered auteurs and are praised on their individual style) such as Wang Bing, Costa, Straub-Huillet, Godard, Duras, will show how their diverse methods, always open to the intensive qualities originated by the non-style machine, create the form of their films.

CoR: a case study

The last chapter of the thesis will attempt to navigate the reader through the connections between the philosophical work and the process of making the film, *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong*, in three main ways. To begin with I will explore in more depth notions that have surfaced in the previous chapters, append some new ones, and consider their relevance to my work. Secondly, I will discuss entries of a journal that I kept during the production and filming process; and thirdly, I'll present a post-completion analysis on the choices made in the course of the writing, filming and editing. Overall, what this section attempts is not to give an explanation or an interpretation of my practice — but by emphasising how the images emerged from a correspondence between a changing reality and the creative process, its intent is to look at the conditions

under which the film was formed. In other words, it will outline the experimentation process which enabled theory and praxis to meet.

Amongst the things considered, I'll examine the fabulation function of cinema, as a means of conceiving political cinema. For Deleuze, if modern political cinema exists, it does so to the extent that it manifests that the people are no longer there, that the people are missing. Therefore, fabulation (and not utopia) can contribute to the construction of a creative future of a people yet to come. This is discussed within the context of the mining communities of Asturias which find themselves in an identity crisis due to loss of the industry that helped shaped them, and in consequence the loss of their way of life. Moreover, I will discuss the specific question of work and labour within cinema by referencing the treatment certain films make of it, i.e., Peter Nestler's *Odenwaldstetten* (1964), Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's *Six Fois Deux/Sur et Sous la Communication* (1976), Farocki's, *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1995).

Finally, I will be anchoring both my current practice and the concept of the CoR on a movement in Asturian cinema that has been flourishing during the time I have been working on this thesis, which has been termed 'New Asturian Cinema'.²² Since the year 2014, and despite the financial difficulties met when producing films in Asturias (which sadly condemn filmmakers to a constant state of precariousness), a handful of names and a number of films of both cultural and cinematographic importance have been received with praise by renowned international film festivals and local audiences alike. This modest trend, with which I proudly affiliate myself, is of relevance by reason of manifesting the traits of a minor cinema: namely, its experimental formal search is cause and effect of a political approach, and its focus on local issues diligently prompt the work to acquire a collective value. Films by Ramón Lluís Bande, Marcos M. Merino, Celia Viada Caso and Diego Llorente display two major concerns: the current social and political reality of a region in which the working-class movement which defined it for the most part of the 20th century has vanished; and the task of reclaiming parts of the region's history that were buried with the sole purpose of destroying the class consciousness that kept a sense of

²² Ramón Lluís Bande first coined this term in a paper titled "Like a family without a photo album. A look at a possible Asturian Cinema", which he presented at The University of Oviedo and subsequently at The Gijón International Film Festival in November 2019.

collectivity alive. These, I will argue, are both necessary for recognising that *the people is missing* and subsequently engaging with the creative function of cinema to construct *a people yet to come*. The movement, which can be called without contention a Cinema of Resistance, will be discussed as an addendum to Chapter 5. "Postscript about an emerging minor cinema: Asturian cinema" examines the conditions which have caused it to occur, the characteristics that define its form and content, the relations of production and distribution which differentiate it from Spanish industrial cinema, and the historical and global frameworks with which it converses (Third Cinema, national cinema, Folk cinema, decolonisation).

Chapter 1

Proposition 1: the abstract line traverses the CoR - a cinema that operates by means of encounters, constituting assemblages of which relations are in the form of exteriority.

That the world is not yet ordered,
or that man has only a small idea of the world
and wants to hold on to it eternally
This comes from the fact that man,
one fine day,
stopped
the idea of the world.

Two paths were open to him:
the infinite outside,
the infinitesimal inside.

And he chose the infinitesimal inside.
Where one need only squeeze
the spleen,
the tongue,
the anus
or the glans.²³

“Something in the world forces us to think. This something is not an object of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.”²⁴ This postulate, found in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), in my view encapsulates the grounds for Deleuze’s project in the decades to come. Firstly, it implies a critique of a western philosophical tradition²⁵ which presupposes that thought occurs in the

²³ Artaud, *Para Terminar*. (My translation).

²⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 183.

²⁵ The targets of Deleuze’s critique are René Decartes, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Specifically, here he refers to Kantian conception of recognition and representation. This critique is maintained through his work: “Common sense, the unity of all the faculties at the centre constituted by the Cogito, is the State consensus raised to the absolute. This was most notably the great operation of the Kantian ‘critique,’ renewed and developed by Hegelianism.” Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 438.

process of recognition, relying on the subject/object principle: “Deleuze does not regard human consciousness or mind as the sole point of image and relation; he is certainly not arguing that the world is constituted by a consciousness that synthesizes appearances into some meaningful whole. For there are images, simulations or perceptions before and beyond consciousness.”²⁶ Furthermore, this philosophical tradition which attends to the expressions of the real primarily through the apprehension of the human subject and some preconceived systems of how this apprehension occurs, favours, according to Deleuze, a system of universal laws of morality, turning rational beings into moral, dutiful beings: “we cannot be subjects without being legislators.”²⁷ This form of subjectivation conditions humans to comply with institutionalised life and gives thought a form of interiority — within this model the subject is conceived as the producer of thought.

Deleuze, however, rejects the premise that thinking occurs within the process of recognition, in which thought exists as a presupposed ‘image’. For thought to be liberated from any *a priori* ‘image’, it has to acquire values of exteriority, hence Deleuze’s reversal: it is not the subject who thinks, but rather the act of thinking that constitutes the subject. In other words, the subject is not an innate moral being with a given essence or identity, but rather it is formed as a result of a process by its interconnectivity with conditions external to it, and these relations of exteriority define and transform its existence, its becoming. For Deleuze, Antonin Artaud envisioned perfectly the idea of a free thought without an image, more precisely, the destruction of that ‘image’. Instead of directing, organising his thought, or generating a method in order to create his poems, thinking was in itself the goal and the difficulty²⁸: thinking as a process, as a pure act of creation. And creation is precisely a form of resistance to a model of interiority which prevents us from thinking — by turning us into subjects subjected to a transcendental system of morality and power. This is made evident in Deleuze’s later work with Guattari, specifically *Anti-Oedipus*, and *A Thousand Plateaus*, where the influence of Michel Foucault in this regard is central.

²⁶ Colebrook. *A Guide*, 5-6.

²⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 5.

²⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 193.

A great part of Foucault's work, as he himself would claim, is not an analysis of the circumstances through which power is exercised, but a historical study of the conditions under which human beings are made into subjects, and the instances in which these subjects are positioned in relations of power.²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari's analysis (and denouncement) of how forms of subjectivation are instrumental in capitalism as a means of executing control and domination complements Foucault's: after all, all subjects in the capitalist system are generated in order to contribute to the production chain of the global market. And within capitalism, the State functions as a comprehensive power which enables the division of labour necessary for the constitution of surplus value and constant accumulation.³⁰ The State is a hierarchical oppressive structure which creates spaces of interiority, and (regardless of the nation in which it operates) reproduces its organisational stratum into all social formations at the same time as it serves the global capitalistic machine in the creation of surplus.³¹

An example of this is the contemporary film industry, whose origins are to be found in the systematisation of work developed in the early years of the Hollywood studio system. Thomas Ince, pioneer of this system, replicated the factory model through division of labour, supervision, and centralisation of production in order to control the uniformity and quality of films, consequently contributing to their mass production.³² Janet Staiger termed the main processes occurring in the studio system 'standardisation' and 'differentiation.' On the one hand through the normalisation of practices such as script formatting or the homogenisation of shooting and exhibition formats, production could be intensified. On the other hand, a studio had to differentiate its products from another studio in the hope of attracting audiences and selling more — for instance by attaching to their output certain stars the other studios didn't have. Today, coinciding with the dispersion and decentralisation of work in capitalism, the film industry has largely left the studio system behind, just as the factory no longer occupies the prominent place that it once did. However, the division and hierarchisation of labour is, in the digital era, still very pronounced due to the

²⁹ Foucault, "The subject and power."

³⁰ Surin, "State," 268.

³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 354.

³² Staiger, "Dividing labor."

unceasing emergence of new hardware, workflows and distribution platforms. All of which obey the laws of overproduction: devices that rapidly replace the previous ones with more advanced technology, on one hand; content as pure product for consumption on the other.³³ “Historically, a disproportionate amount of public money was directed at a type of art-house production. Some were excellent, but they were aimed almost entirely at minority markets. This cannot continue, we must have a more balanced approach with greater support for mainstream films because the key to building a dynamic industry will always lie in film’s relationship with the audience.”³⁴ These words — by writer/producer Julian Fellowes, who served on the review board which in 2012 recommended the UK coalition government modify state film financing to support and produce “more commercially successful pictures”³⁵ — symbolise the interdependence of an industry that reproduces the same obsolete model over and over again, and the State which as a repressive entity prevents cinema from attaining its maximum power as a creative discipline.

From Foucault, we must learn that in examining the circumstances in which human subjects are made to comply with the systems of power, it is not enough to scrutinise the institutions from which this power emanates, one has to look at the ways the relations of power are opposed — in other words, one has to examine the forms of resistance.³⁶ The compelling relevance, in this regard, of Deleuze and Guattari’s project lies in the manner in which it complements and continues Foucault’s work. Within their ethics of exteriority, we can find the defeat of the subject/object principle which will allow thinking in itself to emerge, and thought to escape the systematisation of the State apparatus. In the introduction of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze & Guattari delineate a new conception of the relation of forces within the real which free life from the subject and its preconceptions, at the same time as they free the subject from its subordination to the codes of control of capitalism, of the State:

A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a

³³ These two elements are integral factors of the style of industrial films.

³⁴ Lyttelton, “The Prime Minister’s Speech.”

³⁵ David Cameron cited in Lyttelton, “The Prime Minister’s Speech.”

³⁶ Foucault, “The subject and power.”

subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. It is to fabricate a beneficent God to explain geological movements.³⁷

The importance of the process prevails over the object. The book — or in the topic at hand, the film — is not an aggregate of truth whose parts serve the fundamental purpose drawn by its creator. Rather its power lies in the trajectory of how it came to be and in what it will become when entering into connection with a reader/spectator, an idea, another book or film, other images, etc.

In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also, lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization or destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness or viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rapture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an *assemblage*. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable.³⁸

This definition of a book serves very well our purpose of defining a film as an assemblage. An assemblage “[is] the minimum real unit, [not] the word, the concept or the signifier.”³⁹ According to Manuel DeLanda, it is a concept created by Deleuze in response to Hegel’s idea of totality. In a totality, only the whole is true, and the parts that are related and that constitute the whole have no independent existence apart from the relation in which they exist. These relations are established by necessity and are relations of interiority. On the other hand, the components of an assemblage “may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different.”⁴⁰ It is the heterogeneity of the bodies in play and the capacities of these bodies that together with the properties of the body which entail the ‘local results’ derived by the affective relations with other bodies that give rise to the emergence of the new.⁴¹ These contingent interactions and the heterogeneous nature of an assemblage make the attempt of defining it a task opposed to that of the

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 51.

⁴⁰ DeLanda cited in Bryant, “Assemblage Against Totality.”

⁴¹ “not new in the absolute sense of something that has never existed before but only in the relative sense that something emerges that was not in the interacting entities acting as causes.” DeLanda, “Emergence.”

formation of a system of ground rules: the emergence of the new does not come from a 'great first principle', on the contrary, "this exteriority of relations is not a principle, it is a vital protest against principles."⁴² Thus the task of this project is not the establishment of new dogmas or a criterion for a new way of making political films but instead breaking with current dogmas, presuppositions or any kind of social and aesthetic order with which a film should comply.

A film as an assemblage whose elements' interactions originate the new — in other words, give rise to emergence. But, an emergence of what? In the case of the CoR what emerges is on the one hand affects, and on the other hand thought. However, there is a kind of thought which makes us think in conformity with the State and the capitalist system, elevating their principles as universals by means of reason and truth, thus giving thought a form of interiority. This type of thought must be counteracted by "plac[ing] thought in an immediate relation with the outside, with the forces of the outside. [...] But the form of exteriority of thought [...] is not at all *another image* in opposition to the image inspired by the state apparatus. It is, rather, a force that destroys both the image *and* its copies, the model and its reproductions, every possibility of subordinating thought to a model of the True, the Just, or the Right."⁴³ It is in this sense that, in different but complementary ways, the films of Marguerite Duras and Jean-Luc Godard resist. In so doing, they both destroy the 'principles turned universals' of an industrial cinema that represses cinema's creative and artistic possibilities to abide to the laws of morality of the State on one hand, and to the laws of supply and demand of the capitalist system, on the other. These two instances promote an individuality, which according to Foucault, has been imposed on us for centuries and which must be opposed by inventing "new forms of subjectivity."⁴⁴ Both filmmakers, Duras and Godard, make thought emerge, and invent 'new forms of subjectivity' as a means of resistance.

In Duras the invention of new subjectivities occurs through the destruction of the self. Her characters occupy vacant hotels, empty grand houses, desolate fields or beaches, undetermined places void of any personal traits that could

⁴² Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 55.

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 439.

⁴⁴ "We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries." Foucault, "The Subject and Power".

contextualise them.⁴⁵ They drift through them without any purpose, like ghosts or madwomen. Their background story is scant - *Détruire, dit-elle* (1969)-, or none -*La Femme du Gange* (1974). They are readers unable to read, writers unable to write, seers that cannot see -*Détruire, dit-elle*. It is as if Duras wanted to strip the work of art of any dispensable elements to engage fully with the act of creation, with the process, nothing but writing in itself as the goal and the difficulty: "There should be a writing of the unwritten. It will exist one day. A writing brief, without grammar, a writing of words alone. Words without the support of grammar. Lost. Written, there. And abandoned at once."⁴⁶ In like manner, *Détruire, dit-elle* is a film of characters without identity, of a place without a history, of a story without a plot. Duras's impersonal gaze and economy of shots conduct us from one character to the other without privileging any. Their performances are constricted and detached, showing perplexed emotions characteristic, perhaps, of people trapped in a non-existence, a time when longing for a utopia is not an option any more as all previous revolutions have failed.⁴⁷ In this new unspecified time where the characters find themselves, destruction amounts to self-destruction, a violence they shouldn't fear because it would only prevent them from seeing the possibilities of the reconstruction ahead, a reconstruction which will not need a new revolution, but that will rely on the revolutionary becoming of individuals: "-Is it a political film? - Yes, very much so. - Is it a film where politics are never spoken of? -That's right, never [...] -Is this a film that expresses a hope? -Yes. Revolutionary hope. But at the level of the individual, of inner life. Without which... look around you. It is completely useless to make revolutions."⁴⁸ Modern cinema makes this hope possible insofar as it expresses not a will for the people to unite, fight and change the world, but it expresses instead that the people are no longer there - the people are missing.⁴⁹ This aspiration, found in the cinema of Marguerite

⁴⁵ "-Where are we? -For example, in a hotel. -What time is it? -I don't know, it's not important." Duras, *Detruire dit-elle*, 00:00:05.

⁴⁶ Duras, *Escribir*, 73. (My translation).

⁴⁷ This film and its homonymous book were shot and written after May '68 and, in my view, express a post-revolutionary feeling also present in other films of the same period like Jean Eustache's *La Maman et la Putain* (1973): the idealistic and utopian struggles gave way to disenchantment and desolate characters.

⁴⁸ Duras, *Destroy, She Said*, 108-109.

Here Duras and Deleuze coincide: "They say revolutions turn out badly. But they're constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people's revolutionary becoming. These relate to two different sets of people. Men's only hope lies in a revolutionary becoming: the only way of casting off their shame or responding to what is intolerable." Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 171.

⁴⁹ See page 89 for discussion of 'the people are missing.'

Duras, shows, as I will subsequently argue, that everything in a film of the CoR is political, and that this political nature has nothing to do with either the subject represented, nor with ideology.

At first glance, this latter statement might not be so obvious when we look at Jean-Luc Godard's work, especially his Maoist and militant period - *La Chinoise* (1967), *One Plus One* (1968), *Le Gai Savoir* (1969), *See You at Mao* (1970), *Le Vent d'Est* (1970), *Vladimir et Rosa* (1971), *Tout va Bien* (1972), *Letter to Jane* (1972). However, his politics are inherent to a counter-thought expressed in his subversion of the cinematic form, appreciable throughout his oeuvre. He is, according to Susan Sontag, the first consciously destructive figure in the history of cinema, a "deliberate 'destroyer' of cinema."⁵⁰ That demolition occurs at the deepest root of cinema's canonic traditions and it is a meditated, self-reflexive one, that comes from having the greatest knowledge of what is being destroyed and doesn't entail destruction for destruction's sake, but rather, as we've seen in Duras, demands a reconstruction which opens new possibilities ahead. His numerous artistic periods are evidence of this constant experimentation: the Nouvelle Vague period exemplified in the mischievous deconstruction of any genre: science fiction (*Alphaville* [1965]), musical (*Une Femme Est un Femme* [1961]), film noir (*A Bout de Souffle* [1960]); the aforementioned Maoist period accompanied by Jean-Pierre Gorin, caused by a militant conversion to Marxism that led to, in my view, a vibrant search to give expression to the dialectical materialist method into the cinematic form; the video period marked by the abandonment of the dialectical method, by the beginning of his collaboration with Anne-Marie Miéville, and, of course, by the use of video recording devices (*Numéro Deux* [1975], *Comment Ça Va?* [1976], *Ici et Ailleurs* [1976], *France/tour/detour/deux/enfants* [1977]); his so-called 'return to filmmaking' in the 80's which continued until the 2000's (*Sauve qui Peut (la Vie)* [1980], *Je Vous Salue, Marie* [1985], *For Ever Mozart* [1996], *Eloge de l'Amour* [2001]); the assemblage period illustrated by the appropriation and resignification of found footage (*Histoire(s) du Cinema* [1988-1998], *The Old Place* [2000]); and the most abstract period to date which combines traits of the two earlier trends, stories developed both through the work with actors and with existing footage

⁵⁰ Sontag, "Godard," 150.

(*Film Socialisme* [2010], *Adieu au Langage* [2014]). Hence this destructive force, present in Godard's work from its beginnings (approximately when Sontag wrote her essay) and still present fifty years later, is also paradoxically a positive constructive force, capable of creating the new. The virtual potentialities of this force which burst from *being a foreigner in one's own language*,⁵¹ actualise "rework[ing] the language... in order to speak a little differently."⁵² This is the approach of the nomad film maker.

To be a nomad film maker involves the setting forth of problems, whose search for a solution leads to nothing but the constitution of new problems. Cinema of representation belongs to the theorematic model,⁵³ in other words, it is of a rational order and its form of interiority is expressed by means of its method which originates in the essence of what's being represented and derives its attributes from it; whereas nomadic cinema belongs to the problematic model, namely it is affective and works with what's between things. The filmmaker of the cinema of representation is an author, 'a subject of enunciation'⁵⁴ whereas the filmmaker of the CoR is not. He is someone "[who] invents assemblages starting from assemblages which have invented him, he makes one multiplicity pass into another."⁵⁵ Godard's destruction of cinema is as much an attack against the sedentary theorematic model as it is a proclamation of new values. A whole new cinema which doesn't attend to standardised norms of storytelling, psychological motivations or empathy based correlation with the audience; a cinema which doesn't rely on montage as the invisible tool for space-time

⁵¹ Deleuze makes continuous reference to this conception across several books: "We must be bilingual even in a single language, we must have a minor language within our own language, we must make use of our own language in a minor way [. . .]. Not speak like an Irishman or a Romanian in a language other than one's own, but on the contrary to speak in *one's own language* like a foreigner." Deleuze and Parnet *Dialogues*, 4.

"As Proust says, it opens up a kind of foreign language within language, which is neither another language nor a rediscovered patois, but a becoming-other of language, a minorization of this major language, a delirium that carries it off, a witch's line that escapes the dominant system." Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 5.

⁵² Godard, *True History Cinema Television*, 46.

⁵³ In *Treatise on Nomadology*, Deleuze and Guattari differentiate between nomad science and royal science. Namely, a science whose experimentation produces continuous flows of transformation and deterritorialisation, and a science which reproduces the norms of the state and its forms of interiority, restricting the potentialities of the nomad creativity. The first one makes use of a problematic model, whereas the second belongs to the theorematic model. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 421-422

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 51.

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 51.

continuity, or on dialogue as the underlying device for visual action; a cinema which “[doesn’t] create a world, [because] there is no world that awaits to be created.”⁵⁶ Godard’s new cinema, on the contrary, is the cinema of slogans, juxtapositions, mutations, fragmentation, a cinema in which the characters don’t speak their own words but those of Poe, Hölderling, Dante, Mayakovsky or Mao, “neither identification nor distance, neither proximity nor remoteness, for, in all these cases, one is led to speak for, in the place of... One must, on the contrary, speak *with*, write *with*. With the world, with a part of the world, with people. Not a talk at all but a conspiracy, a collision of love and hatred,”⁵⁷ *not to write the life of a man, but only life, life itself. What there is between people, space... sound and colours*. Godard’s narrative cinema reduces the plot to a minimum: it is fragmented at times leading to dramatic incoherence; or it is reduced to mere self-explanatory titles that give the plot away thereby freeing the film and the spectator from it. Such is the case of *Vivre sa Vie* (1962) apropos of which Godard remarks: “built... in tableaux to accentuate the theatrical side of the film. Besides, this division corresponded to the external view of things which best allowed me to give a feeling of what was going on inside. In other words, a contrary procedure to that used by Bresson in *Pickpocket* (1959), in which the drama is seen from within. How can one render the ‘inside’? I think, by staying prudently outside.”⁵⁸

For Sontag another way in which Godard stays on the outside is by continuously changing the point of view in the film, something that he achieves by having his characters utter literary texts seemingly alien to them, by introducing voiceovers in the form of third-person narrators or in the form of dialogue disconnected from its action, and even by the use of silences and absence of sound. In other words, his work contributes to the construction of new subjectivities. What, in the 60s Sontag perceived as the multiplying of the points of view in Godard’s films, leads into the complete dissolution of the subjective point of view in a film like *Film Socialisme*. Godard’s conception of the characters in a film results from a fervent rejection of psychology when it comes to building these characters and their motivations for realising actions —

⁵⁶ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 51.

⁵⁷ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 51.

⁵⁸ Godard cited in Sontag, “Godard,” 180.

a type of psychology that belongs to the representational model of interiority. In fiction films psychological motivation often serves as a method of attaining an emotional involvement with the audience and Godard continues to spurn it in favour of a Brechtian approach: one that creates disjunctive relations between elements in the film in order to disrupt the viewer and therefore appeal to a reflexive, analytical view. In *Film Socialisme*, the characters acquire an incidental quality: their scenes and dialogue are not consistent with a classical storytelling methodology, meaning that the audience doesn't witness a period of their lives which is supported by a plot; conversely, their accidental appearances and the value of their verbal statements contribute as lines of articulation to a more substantial idea, the idea of Europe. This tearing down of the subjectiveness (of the characters of his films — and by extension his own as an author, and also the spectator's) amounts to the total destruction of the subject/object model when it is accompanied by the dissolution of the subject matter⁵⁹ (as it is in Godard's case) and leads to the inevitable route to abstraction — what Deleuze & Guattari call the abstract line or nomad line.

Wilhelm Worringer identifies two tendencies in art: the urge to empathy and the urge to abstraction. On the one hand, there is, in artistic volition, an urge to satisfy the impulse towards the beauty of the organic, an impulse towards a sentimental projection of man attending to the truths of organic life and his balance towards the phenomena of the external world.⁶⁰ The urge to empathy thus outlines a tendency towards naturalism and it is identified by the interiority of its relations: the inner movements between the subject in his projection on the objects of the outside world —resulting in the formula “aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment.”⁶¹ On the other hand, “the urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world,”⁶² and finds its will to create in the beauty of the life-denying inorganic, the crystalline. This proclivity operates by liberating the objects of the

⁵⁹ “What he seeks is to conflate the traditional polarities of spontaneous mobile thinking and finished work, of the casual jotting and the fully premeditated statement. Spontaneity, casualness, lifelikeness are not values in themselves for Godard, who is rather interested in the convergence of spontaneity with the emotional discipline of abstraction (the dissolution of “subject matter”) Sontag, “Godard,” 174.

⁶⁰ “The organic does not designate something represented, but above all the form of representation.” Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 498.

⁶¹ Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, 7.

