



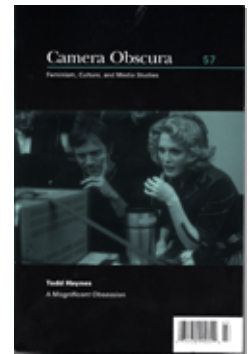
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Mourning, Sound, and Vision: Jean-Luc Godard's JLG/JLG

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Mourning, Sound, and Vision: Jean-Luc Godard's *JLG/JLG*

Nora M. Alter

Where is your authentic body? You are the only one who can never see yourself except as an image.

—Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*

I know now that if I make a picture it's just to speak about what I'm doing, about myself, but it's also giving something to other people so that they can take a part of me.

—Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics*

The shrill and raucous call of a crow is superimposed over an unpopulated, barren country field marked by a path leading into the horizon. Not only is the crow conspicuously absent on the screen, but its sounds are conspicuously disjunct, too loud to be part of the landscape. This sequence, sometimes with the muttering voice of the narrator superimposed, is repeated at irregular intervals throughout Jean-Luc Godard's *JLG/JLG—Autoportrait de décembre* [JLG/JLG—Self-portrait in December] (France, 1994). But how are we to interpret it? Is it primarily a visual, pictorial image of a now lifeless place? Or does the sequence prioritize the audial track, presenting a warning cry, or a portent? I want to suggest that, consistent with much of Godard's work, this sequence

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does not hierarchize the aural and the visual. On the contrary, it fuses the two together as a sound image or rebus, and it is in this way that the sequence makes sense.

But my aim in singling out this part of the film is not to insist on its symptomatic layering. Instead I want to emphasize first the salience in both the audial and visual tracks of a pervasive funereal quality; second, the indexicality of a path that leads elsewhere and a sound that comes from somewhere else; and third, the manner in which this sequence epitomizes the overall project of *JLG/JLG*. I will not try to gloss these matters here; instead, I will move directly to the context of the film, and more specifically, its particular relationship to Godard's overall body of work.

Jean-Luc Godard has consistently been viewed as one of the main practitioners and theorists of an alternative or counter-traditional narrative cinema. His experiments with representations of history, truth, and fiction, media such as video, television, and film, as well as techniques such as collage and montage, and the interplay between sound and image tracks have led some to position him as "resolutely postmodernist."¹ Simultaneously he has been characterized as the "ultimate survivor of the modern."² No matter how he is identified, though, what cannot be disputed is the importance of Godard's cinematic and video production in breaking new ground in representation and in creating new forms. And he has not slowed down. Following his political and highly experimental work with the Dziga Vertov group in the early 1970s, and his creation with Anne-Marie Miéville of the Sonimage workshop in the late 1970s, Godard today continues to search for new strategies of image production and consumption. In particular, he has experimented with video technology, with the interchange between video and 35mm film, and especially with how each of these media affects the representation of history, politics, and the self.

History has always been important for Godard, and his products of the late 1980s and early 1990s reinforce this significance. A case in point is his ongoing project *Histoire(s) du cinéma* [Histories of cinema], commissioned in 1988. Conceived with the approaching centennial of cinema in sight,³ this project is

based on the premise that, for a history to be “true” (any history, but a fortiori cinema’s), it must be constructed not out of “illustrated texts” but from “images and sounds”: *son+images*.⁴ The result, as well as the later *Allemagne 90 neufzéro* [Germany 90 nine zero] (1991), are richly layered palimpsests—collages of images and sounds. In these two films, the articulation of political, technological, and cultural history is ruthlessly simple: the death of cinema and the death of communism are intimately related; indeed, in a strange sense presented as “the same.” What is striking in both of these films is that Godard constructs a new formal style of image production, one that raises montage to a new level. He further complicates his theory of history by problematizing the role of the individual subject position or actant. Whereas in *Allemagne 90 neufzéro* this appears in the character of Lemmy Caution and the philosopher “Siegfried,” in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* it is the shadowy figure of Godard with his voice-over dominating the soundtrack that guides the viewer through the barrage of images. In each instance, though, these characters are on the margins.

By contrast, in *JLG/JLG* the figure of the director, Godard, is the main focus in this hour-long self-reflexive study of the relation of the directorial “I” to image production, consumption, and history. But here, a word of caution, for despite the film’s autobiographical claim, already evident in the title, we must remain skeptical of the project, recalling Paul de Man’s warning that “just as we seem to assert that all texts are autobiographical, we should say that, by the same token, none of them is or can be.”⁵ The film at once synthesizes the themes and problematics of Godard’s earlier works (the history of cinema, distinctions between art and culture, the role of the individual, and, in more general terms, the vicissitudes of Western civilization), while at the same time presenting Godard’s theory of visuality and film today. Furthermore, like many of his recent works, *JLG/JLG* presents a constant self-referencing and intertextual dialogue with Godard’s entire oeuvre—thus a film about JLG is also a film about JLG’s films. But what are the characteristics of the category of self-portrait for Godard? How are we to understand this self-representation in *JLG/JLG* with the consubstantial presence of Godard in and as

text?⁶ And to what extent is *JLG/JLG* in excess of the genre of self-portrait? I want to argue that Godard attempts to fuse the written/graphic genre (autobiography) with the visual genre (self-portrait), subtending both with a third mode: aural representation of an acoustic self.

In contrast to the innovative collage and montage visual experimentations and techniques of the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* video project, in *JLG/JLG* Godard returns to a more linear mode of visual exposition. But the innovative complexity of Godard's films continues in the aural track of *JLG/JLG*, in which the representation of the self is rendered through a world of sounds, indicative of Godard continuing to fundamentally mistrust visual imagery (not a just image, just an image) and to privilege the aural.

