



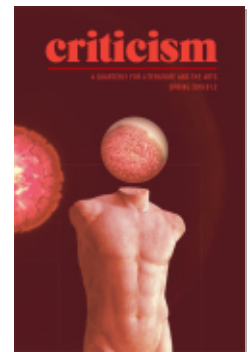
PROJECT MUSE®

"It's Not Blood, It's Red": Color as Category, Color as Sensation in Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris*, *Pierrot Le Fou*, *Weekend*, and *Passion*

Colin Gardner

Criticism, Volume 61, Number 2, Spring 2019, pp. 245-270 (Article)

Published by Wayne State University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/730038>

“IT’S NOT BLOOD, IT’S RED”: COLOR AS CATEGORY, COLOR AS SENSATION IN JEAN-LUC GODARD’S *LE MÉPRIS*, *PIERROT LE FOU*, *WEEKEND*, AND *PASSION*

Colin Gardner

I. Introduction: Category, Genre, and Singularity

Although the history of cinema has been filled with great colorists—Vincente Minnelli, Rouben Mamoulian, and Nicholas Ray are obvious examples—few directors root the chromatic medium within the category of the body as analytically as Jean-Luc Godard. While it’s common to see color used symbolically (Alfred Hitchcock’s *Marnie* typifies the realist trope, “It’s not red, it’s blood”) and as worldly bodily affect (Monica Vitti’s post-coital, pink-suffused room as the apotheosis of fulfilled desire in Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Red Desert*), Godard employs color in a variety of ways, whether through turning objects into multiple subjects by drawing attention to their innate “thingness” via their relation to the material play of signification (the influence of the French poet Francis Ponge’s 1942 collection, *Le Parti Pris des Choses* is crucial here, stressing, as the title suggests, “‘The Things’ View of It”) or treating the painterly image as a kind of sensate flesh, as a fluid demonstration of categorization and genre rather than strict metaphor or metonymy. As Godard once put it in a 1966 interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, “I don’t know how to tell stories. I want to mix everything, to restore everything, to tell all at the same time. If I had to define myself, I’d say that I am a ‘painter of letters’ as others would say they are ‘men of letters.’”¹

Because the shift from color as both category and genre to a vector of pure affect or sensation is the key thrust of this essay, it is important to define our terms in order to highlight Godard’s own hybrid approach to deconstructing the representational sign. In this sense we must start at the beginning—in this case, with Aristotle, who organizes Being or substance hierarchically through categories (unities based on political

and cultural practices), which are in turn subdivided into genera (which are self-identical, stifling difference) and their corresponding series and representations (sounds and images as stylistic conventions). Film genre, then, is directly related to category as a signifying subgroup with its own combination of semantics (the building blocks of setting, iconography, etc.) and syntax (the conflicting relationships and structures in which they are arranged).² In short, Aristotle doesn't allow for difference in itself, only in relation to a governing entity whereby there must be an identical conceptual benchmark against which we can measure difference as inherently "other," much like Kant's relation of the multiple to the transcendental One. Kant reduces all incommensurability and unrepresentability to a single rationalizing entity: the Sublime; while all categories are in turn conceptualized and moralized under the aegis of judgment. In contrast, Henri Bergson counters both Kant and Aristotle by replacing the multiple with the multiplicity (whether quantitative or qualitative) which is immanently different-in-itself.³ Admittedly Godard doesn't go this far—he retains categories but makes them fluid, transforming disjunctive syntheses into connective ones so that desire is re-categorized via Brechtian distanciation, drawing attention to the ideological constructs of conspicuous consumption, advertising, the semiotics of signs, colors, and logos. In short, Godard creates categories but uses color to break their prescribed assignation by turning them into an affective vector, linking them with other series and sets to create new categories and genres that are themselves defined by difference: new connective and inclusive syntheses that multiply ("and . . . and . . . and . . .") rather than disjunctive and exclusive syntheses that subtract and delimit ("and/or").

This combination of centripetal and centrifugal forces (pulling images and sounds into concrete genres and categories, all the better to expand them outwards through affective lines of flight) is not unlike Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel's "work of art," which is simultaneously complete and self-contained but also a fragment of a larger whole, for "a fragment, like a miniature work of art, must be totally detached from the surrounding world and closed on itself like a hedgehog."⁴ These fragments (parts of a given category, set or series) thus become building blocks for other, larger sets, as if the hedgehog had stretched out across its surrounding territory. A good example in Godard is the famous close-up of a swirl of bubbles on the surface of a cup of coffee that doubles as a giant spiral nebula in *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle* (1967), whereby the microcosm and macrocosm fold into each other as overlapping and interpenetrating worlds, as if, read through Ponge's

“The Things’ View of It,” the coffee was saying, “My dark roast is as black as the unfathomable depths of the infinite cosmos.” In this sense Godard’s approach to color resembles a form of set theory, epitomized by the German mathematician Max Zorn’s “lemma,” as his main structuring principle. Here, the eleventh axiom of set theory proposes that, given a set of sets, there is a further set composed of a representative item from each set. In Godard’s case, as we shall see, there are many ordered *subsets* within the set of all elements that make up a given film, for example, all shots containing the color red.

This concept is perfectly illustrated by a recurring scene from the Dziga Vertov Group’s *Pravda* (1970). Here, Godard uses the red livery and movements of Prague streetcars as a means of calling our attention to the different types of socialism (and their possible futures) in the post-Dubček era in Czechoslovakia. Godard films the streetcars as they pull in and out of the station, filling the screen with bright crimson but tarnished by flaking paint and fragments of graffiti. Some of the cars exit to the left (progressive radicalism); others, to the right (revisionism). As James Roy MacBean points out, “Instead of merely using the red streetcar shot for its combination of ‘local color’ and abstract beauty (which is how Chris Marker uses an almost identical shot in his *Sunday in Peking*), Godard takes these elements as starting points—eminently cinematic ones—and links the abstract to the concrete while transforming the superficial aspects of local color into conceptual tools for probing deeper into the ‘red of socialism’ in Czechoslovakia.”⁵ More importantly, Godard expands this symbolic political reading still further by bringing in the human factor via the voice-over on the soundtrack: “We’re in a socialist country. Socialist means red. Red for the blood of workers killed in its liberation.” In this way Godard transforms abstract ideology into somatic affect by a simple transformation of color through two different categories (the signifier of official socialism and the “it’s not red, it’s blood” reminder of personal sacrifice). Significantly, he restores the balance at film’s end by closing with a shot of a red flag fluttering in the breeze on the driver’s side of a car as it speeds through the countryside. The flag has no yellow hammer and sickle embellishment so it is untainted by Soviet or Chinese ideological dogma, setting us up for a future (and people) “yet to come,” as well as a generic link to the end of *British Sounds* (1970), where a disembodied arm clutches a similar red flag in strident rebellion as a fist smashes through the red Cross of St. George of the Union Jack.