⁶² Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, 15.

outside world from their arbitrariness and from man's projection of himself in them, reaching their absolute value by means of abstract forms. In other words, the urge to abstraction creates relations of exteriority, giving rise to the nomadic line which "is mechanical, but in free action and swirling; it is inorganic, yet alive, and all the more alive for being inorganic."⁶³

The nomad line traverses Duras's and Godard's works. In the first instance, it produces a disjunction between images and sound, images and voices. In *La Femme du Gange* this dissociation is taken to its utmost potential, where the images and the narration belong to two different parallel films that coexist in one. The introduction of the film gives a word of warning: "To avoid any contempt, we would like to let the spectator know that the two Voices Off of women do not belong at all to the characters, which appear in the images. We can add that the characters seen in the images are entirely unaware of the existence of the two women in the story who manifest themselves only in the dialogue which they hold."⁶⁴ Deleuze specifically refers to the split between the visual and the spoken which occurs in Duras, but also in Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, and Straub and Huillet. The voice speaks of something while we are shown something else — however what's important is that which emerges from what is talked about *under* what we are shown, a third image that is only possible from the disconnection of sight and sound, even while the disjointed images and words are connected by montage.⁶⁵ This is, for Deleuze, an example of a cinematographic idea, an idea that can only occur in film, as opposed to an idea in theatre or literature or science. The relevance of this act of creation of a cinematographic idea lies in the fact that having an idea is distinct, if not opposed, from communication to the extent that communication refers to the creation and transmission of information. "Information is a set of imperatives, slogans, directions—order-words. When you are informed, you are told what you are supposed to believe."⁶⁶ And as such, information and its transmission belongs to the State-form and its systems of control, it is, in fact, the very system of control. Inasmuch as cinema and art have nothing to do with

⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 498.

⁶⁴ Duras, *La Femme du Gange*, 00:00:00.

⁶⁵ This idea is central in Straub and Huillet's film *Every Revolution is a Throw of a Dice*, which is discussed in detail on page 46.

⁶⁶ Deleuze, "What is the creative act."

communication, they become acts of resistance: “art resists, even if it is not the only thing that resists. Whence the close relationship between an act of resistance and a work of art. Every act of resistance is not a work of art, even though, in a certain way, it is. Every work of art is not an act of resistance, and yet, in a certain way, it is.”⁶⁷ But these acts of resistance, these purely cinematographic ideas can only occur when the nomad line exists, a line of flight which escapes what is institutionalised, standardised, and accepted by the surplus machine, the market, the State.

The nomad line is also apparent throughout Godard’s whole body of work, always exploring new potentialities in cinema and making it advance by virtue of encounters which have never before occurred. This is manifest in his film-assemblage/film-essay *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, the component parts of which are comprised of shots detached from other films and sutured into the film forming different interactions. Such is the case of the images, either visual or sound, that Godard appropriates — or as he says, quotes — from other films (including his own), from newsreels, paintings, music compositions, etc, causing them to enter into completely new relations, constantly deterritorialising not only the works ‘quoted’ but also the history of cinema. A history which has been ordered in categories, in trends, in waves by some — but which Godard frees from systematisation by coming to grips with cinema’s fundamental potency: the affect.

To choose the path of *the infinite outside*, is to choose the path of unrest and nonconformism. The latter is what Godard has continuously chosen: the path to abstraction. His early films already denote this inclination: the jump cuts, the repetition of words and gestures from different takes, the already mentioned becoming-multiple of the subject by the proliferation of points of view, and of course his instinctive mode of creation in which the assimilation of ‘accidents’⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Deleuze, “What is the creative act.”

⁶⁸ In the series of lectures Godard gave in Montreal in 1979, he describes the process of shortening the duration of *À Bout de Souffle*, in particular the conversation between Belmondo and Seberg in a car shot and edited in a shot/reverse-shot manner as follows: “rather than shortening one a little and then shortening the other a little and making short little shots of the two of them, well, we cut four minutes simply by removing one or the other entirely, and then we’ll edit the shots together as if it were just one shot but made out of several. So we flipped a coin between Belmondo and Seberg and Seberg stayed in.” Godard, *True History Cinema Television*, 24.

are part of the process of making a film. This increasing urge to abstraction has led to films such as *Adieu au Langage*, *Film Socialisme* and *The Image Book* (2018). In them, Godard projects his rejection of the technical advances in digital cinema by means of the use of mobile phones and homemade 3D cameras, incorporating their 'distorted' sound, and the pixelation and artefacts produced by certain video codecs. Similarly, Pedro Costa abandoned the use of 35mm cameras — with their concomitant technical crew, rental budgets and logistical demands — in favour of single-user consumer camcorders, as a means of reducing his crew to a minimum in order to engage with the act of filmmaking as a conversation *with*, and a process *with* his characters: rejecting an intrusive, commercial, and distancing role subject to industrial power structures, in favour of a collaborative and honest relationship with his subjects. Through abandoning the received wisdom on how feature films must be shot, Costa acknowledged that the ethical obligations in making a film were of far greater importance than polished images, complex camera moves, or 'realistic' lighting.⁶⁹

Bazin advocated the liberation of painting from its 'resemblance complex', its urge to realism, as a result of the invention of photography.⁷⁰ Aware of the fact that the different types of image-making develop from previous forms of images, Farocki, as he ventures in *Parallel I* (2012), has aspirations alike for cinema following the development and thriving use of artificially generated imagery. The quick expansion of war technology and the obsession of man in inventing and perfecting new ways of creating images to record and represent the world, have led to the utmost perfection of computer-generated images when it comes to filmic imitation. Video game images, for instance, have developed from a primitive abstract and symbolic form to an almost indistinguishable photographic realism.⁷¹ Would these advances perhaps emancipate cinema from its reality resemblance complex? As Jean Renoir explains to Rivette, the decadence of an art form and its consequent death result from its approach to technical perfection driven by the imitating impulse to nature or naturalism.⁷² It is in the genesis of that art form, in its original primitive shape that we can find its

⁶⁹ See page 61 for a longer discussion of Costa's methods.

⁷⁰ Bazin, *What is Cinema* 1, 9-16.

⁷¹ Farocki, *Parallel I*, 00:08:56.

⁷² Renoir and Rivette, interview.

beauty. It is as if Godard, Farocki, or Costa, fighting the decadence and death of cinema, promulgate the resurgence of the absolute value of things in life by assimilating the 'primitiveness' of consumer recording devices against the obsession with perpetually 'improving' professional imaging systems. Similarly, Duras, by stripping the very act of writing or filmmaking from all that precedes it, from what is not necessary, and committing to the process itself engages and reveals what only art can. "It is as though the instinct for the 'thing in itself' were most powerful to primitive man. Increasing spiritual mastery of the outside world and habituation to it mean a blunting and dimming of this instinct. Only after the human has passed, in thousands of years of his evolution, along the whole course of rationalistic cognition, does the feeling for the 'thing in itself' re-awaken in it as the final resignation of knowledge."⁷³ This recurring path to abstraction in art that Worringer describes taking place over an interval of thousands of years could equally illustrate the course of cinema in its brief century of existence, if by cinema we understand not 'cinema of representation' but the cinema of resistance.

⁷³ Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, 18.

Chapter 2

Proposition 2: The CoR is a minor cinema, namely, everything in it is political, it has a high coefficient of deterritorialisation and everything acquires a collective value.

BEWARE SPECTATOR: 'Filmmakers are the sons of the bourgeoisie. They bring to their career the weaknesses of their decadent class.'⁷⁴

With these words of warning, Jean Renoir was alerting us that the art *for* the masses was not the art *of* the masses — or rather “[the bourgeoisie] creates a world after its own image.”⁷⁵ The latter statement was appropriated by Godard from *The Communist Manifesto* (1848 [2002]) for The Dziga Vertov Group and redefined: “The bourgeoisie creates a world after its own image, but it also creates an image of its world that it calls a ‘reflection of reality.’”⁷⁶ And what better way to do that, as Renoir or Godard illustrate, than through the new industrial art: cinema. What their words denote, even if we are oblivious to the work of these two prominent figures of 20th century cinema, is the influence that Marx has had on the work of filmmakers. Marx’s historical materialism prompted not only new ideas in political economy, philosophy or sociology but also in the arts. Cinema, initially an art exhibited for the working classes, could not be different — and the first century of the new industrial art witnessed an eclectic range of film theories and praxis that attempted to emancipate it from the bourgeois approach of disciplines such as theatre and literature, to exploit its true revolutionary nature. The explosion of pre-Stalinist Russian cinema, the work of French May ’68 Groupe Medvedkine, the Third Cinema movement in South America (to name just a few), suggest the great impact of Marxism throughout the world.

⁷⁴ Renoir, *Écrits*, 106. (My translation).

⁷⁵ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 249.

⁷⁶ Godard quoted in McBean, “See you at Mao,” 15.

Although there isn't a Marxist aesthetic *per se*, Martin Walsh identifies two trends within the domain of Marxist political commitment in the arts of the 20th century, epitomised in the theories of Georg Lukács and Bertolt Brecht. Namely, the 'conservative' and the '*avant-garde*' tendencies.⁷⁷ Both Lukács and Brecht give special significance to the Marxist notion of alienation and to the concept of realism, but their views on how artists should embrace and act on these issues are so diametrically opposed that, inevitably, they find themselves at loggerheads. The former rejects the revolutionary potential of the vanguard movements⁷⁸ in favour of a *true realism* that presents the totality of the real through the unity of the work. For Lukács the question of totality is of major importance. In his essay *Realism in the Balance* (1938 [2007]), he indicates that in Marxist thought, the seemingly fragmented characteristic of the capitalist system and its independent components are heteronomous to an economic objective structure. In the first instance, the processes of capitalism advance towards the autonomy of its parts and during periods of stability this is, nonetheless, experienced in society as a unity. However, when a crisis manifests itself in capitalism and the opposite occurs — namely the independent components are summoned together and unified — this is perceived as disintegration. Given that “the basic economic categories of capitalism are always reflected in the minds of men,”⁷⁹ this idea of totality of the societal and economic structure has to be present within the creative work. As a result, alienation is ultimately overcome by virtue of the unobstructed perspective and presentation of the artist.

Brecht, on the other hand, welcomes the scientific method of dialectical materialism in a different way.⁸⁰ He sees it as a useful tool to unveil the systemic processes in society, from which the artist can extract a comprehension required to tell the truth about the reality man lives. If Lukács renounces the 'immediate experience', whose vacuous expression cannot penetrate reality, in favour of the manifestation of a greater structure that

⁷⁷ Walsh, *Brechtian Aspect*, 19.

⁷⁸ “they fail to pierce the surface to discover the underlying essence, i.e. the real factors that relate their experiences to the hidden social forces that produce them. On the contrary, they all develop their own artistic style —more or less consciously— as a spontaneous expression of their immediate experience.” Lukács, “Realism in the Balance,” 37.

⁷⁹ Lukács, “Realism in the Balance,” 32.

⁸⁰ Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, 193.

enables it all, Brecht (urged too by “purely realistic motives”⁸¹ and aware that man already experiences society as “a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts and therefore not in any way to be influenced”⁸²) goes beyond that and asks of his audience to develop a ‘detached eye.’ He favours disruptive and alienating/distancing methods as a way of activating the spectator’s intellectual and reflexive self as opposed to appealing to his/her emotions through a fluidity in the form. Brecht’s epic theatre breaks with the Aristotelian dramatic structure, hugely entrenched in literature, theatre and cinema, to favour episodic fragmentation (every scene has autonomous value and does not merely serve the whole - the plot), and the interruption of the action as opposed to its advancement (this is achieved, for instance, through the introduction of songs, posters, captions), ultimately to reveal that what the spectator is seeing is a play. Epic theatre, thus, represents a fracture with the illusionist and sensational ploys of the dramatic, which linger on the emotional and empathetic connection established between the characters and the viewers, as a means to reverse the latter’s ‘passive acceptance’ into a ‘state of suspicious inquiry.’

Needless to say, the influence of Brecht on some of the filmmakers referenced in this work is great: the aforementioned episodic structure in *Vivre sa Vie*, the breaking of the fourth wall in *Pierrot le Fou*, or the repetition of the same action within a cut using different takes in numerous of his films (*Vivre sa Vie* and *Tout va Bien* [1972] come to mind) are just a few examples of Godard’s Brechtian methodology. Straub and Huillet are also Brechtian filmmakers, that is to say, they are aware that in making films while opposing the system one cannot be at ease with employing the forms the system (cinema industry) uses (Aristotelian dramatic structure), but one must subvert those forms, or rather find new ways for the form of the film to be expressed. Primarily, Brecht’s aim (found in Godard, Straub and Huillet, and as I’ll show below, also in Farocki) was to reveal the processes and material conditions of life under capitalism in order to denounce the relations of forces that give rise to exploitation.

Undoubtedly, this is a common denominator between Marx and Deleuze & Guattari, and as such an underlying concern of the CoR. Both their analyses

⁸¹ Brecht, “Against Georg Lukács”, 70.

⁸² Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, 192

exceed the purely historical, they don't simply propose a genealogy of capital or of dominant 'images of thought', but they scrutinise the connections between the relation of forces and the productive forces. Capitalism and State are system and structure, exerting a division between the productive forces and establishing the relations of power that make possible and reproduce that division, respectively. And this division results in exploitation, alienation, violence, colonialism, and despotism. Progressive political positions which do not problematise these structural issues and put focus on reformist strategies such as re-distribution of wealth, gender wage gap and class inequalities, instead of favouring discussions on why these inequalities occur —namely, how surplus value is created, where lies the ownership of the means of production— are perpetuating the system they criticise.⁸³ This, I will argue, is the contradictory position of many filmmakers who produce works that intend to denounce situations of injustice, but embrace the cinema industry to do so, and are highly acclaimed for it. Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma* (2018) or Nadine Labaki's *Capernaum* (2018) are two recent examples. Labaki's approach is that of the filmmaker who has something to communicate to the world, of the filmmaker who speaks in the name of those who have no voice⁸⁴: a political conception that amounts to the "indignity of speaking for other."⁸⁵ The understanding that puts the filmmaker in a position of being representative of others is not dissimilar to how Foucault and Deleuze considered the role of intellectuals until the 1960's. In their view, the intellectual's approach was to reveal the truth to those who were oblivious to it, as a subject who represented and was standing for the uneducated masses: "he was conscience, consciousness, and eloquence."⁸⁶ However, this role radically changed with the events of '68: the intellectual recognised that people, aware and capable of expressing themselves, didn't require his voice anymore: "The intellectual's role is no

⁸³ Chicolino, "La Presencia de Marx."

⁸⁴ "It began with feeling responsible, with wanting to become the voice of these kids. I thought: if I stay silent, I'm complicit in this crime – and it is a crime that we allow this to happen. I don't know how we live with ourselves. These children are in perpetual danger. So I started going out with my co-writers to the most difficult neighbourhoods – to the slums, to the detention centres, to the courts – just watching. [...] You should do it [making a film] only if you have something to say and the only reason I want to win [the Academy Award] is so I get those 30 seconds in which to speak. I want to make them matter. For me, film-making and activism are one and the same thing. I really do believe cinema can effect social change." Labaki, Interview.

⁸⁵ Foucault and Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power."

⁸⁶ Foucault and Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power."

longer to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge', 'truth', 'consciousness', and 'discourse.'"⁸⁷ And this is perhaps one reason why the Lukács/Brechtian dichotomy and their discussion towards finding a higher Marxist aesthetic is not as relevant today.

Today, as Deleuze informs us *apropos* the work of Foucault, the disciplinary societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on which Marx based his analysis of capitalism are steadily transforming into societies of control. Those disciplinary societies were characterised for rigidly organising life according to vast environments of enclosure: the school, the hospital, prison, and their epitome, the factory.⁸⁸ Precisely because of this, the factory has been a significant setting throughout cinema history, or rather, as Farocki accounts for in his *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1995), it has been an object by omission: one of the first films ever made, *La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon* (1895) (whose primary aim was to expose movement in film) in reality defined the position where the camera would be situated in time to come — where “the workers disperse, the lives of the solitary individuals can begin.”⁸⁹ And so this image, repeated incessantly for a hundred years, constitutes a perfect analogy for the two different outcomes of power in the disciplinary societies, it simultaneously create masses and individuals, by composing an homogeneous body from the group and shaping the individuality of each person constituent of that body.⁹⁰

Conversely, in the societies of control, in which the corporation has replaced the factory “[w]e no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become ‘dividuals’, and masses samples, data, markets, or ‘banks.’”⁹¹ We are subjected to a continuous flow of dispersed networks that conform a new system of domination, with more and more subtle and diffused practices of control. “Where the first camera once stood, there are now a

⁸⁷ Foucault and Deleuze, “Intellectuals and Power.”

⁸⁸ Deleuze, “Postscript.”

⁸⁹ Farocki, *Workers Leaving the Factory*, 00:25:00.

⁹⁰ Deleuze, “Postscript.”

⁹¹ Delete “Postscript.”

thousand surveillance cameras,” Farocki recounts. And he continues: “this camera [Lumiere’s] has spotted a woman who tugs at another woman’s skirt before they separate. The other woman does not dare to retaliate under the watchful eye of the camera.”⁹²

Harun Farocki’s work is exceptionally important as it rigorously unveils the processes of control to which we are subjected, but which are obscured to us. Throughout his oeuvre he reveals how the relations of economic production are one and the same with the relations of production of subjectivity, therefore demonstrating the systematisation in the organisation of power in this stage of capitalism and global exploitation. From how consumerism is forced into us, to the point that we have stopped being considered human beings to become merely consumers, with consumer rights (*A Day in the Life of a Consumer* [1993], *The Creators of Shopping Worlds* [2001], *Image and Sales or: How to Depict a Shoe* [1989]); how corporate structures subdue workers to their demands disguising these as innovative advancements in humankind, and by creating a corporate culture of which the worker feels part — and therefore doesn’t question (*A New Product* [2012]); how we are indoctrinated to behave within society: how to cross the road, how to behave in a job interview, how to project an image of confidence (*Indoctrination* [1987], *How to Live in the Federal Republic of Germany* [1990], *The Interview* [1997]). In short, Farocki shows us something that, according to Guattari, the dogmatic Marxists didn’t understand, that is, the question of subjectivation, which leads to the fact that capitalist profit today amounts, essentially, to the production of subjective power.⁹³

If Marx provided some of the tools to resist the repression of capitalist formations that impacted human life in the disciplinary societies, Deleuze & Guattari do so in the new era of control. Toni Negri considers that both Deleuze & Guattari’s and Marx’s projects exhibit the same urge for the liberation of human power.⁹⁴ And despite that fact that Deleuze & Guattari are not considered Marxist thinkers, there is an underlying dialogue between their work

⁹² Farocki, *Workers Leaving The Factory*, 00:23:41.

⁹³ Guattari, *Micropolitica*, 40-47.

⁹⁴ Negri, “On Gilles Deleuze,” 1192.

and Marx's. Indeed, their work is considered the functioning historical materialism of the current era by Negri, as he equates it to Marx's *Class Struggles in Germany and France*.⁹⁵ This will correspond, however, to a non-dialectical materialism, (given Deleuze's rejection of Hegel's dialectical method) or to a non-linear historical materialism (as DeLanda labels it). It is this very non-linear historical materialism which serves a post-Marxist political cinema, a CoR, with new mechanisms to resist the societies of control, in order to create a world anew — "There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons."⁹⁶ And philosophy can either contribute to create these new weapons, or it can align itself with the forms of power. Needless to say, that Deleuze & Guattari's project is at the service of the former, and for them this is realised by philosophy's only task, namely, the creation of concepts: "We lack resistance to the present. The creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and a people that do not yet exist."⁹⁷

The vocation for the creation of a new people that Deleuze & Guattari attribute to philosophy, is also true for a Cinema of Resistance. The Third Cinema of Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, precursor in many ways of the CoR, talked of the birth of 'a new man', the context of this being the imperialist failures in Cuba and Vietnam. Their notion coincides with Foucault's acknowledgement of the emergence of a new intellectual after May '68. This new man, just like Foucault's, no longer speaks in the name of the masses but strives to transform power structures and inflict social change, at the same time as he denies the underlying premise that revolutionary films can only be made after the revolution — for "revolution does not begin with the taking of political power [...] but rather begins at the moment when the masses sense the need for change."⁹⁸ In other words, the power of change resides not in creating a revolution but through the revolutionary-becoming of people. Conscious of the fact that the ruling forces of imperialism utilise cinema and art as an instrument of homogenisation, therefore negating the ethnic, cultural and social differences of the minorities, in *Toward a Third Cinema* (1969), Solanas and Getino prioritise the construction of a national cinema and a national dialogue as

⁹⁵ Ibid, 1194.

⁹⁶ Deleuze, "Postscript."

⁹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari *What is Philosophy*

⁹⁸ Getino and Solanas cited in MacKenzie, *Film Manifestos*, 232.

conditio sine qua non for an internationalist struggle. In a milieu in which the oppressor says: “If you want to be a man, [...] you have to be like me, speak my language, deny your own being, transform yourself into me,”⁹⁹ and the artist, filmmaker, writer finds himself/herself in the impossible circumstance of using something other than the dominant language,¹⁰⁰ the inevitable recognition of a ‘people who are missing’ becomes evident — and within this recognition lies the foundation of a political cinema, and consequently the creation of a people that does not yet exist.¹⁰¹

Nonetheless, sometimes it is not necessary to create a new people — it is enough joining or reinventing your own, as is the case of Pierre Perrault.¹⁰² Deleuze situates Perrault’s cinema in a nomadic line of flight, in a deterritorialised movement both from film’s objective/subjective dichotomy and from the fiction/documentary domains. Such a nomadic strategy enables Perrault to create a new type of story, a kind of cinema exemplified in the works of Rouch and the *cinéma-verité*. Works that claimed to challenge the subjective nature of fiction by objectively approaching the real (i.e., ethnographic documentaries, reportage films), erred in preserving the objective/subjective point of view of ‘fiction’ images, hence, subordinating them to the model of truth of the fiction — and creating at the same time identities for the character on one hand, and the filmmaker as ethnologist/reporter, on the other. But for Deleuze, when cinema really has the power to invent a people is precisely when it abandons this type of subjectivity created through the objective/subjective poles of the image and allows the real characters of the film to ‘make a fiction’, as is the case in *Pour La Suite du Monde* (1963). “As for his part, Perrault has no less a need to become another so as to join his own people. This is no longer *Birth of a Nation* but a constitution or reconstitution of the people, where the filmmaker and his characters become other together and the one through the other, a collectivity which gradually wins from place to place, from person to person, from intercessor to intercessor.”¹⁰³ In Deleuze & Guattari there is an

⁹⁹ Ibid, 234.

¹⁰⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 209.

¹⁰¹ See Chapter 6.4 for disambiguation of the conception of ‘the people are missing.’ Also Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 208: “if there were a modern political cinema, it would be on this basis: the people no longer exist, or not yet... *the people are missing.*”

¹⁰² Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 148.

¹⁰³ *Cinema 2*, 148.

explicit rejection of the notion of history as a linear causal narration which focuses on possibility. A history that is imposed to us with its *a priori* articulations and contents as if any formation of process in capitalism was inevitable, and as a result there was a purpose to be fulfilled, as if man had destiny.¹⁰⁴ For Foucault the misconception of history as an uninterrupted chronicle lies in the fact that neither the narrator nor the experience of time and space is ever the same.¹⁰⁵ To resist this tyranny of history, as made and appropriated by majorities and the State, is to favour the event and its potentialities, just as Perrault and his characters do. It's not a question of writing their own history, or following its inevitable course, it is rather a question of not accepting the fate of their collective and being able to construct their own story, their new set of values.

And so, in order to propose the political nature of the CoR, firstly, we must displace the focus from social and class contradictions to a non-linear materialism or philosophy of the spirit that defines society as a collective assemblage with lines of flight, points of deterritorialisation, potentialities to become other. We must no longer yearn for the union of the proletariat and its subsequent rise to power, as Solana and Getino wished for the hegemony of the oppressed working classes, neither must we accept the fate of becoming the subject the system wants us to become — instead we must long for and work towards an undetermined people yet to come. A people that is situated outside of history, ahistorical, that is excluded by the State and does not want to be heard and accepted by the dominant majority, but instead wants to speak their own language. Only through recognising this reality can filmmakers join their own people, engage in a minoritarian becoming and create a minor cinema.

Deleuze & Guattari articulate the concept of 'minoritarian' and 'minor' both in *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986). In this attempt to untangle and elucidate the CoR as a minor cinema, I am extracting, transcribing and applying some of the characteristics of minor literature to minor cinema, when the situation allows it. But before that, I should clarify that in the

¹⁰⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 164.

¹⁰⁵ Bell and Colebrook, *Deleuze and History*, 3.

