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slide: title slide

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The motoric aspect of film is not so apparent in its digital form, but is there more than ever in its contents.

Movement is everywhere, even when it is not motorised. So by motoric we mean the usually electric motors that used to turn the spools of film...

In the camera and in the projector...

...

slide: cutaway of film camera

...

by a sprocketed wheel that grabbed the strip of film in its teeth and at a constant rate slid the strip of celluloid through the gate so that it either received light or so that light gained from it the still image captured on each frame, frame by frame. The motor turning at a constant rate. And, in fact, it had to turn the film at the same rate in the projector as in the camera. If slightly off we get the jerky effect we are familiar with in old films. Sometimes because they were hand-cranked.

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slide: hand-cranked footage

...

Pre 1930 there was no standard frame-rate. At least, not one standard.

Pre 1930 framerates varied between 22fps and 26 fps.

After 1930, 24fps became standard for 35 millimetre film.

Digital film retains this standard, along with a lot of other aspects belonging to the mechanical camera. Even the virtual studio retains the idea of a camera, out of convenience. As well as lighting, and so on. To show graphically the conditions that would be achieved in the physical studio.

Playing with framerate is pretty fun. Even the 'virtual' framerates of digital cameras. As well as differences between interlaced and de-interlaced images. (Ask in studio.)

So this motoric aspect, governing that filming and playback were consistent, and before this, allowing any impression of movement to be captured at all, and then shown back, is essential to ... the illusion of movement in the moving image. Created from the mechanical series of individual frames.

Each frame supposed to be a still, like in photography...

...

slide: Eadweard Muybridge: animal locomotion: man with rock thing

...

And this is why Bergson didn't like film.

He said the illusion is not the *movement* but the still, the stillness of the still. He said it was an illusion that such an instant exists. Because movement is everywhere.

...

slide: clip: Eadweard Muybridge: first hand-cranked animation of still frames

...

(The man with strangest-ly spelt name: Eadweard Muybridge. Used multiple sets of cameras set up to trigger one after another... an early version of bullet-time, *Matrix* – look it up.)

...

Would he be happier with digital technology? where the illusion is reversed. Where the illusion is produced by the parts of the image.

The fixed photographic emulsion replaced, even in the fluid-sounding plasma screen, by fixed points of light. Pixels. Each dot a chromograph: a still point emitting light of the required chroma.

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slide: clip: liquid crystal screens (54 seconds)

...

Still, the illusion is movement, right? Yep. But it's generated by the movement of light, so *that* is the digital medium in its motoric aspect. But before we get there, we should get the theory

bit, and that's just context.

...

Here goes: where do cameras come from? film cameras, any cameras.

We can go historically and give more context. And on the way give the etymology of the word: camera, from room, still retained in legal parlance, like that weird word parlance, in the phrase *in camera*, which means either in court or behind closed doors. In a room. And we would start our contextual historical review from ... camera obscura. And go from there to camera lucida, also the title of a very good book by Roland Barthes, worth a look. In the additional reading list.

So far, so obscure.

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slide: showing schematic of stellar camera (in lecture folder)

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Theory ... the slide shows a stellar camera that Nasa developed ... theory is the coming together in concepts of all the parts of a thought in a difficult image. Why is it difficult? because the problem is always to think; and, the concept thinks the problem: it may even solve it but it doesn't make it go away. The problem has to be there in background. In a way, it still has to be relevant. Otherwise the theory is a flop.

So the concept is the point of connection. Roland Barthes puts it in exactly this way. In

Camera Lucida he tells a story about memory. It's a sad one.

His mother has died.

And this is his problem: relevant is too soft a word for it; another way of saying it is that our problems force us to think. We can't help it. And that's where thought happens.

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We should in this course follow the advice given by Amy Krouse Rosenthal to John Green in his book *The Anthropocene Reviewed* (2021).

...

slide of quote: pay attention to what you pay attention to.

...

Should we think about our problems? Absolutely. And what we are doing when we do is using concepts, doing theory.

Now, we can apply theory, and this can go well or badly for us.

We can either use the concepts we are led to by force of habit. This is the motoric aspect of using concepts.

