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A "Strange Topography of Edges": Saying Goodbye in Godard and Antonioni

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Abstract

In much of the film criticism dedicated to Michelangelo Antonioni, endings loom large. From *L'avventura* to *L'eclisse* to *Blow Up*, critics have focused on how Antonioni's films end and what lessons an audience ought to draw from them. Often, they emphasize the existential, the ironic, or more simply the poignant. This essay takes a different tack in its examination of the ending of a later film of Antonioni's, *The Passenger*, finding in its ending hints about the nature of dispossession. It argues that the film pushes forward a perspective on cinema in which cinema itself becomes an invitation to exit into openness. Through a comparison with Jean-Luc Godard's 2014 *Adieu au langage* in which the post-linguistic image is shot through with pathos about what comes after the human, the essay finds in *The Passenger* a response to Godard's dire symptomology of the contemporary world mesmerized by its digital devices. It does so by employing the notions of interregnum as well as what Jacques Derrida in a different context refers to as "the apparatus of edges" in order to see where borders and boundaries become visible. In the transformation of lines into edges, borders can be trespassed. The essay concludes with a reflection on the cinematic interregnum more broadly and the need to consider movement and birth together as forming what Jean-Luc Nancy refers to as "an open totality."

Keywords

Antonioni, Godard, interregnum, apparatus of edges, dispossession.

Anyone who has watched the films of Michelangelo Antonioni remembers the endings. Sometimes they end with a whisper, whether it be *L'avventura*'s in which Claudia comforts Sandro, as his troubled relationship to his own masculinity has been uncovered or *La notte*, where a bereft Giovanni prostrates himself before Lidia while she acknowledges his failings and hers. Antonioni's later films speak louder, witnesses to the mysteries of perception as stories and personalities dissolve. There is *Blow-up's* playful destruction of who actually sees, while *Red Desert's* poisonous yellow fumes at film's end mimic an end-of-the-world scenario worthy of Ernesto de Martino (De Martino, 2019). Along the same lines resides the

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most famous of all Antonioni's endings: the end of the world of *L'eclisse* where planetary destruction begins six minutes before a Roman street light finally burns out. Antonioni's endings invite the spectator to see situations as they "really are" or as his characters see them, which of course is paradoxical as the creation of these situations takes place through the height of artifice. The effect sometimes seems to be a modern updating of what Machiavelli famously called "the real truth of the matter" [*la verità effettuale della cosa*], with Antonioni continually asking the spectator to be more courageous when confronting the real; to embrace the challenges of understanding when the tendentious nature of perceptions is on display; to see the indeterminable nature of what they are seeing (Machiavelli, 2009, p. 108).

Why attach so much importance to endings? It may have to do with a claim of Chekhov's that Antonioni repeats in an interview: "Whoever invents new endings for dramas will have initiated a new era" (Tomasulo, 2008, p. 167). Indeed, one finds in all of the endings I mentioned above what appears to be an obsession on Antonioni's part for endings and for initiating new eras. Not exactly the modernist adage, "Make it New," this seems more in line with linking cinematic invention to existential drama. Nowhere more than in his last great film, *The Passenger*, does Antonioni herald the initiation of a new era by inventing a new ending. And what an ending he gives us.

The means by which he announces this new era are part of my interest in writing about *The Passenger* and how Antonioni bids adieu to one era and commences with a new one, but not all of it. In an earlier work, *The Techne of Giving*, I discuss how Antonioni's films register the emergence of a generous form of life through a playful deployment of the cinematic apparatus that creates conditions in which the spectator and some figures on film, particularly the actress, Monica Vitti, are invited to embrace touch and to abandon grasping. By highlighting the difference between touch and grip, I make the case that Antonioni is urging the spectator to identify less with what they see on screen, and opt instead to dispossess (Campbell, 2017). Turning to *The Passenger*, I wonder in the following pages whether it is possible to understand the film as pushing forward these earlier invitations to dispossess in such a way that a new era begins precisely because an ending for possession has been fashioned. How, in other words, might Antonioni's cinema lead beyond the language of possession to a space of potential?

