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Deleuze,
and
Godard-
Miéville

DEVELOPING PHILOSOPHY
THROUGH AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA

JAKOB A. NILSSON

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Preface

On the widest level, this study deals with the following problem: As reading declines, especially among the young, and distribution of knowledge and even theory becomes an increasingly audiovisual matter (most broadly on YouTube), how can original philosophy adapt in ways that develop—instead of dilute—philosophical rigor and specificity? How can philosophy exploit the potential in audiovisual media—which are more formally multidimensional than text-only—for conceptualizing more registers of reality with more precision and depth? In this book I present a theory of such a formal development of philosophy through audiovisual media: a theory of cinecepts. While addressing the wider problem just described, this theory is also highly specific: it regards Gilles Deleuze's definition of philosophy as the art of creating concepts and a reconfiguration of this definition that allows for concept formation advancing *directly* in and through the audiovisual. This entails a careful synthesis of what Deleuze himself kept apart:

[P]hilosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts.
(WP 2)¹

[T]hose of you who do cinema [...] do not invent concepts—that is not your concern. (TRM 314)

The synthesizing of these positions is premised on a view largely shared with Alexandre Astruc:

[T]he cinema [can] [...] become a means of writing [at least] as flexible and subtle as written language. [...] The most philosophical meditations [...] lie well within

its province. [...] [Cinema] is not so much a particular art as a language which can express any sphere of thought. (Astruc 2014 [1948]: 604f)

I proceed, however, through close reexaminations of Deleuze's work, his conceptions of philosophy, cinema, art, politics, and novelty, but also through a close study of philosophical problems and cineceptual tendencies in Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's 1970s Sonimage period, as well as logics of montage developed in Godard before and after this period, and lastly through connecting the theory of cinecepts to a contemporary world of video essays and multimedia. I also build on and critically engage with a variety of scholarly works on Deleuze and on Godard primarily, as well as from within Film-Philosophy, Film and Media Theory, Philosophy, Critical Theory, and Videographic Film Studies.

A key question for late Deleuze: what distinguishes philosophy, as a mode of thinking, from art and cinema with philosophical dimensions? His main answer, as seen in the quotations above, is concept creation. Philosophy produces concepts—defined as a particular kind of determination of problems and condensed constellations of potential²—and art and cinema do not produce concepts. Are media forms entailed in this distinction? Are philosophical concepts necessarily tied to speaking and writing? Or could film / video / audiovisual media—if regarded as concrete forms instead of specific conducts generalized as art or cinema—be used to formulate philosophical concepts? And could this be a way to advance Deleuze's (Nietzsche-inspired) concern with the formal renewal of philosophy? Deleuze did not himself raise these questions, which is curious given his life-long concern precisely with the formal renewal of philosophy, his focus on art and cinema as sources of inspiration for such renewal, and his interest in advanced thought in and through moving images with sound. These questions have remained unexamined, moreover, despite Deleuze being central for the increased focus in recent decades on the film/philosophy relation, and for the by now extensive literature on film *as* philosophy.³

The theory of cinecepts is an answer to these questions, which is essentially one question with three sides: How could film / video / audiovisual media⁴ function as direct means for concept formation in a Deleuzian sense of concepts? How can Deleuze's thought itself be reexamined and partly reconfigured in this regard? Given his ongoing concern with renewing philosophy on the level of form, what happens if we keep to Deleuze's abstract definition of philosophy, but expand the concrete parameters of its formal renewal to film / video / audiovisual media?

Cineceptual theory builds on Deleuze but is also a critical response to his (complex but categorical) separation between filmic thinking and philosophical conceptualization, and his tendency to implicitly restrict the latter to the actual form of words-only.⁵ The cinecept is also a response to film-philosophical engagements with

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these aspects of Deleuze's thought, which tend to assume that Deleuze equated cinematic thinking with philosophy, which he did not.⁶ For Deleuze, cinematic figures of thought are preconceptual (however much they can suggest or give rise to concepts), and philosophy has the "exclusive right" to concept creation (WP 8). The theory of cinecepts results from an immanent critique and reorganization of parts of Deleuze's philosophy which takes us beyond this restriction.

Similar restrictions abound in the literature on film as philosophy (whether analytic or continental, "bold" or "moderate"). The meaning attributed to the idea of film as philosophy varies, not least because different definitions of philosophy are at play. Still, most—including those connected to or even based on Deleuze—tend to agree that philosophical thinking in and through film is necessarily *nonconceptual*⁷—albeit in a much broader sense than Deleuze's concept of concepts.⁸ Film as philosophy or philosophically inclined cinematic thinking—beyond the mere illustration of pre-existing philosophy—is commonly understood instead as either affective or poetic thinking; thought experiments; (something in line with the classical idea of art and cinema containing) advanced themes; making or evaluating arguments; expressing the unrepresentable; cuing philosophical thought in spectators; or reflecting on the conditions of film itself. Such understandings are often attached to claims or assumptions about medium specificity that determine what is possible to express philosophically: what can be done through film (more or less) beyond the capacity of written(/spoken) philosophy and vice versa. And again, concepts (however defined) tend to find themselves outside the realm of film as philosophy.

Can film / video / audiovisual media serve as means for original philosophical concept creation in a Deleuzian sense of concepts? As said, this is a question Deleuze himself avoided, concerned as he was with more abstract differences between art and philosophy and with "secur[ing] a function for philosophy" through concept creation, and implicitly delimiting his notion of philosophical concepts to the *actual form* of words, and words only (WP 8). Yet, he leaves openings to go beyond this implicit delimitation, and in this study I identify and exploit these openings. *What is Philosophy?* allows for and even invites us to think the possibility of philosophical concept creation "proceeding by" formal means other than (only) linguistic sentences, while also offering a framework for defining philosophy as concept creation on more abstract levels, regardless of the actual form.

Given Deleuze's own concern with actual form, how does the cinecept differ from his ideas about taking inspiration from art and cinema for the formal renewal of philosophy? "The search for new means of philosophical expression was begun by Nietzsche", Deleuze writes in *Difference and Repetition*, "and must be pursued today [1968] in relation to the renewal of certain other arts, such as the theatre or the cinema" (DR xx; see also DI [1968]: 141). This means two things: 1) taking

inspiration from formal developments within the arts (such as painting going from graphic representation to abstraction) and 2) letting advanced ideas within art or cinema provoke philosophy into new lines of thinking. The present study investigates a third option: treating film / video / audiovisual media as not just a non-philosophical material that philosophy can be formally inspired by or provoked to conceptualize in writing, but as direct formal means for philosophical conceptualization itself.

The theory of cinecepts, then, extends the Deleuzian/Nietzschean problem of the formal renewal of philosophy to different media. The point, therefore, is not merely to examine if philosophy can be conducted also through film / video / audiovisual media—and not at all to indicate a hierarchy with philosophy as a lofty goal that producers of such media should aspire to⁹—so much as how philosophy can be formally developed through these means. Why would philosophy need to be formally developed? If there is such a need, it is philosophical and social, rather than cosmetic, artistic, or pedagogical (i.e. making philosophy more rousing or approachable). Philosophical: audiovisual form could be used to conceptualize political, material, and ideational realities with more direct nuance. Social: our societies are currently changing from being text-based to being increasingly audiovisual and screen-based. We need ideas for adaptation to these changes that advance instead of water down philosophy. This book provides a theoretical framework for such an adaptation.

Six preparatory clarifications about cinecepts

- In this book film / video / audiovisual media are seen as media form. As such they differ from each other and from other media, but they do not imply a particular conduct or use—documentation, narrative, art, philosophy, and so on—any more than the category “the written word” implies a particular conduct or use.
- The cinecept is not a merger of philosophy and art, but philosophical conceptualization through expanded formal means.
- The cinecept entails conceptualization according to a specific idea about philosophical conceptualization. It is derived from Deleuze’s concept of concepts and developed primarily as regarding concrete form. The cinecept is therefore not to be conflated with
 - more general notions of conceptual art (whether tied to 1960s discourses with roots going back to Duchamp, or to broader contemporary usages of the term)
 - with ideas about film or art having a concept in the loose sense of a guiding idea (most if not all works could be boiled down to concepts in that sense)
 - with theories of how film or images can signify abstract ideas.

