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conscious will, and the opposing idea that he is determined by the weight of his history, by his archives, by his genealogy, and ultimately by his unconscious.

Translated by Robert Hardwick Weston

Notes

1. Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
2. I introduced some of these arguments in *Généalogies* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).
3. See Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
4. Henri Ellenberger, *Histoire de la découverte de l'inconscient* (Paris: Fayard, 1994 [1970]).
5. Jacques Lacan, *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité* (Paris: Seuil, 1975 [1932]); *Les complexes familiaux* (Paris: Navarin, 1984 [1938]).
6. This seminar is unpublished; it is only known through notes taken by its participants. Thus it is not known how Lacan wrote the term. See Érik Porge, *Les noms du père chez Lacan* (Toulouse: Érès, 1997).
7. Thomas Mann, "Freud and Modern Thought," in *Essays of Three Decades* (New York: 1947).

What Is the Creative Act?

GILLES DELEUZE

I would like to ask some questions of myself. And ask some of you, as well as of myself. This would be of the type, What do you do, what do you make, particularly those of you who make cinema? And then, what do I do in particular, when I do, or hope to do, when I make philosophy? Of course, this is a difficult question; it's painful for you, as well as myself. I could reformulate the question in another way. What is it to have an idea in cinema? If one makes cinema, or if one wants to make cinema, what is it to have an idea in this medium, specifically at that moment when one articulates, "I have an idea"? For everyone knows that to have an idea is a rare event, it occurs infrequently. To have an idea is a sort of celebration; it does not happen every day. In another way to have an idea is not a general thing. One does not have "an idea in general." An idea is always consecrated; all as if he who has an idea has already consecrated it in such-or-such domain. What I would like to explain is that having an idea, such as in painting, or in the novel, or in philosophy, or in science, might not be the same thing.

Ideas should be treated as types of potentials, as consecrated potentials—potentials that are already engaged in one or another mode of expression and that are inseparable from that mode of expression. In conjunction with some techniques that I know, I can have an idea in a domain, an idea in cinema, or an idea in philosophy. What is it to have an idea "in" something? So, I speak again about the fact that I make philosophy and that you make cinema. It would then be too simple to state, "Yes, everyone knows that philosophy is made to reflect upon everything. So why then does it not think about cinema?" Philosophy is not for reflecting on everything; it is made to think about other things. In treating philosophy as a force that "reflects upon," we give it too much credit, and in fact we take everything away from it. Because in fact no one has need for philosophy in order to think or reflect. The only people capable of reflecting upon the cinema are filmmakers, or film critics, or those who love the cinema. They absolutely do not need philosophy in order to think about the cinema. The idea

that mathematicians would need philosophy in order to think about mathematics is quite comic. If philosophy was made to think about something, it would have no reason to exist. If philosophy exists, it is because it has its own content. If we ask ourselves what the content of philosophy is it is very simple. Philosophy is a discipline equally as creative, equally as inventive as all other disciplines. Philosophy is a discipline that consists of creating or inventing concepts. Concepts do not just exist. Concepts do not just exist in the sky where they are waiting for philosophy to come up and seize them. Concepts must be fabricated. Of course they are not made just like that. One does not just say to oneself, "Okay, I am going to make a concept, I am going to invent a concept." Not any more than a painter says to himself one day, "Okay, I am going to create a painting just like that." *There has to be a necessity*, in philosophy as elsewhere. If there is not some necessity, there is nothing at all. This necessity, if it exists at all, is that which makes a philosopher. At least I know what the philosopher is not occupied with; he is not occupied with thinking. He proposes to invent or to create concepts. I say that I make philosophy, which is to say that I try to invent concepts. I do not try to reflect upon other things.