My essay is divided into three parts. In the first I describe the contemporary moment of cinema in terms of an interregnum where

I feature Jean-Luc Godard's 2014 film *Adieu au langage* as sketching how difficult it is for a new era to be born. In the second I bore down on the ending of *The Passenger* in order to highlight the affinities and differences with Godard's film, while also pushing forward trespass in a context of lines that are now edges. In the third, I raise questions concerning the merits of dispossession of language and identity more generally in the contemporary context.

1. *Always Say Goodbye*

How does Antonioni's *The Passenger* lead us beyond possession in a context of trespassing images? In order to begin to answer, some preparatory work is needed, especially around the relation between an era that ends and another that begins. Clearly, when a new ending is being invented, such as the ones that Antonioni is so keen on filming, another ending must also be drawing to a close. In this movement between ending and beginning, when an era is about to commence, a space opens. Zygmunt Bauman, writing in the long shadow of Antonio Gramsci, calls these moments "the time of the interregnum."

> Gramsci detached the idea of "interregnum" from its habitual association with the interlude of (routine) transmission of hereditary or electable power. He attached it to the extraordinary situations in which the extant legal frame of social order loses its grip and can hold no longer, whereas a new frame, made to the measure of newly emerged conditions responsible for making the old frame useless, is still at the designing stage, has not yet been fully assembled, or is not strong enough to be put in its place (Bauman, 2012, p. 49).

Interregnum marks the space and time before the arrival of a new era, when everything remains uncertain. Experiences of intense poignancy can be felt, moments of heightened sensitivity and powerful affect are produced, linked to the knowledge that one has arrived at the end. At the same time, not all endings elicit new eras. Not every death, or departure, or disappearance sets a new era in motion. Indeed, more hackneyed endings are far more likely as Antonioni's citation of Chekhov implicitly suggests. This might account for the discrepancy in the duration of interregnums, from days to years, which raises the question: What kind of new endings set in motion new eras?

Consider on this score the endings and beginnings of Jean-Luc Godard's film *Adieu au langage*. Appearing in 2014, *Goodbye to Language* has been the subject of numerous essays and reflections,

many of which highlight the 3D elements of the film in relation to the kind of farewell that Godard is presenting.[1] Of particular interest, however, is the film's portrayal of and response to what some have called a "post-linguistic moment," when new visual technologies and social media intersect with how cinema is made. In the film, images often float and flit about or end abruptly, seemingly independent of any individual or collective subjectivity. The style recalls of course many moments from both Godard's long video, *Histoire(s) du cinéma* and *Film Socialisme*, especially the third section.[2] These images do not appear to belong to anyone, precisely because Godard uproots them from a controlling subjectivity to which they may be said to belong. This forms part of a long tradition of cinema that James Leo Cahill has described as "cinema's Copernican vocation," namely "to displace the centrality of human mediations of the immediate visible world" (Cahill, 2019, p.16). Godard's films historically have played a central role in displacing that centrality as Conall Cash explains in a terrific reading of Godard's *Vivre sa vie*, but *Adieu au langage* pushes Godard's earlier films further so that the spectator may well wonder if the "human mediations" that Cahill has in mind on the world have drifted to such an extent that *logos* itself has broken down (Cash, 2021). For all these reasons, *Goodbye to Language* may prove helpful in imagining what an archive of extended goodbyes in a cinematic interregnum might look like and so help us position *The Passenger* as both a forerunner of the later Godard as well as future respondent.

Godard's *Adieu* is a deeply perplexing film. On the one hand, we are invited to say goodbye to language across the different sections, each with different titles (language, metaphor, and adieu, for example). On the other, the film veers among a series of motifs linked either to music, to the spoken word, to citations of images taken from other media, or to written texts from literature and philosophy, primarily. In addition, we witness what appears to be a kidnapping off-screen, a woman being chased, amorous trysts

[1] For recent readings on Godard's film, see Craig Keller, "*Adieu au langage*: The Form of the Interview," in *Cinemasparagus*, September 08, 2014, https://cinemasparagus.blogspot.com/2014/09/adieu-au-langage-form-of-interview.html; Andrew Utterson, "Goodbye to Cinema? Jean-Lud Godard's *Adieu au langage* (2014) as 3D Images as the Edge of History," *Studies in French Cinema*, 2019, vol. 19, no.1: 69-84. An indispensable reference work for the film is Ted Fendt's "*Adieu au langage*" – "Goodbye to Language": A Works Cited," 12 October 2014, https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/adieu-au-langage-goodbye-to-language-a-works-cited [accessed 15 November 2022].