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Philosophical concepts, Deleuze writes, “must not be confused with general or abstract ideas” (WP 24). “An idea is not a concept, it is not philosophy. Even if one may be able to draw a concept from every idea” (TRM 318).

- Relatedly, it has been common throughout world history for *images* to function as carriers of what can be called “concepts”, but concepts then generally tend to mean pre-existing conceptions, ideas, conventions, myths, or wisdoms. This would include what Deleuze calls Figures, as exemplified by “Chinese hexagrams, Hindu mandalas, Jewish sephiroth, Islamic ‘imaginals,’ and Christian icons” (WP 89). Or just various kinds of symbols—visual signs representing abstract ideas (however dynamic in their aesthetic expression or manner of signification, as in hieroglyphs, Renaissance or Baroque painting, or, as discussed in Chapter 1, Eisensteinian intellectual montage). While they share with cinecepts an irreducibility to words, they do not share an underlying concept *of* concepts. (It would be interesting to compare the cinecept as developed in this book with visual concepts in neglected, especially non-Western, traditions that may come close also in their concept of concepts, to the extent they exist, but this is outside the scope of this study.)
- Cinecepts expand the formal parameters of philosophical conceptualization but are in no way about supplanting or excluding written or spoken language. Not only are cinecepts meant as a *complement* to philosophical words-only textual or verbal presentations, they are themselves audiovisual compounds that *include* (or are combined with) verbal and/or written language.
- Cinecepts are philosophical determinations in themselves *first*. That is, cinecepts are not dependent on spectators/readers to provide them with a philosophical determination. Since cinecepts, as we will see, have a certain kind of open and modifiable rather than static determination, they can certainly vary and change (perhaps necessarily so) through spectators/readers. But reinterpretations, re-determinations, creative misunderstandings, unexpected applications, personal takes, and so on, come *after* philosophical determinations already existing in and through the cinecepts.¹⁰

Clarification about notes

For straight references to external texts I use parentheses in the main text. The notes, in contrast, contain additional arguments, explanations, critical readings, interpretations, definitions, quotes, and/or dispositional orientation. I therefore advise the reader to at least glance at each note and read those of interest more carefully.

Notes

- 1 I credit both Deleuze and Guattari as co-authors of *What is Philosophy?*, as in the list of References, but in large parts of this study I refer only to Deleuze as the author. I explain this choice in a note on the Abbreviations page below.
- 2 Deleuze's definition of concepts is explored most directly in Chapter 1. The meaning of concepts as potentials is further explained in Chapter 3.
- 3 For a critical examination of three semi-exceptions in Bernd Herzogenrath (2017), John E. Drabinski (2008), and D. N. Rodowick (2015), where some of these questions are at least briefly present if not examined, see the Introduction, note 3, and Nilsson (2018).
- 4 These terms are defined in the Introduction.
- 5 Yes, he *does* keep cinematic thought figures and philosophical concepts separated *also* at the end of *Cinema 2*. These points are developed in Chapter 1 below.
- 6 This assumption is crystalized in explicit claims by David Sorfa (2016) in an editorial for *Film-Philosophy Journal* that overviews the film-philosophy field.
- 7 As Siegfried Kracauer already said (with Hegelian resonances): "conceptual thinking is an alien element on the screen" (1960: 264). Or Pasolini: "The linguistic or grammatical world of the filmmaker is composed of images, and images are always concrete, never abstract [...] [T]herefore, cinema is an artistic and not a philosophic language. It may be a parable, but never a directly conceptual expression" (2005 [1965]: 171f).
- 8 One exception outside a Deleuzian frame of inspiration or concern: Stephen Mulhall mentions at one point, and from a more analytic-philosophical perspective, that films can "do" philosophy also by engaging with what seems to be a partly Nietzschean sense of concepts. However, this is about "interrogation" and "analysis" of existing concepts, not film as means for concept formation (Mulhall 2008: 4–6, 87, 94).
- 9 To further clarify what is said about hierarchies here: A cinecept is distinguished from other figures of thought by its modal and formal nature. A non-cineceptual filmic thought figure may be more brilliant and insightful than a cinecept. And there can be mediocre cinecepts, just as there can be mediocre words-only concepts.
- 10 Here I am keeping to Deleuze's general view of inherent determination in philosophy, art, and cinema (which is underacknowledged in film-philosophy and in the film-theoretical reception of Deleuze in which spectator activity is generally seen as a more central and primary factor). For more on this, see the following notes below: Introduction, notes 2A, 6, 8; Chapter 3, note 20; Chapter 5, note 9.

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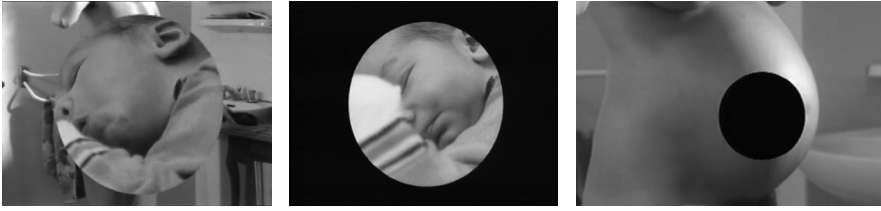
Introduction

LET US START with ekphrastic notes on a cineceptual *tendency* (more closely analyzed later): Towards the end of movement 1 of Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's *France / tour / détour / deux / enfants* (1977/8), following words about hi/story [*histoire*], beginnings, and the existence of the future, a curious audiovisual arrangement appears. We see a naked pregnant woman—from chin to knees—standing in a bathroom combing her hair. The word TOI [*you*] is electronically positioned over her belly, a second later swapped to MOI [*me*]. Handel's aria *Lascia ch'io pianga* enters the soundtrack. The word MOI disappears as a man starts talking in voice-over. The camera then zooms in towards the woman's belly, directly followed by a round separate shot of a baby that seems, through video montage, to emanate from the womb. This separate image rapidly expands and approaches the borders of the main frame nearly covering the image of the woman. It contracts and then expands again a few times before taking over the whole screen. The shot of the woman's belly then comes in from the middle as a round separate shot growing in a similar way as the shot of the baby. This is followed by similar movements also involving a black image, both as round form and as background. During these movements the male voice-over reads pointed philosophical statements—not as a dictation of the meaning of the images but as an integral part of an audiovisual composition—about memory, visibility, and obscurity in conception in a broad sense of what we may call the conception of the new.

Philosophically—bracketing the purely poetic or essayistic—much goes on here in both content and form. In content there are connections to earlier and later themes in Godard, concerning memory, projection, and conditions of re/production. Is this sequence philosophical expression also in *form*? Some of its formal aspects seem to point beyond current notions of “film as philosophy”—certainly beyond

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Figures I.1a–c *France tour détour*, movement 1

illustration, thought experiments, or (however independent) explorations of a philosophical theme in a narrative. To an extent the sequence exemplifies “cinematic thinking” in the sense of advanced thought in filmic form that is *comparable* to philosophy. That is, the notion we find in Deleuze, and many others, of cinematic thinking as *preconceptual* and as formally occurring outside of philosophy proper (even when dealing with similar problems). This is an apt way of understanding most advanced thinking films, certainly those that are narrative. This *France tour détour* sequence, however—which is more closely examined in Chapter 4, along with similar sequences—also points beyond such notions of cinematic thinking and *towards* what this book calls cinecepts.

The term cinecept crystallizes the following idea: philosophical concepts formed as *compounds of moving images / sounds / voice / texts / graphics / montage*. Not all these parameters are necessary for all cinecepts, but as *cine*-cepts they must contain movement—although they could just as well come as part of multimedia compositions containing non-moving parts, such as digital multimedia texts, as long as the cinecepts themselves are partly made up of moving images (more on this multimedia aspect in Chapter 7). As a neologism the term accentuates the transmedia part of such a general formal expansion of concepts and signals a break with tradition in this particular regard.¹ The term also helps distinguish things from plainly different notions of concepts in film, ranging from Eisenstein’s discussion of concepts in intellectual montage (as addressed in Chapters 1 and 2) to conceptual art.² As abstract content, however, cinecepts are philosophical concepts, as defined by Deleuze (this definition is explored at length in Chapter 1 and partly in Chapter 3). The cinecept, moreover, is itself a philosophical concept.

