

# BOOKCOVER AS Inter in the Cinema

Jean-Luc Godard used books in his early films as part of the diegesis and numerous volumes with clearly legible cover titles were part of the diegesis of these films. Starting with *PIERRE VERT*, Godard began to display extreme close-ups of book covers as part of the diegesis. He turned the cover titles into film intertitles. His tentative use of these extradiegetic titles in *LE FOU* became much more thorough in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSE* QUE JE SAIS D'ELLE. In this film, Godard used extreme close-ups from Gallimard's *Idées* series, making the covers part of the diegesis that serve to interpret the images that frame them. The book titles in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSE* have gone unmentioned in the film. In subsequent films over the next few years, Godard continued to use bookcovers as intertitles, but, by that most important of moments, he began to question the value of print culture for expression.

# TITLE

## Jean-Luc Godard

KEVIN J. HAYES

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DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES QUE JE SAIS D'ELLE (Two or Three Things I Know about Her, 1966)

marks a significant advance in the complexity of Jean-Luc Godard's visual references to books. While he had incorporated numerous books in his earlier films, nearly all of them occur as part of his mise-en-scène and therefore belong to the diegesis of each film. In PIERROT LE FOU (1965), he had tentatively incorporated a few extreme close-ups from bookcovers that were not part of the diegesis, a technique DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES expands upon as it lifts the extradiegetic book to a new level of significance. Though the film contains many books as part of its mise-en-scène, it also displays extreme close-ups from several bookcovers, and their words serve to gloss the images that precede and follow them. In a way, the title words from these bookcovers function similarly to the intertitles of silent films – with one crucial difference. Whereas silent film intertitles were created specifically for their films, Godard's bookcover intertitles take words that have already entered the culture and make them suit the situation as best they can. His use of the extradiegetic book would become increasingly sophisticated in subsequent films over the next few years: MADE IN U.S.A. (1966),

the CINÉTRACTS (1968),

and LE GAI SAVOIR

(The Joy of Knowledge, 1968).

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# Deux ou Trois Que Je

Partway through *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES QUE JE SAIS D'ELLE* Juliette Janson (Marina Vlady) and her friend Marianne (Anny Duperey), both of whom belong to the world of high-rise housing complexes outside Paris and work as prostitutes to support their suburban lifestyle, visit a frequent client of Marianne's, an American newspaper reporter played by Raoul Lévy, one of the film's producers. As they enter his hotel room, Marianne carries a book with her. After undressing and seating herself on the bed to await him, she opens the book and reads silently. Marianne's act of reading emphasizes her nonchalant attitude toward being a prostitute. Waiting for her client, she reads as others might read while waiting for a bus or a train, as Bruno Forestier reads his copy of Maurice Limat's *J'Ecoute l'Univers* *IN LE PETIT SOLDAT* (1960) to kill time during a railway journey. Like Bruno's, Marianne's book is the work of a prolific science fiction writer, for she reads *Un Remède à la Melancolie* a translation of Ray Bradbury's collection of short stories, *A Medicine for Melancholy*. The book's title conveys the general idea that Marianne, Juliette and others like them who are caught within modern consumer culture desperately need a cure for their malaise. In addition, the presence of the book emphasizes the gap

between the imaginative world

Bradbury represents and the quotidian world of suburban Paris in the mid 1960s.

With the Bradbury volume, Godard also continues to use books as references to contemporary filmmakers, for the book obliquely alludes to François Truffaut. Earlier that same year Truffaut had released his Bradbury adaptation, *FAHRENHEIT 451*. Godard

# CH OSES Sais d'Elle

had visited Truffaut at Pinewood Studios shortly before shooting began,<sup>1</sup> and Truffaut had paid tribute to Godard in the film with a reference to *À BOUT DE SOUFFLE* (Breathless, 1960). During the book-burning sequence at the house of the old woman who hoards books, Truffaut had included an issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* displaying a picture of Jean Seberg as Patricia Franchini on its cover. With the Bradbury reference, Godard returns the favor, though the implications of his Truffaut allusion may not be entirely flattering. Regardless of their artistic kinship, Godard was indebted to his friend in a more tangible way, for Truffaut, like Raoul Lévy, was one of the producers of *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSSES*. Casting one producer as a prostitute's client and using her book to allude to another, Godard exposes her to both and therefore doubly reinforces an ongoing critique extending at least as far back as *LE MÉPRIS* (Contempt, 1963). Paralleling the prostitute's task with the film director's, Godard presents one of his "most deep-rooted theories":