That Godard decides to feature himself prominently in one of his films comes as no surprise, since his work anticipates this almost from the outset of his career. Indeed, he appears as an actor as early as his second film, *Une Femme coquette* (1955), and subsequently plays the informer in *A bout de souffle* [Breathless] (1959), the director's assistant in *Le Mépris* [Contempt] (1963), Vladimir in *Vladimir et Rosa* [Vladimir and Rosa] (dir. Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, France and West Germany, 1970), and the institutionalized film director "Uncle Jean" in *Prénom: Carmen* [First name: Carmen] (1983). Yet another celebrated example of the insertion of his physical body into his films is his contribution to the 1967 omnibus production *Loin de Vietnam* [Far from Vietnam], where, filmed behind a movie camera, he directly addresses the audience as "Godard the director," discussing the frustrations and limits of the role of cultural worker within world politics. It is important to stress, however, that although Godard is immediately recognizable as himself in these films, he is still playing consciously scripted fictionalized roles. What is just as important, though rarely noted, is Godard's predilection to cast the individual in world history both as fictional character and representative self. In *Loin de Vietnam*, for instance, and again in *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*, Godard presents a surrogate for himself as author/intellectual/writer accompanied by an attendant female muse. And even if he does not appear

corporally or by proxy as image, his (disembodied) presence is easily recognizable in films such as *Une histoire d'eau* [A history of water] (1958), *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* [Two or three things I know about her] (1966), and *Pavada* (1969). For, as Kaja Silverman insightfully notes, authorial subjectivity is inscribed into the cinematic text not only in the iconic representation of the author (here Godard playing himself), but also in the voice-over.⁷ As evidenced by the never-realized project *Moi, je* [Me, I], Godard already had designs of making a film about himself as early as 1973. Furthermore, in *J.L.G. Meets W.A.* (1986) (where W.A. is Woody Allen), Godard uses the initials *J.L.G.* to designate himself, and *Helas pour moi* [Oh woe is me] (1994) has been received as a semiautobiographical meditation on his life and work. But *JLG/JLG* is Godard's first unabashed attempt to represent himself filmically. The overlapping of the iconic presence of Godard (as author/director/actor) with an aural track of speech indexically pointing to the author/director induces the spectator/reader/listener to (mis)believe the veracity of the autobiographical claim: We see him and hear him, ergo the information presented must be true. But one of the root claims of Godard's oeuvre is that cinema is a "dream machine," an industry based on ideology, sleight of hand, and phantasmatic projection. His *autoportrait*, I am suggesting, is one of these projections no less for his than for our awareness of the fact.

From a slightly different perspective, many of Godard's earlier films, though not explicitly signed as such, are (or can be read as) autobiographies. In this sense, it is as if Godard's films enact Nietzsche's sly remark that even (indeed, especially) when writing a biography one is actually being autobiographical, that one is, in effect, all the names of history. Godard does, after all, locate the "political" in relation to highly personal and subjective projects, at one point going as far as to assert that "the real 'political' film that I'd like to end up with would be a film about me."⁸ This is a striking statement, one that is made only more complex by such later proclamations as the following from a 1988 interview in the Socialist newspaper *Libération*. While François Truffaut may have affirmed an "auteur politics," Godard states polemically,

“Today, all that we have left is the term ‘auteur.’” And yet, continues Godard, “what was interesting was the term ‘politics.’ Auteurs aren’t important.”⁹ But how, one may ask, do politics figure in this essay of self-(re)presentation?

Always one to play with traditional genres and to push them beyond their limits, in *JLG/JLG* Godard at once evokes the literary/philosophical genre of autobiography and the *autoportrait*, or self-portrait, category of painting.¹⁰ Indeed, Godard seems to privilege the latter, since he subtitles his film “Autoportrait de décembre” while the book version does not contain this subtitle.¹¹ Furthermore, toward the end of the film he stresses, “Autoportrait pas autobiographie” [Self-portrait not autobiography].¹² But in a seeming contradiction he also argues that “le papier blanc est le vrai miroir de l’homme” [blank paper is the true mirror of man].¹³ To be sure, *JLG/JLG* is set up like a book, opening with ruled lines of a schoolboy’s ledger upon which various words and phrases are scrawled, among others the months of the French Revolution, when there was an attempt to radically alter the order of things. And the pages are turned as the film progresses, culminating in a series of blank pages at the end. However, earlier in the film Godard explains, “Si J.L.G. par J.L.G. il y a que veut dire ce par J.L.G. il s’agira de paysages d’enfance et d’autrefois sans personne dedans et aussi de paysages plus récents où ont eu lieu les prises de vues.” [If J.L.G. by J.L.G. there is, what does this “by J.L.G. mean?” It will concern childhood landscapes both of yesteryear with no one in them, and also more recent ones where things are filmed.]¹⁴ Thus the filmed landscape plays as much a role in personal identity and memory as anything else, something that is further emphasized later in the film, when Godard notes that the word “nation” in French (*pays*) is contained within the French word for “landscape” (*paysage*).¹⁵ In short, for Godard the concept of landscape is loaded with meaning in terms of forming or constructing the social, cultural, historical, political subject.¹⁶ And it is in this sense that the link between national identity and cultural product (filmed landscapes) is forged, a connection that resonates with Godard’s pronouncements on national cinema, such as the following: “I think

cinema was the identity of nations, of peoples (who were more or less organized as nations), and that since, this has disappeared.”¹⁷

Forgoing the more flexible video technology, *JLG/JLG* is made in traditional 35mm film. It opens with the sound of a telephone ringing against a blank screen. As a poorly illuminated room comes into focus, the accompanying soundtrack is of children’s voices at play, followed by the credits. The first voice we hear is Godard’s, imitative of a breathless and wheezing Lemmy Caution in *Alphaville*, muttering as if to himself these opening words: “Exercice 174, procéder la distribution des rôles, commencer les répétitions, résoudre le problèmes de mise en scène, régler soigneusement les entrées et les sorties, apprendre son rôle par coeur, travailler à améliorer son interprétation, entrer dans la peau de son personnage.” [Cast the roles. Begin the rehearsals. Settle the problems concerning the direction. Perfect the entrances and exits. Learn your lines by heart. Work to improve your acting, get under the skin of your character.]¹⁸ And as an early childhood photograph of Godard slowly appears on the screen, ultimately filling the entire frame, he switches his tone of voice, now acting out the clichéd role of an old man ruminating on his youth in the third person. In this scenario, we recognize Godard’s disguised voice, but simultaneously are aware that he is playing a role. This slippage between fact and fiction, reality and simulacrum, is not surprising in Godard. On the contrary, it has characterized his work from its inception—a characteristic which may in part be explained by Godard’s “essayistic” mode of filmmaking. And just as the essay film challenges the generic categories of fact and fiction, so does autobiography. Indeed, we have come a long way since Philippe Lejeune’s initial search for a fixed definition of “autobiography”—one predicated on a heuristic contract that promises to deliver the “truth.”¹⁹ In opposition to this, today autobiography is commonly seen as exemplifying irreducible tensions between a lived life *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, and self-created fiction(s) of a narrating self or selves.²⁰ In this sense, instead of trying to determine whether or not this is the “real,” it may be more productive to adapt Paul de Man’s argument that “autobiography is not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading

or understanding that occurs, to some degree in all texts.²¹ This is, I am arguing, something that certainly takes place in Godard's *JLG/JLG*.