It should be clear from this example that Godard utilizes Aristotelian categories (with their reliance on concepts and generic series) as

fragmented (often disjointed) building blocks to create larger, generic singularities that open up a much broader aestheticism. This essay traces this movement through four sections. The first shows how the stalling of sensory-motor links in film continuity allows Godard to eschew conventional narrative in favor of a different kind of bodily movement through a form of audio-visual “showing” rather than acting out, epitomized by the *flâneur*-like ballad or stroll (what the Situationists called a *dérive*), through a given space, whereby color acts as an agency or vector in and of itself. The second section theorizes this perceptual affect through the work of Velázquez and Rimbaud, whereby forms and images are not rendered concretely but through the discrepant (and often explosive) spaces and tonalities between them. Section three discusses Godard’s fondness for using the colors of the *Tricolore* and the Stars and Stripes as building blocks for a critique of American imperialism through their glyphic connection to corporate logos, particularly oil companies such as Mobil, Total, and Esso. By using different colors to break up words into different acronyms, Godard is able to disclose otherwise hidden political connections that spill over into new, more ideological categories. Finally, through a discussion of *Passion*, the essay pulls all the categorical and generic threads together to create a new category of bodily affect (and a corresponding labor theory of value) based on phenomenological combination through the *tableaux vivant* and its painterly debt to Raphael’s workshop, specifically the technique of synthetic imitation. It is here where Godard makes the key breakthrough in terms of realizing his ongoing goal of placing colors *inside* the camera (as opposed to objectively rendering them from the outside), as if cinema and color, like their painterly counterparts, were inherently self-constituting. Godard once said admiringly of Jacques Demy’s *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964) that “the actors don’t sing but the movie does.”⁶ In *Passion*, one can similarly say that the colors don’t vibrate, the movie does: in short, Godard transforms an apparatus of representation into a pulsation of pure sensation.

II. Breaking Sensory-motor Links: Godard, Color and the “Ballade”

Right from the beginning of his directorial career, Godard willfully disrupted the sensory-motor basis for causal narrative and the strict correlation between sound and image that had been a staple of Hollywood film since the end of the silent era. One can point to the famous jump-cuts of *Breathless* (1959), the seemingly random

interjections of Michel Legrand’s loud orchestral score in *Une femme est une femme* (1961), the use of analytical Brechtian tableaux rather than psychological continuity in *Vivre sa vie* (1962) and the extradiegetic minute-long sound drop out in *Bande à part* (1964). As Deleuze points out in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, for Godard “the problem of the relation between images is no longer of knowing if it works or it does not work . . . but of knowing *How’s it going* (*Comment ça va*). Like this or like that, ‘how’s it going’ (*comment ça va*) is the constitution of series, of their irrational cuts, of their dissonant tunings, of their unlinked terms.”⁷ The key here is not so much montage (that is, rational cuts) as the invisible building blocks for the creation of a sequential and teleologically driven causal narrative, but rather a series of self-reflexive images formed by irrational cuts (interstices) and a corresponding false movement, a form of “montrage” or *showing* as opposed to interpreting or explaining. If our sensory-motor schema is allowed to jam or break, a different type of image can appear, what Deleuze calls a pure optical-sound image: “opsigns” and “sonsigns,” images where the seen and heard no longer extend into action. Through a close reading of *Le Mépris* (1963), *Pierrot le Fou* (1965), *Weekend* (1967), and *Passion* (1982), we can see how Godard uses color as the vehicle for a nomadic “ballade” (translated as both trip and, in the case of *Passion*, ballad/song), categorized by a weakness of motor-linkages that are capable of releasing dynamic yet creative forces of disintegration. Color thus acts as a powerful form of de- and re-territorialization, producing new conjunctions between and across genres, forming new categories in the interstices between series, inducing a *heteroglossia* of potential singularities, whereby the body is always its own other, always in search of the next series that will make it manifest as something incommensurable, as pure sensation.

Exactly what happens to the immanent quality of the image—that is, indirect time—when the motility that makes it subservient literally runs out of gas? As is well documented, the answer for Deleuze is that “the movement-image of the so-called classical cinema gave way, in the post-war period, to a direct time-image. . . . [W]hat tends to collapse, or at least to lose its position, is the sensory-motor schema which constituted the action-image of the old cinema.”⁸ The result is a switch in the relationship between movement and time, for

time ceases to be derived from the movement, it appears in itself and itself gives rise to *false movements*. Hence the importance of *false continuity* in modern cinema: the images are no longer linked by rational cuts and continuity, but are re-linked

by means of false continuity and irrational cuts. Even the body is no longer exactly what moves; subject of movement or the instrument of action, it becomes rather the developer of time, it shows time through its tirednesses and waitings.⁹

Characters now become passive viewers rather than actors, inarticulate commentators on their own lack of communication, while purely optical (especially coloristic) and sound situations come to replace a faltering sensory-motor motility.

In the specific case of Godard and the New Wave, sensory-motor links are undone by a *flâneur*-like ballad or stroll, whether it be a spatial *dérive* through a single apartment (the thirty-minute sequence in *Le Mépris*, where Camille and Paul's marital breakdown is communicated through a series of disjunctive camera movements and framings); a geographical road trip across different landscapes (from Paris and its suburbs, to the Massif Central, to the Midi and the Mediterranean in *Pierrot le Fou*); a journey across historical time (from the French Revolution to Gaullist weekends in *Weekend* itself); or through a criss-crossing and interpenetration of different filmic and art historical genres and modes (*Passion*). Thus *Le Mépris* features a German director—Fritz Lang playing a fictionalized version of himself—filming an adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* at Cinecittà in Rome for an American producer, Jeremy Prokosch, played by *film noir* icon Jack Palance. Godard's own film features an all-star French cast (Brigitte Bardot and Michel Piccoli) and is replete with references to several other films—Lang's own *Rancho Notorious* and *M*, Minnelli's *Some Came Running*, Hawks's *Rio Bravo* and *Hatari!*, Ray's *Bigger than Life*, and Rossellini's *Viaggio in Italia*. Godard's "Lang" comes across as an old world intellectual, effortlessly dropping lines from Hölderlin, Brecht, Corneille, and Dante; in stark contrast to the somewhat crass Prokosch, who quotes from a book of banal aphorisms in order to show off his "erudition." Similarly, in *Pierrot le Fou* we find references to the thriller (*série noire*), comic strip (*bande dessinée*), *cinéroman*, journal, news clip (*faits divers*), adventure story, autobiography, and prose poem. These are in turn associated with different linguistic registers—advertising slogans, poetry, songs, and cine-journalism—to create the quintessential dialogic text. Indeed, "Godard begins with some extraordinary ballads," notes Deleuze, "from *Breathless* to *Pierrot le Fou*, and tends to draw out of them a whole world of opsigns and sonsigns which already constitute the new image."¹⁰ Equally important is that this newly descriptive power of colors and sounds allows Godard to obliterate and

re-create the cinematic object itself through a replacement of color’s purely retinal or symbolic value by the powers of the haptic, for “it is color, and the relations between colors, that form this haptic world and haptic sense, in accordance with relations of warm and cool, expansion and contraction.”¹¹ In the case of the haptic, as Brian Massumi explains, “Vision has taken up a tactile function. It has arrogated to itself the function of touch. This purely visual touch is a *synesthesia proper to vision*: a touch as only the eyes can touch.”¹²