In this study I develop a concept and a larger theory of cinecepts as an answer to the three-sided question posed in the Preface: How could film / video / audiovisual media function as direct means for concept formation in a Deleuzian sense of concepts? How can Deleuze’s thought itself be reexamined and partly reconfigured in this regard? And, given his ongoing concern with renewing philosophy on the level of form, what happens if we keep to Deleuze’s abstract definition of philosophy, but expand the concrete parameters of its formal renewal to film / video / audiovisual

media? One would expect to find such questions at the heart of much of the literature on “film as philosophy” for which Deleuze is a central impetus. Yet, they have barely been raised and much less substantially examined, whether in the field of film–philosophy, Deleuze studies, critical theory, artistic research, or related areas.³

The theory of cinecepts, as an answer to these questions, is developed through a set of movements in three main areas:

1. *Deleuze*. Chapter 1 begins with his definitions of philosophy. I examine how he distinguishes philosophy from other genres of thought (primarily art and cinema), as well as how the logic of multiplicity undergirding his notion of philosophical concepts differs from logics that can appear close, such as Hegel’s. This leads to a critical reexamination of parts of Deleuze’s thought as implicitly offering ways to conceive of philosophical concept formation proceeding through media other than words-only, and the chapter ends with reflections on how audiovisual forms can serve this function. Chapter 1 also analyzes a set of unacknowledged similarities—with a focus on classification, reorganization, and recutting—between what Deleuze says about concept formation and about Godard’s method of filmic thought (and this comparison is continued at the end of Chapter 2).

Developing the cinecept also entails a novel reading of Deleuze’s conception of the new. Part of his—complex and partly technical—definition of concepts is the idea that they make up structures of potential. A “concept speaks the event”, Deleuze writes in *What is Philosophy?*, in the sense of “the contour, the configuration, the constellation of an event to come” (WP 32f). Chapter 3 explores what this means as part of a broader reconsideration of how Deleuze conceives of the production of the new, and a critique of dominant understandings in the literature on Deleuze. The chapter begins by reconsidering *Difference and Repetition* from this perspective, then looks at how Deleuze’s thinking on novelty partly shifts in *Cinema 2*—or rather, how it develops an aspect already found in *Difference and Repetition* (although there somewhat overshadowed by the concern with a being of becoming)—towards conceiving of the new as rare, mostly blocked, and concerning social and political struggle.⁴ Chapter 3 ends by looking at how all this converges in Deleuze’s concept of concepts. Chapter 4 connects these Deleuzian concerns with Godard–Miéville’s *Sonimage* work, centering on its general problem space and on specific embryonic cinecepts as also concerned with complexities and blockages in conceiving of the new.

While my re/examinations of Deleuze’s notions of concepts and novelty regard his thought as a whole, with much focus on *What is Philosophy?* and *Difference and Repetition*, his thoughts on cinema are a central target of reinterpretation and reimagination. The secondary literature on Deleuze’s cinema books is large

and varied.⁵ While informed by aspects of this literature, this study brings out and critically explores issues in Deleuze's conception of cinema, regarding the film/philosophy relation and the problem of the new, which the previous literature has left unacknowledged or underexamined (see also Nilsson 2014; 2018).

2. *Godard and Miéville*. Chapter 2 explores how two later-half 1960s Godard films (*2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* and *Le gai savoir*) and the first finished Sonimage film (*Ici et ailleurs*) develop a formal logic of montage and a set of concerns around novelty production, which prepare for the embryonic cinecepts (more on the term embryonic below) and the general problem space of later Sonimage. Chapter 4 directly explores these aspects of later Sonimage, that is, problems and embryonic cinecepts in Godard-Miéville's works between 1974/5 and 1977/8. Chapter 5 juxtaposes Deleuze's conception of concepts and Godard's later idea of montage as *rapprochement*, and also briefly discusses the montage forms of *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988–98) as a formal resource for cinecepts.
3. *Video essays and contemporary media*. Chapters 6 and 7 connect the theory of cinecepts to a contemporary media environment. Chapter 6 looks at the world of video essays made by film and media scholars and ongoing debates about what it means to be scholarly in this form. I critically examine arguments and assumptions in these debates, spanning artistic research, image/word differences, clarity, medium specificity, and the essayistic. This leads up to a set of criteria for how these kinds of video essays could develop also in a cineceptual direction. Chapter 7 relates the cinecept to current audiovisual media more broadly. Here I address key reasons for why full cinecepts remain as a potential, consider philosophy channels on YouTube, and discuss audiovisual media as a tool for seduction and deception as well as rigorous nuance. I also make further specifications on how the cinecept can function in practice as multimedia philosophy.

Cinecepts Are a Promise, But Embryonic Cinecepts Exist

On the one hand, I consider cinecepts to be an existing potential, something not yet fully achieved (in some ways similar to how Godard regarded filmic montage to not yet have been achieved). On the other hand, I examine what I call *embryonic* cinecepts in parts of Godard-Miéville's 1970s video works (my use of the term embryonic here has principal similarities to Eisenstein writing about "still embryonic attempts to construct a really quite new form of filmic expression" [1998 (1929): 110]). These works provide certain preliminary conditions for cinecepts (partly similar to how most of the first breaks with the movement-image in Deleuze's periodization delivered the preconditions for but not the time-image itself). But they also contain some fascinating direct cineceptual tendencies. These tendencies, which appear at a few

select points in their work, are what I refer to as embryonic cinecepts. This does not mean, then, “preconceptual” sketches that, as D. N. Rodowick writes, “may inspire philosophy to give form to a concept”—implicitly meaning the form of (a) word/s written or spoken outside of the videos (2015: 138, 139, 165, 179, 229)⁶—although these video works could certainly do that too. Instead, *embryonic* means here that more fully realized cinecepts would have the same actual form: *compounds of moving images / sounds / voice / texts / graphics / montage*. (A bit further down I will address how the cinecept as a worded concept developed in this book relates to actual cinecepts remaining as a promise.)

Why Deleuze?

The idea of film as philosophy, found in a by now extensive literature, can only really make sense if in each case it refers to a specified definition of philosophy—whatever the definition (pre-existing or not). So why is Deleuze’s definition at the center of this study? Four basic reasons: First, this definition of philosophy has not really been dealt with in the film as philosophy literature, including in the field of film-philosophy for which Deleuze is the main inspiration. As Thomas Elsaesser writes, “it was the wide reception of Deleuze’s cinema books, once they had been published in an English translation in the late 1980s [...] that provided the major impetus for the whole field to emerge in its current form” (2019: 20, see also 41). Second, Deleuze’s cinema books are central for film theory more generally—Elsaesser and Hagener describe them as “the single most important resource in film theory of the last two decades” (2015: 178). Third, Deleuze’s definition of philosophy, while hardly dominant, is among the most influential or at least recognizable in post-war (non-analytic) philosophy, and perhaps more so in the broader humanities—see for instance its centrality in Mieke Bal’s study of “concept-based methodology” and interdisciplinary travels of concepts (2002: 50ff, 23, 316). Fourth, this study aims to contribute clearly new understandings of Deleuze’s philosophy as concerning film/video and concepts.

Why Godard and Godard-Miéville?

Not only was Godard among the most philosophy-driven of filmmakers, he was intensely concerned with the formal renewal of film as a medium for thinking. This concern has partly resulted in works with arguably unique relevance for a theory of cinecepts: I have explored alternatives throughout this study (mainly among essay films and theory-driven video art) but have yet to come across work with cineceptual tendencies as clear as in Godard-Miéville’s *Sonimage* period (1974–79).

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Moreover, counterintuitively, not *that* much has been written about Godard's films compared to filmmakers of similar film historical stature,⁷ and most is focused on Godard's famous early period ending around 1967. Godard's later phases are still quite under-researched (with *Histoire(s) du cinéma* as a relative exception). This is especially the case with the Sonimage period, which Michael Witt in 1998 described as "largely unexplored" (1998: 13). Barring significant—albeit mostly brief—exceptions (earlier: Bergala, Daney, Deleuze; later: Drabinski, Morrey, Steyerl, White, and Witt himself), this is not that far from still being the case, an assessment that is echoed in Jerry White's 2013 monograph on Godard-Miéville's work more generally, and reaffirmed by Witt in 2014: "in spite of the quantity of critical writing devoted to Godard, the Sonimage work ([...] the television series in particular) still remains comparatively understudied" (2014: 319).