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slide: motoric use of concepts

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slide: blank black

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See that these concepts bring together the parts of thought in a difficult image. Difficult for attempting to group things in categories in which there is always difference.

...

Or we can get advice or recall advice, actively bring to mind something we were told once, or that we heard, or saw somewhere, maybe it was in some dialogue from a show, that somehow seems to fit our situation.

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slide: some happy family dialogue from *The Shining*

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This is the memorial use of concepts, using concepts under the aspect of memory.

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slide: memorial use of concepts

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slide: blank black

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You can already see that dealing with problems with 'actions that come from habit' will take up less time than having to go back into the past to find something relevant. No. It will only seem that way.

In fact, you could not count the seconds.

You couldn't do Einstein's two clock experiment here, with one person observing you trying to

deal with your problem from the *outside*, for whom time keeps passing tick, tick, like a clock, and you, inside the image, trying to work out what to do, and you are looking at your phone and watching the seconds click slowly by, and still you've got no idea. No wait.

You remember ... someone once told you in this situation ... who was it? ... it's vague, but it will have to do. And you do that thing.

They said, Go and take a good long hard look at yourself in a mirror.
And you do, and all you see is someone looking at their phone.

Bergson famously says, between the inner sort of time and surrounding time, dealing-with-a-problem time and clocktime, for the two measures to relate to each other, there is assumed, by Einstein, to be some correspondence. The presumption is that the two sorts of time can be related, that time can ever be a simultaneous experience, when we know, when I look at the clock and you look at the clock, we are thinking quite different things.

And no amount of trying to slow down your thinking process to try and get time to speed up is going to get us to the end of the lecture any faster.

Or, for me, no amount of trying to speed up is going to make time slow down any more, so that I can fit in all I have left to fit in before the end.

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slide: Southern Lights video, 36 secs. (time dilation) (two clocks)

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By the way, this debate between Bergson and Einstein did happen. Paris, 6 April 1922.

Einstein won. Bergson's fame star fell.

His whole philosophy was dismissed, thrown out of the history of philosophy, for being too soft, even feminine, based in vague feelings. It just did not have the exactness and precision of cold hard scientific fact.

We could say that Bergson's problem was supposed to be solved.

There is no different sort of time of inner experience and, if there is, this is what is irrelevant.

Which is something we can hold on to as a bit of advice, until something happens that forces us to think differently.

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slide: third use of concepts

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It might be a shock. Or an accident. It breaks us from the habit... of not looking where we are going.

Now that's a problem. That no amount of actively seeking a memory to help is going to solve. No.

Instead we are plunged quite literally into memory: this is the famous "I saw my whole life flash before my eyes."

Or it could be the shock... of losing someone you love.

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slide: clip: *2001*, arrival Jupiter, 2:04 secs.

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In any case, it's immediate. You are not yourself. For the microsecond of what feels like whole minutes passing you see yourself from outside. You see every detail of what is about to happen, because you put your foot out to take your next step, and motorically shifted your whole weight onto it, where there was nothing underneath it. And there you are. Dangling in space. Defying the laws of physics. About to fall down a flight of stairs. But for long moments suspended. In the image. Like in extreme slow-mo.

Just like that. You really want to be the one filming it. And like coming out of slow-mo, the rest happens really quickly.

But what you tell everyone is, It was so weird! Time totally slowed down.

It really did.

If you'd been watching and we synchronised times, you would have seen mine ... a microsecond lasting whole minutes. You would have seen the second hand. Not budging.

Stuck. And my whole body suspended...

And then, the return of realtime.

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slide: clip: *2001*, aging 1:51 secs.

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Roland Barthes shut himself away in the apartment where he'd lived with his mother. In camera, as we said. But a camera lucida. And once the grief had loosened its hold, and while

the shock to all he knew to be the case still held him, he looked at photographs.

Of his mum.

Trying to find one where she was true to life. That is, true to the living memory of her. The memory that he was living.

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slide: ambient clip: dust

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We can easily imagine it. But time after time, in photograph after photograph, what he saw was a likeness. A person he knew to be her but who still wasn't the person he knew. Until, going through a box of very early photos from when she was young, he found her.

