MEDIATORS

If things aren't going too well in contemporary thought, it's because there's a return under the name of "modernism" to abstractions, back to the problem of origins, all that sort of thing . . . Any analysis in terms of movements, vectors, is blocked. We're in a very weak phase, a period of reaction. Yet philosophy thought it had done with the problem of origins. It was no longer a question of starting or finishing. The question was rather, what happens "in between"? And the same applies to physical movements.

The kind of movements you find in sports and habits are changing. We got by for a long time with an energetic conception of motion, where there's a point of contact, or we are the source of movement. Running, putting the shot, and so on: effort, resistance, with a starting point, a lever. But nowadays we see movement defined less and less in relation to a point of leverage. All the new sports—surfing, windsurfing, hang-gliding—take the form of entering into an existing wave. There's no longer an origin as starting point, but a sort of putting-into-orbit. The key thing is how to get taken up in the motion of a big wave, a column of rising air, to "get into something" instead of being the origin of an effort.

And yet in philosophy we're coming back to eternal values, to the idea of the intellectual as custodian of eternal values. We're back to Benda complaining that Bergson was a traitor to his own class, the

clerical class, in trying to think motion. These days it's the rights of man that provide our eternal values. It's the constitutional state[1] and other notions everyone recognizes as very abstract. And it's in the name of all this that thinking's fettered, that any analysis in terms of movements is blocked. But if we're so oppressed, it's because our movement's being restricted, not because our eternal values are being violated. In barren times philosophy retreats to reflecting "on" things. If it's not itself creating anything, what can it do but reflect on something? So it reflects on eternal or historical things, but can itself no longer make any move.

Philosophers Aren't Reflective, but Creative

What we should in fact do, is stop allowing philosophers to reflect "on" things. The philosopher creates, he doesn't reflect.

I'm criticized for going back to Bergson's analyses. Actually, to distinguish as Bergson did between perception, affection, and action as three kinds of motion is a very novel approach. It remains novel because I don't think it's ever been quite absorbed; it's one of the most difficult, and finest, bits of Bergson's thought. But this analysis applies automatically to cinema: cinema was invented while Bergson's thought was taking shape. Motion was brought into concepts at precisely the same time it was brought into images. Bergson presents one of the first cases of self-moving thought. Because it's not enough simply to say concepts possess movement; you also have to construct intellectually mobile concepts. Just as it's not enough to make moving shadows on the wall, you have to construct images that can move by themselves.

In my first book on cinema I considered the cinematic image as this image that becomes self-moving. In the second book I consider the cinematic image as it takes on its own temporality. So I'm in no sense taking cinema as something to reflect upon, I'm rather taking a field in which what interests me actually takes place: What are the conditions for self-movement or auto-temporality in images, and how have these two factors evolved since the end of the nineteenth century? For once there's a cinema based on time rather than motion, the image obviously has a different nature than it had in its initial period. And cinema alone can provide the laboratory in which to explore, precisely because in cinema, motion and time become constituents of the image itself.

The first phase of cinema, then, is the self-moving image. This happened to take the form of a cinema of narration. But it didn't have to. There's a paper by Noël Burch that makes the basic point that narration was not part of cinema from the outset. What led movement-images—that is, the self-moving image—to produce narration, was the sensory-motor schema. Cinema is not by its very nature narrative: it becomes narrative when it takes as its object the sensory-motor schema. That's to say, someone on the screen perceives, feels, reacts. It takes some believing: the hero, in a given situation, reacts; the hero always knows how to react. And it implies a particular conception of cinema. Why did it become American, Hollywoodian? For the simple reason that the schema was American property. This all came to an end with the Second World War. Suddenly people no longer really believed it was possible to react to situations. The postwar situation was beyond them. So we get Italian neorealism presenting people placed in situations that cannot advance through reactions, through actions. No possible reactions—does that mean everything becomes lifeless? No, not at all. We get purely optical and aural situations, which give rise to completely novel ways of understanding and resisting. We get neorealism, the New Wave, an American cinema breaking with Hollywood.