[2] 'Money is a public good': Godard's *Film Socialisme* and Bernard Maris, S*tudies in French Cinema*, Vol. 19, no. 1, p. 40-54; Samuel Bréan. "godard english cannes: The Reception of Film Socialisme's 'Navajo English' Subtitles," in *Senses of Cinema*, 2011; http://sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature- articles/godardenglishcannes-the-reception-of-film-socialismes-navajo-english-subtitles [accessed 25 October 25, 2022].

between a man and a woman, and most importantly videos of a dog, who appears to be the film's star. Godard also intersperses dialogue with citations to philosophical texts, all offered in tandem with images as a form of seeming commentary on the texts and vice-versa. Repeatedly though, the connections among them have gone missing along with a sense of a *logos* anchoring the film's meaning. What remains clear is that each of these motifs (including the dog I would argue) function as a mode of saying goodbye announced in the film's title.

Much, therefore, will depend on how we see and hear Godard's goodbye to language. Initially, it may be helpful to speak of the film's apocalyptic tone: there is talk and images of war, of bodies, which are interspersed with scenes of nature, beautifully rendered and often overexposed, separated with dialogue that often goes nowhere, as well as a highlighting of the distance between bodies, and the ever-present cell phone and google – all suggest that bidding adieu will be traumatic as it involves a certain amount of violence on bodies and the language that these bodies speak or formerly spoke.[3] The event of saying goodbye to language has devastating consequences according to the film, due to the exiting out of the relation between reality and language caused by the sheer explosion of images across different platforms and media. We do not look at the film to see translations of what qualifies as reality, but instead are thrown into a visual world in which the relation between *logos* and reality has become unmoored. An apocalyptic tone is featured in such a situation when the perception of objects wanes and with it the possibility of objectively transforming the situation that Godard's film is elaborating (see Derrida, 1984).

There is of course much to lament about the situation, though it is more helpful to ask how the different moments of the film might be linked to a visual and political interregnum. Returning to Bauman and the extraordinary moment he describes in which one order "loses its grip" while another is still in its early stages, we might say that Godard juxtaposes images that have not ended their ties to *logos* (we see undressed bodies that still speak, that still maintain a relation to a subjectivity born of language) with other images that appear autonomous, by which I mean those that do not

[3] Godard is of course no stranger to apocalyptic tones. In an interview with Dick Cavett on American television in the 1970s, Godard notes that images are never only one thing but consist of actually two images that vie for domination. The same dialectical reading of image is on display in *Adieu* but here it appears that the proliferation of images across media has so altered the power of the image that cinema is at a loss (of power, of language). "Jean-Luc Godard Interview with Dick Cavett (1980) – Sauve Qui Peut." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdeHqesLx4s [accessed 15 November 2022].

require any subjective connection to sense-making. In the encounter between these two relationalities (of image to language and image to itself), the old era nears its end as goodbyes have begun. [4]

Godard confirms such a reading when he cites the opening of Alain Badiou's *The Rebirth of History* in his film:

> What is going on? Of what are we the half-fascinated, half-devastated witnesses? The continuation, at all costs, of a weary world? A salutary crisis of that world, racked by its victorious expansion? The end of that world? The advent of a different world? What is happening to us in the early parts of the century – something that would appear not to have any clear name in any accepted language (Badiou, 2012, p. 1).