And on his search he had started to pay attention to other details in the photos. Details of dress and furnishings. That changed as he dug deeper and deeper into the past, finding no point to rest in his search in the more recent photos. This was his word for what he eventually found in a photo from when his mother was a young woman, from well before he had been born: the punctum.

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slide: punctum ...

...

A very ugly word for a very beautiful thing.

Details changed as he went through the boxes of photos, the family archive. None leapt out to him as in that one photo of his mother as a young woman.

But these details that were the historical constituents signalled to him not a kind of background, unless a background which swallowed everything, even smiles and the sparkling eyes of the people in the foreground. As if in these photos his mother and those around her were no more than part of history, the historical context had swallowed all signs of life. And Barthes's word for this was studium.

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slide: stadium ...

...

slide: Roland Barthes, child

...

slide: Roland Barthes, window

...

Now we can imagine the search for signs of life as being one of judging, using rational judgement to arrive at the spot where Barthes's mum looks back at him. To get to the punctum.

But there is, he says, in **Camera Lucida**, nothing rational about it.

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slide: clip: dust contd.

...

And we can compare it to, say, Stanley Kubrick or David Fincher, repeating a take up to a hundred times, without changing the ... studium ... No change in setting, or actor's lines. No new direction necessarily added. No change of lens, necessarily, or angle of shot. Increasing exhaustion of the crew. Brooding of the director. The actors feelings of inadequacy, giving way to their hopelessness, and then to their exhaustion. And then, at last, a take the director's happy with. Or maybe it was the one two takes back. Or, afterwards, looking at the rushes, the director finds it: the punctum.

The point, the living point. That you know only because you feel.

And what do you feel?

Not sympathy. Despite Barthes's loss of his mum.

Not sympathy for the despotic director. The one they said, They're brilliant, but don't work with them.

They're the directors you hate. Or, they're simply hateful and possibly bad people.

Not empathy. There's a time. It's too fast. Too sketchy.

And to call it a recognition does no justice to it either. Barthes recognised his mother in every photo where she appeared.

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slide: clip: *Fight Club* (1999) (dir. David Fincher)

...

And it's possible to imagine the search for the perfect take as being vain. Or in vain. Was

Barthes tempted to give up? No. He studied the photos one after another.

Was David Fincher tempted to give up during the shoot of **Fight Club**? No. He ground on and on.

That is, it's not trivial. No matter how schematic ... and I will here draw the relation with character in ... the connection made by a character ... to the true conditions of life that are not the actual ones, that's the studium, but the possible ones, the living ones, the ones still alive to us, and kicking, it's a major thing. The punctum.

Where do we find it?

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slide: third use of concept

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I said the third aspect under which we have recourse to memory is the aspect that breaks the mold. Breaks the habit. Breaks the habit of being satisfied with the studium. With the fact that in all its details, of historical context, it's perfect. This aspect is the one that forces us to think. It forces Barthes to come up with a new concept for it.

And in the case of Stanley Kubrick, the thinking is in the practice.

In the first lecture, I called it the attentive aspect. It could just as easily be called the contemplative. Except it's not chosen.

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slide: clip: Schoenberg

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The inventor of serial music Arnold Schoenberg said, I did not choose to be Arnold Schoenberg.

Being Arnold Schoenberg is a difficult thing to be. Being hated because of what one asks others to do is as hard as being loved despite one's faults.

One's character flaws.

This aspect of memory is involuntary. We did not choose to be who we are. Or to face what we have to face.

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slide: still from *Puzzle of a Downfall Child*, Faye Dunaway (1970)

...

We will see this movement in the hero's quest. The hero is at some point overwhelmed. Knowing they have to rely on their own resources, they are like Barthes digging through boxes of old photographs: there's nothing there!

And no one is coming from outside to save them.

They are like us, suspended over the void, one foot out and all our weight shifted onto it, with nothing underneath.

And if the hero returns to tell their tale, what do they tell us? They give us the history, the studium. When the detail, is the punctum, is the point.

...

slide: clip: dust, from 21:21

...