Furthermore, Godard is relatively underexplored as a film philosopher. While not seldom referred to as doing philosophical or theoretical thinking in film—David Sterritt for instance writes in passing that Godard is "fond of using cinema as a philosophical tool rather than an entertainment machine" (1999: 3)—studies that explore what this means are still rare. In a book-length study, Volker Pantenburg examines how Godard and Farocki develop theory in and through film, but he largely equates this with filmic and pictorial self-reflexivity (including when internally comparing itself to other arts).⁸ Two statements by John Drabinski are of more direct relevance. In the introduction to his book on Godard (2008), which sets out to treat his 1970s video works as "primary texts in philosophy", he points to a 1968 statement in which Deleuze heavily implies that Godard has created new means to think philosophically in and through film (a statement I return to below and examine more extensively in Chapter 1). Drabinski comes even closer to my concern in an editorial for a special issue on Godard two year later: "If philosophy, as Deleuze has it, is primarily concerned with the creation of concepts, then Godard's cinema can be said to create concepts in sound and image" (2010: 4). Yet, these two passages are all Drabinski says with reference to Deleuze about Godard as film philosopher, so neither is developed nor investigated in relation to Deleuze's writings.

Other theoretically driven studies on Godard tend to be unclear about whether original philosophizing (of some kind, that is, in a much broader sense than cinecepts) occurs in and through his films. In the most noteworthy Godard scholarship in which the film-as-philosophy question is somehow broached, it is either placed outside of the delimitation (Morgan 2012: 25f)⁹ or affirmed with a certain wavering and without addressing its formal implications (e.g. Morrey 2005).¹⁰ Furthermore, in the introduction to Michael Witt's comprehensive *Jean-Luc Godard: Cinema Historian* (2013), Godard is described as a philosopher (as well as a filmmaker, poet, critic, essayist), but in reference to his complex intermedia production including his

writings, so that it is not entirely clear to what extent and in what sense the original philosophizing occurs in the films themselves.

Still, *any* implication that Godard's films are in some sense inherently philosophical can be seen to partly alter a more established understanding of the relation between philosophy/theory and the Godardian and Godard-influenced "counter-cinema" of the late 1960s and '70s: that is to say, such cinema seen more exclusively as "practical experimentation motivated by theoretical presuppositions" (Loshitzky 1995: 26) or as having existing (written) theory "inform the objectives, logic, and aesthetic strategies" of the films (Rodowick 1994 [1988]: 4). As Drabinski (and partly also Morrey) reveals, Godard never fully fit that mold even in the 1960s, and more importantly from the 1970s and onwards he produced increasingly original philosophy in and through film, which was a kind of parallel philosophical work to, and not unlikely an intellectual influence (however small) on, that of contemporaries like Deleuze and even Foucault—just as he was clearly influenced by them.¹¹ As Michael Witt writes in a text on aspects of Godard-Miéville's 1977/8 television series *France / tour / détour / deux / enfants*:

is Foucault as Godardian as Godard and Miéville is Foucauldian? Rather than assuming that Godard and Miéville are simply adopting Foucault, [Foucault's own] *Discipline and Punish* could [reversely] be considered an extension of [aspects] in Godard's science-fiction films from the 1960s [...] This position is perhaps a little too far-fetched. But the point is that, in their respective projects, Godard-Miéville, Foucault, and indeed Deleuze/Guattari were all working on parallel tracks. Godard-Miéville's enterprise, however methodologically unconventional, is every bit as serious as that of their contemporaries. (2007 [2004]: 210)¹²

Witt also argues that the Sonimage work in the 1970s "constitutes a self-contained critique of communications processes that *precedes* and *foresees* the influential subsequent work of theorists such as Jean Baudrillard" (1998: 15; see also 2014: 326).¹³

In any case, and whether labeled philosophical or not, Godard was at the forefront of developing film as a form for advanced thought. If Deleuze is the philosopher who has written most influentially about film as thinking in recent decades, it is not by accident that Godard is so central for Deleuze in this regard. Not only are his cinema books "shot through with references to Godard", as Witt writes, *Cinema 2* "could almost be read as a book on Godard" (1999: 111).¹⁴ Intriguingly, and with reference to aspects of Deleuze's conceptualizations, Witt adds that

it is unclear that Deleuze is doing very much more than stating the obvious: his formulae are extremely close to those proposed by Godard himself, who has talked

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of the “BETWEEN” in virtually identical, and equally impenetrable, terms, both in his work, and in the metadiscourse he has spun around it. Thus this summary by Deleuze of Godard’s “method” could equally well have been taken from one of Godard and Miéville’s films or television series of the 1970s. (1999: 111)

The “impenetrable” part aside, Witt has a certain point about Deleuze’s indebtedness to Godard-Miéville having quite well themselves already theorized their logic and ideas within their own work (I return to this issue in Chapter 4). However, Deleuze appears in some ways to shift his views on Godard as specifically concerning filmic thinking and philosophy. Above I mentioned a brief interview statement made by Deleuze in 1968 that implies Godard had singularly developed means to do philosophy in and through cinema (DI 141). In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze instead points to Godard’s cinematic thinking as a kind of *contrast* to philosophy, and philosophy then defined as concept creation. Although Deleuze now explicitly claims that Godard is a philosopher/theorist, this is said to be the case only when Godard “talks” about films (not within them). If a main problem animating the 1968 statement is how philosophy can be renewed (in both form and content) beyond its traditional forms and images of thought, Deleuze around the cinema books seems more concerned with articulating the specificity of philosophy in a time when all philosophy is increasingly relegated to the margins. If the first period is expansive, the second appears more protective. In the present study, these two different concerns are equally maintained: the concern with formal development of philosophy and the concern with the specificity of philosophy as a conceptual venture.

Approaches, Methods, Selection of Films/Videos

A cinecept 1) is abstract philosophical form/structure (it organizes conceptual components in a virtual “consistency”, as I explore in Chapter 1), which was articulated through and is now carried by 2) literal audiovisual form. This does not mean, however, that a theory of cinecepts, or the analysis of existing cinecepts (whether embryonic or full), can avoid 3) philosophical content. For Deleuze, as further explained in Chapters 1, 2, and 5, concepts are particular determinations of *problems*, and problems provide concepts with meaning. Concepts, as we will also see, are formulated on larger planes of thought (planes of immanence) that can be called problem planes or problem spaces. Accordingly, I will examine Sonimage’s embryonic cinecepts along with the larger problem plane on which they are formulated, as well as the specific problems that each embryonic cinecept helps determine on this plane. I will call the larger plane for Sonimage a *problem space*, mostly due to its many spatial manifestations and the thematic centrality of a black background.

While Chapter 2 focuses on a gradual advancement of a formal logic of filmic thought in Godard's *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* (*2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle*, 1967), *Le gai savoir* (1969 [1968]), and the first completed Sonimage film *Ici et ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere*, 1975), this chapter also looks at these films as part of developing Sonimage's problem space. The developed problem space itself is examined in the first part of Chapter 4 with a focus on Godard-Miéville's *Numéro deux* (1975). The rest of Chapter 4 explores six embryonic cinecepts found in their two television series *Six fois deux* (*Sur et sous la communication*) (1976) and *France / tour / détour / deux / enfants* (1977/8), and with some references also to their 1975 film *Comment ça va*. Since the embryonic cinecepts are themselves semi-philosophical expressions, and as their larger problem space has to a large extent already been examined by then, much of the philosophical meaning of each embryonic cinecept is revealed through ekphrastic description and analysis of what we see and hear. Some of them also help explain each other, as they interrelate as if part of a set of embryonic cinecepts that belong to the same theory/philosophy. Each of them will nonetheless also be subjected to philosophical interpretation and discussion (while more interpretational assistance may be required by the absence of conventions for perceiving *cineceptual* articulations, we should bear in mind that interpretation is an unavoidable part of examining any philosophy). Altogether, Chapter 4 looks at 3) the problem contents and the problem contexts of each embryonic cinecept, 2) their concrete, actual forms, and 1) their organization of abstract conceptual components.