In this complexly edited film, Godard meticulously constructs a richly layered aural palimpsest—one could even say a mystic writing pad. Quotations from philosophers and writers as diverse as Hegel, Stendhal, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Bernanos, and Giraudoux are juxtaposed with film clips and sound tracks from Godard's own films, as well as from classics such as Nicholas Ray's *Johnny Guitar*, a rich classical music sound track, and paintings, primarily of courtesans, by, among others, Velázquez, Boucher, Fragonard, Courbet, Manet, and Schiele. Amid the multitude of images and sounds, several major themes gradually emerge. At one point, the director, JLG, is visited by the "contrôleurs du centre du cinéma" (cinema center inspectors). At another, in the ultimate ironic gesture, JLG hires a blind woman to edit his films intuitively.²² Vision is thus completely undermined in relation to other senses. But while the film never lapses into randomness, it never totally resolves itself either; instead, it teases the viewer along cresting waves of delirium, and just when one feels utterly overwhelmed and about to drown, a partially delineated current spins one toward a new thematic connection.

The film is a labyrinth. One is continually confronted by the work of reading, listening, viewing, deciphering, and searching. Throughout, interior shots of Godard's residence in Rolle, Switzerland, are intercut with landscape shots of a vast field, Lake Geneva, and a rough-hewn path that leads into the woods. As JLG aimlessly wanders on a spit in the lake—a more solitary walker than Rousseau—the exterior changes seasons. In one of the final scenes, set in winter, he encounters an old woman in black on a path that is said to lead nowhere: Heidegger's *Holzweg*. This crucial image or trope, evoked by Godard in such earlier projects as *Histoire(s)* and *Allemagne* both visually and as writing across the screen—"chemins qui ne mènent nulle part" [woodcutter's paths that lead nowhere]—is Heidegger's postwar trope for authentic, noninstrumental thinking in the fallen age of technology.²³ But

Godard has refunctioned this scene into an allusion to filmmaking as noninstrumental art, what he calls the exception, versus instrumental production culture—the rule. “Il y a la culture,” JLG maintains in a crucial segment of the film, “qui est de la règle qui fait partie de la règle. Il y a l’exception qui est de l’art qui fait partie de l’art.” [Culture is a question of rules. It is part of the rules. Exception is a question of art. It is part of art.]²⁴ And he goes on to list elements of the rule: cigarettes, computers, T-shirts, television, tourism, and war. The segment ends with the high modernist statement that it is part of the “rule to want the death of the exception.”

In this connection it is as interesting as it is revealing to note the relatively vast array of media introduced by Godard in the film. This array ranges from photography (the film, after all, begins with the conventional autobiographical formula of the photo of the author as a young child), to painting, graphics, written text, video technology, and more. Indeed, in *JLG/JLG* we can see a product exemplary of what Rosalind Krauss, expounding on the theories of Michael Fried and Thierry de Duve, refers to as a “post-medium age” in which individual media implode “into a single continuum.”²⁵ Alternately, though, we can begin to understand why Godard opted for 35mm film as the medium through which to represent himself if we follow Jameson’s argument that “whenever other arts are foregrounded within a film—and, generally visual, those can range from video to cuneiform, or, as here, from theater to painting—what is at stake is always some implicit formal proposition as to the superiority of film itself as a medium over these disparate competitors.”²⁶ For we cannot fail to observe that despite *JLG/JLG*’s extensive referencing of other media, it still seems that Godard stands by his candid response to Colin MacCabe that the only way to counter the “structures of television” is “to make movies.”²⁷ Which leads one to question just exactly what it is about the filmic medium that, even (or especially) for Godard in its death throes, still retains a superiority over all the other media?

But film is not the only medium whose death is being mourned in *JLG/JLG*—it also laments the “death of writing.”

Indeed, the argument that we are moving from a literate society to one dominated by the image also runs through the film. And though cinema has often been cited as instrumental in this shift, arguments for the structural and syntactical similarities between the novel and cinema have been advanced by Marshall McLuhan and numerous others. In this respect, the autobiographical film can be considered part of the legacy of the literary genre of autobiography. And, by extension, Godard's film therefore also constitutes an investigation of the death of literature.²⁸ Interestingly, in what appears to be an effort to combat this occurrence, Godard publishes a print version of his film. He thereby firmly binds his film to literary creation through the publication of the screenplay, strengthening its position as a film for a literate audience.

Heavily scripted, Godard's autobiographical essay is also a philosophical reflection on the reproductive medium of film, a preemptive performance of film criticism—a contemporary adaptation of Schlegel's famous dictum: "A theory of the novel should itself be a novel." In this sense, *JLG/JLG* challenges the institution of criticism as it inhibits and resists scholarly discourse, always already appearing to have done the critic's work. Surely, it is in this way that one can properly begin to understand Godard's claim that since his departure from narrative film he has considered cinema as primarily "an instrument of thought."²⁹

It is unnecessary to spell out the structural relationships between Godard's *son+image*—a type of aural collage consisting of repeated or overlapping film clips, written or spoken poetry, philosophy, high and low literature, as well as paintings and visual citations functioning as rebus—and concepts such as Walter Benjamin's "dialectical image" or Gilles Deleuze's "image-events." But, true to his nature, Godard does not always "footnote" his original sources, preferring to fuse them into his own sounds and images. (The book *JLG/JLG* gives a few citations in the form of proper names at the back.) Regarding Godard's ubiquitous literary and philosophical allusions, the implied "reader" of *JLG/JLG* indeed seems required to possess a lycée, gymnasium, or British public-school education that is barely accessible in the United States or elsewhere, and is shrinking fast even in Europe. As such,

Godard addresses at least two audiences: those who are in the know, who will recognize the references, and those who will not.