How long does it last, this moment when our lives at that point pass before our eyes, when we dig into the past and come up empty, when we take the longest detour through inner experience and find nothing, except being equal to what happens to us.

An instant? a few frames? Not important. The important thing is that it happens. And that there is an and then, and then, and then...

...

Another reason the present can be a prison for thinking, either a prison for thinking practice, or for thinking theory: there's nothing there to help us. If we limit ourselves to the present and the resources it lays everywhere around us we may not survive the test, the quest, the next scene, the lecture...

Aristotle famously said the unexamined life is not worth living. He doesn't go far enough.

There's nothing in the life to face what faces us except the life itself. The life itself is in a way outside us.

And this was the other way we can talk about the hesitation. The suspension. The suspense ... as a way of going outside.

...

It passes, because we make recourse to it, as a detour through loops of memory, of memory under its different aspects: first motoric, habit; second memorial, the past, yes, but the past of recognition; third attentive, that extends recognition beyond the point of what we recognise, and know, and think we know about ourselves, and that breaks us from the habit of immediate

action, and is involuntary. This detour, or its correct name would be that attached to it by the Situationists...

...

slide: Situationist International: an international art movement, 1957-1972, taking inspiration from, among others, Guy Debord, writer of **Society of the Spectacle** and film-maker.

...

slide: détournement ...

...

...of détournement, a hijacking of intention by that other sort of time, the sort of time where we experience our inner lives. And this includes our emotional lives. In fact, it's all about them. This is the reason Bergson was badmouthed for being an effeminate thinker, who valued qualities associated, by history and habit, with femininity, sensitivity, intuition, feeling and affect (about which more later), not the masculine qualities of reason and order, logic and rules, Bertrand Russell names as proper and right for the Western Man of Philosophy.

...

slide: the man who has been driven to contemplation presently discovers that contemplation is the true end of life, and that the real world is hidden from those who are immersed in mundane activities. From this basis the remaining doctrines of traditional mysticism can be deduced. Lao-Tze, perhaps the first of the great mystics, wrote his book (so tradition avers) at a custom-house while he was waiting to have his baggage examined; and, as might be expected, it is full of the doctrine that action is futile.

- Bertrand Russell, **Basic Writings**, 242.

...

Not the Eastern man whose mysticism is more like a woman's vague beliefs.

After all, Bertrand Russell was a man of his time.

It is also the reason we are reading Bergson in this course and not Russell.

...

So the motoric, the memorial, and attentive aspects of memory: and the vector we left hanging in phase-space, the character.

...

slide: a character ... is a vector

...

A character is a vector for action.

A character is a vector for story and for that mutual recognition with which we habitually associate psychology.

A character is a vector for contemplation.

... But we don't make recourse to characters for this reason, do we?

No. We enjoy in characters the situations they face. Their physical strength. Their brilliant minds.

Sherlock Holmes, who is of the Bertrand Russell type, isn't he?

Their kill count, or body count.

Uma Thurman, as The Bride character, has a revenge kill count of 76 in **Kill Bill**.

...

slide: clip: Uma Thurman in action in *Kill Bill*. 1:44 – 3:41

...

We care about what characters do. And the first principle of our theory here is that what happens to characters is important.

It's backed up by a second, The most important thing about characters is that they don't know what's going to happen next.

This is about where characters are in relation to memory, under its different aspects, so that they do what they do.

That is, our care about what characters do has to do with how they operate the link between the two sorts of time. The time of the problem that forces them to ... think. And the time of their actual situation, as the seconds tick by.

So that we can say there are different sorts of character, and these different types have to do with what their inner experience is: whether it plays out in choreographies of movement, where there's no pause for thought.

This is the case in the **Kill Bill** clip, but it's also the case for Buster Keaton.

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slide: clip: Buster Keaton, from *The General*. 1min.

...

Why would I prefer to show Buster Keaton than Charlie Chaplin?

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slide: Charlie Chaplin, in *Modern Times*. 43 secs.

...

Because of Buster Keaton's face. Although you might think of Charlie Chaplin, especially in **Modern Times**, as the best example of a motoric character, of a character being subsumed by the mechanism, the factory, Buster Keaton shows us something else. A general quality of characters: they are schematic.