Simply put, we do not know what is going on and the confusion mesmerizes us. For Badiou, the fact that we are fascinated proves that we are devastated politically and ethically: where there is no clear name for our condition, it is unclear how one might even begin to respond. At the same time, not being able to make sense of this "world" may be salutary. Godard here takes Badiou's diagnosis to heart and plots his film as a way of visualizing this experience of a world that does not yet have a clear name that we might give it. Later, in a citation from France-Lanord Hadrien's *Heidegger: une pensée irréductible à ses erreurs*, Godard recognizes a potential cause for the failure to witness the situation: "Reste à savoir si de la non-pensée contamine la pensée" (It remains to be seen if non-thought contaminates thought). The interregnum that Godard presents includes the possibility that the non-thought that characterizes human interaction with digital technology might not necessarily be as catastrophic as one might have expected. Here the appearance of books in the film suggests that they enjoy a relation to thought that digital devices do not, though one might well respond that placing one's hope in books, given the ubiquity of devices and technology, offers only the flimsiest of hopes.

These impolitical features of the interregnum – a struggle between the thought of the previous era and the non-thought of the new – are ones that we do well to reflect upon. In the first part of the film characterized by kidnappings and the repeated fragmentation of the film's narrative, Godard is pushing us to acknowledge both an anthropological risk when worlds end but also the potential that cinema, Godard's cinema, can provide, in what we might choose to call an exorcism. Ernesto de Martino, for instance, speaks

[4] Consider on this score Marramao's perspective on interregnum, namely that it is only by grasping that "untimely fold of the present capable of bringing out enduring features and changes, forms of continuity and breaks, the past of what is new and the memory of the future" (Marramao, 2020, p. 16).

of experiences that become available as worlds end, and the need for these as forms of "solemn exorcism against such a radical risk" of worlds ending: the non-thought of the new era, in other words, can still be challenged (de Martino, 2019, p. 185). To the degree that the proliferation of images driving the society of the spectacle continues, the language for thinking and the language to think will be at risk; the tools of exorcism may no longer be enough, in a kind of "inertia of repeating" (de Martino, 2019, p. 325). On this score, Godard's goodbye to language may mean saying hello to non-thought in all its terrifying forms without the immediate aid of exorcisms.

And yet we should hesitate. In another intertextual moment, Godard cites a passage from Jacques Derrida's *The Animal that Therefore I Am*: "Il n'y a pas de nudité dans la nature. Et l'animal, donc, n'est pas nu parce qu'il est nu." (There is no nudity in nature. And the animal, therefore, is not nude because it is nude.) The passage is an obvious reference to the previous moments in the film in which a nude man and a woman speak to each other, watch television, shower, or read. These images Godard later extends, after his citation of Derrida, to the star of *Adieu*, the dog. We see it inside and outside, swimming (or being carried away) in a river, or foraging and walking; the hint here, after the inclusion of the Derrida quote, is one of an affinity between the nude humans we have seen inside and the non-nude dog outside. To the degree that humans drift to the animal in the interregnum of a broken *logos*, they will no longer be nude: they are "not nude" because they are now "nude."

Consider at this point that the dog does not encounter nature in the film in those shots in which it is featured, but is *in* nature. Furthermore, the dog leaves traces, tracks in the snow, both inside and outside. One possible reading might be that with the onslaught of images that contaminate thought with non-thought, humanity is increasingly animalized in such a way that the human animal is no longer nude and so is drawn closer to nature; it is on its way to ending its separation from nature. We can say this differently: bidding farewell to language and saying hello to the human animal no longer nude, a new way of living, of speaking – all in 3D according to Godard – is possible. If *Adieu's* dog is an any indication, then the new era of non-thought may take the form of an animal, which institutes a new era precisely because a new ending for humanity and for language has been fashioned.

To be clear, in Godard's reading this new era depends for its beginning on the fracturing of *logos* that makes an outside available

where none was before. Godard observes as much when he cites Rilke's "Eighth Elegy" of the *Duino Elegies*: "Ce qui est au-dehors, ecrivait Rilke, nous le savons que par le regard de l'animal" (What is outside, wrote Rilke, can be known only via an animal's gaze). A confluence of non-thought and a severed relation between language and *logos* make it increasingly difficult to know the outside since the human animal struggles to distinguish its own gaze from an animal's. Cinema will remain – perhaps – one means, Godard is suggesting, by which we can continue to do so.