Chapter 5 mostly examines ideas *about* form: here I juxtapose the logic of montage that Godard calls *rapprochement* with Deleuze's descriptions of the abstract logic of concepts. Chapter 5 thereby ties things back to similar juxtapositions between Deleuze and Godard made in Chapters 1 and 2. Here I also briefly approach *Histoire(s) du cinéma* as furthering the formal renewal of montage in ways that are relevant for cinecepts.¹⁵ While shown to be a *formal* resource *for* cinecepts, however, *Histoire(s)* does not itself contain cinecepts (neither embryonic nor full). The Sonimage works, of which some do contain embryonic cinecepts, include explicit analytic and philosophical reflections in which the essayistic, poetic, and experimental are slightly more in the service of the critically analytic and philosophical than the other way around. While the *forms* of filmic thought continue to develop in video works made by Godard-Miéville and Godard after the Sonimage period—particularly in *Histoire(s)*—this relationship between the philosophical and the poetical tends to become more reversed. That is, Godard himself and Godard-Miéville tend to now put the philosophical comparably more in the service of the poetic (or to think philosophically more exclusively in and through poetry).¹⁶ Or even the musical: since 1980 Godard “has worked increasingly in the manner of a musician”, Michael Witt says, partly structuring films like a composer would

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a piece of music (2018: 26:10–26:24; see also Witt 2013: 3, 202; and Godard and Ishaghpour (2005 [1999]: 24). He appears increasingly driven by his influence from the German Romantics in the sense of their quest to reach poetic artistic truths beyond words and who often considered music to go furthest in this regard. Similarly, Jerry White (while locating this shift a bit later) finds the films Godard did together with Miéville after *Soft and Hard* (1985) to be “of a distinctly different sort”, “more fragmented”, a product of them favoring what he calls “more alienated strategies” (2013: 129).

Certainly, continental philosophy in general—with roots going back to Plato’s dialogues, the Presocratics, and beyond—tends to utilize literary craft as part of philosophical expression. Distinctions can still be made, however, between art as part of philosophy, and philosophy as part of art. This is a key distinction for Deleuze in *What is Philosophy?* Particularly relevant for cinecepts is its distinction between A) sensations or artistic aspects of concepts, and B) artistic structures that (without synthesis) mix in *non-conceptual* philosophical properties (more on this in Chapter 1). A *cinecept* is a filmic figure of thought in which sensations or artistic aspects are subordinated to philosophical determination. Compared to later works by Godard in which philosophy becomes too subsumed into and too governed by artistic figures of thought, philosophy is somewhat more, and more systematically so, in the driving seat in parts of the Sonimage works.

These works are also—to use Serge Daney’s (1976) description—more *pedagogical*, and in the sense of analytically probing and revealing of problems (in Chapters 1 and 5 this is connected to what Deleuze later referred to as the pedagogy of concepts in philosophy). If the earlier Dziga Vertov Group works led Godard a bit too far into the more dogmatic or theoretically static, and the later *post*-Sonimage films tended to be more poetically governed, the Miéville-collaborations in the 1970s can be seen as a middle ground that this study finds to be a productive milieu for embryonic cinecepts. Anne-Marie Miéville appears particularly important here. She seems to have been a key creative force in general for the Sonimage films, and as part of *all* aspects of the filmmaking process (Witt 1998: 10–12; 2014: 319).¹⁷ She also seems to have been vital for striking this analytic/pedagogic balance somewhere between the Dziga Vertov Group’s explicit critical expositions and Godard’s later more essentially poetic films.¹⁸ Miéville gives Jerry White “the impression of being generally less distracted than Godard and more willing to dig deeply into texts and ideas” (2013: 127, see also 161). At the same time, this analytic/pedagogic balance does not necessarily mean that the Sonimage works are less formally complex. White describes these films as “in many ways their most formally ambitious and experimental” containing “formal gestures that [...] come to form the heart of many of the analyses” which make “the most of the medium of video” (2013: 62).¹⁹

On the one hand, as I established above, the examination of a cineceptual formation must entail three intertwined aspects: 1) analyzing its organization of abstract components, 2) its literal audiovisual form, and 3) exploring the larger problem context and the specific problem(s) conceptualized. On the other hand, on a purely *metaphilosophical* level of cinecepts, the Sonimage films are primarily approached as form, in the sense of an interrelation between the abstract form of concepts and concrete audiovisual cineceptual form, rather than specific philosophical content. In this regard, there are some principal similarities to how Deleuze approaches philosophers in *What is Philosophy?*: not so much for their individual concerns and topics as for their formal expression of philosophy taken on more of a (both descriptive and prescriptive) meta-level. Here Deleuze mainly investigates the generalizable abstract forms of philosophy (excluding twentieth-century Anglo-American logic, which he argues is outside the realm of philosophy, mainly by turning concepts into functions).²⁰ General thought-forms, that is, which distinguish philosophy from (but also connect it to) closely related modes of thought, primarily art and (hard as well as a certain social) science. *What is Philosophy?* is only secondarily concerned with explicating and evaluating the content of the philosophies discussed.²¹ Therefore, when Deleuze brings up differences between philosophers such as Descartes and Kant in this book, or even when he emphasizes their respective flaws, this is part of a more primary concern with what characterizes philosophy in general and how it differs from art and science. Descartes and Kant created different (or partly different) planes of immanence, conceptual personae, and concepts (all with their respective limitations), but both created planes, conceptual personae, and concepts—in brief: both did (what Deleuze calls) philosophy. The theory of cinecepts, however, has other conditions and a different task: Cinecepts rely on Deleuze's abstract definition of philosophy, but there is no long history of cinecepts from which generalizations can be made, comparable to the history of written philosophy comprehended by Deleuze. Rather, this study relies also on case studies of rare—and, furthermore, embryonic, not fully developed—cinecepts. For these reasons it is more necessary to examine not only the interrelation between 1) abstract philosophical form and 2) concrete audiovisual form, but also 3) philosophical problem content.

The Cinecept as Articulation of Potential

The cinecept as developed in this book is a concept in a Deleuzian sense, and, again, for Deleuze a concept is “the contour, the configuration, the constellation of an event to come” (WP 32f). This does not mean prediction, prophetism, or causing future effects. It means a particular philosophical articulation of potential. The cinecept is a philosophical articulation of potential rooted in examinations of existing

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cineceptual *tendencies*.²² The film critic and former *Cahiers du Cinéma* editor Jean Narboni²³ described a “feeling that the movement and logic of Deleuze’s thought often anticipate [specific cinematic formations] before the filmmakers get around actually to inventing them” (relayed in Rodowick 1997: xvii). Perhaps actual cinecepts will appear or even become prevalent, perhaps not, but this book helps us conceive of them.

Cinematic thought-formations not yet fully realized are also a Godardian preoccupation. On the one hand, Godard sees certain types of early cinema as ripe with potential, for instance German interwar cinema as a site of formal renewal due to a pursuit of philosophical thought articulated through images (Witt 2013: 145). On the other hand, he was famously fixated on how film never realized its thinking potential (e.g. Godard and Ishaghpour 2005 [1999]: 73f; see also Morgan 2012: 168f), which largely means that the promise of *montage* has not been realized; he even said that montage “never really existed, like a plant that has never really left the ground” (Witt 2013: 112f, 117, 124, 149).²⁴ My concern with cinecepts is based on a similar (while less categorical or hyperbolic) presupposition about a not yet fully actualized potential for philosophical thinking in and through film / video / audiovisual media.

Philosophical Rigor and Clarity of Argumentation

If the Sonimage works strikes an analytical and pedagogical balance between the relatively dogmatic and the too poetical, as explained above, how can this be understood in relation to more traditional notions of argumentative clarity? While this is explored at greater length in Chapter 6, certain key points should be introduced here: On the one hand, Laura Mulvey and Colin MacCabe are right to describe the montage in Godard-Miéville’s *Numéro deux* as follows: “Using two video monitors with voice-over commentary and written titles, Godard brings together an assortment of ideas and images that are suggestive rather than coherently argued” (1980: 96). On the other hand, “coherently argued” can mean many different things, and it is unclear what metric Mulvey and MacCabe use for making this assessment. (Could, say, Deleuze’s cinema books be deemed “coherently argued” using the same metric? And if not, are they merely “suggestive”?) The idea of coherent arguments, furthermore, is not only *broad*, it also says nothing about whether the arguments are *philosophical*. Making an argument backed by evidence to convey a particular viewpoint is for instance part of an established academic definition of the regular documentary (e.g. Nichols 1991: 125). Something similar goes for journalism. What about scholarly coherence and clarity? While the cinecept is neither reducible nor anathema to more traditional ideals of coherence or clarity, it is generally aligned with notions of clarification and rigor in continental philosophy and more specifically with Deleuze’s

conception of concepts as clarifications and determinations of problems (as explored in Chapter 1). Godard-Miéville's cinecepts are "embryonic" not because they fail to live up to traditional ideals of clarity of argumentation, but because they do not entirely live up to Deleuzian notions of clarifying rigor either, as they lean a little too much into poetic association at the cost of philosophical determination, even at their most cineceptual. (As stated, I discuss clarity and modes of argumentation further in Chapter 6, and explore concepts as philosophical determination and clarifications of problems most directly in Chapter 1.)