If I say to you who make cinema, What do you make? accord me this puerile definition, even if there are better ones: if I were to say that you invent, it is not concepts that you make, for that is not your task. That which you invent is something that we could call blocks of *movement-time* [*mouvement-durée*]. If one fabricates blocks of movement-time, perhaps one is making cinema. Notice that this is not a question of invoking a certain story, nor to challenge one. Everything has a story. Even philosophy tells stories. Philosophy tells stories and speaks of concepts. Cinema tells stories with blocks of "movement-time." I could say that painting invents another type of block, which is neither blocks of concepts, nor of movement-time, but, let us suppose, that they are blocks of lines and color. Music invents another type of particular block, a very, very particular one. But what I am saying in all of this is that science is not any less creative. I do not see so much opposition between the sciences, the arts, and all of that. If I ask a scholar what he makes, whether he invents—and he doesn't invent, or discover but what exists—it isn't there that one defines scientific activity as such. A scholar invents and creates as much as an artist. To keep for a moment to these summary definitions as I have been doing, a scholar is someone who is not complicated, it is someone who invents or who creates functions. He does not create concepts. In the end, the scholar has nothing to do with concepts; it is happily for this reason that philosophy exists. On the other hand, there is something that only a scholar knows how to do: to invent, to create functions. What is a function? One can define it quite simply as I will try to do, as we are coming upon the most rudimentary level. Not at all because you would not understand better, but because it would already

pass me by. Let us be as simple as possible. What is a function? As soon as there is a putting in correspondence ruled by at least two ensembles. The basic notion of science (and not since yesterday, but for a very long time) is that of the ensemble. And an ensemble is completely different from a concept. It has nothing to do with a concept. And as soon as you have made a correlation between two ensembles, you obtain a function and you can say "I do science." If anyone can speak to anyone, if a filmmaker can speak to a man of science, if a man of science has something to say to a philosopher, it is in the measure where, and in function with, each of their own creative activities.

Creation (the creative act) is something that is very solitary. It is in the name of "creation" that I have something to say. If I string together all these disciplines that are defined by their creative activity, it is because there is a limit that is common to them—a common limit in this whole series of invention, invention of function, this sort of block of movement, invention of concepts, and so on. Common to all of these disciplines is "space-time" [*espace-temps*]. If all these disciplines communicate together, it is at the level of that which never disengages for itself, but that which is engaged in all creative disciplines, to know the constitution of space-time. It is well known that there are rarely entire spaces in Bresson's work. His are spaces that could be called *disconnected*, which is to say, for example, there is a corner of a cell, and then one will see another corner or another place of partition. It is as if Bressonian space presented itself as a series of little bits whose connection between them is not predetermined. To embed two little bits whose connection is not predetermined—there are some great filmmakers who employ contrary strategies. I suppose that Bresson was one of the first to make space with little disconnected bits and pieces. When I said that in any case, in all forms of creation, there is a space-time and there is nothing but that, it is there that Bresson's blocks of time-movement are going to tend toward this type of space. The answer is a given: these little bits of visual space of which the connection is not given in advance, why do we want them to be connected? Is it but by the hand? There is no theory; it is not philosophy. It is just deduced like that, but I am saying that Bresson's type of space is the cinematographic valuation of the hand in the image. It is obviously linked. The very fact that these little bits of Bressonian space, from the very fact that there are just bits, disconnected bits of space, can be nothing but a manual joining, a connection, or at least the exhaustion of the hand in Bresson's entire cinema. We could continue to speak about this at length, because it is here that the block of Bresson's area-movement [*étendue-mouvement*] received, like the character of its creator, the character of this very particular space—the hand's role. The hand can effectively make its connections from one part of this space to another. Bresson is without a doubt one of the greatest filmmakers for having reintroduced tactile values into

cinema, simply because he knew how to take an image into his hands. The reason for this is that he needed his hands. A creator is not a being that works for pleasure; a creator does nothing but that which he has need to do.

Again, to have an idea in cinema is not the same as having an idea else-where. There are ideas in cinema that could have some worth in other disciplines. There are ideas in cinema that could be excellent ideas in the novel. But they would not at all have the same allure. There are ideas in cinema that can only be cinematographic. There are ideas in cinema that can only be cinematographic. These ideas are engaged in a cinematographic process and are consecrated to that process in advance. Yet, saying this leads me to another question that is very interesting: What happens when a filmmaker wants to adapt a novel? It seems evident to me that if a filmmaker wants to adapt a novel, it is because there are ideas in cinema that resound with the novel yet still present ideas particular to the novel. This is what often makes an extremely great meeting. I am not posing the problem of the filmmaker who adapts a notoriously mediocre novel; he may have need for the mediocre novel. He does have this need. It does not exclude the possibility that the film could be great. I am asking a slightly different question. It is because the novel is great when it awakens this sort of activity where someone has, in the cinema, an idea that corresponds to that idea in the novel. One of the most beautiful examples is the case of Akira Kurosawa.