2. *The Passenger's Passage*

What can we take from this reading of this linguistic and cinematic interregnum that Godard believes we inhabit? First, the film registers the effects of image saturation on the human animal and suggests that a greater animalization of the human results. Equally, the new era emphasizes the likelihood of failing to distinguish inside and outside. Witnessing of the sort that was possible in the previous era is imperiled unless it employs the farewell that Godard is attempting here. Second, and this is key for my reading of Antonioni, the camera witnesses the moments of ending while at the same time adopting a position that shows and occludes what is to come (or what will come or what has already come). We face the paradoxical situation of seeing what is to come only because what is seen has been severed from a subjective position; from a recognizable subject who has been pushed into a post-linguistic position. Cinema not only is the means to witness without a subject but provides the means to witness the effects of the breakdown in witnessing on subjects by other subjects.

Which brings us to Antonioni's *The Passenger*. Antonioni navigates some of the same terrain as Godard does but with a difference: he encourages the spectator to become more comfortable with the way cinema urges them to trespass the holding of images as their own by offering cinema's ability to trespass as a model for openness. To begin: *The Passenger* recounts the story of a reporter, David Locke, who exchanges his identity with another man, David Robertson, after the latter has died in a room of a hotel they share in an unnamed African country. In what occasionally seems like a dramatic send up of a spy thriller, with the film trotting across different European countries, furtive meetings, the introduction of "the Girl" in Barcelona, and the frantic search for Locke by Rachel, his former girlfriend, Antonioni plays with many of the same exis-

tential themes that had to that point characterized his earlier films: ennui, the threat of truth-telling, subterfuge – all the themes of a European bourgeoise blind to its own alienation that we have come to expect from an Antonioni film. In my earlier study of the director as a kind of prelapsarian thinker of biopolitics, I make the case that Antonioni employs gestures as a way of signaling a generous form of life in which touch substitutes for gripping in what evokes an affirmative biopolitics based on dispossession. *The Passenger* slows the process down by elaborating a notion of possession that needs to be trespassed, with cinema itself ultimately showing the way to do so. It is through cinema that we will find the outlines of a new era characterized by its openness and dispossession.

The film opens with a man clearly at the end of his professional and perhaps physical life. We learn that he is journalist seeking interviews in an unnamed country in Saharan Africa and we see that he is willing to risk his own death to do so. It is this near experience of death that prefaces the death of the other white and European hotel guest with whom he will change identities, whom we glean has the same first name as our protagonist: David. Indeed, the earlier encounter with death appears to have altered the journalist's relation to his own life and here Antonioni employs, mostly unconsciously I suspect, a whole series of colonial tropes about Africa and the European who figuratively and literally loses himself there. When the journalist happens upon the death of his doppelgänger, he exchanges his own identity with the other: David Locke becomes David Robertson, whom we and Locke quickly learn was an arms dealer.

In a continuation of what feels like an international thriller where the protagonist learns fitfully who he was and now is, here Locke/Robertson learns who he is not and who he never was. For Antonioni, there appears to be something in the profile of Locke as a reporter – the film in Italian is *Professione Reporter* – which makes him susceptible to adopting the identity of a dead man. Of particular relevance for Locke's tenuous hold on his prior identity is the fact that he was in the process of being emptied of it – the deserted spaces of the country on which he is reporting and where he nearly dies – are meant to showcase that he is "suffering less from the absence of another than from the absence" of himself (see Deleuze, 1989, p. 9). This suggests in turn that the spaces Locke sees and then inhabits circulate not only through his own absence but the absence of Robertson too. We might refer to this as a kind of optical interregnum, in which two absences meet in a space in which identity and seeing are reciprocally contaminated.

Having come to the end of the line in a non-descript border town, Locke/Robertson and "the Girl" retire to a room, the former exhausted by the ordeal of carrying two identities and being neither; there is also the matter of the assassins. It is here that Antonioni's ending begins to take shape. We notice the camera slowly lifting off of the bed where Locke lies after the "Girl" has exited, and then see the camera take up a position in front of a grated window, one of the most famous in all of cinema. It looks out to see those outside, one of whom is looking in; it is the "Girl" who is now outside. As the camera dollies closer to the window, we notice that Antonioni is framing each of the figures that arrive, the older man, the child who is playing, and then the assassins looking for their arms dealer, through the grates of window.