"to live in Parisian society today, at whatever level or on whatever plane, one is forced to prostitute oneself."<sup>2</sup>

The particular edition of the Bradbury work Marianne reads belongs to the science fiction series, *Presence du Futur*. The series title reinforces a persistent theme in Godard's work, the interrelationship of past, present and future. It also echoes an idea Godard articulates in his whispered voiceover during the memorable coffee cup sequence in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSSES* as he explains how the "lightning advances of science give to future centuries a haunting presence" and anticipates a time

"when the future is more present than the present, when distant galaxies are at my

Some may argue that expecting viewers to identify the series of a paperback book which appears on screen for only a few seconds may be demanding too much from them. The obvious response is: who ever said

## Godard was not demanding?

Actually, the series may have been more quickly recognizable to contemporary audiences than the individual book. Works published in the same series often share similar cover graphics. With its white cover splashed with orange, the series to which *Un Remède à la Melancolie* belonged would have been familiar to anyone who browsed the science fiction shelves of Paris bookshops during the mid 1960s.

The copy of Bradbury is one of many different printed objects appearing in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*.

While Marianne is busy with the American, Juliette gazes at photographs in an issue of *Life* magazine. Several interiors are decorated with airline travel posters which supply additional contrast. Those dwelling in suburban Paris live their lives against the backdrop of exotic locales. Instead of promising thrills and excitement, however, the posters serve as reminders of destinations the working class will never afford. Godard's use of travel posters recalls Julien Duvivier's *LE BELLE EQUIPE* (They Were Five, 1936), in which Jean, an out-of-work character played by Jean Gabin, stares longingly at a winter-vacation poster. The colorful postcards at Marianne's beauty shop, reminiscent of the postcards Françoise (Jacqueline Laurent) keeps tacked to her bedroom wall in Marcel Carné's *LE JOUR SE LÈVE* (Daybreak, 1939), reinforce the disparity between exotic destinations and the commonplace existence of the Parisian working class. Boxes of detergent and numerous other packaged products also form important motifs throughout the film. Even the airline flight-bags the American has Juliette and Marianne place over their faces belong to the print culture, for they are silk-screened with the corporate logos, TWA and Pan-Am. In his voiceover narration, Godard sardonically describes the burgeoning significance of words as part of the visual culture:

There is increasing interaction

between images and language.

One might say that living in society today is almost like

Emphasizing the graphic elements from paperback bookcovers, Godard associates books with the numerous other manifestations of print in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* and, in so doing, locates the intellectual world within the realm of the consumer.

By no means does Marianne's copy of Bradbury represent the only series of books Godard includes in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*. Throughout the film, he makes significant use of another series of books, for he inserts several extreme close-ups from the covers of paperback books in the *Idées* series published by Gallimard. Each image is similar, for each book cover has a mottled blue background with title words in white or yellow. Using similar cover graphics, publishers enhance the continuity of a series and allow separate works to sell one another by visual association. Though primarily a marketing tool, bookcover graphics nevertheless imply a continuity of thought among the various works included within a single series.

The extreme close-ups of the bookcovers contribute to the film's continuity and link together the different ideas the title words express. Godard inserts the series title, *Idées*, multiple times, too. Its similar visual appearance to the individual book titles reinforces the associations among them.

The bookcovers from the *Idées* series in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* are reminiscent of the bookcovers in *UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME* (*A Woman Is a Woman*, 1961). In both films, selected title words from the front covers of paperback books are used to convey meaning. There is, however, one crucial difference between the way the bookcovers are presented in each film. In *UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME*, 19

living in a vast comic strip.”

Angéla and Emile use their hands to frame the title words they wish to display, yet none of the characters in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* handle the books from the *Idées* series. In other words, the books in *UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME* are part of the film's diegesis while the books from Gallimard's *Idées* series in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* are extradiegetic. There are many other books that are part of the diegesis in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* – Marianne's Bradbury, the stacks of books which Bouvard (Claude Miller) reads from and Pécuchet (Jean-Patrick Lebel) transcribes, the book that the prize-winning author Ivanov (Jean-Pierre Laverne) inscribes for a school-girl (Blandine Jeanson), and the copy of *A l'Assaut de la Pyramide Sociale*, a translation of Vance Packard's *The Pyramid Climbers*, Robert Janson (Roger Montsoret) reads in bed near the end of the film – but the books from the *Idées* series are not.