Why is it that Kurosawa, a Japanese filmmaker, finds himself in a sort of familiarity with Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky? I can give you one possible response that is among a thousand other possibilities, and which also, I believe, touches upon philosophy. Under Dostoyevsky's characterizations, something very curious occurs quite often. Generally, his characters are very agitated. A character takes off, goes out toward the street; he tells a woman he loves her. "Tania calls me for help. I go. I am running. I run. Yes, Tania is going to die if I don't go, and so I go down the staircase and meet a friend, or see a run-over dog on the street." He forgets completely. He forgets completely that Tania is waiting for him as she is in the process of dying. He starts to talk, just like that, and he comes across another friend, and he goes to have some tea at this friend's house, and then all of a sudden he says, "Tania is waiting for me, I have to go!" What does this all mean? It is there, in Dostoyevsky, that the characters are perpetually taken by urgency. At the same time that they are taken by this urgency, questions of life and death, they still know that there is another question that is even more urgent, even if they are not exactly sure what it is. And that is what stops them. Everything happens as if in the worst kind of urgency—"There's fire, there's fire. . . . I've got to go!"—I say to myself, "No, no there is a much deeper problem, but what problem?" Something that is more urgent, and I will not move as much as I do not know what it is. It is the idiot. That is the idiot; "Ah, but you

know, no, no, there is a much deeper problem—what problem? I can't see it very well. But leave me alone. Leave me. Everything could burn down to the ground but nothing happens, one must find out the most urgent problem." It is not Dostoyevsky that Kurosawa is learning; all of Kurosawa's characters are like that. I would say there is a meeting, a beautiful meeting. If Kurosawa can adapt Dostoyevsky, surely it is because he can say, "I have a common cause with him; we have a common problem; that exact problem." Kurosawa's characters are exactly in the same situation. They are taken by impossible situations. "Yes, there is a more urgent problem, but I have to know what problem is more urgent." Maybe *To Live* is one of Kurosawa's films that goes the furthest in this sense, but all of Kurosawa's films go in this direction. *The Seven Samurai* is very powerful for me. It is because all of Kurosawa's space is dependent on the necessity that it be a sort of overall space that is battered down by the rain: finally nothing would take too much time because, there too we will cross again the limits of space-time. The characters of *The Seven Samurai* are taken by urgent situations. They have agreed to defend a village yet they are taken by a more profound question. This question will be articulated by the head of the Samurai toward the end of the film—"What is a Samurai? What is a Samurai, not in general, but what is a Samurai during this epoch?" Someone who is no longer good at anything, noblemen that we no longer have use for, and peasants that will soon know how to defend themselves without any assistance—and throughout the film, despite the urgency of this question that is deserving of the Idiot—which is in fact the Idiot's question: We Samurai, what are we? Here it is—I would call it an idea *in* cinema, it is a question of this type. You would reply to me in saying, "No! Because it is in fact an idea proper to the novel!"—but the idea in cinema becomes as such because it is simultaneously engaged in a cinematographic process.

You could say to me that you have an idea, but if you borrow from Dostoyevsky, an idea is not a concept, it is not philosophy, and concepts are something else. From that *idea*, one could maybe take a concept. Consider Vincente Minnelli, who had an extraordinary idea about dreams. It is very simple: one can engage this idea within the totality of the cinematographic process that is at work in Minnelli. It seems to me that Minnelli's idea about the dream concerns those who don't dream. Why? There is danger soon as there are dreams of the other. At the moment that people's dreams are devouring, it risks to engulf us; the other's dream is dangerous. Dreams have a terrible will to power and each one of us is a victim of others' dreams. Even when it is the most gracious of young girls, her dreams are terrible devourers, not of her soul but by her dreams. Beware of the other's dream, because if you are caught in the other's dream you are screwed.