Clearly, Antonioni is elaborating the screens the spectator looks out from into much smaller screens but he does so only after he has shown the viewer in a prior sequence the space of the room that the camera will exit from. In the earlier sequence we had seen Locke opening the window and noticed how the camera moved right up to the grates without passing through them. Indeed, it panned left to let the spectator see the sky before returning safely to Locke with his back now turned to the window. The impression is typical of many interior shots: Locke cannot leave the hotel room because he is enclosed there. When Antonioni ultimately breaks through the confines of the room soon after, which happens nearly or very nearly after Locke has been murdered, he clearly intends for us to link his death to a capacity of the camera to trespass the confines of the room.

This is another goodbye, not the one that Godard is after with its animalizing potential, but one that has been central to the film to this point: Locke's trespassing of the borders of his identity along with that of another and with it the line between who lives and who dies. Here the theme is made visible in shocking fashion by showing how the boundary of inside and out, interior and exterior, is punctured. For Antonioni, the mode of bidding farewell involves precisely the question of how to trespass and then pass through what was enclosed inside. In other words, he urges the spectator to become a passenger.

What does it mean to be a passenger? Derrida, writing on Seneca and death, captures the stakes.

> [T] discourse on death also contains, among other so many other things, a rhetoric of borders, a lesson in wisdom concerning the lines that delimit the right of absolute property, the right of property to own life, the proper of our existence, in sum, a treatise about the tracing of traits as the borderly edges of what in sum belongs to us [*nous revient*] (Derrida, 1993, p. 3).

David Locke – his name recalls the name of another Locke, the philosopher *par excellence* of property and contract – undergoes a series of passages across the film in which he moves past what "belongs to him," but none are more important than the one in which he trespasses Robertson's and his own identity. When Antonioni witnesses Locke/Robertson's death not by showing it, but by making Locke/Robertson's death parallel the ability of the camera to fail to respect the borders of inside and outside, he construes cinema and Locke/Robertson together as trespassers of property's "borderly edges." This can be the function of cinema and passengers and reporters: to fail to respect borders in order for a "strange topography of edges" to become visible (Derrida, 1993, p. 80).[5] Doing so, they see what and who belongs and what or who does not.

This, I think, is the ultimate meaning of the earlier scene in which the African dictator turns the camera on Locke himself in a sequence that Rachel, his former lover, watches on video playback later. The interview captures our attention fully because we witness Locke's inability to acknowledge the relation of belonging that he ought to have to himself; unable to acknowledge that he belongs to himself more than he does to others. This is a key piece since it suggests that the missing relation to Locke's self is the condition for taking the place of Robertson. All of the globe-trotting, the encounters with "the Girl," the absences from his prior self are the mode by which Locke/

Robertson learns where the edges of belonging are felt and experienced. In ceasing to belong to himself and then to everyone else, Locke/Robertson bears witness to the possibility of choosing lack of possessiveness around identity, language, and self.

There is one further point that ought to be made and it concerns what we understand by lines and edges. Here is Derrida again:

> Customs, police, visa or passport, passenger identification – all of that is established upon this institution of the indivisible, the institution therefore of the step that is related to it, whether the step crosses it or not. Consequently, where the figure of the step is refused to intuition, where the identity or indivisibility of a line (*finis* or *peras*) is compromised, the identity to oneself and therefore the possible identification of an intangible edge the crossing of the line becomes a problem. There is a problem as soon as the edge-line is threatened (Derrida, 1993, p. 11).

To be identified as a passenger is to know that one cannot cross a line, a border, a frontier without showing the proper papers: we

[5] The full quote is: "Considering what we just have seen concerning borders, demarcations, and limits, the only characteristic that we can stress here is that of an irreducibly double inclusion: the including and the included regularly exchange places in this strange topography of edges."

reach for our passports as soon as we arrive at an airport, for instance, if not before. All of this seems obvious. But what happens when what we thought could not be divided, is, that is when a question arises around where the line is, or even if there is a line? A problem forms around who gets to cross the line and who needs to be stopped from crossing. Derrida's insight bears repeating: in such circumstances lines are no longer simply lines but now have edges, which is another way of saying that these kinds of lines need to be reinforced since they can be crossed; they require protection, a "shield" as Derrida will call it (Derrida, 1993, p. 11).