Deleuze-Guattarian sense a minority is not necessarily quantitatively smaller than a majority (although most minorities are small in numbers and for that reason are oppressed) and so even if women outnumber men, they are nevertheless a minority because of their relations of subjugation within the patriarchal society. Majority implies a constant, typical norm or accustomed measure which presupposes a homogenising system of power and domination (i.e., white, Western, man). Deviation from this is thereby considered minoritarian by virtue of its difference and its creative potentiality of becoming — in other words a ‘satellite’ outlier of the majority system.¹⁰⁶ “For the majority, insofar as it is analytically included in the abstract standard, is never anybody, it is always Nobody [...] whereas the minority is the becoming of everybody, one’s potential becoming to the extent that one deviates from the model.”¹⁰⁷

A minor cinema doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language, or should we say within a dominant model of cinema, a cinema of representation. The first characteristic of minor cinema is that the ‘language’ of which it makes use is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialisation. And this concerns primarily its form. Cinema, the industrial art *par excellence* which mastered the image of classical cinema in the first half of the twentieth century, has become a bad copy of itself, its only inventiveness a series of increasingly elaborate gimmicks. A minor filmmaker or a filmmaker of the CoR discerns the impossibility of making a film within the model of representation: she cannot speak this language, and therefore her search is necessarily one of deterritorialisation, one of experimentation. In this sense, and bringing to mind the two aesthetic tendencies mentioned earlier, Brecht’s *avant-garde* spirit produces not only a line of flight within a more orthodox Marxist aesthetic but it produces a complete deterritorialisation of western theatre to the point that it creates a new theatre. Brecht’s commitment to experimentation and discovery as a path for social engagement and change, legitimises his critique of Lukács’ utopian idealism as disengaging with the problems of the oppressed classes, which rather favoured the submission of art to forms of escape and mere enjoyment.¹⁰⁸ This commentary could very well be

¹⁰⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 123-124.

¹⁰⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 124.

¹⁰⁸ Brecht, “Against Georg Lukács,” 68.

applied today to a type of well-intended authorial cinema which aims at representing the struggles of the deprived working classes, or minorities, but which manages to turn them into any standard heroes in a Hollywood fiction. These authors (the Cuaróns and Labakis) don't speak *with*, but *in the place of* —BEWARE SPECTATOR! They do this by focusing on individual struggles, utilising the social conditions as mere backdrop and maintaining a division between the private and the political, a division between the relations of production and the relations of power. In minor cinema, however (as in Brecht) the private affair merges with the social and becomes immediately political.¹⁰⁹ This leads us, necessarily, to the second characteristic of minor cinema, which is that everything in it is political.

The third characteristic of minor cinema is that everything takes on a collective value. In minor cinema, the filmmaker deviates from the individual enunciation of the great master (which implies a degree of subjectivation and is linked to the order of signification and representation) to instead realise a collective expression. There is no longer a subject represented and a subject of enunciation. In other words, in minor cinema the cinema author is not a communicating subject uttering individual statements, representing the voice of others, in fact is not a subject at all. Neither is it the protagonist. Like in Perrault, “the author takes a step towards his characters, but the characters take a step towards the author: double becoming.”¹¹⁰ The author becomes a collective agent. All the more so because she finds expression in the people who are missing.

Having said that, it could also be said that minor cinema no longer identifies a specific type of cinema but the revolutionary conditions for every cinema to become other than what is called established cinema or cinema of representation.

¹⁰⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 209-210.

¹¹⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 214.

On how minor cinema deterritorialises and acquires a collective and political value: *Every Revolution is a Throw of the Dice*

The films of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet are made of appropriations, of theft. They do so with Kafka, Schoenberg, or Bach. And yet their work is like no one else's. They don't simply adapt or quote, they don't resignify and they most certainly don't use these appropriations as metaphors for anything. They deterritorialise the work of others and create new intensities, whole new possibilities. And they do so not by merely rendering a piece of music or writing into a cinematic work, not by means of movement or transformation from one form to the other — but by being in the middle of the two. This, according to Deleuze, is what a nomad is. If Straub & Huillet are nomad film makers it is not because they physically travel from Germany, to France, to Italy to make their films. Neither is it because they go from the German language to the French or from Hölderlin to Pavese stopping by Cézanne on the way. It is because they are 'between' all of them. They situate themselves in a decentered centre always at the periphery, they reach towards a moving horizon, they erect cartographies. A cartography is precisely how *Every Revolution is a Throw of the Dice* (1977) can be described. And as such, this drawing of a map takes us in all directions, it produces lines of flight. But, as Deleuze reminds us, "fleeing doesn't mean making an exit from the world, mysticism or art, or else that is something rather sloppy because we avoid our commitments and responsibilities. But to flee is not to renounce action: nothing is more active than a flight."¹¹¹

It is necessary to mention at this point that Straub & Huillet always work from existing texts and without any doubt, action, commitment and responsibility are what define their work with these texts. In this case it's Mallarmé's poem *A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance* (1897) that drifts them/us into new encounters. The most immediate connection one makes by putting these two works together emerges from Mallarmé's typographical exercise in fragmentation which orally transmutes on a specific intonation, and the habitual practice that Straub & Huillet carry out on the texts they work from, which emphasises inflection, timbre and tempo. In encountering their 'scripts', one

¹¹¹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 36.

stumbles across a code of markings and colours that brings attention to words and accentuations of syllables, and this evidences a thorough work on the text. The precision they search for, and most certainly achieve, in recitation is displayed in the long rehearsals with actors and the filming process, where takes are repeated incessantly until the actor has uttered the words perfectly. This reciting or stammering, as Foucault calls it,¹¹² is also discernible in the choice of shots and the editing. The changes Mallarmé makes on the typeface are indications for Straub & Huillet to cut, and each one of the cuts, takes us to each one of the reciters which in turn can be identified with the typographical variations in the verses. And in “following of the flow of writing”, as Mallarmé indicates, “everything takes place, in sections, by supposition; narrative is avoided. In addition, this use of the bare thought with its retreats, prolongations, and flights, by reason of its very design, for anyone wishing to read it aloud, results in a score.”¹¹³ The rhythmic movements of the dialogue Mallarmé suggests, could very well describe not only *Every Revolution* but Straub & Huillet’s customary practice.

Following this cartography, a new line of flight moves in a different direction. If Straub & Huillet lead us to Mallarmé, this one in return takes us back to Nietzsche. ‘All thought expresses a throw of the dice’ — could this epilogue in Mallarmé’s poem be the second movement of a dice throw as recounted by Nietzsche? If the dice are thrown, won’t they necessarily fall back, being “the combination which they form on falling the affirmation of necessity”¹¹⁴ ? For both Nietzsche and Mallarmé, according to Deleuze, chance is not a question of probability but of necessity. Chance is affirmed by a single throw, and it’s the bad player (who relies on probability, causality, and finality) that executes a reiteration of the throws. “Form, species, law, idea, purpose - in all these cases the same error is made of giving a false reality to a fiction, as if events were in some way obedient to something.”¹¹⁵ Nietzsche, the nomad, escapes the dogmas of dominant thought that distance life from joy. Mallarmé, the nomad, escapes the conventions of traditional poetry and narrative to allow accidental

¹¹² “Mallarmé, in its stammerings, it embraces all our current efforts to confine the fragmented being of language once more within a perhaps impossible unity.” Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 332-333.

¹¹³ Mallarmé, “Throw of the Dice,” Preface.

¹¹⁴ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 26.

¹¹⁵ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 282.

encounters and the 'flowering of imagination'. Straub & Huillet, the nomads, flee the conventions of a cinema that perpetuates the model of the repressors and who, paraphrasing Rivette in his letter to Rossellini, "culminate art, no longer answerable to anyone but itself". Because if there's something that these nomads have understood well, it is that "the universe has no purpose, that it has no end to hope for any more than it has causes to be known - this is the certainty necessary to play well."¹¹⁶

Where else do these good players, Straub & Huillet, take us, by way of all the connections they produce? To a particular place: the cemetery Père-Lachaise where one hundred and forty-seven socialist and communist insurgents were shot during the Paris Commune. It is in the field of the cemetery that Danièle Huillet, among others, sitting on the grass, recites Mallarmé's poem. And it is in this cemetery where the historian Jules Michelet, who grants the film with a title, was buried five years after the massacre. But what does the recurrence of all these historical facts, texts, ideas tell us? If we understand repetition in the Deleuzian way, not as the repetition of the same but as the affirmation of difference: "To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular."¹¹⁷ This is, according to Deleuze, the paradox of commemoration days: they repeat that which cannot be repeated. "They do not add a second and a third time to the first, but carry the first time to the nth power. With respect to this power, repetition interiorises and thereby reverses itself: as Peguy says, it is not Federation Day which commemorates or represents the fall of the Bastille, but the fall of the Bastille which celebrates and repeats in advance all the Federation Days."¹¹⁸ Isn't then Nietzsche, somehow, celebrating Mallarmé, along with Mallarmé, Michelet and the events of the Paris Commune, all celebrating Straub & Huillet?

¹¹⁶ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 27.

¹¹⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 2.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

In any case, the landscape doesn't perform as mere background – it is not just an element of reminiscence of a past revolution. It's the act of reciting Mallarme's poem in the very same place where the revolutionaries were shot, that transforms the landscape into a 'landscape of resistance'. And given all these layers of history, the reciting becomes itself an act of resistance. It is in this favouring of the ahistorical event, that Straub & Huillet, just like Mallarme, avoid narrative and avoid being narrators — thereby becoming collective agents. For they don't rely on probability, chance, or purpose, but necessity. They repeat the 'unrepeatable': not revolution, but the revolutionary-becoming of people.

Chapter 3

Proposition 3: CoR enters the realm of nomadology, hence freeing itself from ideology: there is no ideology and never has been.

In cinema, like in philosophy, we can either find a gravitation towards the norm, towards the conventional, or we can find instead movements towards experimentation, towards the new. Thus, the first instance results in a representational and sedentary cinema, made by those who call nothing into question, which (purposely or not) reproduces the relations of power, and formulates the statements of the organisations of power. A cinema contributing to the production of a subjectivity that turns a film into a product of consumption like any other, and turn us into passive viewers content merely with contemplating the world. Secondly, there is an experimental and nomadic cinema, with aspirations to the creation of a new earth, of a new people, operating through flows that are impossible (or at least hard) to codify by the system, a cinema that invents new subjectivities, rebelling against the modes that standardise and institutionalise it. Zarathustra puts it well: there are those, the immaculate ones, who gaze and mirror without desire, they are like the moon which simply reflects light; and then there are those who create the new, like the sun creates light.¹¹⁹ Both of these tendencies, representational and nomadic, major and minor, operate at the level of desiring-production. And there lies a fundamental division between our non-linear historical materialism approach and an orthodox historical materialism, but also with other entrenched traditions (hugely influential in cinema studies) based on Freudian and psychoanalytical propositions.

As Deleuze himself notes, there are three fundamental divergences, of which two are of interest.¹²⁰ Firstly, Marxism sets out problems in terms of necessity, whereas Deleuze & Guattari formulate them in terms of desire. Within this premise desire must be understood as a productive machine that exceeds the individual, and as such it's liberated from its standardisation by a system that

¹¹⁹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 144-147.

¹²⁰ Deleuze, *Derrames*, 222.

turns it into lack, and individuals into consumers that desire what they lack. Just as the unconscious also functions as a machine, having nothing to do with the imaginary, the symbolic or the structural. Economy is productive but also libidinal. It is not the subject who desires, but desiring-production that forms the subject. Secondly, Deleuze & Guattari do not differentiate between a base and a superstructure (namely, an economic infrastructure and an ideological one), but believe that there are only organisations of power. And contributing to these power relations we can equally find both the economic processes and the processes of subjectivation. The production of subjectivity operates at all levels, without distinction: "It is not true what the structuralists say: it is not the facts of language, nor of communication that produce subjectivity. Subjectivity is manufactured just as energy, electricity and aluminium."¹²¹ Furthermore, "[a]ll these questions of the collective economy of desire no longer seem utopian from the moment we stop considering the production of subjectivity as a particular case of superstructure, depending on the heavy production structures of social relations; from the moment we consider the production of subjectivity as the raw material for the evolution of the productive forces in their most "developed" forms."¹²² Here I feel an idea must be stressed: the system not only produces objects for consumption but it also produces the subjects who consume them.¹²³ We do not consume what we need but rather we are made to desire what we produce. A CoR must, for that reason, resist its absorption into the codes of consumption. Hence a true work of art, a true film of the CoR is one that prevents itself from becoming a commodity.

Deleuze claimed that the function of philosophy is that of the creation of concepts, but the real foundation of his project with Guattari was a meticulous dissection of capitalism. Together they expose an immanent system in constant transformation and expansion of its limits, insatiably overcoding and reterritorialising intensities and movements, endlessly shutting lines of flight, relentlessly attempting to transform works of art into commodities. To be able to

¹²¹ Guattari, *Micropolítica*, 48. (My translation).

¹²²"[...] The raw material of the movement itself that animates the current world crisis, that kind of will to productive power that revolutionises production itself through scientific and biological revolutions, through the massive incorporation of telematics, computer science and robot science, through the increasing weight of collective equipment and the mass media." Guattari, *Micropolítica*, 40. (My translation).

¹²³ Marx, *Grundrisse*, 25.

resist this, it is necessary to create concepts and films that free philosophy and cinema from a dominant thought which aligns itself with institutions of power, that free life from the repressive tendencies of capitalism. Yet to do so, we must reject the notion of ideology as the justification for many of the tendencies of life-production: the becoming-fascist of desire, the misuse of language and misconstruction of the nature of signs, etc: “ideology is an execrable concept, that hides the real problems which are always of organisational nature.”¹²⁴ This amounts to a crucial redirection, because the majoritarian tendency in political cinema after May 68’, as Jean-Louis Comolli expressed, was addressed in terms of ideology: “[t]oday, it is just about admitted by the majority of film critics [...] that every film is an ideological product, that it is made in and diffuses an ideology, and that by dint of this fact, however ‘artistic’ it may claim to be, it has something to do with politics.”¹²⁵

Marx and Engels approach the notion of ideology by saying that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas [...] The class which has the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it”¹²⁶. Antonio Gramsci expands this notion to ‘hegemony’, explaining that this subjugation is not established by force but rather is consensual.¹²⁷ Precisely there lies one aspect of the immanent power of capitalism — to ensure that “in the subject who desires, desire can be made to desire its own repression.”¹²⁸ In any case, ideology as the function of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), alluding to Althusser’s structuralist thesis, is a means to continue reproducing the capitalist conditions of production, more accurately the relations of production, therefore maintaining the status quo. It follows that “ideology is a ‘representation’ of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence”¹²⁹: a false image, a reflection, a dream. For Guy Debord, the materialisation of ideology occurs in the shape of the spectacle, thanks to which ideology

¹²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 392.

¹²⁵ Comolli, *Cinema Against Spectacle*, 143.

¹²⁶ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 192.

¹²⁷ Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*.

¹²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 127.

¹²⁹ Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, 162.

becomes part of the everyday, determining the real through a distorted view of life that nevertheless turns into the universal and accepted view of life.¹³⁰

“A movie is not reality, it is only a reflection. Bourgeois filmmakers focus on the reflection of reality. We are concerned with the reality of that reflection,”¹³¹ declared Godard in 1970. Godard’s work with the Dziga Vertov Group subsumed the ideological discourse, attempting to create what Peter Wollen termed, counter-cinema. This counter-cinema can only exist as interdependent of a dominant ideological cinema,¹³² hence acknowledging its axioms. Even though Godard subscribed to Althusser and Comolli’s analysis at that time, he abandoned this discourse thereafter — and his subsequent work, especially from the late 1970’s, rejected the ideological discourse but also the dialectical method, in favour of a different type of political cinema.¹³³

We have indeed established the political nature of the CoR, however, like Godard, we must divert from structuralist schools of thought which do not understand the productive function of subjectivity and pose the problems as representational: “ideology remains in the sphere of representation when the essential production of IWC [Integrated World Capitalism] is not merely representation, but the modelling of behaviours, sensibility, perceptions, memory, social relations, sexual relations, imaginary ghosts, etc.”¹³⁴ And cinema certainly has the power to contribute to these. It is by comprehending Deleuze & Guattari’s thought in terms of the potentialities of the virtual to actualise, and looking at formations as assemblages (as opposed to reducing and misconstruing the nature of things in terms of ideology and a base/superstructure socio-economical system), that we can truly engage with the possibilities that cinema offers with regards to form and expression, thus allowing it to resist becoming spectacle, becoming commodity. That is the course of action for CoR to fight modes of repression and escape the processes of overcoding and reterritorialisation by which capitalism subjects language, the arts and cinema to their axiomatic machine: “Capitalism institutes or restores all

¹³⁰ Debord, *The Society*.

¹³¹ Lesage, “Godard & Gorin’s.”

¹³² Wollen, “Godard and Counter Cinema.”

¹³³ See page 72 for the shift expressed in his film *Ici et Ailleurs* (1976).

¹³⁴ Guattari, *Micropolítica*, 42. (My translation).

sorts of residual and artificial, imaginary, or symbolic territorialities, thereby attempting, as best it can, to recode, to re-channel persons who have been defined in terms of abstract quantities. Everything returns or recurs: States, nations, families. That is what makes the ideology of capitalism ‘a motley painting of everything that has ever been believed.’ The real is not impossible; it is simply more and more artificial.”¹³⁵ The question is no longer how the means of mental production, cinema included, reproduce and sustain the means of economic production, but how the production of subjectivity contributes to capitalism’s surplus in its frantic and insatiable production/consumption/recording process, its ceaseless and delirious overproduction of images (optical and sound images). Once a surplus of consumable material objects, now a surplus of images, experiences and affects. In other words, anything and everything can be consumed. “Does the world exist if I’m not watching it?” Farocki asks us in his film *Parallel II* (2014). As we’ve seen, throughout his work, Farocki proves to us that a CoR does not simply resist the overcoding of capitalism by means of form and content, it also unveils the very processes by which our lives are produced, recorded, consumed, and how we are made into subjects that produce, are recorded and consume —workers, consumers, spectators, prisoners, soldiers, citizens.

If Deleuze & Guattari rescue any concept from Althusser’s thesis on ideology, is that of subjectivation by means of interpellation. They, however, dissociate it from ideology. They propose instead a new semiology in which various regimes of signs coexist, amongst them a regime of *signifiance*¹³⁶ and a regime of subjectification (or subjectivation). The first one generates meaning; the latter generates subjects. And both are grounds for the realisation of power. Thus, the question for us is, how can a film —as capable as it is of modelling behaviours, sensibilities, perceptions and contributing to the artificiality we are led to live, by means of creating signifying chains and interpretations, by means of relating to identitarian values that appeal to and create subjects— resist becoming an instrument of power and resist becoming a commodity which is produced, consumed and recorded as part of the surplus of capitalism? In other words,

¹³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 48.

¹³⁶ Signifiance in linguistics is, broadly, the emergence of meaning in the recipient. In Deleuze & Guattari, as Brian Massumi describes, refers to “the syntagmatic [...] process of language as a ‘signifying regime of signs. [It is] borrowed from Benveniste (“signifying capacity”).” Masumi, *A Thousand Plateaus*, xvii.

how can a film escape the processes of subjectification and *signifiante* and become an a-signifying and pre-subjective cinema?

In essence, the type of cinema that situates itself within the bounds of the norm, the conventional, that we've been labelling cinema of representation, functions through signifiante and subjectification and has a strong foundation in lack:

"The deliberate creation of lack as a function of market economy is the art of a dominant class. This involves deliberately organising wants and needs (*manque*) amid an abundance of production; making all of desire teeter and fall victim to the great fear of not having one's needs satisfied; and making the object dependent upon a real production that is supposedly exterior to desire (the demands of rationality), while at the same time the production of desire is categorised as fantasy and nothing but fantasy."¹³⁷ The description Deleuze & Guattari give of the manner in which capitalism makes use of lack could almost be the synopsis or the character description of many contemporary films. Films that fill the screen with people in search of a dream, who can't fully appreciate life because they are always longing for something they lack: an idealised goal treated the same way advertisements sell consumer products. And when it isn't the character who lacks something, it's the spectator who lacks what the character has, as result of a deification the film makes of these characters who should be admired to the point of wanting to become more like them. Or else, "cinema substitutes for our gaze a world that corresponds to our desires."¹³⁸ A world in which we are subjectified as consumers of desires, and with a centre of signifiante in which all actions, and all words, find an ultimate sense that appeals to our unconscious.

In any event, whether it is a character or the spectator who lacks, desire is regarded in terms of empathy and psychological verisimilitude (two conditions that the CoR refuses): the 'author's approach', to create a world that doesn't await to be created.¹³⁹ This is precisely what makes the CoR a 'minoritarian'

¹³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 41.

¹³⁸ Bazin cited by Godard, *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, 1a. 00:06:16 - 00:07:50.

¹³⁹ "The author, as subject of enunciation, is first of all a spirit: sometimes he identifies with his characters or makes us identify with them, or with the idea they represent; sometimes, on the other hand, he introduces a distance which allows us to observe, to criticise, to prolong." Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 52.

cinema and not a 'marginal' cinema. Why do we desire our own repression? "Why do men fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?"¹⁴⁰ Why do we accept the codes of capitalism as modes of life? Why do we enter the cinema in search of manufactured dreams conscious of the artifice embedded within? The CoR flees these modes of representation, utterly alien and artificial to life, and becomes a minoritarian cinema, a nomad cinema, a cinema of those and for those who fight fascism "not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini — which was able to mobilise and use the desire of the masses so effectively — but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us."¹⁴¹

Thus, CoR's ability is not equated with making us empathise and identify with those represented on the screen, nor with expressing the will of the masses, whether it is democracy (early America cinema) or revolution (Soviet cinema), but rather its potential lies in the capacity to make us engage in a revolutionary-becoming, a democratic-becoming, a becoming-other. And this becoming, which is a process of deterritorialisation and has nothing to do identification, imitation or history, is always minoritarian. Deleuze & Guattari illustrate it by referencing *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), in which Faulkner, tackling racial tensions in the South, expressed that, "to avoid ending up a fascist there was no other choice but to become-black."¹⁴² The writer's becoming, the becoming-other, that of being in the middle, *of inventing assemblages starting from assemblages that have invented him; neither identification nor distance, neither proximity nor remoteness*. There is no finer exemplar of this than Jean Rouch. Rouch's cinema demonstrates a total break with the representational subjectification/significance regime. This fracture occurs when the identity of both the character and the filmmaker are questioned and transformed by means of becoming the other. Rouch stops being Flaherty-the filmmaker, abandons the role of the coloniser and becomes his characters at the same time as the characters become other themselves: *Moi, un Noir* (1958), *La Pyramide Humaine*

¹⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 42.

¹⁴¹ Michel Foucault, Preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, by Deleuze and Guattari, xii-xiii.

¹⁴² "We are in the position of the German after 1933 who had no other alternative but to be a Nazi or a Jew." Faulkner, *Intruder*, 138.

(1961), *Jaguar* (1967).¹⁴³ In *Le Maîtres Fous* (1957), when this method begins to be manifested, we encounter the rites of the Hauka who perform British military liturgies in order to enter into a collective trance and be possessed by the colonialist's spirit. "Violence is merely a reflection of our civilisation", Rouch warns the viewers in anticipation of what we're about to see. The documentation and account of these ceremonies is significant to the extent that they are not purely pre-colonial 'primitive' rituals recorded for the voyeuristic eye of the civilised spectator in the West, but rather it presents a religious movement born from the state of colonisation of the African people, constituting a resistance to the white coloniser embedded within their new culture. In their penance, the Hauka are not merely representing the violence of the white man, but they are acquiring a national/ethnic consciousness built upon the very struggle and resistance against the supremacy of the coloniser, requisite, according to Fanon, to build a national culture.¹⁴⁴ Hence, there is a black-becoming, not just of Rouch but of his characters. This break in the subjectivity, this becoming other, attends to a political sense, an attitude, a responsibility. Rouch's films are indeed political gestures which, to go back to Comolli, are in no way ideological.

Having said that, Comolli and Narboni raised an important and relevant issue when discussing their application of Althusser's ISA thesis to cinema. Namely, the impossibility for filmmakers to produce outside of a system of production within the economic capitalistic system which controls not only the manufacturing but (I'll add — most importantly) the distribution of films. This inconceivable circumstance is due to the fact, according to Comolli and Narboni, that a filmmaker is not able to change the economic relations in which a film is produced or distributed on her own. Their logic is surely pessimistic: we live in a world occupied by an overreaching capitalist system, within which any film that is ever produced must necessarily reproduce and reaffirm the system since we filmmakers are unable to change it. Consequently, every film is a product of the ideological apparatus of the system since it reproduces its conditions. However, Comolli and Narboni rule out the uninterpretable and

¹⁴³ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 147.

¹⁴⁴ See page 112 for discussion of Fanon ideas on national culture.

imperceptible elements of life that only film can capture. They obviate the becoming-revolutionary of people. They do not consider resistance.

How can a filmmaker strive to avoid the absorption of her film into the codes of consumption, to stop it from becoming a commodity, and to avoid reproducing the image of the state apparatus? Straub is well aware of this struggle: "In the cinema, in being content to oppose the system, we run the risk of strengthening it".¹⁴⁵ Walter Benjamin denounced the position of certain 'revolutionary' collectives or intellectuals who, at the time, proclaimed the virtues and imperative necessity of socialism but failed to be at the side of the proletariat, failed to truly engage in the class struggle as a result of their position within the production process. Those intellectuals, acting as "well-wisher[s], [as] ideological patron[s],"¹⁴⁶ assumed the role of the author by simply identifying with the cause yet keeping their distance from it. Instead, Benjamin praises Brecht who was actively involved in the transformation of the means of production because as Benjamin puts it, "to supply a production apparatus without trying, within the limits of the possible, to change it, is a highly disputable activity even when the material supplied appears to be of revolutionary nature. For we are confronted with the fact [...] that the bourgeois apparatus of production and publication is capable of assimilating, indeed of propagating, an astonishing amount of revolutionary themes without even seriously putting into question its own continued existence or that of the class which owns it".¹⁴⁷

For Deleuze & Guattari "the state exists primarily as a process rather than a thing" and "[this] state-form is defined by the processes or practices of 'overcoding', 'despotic signification' and 'machinic enslavement.'"¹⁴⁸ In turn, "the state as machine of anti-production operates to restrict, prevent or channel these flows of creative energy so as to preserve fixed social forms and restrict the extent of difference which is able to exist, or the connections it is able to

¹⁴⁵ Straub and Huillet, *Writings*, 107.