IN *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*, Godard, as narrator and filmmaker, assumes the place of Angéla and Emile in *UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME*. Like them, he carries on an argument using title words from book-covers. While theirs is a private lovers' quarrel, however, Godard's is a public forum between a filmmaker who has assumed the role of social commentator and the audience who watches, hears and reads the film. Where the two lovers use their hands to frame the title words for their silent argument, Godard uses the motion picture frame. These inserts have the quality of chapter titles in a book or, to make a comparison to another Godard film, they resemble the intertitles that separate the different tableaux in *VIVRE SA VIE* (*My Life to Live*, 1962). Julia Lesage has characterized the inserts as Brechtian footnotes,<sup>3</sup> yet the term intertitle suits them better,

for they function less as appended references and more as texts establishing ways of perceiving

subsequent images.

The first insert from a book in the Idées series appears immediately prior to an early sequence depicting homelife with Robert and Juliette Janson:

## DIX-HUIT LEÇONS SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ INDUSTRIELLE

Understood in relation to the sequence, this intertitle suggests that the promised lessons will come in the form of exempla depicting people living within the industrial society. The words are from the cover of Raymond Aron's economic analysis of modern society, *Dix-Huit Leçons sur la Société Industrielle*. Discussing **DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES**, Godard acknowledged his debt to Aron and asserted that the film "endeavors to present one or two lessons on industrial society."<sup>4</sup> Aron's work initiated debate about what constitutes industrial society and how best to regulate it. Comparing Western society with Soviet society, Aron found that neither capitalist nor Marxist approaches offered the ideal solution. Instead of taking sides and concluding that one better fostered economic growth than the other, Aron questioned the overall value of economic growth as a necessary goal. **DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES**, though sharing some of Aron's ideas, is more polemical than the book. While Godard refrains from offering an alternative, there is little question that the film indicts the burgeoning consumer culture. Godard does not necessarily side with Marxism here, but the ideas he conveys reveal his receptivity to the communist notions

he would embrace  
during the next  
few years.

There were hundreds of books in Gallimard's Idées series, but unlike Bouvard and Pécuchet in the Elysée-Marbeuf café sequence, Godard does not choose his books at random. The sequel to *Dix-Huit Leçons* supplies Godard's next insert from the Idées series. Creating two consecutive intertitles from different books by the same author, Godard signifies his careful and deliberate choice of titles. The insert reads:

**DE CLASSES  
NOUVELLE LEÇONS  
SUR LES SOCIÉTÉS  
INDUSTRIELLES**

The words come from the cover of *La Lutte de Classes: Nouvelles Leçons sur les Sociétés Industrielles*.

Cutting off the first two words, Godard takes out the struggle (la lutte), suggesting that his is a story of classes without struggle.

In so doing, Godard confirms ideas contained within Aron's book, which generally argues that the history of modern society is no longer one of class struggles but the story of a general escalation toward high mass consumption. Instead of struggling, Godard implies, people in modern society accept their station with lethargic indifference and succumb to a world controlled by material impulses. Cutting off "la lutte" would become unthinkable for Godard over the next few years during which he would embrace Maoism, a doctrine emphasizing the importance of understanding how the class struggle evidences itself in all aspects of human existence.<sup>5</sup> In terms of both title and intertitle, Godard would restore the struggle. The sequence involving a sportscar-farm tractor crash in **WEEKEND**, for example, contains the intertitle:

**LA LUTTE DE CLASSES**

And **LOTTE IN ITALIA** (Luttes en Italie, 1970), as the title indicates, explicitly addresses the class struggle.

A later insert in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* presents the title of a work by another prominent economist, Jean Fourastie:

## LE GRAND ESPOIR DU XX<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE

The title occurs between two shots of construction sites and thus implies that industry and modernization are the great hope of the twentieth century. The intertitle, therefore, contributes irony to the sequence. While expressing a belief in progress many contemporaries held true, it simultaneously questions the validity of that belief. The irony of this intertitle nicely complements the ambiguity of the construction shots throughout *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*. These images question the value of so much new construction, yet Godard's display of the construction, in Eastman Color and Techniscope, makes them beautiful and therefore creates ambiguity.