I could mention another example, an idea that is rightly cinematographic. I will take the most common one, whether it can be attributed to Sylberberg, Straub, or

Marguerite Duras. What do they have in common and what among them is rightly cinematographic? To make a disjunction between the visual and sound is a rightly cinematographic idea. Why can't this be done in theater? Well, it can be done. But if it were done in theater, it would be a theater that is applying cinema to itself. To assure the disjunction of the visual and the audible ("the spoken") responds to the question of having a purely cinematographic idea. Simply stated, a voice speaks of one thing and we show something else. But in fact, there is more. That which one is speaking about is actually *underneath* that which one is showing. This is a very important point. It is in this last distinction that you can feel that this is not something one can do in the theater. To be able to speak simultaneously and to then put it *underneath* that which we see is necessary, or else this disjunctive operation holds no sense, would have no real interest. The great filmmakers had this idea. It is not about saying that it has to be done. Nothing *has* to be done. Whatever they may be, one must have ideas. That is a cinematographic idea.

It is a prodigious one because it assures in cinema a veritable transformation of its elements, a cycle of large elements that makes an impact. Cinema echoes with a sort of qualitative, physical set of elements. It makes a sort of transformation. Earth, air, water, and fire must be added.

We do not have time here to discover what role other elements play in cinema, but in saying all of this, I am not repressing the story. The story is always there, but what interests us is why the story is so very interesting with all of these things behind it or working with it. This question is what is so recognizable in most of Straub's films. There is a grand cycle of elements in Straub's work. All that we see in it is the deserted earth. But this desert is heavy with everything that is underneath it. What is underneath? It is that which the voice is speaking to us about. It is as if the earth was warping itself with what the voice tells us, and is coming to take its place underneath the earth, in its hour and its time. And if the voice speaks of cadavers, it is a whole lineage of cadavers that have just begun to take their place on the earth. Even if at that moment the littlest quivering of the shot of the deserted earth, of the empty space that you have beneath your eyes, on the deserted earth, and so on, takes on all of its meaning. The slightest hollow in this earth, et cetera.

But I could it say again—take note: to have an idea is not on the order of communication. Everything that we have been speaking about is irreducible to all communication. What does that mean? It means, in one sense, one could say that communication is transmission and propagation of information. What is information? That is not a complex question. Everyone knows that information is an ensemble of *order words*. When one informs you, one tells you that you are censored for having believed them. In other words, to inform is to circulate ordered words. Police declarations are said to be "communications" [*communiqués*].

One communicates information, which is to say that we are censored by being in a state, or censored from being able to believe, or that we are held from believing or not from believing, but to make believe that we are believing. Be careful: we are not being asked to believe. We are just being asked to *behave* as if we believe. This is information that is communication. And at the same time in these ordered words and their transmission there is in fact no communication. There is no information; this is exactly the system of control. It is true that it is a platitude, it is obvious. It is evident except in the fact that it is this that should concern us particularly today, because we are entering into a society that we could call a society of control.

A thinker such as Michel Foucault analyzed two types of society, which were quite close in their relationship to power. The first was called the *sovereign* society, and the other was called the *disciplinary* society. Those he called *disciplinary* were called as such because there are all of these transitions, such as with Napoleon, who typified the passage from a sovereign society to a disciplinary society. The disciplinary society defined itself by the constitution of the milieu of enclosure: the prison, the school, the studio, and the hospital. Disciplinary societies needed all of these things. This could engender some ambiguities within certain readings of Foucault because one could believe that this is Foucault's last word, but this is not the case. Foucault never believed that, and even clearly stated that these disciplinary societies were not eternal. He thought that we entered into a new type of society. Of course, there are all sorts of remnants of the disciplinary society, and they will remain for years and years, but we know already that we are in another type of society that we must call, as Burroughs did first (and Foucault had a great admiration for Burroughs), the "society of control."