¹⁴⁶ Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, 93.

¹⁴⁷ Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, 94.

¹⁴⁸ Robinson, "In Theory Why Deleuze."

form”¹⁴⁹. And it does so whether by addition or by subtraction of axioms.¹⁵⁰ In the first case the seemingly consensual acceptance of certain groups, such as ethnic minorities in the form of rights for those groups, of transgressive works of art, or of revolutionary themes, define the processes which occur in a democratic kind of state. The second case determines the nature of a totalitarian type of state in which “[t]he subtraction of axioms consists of the encoding of differences as problems to be suppressed.” The Soviet Union is a paradigmatic example of the latter. The becoming-revolutionary of people, motivated by the October Revolution, prompted radical experimentation in the arts to thrive, giving rise to pioneering theories and works which remain relevant today. How else could we describe Vertov’s idea of the emancipation of the machinic eye — the camera —? (“From today we are liberating the camera, and making it work in the opposite direction, *furthest away from copying.*”¹⁵¹) Or Meyerhold’s biomechanics? (“In the past the actor has always conformed to the society for which his art was intended. In future the actor must go even further in relating his technique to the industrial situation. For he will be working in a society where labour is no longer regarded as a curse but as a joyful, vital necessity. In these conditions of ideal labour art clearly requires a new foundation...”¹⁵²) However, with the arrival of Stalin, the imposition of a unique doctrine (socialist realism) took place and the despotic repressive machine was activated, crushing the flourishing of creative productive forces, “differences as problems to be suppressed”¹⁵³: Vertov was relegated to a simple editor of doctrinal newsreels, Eisenstein, the ‘deserter’, had to subjugate his creative process to Stalin’s orders, and Meyerhold was sentenced to death and executed.

In opposition, in resistance to the hierarchical and repressive formations of the State (such as the film industry) stands the abstract machine: a machine of differentiation, deterritorialisation and becoming, capable of originating nomad thought — a nomadology. “History is always written from a sedentary point of

¹⁴⁹ Robinson, “In Theory Why Deleuze.”

¹⁵⁰ “An axiom here refers to the inclusion of a particular group or social logic or set of desires as something recognised by a state.” Robinson, “In Theory Why Deleuze.”

¹⁵¹ Vertov cited in Walsh, *Brechtian Aspect*, 15.

¹⁵² Braun, *Meyerhold Revolution in Theatre*, 172.

¹⁵³ Robinson, “In Theory Why Deleuze.”

view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus, at least a possible one, even when the topic is nomads. What is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history.”¹⁵⁴ In contrast to those who, in the name of mankind and cinema, venture to write history —while profiting at the same time— by realising films as regrettable as *Schindler's List* (1993), we are fortunate to count with *Roma Città Aperta* (1945), the only true film that “resisted American occupation of cinema and a uniform way of making films” —as Godard recounts in *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*. Rossellini was not only resisting the fascism of the Germans and the Spielbergs of his day, but was creating a new cinema. A new cinema which, paraphrasing Malraux, revolted against its own fate while revolting against the fate of mankind. Cinema as anti-destiny; a true Cinema of Resistance.

The importance of the political gesture or how to change the relations of production

Pedro Costa, a nomad filmmaker, after the success of his film *Ossos* (1997) in Venice rejected a producer’s proposition of “making the next one the same, but bigger” by going ‘smaller’ instead. While *Ossos* was shot on 35mm by Emmanuel Machuel, Bresson’s cinematographer in *L’Argent* (1983), and by a relatively large crew, his next film, *No Quarto da Vanda* (2000), was shot on MiniDV by two men, Pedro Costa himself, assuming the role of camera operator/cinematographer, and a sound recordist. Costa’s new way of producing ‘smaller’, was not merely a response to the producer but was also a commitment and responsibility towards the community which took part, and continuously takes part, in his films. Costa, aware of the disruption that the night shoot of *Ossos* was causing the people of the deprived neighbourhood of Fontainhas, workers that had to get up and go to work in the early hours of the morning, altered the process of making films, the relations of production, to speak ‘with’, rather than ‘in the place of’. It was during this moment that Costa abandoned his aspirations as an enunciating author and became a collective agent working towards a minor cinema, resisting the absorption of his work from the so-called independent system, creating lines of flight.

¹⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 24.

Straub & Huillet stand as incorruptible paragons of a ‘not reconciled’ resistance: “rather than attacking the Festival of Cannes or of Venice, New York, or London [...], let us refuse the contracts that deprive us of all rights to our films, let us prevent the dubbing of our films throughout the world (even for television), let us demand better screenings and better copies [...] and let us tackle our aesthetic and moral clichés.”¹⁵⁵ Their politics and ethics are one and the same with their life and work. Their actions and films manifest not their will to make a revolution, but their revolutionary becoming: 1968, a letter of refusal to attend the Berlin Film Festival on the occasion of the screening of *Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968), in which Straub criticises the festival for being a cradle of parasites and whores (referring to industry suits, journalists and even jurors)¹⁵⁶; 1970, they refuse to dub their film *Othon* (1969) which was bought by RAI, appealing to the irreproducibility of certain surprises in life such as a noise, an instance of voice, or the sigh of a girl¹⁵⁷; 2006, they send their actors to read a message to Venice where Straub declines to celebrate a “festival where there is so much police, public and private, in search of a terrorist — the terrorist is me, paraphrasing Franco Fortini: *as long as American imperialistic capitalism exists, there will never be enough terrorists in the world.*”¹⁵⁸ Straub-Huillet, indeed embody resistance towards a highly sophisticated imperialistic machine, Hollywood, a factory whose power lies in the production of dreams by turning desire into lack: “the masses love myths and cinema speaks to the masses.”¹⁵⁹ The power of Hollywood: “the world for a nickel.”¹⁶⁰

These examples are nothing but signs of nomad flows, lines of flight within the structures of capitalistic modes of production. However, here arises a paradoxical problem: if we consider CoR not a representation of life, but life itself (which capitalism constantly tries to absorb and overcode) isn't the CoR also — forced to operate within the system of capitalism — deterritorialising the codes of capitalism in order to bring life back to its natural state, away from the artificiality into which it has slumped? There seems to be a double movement in

¹⁵⁵ Straub and Huillet, *Writings*, 107.

¹⁵⁶ Straub and Huillet, *Escritos*, 109-110. (My translation).

¹⁵⁷ Straub and Huillet, *Escritos*, 119-122. (My translation).

¹⁵⁸ Straub and Huillet, *Escritos*, 177. (My translation).

¹⁵⁹ Godard, “Tout les histoires,” *Histoire(s) du cinema*, 00:36:35.

¹⁶⁰ Godard, “Tout les histoires,” *Histoire(s) du cinema*, 00:12:37.

play: on the one hand, assimilation; on the other resistance. So as for the CoR, it is not a question of taking control of the means of material production in order to dominate the means of mental production, rather, just like with Straub-Huillet, it is to produce outside the system yet never forget who the adversaries are. Godard tells us in his *Histoire(s)* that when Radio Paris was seized by the Nazis, the radio lied and betrayed, but the cinema resisted and “kept its word”: *The Great Dictator* (1940), Lubitsch, “even if scratched to death, a simple 35 millimetre rectangle saves the honour of reality.”¹⁶¹ For Pasolini, if there is one thing that the system cannot assimilate it is poetry: “poetry is unconsumable” and “[t]he same goes for cinema, I will make films even more difficult, drier, more complex and perhaps ever more provocative, so they will be the least consumable possible.”¹⁶² If there is something more antipodal to poetry than a consumer product, that would probably be ideology. In trying to express a non-ideological, unconsumable cinema: are we talking then of a poetic cinema or, as Pasolini would refer to, a cinema of poetry? Cinema, like poetry, reveals the imperceptible in reality, just as in Bresson’s commandment “make appear what, without you, might perhaps never have been seen”¹⁶³; just like Rossellini’s cinema-microscope that helps us see things because it tells us ‘look right there’, rather than presenting a representation of things, whose command is ‘close your eyes’.¹⁶⁴ Is poetry then an effective approach of resistance, to resist capitalism, to resist death, slavery, infamy, shame?

¹⁶¹ Godard, “Tout les histoires,” *Histoire(s) du cinema*, 00:33:13.

¹⁶² “The poetry that I am writing now is unpleasant, it’s unpleasant poetry, a barely consumable poetry [...] I know that poetry is unconsumable, I know well that it is rhetorical to say that poetry books are also consumer products, because, on the contrary, poetry is not consumed. Sociologists are wrong on this point, they have to review their ideas. They say that the system eats everything, that it assimilates everything. It is not true, there are things that the system cannot assimilate, cannot digest. One of them, for example, is poetry: in my opinion, it is unconsumable. One can read a book of poems thousands of times and not consume it. The book is consumed, but not the poetry.” Pasolini, interview. (My translation).

¹⁶³ Bresson, *Notes sur le Cinématograph*. 76. (My translation).

¹⁶⁴ “Representations depend on will. Representations, not images. Let’s look at the difference. Trying to see something. Trying to picture something. In the first case, you sort of say, ‘look right there.’ And in the second, ‘close your eyes.’ Godard and Miéville, *Liberte et Patrie*, 00:01:25-00:01:48.

Chapter 4

Proposition 4: CoR's movements towards becoming occur by means of style, a style that is allocated outside the realms of subjects and objects, a style to come that doesn't exist yet, a non-style.

If poetry produces the unconsumable, philosophy thinks the unthinkable, and cinema reveals the imperceptible, then the cinema that explores its own ontology engaging with these creative domains (the CoR) would be able to produce a film impossible to commodify, which is able to provoke thought by means of capturing that which can only be sensed. By examining its attributes while connecting with other artistic domains, I will demonstrate that the CoR concerns itself primarily with the creative process and not the end result. A process that instead of presupposing an existing closed system of structures, or being concerned with providing significations and interpretations, finds its main objective in experimentation. It is through this essential process and act of creation that the style of the work is realised. "Becomings — they are the thing which is the most imperceptible, they are acts which can only be contained in a life and expressed in a style."¹⁶⁵

Deleuze believed and put into practice the idea that philosophy had to continuously engage with other disciplines such as literature, art, cinema, etc, to create encounters and push philosophy's own limits: the becoming non-philosopher of the philosopher.¹⁶⁶ Simultaneously, philosophy must be of use to non-philosophers to think, to experiment. Within this engaging with the multiple, in this deterritorialisation, is where expression is formalised and form is expressed - in other words, where style emerges. Yet, not the kind of style that capitalism produces/consumes/records in the form of a pattern void of any sense other than selling a film like a consumer product, and which ultimately transform the style into a formulated vacuous practice (even if proclaiming its innovation, originality, artistry) — but a non-style. A style not as an imposition of

¹⁶⁵ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 3

¹⁶⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 109.

form but as something that hasn't been formed yet, that doesn't exist yet, that is a product of the creative productive process. When asked about the unity of his work, Peter Nestler replied "I can see it, but I never built on the last, or any other film. I always try to be open to starting from scratch. But when the films are done, I can see it. They have relationships, because I'm after certain questions, important questions."¹⁶⁷ And Straub praised his colleague Nestler for that very reason "[p]eople who simply record — or film, paint, draw — what they see without previously trying to impose a form and thus make reality disappear are getting more and more rare in the field of film. Such people are like Cézanne, who did nothing but paint apples and to whom people would say, '*Those aren't apples you are painting.*'"¹⁶⁸

But, how does non-style form? What differentiates Deleuze's notion from the way 'style' is commonly accounted for in the artistic disciplines? Long before André Bazin or Jean Mitry could begin enunciating the characteristics of cinematographic style, literature and the plastic arts had been studied and dissected in various ways in order that scholars could describe them using common terms, eras, categories etc. The vast back-catalogue of works and accompanying hindsight gifted to art and literature historians, allows very detailed analysis of how aesthetics and style developed over the many thousands of years during which humans have recorded images, narratives and ideas. The art historian Heinrich Wölfflin sets the style of a work of art as a foundational principle in the history of art and distinguishes, broadly speaking, between a general style (given by a national tendency i.e. Flemish painting, or an epoch, i.e. the Renaissance) and an individual style (which he affiliates with a certain 'temperament' of the artist).¹⁶⁹ In cinema, the aforementioned work of Bazin and Mitry who advocated stylistic analysis over conceptual or thematic evaluation, but also and more recently David Bordwell's *On the History of Film Style* (1997) or Barry Salt's *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (1983), corroborate the importance of style just as in any other artistic field: "The way movies look has a history; this history calls out for the analysis and explanation; and the study of this domain —the history of film style— presents

¹⁶⁷ Nestler, interview.

¹⁶⁸ Straub and Huillet, *Writings*, 99.

¹⁶⁹ Wölfflin, *Principles*, 1-13.

inescapable challenges to anyone who want to understand cinema.”¹⁷⁰ Having said that, the issue at hand is not to chronicle the developments of cinematographic style but to re-evaluate this notion from a practitioner’s viewpoint and from the current practice of what I’ve been denominating CoR. And as such, I consider it pertinent to take the definition as expressed by a filmmaker, Carl Theodor Dreyer, as a ‘working’ definition of style: “Style in an artistic film is the product of many different components, such as the play of rhythm and composition, the mutual tension of colour surfaces, the interaction of light and shadow, the measured gliding of the camera. All these things, in association with the conception that a director has of his material, determines his style.”¹⁷¹ In this description two qualities of different nature are brought together. Firstly, Dreyer alludes to the intrinsic and formal elements of a film, those to do with movement, duration, structure, but also plastic elements that cinema shares with other visual arts such as painting and photography, i.e., shot composition, chromatic and luminance arrangements, etc. Secondly, he identifies the figure of the director as constitutive of what we call style, consequently ascribing the personal dimension of a work as a differentiating attribute between the concepts ‘form’ and ‘style’. However, from Dreyer’s words we cannot conclude that he ascribes the director/author a higher status in terms of unifying factor of a particular work, a complete oeuvre or even an artistic movement. And this is made explicit as Dreyer continues —“to find a style that has value for only a single film, for *this* milieu, *this* action, *this* character, *this* subject.”¹⁷²

Nonetheless, this status given to the author of an artistic work when it accounts for the style of such work is commonly considered in art, literary and film criticism as a necessary condition for great works: a work’s excellence is attributed to individual style inasmuch as it grants the work with an identity and evidences its atypicality. Fredric Jameson acknowledges the fact that the singular attention paid to individual style in literature is a relatively modern phenomenon. The writer, Jameson adds, no longer attends to certain accepted forms that predate his writing, whether a stylistic trend of an epoch or a school,

¹⁷⁰ Bordwell, *On the History*, 4.

¹⁷¹ Dreyer as cited in Straub and Huillet, *Writings*, 103.

¹⁷² Dreyer as cited in Straub and Huillet, *Writings*, 103.

but instead, the value of his work depends on its originality which amounts to how his work is recognised and differentiated from others.¹⁷³ In like manner, in cinema, directors with personal styles, original traits recurring throughout their oeuvre are celebrated — and such are the prerequisites of the auteur theory as discerned by Andrew Sarris.¹⁷⁴ Style is therefore frequently envisioned as a personal quality, at times a genre mannerism in a work, that singles out *difference*, yet, as Anne Sauvagnargues notes, *difference* merely as a manifestation of identity.¹⁷⁵ This conception of style (which commends, as does Lukács, the idea of totality, of unity of a work) delivers a set of principles which monitor the artistic production and shapes it into the model of capitalist production, simultaneously organising it hierarchically, and at the same time certifying the quality of the works, to either reject them or normalise them. In other words, style standardises and creates an ‘archetype factory’.¹⁷⁶ Be that as it may, the CoR cannot acquire a degree of orthodoxy by means of the style of its works, as it is not concerned with the production of meaning, with the politics of identity, with the mannerisms of genres, with producing major works, and recognising great authors. Nor does it engage in processes of individuation which assume the personal origin of the films, and link to an author defined as ‘body, subject, form’. Instead, the films of the CoR are minor works defined by their a-signifying, impersonal and intensive essence; an essence which has no power to unify or totalise and is instead understood as a process of individuation that overcomes the individual,¹⁷⁷ and whose absolute grounds is experimentation.

Style does not merely belong to realms of literature or art, as it can be stumbled on in other fields such as science, sport, music and naturally, film.¹⁷⁸ For Deleuze, style is always a question of syntax. It works as a machine that creates the variations and modulations necessary to contort a language and

¹⁷³ Jameson, *Sartre*, vii-viii.

¹⁷⁴ Klevan, *Aesthetic Evaluation and Film*, 46.

¹⁷⁵ Sauvagnargues, “Cartographies of Style,” 214.

Deleuze puts forward a concept of ‘difference’ in itself and not of ‘difference’ as some determination which distinguishes one identity from another.

¹⁷⁶ Sauvagnargues, “Cartographies of Style,” 214.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Essence’ as defined in Proust and Signs, chapter 12: “an individuating viewpoint superior to the individuals themselves, breaking with their chains of associations [...] The Essences, like the Laws, have no power to unify or to totalize.”

¹⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 131.

take it outside of itself¹⁷⁹ — recalling Proust's maxim, to write as if one's language was a kind of foreign language. Furthermore, style does not operate on a semantic level, it is a-signifying. "It is no longer a question of discerning relations of resemblance between real things, but of producing a system of differential intervals between terms that have no signification in and of themselves, and which only acquire their sense through this play of positions."¹⁸⁰ To look at how non-style is formed in cinema, how the imperceptible is manifested in a film, we have to look at cinema's 'syntax': that is, syntax not as a system of principles and structures but as a creative line which is organised in a plane of consistence. Deleuze distinguishes between two planes of formation. On the one hand, the plane of organisation or transcendence, a structural plane which precedes the development of forms, forms that are subjected to a certain pre-established order. "One such plane is that of the Law, in so far as it organises and develops forms, genres, themes, motifs, and assigns and causes the evolution of subjects, persons, characteristic features and feelings: harmony of forms, education of subjects."¹⁸¹ On the other hand, the plane of consistence or immanence is an affective plane and exists inasmuch as unformed elements enter into relations with each other, creating new dimensions or decreasing its own dimensions depending on what occurs in it. "Nothing develops, but things arrive late or in advance, and enter into some assemblage according to their compositions of speed. Nothing becomes subjective but haecceities [events] take shape according to the compositions of non-subjective powers and effects. Maps of speed and intensities... their common quality is to grow from the middle, to be always-in-between."¹⁸²

The manner in which the elements constituting the assemblage that is a film of the CoR (narrative structure, camera work, composition, performance of actors and non-actors, narration, sound, music, montage) enter into relation with one another in the plane of consistence is what comprises the style of a film to come, its non-style.

¹⁷⁹ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 140.

¹⁸⁰ Sauvagnargues, "Cartographies of Style," 217.

¹⁸¹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 92.

¹⁸² Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 93.

[A]n author is great because he cannot prevent himself from tracing flows and causing them to circulate, flows that split asunder the catholic and despotic signifier of his work, and that necessarily nourish a revolutionary machine on the horizon. That is what style is, or rather the absence of style—a-syntactic, a-grammatical: the moment when language is no longer defined by what it says, even less by what makes it a signifying thing, but by what causes it to move, to flow, and to explode—desire. For literature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal, a production and not an expression.¹⁸³

The formation of style is, therefore, a question of the event, and of 'haecceity', namely, "a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance,"¹⁸⁴ as opposed to a question of the author from whom the style emanates. And meaning is produced, as a succeeding contingent actualisation, due to the spontaneous and lawless distribution of the parts: all thought is a throw of a dice.¹⁸⁵

In this transversal organisation of the parts that constitute the style of a film, and in this anarchic and experimental engagement with the creative process, working methodology and technical application are consequential. If we were to take this position to the extreme, it could be said that the quintessential approach which unreservedly assumes the mantle of *filmmaking* as a process (and not 'a film' as a goal) would be: shooting without a script, relying on small-scale means of production, and bringing the narrative through montage. Wang Bing's methodology in making *Three Sisters*, which was a commission by a French television channel, resulted from his will to experiment with time, characters and documentary-making as a form to create a new narrative far from the conventional documentaries which are usually commissioned by broadcasters. While making this film, Wang Bing re-evaluated and modified his manner of filming so the formation of plot and characters differed from those of his previous works. The film was shot without a script, with two cameras, in ten days over a period of four months — and it was during the editing process, according to his own account, that the richness of the story surfaced and

¹⁸³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 158.

¹⁸⁴ "A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected." Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 304.

¹⁸⁵ Sauvagnargues, "Cartographies of Style," 218.

actualised. For Wang Bing the story of a film is never created in advance, it should be searched for during the filming process and materialised in the montage, so as not to restrict the possibilities of filmmaking.¹⁸⁶ Pedro Costa shares a similar practice, with the exception that Costa's work thrives more prominently on the narrative function of fiction. Costa has made nearly all of his films with the migrant community of the Fontainhas neighbourhood in Lisbon. He rejected, after *Ossos*, the mainstream ethos of film production (which he regards as indecent¹⁸⁷): namely, large budgets and large crews which invade and create a bubble apart from the people and place they intend to portray. Following this, Costa developed a work methodology which consists of almost daily rehearsals and filming, with actors and a skeleton crew. Within this very slow process, which occurs over a period of months, and through the direct and constant contact with the characters, the story is found. It is this openness in the creative process, which in film comes down to filming and editing, that allows 'great stylists'¹⁸⁸ to thrive, for the greatest stylists of all are those who don't impose a previously conceived style to a work, but this instead becomes evident during the making of the work: *to find a style that has value for only a single film, for this milieu, this action, this character, this subject.*

"Style is not the man, style is essence itself (non-style)" says Deleuze in *Proust and Signs* (1964). And essence, in this instance, does not refer to the permanent attributes that provide a thing with an identity but quite the opposite: essence is difference. Essence is repeated, and simultaneously difference is affirmed through repetition.¹⁸⁹ Difference and repetition are reciprocal and inextricable qualities of essence, and the variations, the changes that result from this constitute non-style. Difference and repetition are intrinsic attributes of the very processes of filmmaking that we are outlining here —filming and montage. During the shooting of their films, Straub and Huillet repeat incessantly the number of takes until they have at least two good takes on each

¹⁸⁶ Wang Bing, masterclass.

¹⁸⁷ Costa, interview.

¹⁸⁸ Deleuze, on numerous occasions uses this definition to talk mainly about writers such as Proust, Kafka, Kerouac. In this instance, he refers to it in the *Abecedere*, "S' for Style".

¹⁸⁹ "If repetition exists, it expresses at once a singularity opposed to the general, a universality opposed to the particular, a distinctive opposed to the ordinary, an instantaneity opposed to variation and an eternity opposed to permanence. In every respect repetition is a transgression. It puts law into question, it denounces its nominal or general character in favour of a more profound and more artistic reality."

Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 3.

roll of film. Their method requires a precise musical recitation by the actors, which is achieved by the mechanised effect of countless reiteration. Nonetheless what they search for is not flawlessness but variation and the subtleties of difference: “We notice that there is real progress within each take”, says Danièle Huillet. For William Lubtchansky, director of photography and long-term collaborator, “Jean-Marie perhaps hopes that there will be something different, in the actors’ performances, or, outside, in the light. He waits to be surprised by something.”¹⁹⁰ Similarly, in the editing process (as is made evident in Pedro Costa’s film *Où gît votre sourire enfoui?* [2001] where we observe Danièle Huillet’s meticulous work on the Steenbeck editing table cutting *Sicilia!* [1999]), it is the repetition in the playback of the takes, and the repetition of the cuts over and over again which brings difference. And within this variation, and the precision of the cuts attending to the subtleties in the performance of the actors, something else emerges between the shots: psychology. In Straub’s own words: “Some people have the impression - because we reject verisimilitude and TV-style cinema, [...] that there is no psychology in our films. But that’s not true. All this is psychology. There is no psychology in terms of the performance of the actor because there is a dramatic abstraction that goes deeper than the so-called verisimilitude. But it’s there, in between the shots, in the very montage and in the way the shots are linked to each other.”¹⁹¹ The importance of this fragile yet critical variability in the method of Straub and Huillet is evidenced by the fact that different screening copies of several films such as *The Antigone of Sophocles* (1991) exist. These versions vary in duration as each one of them has been edited with different takes of the same shot, and there is no ‘official version’ of a particular work — so the variations are embedded within them. It could be speculated that Huillet edited different versions of the same film because the physical nature of celluloid means that once a particular take is selected for a cut, it no longer exists in the bin of available takes — so that subsequent attempts to produce a cut must *de facto* use resources from a smaller pool. Hence the editing method is subject to the available technology which is used. This is precisely the point Harun Farocki and Kaja Silverman make apropos of Godard’s *Numéro Deux* (1975). Farocki and Silverman observe that while editing on film “one image comes *after*

¹⁹⁰ Bergala, “Straub-Huillet.”