During the rendezvous between Juliette and a tall, pimple-faced Metro worker, the following intertitle appears:

## INTRODUCTION À L'ETHNOLOGIE

The words provide viewers with one way to perceive the film, that is, to regard it as an ethnological work. Alfred Guzzetti, recalling that Godard studied ethnology at the Sorbonne, has suggested that the words have a personal dimension and has argued that the young man in this scene is a stand-in for a young Godard and that the young man's tryst with the prostitute marks a step in his ethnological education.<sup>6</sup> The book Godard used as the basis for the intertitle, which Guzzetti does not identify, makes possible a somewhat different interpretation yet one retaining a personal dimension. The French title of the book, *Introduction à l'Ethnologie*, is really a misnomer, for the work is not an ethnological work per se. It originally appeared in English with the title, *They Studied Man*. Edited by Abram Kardiner and Edward Preble, *They Studied Man*

is an anthology of extracts from several major thinkers who pondered the human condition – Charles Darwin, Emile Durkheim, Sir James Frazer and Sigmund Freud, among others. Alluding to this compendium of thought, Godard linked his cinematic meditation on modern man with the ideas of great thinkers before him. Godard thus places himself and his own work within

the Western intellectual tradition.

The intertitle:

## PSYCHOLOGIE DE LA FORME

Godard borrowed from the French translation of Wolfgang Köhler's *Gestalt Psychology*. In a brief article in *L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma* the year after the film appeared, Godard contemplated *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*, and his remarks provide a good gloss for this reference to Köhler's work. Godard urged viewers to look beyond the specific objects and attitudes depicted in the film in order to discover "certain more general forms" and to discern

"not a generalized overall truth,

but a certain 'complex feeling.'"<sup>7</sup> Godard's reference to Gestalt psychology in the film functions as a plea for audiences to perceive *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*, not as a collection of shots, settings, motifs, images and sounds, but as a distinct whole.

Continuing to contemplate *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* after finishing the film, Godard wrote, "Actually, when I come to think about it, a film like this is a little as if I wanted to write a sociological essay in the form of a novel."<sup>8</sup> His words deliberately echo another intertitle from the film:

## SOCIOLOGIE DU ROMAN

Godard took these words from the cover of Lucien Goldmann's *Pour une Sociologie du Roman*.<sup>9</sup> The reference to Goldmann's work brings together the economic ideas from earlier intertitles with the search for an overall pattern that the reference to Gestalt psychology had implied. Goldmann theorized that the essential structure of the modern novel parallels the economic structure of market society. Godard applies Goldmann's theory to convey the impossibility of telling a modern fictional story without also telling the truth about the social conditions that make the story imaginable.

Godard's use of title words from the works of others recalls Edgar Allan Poe's idea about the power of words: once articulated,

words survive indefinitely.

While Poe's "The Power of Words" specifically concerns the spoken word, Godard's use of bookcover graphics extends Poe's idea to the written word. Book titles in sidewalk bookstalls or on display shelves inside bookstores and department stores provide modern-day analogues for the idea. Poe has the spoken word float about in infinite space. In modern consumer culture, the written word becomes part of the environment, the visual landscape. Attractively printed on dust jackets of hardbound books or the covers of paperbacks, book titles enter the public vocabulary, fair verbal game for anyone to use as they will. For Godard, book titles are a recyclable commodity. His short film, *LE GRAND ESCROC*, borrows its title from Herman Melville's *Le Grand Escroc*, as *The Confidence-Man* was known after it was first translated into French in 1950. *LE GAI SAVOIR*, to cite another example, borrows its title from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*.

# Made

IN *MADE IN U.S.A.*, a film Godard made the same year as *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*, he again used books from Gallimard's *Idées* series. The film tells a story about Paula Nelson, a private detective who investigates the mysterious disappearance of her friend Richard. As part of her investigation, Paula questions one Doctor Ludwig, the physician who certified Richard's death. As she questions the doctor, he consults a copy of Georg Groddeck's *Au Fond de l'Homme, Cela*. This psychoanalytic work originally appeared as *Das Buch vom Es* in 1923. Groddeck came up with the idea of "das Es" or "the It," a term borrowed from Nietzsche which Groddeck used to refer to an indivisible force determining a person's mental and physical health and well-being. More therapist than theorist, Groddeck ran a clinic at Baden-Baden where he attempted to cure physical ailments through psychoanalysis. The mid 1960s saw a revival of interest in Groddeck, whose therapeutic approach found many new readers among a generation amenable to such holistic ideas.

The reference to Groddeck in *MADE IN U.S.A.* functions similarly to the allusion to Gestalt psychology in *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES*, for both convey the value of understanding the world holistically. Psychoanalyzing his patients, Groddeck attempted to discern more deep-seated causes of physical ailments. As Paula questions Doctor Ludwig, he avoids giving her a straight answer concerning the cause of Richard's death, yet he does let her know that Richard was lonely. Paula responds that loneliness could hardly be the cause of death whereupon the doctor expresses confusion: "I don't understand.