There's still movement in images, of course, but with the appearance of purely optical and aural situations, yielding time-images, that's no longer what matters, it's only an index of something else. Time-images are nothing to do with before and after, with succession. Succession was there from the start as the law of narration. Time-images are not things happening in time, but new forms of coexistence, ordering, transformation . . .

The "Baker's Transformation"

What I'm interested in are the relations between the arts, science, and philosophy. There's no order of priority among these disciplines. Each is creative. The true object of science is to create functions, the true object of art is to create sensory aggregates, and the object of philosophy is to create concepts. From this viewpoint, given these general heads, however sketchy, of function, aggregate, and concept, we can pose the question of echoes and resonances between them. How is it possible—in their completely different lines of development, with

quite different rhythms and movements of production—how is it possible for a concept, an aggregate, and a function to interact?

An initial example: in mathematics there's a kind of space called Riemannian. Mathematically very well defined, in terms of functions, this sort of space involves setting up little neighboring portions that can be joined up in an infinite number of ways, and it made possible, among other things, the theory of relativity. Now, if I take modern cinema, I see that after the war a new kind of space based on neighborhoods appears, the connections between one little portion and another being made in an infinite number of possible ways and not being predetermined. These two spaces are unconnected. If I say the cinematic space is Riemannian, it seems facile, and yet in a way it's quite true. I'm not saying that cinema's doing what Riemann did. But if one takes a space defined simply as neighborhoods joined up in an infinite number of possible ways, with visual and aural neighborhoods joined in a tactile way, then it's Bresson's space. Bresson isn't Riemann, of course, but what he does in cinema is the same as what happened in mathematics, and echoes it.

Another example: in physics there's something that interests me a lot, which has been analysed by Prigogine and Stengers, called the "baker's transformation." You take a square, pull it out into a rectangle, cut the rectangle in half, stick one bit back on top of the other, and go on repeatedly altering the square by pulling it out into a rectangle again, as though you were kneading it. After a certain number of transformations any two points, however close they may have been in the original square, are bound to end up in two different halves. This leads to a whole theory, to which Prigogine attaches great importance in relation to his probabilistic physics.

On, now, to Resnais. In his film *Je t'aime, je t'aime* we see a hero taken back to one moment in his life, and the moment is then set in a series of different contexts. Like layers that are constantly shifted around, altered, rearranged so that what is close in one layer becomes very distant in another. It's a very striking conception of time, very intriguing cinematically, and it echoes the "baker's transformation." So I don't feel it's outrageous to say that Resnais comes close to Prigogine, or that Godard, for different reasons, comes close to Thom. I'm not saying that Resnais and Prigogine, or Godard and Thom, are doing the same thing. I'm pointing out, rather, that there are remarkable similarities between scientific creators of functions and cinematic creators of images. And the same goes for philosophical concepts, since there are distinct concepts of these spaces.

Thus philosophy, art, and science come into relations of mutual resonance and exchange, but always for internal reasons. The way they impinge on one another depends on their own evolution. So in this sense we really have to see philosophy, art, and science as sorts of separate melodic lines in constant interplay with one another. With philosophy having in this no reflective pseudoprimacy nor, equally, any creative inferiority. Creating concepts is no less difficult than creating new visual or aural combinations, or creating scientific functions. What we have to recognize is that the interplay between the different lines isn't a matter of one monitoring or reflecting another. A discipline that set out to follow a creative movement coming from outside would itself relinquish any creative role. You'll get nowhere by latching onto some parallel movement, you have to make a move yourself. If nobody makes a move, nobody gets anywhere. Nor is interplay an exchange: it all turns on giving or taking.

Mediators are fundamental. Creation's all about mediators. Without them nothing happens. They can be people—for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for a scientist, philosophers or artists—but things too, even plants or animals, as in Castaneda. Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators. It's a series. If you're not in some series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost. I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own. And still more when it's apparent: Félix Guattari and I are one another's mediators.