¹⁹¹ Costa, *Où gît votre*, 00:21:45.

another, and implicitly negates everything which it isn't,"¹⁹² whereby video editing permits one to see two images at the same time, evidencing what's between the two: a third image. By the same token, video editing systems permit the re-use of takes between versions (without the expense of duplicate printing), axiomatically nullifying the possibility of 'variations through prudence' described above.

In *Interface* (1995), Farocki addresses the very nature of video editing, reflecting on what occurs during the concatenation of images in the cutting process. While sitting at his video editing station, he describes the operation of working with archival images, drawing connections between the images on the two monitors, in the same way the cameraman Paul Cozighian, through a camera pan, draws a connection between the image of Ceausescu on the television set speaking to the masses, and the street where men and women are walking away from the rally in *Videograms of a Revolution* (1992). Especially in Godard's work, as we've seen, this method is not one of association: "Given one image, another image has to be chosen which will induce an interstice *between* the two. This is not an operation of association but differentiation [...]: given one potential, another one has to be chosen, not any whatever, but in such way that a difference of potential is established between the two, which will be productive of a third or of something new [...] It is the method of AND, 'this and then that'."¹⁹³ This has been Godard's method since *Ici et Ailleurs* (1976). Moreover, *Ici et Ailleurs* is a significant example of how the story is found through montage: "In 1970 this film was called *Victory*. In 1974, this film is called *Here and Elsewhere*."¹⁹⁴ In 1970 Godard and Gorin —the Dziga Vertov Group— travelled to Palestine "to find images of the revolution that had never been seen in France"¹⁹⁵ and distribute in France the images the Palestine Liberation Organisation wanted French people to see.¹⁹⁶ In 1974, Godard recalls how the return home after those two months in Palestine changed everything: "Back in France, very soon you don't know what to make of the film. Very soon, as one says, contradictions explode, including you. I

¹⁹² Farocki and Silverman, *Speaking About Godard*, 109.

¹⁹³ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 174.

¹⁹⁴ Godard and Miéville, *Ici et Ailleurs*, 00:00:23.

¹⁹⁵ MacCabe, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics*, 73.

¹⁹⁶ Lesage, Jean- Luc Godard, 126.

begin to see it. I begin to see it.”¹⁹⁷ What Godard began to see, once he detached himself from the Dziga Vertov Group, was the real images of Palestine without the imposition of the political discourse of the group — it was too loud and made it impossible to see or hear, the noise covered reality and made it propaganda. And so Godard began to see: “Too easy and too simple to say simply that the wealthy are wrong and the poor are right. Too easy and too simple to divide the world in two.”¹⁹⁸ The process of questioning, of seeing, the making of not two films but one: the film becoming — “in 1970 this film was called *Victory*. In 1974, this film is called *Here and Elsewhere*.” And so Godard abandoned forever the post 68’ dialectical discourses (it is not France *or* Palestine) to become the cineaste of ‘and’ — it is France *and* Palestine.

Insofar as it organises all the elements of a film and brings forward variation and difference, and presuming Godard’s claim that it is cinema’s greatest invention, montage must be accepted as the fundamental tool, the mechanism by which style is ultimately actualised. This is made radically visible in his films which almost entirely use archival footage. *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, in particular, is significant for the way it exposes the process of constructing a film, laying bare the movements and speeds of the images going through the Steenbeck; revealing the thoughts that trigger the connections between these images through their repetition, through the repetition of ideas told to us by Godard himself and flashed on the screen in the form of captions, through the persistent sound of the typewriter finishing a sentence and moving on to the next. It’s as if Godard was exposing to us the secret of cinema, namely, how the imperceptible is only able to be captured by film without giving it away. Wouldn’t then making a film completely in the editing room, only possible by using archive or found footage, be the supreme embodiment of a film of the CoR? In any case, what Godard’s practice exposes is the very process by which non-style is formed through montage. The precision of each cut or superimposition of images, the minimal difference, the change of speeds, all reveal (in the case of *Histoire(s)*) the unexpected, with intense affective qualities. In *Ici et Ailleurs*, the revision of the footage years later and the connection with Anne-Marie Miéville instead of Jean Pierre Gorin, reveal also the unexpected — in this case

¹⁹⁷ Godard and Miéville, *Ici et Ailleurs*, 00:07:45.

¹⁹⁸ Godard and Miéville, *Ici et Ailleurs*, 00:15:17.

a new film. This practice that enables surprise in cinema, that allows cinema to move, flow, explode, can, however, only be achieved primarily by rebelling against the very principles that make cinema sedentary.

Albert Camus tells us that 'to rebel is to say no', but within that refusal does not reside a renunciation. Rather, it implies a dividing line delineated firstly by the confrontation with what is considered intolerable, and secondly the belief of having the right to something. For Camus, art withholds the very foundation of rebellion as it elevates and denies reality, simultaneously. It is in the treatment the artist makes of reality, in the formal distribution of the elements originated from it, where the rebel rejects and affirms. In other words, it is the style of the work that accounts for her rebellion. Moreover, for Camus, two poles exist within the bounds of the exploration of reality in art. On the one hand, there are stylists who completely reject reality and produce entirely formal works. On the other hand, there are those who employ realism to "exalt crude reality."¹⁹⁹ However, total negation and total affirmation deny the creative act, and it is in the middle and from the middle of these limits that style really occurs as "[i]t attempts, in the work of every rebel, to impose its laws on the world."²⁰⁰ There is an analogy to be made between the two poles described by Camus and the two circumstances that, according to Deleuze, "work against style": the homogeneity of language, or else a "heterogeneity so great that it becomes indifferent, gratuitous, and nothing definite passes between its poles."²⁰¹ In both these respects — neither formalism nor absolute realism, neither homogeneity nor complete heterogeneity — the CoR situates itself in the middle, refusing the conformism and formulas of a cinema of representation, in order to, through this very negation, affirm the nature of cinema: experimentation.

Some of the principles of what I've been denominating cinema of representation which accredit the existence of formalist and illusionist structures preceding the creative process (and suggesting the homogeneity of the model), are the Aristotelian dramatic structure or the use of the shot/reverse-shot. Farocki carried out a study on the use of the latter, which rather suitably illustrates this

¹⁹⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 9.

²⁰⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 19.

²⁰¹ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 141

point: "the authors, the authors-authors, are the ones that rise up against the shot/reverse-shot principle. The procedure of shot/reverse-shot is a method of editing; however, it affects the method of filming, thus it also affects the ideas, the selection and use of the images and that which precedes the image. Ultimately, the shot/reverse-shot is the first rule, the law of value."²⁰² The violence of a cut is softened by a different framing and change of angle but, according to Farocki, what is never put into question is why these fractures need to be concealed. Godard rises up against this first and prominent principle as early as his first feature film, *A Bout de Souffle* (1960). Calling to mind the scene in which Patricia and Michel drive around Paris, the jump cuts of this scene show a constantly changing background of the city. The sound, on the other hand, "contradicts the visual abruptness, nothing on it point to an ellipsis. [...] The cuts attract attention to something that in cinema is rarely at the forefront: the cuts structure the text." What Farocki is alluding to here is the fact that scenes in films are formulated, predominantly around dialogue situations, and it is the dialogue which determines the cuts.

The cinema of Straub and Huillet also calls into question these issues — namely the rebellion against the shot/reverse-shot formula, and the primacy of the text over the visual. In the first case by reason of Straub's open aversion to the worn-out formula, especially when the back of a neck occupies the screen.²⁰³ In the latter case, due to the fact that they always use existing texts (one could reluctantly call them adaptations) as has been shown in the case of *Every Revolution is a Throw of a Dice*. In *Every Revolution*, the cuts structure the text in insofar as they correspond to the visual intervals in Mallarme's poem. Their commitment, not only to Mallarme's text but to all the texts they work from is indicative of their commitment to cinema through their strict methodology: the choice of the 'strategic point' from which to film a scene, sometimes known months in advance; the evangelical use of direct sound; the ardent rejection of

²⁰² Farocki, *Desconfiar*, 83. (My translation).

²⁰³ "I have always been horrified —even in Bresson, whom I greatly like— by shot/reverse-shots made in such a way as to show first a character's face and, then in the reverse-shot, the back of the neck of the same character; it becomes something like the trunk off a tree [...] I believe that this way of making cinema lack a sense of rebellion against previous, outdated photographic procedures." Straub and Huillet, *Writings*, 89.

dubbing, the endless repetition of the takes; the reciting, not performing, of the actors.

The work of Marguerite Duras is also significant in terms of the importance of 'the text' preceding filming and editing. In Duras not just the text but writing assumes a new and unimaginable significance as it is both a process and a primordial question. This 'writing question' is not a self-absorbed, meta-literary condition: rather it concerns the triggering of experimentation, the destruction of writing itself, its transformation into other art forms - from literature and poetry to theatre and film, and from film, back to literature. And the text is not simply a script but the vessel that precipitates an interdisciplinary artistic search, which is expressed in a fascinating and unique filmic narrative (*Détruire dit-elle, India song* [1975]). In the case of *La Femme du Gange*, however, the writing doesn't predate the filming, quite the contrary. As she notes in the introduction of the film, the film was shot and edited and subsequently the text was written as a completely autonomous form, thus producing two films, the one of the voices and the one of the images. This inherent experimental character of Duras, her total rejection of the norm as well as the mutability between art forms contribute to both her writing and filmic, cyclic and repetitious style.

Duras', and Straub and Huillet's significant resort to literary texts, as well as their working methodology, prompts a practice that as divergent as it appears from Wang Bing's and Godard's, demonstrates that the CoR has no predetermined approach. There is no correct method, only experimentation. The commitment to the approach (whatever it might be) carried out in the making of a film of the CoR, makes the question of style a political question. In a highly technical art form like cinema, the refusal of the filmmakers of the CoR to subscribe to the dominant cinematic language and technical approach (which incidentally become stylistic choices) is what bring experimentation and new ways of making to the forefront. As Pasolini pointed out in 1965 at the Pesaro Film Festival, the filmmakers of the 60's broke with the tradition of an invisible camera. Instead, they allowed the shaking of the hand-held camera to be felt, they favoured endless long takes and tracking shots, effecting breaks not only in continuity, but in a whole set of technical standards. This rebellion, according to Pasolini, has its origin in a total aversion for the rules, as much as in a

striving for creative anarchic and at times controversial freedom.²⁰⁴ How then does a technical-stylistic question become a question of commitment, of responsibility in making films ethically and politically? How does a tracking shot become a moral question?²⁰⁵

Style articulates the cinematic work and acts as political machine inasmuch as it becomes a collective assemblage of enunciation.²⁰⁶ The polytonality of free indirect discourse (which in literature, in lay terms, constitutes the intercession of third and first person narration, one could say a discourse within a discourse) provide Deleuze and Guattari with the basis for this concept. But also, Pasolini's 'free indirect subjectivity' is constituent of Deleuze's 'free indirect images' — images that spring up between the objective and subjective. All these concepts are concerned with what language and cinema are capable of doing, how they affect or are affected, as opposed to what they can represent or what information they can convey: after all, cinema has nothing to do with communication. In Pasolini as well as in Deleuze, free indirect subjectivity and free indirect images emanate from the disconnection that exists between the modern world and men. Penetrating the world of the character so as to achieve free indirect subjectivity is, for Pasolini, a question of class consciousness. A director does not judge, observe from a godlike position, and does not capitalise on the suffering of her characters, but instead merges with them and their world in such a way that she is able to formally reflect the bewildered state in which the characters find themselves. Consequently, when Pontecorvo tracks in to show the close-up of the protagonist who had just killed herself at the barbed wire of the concentration camp, an objection has to be made.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Pasolini, "The Cinema of Poetry," 556-557.

²⁰⁵ This refers to Godard's famous dictum: "Tracking shots are a question of morality." Also See Rivette's letter "On Abjection," originally published in *Cahiers du Cinema* 120, (June 1961) which criticises the formalism in *Kapo*, and Serge Daney's subsequent text "The Tracking Shot in *Kapo*."

²⁰⁶ As I've discussed Deleuze & Guattari do not accept the base/superstructure distinction, but they instead propose the problem in terms of production of subjectivity. They distinguish, however, between machinic assemblages (which belong to the realm of the physical world) and collective assemblages of enunciation (which belong to the realm of signs and language). In collective assemblages of enunciation there are no subjects that produce utterances, the enunciation is built through collective agents, and "in what the utterance speaks of there are no objects, but machinic states." Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 71

²⁰⁷ This references Jacques Rivette's famous text "On abjection" (1961) in which Rivette criticised Gillo Pontecorvo's film *Kapo* (1960), more specifically the use of the tracking shot mentioned above: "Just look at the shot in *Kapo* where Riva commits suicide throwing herself on electric barbed wire: the man who

Be that as it may, the author/director, either in assemblages of enunciation or in free indirect images, doesn't precede the enunciation but she is a derivative of it. She becomes her characters, while her characters become others — calling for a new people to come. Style is then at the core of the individuation process, or the production of subjects (production of new subjectivities), which are a consequence, not a cause of the filmmaking process. Or to put it differently, the becoming of cinema only occurs with the dissolution of the subject.²⁰⁸ Hence this pre-personal conception of style — a style yet to come — supports CoR's relinquishing of authorship. "Because a style is not an individual psychological creation but an assemblage of enunciation, it unavoidably produces a language within a language."²⁰⁹ It puts language/cinema outside itself: it creates relations of exteriority.

decides at this moment to track forward and reframe the dead body in a low-angle shot —carefully positioning the raised hand in the corner of the final frame— deserves only the most profound contempt." Rivette, "On abjection."

²⁰⁸ Foucault identifies the being of language not with an enunciating subject, the 'I' who speaks, but with a thought that situates itself "outside." Language is pre-subjective: "the being of language only appears for itself with the disappearance of the subject." Foucault, "The Thought from Outside", 15.

²⁰⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 113-114.

Chapter 5

***Work or To Whom Does the World Belong.* A case study of the Cinema of Resistance**

Between theory and praxis

In Jean Rouch's *Dionysos* (1984), the protagonist Hugh Gray conducts a rather extravagant defence of his thesis "Dionysos or the necessity of worshipping nature in industrial societies." A defence filled with strange rites and 'inconceivable concepts' that, nonetheless, leads to his being granted a Doctoral title cum laude. After celebrating the excellence of Gray's work, an opportunity emerges and the tribunal persuade him to take a job as a workshop manager in a car factory. It is, in their view, the perfect chance to welcome disorder, to enact the Dionysian rites he praises and convert work into joy. In other words, using the examiners' own remarks, it's time to pass from theory to practice. In this PhD programme, however, the opposite is asked of filmmakers: experiment, develop your practice, make a piece of work and then conceptualise the strategies used during the decision making in your cinematic practice in order to produce a piece of written work. That is to say, we're asked to pass from practice to theory. This dichotomy between 'theorising one's own practice' and 'practicing one's theories' raises a fundamental question that is at the core of this research. The approach put forward in this project has always been one of engaging with both disciplines simultaneously, of being in the middle of the two, as it is assumed that theory and practice inform each other, influence each other: "theory cannot be developed without encountering a wall, and praxis is needed to break through."²¹⁰

In *Vladimir et Rosa* the Dziga Vertov Group consider the implications of an apparent separation between theory and practice, by acknowledging the fact that a film can be both theoretical and practical. This is an assessment that might appear controversial to some practitioners but has to be understood from

²¹⁰ Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and power."

the Group's position of militancy, from their conception of cinema as valuable tool to the anti-capitalist struggle. "Clearly, then, the film will be both theoretical: What is the meaning of the trials of radicals in imperialist countries? — and practical: how can the portrayal of such a trial, its 'reflection' (in recorded images and sound), be achieved as accurately as possible? That is: how should the film be made in practice? How should it be shot and recorded, so that in theory (i.e., during screening) it will be useful to people who see it?"²¹¹ This reflection put forward by the Dziga Vertov Group mirrors the nature of this chapter: namely, not focusing on the 'why' but rather on the 'how.'

In a conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, recorded in 1972, the indissoluble association connecting theory and practice is linked to the post-structuralist approach of both philosophers, which allies their role as intellectuals with that of the opposition to power. Deleuze emphasises the change in their cause of action with previous approaches which either considered practice a result of the implementation of theory, or conversely, regarded it as the grounds of theoretical analysis. Their change amounts to a fluid and open conception of theory which instead of totalising, functions by naturally engaging with the problems of its domain by connecting with other domains. In other words, "[theory] is an instrument for multiplication and it also multiplies itself,"²¹² and as such it rejects the nature of power which totalises it, making a case for "truth."

Both the means and the consequence of this understanding of theory and practice outlined by Deleuze and Foucault, is, necessarily, experimentation: "Practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory is a relay from one practice to another."²¹³ To address this double movement between theory and practice, or more precisely to activate it, to plug into the assemblage constituted by this project and set it in motion, crossing all the necessary fields (politics, aesthetics and metaphysics), not by associating one with another (but by reconnecting them and ultimately bringing back from chaos

²¹¹ Dziga Vertov Group, *Vladimir et Rosa*. 00:03:17.

²¹² Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and power."

²¹³ Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and power."

the *varieties*²¹⁴ that will constitute the film and the thesis), Deleuze & Guattari's work has been indispensable. In its constant blurring of the disciplines mentioned above, their philosophy constitutes the *ethos* of this work and it is the anchor to order, but also the line of flight that opens fire in all possible directions, taking us back to a Dionysian chaos. And so, the double movement (theory/practice) itself doubles up (chaos/composition). From this double movement emerges firstly a film that avoids the linearity of narrative, the conventions of the cinema of representation in favour of expression and abstraction, and secondly a thesis which takes certain artistic licences and aspires to be free-spirited. As the Dziga Vertov Group established, a film can potentially be both theoretical and practical - but, as is demonstrated with the writing of this text, so also can a thesis.

The essay and the film share processes alike, each one within its particular form, the writing form and the cinematic form. Invoking the comparison Deleuze makes of the two types of planes of formation (namely, the plane of organisation or transcendence, and the plane of consistence or immanence) serves to illustrate the processes of writing the thesis and making the film. Presuming that what's referred to as cinema of representation is produced in a plane of organisation as a result of the rules it obeys (from the creation of the protagonist and his/her goals, the wide shot as action describer and close-up as affection-image, to continuity and shot/reverse-shot as means for editing), and the signifying chains it produces (psychological motivations, messages or values to be read or interpreted by the spectator or even subliminally wrapped under the entertainment label), we could say that the making of *CoR: A Manifesto for a Minor Cinema to Come* and *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* both take place in a plane of consistence. And they do so inasmuch as they flee from rules of representation, signifying chains, and also break with relationships such as subject/object and notions such as the author. This immanent approach towards filmmaking not only describes the process of conception and production but it accounts for a political attitude.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ "the artist brings back from the chaos *varieties* that no longer constitute a reproduction of the sensory in the organ but set up a being of the sensory, a being of sensation on an anorganic plane of composition that is able to restore the infinite." Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 203.

²¹⁵ "Even individually, the construction of the plane is a politics, it necessarily involves a 'collective', collective assemblages, a set of social becomings." Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 91.

This chapter is an attempt to, firstly, articulate how the formal choices in the making of the film account precisely for a political attitude, and secondly how the result of the research, namely the film and the thesis, are each equidistant from both theory and practice.

Context

Work or To Whom Does the World Belong is a film set in the coal mining valleys of Asturias (a small region in Northern Spain), between the last failed miners' strike in 2012, and December 31st 2018, the date in which the final collieries were shut down. Despite the fact that only three pits operated by the state company remained open during this time, and despite the fact that the number of workers was drastically reduced from 50,000 in the 1990s to less than 1,000 in 2018, the impact of the comprehensive closure of this industry in the region remains enormous. Inflicting high levels of unemployment on an ageing population, the end of coal elementally affects a way of life and the character of a people with a rich history of class struggle, solidarity and resistance. This history and this way of life has marked me personally in view of the fact that I grew up in the mining village of Barredos, where one of the last pits was situated. The necessity to make this film thus originates from having to make this (hi)story remain and resist; but also, recalling Malraux, from art as a revolt against man's fate: *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* as act of resistance, as anti-destiny.²¹⁶

However, this story could not be one of a eulogy to the working-class movement, of appraisal of these last miners and their efforts to resist. Today, *La Vie est a Nous* (1936), *A Bientôt, J'espere* (1968), or *Enthusiasm: The Symphony of Donbass* (1931) are no longer possible. New problems appear and demand new methods. Beginning in the 1980s, but more significantly since 1992, plans for comprehensive closure have been incrementally implemented throughout the mining region. The slow strangulation of an industry brought sustained industrial action but at the same time brought the promise of great

²¹⁶ Malraux, *Voices of Silence*, 639.

resources for a reindustrialization that, in the event, never happened. Workers received early retirement packages with substantial salaries depending on their job category, and unions took advantage of their control over these categories to gain wholesale support. Furthermore, unions procured power by distributing jobs as they pleased in new private companies, created with state funding, which almost invariably ceased operations within five years when the funding expired. Men began to be driven by self-interest and rivalry, and unions contributed to oppose individuals against one another. To put it differently, a perverse network of power and corruption destroyed the working-class movement from within, and today we are faced with a demobilised collective that has lost its class consciousness. It's every man for himself.

A recent example of this, is the 2019 sit-in of five subcontractors that took place only two weeks prior to the date on which coal extraction was due to end. Historically, when a group of miners shut themselves in the pit in protest and word spreads to the other pits, all workers stop in solidarity and a strike commences. However, this time, the workers from the state company who didn't feel their jobs were at risk, decided to ignore the situation and go to work. The unions didn't support the striking subcontractors and aligned themselves with the company in a smear campaign to get them out. For the first time there was a breach in the unspoken agreement between miners to stand in solidarity with one another regardless of external pressures.

Under these circumstances the fundamental question was, how to make a film about a labour movement that doesn't exist anymore? How to document a period of time in which nothing much happens? How to portray the apathy of people? And more importantly, how to do so while showing the effects but not the causes? For my aim is not to explain and arrive at an objective truth which distributes responsibilities among the actors, but it is to create a cinematic truth that reveals what only cinema can, and instigates the emergence of thought and affects.

January, 2017

I must get to know in depth the situation of the mining industry, and understand the processes by which historical, political, labour and personal relations have

led to the present circumstances. Only then can I start constructing, from the specific, a filmic reality that does not need to be accurate in the facts but faithful to the sentiments of the protagonists, and faithful to the film itself.

Kiarostami once recounted the following: “this reminds me of an anecdote about Balzac, who, in a painting exhibition, amuses himself in front of a painting that represents a farm with a smoking chimney in a snowed landscape. He asks the painter how many people live in that house. The painter responds that he does not know. ‘How is that possible?’—replies Balzac. If it’s you who painted the canvas, you must know how many people live there, how old are their children, if the harvest was good that year and if they have enough money for the daughter’s dowry. If you don’t know everything about the people who live in that house, you have no right to make that smoke come out of the chimney.”²¹⁷

Moreover, I must not stress the causes but the effects of these processes—to flee from the dramatic (Aristotelic) towards the epic (Brechtian), from the empathetic towards the abstract.

How to paint the smoke of the chimney?

March 2nd, 2017

“For the situation, says Brecht, is complicated by the fact that less than ever does a simple reproduction of reality reveal anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or AEG reveals almost nothing about these institutions. The real reality as such has shifted over into the functional. The reification of human relations, for instance in industry, makes the latter no longer revealing. Thus, in fact it is to build something up, something artistic, created.”²¹⁸

These words written by Benjamin have impacted my thought process and conception of the film from very early on. They have led me in my belief that Work must not engage with the so-called observational approach. I, along with the protagonists of the story must intervene and produce a reality, that of the

²¹⁷ Bande, *Cuaderno de Paisaje*, 84. (My translation).

²¹⁸ Benjamin, “A Short History of Photography,” 213-214.

film, which (thanks to cinema's very nature) will make perceptible that which otherwise wouldn't be seen.