It may be a category mistake, ultimately, to decode and identify every single reference, allusion, and “image” (visual or auditory) in Godard’s videos and films. Although the scholarly temptation may be real, and even pleasant, this pursuit is something of a red herring in the case of Godard’s play with allusions, which are at once playful but also exert their influence rationally and affectively. By the same token, even without trying to grasp completely the intertextual clarification of Godard’s every allusion, it is important to understand his basic structure of appropriation. Can intertextuality produce a pure *son+image*? Can a pure *son+image* produce indeterminacy? We get a glimpse of Godard’s response to such questions in a key section of *JLG/JLG*. Discussing image production, Godard presents a theory of montage in which the realities put together have to be both “lointains et justes” [distant and right].³⁰ If these elements do not have any relationship to each other, Godard suggests, then an image will not result. Godard then goes on to assert that it is not “brutale” or “fantastique” elements that will make an image powerful. Rather, a strong image is one in which “l’association des idées est lointaine, lointaine, et juste” [the association of ideas is distant, distant, and right].³¹ In a further sense, too, Godard maintains that this idea of montage is not one that is found only in the realm of visual imagery, but one that encompasses the aural realm as well. Thus the shrill sound of the crow against the barren, rough-trodden landscape at once alludes to Van Gogh’s last painting, *Wheatfield with Crows* (1890), while referencing the squawk of the crow in *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*.

By design, then, Godard’s resulting *son+image* is impossible to fully absorb or comprehend at one viewing. Raymond Bellour’s 1992 observation in “(Not) Just an Other Filmmaker,” that in Godard’s films generally there are “four modalities that link text and speech to image, but also divide them,” is applicable to *JLG/JLG*.³² According to Bellour, the first modality is “the book circuit,” the frequent shots of books as physical objects, including Godard’s personal library. Here, the “book is the object in

hunt-the-slipper: you can hold certain moments of it, which you hold out to the other, your partner, as the spectator. You can expect a sort of grace from it, which is always deferred, since the real belief is the image—before which the text is lacking.”³³ Second, there is “quotation, issuing from books on this side and beyond: on this side to mark how references spontaneously exercise memory and the body, like available traces; beyond, to create impalpable dissociations—to contain, to veil the image as such, which is at once too simple, excessive, immediate, and out of reach.”³⁴ Third, there is another modality of textuality, Godard’s patented privileging of “text over image, ready-made texts—ads, signs, graffiti—all foregrounded by the framing of the image.”

And finally there are all the voices: those of the book and of quotation, and those of all the characters from whom Godard’s voice stands out more and more frequently and insistently. But all share with his voice the singularity of always addressing the spectator, at least somewhat—even when talking to a partner, whether on- or offscreen. Thus, they constantly double the film with a critical layer that isn’t commentary, since the voices remain engaged in the fiction. But the fiction is based, as much as or more on plot, on an analysis of the condition of fiction, the conditions of a possible (hi)story, in the context of images and sounds.³⁵

In this respect it is certainly interesting to note that one of the subtexts of *JLG/JLG* is to problematize vision and visuality generally. At one point in the film, Godard cites from Wittgenstein’s *On Certitude*: “Si un aveugle me demandait as-tu deux mains ce n’est pas en regardant que je m’en assurerais oui je ne sais pas pourquoi j’irais faire confiance à mes yeux si j’en étais à douter oui, pourquoi ne serait-ce pas mes yeux que j’irais vérifier en regardant si je vois mes deux mains.” [A blind man asks me: Do you have two hands? Looking at my hands would not reassure me. I do not know why I would trust my eyes, if I were in doubt. Yes, why wouldn’t I check my eyes by looking at whether I see my two hands?] ³⁶ This is followed by Diderot’s letter to the blind. And, complicating things even further, one of the last sequences of *JLG/JLG* ends with the blind film editor. Godard instructs her to count the frames manually, while he describes the scenes to

her. Cutting and editing is therefore left to chance, the operative principle of an avant-garde legacy that can be traced as far back as Stephane Mallarmé's late-nineteenth-century poems. Here we might recall Jacques Derrida's observation in *Memoirs of the Blind* that a "hand is the very memory of the accident."³⁷

At one point in the film Godard asks the blind woman to listen and identify a particular sound track. Perceptively, she replies that "c'est un film qu'on n'a encore jamais fait," to which he responds, "Vous dites vrai mademoiselle, c'est un film que personne n'a vu." ["It is a film that hasn't been made yet." "You speak the truth, Miss, it's a film which no one has seen."]³⁸ Thus, in a complete inversion of the traditional production of film in which the image precedes the superimposition of the sound track, the viewer, like the blind woman, is presented with a film that exists only as a sound. Revealingly, despite her blindness, the woman adds that we are constituted by the visible, for it is the "visible qui est là-bas est simultanément mon paysage" [how the visible over there is also my landscape].³⁹ As Derrida notes, "Every time a draftsman lets himself be fascinated by the blind, every time he makes the blind a theme of his drawing, he projects, dreams, or hallucinates a figure of the draftsman or sometimes, more precisely, some draftswoman."⁴⁰ Likewise, Godard, the draftsman of the passing art of cinema, invokes the blind draftswoman and links her drawing to memory and mourning. For only blindness is capable of adequately penetrating mourning, piercing right through it as if interposing a mirror. Additionally, observes Derrida, "in the case of the blind man, hearing goes farther than the hand, which goes farther than the eye."⁴¹ And let us not forget that it is acoustic memory and self that Godard composes.

It is in this scene with the blind woman that several disparate threads come together, linking the problem of visibility in an age of spectacle with the death of cinema. These threads produce tension between a certain skepticism on the one hand, and a glimmer of hope in the possibility of providing an alternative cinema on the other, one that will carry cinema into the twenty-first century. Just as *Histoire(s) du cinema* is an ongoing project to which Godard refers as the last version of art as a "shroud," or

“piece of mourning,” for, and of, cinema, so too *JLG/JLG* inhabits this same quasi-Hegelian dusk of the end of art. And yet in *JLG/JLG* there is an interesting reversal to this funereal tone. Whereas mourning usually follows death, in his case it is the opposite: “Chambre noire, j’ai porté le deuil d’abord mais la mort n’est pas venue, ni dans les rues de Paris, ni sur les rivages du lac de Genève, lanterne magique.” [*Darkroom*. I first put on mourning, but death never came, neither on Paris’s streets, nor on Lake Geneva’s shores. *Magic Lantern*.]⁴² By framing this sentence with the camera and magic lantern—handwritten in the ledger book—Godard simultaneously produces an eulogy and an elegy not only for himself and cinema, but, even more ambitiously, for the history of Western civilization. Thus Godard intones over a photo of himself as a child, “J’étais déjà en deuil de moi-même” [I was already in mourning for myself]⁴³—where “self” includes, as always for Godard, an entire social and historical formation.