Film / Video / Audiovisual Media as Formal Means (Not Thought Disciplines)

The embryonic or still "too poetical" character of the cinecepts in *Sonimage*, furthermore, is not due to its media form(s). The theory of cinecepts is based on a rejection of ideas about what category of thought media forms are supposedly destined to express. In this study, film / video / audiovisual media are regarded as formal means that can be used to basically express anything, as opposed to being inherently prone (or restricted) to some given discipline or mode of thought (art, philosophy, documentary, narrative, skepticism, etc.).²⁵ In contrast, Deleuze himself (as well as much film-philosophy) perceives cinema/film as a distinct discipline, however heterogeneous and evolving; for example:

It is perhaps the question for literature, or philosophy, or even psychiatry. But in what respect is it the question for the cinema; that is, a question that touches on its specificity, on its difference from other disciplines. (C2 168)

There are [...] ideas in cinema that could also work in other disciplines. (TRM 316)

Contact can be made only when one discipline realizes that another discipline has already posed a similar problem, and so the one reaches out to the other to resolve this problem [...] I was able to write on cinema [...] because certain philosophical problems pushed me to seek out the solutions in cinema. (TRM 284f)

It is as "another discipline" that Deleuze compares cinema to philosophy. And they are seen as disciplines of *thought*, which is clearer if we turn to *What is Philosophy?*, in which "art, science, and philosophy"—as clarified in Chapter 1 below—are described as three different "forms of thought" in the sense of "disciplines", where each "remains on its own plane and utilizes its own elements", and "philosophy is the discipline that involves creating concepts" (WP 202, 217, 5). Deleuze's differentiation between cinema/art and philosophy, then, implies them sharing the category

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of being thought disciplines. The present study has a very different premise: while philosophy is still seen as a thought discipline, film/video is removed from that category and seen more concretely as moving images with sound, etc. Film/video is thereby put in the category of media forms, which it shares with other widely defined media forms like the written word. The written word is obviously used for any of the mentioned thought disciplines, and this study considers film/video to be just as unrestricted in that regard.

How is film/video defined as a media form in this study? One key basis is found in D. N. Rodowick's treatment of Noël Carroll's notion of a media category called moving images. Rodowick redefines moving images as a plural and variable general medium (without static essence) that includes all forms of moving images: celluloid, analog video, digital, etc. (2007: 38, 41, 86). The definition used in the present study adds to Rodowick's an emphasis on the internal multimedia aspect and uses words like film or video to point to moving images and montage that usually also include sounds, voice, and perhaps also texts and graphics. Following Rodowick's definition, furthermore, the differences between celluloid, video, and digital will be of minor importance. While Godard-Miéville's works in the 1970s, as Jerry White writes, "exist in a curious state, between [celluloid] film and video" (2013: 2), this is only relevant secondarily and to the extent that the film/video relationship is conceptualized (and concretely mixed) in a work like *Numéro deux*. We can also note that for Godard himself there are no big categorical differences between film and video, although video allows the filmmaker to do things the former does not (see e.g. Godard and Ishaghpour 2005 [1999]: 32).²⁶ And while the new formal possibilities afforded by video technology are certainly relevant for cinecepts, this does not make the film/video difference categorical.

The cinecept, furthermore, is not in a separate category from words: All films/videos and embryonic cinecepts examined in this book contain an abundance of spoken and/or written words.²⁷ These words, moreover, are parts of audiovisual complexes with other forms. The words are themselves audiovisual: by being incorporated into (or appearing along) a time-based medium and becoming aural or visual in other ways, and through their meanings being co-determined in the interplay with the other parameters.

Media Affecting Thought and the Fact That This Is a Book

While a medium is a formal means and not a restriction to a given thought discipline, work within a discipline is still affected by the medium or media used. If a philosopher changes from one medium to another while continuing to do philosophy, this shift will impact their thought work. Deleuze's main media in this regard—however otherwise

influenced by art, affects, events, etc.—is speech (lectures, seminars, conversations) and reading/writing (books, articles, letters). Godard certainly also speaks, reads, and writes, but he thinks to a great extent in and through his work with audiovisual media—certainly at the editing table where he is famously “thinking with his hands”.

Thinking in and through audiovisual media will also spill over to thinking when not directly using such technology. It will even influence ways of thinking in and through words and writing. This is clear with Godard’s writing. And as Witt points out, Godard has an extraordinarily expanded idea about “cinema” that seems to partly include his texts (2013: 7; see also 2004). Relatedly, the Godard-influenced filmmaker/theorist Harun Farocki says while writing in front of an editing table at the beginning of his video *Interface* (*Schnittstelle*, 1995): “I can hardly write a word these days, if there isn’t an image on the screen at the same time.” And as Nietzsche wrote after switching to a typewriter in 1882: “Our writing tools are also working on our thoughts” (quoted in Kittler 1999 [1985]: 200).²⁸ Deleuze wrote with a pen. Aside from notes written with a pen as well as on a smartphone, this book was written on a laptop, on which I also watch a lot of moving images, sometimes while writing.

You are reading a book, nonetheless, which tracks with the general aim and delimitation: I investigate the conditions of possibility and lay a theoretical ground for cinecepts, but as a transmedia potential cinecepts are in the end conceived here from a words-only perspective (like Astruc writing a text instead of making a film about the camera pen). This potential can be developed into a concrete practice only through work in audiovisual media, by philosophers/theorists trying to formulate actual cinecepts through such media, or by philosophically/theoretically inclined video/multimedia artists taking their work in cineceptual directions. This book provides a framework for such development. To fully function as an academic practice, however, cinecepts would also require scholarly infrastructures that facilitate their production, dissemination, and reception. I return to these kinds of issues in Chapter 7.

Notes

- 1 Why *cinecept* instead of *videcept* or *filmcept*? Cinecept, along with being easier to say, has etymological advantages: the cine- prefix connects with the more literal original meaning of the French word *cinéma* as a shortening of *cinémato-graphie*, which fundamentally means movement writing or writing through movement (*cine* and *graphie* connect with terms in the Latin/Greek heritage that mean movement and writing respectively). Cinecept can from this perspective be seen to have a literal meaning of concept movement or concept in movement. The *-cept* part of cinecept simply keeps the connection to the word *concept*—although we can note that the Latin meaning of *cept* is to seize, hold, or take (similar to *griff* in *begriff*,

the German word for concept). This is only an explanation for the word choice, not a definition of the cinecept as a concept.

- 2 Conceptual art has little direct relevance for a theory of cinecepts for the following reasons:
 - A. Deleuze recognizes conceptual art—at least as initially practiced and defined—as a recent attempt “to bring art and philosophy together”, but he is highly critical of this attempt. He argues that conceptual art “create[s] sensations and not concepts”, despite its ambition to express concepts instead of sensations. And when concepts are in some sense involved, it is an impoverished notion of concepts, concepts reduced to “doxa” (WP 198), or “abstract and signifying Forms” that have merely traded one kind of representation of the given (figurative givens) for another (conceptual givens) (FB 103). Deleuze also argues that conceptual art dematerializes art through generalization in ways that neutralize art’s “plane of composition.” The plane is made “informative” since the sensation becomes dependent “upon the simple ‘opinion’ of a spectator who determines whether or not to ‘materialize’ the sensation,” that is to say, decides whether or not it is art” (WP 198). While this latter critique of spectator activism concerns the art side rather than concepts per se, for Deleuze concepts are equally “not in your head: they are things, peoples, zones, regions, thresholds, gradients, temperatures, speeds, etc.” (DI 312, note 3).
 - B. What we today tend to call conceptual art—which compared to its 1960s definitions is a much broader category, containing various (more or less) theory-driven mixes of sensations, observations, and ideas—is too undefined and inclusive to be relevant or helpful for something as specific as cinecepts.