In *The Passenger*, Antonioni focuses our attention on the lines of identity and of what was before indivisible, namely the relation that Locke, the individual, has to the self, that are repeatedly crossed. Here too a problem arises around lines running between individual and self, and with it to a subjectivity that speaks and sees univocally. The subjectivity that before was univocal is no longer, which is to say that Locke does not speak with one voice nor does he see with only his eyes. Where before there was Locke, now there are lines with edges between self and other, between Locke and Robertson, between Locke and Locke, that require that the lines of identity, now edges, be reinforced and defended. Locke/Robertson, in other words, must die so that the edges recede around identity; Locke's liminal state in an interregnum of inside and outside is resolved with his death.

This context explains the power of the camera's exit from the room and its emphasis in crossing of the line of the grated window that separates the dead from the living. There are many things one can say about the moment when the camera leaves inside for outside, but undeniably there is a jolt of surprise. The line separating the two is no longer a line because Antonioni has uncovered an edge that provides a passage across. This explains, I think, why the sequence is so stunning: Antonioni shows how lines with edges can be trespassed and ultimately exited. Indeed, the problem that a compromised line with its edges creates can be resolved by adopting a different mode of passing.

Here cinema provides a key since it does not require passenger identification as it encompasses within it the potential for crossing in such a way that the indivisible can be made divisible. At the same time, it can refuse lines, protection, and the further elaboration of problems around what is visible. This explains why this moment is the most affirmative in all of Antonioni's filmmaking and I would argue of cinema itself. The abandon with which the camera sees an opening to Locke's problem shocks us while urging us not

to fall back to the other side of the line. We cross without fearing trespass and without recourse to a view of outside from only within.

On this score Deleuze precedes us with his reading of Antonioni and his analysis of "any-space-whatever."

> There are therefore two states of the any-space-whatever, or two kinds of 'qualisigns,' qualisigns of deconnection and emptiness. These two states are always implied in each other, and we can only say that the one is 'before' and the other 'after.' The any-space-whatever retains one and the same nature; it no longer has co-ordinates, it is pure potential, it shows only pure Powers and Qualities, independently of the states of things or milieux which actualise them (Deleuze, 1997, p. 120).

Once the camera crosses the threshold, the outside is charged with potential and affect because there is no longer an inside or outside, but only a before and after. What has come before – Locke/Robertson's continued attempts to possess the self, a way of seeing, and speaking a language that both Locke and Robertson have in common – has ceased. In its place we find a space no longer defined by what was inside looking out but only "any-space-whatever." To be clear, this does not preclude seeing human coordinates after the camera has passed. We certainly see "the Girl," Rachel, the killers, and the space surrounding the hotel, but they are disconnected from what came before. Now we have a perception of after that is unbound from Locke/Robertson's earlier adventures in trespass. The optical interregnum that had characterized the film to that point comes to an end while another era has commenced in which trespass is no longer needed as a practice, given how profoundly the space we see has been potentialized.

3. *Moving Between Images*

Where does this leave us in a reading of Antonioni and Godard's different eras, different endings, and different goodbyes? On the one hand, Godard's adieu to language is premised on an inauthentic relation between the human and the technologies of the screen. The reason has to do with how digital technology remaps the relation of fingers, body parts, and nakedness, which places the human outside itself. Cinema for Godard does not lead beyond language so much as show us the effects on the human when there is nothing but language. What remains to be seen is how much the non-thought that Godard believes characterizes the digitalized human is contagious for thought. In *The Passenger* Antonioni features an individual's problematic relation to the self, which leads to a

decision to sever that relation in favor of another. Locke trespasses his own and another's identity and the thought experiment results in a limit case of who actually sees and speaks. In this perspective Antonioni offers cinema as a mode for passing since it potentializes a seeing that has relinquished the form of trespass that Locke/Robertson practices. If we were to read Godard's interregnum of outside (the non-thought of a future era, for instance) and inside (the thought of the previous era) through a perspective of potentialized space thanks to dispossession, we might ask at what point does Godard's goodbye give up trespass and embrace non-infringement, openness, and the giving way of inside to a potentialized outside?