To see and to hear is to leave oneself momentarily, not always to return to one’s point of departure, indeed not necessarily to return at all. Toward the end of the film, Godard muses: “Le passé n’est jamais mort, il n’est même pas passé, moi, j’ai autant de plaisir à être passé qu’à ne pas être passé.” [The past is never dead, it hasn’t even passed. Yet I am as happy to be passed as not to be passed.]⁴⁴ In this sense, *JLG/JLG* threatens to become a traditional creation or insurance of Godard’s own immortality. As he puts it, “Il faut que je devienne universel” [I have to become universal].⁴⁵ Here we might recall a passage from de Man’s “Autobiography as Style” that uncannily evokes the elegiac tone of *JLG/JLG*: “Death is a displaced name for a linguistic predicament, and the restoration of mortality by autobiography (the prosopopeia of the voice and the name) deprives and disfigures to the precise extent that it restores. Autobiography veils a defacement of the mind of which it is itself the cause.”⁴⁶ If for Barthes a photograph of a person is spectral, a hauntology if you will, then Godard’s tack is to insert himself, his mortal corpse, into the history of film, playing an abstract role that will be substantiated in the ongoing project of *Histoire(s) du cinéma* and that acts as a leitmotiv in *Allemagne 90 neuf zero*.

Put simply and assertively, death is the dominant theme in *JLG/JLG*. For, as Godard reminds us, his own mortality is wedded to that of film, and with the passing of the latter comes his own. Thus, the man who once described film as “truth at twenty-four frames a second” now merges into a medium that has proven to be as ephemeral as life. With death, of course, comes mourning, a solitary act of deep contemplation. As already implied, despite the brief appearance of other characters, *JLG/JLG* is a solitary meditation. In fact, I would go further and claim that although Godard surrounds himself with an audiovisual world rich with texts, this very populated space is also an excruciatingly lonely place. Indeed, “solitude” is a red thread in many of Godard’s works,⁴⁷ as he often reflects on how ultimately “history is made” from a solitary position. And *JLG/JLG*, which ends with the words “un homme rien qu’un homme et qui n’en vaut aucun mais qu’aucuns ne valent” [a man, nothing but a man, no better than any other, but no other better than he], is no exception.⁴⁸

In view of the emphasis I have placed on the autobiographical elements of *JLG/JLG*, it is important to note that Godard himself tries to preempt this categorization by insisting that “si J.L.G. par J.L.G. il y a que veut dire ce par J.L.G., il s’agira de paysage d’enfance.” [If J.L.G. by J.L.G. there is, what does this “by J.L.G. mean?” It will concern childhood landscapes.]⁴⁹ And yet *JLG/JLG* is often wrongly referred to by critics as *JLG by JLG*.⁵⁰ To which Godard objects: “There is no ‘by’ . . . If there is a ‘by’ it means it’s a study of JLG, of myself by myself and a sort of biography, what one calls in French une examination de conscience [an examination of consciousness and/or conscience], which it absolutely is not. That’s why I say *JLG/JLG* Self Portrait. A self-portrait has no ‘me.’ It has a meaning only in painting, nowhere else. I was interested to find out if it could exist in [motion] pictures and not only in paintings.”⁵¹ The reference to painting as a medium is prevalent in Godard’s films. Pictorialist scenes and the reproduction of paintings are featured in works as diverse as *Pierrot le fou* (1965), *Passion* (1982), *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro* (1991), and *Histoire(s) du cinema* (1989).⁵² This fascination with the painterly medium has led Godard to propose fusing painting

with cinema, and to refer to himself as a “painter of letters.”⁵³ We get a glimpse of the underlying reasons for this interest in an interview with MacCabe where Godard remarks, “Sometimes I prefer to look at faces or at things in paintings because I can look longer and there are more things to see than in a picture.”⁵⁴ But the question of the difference between self-portraiture and autobiography is still an open one, as is that of the similarities and differences between these two modes of presenting the self.

The first and most obvious difference between a self-portrait and an autobiography is within the medium itself. On the one hand, autobiography is a form of writing—a writing of the self—the self created through a linguistic system. On the other hand, a self-portrait is an image of the self, a pictorial or sculptural recreation of the self. But we have yet to account for how the filmic or video self fits in, especially in films such as Godard’s where the graphic plays such a dominant role. Here, once again, we can fruitfully turn to the structure of painting to begin to understand Godard’s mode of working. As he notes,

What I like in painting is that it’s a bit out of focus and you don’t care. In cinema you can’t be out of focus, but if you add dialogue, if you show that in pictures, this kind of look at reality, then between your very focused cinematographic image and the words there is a land that is out of focus, and this out of focus is the real cinema.⁵⁵

Hence there is a perpetual though elusive presence of an aleatory gap between, and within, images and sounds that can be controlled and those that cannot. Godard’s recent works, for instance, neither reproduce the “actualities” of the mass media nor create a pure fiction; instead, they operate in the gaps, in the “betweenness” of both. The sound enters between the visual gaps and vice versa. Thus new images and/or concepts are created in the resulting audio-visual collage—images and/or concepts adequate to the multiplex historical and technological event.

The second important difference between the genres of self-portraiture and autobiography involves the element of temporality. Autobiography implies the study of a life over time, the

reordering and the retelling of a narrative of one's life, situating it across a trajectory of space and time. A self-portrait, by contrast, is inherently static and timeless, an icon frozen within a certain space and time. Stasis. And as such, it is not fortuitous that *JLG/JLG* is an essay film, a category of cinema that, among other things, is very "writerly." Alexandre Astruc, one of the early promoters of the essay film, introduced the notion of a *caméra-stylo* (camera-stylus) that would, in his words, "break free from the tyranny of what is visual, from the image for its own sake, from the immediate and concrete demands of the narrative, to become a means of writing, just as flexible and subtle as written language . . . more or less literal 'inscriptions' on images as essays."⁵⁶ And Godard has certainly incorporated actual written or graphic inscriptions throughout his oeuvre, leading some to refer to him as the "consummate essayist."⁵⁷ Additionally, the essay film is further linked to the genre of autobiography by the term *essay*. For *essay* comes from Latin *exagium*, which means "weighing" or "assaying" and entails "to attempt an experiment"; in addition, *essay* is also related to the notion of conscious human agency, as in *agent* (via Latin *ex-agere*). Hence there is a link to autobiography as an open-ended experiment that is part objective assessment, part subjective projection, part consensual hallucination.