Furthermore, when the term conceptual art is used in writings on Godard it tends not to reference the kind of filmic montage or montage logic that is explored in this book, or, when it does, it is still used broadly without further definition or elaboration—e.g. Michael Witt’s description of Godard as being already from the beginning a “conceptual montage artist” (2013: 11).

- 3 The film-philosophical literature that explicitly works with Deleuze sidesteps such questions either by following Deleuze’s own separation between cinematic thinking and philosophical conceptualization and focusing on other issues concerning the film and philosophy relation (e.g. Sinnerbrink 2011), or by assuming/implying that Deleuze claimed that film was philosophy, which he did not (e.g. Frampton 2006; Sorfa 2015). A limited few have brushed up against one of these questions while appearing not to recognize it as a question (e.g. Baross 2017; Herzogenrath 2017), recognized it somewhat without subjecting it to examination (Drabinski 2008), or almost examined it but in unclear and partly contradictory ways (Rodowick 2015). I examine these aspects in Bernd Herzogenrath, John E. Drabinski, and

D. N. Rodowick in Part 1 of Nilsson (2018). The gist of it: Herzogenrath claims in passing that if/when film is philosophy, this equals what Deleuze calls the creation of concepts (2017: xii). Yet, he does not examine any of the implications of this connection to conception creation and he references Deleuze's general ideas about a new image of thought instead of his definition of concepts. Drabinski, more relevantly, offers this suggestion: "If philosophy, as Deleuze has it, is primarily concerned with the creation of concepts, then Godard's cinema can be said to create concepts in sound and image" (2010: 4). However, Drabinski does not develop or investigate this suggestion in relation to Deleuze's writings. Rodowick's arguments about film as philosophy from a Deleuzian perspective are more developed and sophisticated but also more ambiguous and even contradictory. He argues for the following three positions: 1) "film is philosophy" (2015: xv, 158, 179); 2) film is "a becoming-philosophy tending toward conceptual formation" (158); and 3) film as that which "may inspire philosophy to give form to a concept" but whose own figures of thought are always "preconceptual" (138, 139, 165, 179, 229). Sidestepping the peculiar generalization of film in positions 1 and 2: the relation between position 1 (film is philosophy) and position 3 (film as preconceptual) would not necessarily be contradictory if Rodowick did not explicitly argue that the first position was also claimed by Deleuze: "Deleuze and Cavell", he writes, "comprehend cinema as expressing ways of being in the world and of relating to the world such that cinema is already philosophy" (179). He then qualifies this to mean that cinema thinks similar problems as philosophy, and that it does so "preconceptually in aesthetic form." But this is actually a shift rather than a qualification since it does not explain how *Deleuze* could have "comprehended cinema" to be "already philosophy" given that cinema—however advanced in its thought—is preconceptual and philosophy is chiefly defined by its creation of concepts. Rodowick similarly writes about "an active philosophy immanent to the Image—a philosophy of the image given in or through images", with the implication that this is Deleuze's position (158). But how could it be his position, given that it would amount to philosophy without concept creation? At times Rodowick seems to try to solve this through sentences that make ambiguous Deleuze's division between cinema and philosophical concept creation (a division Rodowick is carefully upholding at other times): "Deleuze sees conceptual creation in the movement- and time-images", he writes at one point (161). (I can add—to my 2018 article which this note rehashes—that there might be a back door for merging what Rodowick wants to merge here, beyond what he says and my critique of it: There is a certain inconsistency in *What is Philosophy?* between saying on the one hand that philosophy is concept creation, that "Philosophy appears in Greece" and "philosophy is Greek" (WP 96, 87), while also claiming that the Greeks "did not yet 'have' [concepts but rather] contemplated them from afar, or sensed them" (WP 108).)

4 I laid the ground for parts of this reading in Nilsson 2014 and 2020.

- 5 For the sake of a generalizing overview, the literature can be separated and pressed into five categories (with some works more clearly belonging to more than one):
 - i. Works that delve into aspects or the whole of Deleuze's cinema books with the main aim of explicating what they say. While many do so in excellent, original and developing ways, they mostly harmonize with at this point fairly established readings (e.g. Rodowick 1997; Flaxman ed. 2000; Bogue 2003; Marrati 2008 [2003]; Colman 2011; Rushton 2012; Deamer 2016).
 - ii. Exegetic explorations of the more specifically philosophical meanings of Deleuze's cinema books seen from the perspective of his overall philosophy (e.g. Rodowick 1997; Pamart 2012; Thomas 2018).
 - iii. Works that primarily use the cinema books as a frame for analyzing types of films, areas, or periods that Deleuze did not himself go into, which may critically modify certain categorizations and approaches in *Cinema* while not necessarily expanding significantly on Deleuze's philosophical ideas (e.g. Pisters 2003; Martin-Jones 2006; 2011; Sutton 2009; Martin-Jones and Brown eds. 2012; Deamer 2014; Nevin 2018).
 - iv. Works that cross-read the cinema books with other aspects of Deleuze's work that are not discussed or developed in the cinema books, such as his and Guattari's notions of schizoanalysis or his more expanded work on affect (and often applied to spectators, of which Deleuze said little) (e.g. Buchanan and MacCormack eds. 2008; Shaviro 1993; Kennedy 2000; Powell 2007; del Rio 2008).
 - v. Studies that provide some wider philosophical reflections and/or expansions on the ideas in Deleuze's cinema books that are less easily categorizable, and which thereby have principal similarities to the present study, but that nonetheless mostly keep more or less within established parameters of how Deleuze's cinema books are understood (e.g. Rodowick ed. 2010; Pisters 2012; Boljkovac 2013).
- 6 It is quite common to reduce film-philosophy to film stimulating philosophizing and conceptualization in the theorist/philosopher or the viewer more generally. This includes film-philosophical interpretations of Deleuze: Gregory Flaxman for instance writes about "the profound role that these arts [among them cinema] play in Deleuze's work as conceptual provocateurs" (2011: xx).
- 7 As late as 2009, Zsuzsa Baross goes so far as to argue that (at least compared to his peers) "Godard, or rather his cinema, is also the least known, seen, screened and, perhaps, understood" (2009: 134).
- 8 Pantenburg (2015 [2006]: 23, 49, 53, 60–3, 71–4, 79, 83, 96, 124, 135, 177, 213, 255). A few times Pantenburg also talks about films as containing or giving rise to theoretical "concepts", but the term (when implicitly defined in ways relevant for

the *cinecept*) mostly appears to mean abstract ideas, often in a loosely Eisensteinian sense; and, even more significantly, the concept is conceived of as “a leap [...] that has to take place in the viewer’s mind”, something that is thereby—Pantenburg quoting Alexander Kluge—“not materially concentrated in the film itself” (204, 44, 27, 151f). (For a similar spectator-centric stance in the Godard literature, which also adds a more radical aversion to the very idea of filmic thought—apparently based only on the fact that the film technology itself is not the literal thought agent—see Vaughan 2013: 2, 32, 27.) The *cinecept*, in contrast, is “materially concentrated in the film itself”, *before* meeting viewers, a stance that follows a Deleuzian (distinctly non-spectator-centric) conception of both art and philosophy (e.g. WP 164, 175; DI 312, note 3). I return to this aspect of Deleuze in Chapter 3, note 20, and Chapter 5, note 9 (see also notes 2A and 6 above, and Preface, note 10).

9 In Morgan’s case, however, this is not because he does not see philosophy at work in Godard’s films—rather, the philosophy at work in some of Godard’s late films is basically his object of study. Yet Morgan presents his study as avoiding the film-as-philosophy perspective because he sees a risk—and with references mostly to analytic philosophy of film and little film-philosophy—that it can lead “to the reductive thought that the only philosophically significant elements of Godard’s films and videos have to do with conversation and dialogue” and to thereby miss “a sense of the subtle texture of the images and sounds that make up a film and the way Godard’s philosophical ambitions emerge out of these explicitly formal concerns” (2012: 26). While film-philosophy could perhaps become more aesthetically engaged in certain regards—or at least such criticism would make sense—film-philosophy overall clearly does not equate philosophy in and through film with “conversation and dialogue.” Morgan’s statement therefore appears more as a result of an insufficient familiarity with the field—at least as it exists outside analytic philosophy—than as a solid reason to avoid its central question. His highly interesting study of late Godard, despite this positioning in the introduction, is in many regards in line with, and a good contribution to, film-philosophy. (See also second part of note 11 below.)