You really think there might be a connection between loneliness and an organic illness?"

# I N U.S.A.

His words clearly show that he has not learned anything from Groddeck whose fundamental theory is based precisely on the connection between mental and physical well being. Through the character of Doctor Ludwig, Godard implies that those in authority have no idea how to diagnose the problems facing them. Godard's use of Groddeck also functions at the macrocosmic level. Curing society's ills, he implies, means taking a holistic approach toward healing the body politic.

Later in *MADE IN U.S.A.*, Godard displays the cover of another book from the *Idées* series, Marc Paillet's *Gauche, Année Zéro*. Paillet's work treats modern French politics, government and economic policy. In a contemporary comment, Godard specifically described how this particular title functions in the film. The last time the title appears, he explained that

“the beginning of a movement of Schumann's Fourth Symphony is heard. Unless you're blind and deaf, it's impossible not to see that this shot, this mixture of image and sound, represents a movement of hope. You can call it false, ridiculous, childish, provocative, but it is what it is, like a scientific object.”<sup>10</sup>

Godard's comment reinforces the visual significance of Paillet's title and, in so doing, reinforces the care with which he chose the book titles that appear throughout his oeuvre.

# Ciné

Godard's CINÉTRACTS, made in May 1968 to depict the revolutionary events unfolding then, also incorporate close-ups of multiple bookcovers, which are inscribed with handwritten messages. The inscriptions convey the idea that

print culture alone is insufficient  
for conveying thought.

Godard's growing skepticism toward print culture parallels his changing attitude toward cinema during the late 1960s. Book publishers, after all, performed an analogous role to film producers. In their essence, both represent the money that mediates between creative genius and the final product the public sees. During the turbulent days of May 1968, Godard, among other filmmakers, realized that the way to create moving images honestly reflecting the revolutionary events taking place was to create brief cinétracts so cheap that anyone with a camera could make them: no producer necessary. At the same time, many people expressed themselves – their ideas and their frustrations – through graffiti, a medium of expression Godard's CINÉTRACTS incorporated. The analogy is clear: graffiti is to the book what the cinétract is to commercially-produced feature film. Graffiti provides a succinct way for anyone with a spray-can or a stick of chalk to publish their written ideas, to publish them, that is, in the original sense of the word, to make them public.

no publisher necessary.

# T R A C T S

One CINÉTRACT makes use of Hachette's L'Univers des Connaissances, a series of books similar to Gallimard's Idées. One shot depicts the front covers of two books with the series title prominently displayed on the covers of both. The left side of the frame shows Hans Freudenthal's *Mathématiques et Réalités*. The right side of the frame contains Jürgen Kuczynski's *Les Origines de la Classe Ouvrière*.

In his work, Freudenthal, an important mathematics educator, discusses wide-ranging practical and realistic applications for mathematics. Kuczynski's work, on the other hand, examines the history of the labor class. Depicting the two books within the same frame, Godard replicates their position in the Hachette series, for Kuczynski's work comes directly after Freudenthal's in the series. In his early short film, CHARLOTTE ET SON JULES (1958), Godard had expressed the idea that any utterance necessarily has a connection to the one preceding it. Though Freudenthal and Kuczynski worked in two completely different fields, their proximity in the Hachette series necessarily implies a connection between their distinctive works.

The cover inscriptions reinforce the connection between the two volumes, for a horizontal line with arrowheads at each end connects one cover to the next. More than a simple connector, the horizontal line resembles the x-axis of the Cartesian coordinates; a dark vertical line between the two books forms the y-axis. The word "cinéma" is inscribed above the horizontal line on the Freudenthal cover and below the horizontal line on the Kuczynski cover. Since Freudenthal's book conveys the value of the practical applications of mathematics, Godard's placement of it adjacent to Kuczynski's study of the labor class suggests social reform as one possible application for mathematics. Inscribing both covers with the word "cinéma," Godard implies that **cinema**

is the cultural location where mathematics can be brought to bear on social causes. 29

The graffiti-like inscriptions Godard experimented with in the CINÉTRACTS he used more extensively in LE GAI SAVOIR, which also depicts several bookcovers. Though the bookcovers in LE GAI SAVOIR often appear close-up, many are tilted sideways.