Here I am reminded of an interview of Jean-Luc Nancy's. Speaking of delocalization in Claire Denis's *The Intruder*, Nancy reminds us that "every film proposes something which is a *movement of world*, a birth, an expansion. A world is always two things. On the one hand, it is *a separated* birth, a separation which constitutes a totality which can, in any case, remain *open*. An open totality where sense can circulate. On the other hand, it is also a *movement*, the birth of a world and the end of a world" (Nancy 2016, p. 47). Nancy is urging caution in dividing up goodbyes and endings in cinema so neatly as I have here, especially when it comes to reading the cinematographic images of their endings. If every film proposes a separated birth that constitutes a totality that is open as well as a birth and an end of a world, then each film does both; each contains twin movements, one toward a world that is separate and open and another that operates in a cinematic interregnum. In other words, new eras are born in each, and these births have to do with the relation that the spectator enjoys with the image that they see on the screen.

In Antonioni, the world that is being born is based on potentializing the openness of the outside of the image, by which I mean that we recognize it as outside now separate from inside – this is what to be open means, to see without an inside informing outside. Sense circulates here despite the fact (or on account of) that the movement depicted is of a world born distinctly. It is separated because the world that is born is utterly different from what came before spatially. At the same time, *The Passenger* also marks a movement of before and after temporally, in which we see the affinity between Locke's relation to the self and cinema's relation to itself. The images enjoy their power precisely because they share the same modes of trespass, the same quest for edges. Yet, the film's ending decidedly comes down on the side of a world that is separate and open. And why wouldn't it? Antonioni's predecessors

in neo-realism each in their own way make that choice for potential and openness, a fact that Deleuze notes in *Cinema 1.*

Godard's *Adieu* reverses Antonioni's celebration of the passage and the passenger. Instead, it provides coordinates on the interregnum, the troubled movement between thought and non-thought, language and post-linguistic images, possession and dispossession. Each of these short-circuit the "movement of world" that is required for the interregnum to end and for another era to begin. Godard seems implicitly to be responding *avant le lettre* to Nancy's reading by showing that cinema's constitutive movement toward the separate birth of openness is now in doubt precisely because of a failure of language to give a name to what it is we are experiencing. This failure cannot be separated from the fundamental drift of language brought about by what our devices, digital technology, this *world* has wrought.

There is a final observation to make. In the above passage, Nancy implies that the second movement of world making differs from the first because sense does not circulate there and for this reason it is less open. It resembles, in other words, the interregnum with which I began this essay: we are unable to locate where openness resides and so our only map and model would appear to be embodied in Godard's repeated images of a dog traipsing inside and out, leaving tracks. If we have difficulty navigating this second world of movement that Nancy describes, it is because we continue to be enmeshed in endings, unable to say goodbye because we cannot find the words. What is required, *The Passenger* invites us to consider, is feeling our way to those edges and then to pass over, leaving this interregnum for good. How is one supposed to discover where borderly edges have been elaborated? Here it is crucial how Antonioni frames the movement of world as a potentializing of openness; it occurs only after Locke has dispossessed himself of one identity, adopted another, and then dispossessed himself of the second. Only after Antonioni has reminded the spectator of Locke's attempts to trespass his own identity, finding an edge in the death of another who resembles him, that he adopts a similar task for cinema: where do the borderly edges of the visible yield to greater openness? On this note recall Derrida speaks of an "entire apparatus of edges" as central when thinking what it means to "properly die" (Derrida, 1993, p. 30). Cinema for Antonioni is an apparatus of edges that transforms the spectator into a passenger who understands the benefits of dispossession when an era is concluding. That is the poignant lesson that Antonioni offers those unable to say goodbye: find the edge and cross over.

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