10 At one point in Morrey’s excellent overview of Godard’s oeuvre, at least some of Godard’s earlier films are described as “providing a practical illustration” of “the revolution of French thought brought about by the works of Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, and Althusser in the mid- to late-1960s” (2005: 90). At another point it is said that Godard later addressed the same problems as such philosophers but through filmic means, and here it seems implied that he did so also with some philosophical autonomy (109). At yet another point, Godard’s own conception of film as a “mode of thinking” and referencing of himself as a philosopher or scientist seem to be interpreted as a montage method that “sparks off a process of thought in the observer” in which the spectator is “invit[ed]” to “construct the meaning of a given association” (227f), which makes the philosophy of the film itself unclear, while the conclusion still states that Godard’s is “cinema *as* philosophy” (242).

- 11 Deleuze and Guattari's influence on Godard-Gorin and on Godard-Miéville as well as Foucault's influence on Godard-Miéville during the 1970s is fairly well established if not exhaustively investigated; see e.g. Morrey (2005: 115–30, 240); Witt (1998: ch. 1). See also Godard and Ishaghpour (2005 [1999]: 76f) on a key Foucault quotation in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*—emphasized also by Rancière in his discussion of *Histoire(s)* (2009 [2003]: 37f, 59, 62)—which is relevant also for the following issue:

While I agree with Morgan's problematizing of reductions of Godard's films to the philosophies of his French contemporaries, and the importance of regarding Godard as an original thinker, Morgan goes too far in the other direction. Based almost entirely on the claim that Godard does not cite such philosophers directly in his films, Morgan not only finds Godard to be "fairly indifferent to these thinkers and the schools of thought they represent", he also argues that they "simply are not his interlocutors, not the texts his films draw on, and [that] this is important for understanding what he takes himself to be doing" (2012: 65f). This argument is not convincing. Contrary empirical evidence aside, if this is the criterion by which to judge whether there is influence, then none of these French philosophers influenced each other, since they seldom directly reference or engage comprehensively with each other in writing. Even Deleuze and Foucault (apart from Deleuze's late book on Foucault and Foucault's preface for *Anti-Oedipus*) seldom directly referenced each other in their books. The point is that they still deeply influenced each other, and direct citations are not the only metric for determining whether that is the case.

- 12 Witt goes on to say here that Deleuze had claimed in "Three questions about *Six fois deux*" that Godard with *Six fois deux* made a "full and original contribution", with the implication that this contribution was philosophy in Deleuze's mind (Witt 2007 [2004]: 210). However, while Deleuze clearly always considered Godard as thinking filmically, and in that text explicates ideas at play in this work, he does not actually say anything explicitly about a particularly *philosophical* contribution in and through video. Deleuze's statement in that text is arguably closer to how he positions Godard in the cinema books than to the way he talked about Godard in 1968—more on these differences in the last paragraph of this section.
- 13 On Godard-Miéville's relation to Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray in these senses, see Chapter 4, note 19.
- 14 Witt's extraordinary Godard scholarship notwithstanding, it is worth noting that in his early writings he was not a very close reader of Deleuze. In this article from 1999 he largely dismisses Deleuze's cinema books as incomprehensible. Moreover, despite it being part of his aim to examine Deleuze and Guattari as an important intellectual context for the Sonimage films, Witt does not really engage with Deleuze and Guattari in his dissertation (1998), beyond some schematic and brief passages.

- 15 To clarify: the philosophical themes in *Histoire(s)*—aside from certain directly relevant ideas such as *rapprochement*—are thereby outside of the delimitation: e.g. doing historiography through film, the holocaust, various theses about film history (the literature on these themes is of course already quite large and the present study does not aim to make a contribution in this respect).
- 16 This differentiation is an overall generalization, and not absolute: there are many aspects of the Sonimage films where the poetic is in the driving seat perhaps as much as in *Histoire(s)*, and there are aspects of the latter that can at least be analyzed through a cineceptual lens. While *Histoire(s)*'s poetic-essayistic-symphonic reasoning is philosophically dense, however, this density does not in the same way tend directly towards the cineceptual.
- 17 Witt: "In view of the frequent underestimation and misrepresentation of the scale of Miéville's contribution, let us note here that she co-directed, co-authored and co-edited all of the Sonimage works listed above [*Ici et ailleurs*; *Numéro deux*; *Comment ça va*; *Six fois deux*; *France tour détour*], with the exception of *Numéro deux*, which she nevertheless co-authored and co-edited" (2014: 319).
- 18 This is not to take anything away from Godard himself, who as pointed out by Jerry White (2013: 41) had developed much of the concerns and foundations for the formal approaches already in *Le gai savoir* (1968) and partly during the Dziga Vertov Group period (see Witt 1998: 14f).
- 19 White, however, also considers these works as "precursors" to Godard-Miéville's 1980s films that he regards as being just as philosophical but more "fully realized aesthetic objects" and more "mature" (2013: 62, 94, 99, see also 107). In contrast, the present study regards the Sonimage films as precursors or "not fully realized" in the very different sense of precursors to cinecepts. And from this standpoint, the post-Sonimage films that White finds more "fully realized" and "mature" instead appear *less* "fully realized."
- 20 Deleuze devotes chapter 6 of *What is Philosophy?* to detailing how this kind of logic turns concepts into functions in propositions (see also WP 22). (Cf. Deleuze's much more affirmative view of what he calls functives in science in the preceding chapter.) This is mainly about twentieth-century logic after logical positivism and starting especially with schools around Wittgenstein (ABC Letter W)—so, not necessarily all, and perhaps especially not all *early* analytic philosophy (Deleuze seems for instance to have admired some aspects of Russell, see e.g. LS 85, note 2, 96).
- 21 Deleuze makes a certain distinction between form and content in this sense, e.g. DI: 140).
- 22 There are similarities here to Astruc vis-à-vis the camera pen: "Perhaps it could simply be called a tendency [...] Of course, no tendency can be so called unless it has something to show for itself. [...] the strange paradox of whereby one can talk about something which does not yet exist" (2014 [1948]: 607).

- 23 For a biographical overview of Deleuze's close relationship to certain parts of the French world of film critique and scholarship, including Narboni, see Dosse 2010 [2007]: 398–405, see also 411–14.
- 24 See also Godard (1992 [1988]: 161). He sometimes implies that Hitchcock, Welles, and Ray are exceptions; see Godard (1985 [1980]: 405); Witt (2013: 137; 2000: 43).
- 25 And if *philosophy* is formulated in and through such media, then the philosophy should in principle be able to concern anything, just like philosophical writing can concern anything and not just writing itself. Reducing film as theory/philosophy to theory/philosophy about film itself is fairly prevalent in contemporary discussions about film as theory/philosophy, notably in Pantenburg (2015 [2006]), who transposes the Romantic idea—originating in Lessing and expressed by Schlegel and Novalis—that a theory or a critique of the novel should come in the form of a novel. The present study argues that this is too narrow a frame for what is at stake with film as philosophy: film as philosophy should not be reduced to a philosophizing about film.
- 26 To which we can add Serge Daney's claim that "Godard's lead over other manipulators of images and sounds stems from his total contempt for any discourse on the 'specificity' of cinema" (Daney 1976).
- 27 On the proliferation of visible text in Godard's video works see Lahey Dronsfield (2010) and Leutrat (2000: 179). While not about text *in* the videos, we may also note Raymond Bellour's argument—which references Godard among others—that video *itself* "is more deeply rooted in writing than is cinema" (1990: 421).
- 28 For a historical and empirical overview of how this can work more generally—focusing on how various writing technologies (from a Sumerian cuneiform script ca. 3500 BC to alphabetic writing to printing to electronic media) "restructure consciousness"—see Ong (2012 [1982]: ch. 4).