Indeed, as Deleuze argues, “It is the tactile which can constitute a pure sensory image, on condition that the hand relinquishes its prehensile and motor functions to content itself with a pure touching.”¹³ The haptic thus forces both characters and audience to *grasp* in the very act of perceiving—often something intolerable and unbearable such as savage bloodletting and cannibalism in *Weekend*, but also the passion induced by the innocent fusion of love and labor in *Passion* or “Fritz Lang”’s god-like reinvention of both Greek myth and cinema, whereby, as Godard puts it, “The eye of the camera watching these characters in search of Homer replaces that of the gods watching over Ulysses and his companions.”¹⁴ In effect, we, as the audience, become collective visionaries of the infinite and incommensurable. In this sense, characters taking part in the trip/ballad—Camille and Paul in *Le Mépris*, Marianne and Ferdinand in *Pierrot le Fou*, Corinne and Roland in *Weekend*, the whole cast and crew of *Passion*—are often unconcerned by what happens to them in terms of fate or destiny, but act rather as descriptive agents or mediums whose sole role is to observe affective mutations and shifts in narrative focus. Thus we never really need to find out the true reason for Camille’s contempt for Paul—is it because he brazenly threw her into the arms of his predator producer, Prokosch, or because of his innate cowardice, his selling out of his artistic integrity to make enough money to “keep” his wife in luxury, effectively turning both parties into prostitutes? All that matters is that “Lang” (Godard’s diegetic stand-in) eventually realizes his cinematic vision that will long outlast the histrionics of its production. Similarly, the closing shot of the sky in *Pierrot* doesn’t really need the visual presence of the recently deceased protagonists to exude its full poetic force. Instead we hear Karina and Belmondo’s voices whispering intimately together as they alternately quote four lines from Rimbaud’s poem, “L’Eternity”: “She’s found again / What? . . . Eternity / It is the sea run away / With the sun.” In short, their subjectivity as characters has become a singularity of pure becoming, a vector moving from the microcosm of political and romantic intrigue on the French Riviera to the macrocosm of the infinite.

III. Color as a Vector of Category and Genre in *Le Mépris*, *Pierrot le Fou*, and *Weekend*

This is all well and good, but as Deleuze, echoing Bergson, also points out, “It is not enough to disturb the sensory-motor connections. It is necessary to combine the optical-sound image with the enormous forces that are not those of a simply intellectual consciousness, nor of the social one, but of a profound, vital intuition.”¹⁵ Godard achieves this by adopting the very different but also complementary methodologies of two great colorists: Velázquez and Rimbaud. It’s no accident that the opening few minutes of *Pierrot* consist of Belmondo’s Ferdinand sitting in a bathtub reading a passage on Velázquez from Elie Faure’s *Histoire de l’art*, a description that lays the groundwork for Godard’s use of color in both *Pierrot* and *Passion*, each in their own way inflected with a baroque tradition of painting. “After he had reached the age of fifty,” reads Ferdinand,

Velázquez no longer painted anything concrete and precise. He drifted through the material world, penetrating it, as the air and the dusk. In the shimmering of shadows he caught unawares the nuances of color, which he transformed into the invisible heart of his symphony of silence. His only experience of the world was those mysterious copulations which united the forms and tones with a secret but inevitable movement which no convulsion or cataclysm could ever interrupt or impede. Space reigned supreme.

“This is the theme. Its definition,” confirms Godard in a 1965 interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma*. “Velázquez at the end of his life no longer painted precise forms, he painted what lay between the precise forms.”¹⁶

This dictum is restated in literary terms by Ferdinand, the would-be novelist, later in the film when he addresses the camera and imitates the raspy intonations of the iconic actor Michel Simon: “I’ve found an idea for a novel. No longer to write about people’s lives . . . but only about life, life itself. What goes on between people, in space . . . like sound and colors. That would be something worthwhile. Joyce tried, but one must be able, ought to be able, to do better.” Velázquez thus sets the chromatic tone for the whole film, marking a shift from flatness (typical of *Le Mépris*, where it is exacerbated by Godard’s use of Cinemascope, and *Weekend*) to depth, from planes to spaces. In *Pierrot*, only the vapid cocktail party is filmed in flat perspective, where the camera follows Ferdinand laterally as he passes from vignette to vignette, advertising slogan to advertising slogan, while

Passion’s entire *mise-en-scène* is devoted to the construction of theatrical *tableaux vivants*, whereby the natural centrifugal tendencies of cinema as a movement-image are in tension with the centripetal properties of the internal painterly frame, for as André Bazin reminds us, “The picture frame polarizes space inwards.”¹⁷

However, this focus on spatiality is not a totalizing effect. Instead, Godard’s interest in Rimbaud serves to scatter the color references throughout all four films to produce a deterritorialized affective resonance that forces the viewer to grasp different colors in different sets and series of relations. The key text here is Rimbaud’s poem “Voyelles,” which takes the form of a manifesto of synesthesia, creating a correspondence of sensations between media that impact directly on the perceiving body: “I invented the color of the vowels!” states the poet in his “Délires II” (“Ravings”). “— A black, E white, I red, O blue, U green — I regulated the form and movement of each consonant, and, with instinctive rhythms, I flattered myself that I had invented a poetic language accessible, some day, to all the senses.”¹⁸

In *Le Mépris*, this scattering of colors can even take place within a single shot, where it takes on the category of both the intra-diegetic, where it feeds narrative progression between and across difference series, *and* the extra-filmic. Designed to be a commercial film for Carlo Ponti based on Alberto Moravia’s novel *A Ghost at Noon*, Godard’s original choices for Camille and Paul were Kim Novak and Frank Sinatra. Ponti demurred, preferring Italian stars Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni, both of whom were unacceptable to the director, who was looking to parody international co-productions by creating a diverse mish-mash of national cinema icons. The impasse was finally broken when Brigitte Bardot showed an interest in the project. Now everyone was delighted, according to Godard, especially the American distributor, Joe Levine, “who partly financed the whole affair and who had been guaranteed by Ponti that the film would be ‘very commercial.’”¹⁹

Although Ponti was satisfied with the first cut, Levine felt the film was too artistic and lacked commercial viability. “Ponti then asked me to add a scene,” recalled Godard. “He didn’t really have any idea what kind of scene, and neither did I. All I knew was that I couldn’t do it, and I told him: ‘Take my name off the credits and do what you want with it.’”²⁰ Time passed, the Americans complained about financial losses and demanded two more scenes, including one with Bardot and Piccoli naked, which would have justified casting Bardot in the first place: “They wanted a love scene which would open the film and which, to an extent, would explain and justify the contempt.”²¹ Godard ultimately

justified the scene by shooting and editing it in such a way that it became a meta-communicative commentary on the nature of commercial film-making itself, in effect turning Levine's exploitative demands against themselves:

Under other conditions, I would have refused this scene; but here, I shot it in a certain way, using certain colors—I used a red lighting, and then a blue lighting so that Bardot would become something else, so that she would become something more unreal, more profound and more serious than simply Brigitte Bardot on a bed. I wanted to transfigure her, because the cinema can and must transfigure reality.²²

Thus, against a soundtrack of George Delerue's low, murmuring strings, we see Camille through a red filter, sprawled naked across Paul, showing off the ample curves of her back and buttocks. She then proceeds to inventory her body parts, asking Paul if he likes her ankles, knees, thighs, ass, and so on (dialogue which Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin will self-reflexively recycle nine years later in *Tout Va Bien* as Jane Fonda and Yves Montand—the film's generic "Her" and "Him"—chat while walking alongside a river, shot in "natural" color). Paul responds affirmatively to each question until she asks, "Shall I get on my knees?" suggesting that she's using Paul to "direct" her, as if she were acting in a film. Godard then lifts the filter so that we see the couple in full color for the first time. The camera starts a slow pan across her body as she adds her shoulders, legs, arms, head, and face to her list, and Paul again responds affirmatively. This is followed by a blue filter (which retroactively categorizes the "natural color" that precedes it as the neutral "white" of the *Tricolore*) as the scene ends:

"Your face too."