The sideways bookcovers implicitly question the value of their titles and their texts for conveying truth. Many of the covers are inscribed with handwritten messages. While the printed titles appear sideways, the inscriptions appear upright. Godard's hierarchic juxtaposition of manuscript and print suggests that he was questioning the value of print for expressing truth.

Two of the sideways books in LE GAI SAVOIR deserve particular attention, for both concern how language creates meaning. One is *Le Langage*, the French translation of Edward Sapir's *Language, An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. First published in 1921, the work had remained in print, earned a reputation as a minor classic in the study of language, and been translated into multiple languages. The French translation had been reprinted the year before LE GAI SAVOIR appeared. Godard depicts the book tilted to the left with the word "savoir" inscribed on its cover so that the printed title and the inscription appear at right angles to one another. Savoir – knowledge – comes not from print culture but from manuscript culture, a form of writing unmediated by a publisher. The next bookcover depicted is Jacques Derrida's *De la Grammatologie*. First published in 1967, Derrida's work had yet to gain the cult status it now holds. *De la Grammatologie* appears tilted to the right with the word "savoir" inscribed at a right angle in block capitals.

Godard's use of Sapir and Derrida is playfully complex. Sapir's work perpetuates the traditional binary opposition that privileges speech over writing, while Derrida challenges the hierarchic elevation of speech over writing and, indeed, all hierarchic binary oppositions. Godard, while using a copy of Derrida's book nevertheless situates it within several binary oppositions. Taken together, Sapir's and Derrida's books juxtapose old versus new and tradition versus

innovation. Turning the books sideways and inscribing words on their covers at a ninety-degree angle, Godard depicts a fundamental Cartesian duality, the printed title forming the y-axis and the handwritten word the x-axis. Godard's juxtaposition of print and manuscript shows that writing, regardless of its relationship to speech, contains another opposition within itself, print versus manuscript. Though Kaja Silverman has argued that *LE GAI SAVOIR* challenges Descartes and follows Derrida,<sup>11</sup> Cartesian thought underlies Godard's most fundamental beliefs. The visual appearance of the bookcovers in the *CINÉTRACT* and *LE GAI SAVOIR* explicitly reveal his Cartesian outlook. Furthermore, Godard's theory of the image, which he had exemplified in practice yet had not articulated fully, is based on analogy, a method of comparison with its roots in Cartesian thought. Godard's reluctance to abandon Descartes for deconstructionism may explain Derrida's subsequent belligerence toward his work. Years later, when asked what influence Godard's oeuvre had had on the history of thought, Derrida, first apologizing for his brutal sincerity, replied, "Not the least influence, to my knowledge."<sup>12</sup> Derrida's derogatory comment, on the other hand, may simply reflect intellectual snobbery, the philosopher refusing to acknowledge one who works in a popular medium.

While Godard hesitated to accept the fundamental ideas underlying Derrida's thought, he was amenable to the general notion of challenging the ways of thinking and perceiving people take for granted. His juxtaposition of print and manuscript on a bookcover, while reinforcing several binary oppositions, does challenge another: public versus private. For centuries, print had been a public medium, one designed to disseminate ideas to a general readership while manuscript was a largely private medium, a way for individuals to express themselves from one to another. *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES* and *MADE IN U.S.A.* critique the role of print within the consumer culture, yet the bookcovers displayed in both films retain the capacity to express important ideas. By the time *LE GAI SAVOIR* appeared two years later, however, Godard had begun to question seriously the capacity of print for conveying truth.

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## ENDNOTES

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- 2 Godard, Jean-Luc. 1968. "One or Two Things." In Mussman, Toby, editor. *Jean-Luc Godard: A Critical Anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 278.
- 3 Lesage, Julia. 1979. *Jean-Luc Godard: A Guide to References and Resources*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 78.
- 4 Godard, "One or Two Things," 278.
- 5 MacCabe, Colin. 1980. *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics*. London: BFI, 68.
- 6 Guzzetti, Alfred. 1981. *Two or Three Things I Know about Her: Analysis of a Film by Godard*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 155.
- 7 Godard, Jean-Luc. 1972. *Godard on Godard*. Jean Narboni, editor and Tom Milne, translator. (Reprinted, New York: Da Capo, 242.)
- 8 *Godard on Godard*, 242.
- 9 Annie Goldman gives DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES a sociological interpretation in *Cinéma et Société Moderne: Le Cinéma de 1958 à 1968: Godard – Antonioni – Resnais – Robbe-Grillet*. Paris: Denoël, (1974), 161-166, yet makes no mention of Gard's allusion to her Husband's work.
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