The nature of this project and the CoR is experimentation with the filmic form, to create a style that doesn't exist yet, to make a film politically. The process of making *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* has been influenced by — and is a direct consequence of— the critical research. As a result, it has produced a change in the formal approach of my film practice. The fleeing and deterritorialisation of my previous work, 'becoming a foreigner in my own language', attends to changes in narrative, directing of actors, montage and use of sound and music. The working method in my short films was based on a scriptwriting process and a *mise-en-scène* that (although open to changes and improvisations during filming) left little room for manoeuvre in the editing room. The form of narrative was what is commonly known as a fiction: the protagonist encounters a series of events and people that in one way or another, even if slightly, will affect and change her. Even while devoid of emotional drive, the performances of both professional actors and non-actors were leaning towards naturalism. The actions and scenes were resolved in long sequence shots, montage was used as a continuity tool (to show the progress of actions), and the music was diegetic. In my first conception of this film years ago, the intention was to continue with this method of working but in a longer form, and with a miner as protagonist. However, after a year of theoretical, historical, and field research, *Work* slowly entered into the territory of essay and documentary film. If in the past the films of Bresson, Antonioni or Ozu had a more visible global impact in my work, this time the Godard of *ICI et AILLEURS* or *HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA*, the Straub-Huillet of *TOO EARLY/TOO LATE* (1981) or *CÉZANNE* (1990), or the Farocki of *VIDEOGRAMS OF A REVOLUTION* will be more present. Works and filmmakers that have in common, not only a Brechtian influence, but a fundamental conviction: "One must speak and show literally, or else not show and speak at all."²¹⁹ To put it another way, "not a just image, just an image."²²⁰

²¹⁹ "If, according to ready-made formulas, the revolutionaries are at our doors, besieging us like cannibals, they must be shown in the scrub of Seine-et-Oise, eating human flesh. If bankers are killers, school-children prisoners, photographers pimps, if the workers are being screwed by their bosses, this has to be shown not 'metaphorised', and series have to be constructed in consequence." Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 176-177.

²²⁰ Dziga Vertov Group, *Le Vent d'Est*. 00:35:12.

Coming from a practice fundamentally based on fiction, and with the conviction that in order to capture a cinematic truth, something 'artificial' or 'invented' had to be constructed and openly displayed, *Work* soon departed from a form that could be considered purely observational documentary. The approach at the outset was a hybrid one. On the one hand, my proximity to a small group of miners, getting to know first-hand their difficulties and organisational modes, permitted the rendering of their experiences into fictional writing, from which they will participate as both writers and actors. This structured the shooting of the film and the assembly with the linearity of a plot (even if ill-defined). On the other hand, the desire to make the valley itself a leading force in the story, focusing on the people that occupy it, on the revealing decay of the streets, induced a more documentarian and intuitive strategy. The difficulties encountered in attempting to merge the two in a first assembly, and then perceiving the incongruity of great parts of the material, led to my reconsidering and reshooting part of the film a year later. Through these developments, the editing process gained importance, no longer merely a simple hinge that joined different parts, it became the (non-style) machine that produced the film. Consequently, it could be said that the eventual form the film has taken (its style) is a direct product and evidence of the methodological approach of this project, whose essence is captured in the manifesto. Thus, *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* presents itself as a representative case study of the Cinema of Resistance in view of the fact that what is of relevance is the process of the making (which I can trace) and not so much the end product.

Fabulation - the people are missing

Through a process of deindustrialisation lasting now thirty years, the people of Asturias in general (and of its mining valleys in particular) have lost far more than the jobs, wealth, infrastructure and community cohesion that the mines provided. The demoralising recent history has contributed to a loss of a dignity which had been painstakingly built by proud workers with a strong class consciousness. Preceding generations shared common localised fights to improve working conditions, but also higher ideals of utopian struggle represented by the main parties (anarchists, socialists and communists) that

united during the 1934 revolution. The union of these groups (heretofore rivals) created a spirit of cooperation in the region throughout the fight against fascism which lasted for the greater part of the twentieth century, and this spirit was epitomised in the slogan UHP (Uníos Hermanos Proletarios) — Unite Proletarian Brothers. The new generations, oblivious to all this, and exposed to a different political tradition dangerously linked to neoliberalism, are somehow bewildered, stuck in an impasse. The underlying question of *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* is, in short, a question of a people that is missing.

Early on in the process I considered using the device of an English narrator, to approach the story from an ethnographic point of view, and which would foreground the distance a foreigner might have, separating me, the 'author', from the storyteller. This narrator would bring us closer and closer to the place, that is to say, he'd take us from the general to the specific, attaching an element of fiction which would also be exploited through other means. But to simultaneously reveal the universal through the particular, and avoid the convoluted and inessential feuds existing among the collective of miners and regional politics, an element of fabulation would need to be employed.

Creative fabulation has nothing to do with a memory, however exaggerated, or with a fantasy. In fact, the artist, including the novelist, goes beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived. The artist is a seer, a becomer. How would he recount what happened to him, or what he imagines, since he is a shadow? He has seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable also, and the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it, so that the corner or nature or districts of the town that he sees, along with their characters, accede to a vision that, through them, composes the percepts of that life, of that moment, shattering lived perceptions into a sort of cubism, a sort of simultaneism, of harsh or crepuscular light, of purple or blue, which have no other object or subject than themselves. "What we call styles," said Giacometti, "are those visions fixed in time and space." It is always a question of freeing life whenever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat.²²¹

Henri Bergson gives great importance to the need that humans have to create fictions and myths. The function of fabulation is, according to Bergson in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932 [1977]), firstly a religious and moral

²²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 171.

one, a quasi-utopian potential to create 'gods and giants' in the form of 'voluntary hallucinations.' After all, it is religion that has created the greatest fictions in history, proving this innate tendency as a means to implement fear and consequently gain control and obedience.²²² Deleuze takes up the concept of fabulation and explicitly considers, in an interview with Toni Negri in 1990, to re-appropriate Bergson's concept and give it a political meaning. Deleuze calls for substituting the term utopia for fabulation. Utopia is an unsatisfactory concept, argues Ronald Bogue, because it designs a predetermined future, whereas fabulation engages with creativity and presents an open, unwritten, creative destiny.²²³ By linking fabulation to politics, fabulation then becomes, for Deleuze, a question of becoming-revolutionary and the invention of the people to come.

Both Bergson and Deleuze's fabulation has been at the centre of several studies linked to science fiction,²²⁴ as this genre explicitly explores the circumstances of the present by presenting an imaginary future. Our role, however, is not imagining a better or worse future, but presenting through a 'fiction' a ruinous scenario in which men and women have lost the connections with the world they live in, and as a result of this seem to have no future at all. Only then, (by manifesting "that the future is both now and to come, now as the becoming-revolutionary of our present and to come as the goal of our becoming,"²²⁵) a new people might come. And this is the function of modern political cinema for Deleuze, as he continues to analyse in *Cinema 2*, where he presents the films of Jean Rouch and Pierre Perrault as a paradigm of this. Insofar as Rouch and Perrault directly involve the subjects of their films in the construction of the story and re-conceive a collectivity that was absent, they make the gesture of constructing a fiction into a political gesture - the protagonists of *Moi, un Noir* not only invent their own narration as they are being shown the film, but they transform the concept of ethnography by shifting the transcendent coloniser perspective ('Lui, un noir'- 'him, a black'), to an inventive first person ('moi, un noir, -'Me, a black'-, 'moi, Robinson', 'moi, Eddie

²²² Bogue, "Fabulation," 99.

²²³ Bogue, "Deleuze & Guattari Future Politics."

²²⁴ See James Burton "The Philosophy of Science Fiction: Henri Bergson and the Fabulations Of Philip K. Dick", or Bogue "Deleuze & Guattari Future of Politics."

²²⁵ Bogue, "Deleuze & Guattari Future Politics."

Constantine' 'moi, Dorothy Lamour'). Similarly, the boys and girls of *La Pyramide Humaine* "learn to love, get angry and know each other" in "a fiction that once filmed becomes reality, freeing those who believe too much in their roles."²²⁶ And in the case of *Pour la Suite du Monde*, the people of Île-aux-Coudres invent their own film, starting from the premise given by Perrault - reenacting the long abandoned tradition of beluga fishing - and as they reconnect with a lost tradition, they begin to reconstruct their missing collectivity.

It is this collaborative collective spirit present in Rouch and Perrault, on which *Work* draws. The group of miners involved in the film were not merely subjects: a co-operative relation was established after some time. The reality they were living was informing the events of the film, and simultaneously the film was permeating their reality. And through the tensions generated by the collision of fiction and reality, the film aspires not to replicate this existing reality but to create a new one, a filmic reality greater than the trivial partisan disputes that occupy institutions, media, private and public conversations alike, and sink the collective consciousness into a state of pessimism and revanchism. Because as Deleuze points out apropos Rossellini, "the less human the world is, the more it is the artist's duty to believe and produce belief in a relation between man and the world, because the world is made by men."²²⁷

Between documentary and fiction

One of the first films ever made determined cinema's destiny in the century to come. Farocki pointed out that despite the fact that Lumière's film documented workers leaving a factory, during its century of existence, cinema has not appeared concerned to show what occurs within the confines of the factory. Perhaps it was the fact that Lumière catches his workers in the moment they stop being workers (a proletarian mass) to become dispersed individuals, which sets the grounds for cinema's proclivity to depict their lives only from that moment on. But far beyond that, what Louis Lumière also accomplished with another film that same year, 1895, was to lay the foundations for cinema's two

²²⁶ Rouch, *La Pyramide Humaine*, 00:00:00.

²²⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 165.

tendencies, documentary and fiction: illustrated in *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* and *The Sprinkler Sprinkled* (1895), respectively. Only two decades later, with a new art form developing faster than any other before, two other pioneers (Flaherty and Vertov) established the grounds for the two tendencies in documentary filmmaking, namely, the ethnographic and the poetic, the narrative and the experimental, the one that steers events in front of the camera and the one that captures things as they happen. What these apparently binary attitudes towards filmmaking (tendencies present in all the filmmakers mentioned in this paper) have really achieved is a multiplicity of approaches to cinema that have made certain films difficult to categorise. These two tendencies also coexist in *Work*.

“How do we dare to speak of a truth that has been chosen, edited, provoked, oriented, deformed? Where is the truth? Here again the confusion comes from those who take the term ‘*cinema-verité*’ as an affirmation, a guarantee sticker, and not as research. *Cinema-verité*: this means that we wanted to eliminate fiction and get closer to life [...] I thought that we would start from a basis of truth and an even greater truth would develop.”²²⁸ These words by Edgar Morin exemplify his and Jean Rouch’s search in *Chronique d’un Été* (1961) but also indisputably relate to Chris Marker’s subsequent avowal “ciné, ma vérité” (cinema, my truth). Whether a search for ‘the truth’ or for ‘my truth’, the process of making *Work* relates to the two — led, on one hand, by the will to record the reality of a particular place at a particular time, and on the other by my inclinations as director to be a facilitator of encounters (and not an author/subject of enunciation). On the whole, the process, the search, the research expresses the double movements in cinema (documentary/fiction) and in documentary filmmaking (narrative/experimental), which rather than setting up creative limits determined by genre, open a multiplicity of avenues. Perhaps if I were to describe *Work*, to try to categorise it, the term *ethnofiction* could be used. Given that, no matter what, a filmmaker always intervenes to some extent in the events that she’s filming, the approach in *Work* was always one of creating a fiction within the boundaries of an existing reality, even if that fiction unravelled in different terms than had been foreseen. Pedro Costa said, “for me,

²²⁸ Morin cited in, *Cine-ethnography*, 282

the true Japanese documentaries are by Ozu.”²²⁹ Similarly, Alain Bergala noted that “Rossellini has been, undoubtedly, the first filmmaker convinced that, whatever the case, whatever the will to invent a fiction, a film is always the documentary of its own film shoot.”²³⁰ The contention of those advocating documentary filmmaking as revelatory of a higher truth, or of those championing fiction, in contrast, is specious. How else would it be possible for a cinema of fiction, with its apparent artifices, to capture reality better than any other type of cinema, as Ozu or Rossellini did? What these examples illustrate, just as Perrault or Rouch do, is that cinema is more alive when there is a documentary function in fiction, and vice versa, a fiction function in documentary. The tension between the two is at the core of the CoR.

July 5th, 2017.

Months of researching, asking, listening, looking, finding, getting lost in a changing reality right in front of me has been gruelling. Is it me or are some greater forces leading the film elsewhere that I did not anticipate? It seems there is no other way to approach such complexities but by: 1) going to the particular — not all miners but a group of miners, not all the pits but one pit; 2) “dramatise”, “re-enact”, “fictionalise” situations that have happened, are happening, in order to have control over the images and the affects that emerge from them, to have control over the internal rhythm of the images; 3) fabulation: avoid all names, it is not Asturias, it is an unnamed place; it is not HUNOSA, it is an unnamed company, It is not SOMA or CCOO, it’s the major unions.

The film is changing its form. I am maintaining the four-act structure, at least on paper, but the narrative is driven now by people, by the story of the place itself. And now, more than ever the boundaries between categories fade. It is not just an essay, it is not just a documentary, it is not just a fiction, it is all of those things and none of them at once: it is just a film.

In an early draft of the script, as the diary entry above indicates, I omitted all identifying names that could link the story to its specific place with an idea in mind, to explore the possibilities of fabulation. At that point the tale was

²²⁹ Costa cited in Andersen, “Ozu Yasujirō.”

²³⁰ Bergala, *Roberto Rossellini, el cine revelado*, 28. (My translation).

constructed from a mixture of fictionalised scenes played by the miners themselves, and a chronicle of life in the valleys expressed in material of a more 'documentary' nature. The introduction of a foreign narrator with an unfamiliar language and a distant tone would contribute not only to the purpose of multiplying the points of view in the film but to the idea of fabulation. His account was articulated while emphasising the remote perspective of someone who, with anthropological aspirations, recounts the way of life of a civilisation on the verge of extinction.

Despite the fact that Rouch's method was of total improvisation of fictional events when the camera starts rolling, the correspondence between his motives and mine is manifest: "It is not a documentary that attempts to capture an observed reality. By the same token it is not a melodrama the filmmakers dreamed up to titillate our emotions — these films are stories based on laboriously researched and carefully analysed ethnography. In this way Rouch uses creative licence to "capture" the texture of an event, the ethos of lived experience."²³¹ Rouch's practice, grounded on utter mischievous joy, unreserved collaboration, and on a conviction that the filmmaker disturbs the interactions in front of the camera (but that he should not be the only one doing so), was termed by him "ciné-trance" and even "cine-pleasure"²³², while this quest to dissipate the boundaries between documentary and fiction was labelled by theorists 'ethnofiction'.

This original notion towards ethnofiction transformed while the material was taking shape in the editing room. Most significantly the decision of including specific events that occurred in the history of the working-class movement in Asturias in the narration (therefore abandoning the idea of presenting the place as anonymous) can be attributed to the necessity of ascribing consequence to the scene in which a group of miners express their will to defy the current negotiations that would culminate in the total closure of the industry. Only by recognising the significance of previous struggles and the foregoing strength of the working-class movement can we begin to make sense of the present-day division and lack of influence of the collective.

²³¹ Paul Stoller as cited in Sjöberg, "Ethnofiction", 230.

²³² Rouch, *Cine-ethnography*, 185-187.

However, from those early ideas that display the intent to invent (to recount a tale of any place whatever) some elements remained: the inclusion of the foreign narrator, the re-creations of certain scenes with the protagonists, the use of 16mm. The opening of the film expresses this very objective of creating a fabulation, a fiction within an ethnographic approach by setting the tone: the moving camera gradually approaches the depth of the valley from the heights of the mountains and is accompanied by a fable-like description of a non-native – and as the contrasting, industrial landscapes are revealed, an African percussion gives way to an unrestrainedly dynamic shot that appears to be searching for a target. This thoroughly rehearsed and staged shot, which hardly abides by any documentary style conventions, contains the opening credits of the film, and its conclusion manifests the end of the prelude. Contributing to this atmosphere constructed using the elements described above (music, camera movement, text and voice) is the choice which defines the photography of the film, the use of 16mm. Celluloid, and specifically 16mm negative, possesses not only a materiality akin to the post-industrial landscapes so prominent in *Work*, but a quality that evidences an undetermined time. In this way, through the photography, the aim to suggest the timeless, placeless character of the film is also emphasised.

Moreover, the determination of working with 16mm was not restricted to aesthetic considerations: embracing the methodology required to work with celluloid was also a decisive factor. Unlike Rouch, whose work freed itself from the constraints of larger format cameras in favour of lightweight 16mm systems that welcomed an improvised approach, the use of these cameras today conveys a more reflective attitude compared to most digital acquisition – especially if, due to budgetary constraints, there is a limited amount of footage. It could be argued that the planning involved in shooting with celluloid and the limitations that follow may prevent the capturing of unadulterated events as they occur in front of the camera. However, (and this is where my approach meets Rouch's) when the intent is to blur the boundaries between documentary and fiction and incorporate the fertile hybridity found in the middle of the two, working with celluloid is as good a format as any. In addition, it should be noted that I have worked with 16mm for many years in my fictional short films, and I

have acquired a practice based on the acceptance of the restrictive nature of photochemical formats offset by extremely well-planned shooting schedules.

In spite of this acquired working methodology, the process of making *Work*, of finding a balance between documentary and fiction, has opened new lines of flight. Looking back now, it seems that an idea, an intuition evident during the writing phase, has taken three years, a reshoot and months of editing to materialise, evidencing the proposition that the non-style of the film is the product of the whole process, of an ongoing search, of events originated through trial and error, and never of a pre-existing style that precedes this film or any other film, this milieu or any other milieu, this subject or any other subject. This circumstance in which a style which doesn't yet exist comes into being during the filmmaking process, is particularly manifest in this work due to the difficulties and complexities encountered in documenting an existing reality. It's not a question of formulating, classifying, making things easy to recognise and interpret, but exploring the possibilities of cinema, getting closer to life and perhaps "bringing something incomprehensible to the world."²³³

Mise-en-scène and/or montage

I have argued that the pioneer Louis Lumière determined, in the early days of cinema, the two tendencies still prevailing today, the *Workers Leaving the Factory* documentary trend and *The Sprinkler Sprinkled* fictional one. What is also remarkable and worth pointing out at this stage is the fact that his instincts led him to remake these films over and over again, creating different versions of the same events. In the case of *The Sprinkler Sprinkled* this is perhaps more noticeable, as a change of angle introduces perspective and favours a higher comic effect. It therefore exhibits the origins of the mise-en-scène in film. Yet mise-en-scène only really became a conception of cinema when André Bazin elevated it to realism's utmost attribute.

A concern with realism has always been present in my work and as such, the influence of Bazin was significant. The style of my films was a direct

²³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 440.

consequence of the exploration of the so-called *mise-en-scène* style: the use of sequence shots or otherwise lengthy shots, deep focus, the favouring of wider lenses and the movement within the frame over close-ups. In other words, the representation of space attending to the continuity of the real, as cinema's ontology and 'true' realist method. This conception of cinema led to an experimentation towards how to convey with what is within the frame, and as I explained earlier, not so much towards montage. Although Bazin recognises that what moved Eisenstein, Dovzhenko and Pudovkin in their experimentation with new forms was the search for realism,²³⁴ he censures the arbitrary nature of montage for forcing into the spectator a single viewpoint of the events, therefore diverting from the truly important: reality. This dichotomy present in Bazin's analysis is not seen as such by Godard, who defends in his *Cahiers du Cinema* article "Montage, mon beau souci" that both *mise-en-scène* and montage are constitutive of each other: "one seeks to predict in space, the other in time."²³⁵ With *Work*, I engage with a more inclusive approach, giving importance to both *mise-en-scène* and most prominently montage.

October 22nd, 2017

*I have always made use of the sequence shot in my search for the strategic point from which to film a scene —so as not to rely on editing merely as a tool that hides the cut, by filming the scene from different angles and with different sized shots. And I've always emphasised, with a static camera, the movement and the inner rhythm within the frame. But the variety of characters, situations and places, and the oft-changing focus of the action here, demands a different approach. Bresson is key here, specifically *Le Diable Probablement*, *L'Argent* and *Pickpocket*. The way in which he fragments the space; the way the camera moves, always motivated by the movement of characters, the way rhythm is created with the cuts; these are lessons of great value to me.*

The Bresson of these latter films exemplifies the alliance between shot and montage noted by Godard. My scrutinising of his films led to the design of the

²³⁴ Bazin, *What is Cinema 2*, 16.

²³⁵ Godard, *Les Années Cahiers*, 78. (My translation).

riot or strike sequence in *Work*. Focusing on Bresson is focusing on the de-dramatisation value of the cinematograph, something that has long been a concern of mine. For this project, and particularly for this scene, the emphasis and exploration of the everyday entailed a bigger mission: the accounts that we are used to when it comes to the miners and their struggles have a predisposition towards the epic (epic meant not in a Brechtian sense, but its conventional heroic and grandiloquent one). Having witnessed from up close battles between strikers and riot police, and devising the scene from a vivid memory of one particular strike that occurred in 1997, it was obvious to me that audiovisual hyperbole would ill-serve the purpose of searching for a cinematic truth. Hence *Work* withstands the overly spectacular images that television channels and some filmmakers reproduce. It deliberately favours instances where *nothing very much* happens, moments outside the spectacular, rather than heroic accounts that are removed from reality – in the same way a Hollywood war film is detached from the realities of war. The type of images and accounts to which the Spanish and international audiences were accustomed during the 2012 miner's strike, are primarily handheld videos of rockets being thrown, bold speeches by union leaders, emotional town gatherings near the pits where sit-ins were taking place. In short, they exploit narratives that tend towards the melodramatic. In *Work*, however, the affective plane was to be built through different means, and the riot scene was then created modelling the events of a strike without even showing them ("be sure to exhaust everything that is communicated through immobility and silence"²³⁶), instead presenting a frequent familiar episode in the valley through images seldom seen. Furthermore, this scene sets the disposition of the film to: 1) downplay the bravery of these men, de-dramatise; 2) stage, fictionalise; 3) have a collective protagonist – the protagonist is the place.

The Bressonian influence is also very distinctly present in the sequence where a group of workers organise. The film follows a number of actions such as the making of a banner, the printing and distributing of a publication, the affixing of posters, etc — always through a fragmented disposition of all the actions which scarcely depicts faces, but rather focuses on the gestures that constitute the

²³⁶ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 28. (My translation).

actions. We change space and time without establishing the space and the time or even the people involved in the previous setting. All to favour the action, the work taking place, as opposed to favouring the person performing the work. In this sense it's emphasised that the work of miners is not limited to operating the machines that extract the coal, just as the supermarket cashier scans items, or the barista handles the coffee machine, but it necessarily involves creative modes of organisation and resistance: "man's true condition is to think with his hands."²³⁷

For Deleuze, Bresson was one of the first filmmakers to use a fragmented space made up of small sections with seemingly no predetermined connection, in contrast with other filmmakers who use whole spaces. And what connects these disjointed volumes of space, in Bresson, is the hand. If he exhaustively uses the hand and creates exceptional images of hands, it is because he needs them. "A creator is not someone who works for pleasure. A creator only does what he or she absolutely needs to do."²³⁸ The need for the fragmentation of space and time, in *Work* is not restricted to underscoring actions, interrupting a psychological engagement with the characters, or contributing to the de-dramatisation of a 'dramatic' event. It originates in a conception that overarches the whole film: to unite a context of countless towns, various pits, hundreds of miners, thousands of inhabitants and several years in the block of space-time that is the film. In other words, the need for fragmentation comes primarily from aiming at the particular. It is a particular classroom in this school, and this housing estate, this bar, and this dry-cleaners, that encapsulate and project the essence of a place united by one thing, one way of life: coal. With this aim of constructing through fragmentation, what I tried to do is to create 'a place' from many. The mining valleys in Asturias are formed by a multitude of populations that, due to the geography of the place and the lack of infrastructure, were until very recently not well connected to each other. Despite this, there is an architectural aesthetic and a culture that unites them and of which one becomes aware as soon as one leaves them. When the film was shot, we travelled and photographed places that in reality are miles away from each other but are contiguous in the film. In addition, establishing shots that could contextualise

²³⁷ Godard, *Histoire(s) du cinema*. "4A Le control de l'univers", 00:07:32

²³⁸ Deleuze, "What is The Creative Act."

the place were never shot. The intent was to build a unified space, invented from the indistinguishable elements of the mining valleys, similar to the way Peter Nestler constructs his film *Mülheim/Ruhr* (1964).

August 5th, 2017

I suspect that I was trying to impose a pre-existing form/structure to the film during the time of the first drafts. I needed time to immerse myself in the community to tear preconceptions apart, which were formed at a distance, both geographical and temporal. The notions and judgements I had made were formed by all the initial research which occurred in a London library, but also from memories of my childhood and adolescence. Since I've moved here, I have tried to be more open to the multiplicity of attributes of such reality; and ultimately the putting together of the film takes me back to fiction in order to more truthfully show what I have learned from it all, what people have showed me. In other words what I think I'm doing is playing with the potentialities of cinema to narrate, ergo to affect, but creating lines of flight towards the epic (Brecht).

My previous work was loosely based on a traditional dramatic structure, with a heroine or protagonist, with a beginning, middle and end — but eluding the limits of this canon and reducing the plot to its minimum. In some respects, my approach is closer to neorealism in the sense that the events that lead to the progress of the storyline are everyday incidents without an apparent dramatic burden. However, this concatenation of events does not follow the logic of cause-effect, but rather (something I've always been interested in): to show the effects of something without exposing its causes ("One does not create by adding but by taking away"²³⁹).

The nature of this project motivates total transgression of the Aristotelian dogmas, or rather it determines the origin of its form in something completely new, not invented yet. A form that shapes itself through encounters occurring during the creative process, as opposed to laying its grounds on pre-established structures. But how to best describe the new without comparing it to the old?