"All of it? My mouth, my eyes, my nose, my ears?"

"Yes, everything."

"Then you love me totally."

"Yes, I love you totally, tenderly, tragically."

"Me too, Paul."

This scene is a perfect example of what Deleuze calls "colorism": "In opposition to a simply colored image, the color-image does not refer to a particular object, but absorbs all that it can: it is the power which seizes all

that happens within its range, or the quality common to completely different colors.”²³ In this case, color *is* the affect itself, a virtual conjunction of all the objects it picks up. It absorbs the spectator, the characters themselves and the situations the colors create, but it does so self-reflexively, folding sensation *and* critique together.

This use of filters is, of course, nothing new, for like many New Wave directors Godard resorts to silent film techniques to undermine conventional (read: naturalist) image-sound relations. As Joshua Yumibe points out, “In actual practice, the vast majority of silent films use applied coloring in ways that demonstrate an understanding of color and cinema not confined exclusively or even predominantly to the logic of realism. Applied coloring is most often used to create spectacular, eye-catching images of the world—examples of what Tom Gunning has termed the cinema of attractions.”²⁴ Gunning himself notes three basic chromatic processes. First, we have coloring itself: an application of color to the various figural elements of the film image, separately “coloring-in” objects like costumes, props, and décor on a labor-intensive, frame-by-frame basis. A cinematic updating of the nineteenth-century practice of coloring-in photographic prints, this method quickly became synonymous with erotic and pornographic imagery, part of the exhibitionist quality of the cinema of attractions as an exploitation of the scopophilic desires of the spectator. As Yumibe argues, “Color functions as a direct address, rupturing the scenic to project a virtual sense of physical contact with the audience, in high relief. Given how films such as Pathé’s *A Butterfly’s Metamorphosis* [where a butterfly magically transforms into a woman in costume] most often localize color upon the female body, these haptic projections are charged with eroticism.”²⁵ In modern cinema—for example, *Le Mépris*—coloring would be technologically upgraded as single-strip (Eastmancolor) and three-strip (Technicolor) processes, so that the full-color rendering of Bardot’s body would constitute Godard’s version of an erotic cinema of attractions.

Secondly, we have tinting, the most common process during the silent era, which treats a filmstrip with a single dye. According to Gunning, “The process consisted of immersing sections of a black-and-white film print into a vat containing a single color. This tinting process would then color the areas of the image that were white with the hue of the dye.”²⁶ Although the effect was clearly artificial, it was used to create “realistic” effects: thus black and red would often be used for scenes featuring fires, black and blue for nighttime sequences, black and yellow for electrically

lit interiors, while a color like lavender might be used to express a dominant “mood.” Finally, we have toning, the reverse of tinting, insofar as chemical processes were used so that the dark salts making up the images became colored. The white areas stayed white (unlike in tinting) while the blacks and grays were colored. Again, toning was used for realist effects so that blue and white became a common heightening effect for snowy landscapes or moonlight.

As one might expect, Godard’s use of tinting in *Le Mépris* was used non-realistically, the red and blue alluding symbolically to the *tricolore* (Bardot as a national cinematic icon) but also serving to de-eroticize her body as a “colorized” spectacular object. In other words, Godard uses tinting for its Brechtian alienation effect (*V-Effekt*), so that monochromatic color adds Godard’s own artistic contempt for his producer, Joe Levine, to Camille’s resistance to her reification as a series of sensate body parts, a pure object of scopophilia, whereby the sensual is circumscribed, like Paul’s writerly and intellectual creativity, by the commercial marketplace. Thus, although Levine got his desired nude scene, Godard radically dematerializes it through color separation (which acts as a kind of “edit within the shot”), transforming what might have been a sensuous long take into an intellectual discourse on reification as well as Bardot’s international status—cemented in a 1958 *Life* magazine article entitled “The Charged Charms of Brigitte”—as a “sex kitten.” More importantly, we also know that red, white, and blue are not only the colors of the French *Tricolore* (liberté, égalité, fraternité) but also, paradoxically, the colors of American imperialism, associating the shot extra-diegetically to Levine but intra-diegetically to Palance’s Prokosch—the epitome of vulgar Hollywood commercialism—who will ultimately seduce both Paul and Camille as the catalyst for the film’s thematic “contempt.”

This is further reinforced by Godard’s placement of the scene early in the film (thus, in effect, giving an impatient audience exactly what they want), between two shots that would otherwise have spatio-temporal continuity. The film opens with a shot of Prokosch’s secretary/translator Francesca Vanini (Giorgia Moll) walking along a street on the Cinecittà lot. As she approaches the camera, she is in turn being filmed by Godard’s cameraman, Raoul Coutard, who tracks alongside her until she reaches the foreground of the shot. Coutard then points the camera at us, the audience, before we cut away to the nude scene. It’s only after the latter that we cut back to Francesca and realize that Coutard is actually framing a reverse angle shot of Paul as he approaches the camera in turn and

greet Francesca. In retrospect we realize that the nude scene has been inserted into the diegesis in a seemingly arbitrary manner, upsetting the narrative continuity to both appease and ridicule Levine’s desire for an exploitation scene.

This more categorical logic of sensation—after all, as Godard acknowledges, “I don’t know whether or not you can ‘see’ contempt or scorn. Perhaps one can only capture the instant during which it exercises its force—after a certain gesture, after a misunderstanding”²⁷—is fused with a form of involuntary memory in *Pierrot le Fou* when, early on in the film, Marianne and Ferdinand drive late at night to her apartment. Godard has the passing street lights play on their faces in alternating red, yellow, and green arcs, a concrete example of the transformation of cinematic language into pure chromatic poetry. “When you drive in Paris at night, what do you see?” asks the director. “Red, green, yellow lights. I wanted to show these elements but without necessarily placing them as they are in reality. Rather as they remain in the memory—splashes of red and green, flashes of yellow passing by. I wanted to recreate a sensation through the elements which constitute it.”²⁸ These sensations serve to splinter and scatter the logic of narrative unity. A coherent internal monologue is lost, personal or collective unity is shattered into stereotypes, clichés, ready-made formulas, taking away the outside world and the interiority of characters in the same deconstruction. In addition, the play of lights transforms the portrait-like quality of the characters’ faces—which in conventional film language act as an affective signifier of love and romance as well as unified subjectivity—into a form of disjunctive collage, a singularity lacking a coherent center. Angela Dalle Vacche sees this as an example of Godard’s iconophobia (which we already noted in terms of the film’s ending, whereby the visual register featuring Marianne and Ferdinand gives way to Rimbaud’s poem and the empty canvas of a blank sky and a colorless sea). As she puts it, “As a text *Pierrot le Fou* is thin, because its storyline develops in a chaotic manner, and thick, because it is crowded with allusions, and Godard’s oscillation between these two extremes of all or nothing are in line with the workings of collage. There, many fragments accumulate, create density, while any sense of centering is lost.”²⁹ The film could have developed into any number of genres—love story, adventure, gangster film, comedy—but complete disintegration is kept at bay because there are series that adhere to their own self-contained differences. “Godard is interested in images that disclose feelings,” argues Dalle Vacche, “and collage, by

virtue of its accumulation of fragments and lack of hierarchy, generates a dynamic that emphasizes contrasts in textures, tones, and shapes and thus evokes what is not there, or what simply exists in an intangible, unrepresentable manner.”³⁰