Let me now turn to an investigation of the sound track in order to bring out one of the most obvious differences (aside from the visual images) between the filmic and the written autobiography. (Hypertext will also reorient autobiography in this direction technologically, though it will not necessarily change the basic philosophical and hermeneutic problematic.) In *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*, Barthes, the subject/object, addresses the inadequacy of the written text to represent his voice: "I try, little by little, to render his voice . . . but I fail to find any such thing, so great is the gap between the words which come to me from the culture and this strange being (can it be no more than a matter of sounds?) which I fleetingly recall at my ear."⁵⁸ Here we might recall that sound, for Godard, is at least as crucial as the visual image. He dubs his work *sonimage* to play on several connotations: sound image, his image, or meaning/sense image. This has led

critics, such as Dragonetti, to refer to the primacy of music in Godard's films of the 1980s as "legame musaico, implying both mosaical and musical."⁵⁹ The importance of the sound track for Godard resonates from as early as his first film, *Opération béton* (1954), an otherwise traditional documentary about the construction of a dam that is supplemented with the nonsynchronic music of Bach and Handel. And the 1961 production, *Une femme est une femme*, [A woman is a woman] plays against the conventions of the movie musical.

The year 1967, however, marks a watershed for Godard's experiments with the sound track. In *Week-end*, the visuals are subordinated to the soundtrack,⁶⁰ and in *Le Gai Savoir* [Joyful wisdom] (1967), there is no plot relationship between sound and image at all.⁶¹ Furthermore, *Un film comme les autres* [A film like any other] (1968) is marked by the indecipherability of the simultaneous French/English soundtrack. In *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics*, Colin MacCabe presents a plausible interpretation of the problematic of tension between the sound and audial track manifest in Godard's films of this period. He notes that in traditional cinema there is "a fixed relation of dependence between soundtrack and image whether priority is given to the image, as in fiction films (we see the truth and the soundtrack must come in line with it) or to the soundtrack, as in documentary (we are told the truth and the image merely confirms it)."⁶² According to MacCabe, Godard attempts to subvert this traditional relationship and instead puts the soundtrack in direct contradiction to the visual/image track. Accordingly, he links this to the influence of Maoist politics on Godard at the time and sees the following five films made while Godard was working with the Dziga-Vertov Group as illustrating this ideology: *British Sounds* [See you at Moa] (dir. Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Henri Roger, France, 1969), *Pravda* (dir. Jean-Luc Godard, Paul Burron, Jean-Pierre Gorin, and Jean-Henri Roger, West Germany, 1969), *Vent d'est* [East wind] (dir. Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Pierre Gorin, and Gérard Martin III, France/Italy, 1969), *Lotte in Italia* (dir. Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, Italy/France, 1969), and *Vladimir and Rosa*. However, MacCabe goes on to argue that

although Godard firmly denies the possibility of a correct image, it is evident that he believes in the possibility of a correct sound: “The films persistently pose the existence of a correct sound and a new relation between sound and image which would produce the correct image to accompany it.”⁶³ As such, sound becomes a corrective or a means to rectify the visual track in these early investigations. Though it can be said that Godard abandoned his practice of making overtly political films, he continued with his sound experiments. It is in this context that, after leaving the Dziga-Vertov Group, he formed with Anne-Marie Miéville the Sonimage workshop in Grenoble.

By and large, Godard’s problematization of the sound track continues to become more ambitious and complex. For example, in *Prénom: Carmen* (1983), he initially wanted the entire film to be an actual quartet. At around the same time, Godard starts adding to and inserting his old film soundtracks into his new films. *Le Livre de Marie* (1984), for instance, features sections of the soundtrack from *Le Mépris*, as well as scenes from the latter. Perhaps the most complex of his experimentations with the soundtrack is *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*, which was awarded the Osello d’Oro award for sound at the 1991 Venice Film Festival. Symptomatic of his films during this period, the soundtrack produces various different levels of signification and reference through multiple layers of sensory source and recipient, subconscious and conscious perception, textual and intertextual referent, fictional and historical facts, and, ultimately, biographical and autobiographical traces.

But I want to return to how the themes of death and mourning are imbricated into the soundtrack of these recent films and *JLG/JLG* in particular. Provocatively subtitled “A Self-Portrait in December,” *JLG/JLG* is described by Godard on the dust jacket notes as “phrase unité du discours partie d’un énoncé généralement formé de plusieurs mots ou groupe de mots dont la construction présente un sens complet phraser jouer en mettant en évidence par des respirations le développements de la ligne *mélodique*” [phrase-unit of the discourse, fragment of an enunciation of a statement usually composed of several words or groups

of words, the structure of which presents a full meaning that is segmented and played out while stressing with the rhythm of breathing the development of the linear *melody*].⁶⁴ Indeed this stress on musical composition has been perceived by theorists such as Theodor Adorno as an integral part of the genre of the essay.⁶⁵ *JLG/JLG* is in essence a requiem, including musical tracks by Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Stravinsky, and other late romantics spliced in with Schoenberg. In this connection, it is insightful to consider Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe's coupling of the autobiographical compulsion to musical obsession in "The Echo of the Subject."⁶⁶ Via a detour through Freud, Abraham, Reik, Mahler, Wagner, and Nietzsche, Lacoue-Labarthe postulates that the autobiographical compulsion is discernible in the audial before its specularly in the visible. Significantly, especially in the context of the present argument, Lacoue-Labarthe relates the impulse to autobiography to the practice of mourning—a phenomenon he calls "catacoustic," a kind of "inner echo":⁶⁷ "Music, then, primes; it sets off the autobiographical gesture. Which is to say, as well, the theoretical gesture."⁶⁸ However, these gestures are set off and sustained by a prelinguistic spark, one "not strictly speaking . . . of the order of language."⁶⁹ The deep audial nature of autobiography is posited by Lacoue-Labarthe as a protoform of "otobiography," another way of telling the Derridian biography of the ear. He refers to autobiography as "allothanatography," arguing that "the biography of the dead other is always inscribed in an agon—a struggle to the death. . . . every autobiography is in its essence the narrative of an agony, literally."⁷⁰ And this term returns us to Godard, for whom mourning, death, haunting, melody, and "rhythm would also be the condition of possibility for the subject."⁷¹ Which is to say, the uncanny subject of the self-portrait: subject to it as well as of it, its servant as well as its purported director, for the ultimate director of a film of life is death.