²³⁹ Bresson, *Notes sur le Cinematograph*, 90.

In *Work*, as already mentioned, montage undoubtedly becomes more important than in my previous films. There is a search towards fragmentation, by breaking the realistic dramatic story, and building a film from small episodes that produce a sense of dynamic unity, and not a totalising force. This experimentation towards a different cinematic model, finding a form that does not exist *a priori*, was an exceptionally difficult task. Within this search, the questions raised in *Vladimir et Rosa* are closely akin to the question that has been present throughout the creative process of *Work* and the writing of this paper: how can a film be political in its form? Or more precisely, why is the form of a film political? That is, how can things be filmed, recorded and assembled in such a way that the creative act and the creative product become an act of resistance?

One thing was apparent, merely engaging with a subject matter that is already political, namely the end of a working-class movement, doesn't constitute in itself a political act — the film has to be articulated in a certain way. Jacques Rancière points out that the politics of cinema is not social denouncement but montage. He indicates that cinema's technical apparatuses of representation didn't have a purpose in themselves before its origin. Unlike other mechanical scientific developments which were conceived and built with a specific intent, the cinematograph wasn't: cinema was born as nothing more than a popular attraction. It is with the Soviet conception of montage, with the experimentations of Eisenstein or Vertov that cinema's revolutionary potential was put forth and montage revealed itself as cinema's political instrument.²⁴⁰ This political function of montage resonates in John Akomfrah's *Handsworth Songs* (1986), where the form of the film (given by an astute and crude use of montage) and not its subject matter, make the film political. Akomfrah's method, encompassed by an eclectic use of material, juxtaposes violent images of the present with the black and white images of idealised hopes of the past ("We will survey the world in ascension, and one day the world will come to us."²⁴¹) The significant images are, however, those that the film doesn't show, those that are in the middle of what do we see, in between two moments in time (the arrival of the Windrush generation and the riots in the Handsworth black community nearly forty years

²⁴⁰ Rancière, Interview.

²⁴¹ Akomfrah, *Handsworth Songs*, 00:14:11,

later), for “[t]here are no stories in the riots, only the ghosts of other stories.”²⁴² Hence the power of montage, and cinema, are revealed: the pulse of the imperceptible, of the things that aren’t told, of the people that are invisible and disposable, take expression. So much so that, even if there are glimpses of media reports or the discourse of those in power who deny the existence of the black and Asian minorities, there are no two sides in this story, but just the only one possible. There is no effort in appearing objective, those veneers are for the means of communication: this is a cinema of resistance. In *Work* there are echoes of Akomfrah’s montage of the latent (of the imperceptible) — the voice tells us about the struggles of the past while we see empty ruinous landscapes, the archive images show forceful battles between workers and police that are followed by endless discussions amongst miners that lead to nothing but pandemonium. We are not explicitly shown what’s between those images, we are left to speculate. Just as in *Handsworth Songs*, in *Work* we are shown the effects of something, but not the causes.

My methodological switch from Bazin’s conception of realism to a more fragmented approach that amplifies the significance of montage (but doesn’t really abandon *mise-en-scène*), develops from the search towards a non-style. Ultimately, the question of cinematographic ‘political form’ is inevitably linked to montage, if we associate montage, in essence, with the Soviet idea of its revolutionary potential. “It is time that thought becomes what it truly is: dangerous for the thinker and able to transform reality. ‘Where I create is where I am true’ Rilke. [...] Some think, others act. But man’s true condition is to think with his hands”.²⁴³ This text by Denis de Rougement reproduced by Godard in *Histoire(s)* that calls for commitment, for the intellectuals to take thought into action, seems a perfect analogy for the process by which the filmmaker of the CoR takes action through the (at its origin, entirely tactile) operation of montage. Hence montage is conceived here, not as a mere continuity tool (editing), but instead as the only instrument in cinema able to create relationships between images, making what is between them emerge and produce a cinema-thought, but also a cinema-action.

²⁴² Ibis. 00:43:41.

²⁴³ Godard, *Histoire(s) du cinema*. “4A Le control de l’univers”, 00:07:32. Extracted from Denis de Rougement, *Penser avec le Mains*, 1936,

Kuhle Wampe and the distancing effect

Inarguably, a crucial element of *Work* is the inclusion of a scene by the 1932 German film, *Kuhle Wampe, oder: Wem gehört die Welt?*, whose English title *Kuhle Wampe or Who Owns the World?* bestowed the subtitle of *Work*. *Kuhle Wampe*, directed by Slatan Dudow and written by Bertolt Brecht, gives an account of a working-class family who struggle to find work in a society stricken by the rapid growth of unemployment in post-Great Depression Weimar Republic. The detrimental impact of the systemic crisis leads one of the characters to suicide and forces his family into homelessness. The scene in question takes place in a crowded train where a diverse variety of characters engage in a conversation turned into argument. The scene confronts the views of reactionary conservatism as well as those of an apathetic and unpolitical part of society, with the views of militant workers who expose the exploitative object of capitalism as well as the indifference shown by most of the passengers, and is intended as a call to action: “Yeah, the two of us, we’re not going to change the world either!” says a man belonging to the apathetic class. To which Kurt, one of the protagonists, responds “Right, you won’t change the world. And the lady there will not change it either. And an unpolitical person like you, not by a long shot. And this man here, neither will he change the world. He is satisfied the way it is now.” “And who would change it?” asks the unpolitical person. Gerda replies: “Those who are not satisfied!”

The powerful message of the final statement of the scene, a result of Brecht’s militancy (and a product of a time when left-wing politics praised revolution as the means to emancipate the working classes and fight against capitalism) is placed in contrast to the current demoralising state of a working-class movement to whose disappearance we are witness, and whose defeat is about to be acknowledged. Yet there are other factors that led to the decision of using this particular scene of *Kuhle Wampe*. Primarily, despite the socioeconomic dissimilarities pointed out immediately above, the film in general (and the train scene in particular) is of great relevance today, and its context — comparable to the post-2008 financial meltdown, which caused the Spanish government to cut subsidies to the mining industry, provoking the final mining strike in 2012. Indeed, some of the characters in the train scene seem rather stereotypical of

certain ideas and people today, as is evidenced by a rise of nationalism in Europe caused in large part by the suffering inflicted on the working and middle classes by the economic crisis. Furthermore, the discussion of coffee burnt in Brazil for speculative reasons, could very well be compared to the speculation with coal undertaken by firms such as Goldman Sachs during the years following the crisis. The investment bank bought thousands of tonnes of coal from Colombia, which were stockpiled in Gijón's harbour until the price went up due to local production declining. This episode (widely reported in the local press at the time and no doubt familiar to local audiences), creates lines of correspondence between the events depicted in the German film and events in the last years of coal mining in Asturias — as well as between the global state of the economy and its impact on people, during two periods separated by nearly a century.

In addition to the connections allying the content of both films, the underlying question regarding the meta-use of a film within the film refers to *how* it is used. There are many examples of films within films in the history of cinema, most commonly they are cases in which the protagonists go to a film theatre and experience a particular moment in a film that affects them in a certain way. In Godard's *Vivre sa Vie*, the emotion of Dreyer's Joan of Arc as she is informed of the time for her execution, transcends the limits of the screen Nana is watching and exerts itself on her directly. An extraordinary effect occurs when we, as spectators, are moved. But are we moved by Joan's or Nana's tears? In *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973), similarly, the intense impression that the film *Frankenstein* has on Ana is not only manifested in the instant expressiveness of her close up, but subsequently impacts her perception of reality. For Victor Erice this shot of Ana is among the best images he has ever filmed. And this is perhaps due to the fact that, the shot, stolen by the hidden camera of Luis Cuadrado, conceals and at the same time reveals the intimate and collective space created in the act of cinema watching, expressed through the innocent gaze of a child.

In contrast to Erice's disguised and documentary camera, which aims to capture the most elementary and pure emotional reactions, Abbas Kiarostami's exercise in *Shirin* (2008) employs a methodology making use of the procedures of a

fiction, despite the fact that the search is the same for Kiarostami as it is for Erice. In *Shirin* a number of actresses watch a film to which we, the spectators, are only exposed audibly. What we witness, instead, is the reactions of these women to a film we never see. But the exposure of the cinematic devices in the documentary *Taste of Shirin* (2008), tells us that neither, in fact, do they. Kiarostami, who directs their performance every step of the way, has them looking at a cross or a drawing with arrows that indicate which direction their eyes should be moving, inches away from the axis of the camera. It is this position of the camera, nearly breaking the fourth wall, which is employed during the cinema scene in *Work*. In this case, as opposed to *Shirin*, the film was shot in a cinema and the spectators were watching *Kuhle Wampe*. However, having the camera in the axis right between the person being filmed and the cinema screen made the spectator aware of its presence, consequently resulting in a tension between the real event and its fabrication. A tension that, as previously stated, is deliberately planned and occurs throughout the whole film.

This cinema sequence in *Work* comes as the last in a long sequence of shots that visually show the daily life in the mining valley - people at work, children at school, and when the evening arrives the locals entertain themselves: they play bingo; they dance; they go to the cinema. The recurring presence of the narrator juxtaposes these everyday events to key historical events in the miner's resistance movement, which occurred in the same place. *Kuhle Wampe*, transforms the non-diegetic account of historical events, into a diegetic exposition at the same time as it connects the local working-class movement with a broader context. As in *Shirin*, a number of close-ups show the reactions of people watching a film — among them some miners — while for a significant period of time, the images of the film they're watching are not shown. But when they eventually are displayed, we never cut back to the spectators. Furthermore, once we relocate from the film theatre to the film being watched, we stay there for the rest of the remaining six and a half minutes of the scene. The link between the character audience and the film they are watching is consequently broken, in view of the fact that what is at stake here is not the effect that *Kuhle Wampe* has on the characters of *Work* or *To Whom Does the World Belong* (as the editing doesn't emphasise that) — but what occurs is that

the spectator of *Work* stops watching one film and starts watching another. To put it differently, the characters of *Work* dissipate as spectators of *Kuhle Wampe*, and the spectators of *Work* themselves become spectators of *Kuhle Wampe*. This device manifests a direct engaging with Brecht's ideas on the epic theatre.

The epic theatre is a theatre of gestures, says Walter Benjamin, and a gesture results from the interruption of an action. "Without anticipating the difficult study, yet to be made, of the function of the text in the epic theatre, we can at least say that often its main function is not to illustrate or advance the action, but on the contrary, to interrupt it."²⁴⁴ And this, in a sense, is the function of the lengthy excerpt of *Kuhle Wampe*. In spite of the fact that *Work* has a very minimal plot, hardly driven by the action; in spite of the fact that *Work* purposely avoids the sentimental engagement between the spectators and the characters, the obvious distancing effect created by the duration of the excerpt is a deliberate attempt to cinematically put into practice the methods of the epic theatre. Yet, it could be argued that Brecht's methods are old and as obsolete as the Aristotelian drama he so firmly arraigned. Even Jean Pierre Gorin censured his own approach with the Dziga Vertov Group, only four years after *Tout Va Bien*: "I'm no longer trying to be a Brechtian. The very idea of trying to think through the lenses of a guy who was thinking in the thirties seems to me, now, extraordinarily backward. I'm hardly even a Marxist anymore, so it opens my space a little."²⁴⁵ Having said that, the radical and experimental nature of Brecht's practice is undoubtedly more valuable to the CoR than the methods of a cinema entrenched in a model of representation, which doesn't merely decline to create anything new, but reproduces an image of the world aligned with the capitalist system it should denounce. Gorin clearly simplifies the innovative accomplishments of the Dziga Vertov Group as a result of its Brechtian influence and reduces the potentialities of this avant-garde tendency. It is not a matter of rendering the epic theatre into an epic cinema anymore, but of experimenting and exploring the possibilities of a technique which not only understands the nature of its artistic discipline, but understands the conditions of life under capitalism and consequently brings them to the fore.

²⁴⁴ Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, 3.

²⁴⁵ Walsh, *The Brechtian Aspect*, 117.

Some notes on film and work

The concepts of 'work' and 'labour', which are undisputedly of great importance in my film, are also concerns present in the work of many filmmakers referred to in this essay. *Odenwaldstetten*, is described by Nestler as "a picture of Germany and its history encapsulated in one village."²⁴⁶ But that history, the history of the people of Germany, as manifested in the film, is inseparable from the work they produce. *Odenwaldstetten* acquires, even if unintentionally, a materialist perspective: "men must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history'. But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself."²⁴⁷ In addition to seeing the inhabitants of the village in their daily tasks of subsistence, they also provide an account of how many hours they work and what their wage is. This associates the film even more, not to the Marxist conception of material history, but to the notion of labour. Expanding on that, Godard and Miéville produced a significant number of films which put focus on the relationships between work and labour power, *Numéro Deux* is an example ("Penser la maison en termes d'usine"²⁴⁸ - to think of the household in terms of the factory), as is *Six Fois Deux*. Deleuze describes how Godard, in *Six Fois Deux*, takes the abstract notion of labour (labour power is sold by the worker and bought by the capitalist, who obtains a surplus value) and asks very concrete questions. What is actually sold and bought? What is the worker prepared to sell? And what does he expect to get in return?²⁴⁹

The work of Straub-Huillet continuously addresses the question of power and class relations from an historical perspective. However, it must be emphasised that the concept of work and labour, aside from its influence on their treatment of historical adaptations, is inseparable from their own practice. Daney wrote "to produce for them (The Straubs, Godard, Duras, Rohmer - the film-artists) is to produce, at the same time, their life and their work, and more modestly, their

²⁴⁶ Nestler, "Traces: A Conversation."

²⁴⁷ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 181.

²⁴⁸ Godard and Bergala JLG par JLG, 380.

²⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 38.

labour and their labour power.”²⁵⁰ And going beyond any Marxist definition of what these mean, what Straub and Huillet do is to align themselves with the working class, never with an intellectual leftist sort of class, never with any militant Marxist group. They make films as workers for the working class.

The abstraction of labour in capitalist relations disperses further in the new model of society. As we've seen, the disciplinary societies (those that according to Foucault gave rise to a model of production operating in enormous spaces of enclosure), declining and destined to disappear, are being replaced by mechanisms equal to the hardest of confinement: the system of control that Farocki so patently lays bare. And in this moment, the passing from one model of production to another, is when *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong* takes place, as the last mine/factory is closing down. One of the last shots of the film bears witness to it: an attempt to reproduce *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (a film made at the height of the Industrial Revolution, and therefore involving huge numbers of participants). But what is captured today is a scant huddle of workers, barely enough to fill the mine elevator. In fact, the way the exit occurred in reality (the majority of workers who finish their shift leave the premises at different times over the period of approximately half an hour) prompted us to organise and re-enact the event, joining with workers at the colliery in order to make the change of shift an identifiable moment. And the same procedure was applied to the shot in which the miners go back to work after the failed strike. Aside from the methodology used to produce this image, what the shot exemplifies as compared to Lumière's, is the end, as opposed to the beginning, of a determined society and way of life — an end which has been long foretold and accepted by its protagonists. As a result of the crisis occurring in this territory regarding the changes in the means of subsistence of its people, the crisis in the labour movement is palpable. However, what the collective is not ready for, is to take on the new methods of exploitation of the society of control for which they have no tools of resistance.

And this is unambiguously expressed in the assembly where a group of workers attempt to organise and take action, tired of the inaction of the major unions.

²⁵⁰ Daney, *Ciné Journal*, 256. (My translation).

“This is like bread making.” says Raúl, one of the miners, “If a baker makes bread and no-one eats bread, nobody would care if he makes it or not. With mining it's the same, we produce coal, but no-one wants it. As far as they're concerned, we can extract it or not — they'd be even happier if we stop, so they don't have to pay our wages. And so, where is our weapon? Our weapons are [burning] tyres, [shutting down] motorways and picketing.” However, it becomes clear during the remainder of the assembly that they have neither the numbers nor the will to prove Raúl correct — so what starts as the intention to build a new movement ends up as a demonstration of the division and lack of intent among the stragglers of a once-determined and powerful force. Perhaps *Work*, by capturing the extinction of this civilisation, by showing that the people are no longer there, can contribute to its reconfiguration and, moreover, to the argument for a new labour movement.

Postscript about an emerging minor cinema: Asturian cinema

There is a filmmaking tendency which has appeared irregularly in Asturias over the years, and which has strong links to the Spanish film industry. This tendency either already belongs to the centralised mainstream and uses the region as a backdrop (at times touching on specifically regional subjects), or is constituted by some filmmakers who wish to belong to this mainstream, and mimic industry techniques. Like in any film industry, these films assume exhausted storytelling methods and operate within the modes of production of capitalism. Distinct from this, over the past decade there has been an unprecedented movement of cinema made in Asturias, or by Asturians, which shares a number of congruous traits, while simultaneously exposing a creative diversity. Ramón Lluís Bande, one of the most prominent and prolific filmmakers in this minoritarian cinema, regards these two trends as firstly, “An ‘integrated’ cinema which aims at belonging to the Spanish industry, as a first step to becoming a transnational (or neoliberal) cinema”; and secondly, and in opposition to this, there is “a cinema ‘not reconciled’ — neither in the political sphere, nor in the industrial, made by a group of people proud of their belonging and their origins, and concerned with a collective reality they want to

address.”²⁵¹ In this sense it could be said that, applying the themes of this paper, we are talking about a cinema of representation and a cinema of resistance — namely, a minor cinema whose first trait (as Bande points out) is that everything in it takes a collective value.

The cinema movement in question, is primarily self-produced by filmmakers whose first and foremost concern is that of depicting the reality of a region struggling with a loss (some would say a loss of identity — however as I’ve previously noted, it is the loss of a people) as a result of the post-industrial decline in which Asturias is immersed. And this depiction is invariably achieved either by focusing on the current state of affairs or on its history. A marked attribute of this movement (in which I include myself) is the influence of the strong working-class movement we were still able to witness and be part of in the last decades of the 20th century. To put it differently: it is presumed that, judging by their politically engaged films, these filmmakers have a class consciousness. And this is a specific characteristic of Asturian cinema, which cannot be found in other Spanish regions with strong regional cinematographic oeuvres. Despite the fact that neighbouring regions such as Galicia produce well-recognised and riveting works of creative excellence, only in Asturian films is there a political trait contained both in form and content. This political, and at times militant idiosyncrasy, leads to an aesthetic experimental search which is different for every filmmaker and, occasionally, in every film. This cinema (more possible recently as a consequence of increasingly affordable video and sound systems) have a tendency towards the so-called non-fiction or, in some cases, they try to occupy that space situated between documentary and fiction, perhaps because this type of cinema is also inexpensive to produce. The limited economic resources which these filmmakers have at their disposal largely determine their aesthetics and means of production (but not exclusively — they are also determined by their politics). That being the case, what is manifested is the second aspect of a minor cinema: everything in it is political.

These films which are steadily contributing to construct what Bande would call a national cinema, as divergent as they can be in their formal approach, have one

²⁵¹ Bande, Ramón Lluís, “Asturian Cinema and me,” email correspondence to Elisa Cepedal, August 5, 2019.

thing in common — their formal search is constitutive of their experimental militancy. They amount to political gestures inasmuch as:

1. they are self-produced, namely, they are not backed up by any distribution company or industrial structure.
2. they are concerned with the 'local' as a course of action to relate to the universal.
3. their cinematic exploration, restricted or unencumbered (depending on how one looks at it), by limited means of production, is intrinsic to their being. These attributes of a cinema that emerges purely from a creative necessity of those involved, indicate a responsibility, not just to the collective reality of the people (who are missing, and are yet to come) but also to the cinematographic act.

This new Asturian cinema, whose attitude for many years was resistance against the passivity and disdain of regional and national organisations, has in recent years had a supportive platform for exhibition in the Gijón International Film Festival. As a result, the local press has become more aware of the existence of a coherent movement and has started regularly reporting on it. In 2017, the Gijón festival devoted a special section to my short-form work, in the first retrospective of an Asturian filmmaker made in the 55-year history of the festival. That same year, Ramón Lluís Bande premiered in a competitive section, *Escoréu 24 d'avientu de 1937* (2017), a film that depicts the search for a mass grave, concealed since the Spanish Civil War. Bande's committed and respectful gaze towards the living victims of atrocious crimes, and to the voluntary work of those excavating, is indebted to the resistance of these collectives — who despite the lack of support by state institutions and the contempt of conservative parts of society, have continued in their struggle to find the remains of those executed by the fascists. The following year there was an unprecedented presence of Asturian 'not reconciled' films: Marcos M. Merino and Marta F. Crestelo showed their documentary film *In Memoriam (la Derrota Convene Olvidarla) - In Memoriam (the Defeat Should be Forgotten)* - (2018) which also focused on various collectives of people in Asturias, whose work of resistance in the preservation of the memory and culture of the industrial heritage goes widely overlooked; Diego Llorente screened *Enrialgo* - (2018), a work with a direct cinema approach that recounts rural living in a village in the mining valleys through the life of a child and the school he attends; Tito

Montero's *El Pasado Presente - The Past Present* - (2018) approaches the identity crisis of the region following a long period of deindustrialisation; and Bande returned, this time to the Official Selection and obtaining a special mention by the international jury, with *Cantares de una Revolución - Songs of a Revolution* - (2018) an ode to the popular songs of the 1934 Asturian Revolution and to the role played by Belarmino Tomás, miner, socialist, union leader, and one of the leaders of the Revolution. *Work or To Whom Does the World Belong*, which premiered in Gijón in 2019, obtained that year's Special Jury Award.²⁵² The recent 2020 edition of the Festival saw a new work by Bande, *Vaca Mugiendo Entre Ruinas - Cow Lowing Among Ruins*, and the debut of Celia Viada Caso, *La Calle del Agua - Water Street*, which amassed seven awards by three different juries. Both works explore the lost memory through the gesture of unearthing stories and events that were intentionally buried by the dictatorship in a vile revision of history that still persists today: the formation of the Sovereign Council of Asturias and León which unflinchingly endured the fascist attacks during the Spanish Civil War until the Nacionales victoriously occupied the region following the horrific bombing of Gijón by German planes; and the story of Benjamina Miyar, the pioneering female photographer of the early 20th century, and anti-fascist fighter who organised clandestine resistance and gave shelter to those fleeing persecution at the end of the war.

As a consequence of the strong presence of Asturian filmmakers in the 2018 Gijón Film Festival, some of whom haven't been mentioned and some of whom belong to the 'integrated' cinema trend, Bande summoned us to a hotel room (in an exercise mirroring Wim Wender's *Room 666* [1982]) to reflect upon the existence of the regional cinema and upon questions relating to cinema and territory. *Hotel Asturias* (2019) was shown in the 2019 edition of the festival, contributing to the continuation of the debate opened the previous year.²⁵³ The

²⁵² The jury recognised the work with the following statement: "A film that captivated us, by its way of appropriating images of the present through setting them in relation to the collective memory of the labour movement. Preserving their political commitment, these images find their own reflective aesthetic whilst building on a determined cinephile cadence."

²⁵³ The following pilot manifesto was read as my contribution to the film *Hotel Asturias*. A collective reflection upon the questions posited by Bande: What relation should cinema have with the territory it depicts? Can we talk about an Asturian Cinema? What should Asturian cinema be?

screening of *Hotel Asturias* served as grounds for Bande to present a lecture on the New Asturian Cinema, in an attempt to define its characteristics but also to transform the individual efforts into a collective one. Additionally, it also served as platform for filmmakers to exchange views, incidentally opening the New Asturian Cinema to criticism of non-inclusivity and sectarianism.

Be that as it may, the undeniable existence of this New Asturian Cinema provides an exciting new framework, but it also faces the challenges that any non-industrial cinema does: the difficulty of its distribution. Although, for the first time outside of its frontiers, a retrospective was dedicated to Asturian cinema in the festival Cinespaña Toulouse - titled "Memory, militancy and exile: an approach to a recent Asturian cinema", the reality is that the commitment shown by distribution companies, film festivals and cultural institutions to a cinema of these attributes is scant. Having said that, it is worth mentioning the emergence of a circuit of cinematheques across the Spanish territory whose policy is to provide a platform for this type of cinema. Bande and Merino were instrumental in involving the Asturian ministry of art to create a similar regional circuit, to bring the Asturian cinema to the whole territory. This proposal has enormous potential. In the first place, it could be a platform for public debate between the people of the territory about their past, present and future, and secondly, it could provide a source of income to the producers of the films, with the opportunity to recuperate some of the investment made in the film without having to resort to exiguous public funding.

The question of funding is a controversial one, to say the least. Ramón Lluís Bande supports the idea of a national cinema which is publicly funded and ought to be so exclusively by Asturian institutions. He argues that the feasibility

-A cinema that abandons the interpretation of things in favour of experimentation: to bring something incomprehensible to the world.

-A cinema that doesn't attempt to make sense of the reality of Asturias but that re-establishes our belief in this place.

-A cinema that doesn't represent the reality of Asturias but that *is* the reality of Asturias: Paraphrasing Godard: our films will be what is real, it's Asturias that is living a bad script.