In many ways collage is Godard’s visual formula for extracting images from the trap of representation and its corollary, realism (and its corresponding clichés). As Deleuze poses the question, “What is an image which would not be a cliché? Where does the cliché end and the image begin?”³¹ A possible answer lies in the fact that each sequence is independent and stands alone in relation to what came before and after, even in *Le Mépris* where the spatio-temporal integrity of the nude scene is broken into separate, color-coordinated series by the red, white, and blue filters. Color helps to break the contextual, signficatory trap of cliché because it is no longer used metaphorically or figuratively, thereby losing its function as a unifying trope. When *Cahiers du Cinéma* noted that “There is a good deal of blood in *Pierrot*,” Godard famously replied, “Not blood, red.”³² Deleuze agrees, noting that “the formula in *Weekend*, ‘It’s not blood, it’s red,’ signifies that blood has ceased to be a harmonic of red, and that this red is the unique tone of blood. One must speak and show literally, or else not show and speak at all.”³³

This is why color is now the vehicle of genre and category rather than sensory-motor linkages and character interiority or exteriority. “If we are looking for the most general formula for the series in Godard,” states Deleuze, “we should call every sequence of images *in so far as it is reflected in a genre* a series. An entire film may correspond to a dominant genre, as *Une femme est une femme* does to musical comedy, or *Made in USA* does to the strip cartoon. But even in this case the film moves through sub-genres, and the general rule is that there are several genres, hence several series.”³⁴ In this respect, Godard’s self-reflexive genres—each of his films, à la Brecht, is an object lesson in the filmmaking process—are genuine categories through which the film is forced to pass. Categories—which are never fixed but reinvented for each film as a new set of problems—can be words, acts, things, people, and most pertinently for this essay, colors. Deleuze confirms that “colors themselves can fulfill the function of categories. Not only do they affect things and people, and even written words; but they form categories in themselves: red is one in *Weekend*. If Godard is a great colorist, it is because he uses colors as great, individuated genres in which the image is reflected.”³⁵ More importantly, as in the case of Braque and Picasso’s use of fragments from newspapers and posters in their Cubist collages, these categories also embrace language itself as a plastic as well as a signifying form.

IV. Color as Language, Language as Color: The Tricolore, Petrolglyphs, and US Imperialism

In contrast to the primacy of red in *Weekend*, both *Le Mépris* and *Pierrot* are marked by the recurring motif of the *Tricolore*—red, white, and blue. In addition to the filters that serve to demarcate the nude scene in *Le Mépris*, Camille and Paul’s apartment is dominated by white walls and blue and red furnishings. Initially, Camille is largely associated with red, from her towel as she readies to take a bath to the red couch that she decides to sleep on following her initial estrangement from her husband. Red also links her to Prokosch, through his Alfa Romeo, and to their untimely death in the car crash at film’s end, as well as the singer chosen to play Nausicaa (Homer’s manifestation of unrequited love) who wears a red dress during her audition. Paul, in contrast, is associated with blue, manifested in the furnishings at Prokosch’s villa when he finally announces that he is quitting the production to focus on his true love, the theater. This also links him to the vivid blue ocean and sky that dominates the final shot of “Lang”’s *Odyssey* (a point-of-view shot of Ulysses’s gaze when he first sees Ithaca, his homeland, on his return)—making Paul something of a Homeric hero himself. As Francesca points out, “You aspire to a world like Homer’s. You want it to exist, but unfortunately it doesn’t.” “Why not?” insists Paul. “It does.” Moreover, “Lang”’s own vision (at least as it is constructed by Godard)—namely the harmony of mankind with nature through the artifice of cinema poetry—suggests that for Godard at least, dreams are more than enough when it comes to making a movie.

In *Pierrot le Fou*, we see the actual French flag flying on the boats moored in Toulon Harbor but also chromatically in the neon lettering of two inter-titles—CINÉMA and RIVIERA, where VIE or “life” is extracted by being depicted in white. It constitutes the color scheme of Marianne’s apartment—blue and red furnishings against a white wall, but also the blood-stained body of the corpse lying on her blue bedspread—as well as the colored filters that saturate the opening party sequence where all the guests speak in advertising slogans. Only the film director Samuel Fuller—like Lang in *Le Mépris*, playing a fictionalized version of himself as one of the party guests—is given the full panoply of colors as he proclaims on the nature of cinema itself: “Film is like a battleground. Love. Hate. Action. Violence. Death. In one word, . . . Emotion.” As Richard Dienst comments on this scene,

“Emotion” would have to be the common force of all imaginary movements: it is what happens whenever images are drawn together, and in that sense “emotion” always brings

both the prospect of unification as well as the threat of disorientation and uncertainty. Emotion makes you feel alive only by opening your borders to the energies of other lives: in this sense, it would be a mistake to take your emotions personally, as though these sensations related only to you: in the moment of emotional transport, there sparks an image.³⁶

Blood as red is largely associated with Marianne (whose name is also the national emblem of France and the allegorical personification of Liberty and Reason—another *Tricolore*), who wears a red dress while on the run and a red skirt when she dies. The corpse in her bedroom—skewered through the neck with a pair of scissors—is reprised with the similar fate of her dwarfish captor at the film's end, as well as the red streak across her face after she is shot by Ferdinand. The latter—like Paul in *Le Mépris*, the thoughtful man of letters—is mostly associated with blue, although it may also be the color of bruises, as the blue hues of a Picasso print jut into the frame as he takes a savage beating from the gun-running thugs. However, these categories are also reversible: Marianne wears a blue bathrobe in her apartment before the arrival of the gangsters, Ferdinand's torturers cover his face with Marianne's red dress while he is water-boarded in a hotel room, and at the end of the film he paints his face blue before wrapping it with dynamite and impulsively committing suicide. Similarly, red street lights play across his face in a later car sequence, while Marianne is streaked with blue, and they are also matched with similar colored cars during the final chase. As Dalle Vacche rightly argues, "*Pierrot le Fou* derives its aura of mystery from the fact that colors tell a story the characters are never aware of or quite in control of. This is especially true of the use of blue as a shifting marker of approaching death, male identity, and national origin."³⁷

In this sense Godard cleverly uses Rimbaud's "Voyelles" less for their synesthetic properties (a harmonic fusion of language with colors and sonic rhythms à la Kandinsky) than as an expression of affective disorder. As Rimbaud himself once put it in an 1871 letter to his mentor, George Izambard, "I'm lousing myself up as much as I can these days. Why? I want to be a poet, and I am working to make myself a *seer*: you won't understand this at all, and I hardly know how to explain it to you. The point is, to arrive at the unknown by the disordering of *all the senses*. [Il s'agit d'arriver à l'inconnu par le dérèglement de *tous les sens*]."³⁸ This relates directly to *Pierrot's* party sequence where Ferdinand (tinted blue as a harbinger of his death as well as his creativity) describes his fragmented self by stressing how the categories of image, sound, word, and color have

taken on a collage-like autonomy that resists harmonic closure: “I have a mechanism for seeing, called eyes, for listening, called ears, for speaking, called mouth. I’ve got a feeling they are all going their separate ways.” Equally significant is that the one primary color omitted by Rimbaud in his catalog of corresponding vowels—yellow—is the primary hue of the first layer of dynamite that Ferdinand ties to his head at the moment of his suicide, suggesting that there is always an excess of category that cannot be neatly classified and tied to an Aristotelian world order.