In the form of a conclusion, let us come to terms with just exactly what it is that Godard is mourning. For one thing, it is clear that he is in mourning for himself. For another, there is a mourning of the specter of cinema. Additionally, there is a felt loss for the possibility of art that pervades *JLG/JLG*. But toward

the end of the film Godard introduces a new issue, a new layer, that of the European community (EEC), and the concomitant death of Europe. When he asks his maid, whom he misnames Adrienne, if she fears unemployment, she replies that she does not because “Monsieur [Jaques] Delors a dit hier à la télévision que l’Europe allait construire de grandes autoroutes informatiques il y aura du travail.” [Delors said on television yesterday that Europe will build huge computer highways. There will be work for everyone.]⁷² Godard responds in turn with a citation from de Tocqueville, “Les grands brigandages ne peuvent s’exercer que chez de puissantes nations démocratiques où le gouvernement est concentré en peu de mains et où l’état est chargé d’exécuter d’immenses entreprises” [Great piracy can occur only in powerful democratic countries, where the government is run by few, and where the State is responsible for immense enterprises].⁷³ For Godard, then, with the European community and the GATT accord all culture becomes a commodity or merchandise. Let us not forget that part of his “audit” in the film is conducted by a central film-control board, whose sole voice itemizing his life work is that of Cassandra. In response to her recitations he says softly, “Cassandre, Europe a des souvenirs . . . l’Amérique a des t-shirts . . . sur la convention de Berne et les accords du Gatt les film sont des marchandises.” [Europe has memories. America has T-Shirts . . . under the Bern Convention and the Gatt talks? Films are merchandise.]⁷⁴ Soon thereafter he cites from a Russian journal of 1873, twice repeating that “l’Europe est condamnée à mort” [Europe is sentenced to death].⁷⁵ Thus, by the end of *JLG/JLG*, Godard’s *paysage*, his landscape of personal memories and filmic ones, has changed. European countries are losing their individual identity, being unified as one, and on the edge of the new “European community,” what was once a unified country—Yugoslavia—has been wrenched apart in one of the bloodbaths of the 1990s. As Godard laments, “C’est alors l’art de vivre Srebrenica, Mostar, Sarajevo, oui, et il est de la règle que vouloir la mort de l’exception.” [It is thus called the art of living: Srebrenica, Mostar, Sarajevo, yes, and it is part of the rules to want the death of the exception.]⁷⁶ The perennial question returns:

What is the role of art in world history and politics? This topic is central to Godard's 1997 film *Forever Mozart*.

In mourning for a lost place and thus a bygone era, near the end of *JLG/JLG* Godard inserts a sequence from the sound track of *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*, where Lemmy Caution intones, "Pays heureux magique éblouissant, ô terre aimée où donc es-tu" [Happy, magical dazzling country, oh, beloved land, where are you now?].⁷⁷ And yet, plaintively, querulously, Godard pessimistically leaves the possibility for ultimate redemption open. For what emerges phoenixlike from the ashes of the funereal world he presents is wisdom. "La philosophie," he proclaims in both *JLG/JLG* and *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro*, in what is clearly a paraphrase of Hegel, "commence par la ruine d'un monde réel" [Philosophy begins with the ruins of the real world].⁷⁸ And as the sequence that superimposes the raucous cry of a crow onto a scene of a now barren field allegorically suggests, according to Godard that catastrophe has all but taken place.

Notes

1. Frederic Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 75.
2. Frederic Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 162.
3. *Histoire(s) du cinéma* was originally commissioned by French cable television channel Canal Plus. It was based on a lecture series given by Godard in 1977 in Montreal and published a few years later as *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma*. For a description of this project, see *Camera Obscura* 8–10 (1982): 75–88. These lectures were themselves slightly preceded by his collaborative project with Miéville, *Six fois deux/Sur et sous la communication*, a six-part video series for French television. Each program of the latter is one hundred minutes long and deals with a variety of topics related to visual culture. To date, *Histoire(s) du cinéma* consists of two one-hundred-minute parts (a total of ten parts were planned

initially), which premiered in the US at MoMA in 1989. Part I (A) is subtitled “Toutes les histoires.” Here, Godard shuttles back and forth between early Soviet cinema and the advent of Hollywood, which is compared and contrasted to Nazi and Soviet cinemas, and of television. In Part I (B), “1 Histoire seule,” he leapfrogs back to the inception of cinema is the work of photographer Eadweard Muybridge and the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière, before proceeding forward once again, this time to analyze the star/starlet system and the relation of cinema to the industrial revolutions and imperialism.

4. Colin MacCabe critiques Godard for his proposal that a sound image is inherently any truer than a visual one. See *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 59.
5. Paul de Man, “Autobiography as De-Facement,” in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 70. There are those who speak for the impossibility of transforming or translating autobiography into film or video. One argument is that film is basically a collective project with no single creator. Thus Barbara Kosta argues that “any attempt to outline the autobiographical project becomes even more misguided once autobiography is removed from its literary medium and is translated into film. For one, filmmaking is a collaborative project, and meaning is produced by multiple sources. Second, film prevents the integration of the author with her past persona. Unlike literature, film lacks the immediacy of author and protagonist because a surrogate performer stages the past self” (Barbara Kosta, *Recasting Autobiography: Women’s Counterfictions in Contemporary German Literature and Film* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994], 23 n.8). Perhaps this might be true in the case where autobiography is centered on the person and not on the oeuvre—but even that impediment has been overcome through the use of electronic imaging and manipulation. See Daniel Reeves’s video *Obsessive Becoming* (US, 1995). Less convincing is the argument put forth by Elizabeth W. Bruss, who bases her claim on a very traditional and outdated definition of autobiography, one which postulates stable categories of truth and representation; the critique that she levels against film