The society of control moves in a different direction than the disciplinary society. We no longer have need for the space of enclosure. Prisons, schools, and hospitals are all still places for permanent discussion. What could be better for us to spill into than the domicile? Yes, of course, that is the future. Studios and factories are crackling around the edges. Is there not a better place to punish people aside from the prison? All of these old problems are reborn. In any case, the society of control will not come to be through spaces of enclosure. Nor through the schools. We must now observe the new capitalists. It will take forty or fifty years to explain this splendid phenomenon to us, and it will be at the same time in the schools and in the professions. It will be very interesting because the identity of the school in the profession and in its permanent formation is our future. It will inevitably imply the regrouping of schoolchildren in a space of enclosure. Yet it could be done in another way. It could be done by Minitel.

That which controls is not discipline. I would give the example of the freeway that encloses with the unique goal that people can turn into infinity with-

out ever enclosing everything yet are completely controlled. This is our future. Why am I telling you all of this? Information is a controlled system of order words. Order words that are given in our society. What can art do with all of this? What is the work of art? In the very least, there is counterinformation. For example, there are countries where conditions are particularly cruel and harsh, countries where there are very, very extreme dictatorships, where still also exists counterinformation. In Hitler's time, the Jews who escaped from Germany were to tell us of the extermination camps—they were giving counterinformation. It seems to me that counterinformation never accomplishes anything. No form of counterinformation ever bothered Hitler. The only response would be when counterinformation effectively becomes efficient, when it becomes an act of resistance. And the act of resistance is not information nor counterinformation. Counterinformation is only effective when it becomes an act of resistance.

What is the relationship between the work of art and communication? The work of art is not communication. The work of art has nothing to do with counterinformation. On the other hand, there is a fundamental affinity with the work of art and the act of resistance. Then it is there that it has something to do with information and communication—in the same way as the act of resistance. What, then, is this mysterious relationship between the work of art and the act of resistance, when in fact those who resist often do not have the time or sometimes the necessary cultivation to have a relationship with art? I don't know. Malraux developed a beautiful philosophical concept about art. He said, "Art is the only thing that resists death." I'd like to come back to what I said in the beginning concerning, what is it that I do when I make philosophy or when I invent concepts? This is the basis of a rather beautiful philosophical concept; think about it: What is it that resists death? The statue from three thousand years ago can respond to Malraux, and it is a pretty good response. But we could say, "Art is that which resists."

All acts of resistance are not works of art. In a certain manner, all works of art are not acts of resistance, but in another way they are. But in what way is art mysterious? If you permit me to go back to the question, What is it to have an idea in cinema? What is a cinematographic idea?" I would say let's take the case of Jean-Marie Straub as he operates within this disjunction of voice and sound. In his work the voice rises up, rises up, rises up, and again that which it speaks of passes over the naked earth. The desert is the visual image that is simultaneously being shown, and it has no relationship to the sound image; there is no direct relationship with the sound image. What is the act of speech that is rising upward in the air as its object passes underneath the earth? *Resistance*—an act of resistance. And in all of Straub's work, the act of speech is an act of resistance. In the last Kafka, in passing I would cite "the unrecognized name," and

would continue with Bach. Think about what the act of speech is in Bach. What is it? It is his music that is an act of resistance. Resistance against what? Not an abstract act of resistance. It is an active struggle against the profane and the sacred. And this music's act of resistance culminates in a scream, just as in the writing of *Woyzeck*. There is Bach's scream, "Outside, outside, get out of here! I don't want to see you!" That is the act of resistance. Or when Straub brings out this scream, this being Bach's scream. Or when Straub brings forth the scream of the old schizophrenic woman, the woman from the film *Not Reconciled*. Her trace makes me realize the two sides of the act of resistance: it is human, and it is all an act of art. This is the only kind of resistance that resists death and order words, control, either under the guise of the work of art, or in the form of man's struggles. What is the relationship between the struggles of man and the work of art? For me, this is the most mysterious thing, it is exactly what Paul Klee wanted to say when he said, "You know, people are missing. People are missing but they aren't." This fundamental affinity between the work of art and people who no longer exist is never clear, and it will never be clear.

Translated by Alison M. Gingeras