-A minoritarian cinema that creates an immediate connection between the singular and the political. Thus, a militant cinema with a revolutionary becoming such as that which the Asturian people once demonstrated.

of this is considerable given how inexpensive these films are. This model would be easily supported if the regional television channel enforced the Spanish Film Law by which publicly owned television channels must invest 6% of their annual earnings into film production. Currently there is a maximum of €30,000 in funding for non-fiction Asturian cinema to distribute among two productions every year which is provided by the regional Ministry of Culture. This amount is derisory (as is what the Television channel invests compared to what they should if they were to comply with the law), and this attitude towards funding perpetuates the current precariousness of the productions. At the moment Asturian productions have to resort to central public funding from the Spanish Institute of the Cinematographic Arts — which has recently created a new grant for non-fiction experimental projects, making funding more accessible to films with small budgets and without distribution deals and theatrical releases such as those of the New Asturian Cinema. Many disagree with Bande's vision of a national cinema purely funded in the region, arguing that not only is this dogmatic, but it will constrain the cinema's potential by forcing it to a constant state of precariousness. However, from a deeper and perhaps unrealistic political perspective it ought to be asked whether the State (let alone a regional government) should be funding films belonging to a minor cinema at all.

Aside from the practicalities of how contemporary Asturian filmmakers can make ends meet in order to produce their films, the underlying question that goes to the core of the Cinema of Resistance is: Within a globalised world, how can a minor cinema be constructed? "We need to make specific films, for specific languages, in specific places, about specific questions. We need to reinvent borders, destroy the Europe of Dr. Goebbels,"²⁵⁴ says Straub when asked about the advent of globalisation. On the surface, this question might seem to contradict the third trait of a minor cinema: a high coefficient of deterritorialisation. If we define deterritorialisation as the movement by which something flees a territory,²⁵⁵ it must be understood that a territory is not necessarily a physical piece of land — but something that could also be mental and spiritual,²⁵⁶ or could belong to the social field, or to the regime of signs. It

²⁵⁴ Straub and Huillet, *Writings*, 259.

²⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 508.

²⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, 68.

follows that the notion of the high coefficient of deterritorialisation in 'language' within a minor cinema does not refer to the processes of deterritorialisation that occur within neoliberal cinema. The latter benefits from the disappearance of borders in the Global Market (the deterritorialisation of capital) which rather than recognise cultural differences, ends up homogenising them to an 'American' standard. Contrarily in minor cinema, the movements of deterritorialisation occur within cinema itself inasmuch as it escapes the dominant and homogenising aesthetics in favour of a creative expressivity. It might therefore seem paradoxical to defend a national cinema, as Bande does, if we look at it through the prism of binary questions such as those of identity — however, from the viewpoint of a non-linear historical materialism and considering the current stage of capitalism, the only way for cinema to resist is through grass-roots organisation, by making films of a specific place, a specific issue, and outside the majoritarian languages of cinema and industrial standards. In this context, the fragility of a minor cinema that strives to exist is evident. In spite of the difficulties, what the emergence of these films in Asturias proves is that cinema is alive and its function is best served when it springs up from a people close to the territory and to the issues depicted in the film.

This is referred to by Mike Wayne as cultural specificity, and is discussed within the context of Third Cinema as one of its core characteristics.²⁵⁷ The Third Cinema movement distinctly shares certain attributes and essential values with this New Asturian Cinema: the importance of producing films outside industrial modes of production, the capitalisation of technical advances in film equipment which reduces costs and makes film production more accessible, the concern towards implementing circuits of distribution that reach local audiences and promote debates with the communities where and for whom the films are made, the political commitment expressed both in the content and the form of the films, the obligation of the filmmakers towards their communities and their class. Despite the internationalism of the Third Cinema movement, which originated in Latin America but later unfolded globally and significantly in Third World countries as manifested in Teshome H. Gabriel's work²⁵⁸ and conventions that took place in Algeria and Edinburgh in 1973 and 1986 respectively,²⁵⁹ the

²⁵⁷ Wayne, *Political Film*, 22.

²⁵⁸ Gabriel, "Towards a Critical Theory."

²⁵⁹ Chanan, "The Changing Geography."

aforementioned characteristics and the cultural specificity of its distinctive cinemas can provide a discussion within the boundaries of national cinema, summoning Bande's views and Fernando Birri's call for a national, realist, critical and popular cinema,²⁶⁰ but also Solanas admission years later from the original manifesto that "third cinema is also aligned with the national culture [...] [if] by national culture we mean that of the ensemble of the popular classes."²⁶¹

As Andrew Higson notes, the term 'National Cinema' commonly refers to the cinematographic work produced in a particular country. Beyond this initial simplification, he identifies four primary routes through the various approximations to the subject. In the first instance, he finds that national cinema can be defined in economic terms, prioritising the ownership of the means of production and distribution of a particular nation-state, therefore linking the concept to the 'domestic film industry.' Secondly, there is a cultural approach, which concerns stylistic, formal, and performative issues to the extent that they negotiate identity questions such as nationhood. The third method involves the spectator, primarily in relation to the hegemony of American cinema, "for what is a national cinema without a national audience?" And lastly, the 'criticism-led' approach which favours a reading in national cinema in terms of quality, inasmuch as there are outstanding examples of films within a given territory.²⁶² Overall, my previous description of the current situation of Asturian cinema concurs with some, if not all, of Higson's characteristics, and could therefore prompt me to define Asturian cinema as a national cinema, or in some measure, a national cinema in the making. However, certain appendages and nuances have to be made to this definition attending primarily to the political and peripheral nature of Asturian cinema, and additionally to my role and concerns as a filmmaker and participant of the cinema in question. It goes without saying that when I refer to Asturias as a nation, I implicitly don't equate the term to a nation-state. Further, from assuming the modern conception of a nation as a totality with fixated identitarian traits and traditions, inextricably grounded in historicism, we must approximate the concept 'nation' prioritising its temporality, understanding it as an assemblage whose fluid and transitional

²⁶⁰ Birri, "For a National."

²⁶¹ Chanan, "The Changing Geography."

²⁶² Higson, "National Cinema."

nature focuses on the local as means of connecting to the international: “a form of living that is more complex than 'community'; more symbolic than 'society'; more connotative than 'country'; less patriotic than *patrie*; more rhetorical than the reason of state; more mythological than ideology; less homogeneous than hegemony; less centred than the citizen; more collective than 'the subject'; more psychic than civility; more hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications —gender, race or class — than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism.”²⁶³

It is clear that the function of a cinema like Asturian cinema, in as much as it is a CoR, is not that of emulating the State and therefore attempting to replicate a Spanish cinema industry in its territory (with what this entails: reproducing the modes of production on one hand, acting as totalising agent in constructing a dominant culture of essentialist identities, on the other). On the contrary, insofar as a minor cinema does not construct tales of signifying identities and cultural justification of the nation, but rather continuously puts into question these narratives which somewhat obstruct the reality, the everyday experience of the people and their virtual potentialities to become, the function of a national cinema of these characteristics is that of bringing forward a ‘counter-narrative’.²⁶⁴ And as such it has much to learn from minoritarian expressions of resistance from third world and colonised communities. To legitimise the yearn for the nation, says Frantz Fanon, national consciousness is not only essential but ‘the highest form of culture.’ However, Fanon warned of the perils of reconstructing a national culture in colonised countries in the process of fighting for their independence, based on a return to their traditions before colonisation. In doing this, one risks romanticising the past on one hand, and assuming the discourse of the coloniser on the other: a distorted idea of an uncivilised and barbaric culture which brings forth folklore, populism, exoticism. Instead, the quest for national consciousness and consequently national culture, must be built upon the very struggle and resistance against the supremacy of the coloniser (just as the Hauka do in *Le Maîtres Fous*). The colonised intellectual must not only write about the fight, but join it.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, Fanon criticises

²⁶³ Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 292.

²⁶⁴ This term is used by Bhabha in his text “DissemiNation” included in *Nation and Narration*.

²⁶⁵ Fanon, *The Wretched Earth*, 145-180.

the efforts of the movement towards Pan-Africanism, arguing that by exalting a global integrated idea of blackness, one is merging the distinct and different ethnicities, problems and demands of black people across the world into an abstraction fabricated by the white coloniser. Both Fanon and Bhabha engage with an idea of the nation contrary to the one put forth by nationalism, inasmuch as they recognise the impossibility of ascribing homogenising intrinsic qualities to a group, while fundamentally assigning to the group the need for artistic and literary expressions which capture and contribute to its political becoming.

Based on Fanon's ideas on the necessary evolution for the liberation of a colonised people, Gabriel envisions three stages by which the cinematography of Third World countries can emancipate itself from Western domination: namely, the unqualified assimilation (the influence of the Hollywood model is paramount), the remembrance phase (there is an emergence of native/national consciousness, but there remain risks of fabricating a culture based on the idealisation of a pre-colonised past), and the combative phase (where total emancipation is achieved)²⁶⁶. Furthermore, he considers the connections between popular memory and culture in Third Cinema, emphasising the importance of oral transmission of memory in the form of poems and songs, and bringing it into opposition with Western forms of narrative which rely on cause and effect.²⁶⁷ Interestingly, New Asturian Cinema shares with Third Cinema and Third World Cinema this yearning to tell what Miguel de Unamuno denominated intrahistory,²⁶⁸ that is, the unofficial history, the real stories that occurred but that weren't published by the newspapers, the history of those who don't have History and that ultimately finds other ways of transmission. *Cantares de una Revolución* is perhaps the most obvious example as it demonstrates how the stories of a forgotten proletarian revolution survive through popular songs. *Escoréu* and *La Calle del Agua* are also paradigmatic as they bring to the fore the necessity of the orally transmitted knowledge as a tool of resistance in a sieged community: knowledge without which it would have been impossible to redeem mass graves eighty years later, or the officially forgotten figure of Belarmina Tomás. These efforts by Asturian filmmakers represent not a remembrance phase, but a fight against the acquiescent history that the Pact of

²⁶⁶ Gabriel, "Towards a Critical Theory", 188-190.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. 195.

²⁶⁸ Unamuno, *Ensayos*, 40.

Forgetting brought to a country transitioning into democracy. It could be argued that 'forgetting' was necessary then - but it is imperative today to recuperate what was forgotten, in order to build a new people. The causes and perils of this are highlighted by Bande who talks, apropos of *Vaca*: "They've done a great job in erasing class loyalty and feelings of belonging [...] To that end, one of the tools has been the erasure of stories like this. They cut the red thread, and as you leave the popular classes without antibodies, you allow the new triumph of fascism."²⁶⁹

What is expressed in Bande's words, in his work, in Celia's film, and I would add also in my own, is a search to dredge up Unamuno's intrahistory, Bhabha counter-narrative, or Jamie Chambers "revisionist or counter-hegemonic representation" - this latter being an intrinsic attribute of Folk Cinema.²⁷⁰ In point of fact the New Asturian Cinema's concerns, characteristics and ways of engagement discussed thus far, profoundly resonate with Chambers' conception of Folk Cinema. As well as this first trait, and the already mentioned importance of orally transmitted culture (the second aspect of Folk Cinema), the collective value of the work expressed in the lack of a single protagonist in favour of a choral approach, and the "ethnographic verisimilitude or 'authentic' representation" given in the case of Asturian Cinema by the fact that all filmmakers belong to the community and the class they depict in their films, could venture us to denominate New Asturian Cinema as Folk Cinema.

There are further issues discussed by Chambers, Gabriel and Third Cinema that are of interest in enabling a better understanding of Asturian Cinema, namely the role of the audience and the conception of cinema as a work of art and the filmmakers as an artist. Both Chambers and Gabriel resort to conflicting the cinema in question with Western cinema, from which emerge two distinct conceptions of audiences: "the active interrogation of images versus the passive consumption of films."²⁷¹ This idea is in no way new in Gabriel, as it was present in Solanas and Getino's manifesto, and of course in Brecht. The reception of our films is indeed an issue of great importance in Asturian Cinema, on the one hand we recognise the importance of the international

²⁶⁹ Bande, interview.

²⁷⁰ Chambers, "Towards a Folk Cinema."

²⁷¹ Gabriel, "Towards a Critical Theory", 191.

circuit of film festivals as platforms to make our work known and acknowledged, but ultimately we want our films to be shown in Asturias, as was manifested in the efforts of my colleagues to engage the Ministry of Culture in creating a regional circuit of cultural centres to, not only show our films, but participate in open discussions with the audience. In this sense, one could not ask Asturian spectators and Asturian films to engage in a screening experience based on the open discussion of the film while it is playing, as Gabriel describes African audiences or *La Hora de los Hornos* promoted with its captions openly calling for debate. But by no means should we diminish the importance of a more “Western” experience just because different codes are in place. I would venture to say that Asturian filmmakers are as concerned with transmitting cultural specificity and engaging with local audience as they are concerned with cinema as an art form - and as such the film should be appreciated in its entirety with close attention (this not implying passivity). Comparably, it could be argued that this conception of the film as a work of art has more to do with Second Cinema, a more arthouse, auteur approach which lacks true revolutionary potential because is tied, firstly to a bourgeois idea of the artist, and secondly to its reception by a restrictive collective of people which, as Michael Chanan notes “the Argentinians called a dilettante elite.”²⁷² However, nothing in Asturian cinema points to this, as both the filmmakers and their audience are working-class and seem intent on remaining so.

The limiting nature of the Second/Third Cinema divide firstly expressed in “Toward a Third Cinema” has given rise to many subsequent discussions, even to some rectifications by Solanas who years later reconfigured their definitions attending to the reality of the situation as opposed to some idealist and ideological political stance, in other words, taking into considerations “the interests to which the films answer.”²⁷³ By the same token, the Third Cinema as a global movement proved to be a fertile ground for the development of both a filmmaking practice and a critical framework. The theoretical debates which have proliferated outside its original Latin America, at times interesting, at times rather sterile, largely drift apart from the essence and the urgency that drove Rocha, Solanas and Getino, Julio García Espinosa to write their manifestos and

²⁷² Chanan, “The Changing Geography.”

²⁷³ Ibid.

to make their films. Anthony R. Guneratne rightly denounces the disregard for Third Cinema as a movement within Western studies and the greater alienation of non-Eurocentric culture within globalisation, situating the cause of this in some scholars' prejudice towards Third World societies.²⁷⁴ This sidedness, says Guneratne, alleging the disparate nature of its origin which is organised around a number of scattered manifestos, prevent classifying Third Cinema as a coherent movement with common goals. However, in my view, any attempts to elevate a heterogeneous movement originated by the creative and political volition of filmmakers to a canon articulated by theorists should keep us alert. Precisely the early manifestations of Third Cinema awoke a subsequent global movement and conversation among practitioners that took place all over the world, and stimulated the production of interesting texts by filmmakers/theorists (Gabriel, Chanan) which furthered the cause of Third Cinema and increased its momentum. Having said that, the efforts and discussions around the categorisation of films and filmmakers, the labelling, the setting of great principles, obsession and drive of some theorists (though not practitioners) fetter the creative flows that gave rise to Rocha, Solanas and Getino, Espinosa's manifestos and films in the first place, and are exceedingly aloof from the discussions taking place amongst filmmakers today.

In 1996 John Akomfrah proclaimed the death of Third Cinema,²⁷⁵ and one cannot but partially agree with his statement. As I've extensively observed in previous chapters, the world Solanas or Getino knew when they conceived their manifesto has changed dramatically, capitalism has continued to transform and it now exerts its dominance and oppression through different means. Hence, new problems appear and demand new methods. Nonetheless, any filmmaker concerned with resisting the system and creating freely for and with the people, cannot but align herself not with each and every postulate of the Third Cinema, but with its sentiment, its cry, its will, in the same way that Third Cinema filmmakers had their precursors in Benjamin, Brecht, or Vertov.²⁷⁶ The lines of flight that Third Cinema filmmakers opened in the 60s and 70s are very much alive, and manifesting currently in Asturian Cinema: "[Something] was in the air" declared Birri apropos of the abundance of outstanding Latin American works in

²⁷⁴ Guneratne, *Rethinking Third Cinema*,

²⁷⁵ Wayne, *Political Film*, 2.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

that period of time.²⁷⁷ Hence, we should then speak of a continuum, a becoming and not a death. And let us recall that the ethos of this project and Deleuze's philosophy has proven to be not the laying of new ground rules or dogmas with their intrinsic structures and relations of interiority, but the understanding that the processes in life production, filmmaking included, abide by not a great first principle but to the exteriority of relations, this being a vital protest against principles. Thus, the questions for us are not how to classify our films more accurately according to a system once thought, how to develop that system to perfection, or how to build other principles to which obey, but what postulates, what ideas, what practices from Cinema Novo, Tercer Cine, from Fanon, Brecht, or Vertov are of use for us today. Leaving aside discussions on whether Asturian cinema manifests itself as a Second Cinema, a Third Cinema, or a mixture of the two, whether we can call it national, folk, local or regional, a few essential conditions remain: the links between the filmmakers and the territory are inextricable, and there is a concern with finding new ways of expression, production and distribution which attend to a need to decolonise cinema from the claws of the industry, a need to resist the commodification and absorption of our films into capitalism.

Deleuze recounts a significant switch in political cinema after the Second World War, attributing this change to the way cinema represents a recognised collectivity. In classical cinema "the people are there, even though they are oppressed, tricked, subject, even though blind or unconscious."²⁷⁸ For in both Soviet and American cinema the masses become a subject in their search for revolution and democracy respectively: cinema as the embodiment of the art of the masses. Great modern political cinema differs substantially insofar as the people are no longer there, *the people are missing*. Most modern western filmmakers, says Deleuze, have not realised this, however, third world and minority filmmakers (due to the fact that they live in nations or communities in a constant state of oppression, subdued to a perpetual existential and identity crisis) find themselves unable to represent or construct the idea of a people, purely because the people doesn't exist yet. If Asturian cinema is or would be a minor cinema, it will not be so by dwelling on a history of past struggles, by

²⁷⁷ Birri, "For a National," 95.

²⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 208.

upholding a unifying flag or language, by constructing signifying tales which help us connect to the foundations of who we are as a people. Rather, Asturian cinema must invent a people that does not exist and in doing so it asserts its creative, experimental and political nature, its counter-narrative function, its resistance and minoritarian becoming.

Manifesto of the Cinema of Resistance

As filmmakers of the twenty-first century committed to our art as means of exploring the world we claim to engage with, we must not forebear from pinpointing the very system that undermines that world and that art. A system with omnipotent power that dominates all production in life, whose fundamental purpose is creating commodities, surplus and ultimately capital. This system is so pleased with the cinema industry, wherever it might be, and its model of representation that it puts to work all its potential to perpetuate it. In preserving its existence, it filters, assimilates and codifies certain artistic, radical and unconventional expressions, emptying them of any significance, in order to make them innocuous and convenient to consume.

As filmmakers of the twenty-first century we must welcome, but be wary of, the digital technologies that have revolutionised the mechanisms of production. On one hand, this significant change has contributed to the so-called democratisation of cinema. We are now able to autonomously produce work with very few resources, hence (in principle) making cinema more accessible to those who previously didn't have the opportunity to work with these means of expression (note that producing work is one thing — exhibiting it, quite another). On the other hand, the digitalisation of cinema has afforded the industry with an obsession of producing 'perfect' images with ever larger resolutions and sound compositions aimed at reproducing the three-dimensional space of reality. This reality resemblance complex is inseparable from the constant progress in technology: unceasing production of new devices to achieve such and such camera movement, constantly upgraded computers that allow the processing of the ever-changing encoding of data, postproduction software to substantially alter that which has been previously recorded from reality. Not only do these endless advances subscribe to capitalism's essential overproduction chain but lead to a bigger division of labour and hierarchisation of work in the cinema industry.

Hand in hand with this industry goes the majority of the professed independent cinema or authorial cinema, which generally, under the epithet of originality and style, reproduces the same expired model: the Aristotelian dramatic structure,

the identification of the spectator with the characters through the exploitation of sentimental psychology, the shot/reverse-shot. Cinema should have no frontiers and no boundaries, but the new tendencies in contemporary cinema tells us that the only borders it transgresses are those of the capital it takes from everywhere: a tourist cinema from nowhere, for everyone.

From the outside, finding a space between the crevices of the capitalist modes of production, in order to truly connect to reality without any noise, setting alight the model and its copies, displaying an outcry for the local, honouring what has come to pass and has so shamefully been forgotten, reclaiming moving images from their commodification - a cinema which explores cinema's potential to its utmost is possible, and this is a cinema of resistance.

Cinema of Resistance is so extremely variable that we cannot begin with a general model, only a relatively simple case. As a result, the following are not rules to implement but points of departure, lines of flight which rouse continuous movements preventing cinema from becoming sedentary, from being absorbed into the codes of consumption. Having said that, this cinema has three essential attributes which shape its form, its search, its becoming - or else these qualities are the direct consequence of the aforementioned:

1. Everything in the cinema of resistance is political.
2. It has a high coefficient of deterritorialisation.
3. Everything acquires a collective value.

These essential properties make the CoR a minor cinema and manifest the indissociable dimensions of cinema's ontology: politics and aesthetics. Yet this contingent correlation prevails also in the dominant type of cinema which itself doesn't identify as political, as the CoR so openly does. However, it is not a question of ideology, as there is no ideology and never has been, it is rather a question of alliances.

I

If cinema was born with no purpose it can thus be put into the service of many causes: moving images can be entertainment, propaganda, advertisement, they can become a great tool in the advocacy of idiocy, or develop into the biggest system of control and domination ever known, they can be instrumental in throwing fatal bombs or instead machines of resistance when documenting the atrocities of war. Because, is there such thing as capturing reality unmediated? In a time when *the world is less and less human, the more it is the filmmakers' duty to believe and produce belief in a relation between man and the world, because the world is made by men.*

II

In cinema's power to affect, the easy manipulation of emotions through empathy must be dismissed in favour of producing images and sounds able to move us by filtering that which cannot be assimilated by a system capable of assimilating almost everything, that which cannot be commodified, that which is un-consumable, that is poetry.

III

A cinema of poetry must be advocated, which abandons its urge towards empathy and engages instead with an urge to abstraction: to bring something incomprehensible to the world.

IV

The road to abstraction which involves a reconciliation with human's most primitive artistic impulses, is twofold. At the outset it implies a formal search, exploring new ways of storytelling, transgressing predominant dramatic structures and methods of filming. Subsequently it contributes to the emancipation of images from the current obsession with perfection, by creating imperfect images and imperfect works.

V

A film must be conceived not as a flawless totality whose parts exist only at the service of the whole, nor as a work able to create a distinct absolute universe, for *there is no universe that awaits to be created*. Hence a film as an assemblage, an open network of connections with the reality outside, because it is part of the reality outside, in constant movement, always exploring its potentialities. Dialectics and binary oppositions are cast aside to instigate a cinema of the 'in between', that which develops in the middle, a cinema of the 'and', this and then that and then this...

VI

In its search towards the unknown, towards the new, what defines the cinema of resistance is experimentation. Inasmuch as the creative process is at the core of this experimentation, the filmmaker must abandon pre-existing forms that precede the film, to find a style that doesn't yet exist, a non-style.

VII

In and of itself, a non-style doesn't emanate from an author whose genius is susceptible of creating original works of excellence, and whose traits are swiftly embraced and praised by a system that

wastes no time in marketing them and cashing them in. A non-style is impersonal.

VIII

A filmmaker of the cinema of resistance is not a subject of enunciation, she doesn't convey messages or give voices to those who don't have one. But rather she is the conduit for a conspiracy. She becomes her characters, at the same time as her characters become her.

IX

The collective is therefore put before, sometimes and specially when the collectivity is absent. It is not a question of longing for a different world, a revolution, a utopia but acknowledging the fact that the people are missing. And only then, by means of creativity, cinema can contribute to envision an open, unwritten future for the people yet to come. Trusting then, not revolutions, but the revolutionary-becoming of people.

X

Balzac amuses himself in front of a painting that represents a farm with a smoking chimney in a snowed landscape. He asks the painter how many people live in that house. The painter responds that he does not know. 'How is that possible?'— replies Balzac. If it's you who painted the canvas, you must know how many people live there, how old are their children, if the harvest was good that year and if they have enough money for the daughter's dowry. If you don't know everything about the people who live in that house, you have no right to make that smoke come out of the chimney. In avoiding the connection of cinema and the territory where it's made, one deliberately becomes estranged from reality and loses the right to make this or that film, or make it in this or that manner: it is not about the politicisation of the

aesthetics, but rather recognising that aesthetics are inherently political.

XI

And these will be the politics of resistance by which a cinema that expresses minorities, that emerges from the local, that invokes an immediate territory of imperceptible borders, rebels against the standardising methods of a globalising system that is instrumental in the uprooting of the people on one hand, and is responsible for the creation of polarising identities on the other. In other words, by not conforming with the norm, by affirming difference, cinema of resistance ought to give rise to a minor cinema.

XII

This minor cinema which is born out of necessity, becomes so inasmuch as it invents the revolutionary conditions to connect the individual with the political.

XIII

All in all, to create, not a cinema of the truth but the truth of cinema.

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