As we saw with the opening of *Le Mépris*, Godard invariably associates the French *Tricolore* with the colors of US imperialism and the director takes great pains to locate key scenes in all four films in petrol stations, usually MOBIL, TOTAL, and ESSO, whose logos are also red, white, and blue. Thus in *Le Mépris*, Prokosch fills up with petrol at a Mobil station before his fatal car crash where, significantly, his Alfa Romeo is crushed between two petroleum tankers, as if to underline the fact that Hollywood lives and dies by its own capitalist sword. The Rimbaud-like splintering of letters into color-connected equivalents also allows Godard to create a form of *petrolglyph*, whereby the SS from ESSO at the end of the Vietnam War agit-prop “Mimodrame” performed by Marianne and Ferdinand becomes an association of US global imperialism with the evils of the Nazi Schutzstaffel. At first glance this bears a certain affinity to Situationist *détournement* strategies, which often entailed the appropriation of images from well-known advertising campaigns but replacing the commercial text with more subversive Marxist aphorisms on the nature of the spectacle. However, as Alan Williams points out, “Godard does the reverse: he takes ‘found’ advertising texts and puts them in the context of new images. This includes the ironic visual context of images dominated by red, white, or blue—not just the colors of the French flag, but of the United States as well. Such, the film seems to imply—ironically—is true patriotism.”³⁹ Interestingly, the diegetic film company filming “Passion,”—VTF or Vidéo Télé France—also has a *Tricolore* petroleum company style logo that allows Godard to tie the film financing process itself—as in *Le Mépris*—to the global hegemony of corporate America. Clearly, as Deleuze notes in relation to Proust, “The work of art is born from signs as much as it generates them; the creator is like the jealous man, interpreter of the god, who scrutinizes the signs in which the truth *betrays itself*.”⁴⁰

Godard exploits this semiotic “self-betrayal” in an early sequence in *Pierrot* where Ferdinand holes up in Marianne’s apartment prior to their road trip to the Midi. On the wall we see a painted rendering of the word “OASiS,” the “OAS” highlighted in blue and the “iS” depicted in red. The idea of an oasis as a safe haven is cleverly undermined by the

acronym O.A.S. alluding to the “Organisation armée secrète” (Secret Army Organization), a right-wing dissident paramilitary group who organized terrorist attacks against the Algerian National Liberation Front and organized an assassination attempt against De Gaulle in 1962 (the subject of Frederick Forsyth’s book, *The Day of the Jackal*). Color thus links the scene temporally to the political intrigue and gun-running to come (including Marianne’s cynical betrayal of Ferdinand) but also connects the film generically to Godard’s own Algeria-related *Le Petit Soldat* (1960), which also starred Anna Karina. As Thomas Odde sums up the use of language in *Pierrot*, “Wit and reference inscribe the effects of war across the surface of the screen. Protean figures and letters shuffle in maddening arrays of allusion, writing in the image, figure, and speech. Esso, SS, ‘OASiS,’ ‘S.O.S.,’ O.S.S., Espresso, *Ossessione*, and so on establish a world constituted by incessantly metamorphosing forms and explosions of sense.”⁴¹

The use of red in *Weekend* is similar to its use in *Pierrot*, particularly in the scattered references to “blood as red” in the plethora of car crash victims that litter the ballade, as well as the battered corpse of Roland after he is shot and disemboweled by the FLSO terrorists. We see it also in the red smeared face of the dying “marginale” Valerie that eerily conjures up the similar image of the deceased Marianne in *Pierrot*. Red is also used as a fashion statement, linking the chic clothes of the bourgeoisie with the leather jackets, bandanas, and accessories of the terrorists in the forest, creating an indelible link between the revolutionary counterculture and 1960s fashion. Equally important is *Weekend*’s use of red as its own constructed form of the real. As Robin Wood notes in an early exegesis of the film, there are some things that are never shown in commercial (i.e., non-pornographic) cinema, most notably actual copulation and real death. “Godard as far as possible shows us things really happening, and happening in real places,” notes Wood. “But you can’t yet show people actually copulating on the screen, and you can’t have the actors actually killed. So you either don’t show it, or stick to your principle of showing only what is real: not a corpse, but an actor covered with red liquid (we are even allowed to watch one of the corpses in *Weekend* breathing).”⁴² Instead, at least in the 1960s, you *could* show the real deaths of real animals, namely the actual slaughter of a pig and goose in *Weekend* following the inter-title SEPTEMBER MASSACRE as a stand-in for human carnage. Similarly, the brutal murder of Corinne’s mother is suggested by pouring washes of red liquid over the corpse of a skinned rabbit that she has just killed. Godard makes no effort at realism here—the spurts come indiscriminately from both sides of the screen—but the effect is extremely disturbing nonetheless. We know that it’s “just” a dead rabbit (although

no “mere” stand-in from the perspective of animal rights), and we know it’s not real blood but red liquid, and that no actor has been harmed, but the phenomenological combination creates a new category of affect. The haptic drives a wedge between what we know and what we feel to create a third space that defies easy categorization, beyond the dialectic between real and unreal, fiction and documentary, animal and human.

V. *Passion* and the Being of Sensation: The Tableaux Vivant as Painterly Blocs of Affect

In many ways, *Passion* is the apotheosis of these developments in Godard, a film which directly takes up the emotional gauntlet thrown down by “Samuel Fuller” in *Pierrot le Fou*. Released in 1982, the film revolves around two main intertwined narratives that are marked by considerable discontinuity and fragmentation. The first is a film within the film—also called “Passion”—where Godard’s creative stand-in, the émigré Polish filmmaker Jerzy (Jerzy Radziwilowicz), attempts to stage and film history paintings as magnificent *tableaux vivants*. The second is that of Isabelle (Isabelle Huppert), a laid-off factory worker who attempts to start a collective strike against her former boss, Michel Boulard (Michel Piccoli), in solidarity with contemporary events in Poland. Jerzy acts as a fulcrum between all parties as he is simultaneously having an affair with Isabelle and Boulard’s wife, Hanna (Hanna Schygulla). For Deleuze, *Passion* is an important culmination of the developing “opsign” and “sonsign” in Godard, for although it starts out as a powerful tract on the politics of the image—despite being two billion francs over budget, Jerzy rails against Hollywood, corporate interests, and the film’s producer, who, like Prokosch in *Le Mépris*, is only interested in a bankable plot or storyline—

the aesthetic force is powerfully brought out for its own sake in *Passion*: the free build-up of pictorial and musical images as *tableaux vivants*, whilst at the other end the sensory-motor linkages are beset by inhibitions (the stuttering of the female worker [Isabelle] and the boss’s cough). *Passion*, in this sense, brings to its greatest intensity what was already taking shape in *Le Mépris*, when we witnessed the sensory-motor failure of the couple in the traditional drama, at the same time as the optical representation of the drama of Ulysses and the gaze of the gods, with Fritz Lang as the intercessor, was soaring upwards.⁴³