His face is a blank. Yes, white make-up, but white make-up...

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slide: Every profession has its disagreeable duties, and one of ours is to work under the studio lights. Every actress dreads them, for they are simply cruel to the eyes, and to work within a few feet of eight or ten ghastly, hissing, flaming arcs will unnerve the strongest of us. The red rays are entirely absent in these awful things, the consequence being that when they are used, everything in the scene is bathed in a sickly, bluish green. Faces appear ashen gray and the red of one's lips looks purple. The actors appear like uncanny corpses suddenly come to life. The light is so dreadful to the eyes that the least result is a splitting headache, and the worst, the necessity of seeking the solace of an oculist or of wearing amber glasses for several days.

- Wagner, **Film Folk**, 1918, 93-94.

...

...white make-up was used as well for emotionally expressive faces.

...

slide: Keystone, Ford, Mack and Mabel

...

slide: make-up for black and white

...

Buster Keaton's face shows us deadpan. *Dead-pan*, echoing...

...

slide: "actors appear" ...

...

..."actors appear like uncanny corpses suddenly come to life" of the studio in 1918, and echoing the phenomenon of the 'uncanny valley.'

...

slide: Buster Keaton, deadpan: see hear speak

...

Deadpan, affectless affect: Buster Keaton's face is a bare fact. It shows us not the fact of being barely alive, but the bare fact of the character's life, that is, their inner life.

Buster Keaton's onscreen character operates the schematism connecting the inner life of memory under its motoric aspect, which is here the punctum, the bare fact, and the outer context of the studium, the historical details of mise-en-scène and technology, including the studio set-up, of which it and he is a part. But unlike the studium he is alive for us because of the punctum, the link, from one sort of time to another.

...

All a character has to do is connect these two, their own hesitation, pause for thought, if there is any, and the conditions of their situation.

Keaton connects us to the motor of the cinema, of his cinema, in this way.

Then there's the cinema of recognition, which is supposed to come after this cinema of, as the founder of psychoanalysis said, a lot of chasing.

...

slide: clip of chasing. Keystone cops (Mack Sennet's Keystone Studios, 1915)

...

Check out the date for this car chase ... 1915!

...

We have the cinema of recognition, characters whose struggle is with memory, with the past as they recognise it. Characters with a past, whose struggle is with the past, whose struggle is to get past it. Or, as we say, characters whose past catches up with them.

We also say, crushed by the past. Sometimes a character will look in the mirror and we will know they are crushed by the past.

In this case, the resources they need to confront the problem is definitely not inside them. Inside is where the past is that has caught up with them.

We will come back to psychoanalysis and the questions of psychology, but we can see here both its usefulness and its danger.

Both come from the fact of psychoanalysis and the psychology that follows are subject to ... you remember our first concept? ... historicity.

They are historical images. In them we run the risk of sticking with the studium and missing the point, or punctum. But from them we get the idea of emotional life and inner experience as being subjective fictions. Subjective fictions, however, are all we ever want from our characters.

We also get the idea of there being in our inner life, for psychiatry, chemically derived impulses we can't control, for psychology, genetically determined impulses we can't control, and for psychoanalysis, impulses that are instinctual, like sex and death, hungers and desires driving us from the earliest stages of infancy. Developmental psychology also tells us this.

And in these cases, according to these theories, shouldn't the hero give up?

No. Because a stick is a character not because it's animated from the inside. A character is a stick because it's animated from the outside.

...

slide: A stick is a stick is a character not because it's animated from the inside. A character is a stick because it's animated from the outside.

...

The point is the point of contact between desire and the world. And sometimes it's not necessary for a character to be 'deep' and to have a meaningful relationship with their inner emotional life that we can hook onto; or even to be fully fleshed out at all, fully formed, with a biography, a personal past, to which we can refer and say, Ah, I see where the motivation came from for that kick to the side of the other one's face. Ah, the samurai sword swing...

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slide: blank black

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Where The Bride is motivated to a kill count of 76 for most other people revenge might amount to some sarcastic comments ... or a sympathy post on social media.