- could equally be leveled at written modes of textual production. See Elizabeth W. Bruss, "Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography in Film," in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 296–320. For a general overview of the autobiographical essay film, see Michael Renov, "History and/as Autobiography: The Essayistic in Film & Video," *Frame/Work* 2.3 (1989): 6–13.
6. Montaigne, in his essay "Of Giving the Lie," develops the concept of "constatantiality"—"the presence of the writer in and as text." For an examination of this term, see Julia Watson, "Toward an Anti-Metaphysics of Autobiography," in *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self-Representation*, ed. Robert Fokenflit (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984), 63.
 7. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 197–205.
 8. MacCabe, *Godard*, 23.
 9. "Godard Makes [Hi]stories," 1988 interview with Serge Daney, in *Jean-Luc Godard: Son+Image 1974–1991*, ed. Raymond Bellour with Mary Lea Bandy (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 160.
 10. Godard alternately uses *autoportrait* and *autobiographie*. For a discussion of the differences between the two terms, see Michel Beaujour, *Miroirs d'encre: Rhétorique de l'autoportrait* (Paris: Seuil, 1980).
 11. All citation in French will provide the page number from the printed text: Jean-Luc Godard, *JLG/JLG* (Paris: P.O.L., 1996). The English translations are from the video subtitles unless otherwise indicated in the notes.
 12. *Ibid.*, 76.
 13. *Ibid.*, 54.
 14. *Ibid.*
 15. *Ibid.*, 55.
 16. In *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, Hélène Cixous embarks on a project similar to Godard's. She presents herself both in terms

of autobiographical details, interviews, and photographs, as well as with multiple excerpts and citations from her earlier writings. Crucial in her presentation is the memory of the cultural and linguistic geography or topography that informs her personal landscape. See H el ene Cixous and Mireille Calle-Gruber, *H el ene Cixous: Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (New York: Routledge, 1997).

17. Jean-Luc Godard, cited by Armond White in "Double Helix," *Film Comment* 32.2 (1996): 30.
18. Jean-Luc Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 8.
19. Not by chance, Lejeune came to describe his own earlier approach as "positivist" and "elitist," dating his conversion to seeing Alexandre Astruc's essay film *Sartre par lui-m eme* (1975). See Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, trans. Katherine Leary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).
20. Thus autobiography has been theorized as "an extension of fiction, rather than the reverse, that the shape of life comes first from imagination rather than from experience" (Jerome Bruner, "The Autobiographical Process," in *The Culture of Autobiography*, 55). And summing up preceding theories, Julia Watson concludes, "Philippe Lejeune, Louis Renza, John Sturrrick . . . situated autobiography at an intersection of history and fiction, temporally complex in both its readership and its multiple 'I's" (Watson, "Toward an Anti-Metaphysics of Autobiography," 59).
21. De Man, "Autobiography as De-Facement," 70.
22. The seemingly contradictory nature of a blind director or editor is not unique to Godard: Alexander Kluge's *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die  ubrige Zeit* [The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time] (West Germany, 1985) featured a blind director.
23. Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege* (1950; Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980), iii.
24. Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 16.
25. Rosalind Krauss, "' . . . And The Turn Away?': An Essay on James Coleman," *October* 81 (1997): 5-6.

26. Frederic Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, 158–59.
27. MacCabe, *Godard*, 156.
28. For further investigations into the autobiographical film see Yann Beauvais and Jean-Michel Bouhours, “Le Je à la caméra,” in *Le Je Filmé* (Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1995).
29. Jean-Luc Godard, “J’ai toujours pensé que le cinéma était un instrument de pensée,” *Cahiers du Cinéma* 490 (1995): 70.
30. Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 23.
31. Ibid.
32. Raymond Bellour, “(Not) Just an Other Filmmaker,” *Son+Image*, 219.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 220.
35. Ibid.
36. Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 25.
37. Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and other Ruins*, trans. Ascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 16.
38. Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 69.
39. Ibid., 71.
40. Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 2.
41. Ibid., 16.
42. Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 11.
43. Ibid., 14.
44. Ibid., 77.
45. Ibid., 74.
46. De Man, “Autobiography as De-Facement,” 81.
47. MacCabe locates the emergence of a theory of solitude in “Ici et ailleurs” and “Numéro deux” (MacCabe, *Godard*, 75). Drawing from the interview “Jean-Luc” in *Libération*, part of the 1978 Godard/Miéville television series, *France/tour/détour/deux*

enfants, MacCabe concludes that for Godard we are all solitary individuals, “the lot conferred on us by biology and reinforced by society,” and that “once meaning has become fully social it ceases to be communication but becomes a repetition that binds us unknowingly in our solitude” (MacCabe, *Godard*, 153).

48. Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 81.
49. *Ibid.*, 54–55.
50. See Amy Taubin, “War Torn,” *Village Voice*, 8 July 1997, 74.
51. Jean-Luc Godard, interview with Gavin Smith, “People like to say, ‘What do you mean exactly?’ I would answer, ‘I mean, but not exactly,’” *Film Comment* 32.2 (1996): 35.
52. For an analysis of Godard’s re-creation of painting in *Passion*, see Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, 158–85.
53. James Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 396.
54. MacCabe, *Godard*, 48.
55. Jean-Luc Godard, “People like to say,” 39.
56. Alexandre Astruc, “The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La caméra stylo,” in *The New Wave: Critical Landmarks*, ed. Peter Graham (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 18–19.
57. Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 5.
58. Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 67–68.
59. Roger Dragonetti, cited in Jean-Louis Leutrat, “The Declension,” *Son+Image*, 26.
60. Dixon, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard*, 89.
61. *Ibid.*, 99.
62. MacCabe, *Godard*, 18.
63. *Ibid.*, 59.
64. My translation and emphasis.
65. Thus, Adorno observes, “The essay approaches the logic of music, that stringent and yet conceptual art of transition, in

order to appropriate for verbal language something it forfeited under the domination of discursive logic—although that logic cannot be set aside but only outwitted within its own forms by dint of incisive subjective expression” (Theodor W. Adorno, “The Essay as Form,” *Notes to Literature*, vol.1 [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], 22).

66. Philippe Lacoue-LaBarthe, “The Echo of the Subject,” in *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, ed. Christopher Fynsk (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).
67. *Ibid.*, 150.
68. *Ibid.*, 151.
69. *Ibid.*, 159.
70. *Ibid.*, 179.
71. *Ibid.*, 195.
72. Godard, *JLG/JLG*, 41.
73. *Ibid.*, 42
74. *Ibid.*, 48–49; my translation.
75. *Ibid.*, 51.
76. *Ibid.*, 19; my translation.
77. *Ibid.*, 36; my translation.
78. *Ibid.*, 37; my translation.

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