Like Lang's role in *Le Mépris*, Godard's alter ego expresses his own creative artistic dilemma: the film is beset by endless problems—romantic entanglements, cast and crew demanding unpaid salaries, factory girls striking against their exploitation as extras—but worst of all, everybody wants to know the story. What is their part about? What is really going on in the film? But Jerzy, like Godard, isn't interested in stories, only painterly affects and categories. Instead he devotes endless hours trying to capture the right light for his *tableaux vivants*. Accompanied by the music of Mozart, Dvořák, Ravel, Beethoven, and Fauré, and inspired by great paintings, he reproduces living recreations of Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, Goya's *The Third of May*, Delacroix's *Taking of Constantinople by the Crusaders*, El Greco's *Immaculate Conception*, as well as a composite Turkish bath scene by Gérôme. In art historical terms Jerzy's project is not unlike the Renaissance practice of "stylistic eclecticism," a form of synthetic or critical imitation that was a key feature of Raphael's workshop in the early sixteenth century and highly valued by Vasari in his seminal *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. Art historian Robert Williams's account of Raphael's practice is eerily close to Jerzy's cinematic objectives: "He combines what he can of the outstanding qualities of the artists he admires, and this synthesis forms the basis of his mature style. Raphael establishes his artistic identity by borrowing and reintegrating elements from the work of others; in so doing he brings painting to 'complete perfection' (*intera perfezzione*). The style he achieves is more than a personal style in the usual sense; it is something like a super-style or meta-style."⁴⁴

Yet while Raphael's synthetic imitation is conceptually grounded in the principles of "decorum," a rational and idealist correspondence between all possible images/signs and all possible objects in the world as an ideal mode of being, Jerzy's combination of Rembrandt, Goya, Delacroix, El Greco, and Gérôme seems to be eclectic in the extreme, tied together more by affect and sensation than classical reason or virtue (Plato's *arete*). One is reminded of Joshua Reynolds's more pan-historical approach to painterly style, whereby,

To find excellencies, however dispersed, to discover beauties, however concealed by the multitude of defects with which they are surrounded, can be the work only of him, who having a mind always alive to his art, has extended his views to all ages and to all schools; and has acquired from that comprehensive mass which he has thus gathered to himself, a well-digested and perfect idea of his art, to which every thing is referred. Like a sovereign judge and arbiter

of art, he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both from what is great, and what is little; brings home knowledge from the East and from the West; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind and enriching his works with originality, and variety of inventions.⁴⁵

The *tableaux vivants*’ passion lies both in the affect of pure light and color, as well as Jerzy’s own suffering in attempting to find the connections that will link the tableaux into a modicum of artistic coherence. As one might expect, it’s not the money men but the crew members as cinematic craftsmen who have the best insight into the nature of the incommensurable image. “Don’t scrutinize the frame of the sketches,” notes one of the crew (Patrick Bonnel) concerning *Night Watch*, as we cross-cut with Isabelle working in the factory, as if to underscore the vital connection between kinesthetics and manual labor. “As Rembrandt did, just carefully look at the human beings. Look at their eyes and lips.” Then cinematographer Raoul Coutard adds: “No story. Everything is perfectly lit from left to right, slightly from top to bottom and from front to back. This is not a *Night Watch* but a day watch, lit by the setting sun.” In short, bodies rebound off each other, defined by the space of the scenery. “In *Passion*,” notes Deleuze, “each body not only has its space, but also its light. The body is sound as well as visible. All the components of the image come together on the body.”⁴⁶

Given Jerzy and Godard’s predilection for non-motile “sonsigns” and “opsigns” in making the tableaux “come alive,” Rembrandt (with his propensity for materiality) is perhaps a less suitable aesthetic model than Francis Bacon, the subject of Deleuze’s explication of “The Logic of Sensation.” The key term in this case is the Figure, which is not to be confused with *figuration*, for as Daniel Smith succinctly puts it,

Whereas “figuration” refers to a form that is related to an object it is supposed to represent, the “Figure” is the form that is connected to a sensation, and that conveys the violence of this sensation directly to the nervous system. In Bacon’s paintings, it is the human body that plays this role of the Figure: it functions as the material support or framework that sustains a precise sensation. This is Bacon’s solution to the problem he shares with Cézanne: How to extract the Figure from its figurative, narrative, and illustrational links? How to “paint the sensation” or “record the fact”?⁴⁷

For Deleuze, the Figure (as a process of both extraction and isolation) and Abstraction constitute the two key structural strategies for avoiding the relational contrast between specific objects and images. In Michel Serres's terms, they behave more like parasites or "the included middle," disrupting the binary logic between sets and series. The Figure allows the artist (and filmmaker) to capture sensations and render visible otherwise invisible forces so that they become both immediate and perceptible, acting directly on the viewer's body. This may seem like an odd statement in relation to such a cerebral filmmaker as Godard, but his films invariably conjure up thought from the sensate rather than the reverse. Thus, following artists like Cézanne and Bacon, Godard substitutes the new, more haptic trajectory of the isolated Figure that links tableaux as a series of "impressions," what Cézanne appropriately calls *sensation*: "The figure is sensible form related to a sensation; it acts immediately upon the nervous system, which is of the flesh, whereas abstract form is addressed to the head and acts through the intermediary of the brain, which is closer to the bone."⁴⁸

Of course, sensation doesn't produce itself: it requires *work*. Thus, although Jerzy is convinced that his tableaux have failed because the lighting is all wrong, they are ultimately brought alive through a form of aesthetic re-categorization in reference to the very act of labor and production. In this respect Isabelle, the virgin factory worker, is Jerzy's complementary other, because she manifests the ideal of the unity of love and work: "Love and pleasure are the same," she avers. "In labor and love making, the same gestures are involved. It's not necessarily the same rhythm, but the gestures are the same." Once again, this returns *Passion's* aesthetic rubric to Raphael's workshop, which gave great privilege to the "labor value of art," for as Williams points out,

It sets art upon what might be thought to be the true ground of its significance, that is, the work necessary to produce it, and to provide the best possible basis for an understanding of what that work means in the context of human life. To ground art in relation to the work of the individual craftsman is to open it to consideration in economic-historical terms, on the one hand, providing us with a clear sense of the kinds of challenges artists face and the significance of the choices they make, but also—as this very formulation makes us recognize—in intellectual and moral terms: indeed, it is to provide a way to set the economic and the

moral in integral relation to one another, to emphasize *the fundamentally moral content of labor*.⁴⁹

The consummation of Jerzy and Isabelle’s affair at film’s end, intercut with the filming of a vibrant chromatic tableau of El Greco’s *Immaculate Conception*, allows Godard to juxtapose images of Isabelle with the Virgin Mary as the former recites the *Agnus Dei*. Her innocent advocacy for the dignity of work-as-pleasure is thus married to the apotheosis of the sublime, not in a Kantian sense, but as pure hapticity—both affective (as color), spiritual (as religious quotation), moral (as labor), and intellectual (as genre and category). In this instant, color acts as a link between two worlds—immanent/material and the unrepresentable. As Nadine Boljkovac argues in relation to similar tendencies in Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, “The problem . . . is not one of appearances but of ‘inconspicuous perceptions’ that make visible the invisible, the interstice, the *between* two images.”⁵⁰ Godard places the visible at its limit of the invisible, yet at the same time as an affect that can only be seen, and speech at the limit of the unspeakable that can only be spoken (in this case sung). For Deleuze and Guattari, writing in *What Is Philosophy?*, this being of sensation, this series or bloc of percept and affect, appears as the unity of feeling and the felt—an intimate intermingling like clasped hands. In short, it is a sensation that manifests itself in the flesh, for

it is the *flesh* that, at the same time, is freed from the lived body, the perceived world, and the intentionality of one toward the other that is still too tied to experience; whereas flesh gives us the being of sensation and bears the original opinion distinct from the judgment of experience—flesh of the world and flesh of the body are exchanged as correlates, ideal coincidence.⁵¹

In the world of Godard, light and color *are* the story because they are sensation made incarnate.