Sometimes it's enough for there to be the link, the punctum, for us to go with the action. Think about this with the first-person shooter game: to connect with your character you do what? Simply do the actions.

So this link is the minimal condition for the character. And so it is for the actor.

Robert Bresson develops a whole theory of acting from this simple fact. He throws away all of the history of character preceding the development of cinema dealing with psychology, that comes from the theatre. Namely, the theatre of Konstantin Stanislavski, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and the Moscow Arts Theatre. The source of the Method.

...

slide: Konstantin Stanislavski, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. Moscow Arts Theatre.

...

Moscow Arts Theatre under Stanislavski generated method in response to Anton Chekhov: note mise-en-scène, naturalism. Actors facing away from audience.

...

Bresson doesn't need an actor to dig deep, to find their motivation. Or, in the case of Lee Strasberg's adaptation of the Method, at the Actors Studio, who from 1951 in New York, then from 1966 in West LA, taught that an actor had to find a similar situation to that faced by the character they wanted to play in their own life. The power of the past and biography. And the theories of psychology.

The Method is still the true school to those who follow it:

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slide: clip: De Niro in the mirror, *Taxi Driver* (1976) (dir. Martin Scorsese) 30 secs.

...

Bresson didn't want actors. He wanted models, who neither were betrayed by their own pasts, nor made recourse to their own pasts to play a character; who were not required to 'show' but were simply required to tell. In their actions.

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slide: clip: *Le Samourai* (1967) (dir. Jean-Pierre Melville!) 1:39 secs.

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That does not mean Bresson's 'models' do not take us on vast memorial loops, past the motoric, the memorial and into the attentive... It doesn't mean they don't grab us.

What is curious is that the kind of motoric action Buster Keaton engages in in *The General* doesn't hold us now for the length of time audiences were supposed to be hooked into it when it was first shown.

...

As Deleuze says in his introduction to the English edition of his book, *Cinema 1*, "The cinema is always as perfect as it can be, taking into account the images and signs which it invents and which it has at its disposal at a given moment." (1983/2020, xii)

This can perhaps be put down to that what is of interest to us today is not the motor of the gag but the choreography of the fight, the fight sequence.

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Another curious thing. Despite the method's thinking, what is notable in the actors who follow it is that they keep their inner connection, of what a character feels to what is similar drawn from their own experience, to themselves. The method is in practice a great detour. Where it ends up is often ... the deadpan, the impassive face in which what happens to them that they don't see coming is not reflected. Even in the mirror.

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slide: camera on the moon

...

Where do cameras come from? Cameras come from the improbable coming together of unrelated fields of science, of scientific discovery and research. Principally, physics and chemistry. Physics for the motoric function, and the energetic resource, the electric motor. Chemistry for the photographic emulsion of the registration plate, allowing film to be 'developed' upon exposure to light, developed and fixed, in order to be played back.

Digital cameras simply interpret the functions of the photo-mechanical camera without any great development in the concept. A sensor replaces the photographic plate. Movement is achieved in the image itself by the little lights of the pixels.

So what were the chances of the camera ever coming to be? Remember this was the theme of *2001*. What is the probability of all these parts ever having come together? Having been brought together? Their 'mise-en-scène,' being put in or making the scene?

Add to this probability that of an intelligent ape. For James Lovelock, the inventor of Gaia, the entire universe is barely old enough for there to have been enough time for humans to have developed.

While for the anthropologist, Loren Eiseley, it is the extreme improbability of there being life at all that is the decisive factor. For him, the universe isn't big enough to allow for life happening more than once. And this is the way he answers the Fermi Paradox: the chances of life occurring *here* are so small as to make the likelihood of life occurring anywhere else practically zero.

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slide: Hubble space

...

Not enough time. Not enough space. You can perhaps see from this the importance of that little window, that opens away from all these determinations of history, society and economics, where there's a breath of air and the improbable and otherwise impossible is quite common. The gap in which there's a thought. And a character who thinks it.

...

slide: final scene, *Planet of the Apes* (1968) (dir. Franklin Schaffer) (starring Charlton Heston)

...