As we noted in the Introduction, in many respects *Passion* is Godard’s solution to a problem that he first laid out in an October 1967 interview with the editors of *Cahiers du Cinéma* in which he admitted his desire to get *inside* the image rather than be kept on the outside as an objective, disinterested observer. “In most film,” he argued, “you’re kept on the outside, outside the image. I wanted to see the back of the image, what it looked like from behind, as if you were in back of the screen, not in front of it. *Inside* the image. The way some paintings give you the feeling

you're inside them. Or give you the feeling you can't understand them as long as you stay outside them."⁵² Godard noted that Antonioni's *Red Desert* gave the audience the feeling that the colors were *inside* the camera, as opposed to his own *Le Mépris* where they're always in front of it: "You're convinced it's the camera that makes up *Red Desert*. In *Le Mépris*, there is the camera, on the one hand, the objects on the other, outside it. I don't think I'd know how to make up a movie like his."⁵³ Clearly, by the time of *Passion* he had learned the technical ropes, strangely enough by combining innovative Renaissance painterly techniques borrowed from Raphael's workshop with Cubist collage as well as an adherence to his old adage from *La Chinoise*, that "one must confront vague ideas with clear images." It's perhaps a fitting end to this essay on the different connective vectors of category and genre that we are able to link Raphael to a fictional Maoist cell at Nanterre in 1967, via the common attribute of color as sensation without so much as the blink of an eye.

Colin Gardner is Professor of Critical Theory and Integrative Studies at UCSB where he teaches in the departments of Art, Film & Media Studies, Comparative Literature, and Art History. He is the author of critical studies on Joseph Losey and Karel Reisz for Manchester University Press and Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event: Peephole Art for Palgrave Macmillan. He is co-editor of two anthologies with Professor Patricia MacCormack (Anglia Ruskin University): Deleuze and the Animal (Edinburgh University Press, 2017) and Ecosophical Aesthetics (Bloomsbury, 2018).

NOTES

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Professor Robert Williams of UC Santa Barbara, internationally renowned art historian and Raphael scholar, whose insights into synthetic imitation and the connection between aesthetics and labor were a major inspiration for the last section on Godard's *Passion*. R.I.P. Bob.

1. Jean-Luc Godard, cited in James Monaco, "Godard, Jean-Luc," in *World Film Directors, Volume Two: 1945–1985*, ed. John Wakeman (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1988), 396.
2. See Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," in *Film Genre Reader*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 26–40.
3. For a further discussion of category in Aristotle and Bergson, see Dorothea Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 17–18.
4. Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel, *The Athenaeum*, fragment 206, cited in Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Continuum, 2008), 36.
5. James Roy MacBean, *Film and Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 153–4.
6. Jacques Bontemps, Jean-Louis Comolli, Michel Delahaye, Jean Narboni, and Jean-Luc Godard, "Struggle on Two Fronts: A Conversation with Jean-Luc Godard," *Film*

- Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (Winter 1968–1969): 32. The interview was first published in *Cahiers du Cinéma* 194, October 1967.
7. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 183.
 8. Deleuze, xi.
 9. Deleuze, xi.
 10. Deleuze, 9.
 11. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 111.
 12. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 158.
 13. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, 12.
 14. Jean-Luc Godard, “*Le Mépris*,” *Cahiers du Cinéma* 146, August 1963, in *Godard on Godard*, ed. Jean Narboni and Tom Milne (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 201.
 15. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, 22.
 16. Jean-Luc Godard, “Let’s Talk About Pierrot,” *Cahiers du Cinéma* 171, October 1965, in *Godard on Godard*, 224.
 17. André Bazin, “Painting and Cinema,” in *What Is Cinema?*, trans. and ed. Hugh Gray, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 166.
 18. Arthur Rimbaud, “*Délires II*,” in *Collected Poems*, trans. Oliver Bernard (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), 327.
 19. Yvonne Baby, “Shipwrecked People from the Modern World: Interview with Jean-Luc Godard on *Le Mépris*,” in *Focus on Godard*, ed. Royal S. Brown (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972), 37.
 20. Baby, 37–8.
 21. Baby, 38.
 22. Baby, 38.
 23. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 118.
 24. Joshua Yumibe, *Moving Color: Early Film, Mass Culture, Modernism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 7.
 25. Yumibe, 79.
 26. Tom Gunning, “Applying Color: Creating Fantasy of Cinema,” in *Fantasia of Color in Early Cinema*, by Tom Gunning, Joshua Yumibe, Giovanna Fossati, and Jonathon Rosen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 17.
 27. Baby, “Shipwrecked People,” 39.
 28. Godard, “Let’s Talk About Pierrot,” 234.
 29. Angela Dalle Vacche, *Cinema and Painting: How Art is Used in Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 108–9.
 30. Dalle Vacche, 111.
 31. Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, 14–15.

32. Godard, "Let's Talk About Pierrot," 217.
33. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, 182–3.
34. Deleuze, 184.
35. Deleuze, 186–7.
36. Richard Dienst, "The Imaginary Element," in *Jean-Luc Godard's "Pierrot Le Fou,"* ed. David Wills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 31–2.
37. Dalle Vacche, *Cinema and Painting*, 119.
38. Arthur Rimbaud, "Letter to Georges Izambard," in *Collected Poems*, trans. Oliver Bernard (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), 6.
39. Alan Williams, "Pierrot in Context(s)," in *Jean-Luc Godard's "Pierrot Le Fou,"* ed. David Wills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 56.
40. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 98.
41. Thomas Odde, "The Children of Marx and Esso: Oil Companies and Cinematic Writing in 1960s Godard," in *A Companion to Jean-Luc Godard*, ed. Tom Conley and T. Jefferson Kline, (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 238.
42. Robin Wood, "Godard and *Weekend*," in "*Weekend*" and "*Wind from the East*": *Two Films by Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 6.
43. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, 10.
44. Robert Williams, *Raphael and the Redefinition of Art in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 7.
45. Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Stephen O. Mitchell (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 89.
46. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, 193.
47. Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze on Bacon: Three Conceptual Trajectories in The Logic of Sensation," introduction to *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, by Gilles Deleuze, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xiii–xiv.
48. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 31.
49. Williams, *Raphael and the Redefinition of Art in Renaissance Italy*, 173–4.
50. Nadine Boljkovac, *Untimely Affects: Gilles Deleuze and an Ethics of Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 118.
51. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 178.
52. Godard, "Struggle on Two Fronts," 32.
53. Godard, 32.