The formation of mediators in a community is well seen in the work of the Canadian filmmaker Pierre Perrault: having found mediators I can say what I have to say. Perrault thinks that if he speaks on his own, even in a fictional framework, he's bound to come out with an intellectual's discourse, he won't get away from a "master's or colonist's discourse," an established discourse. What we have to do is catch someone else "legending," "caught in the act of legending." Then a minority discourse, with one or many speakers, takes shape. We here come upon what Bergson calls "fabulation" . . . To catch someone in the act of legending is to catch the movement of consti-

tution of a people. A people isn't something already there. A people, in a way, is what's missing, as Paul Klee used to say. Was there ever a Palestinian people? Israel says no. Of course there was, but that's not the point. The thing is, that once the Palestinians have been thrown out of their territory, then to the extent that they resist they enter the process of constituting a people. It corresponds exactly to what Perrault calls being caught in the act of legending. It's how any people is constituted. So, to the established fictions that are always rooted in a colonist's discourse, we oppose a minority discourse, with mediators.

This idea that truth isn't something already out there we have to discover, but has to created in every domain, is obvious in the sciences, for instance. Even in physics, there's no truth that doesn't presuppose a system of symbols, be they only coordinates. There's no truth that doesn't "falsify" established ideas. To say that "truth is created" implies that the production of truth involves a series of operations that amount to working on a material—strictly speaking, a series of falsifications. When I work with Guattari each of us falsifies the other, which is to say that each of us understands in his own way notions put forward by the other. A reflective series with two terms takes shape. And there can be series with several terms, or complicated branching series. These capacities of falsity to produce truth, that's what mediators are about . . .

The Left Needs Mediators

A political digression. Many people expected a new kind of discourse from a socialist government. A discourse very close to real movements, and so capable of reconciling those movements, by establishing arrangements compatible with them. Take New Caledonia, for example.[2] When Pisani said, "Whatever happens, there'll be independence," that in itself was a new kind of discourse. It meant: instead of pretending to be unaware of the real movements in order to negotiate about them, we're going to recognize the outcome right away, and negotiations will take place in the light of this outcome set in advance. We'll negotiate ways and means, the speed of change. So there were complaints from the Right who thought, in line with the old way of doing things, that there should above all be no talk of independence, even if we knew it was unavoidable, because it had to be made to depend on very hard bargaining. I don't think that people

on the Right are deluded, they're no more stupid than anyone else, but their method is to oppose movement. It's the same as the opposition to Bergson in philosophy, it's all the same thing. Embracing movement, or blocking it: politically, two completely different methods of negotiation. For the Left, this means a new way of talking. It's not so much a matter of winning arguments as of being open about things. Being open is setting out the "facts," not only of a situation but of a problem. Making visible things that would otherwise remain hidden. On the Caledonian problem we're told that from a certain point onward the territory was regarded as a settler colony, so the Kanaks became a minority in their own territory. When did this start? How did it develop? Who was responsible? The Right refuses these questions. If they're valid questions, then by establishing the facts we state a problem that the Right wants to hide. Because once the problem has been set out, we can no longer get away from it, and the Right itself has to talk in a different way. So the job of the Left, whether in or out of power, is to uncover the sort of problem that the Right wants at all costs to hide.

It seems, I'm afraid, that one may speak in this connection of a real inability to get at the facts. The Left can certainly be excused a great deal by the fact that, as a body, civil servants and those in charge have in France always been on the Right. So that even in good faith, even playing by the rules, they can't change the way they think or behave.

The socialists didn't have people who would provide, let alone assemble information for them, who would set out problems their way. They should have established parallel, supplementary channels. They should have had intellectuals as mediators. But all that happened along these lines were vague friendly contacts. We weren't given basic information about things. To take three very different examples: land ownership in New Caledonia may be recorded in specialist journals, but it wasn't divulged to the general public. On the question of education, we're led to believe that the private sector is Catholic education; I've never been able to find out what proportion of private education is secular. Another example: since the Right took back a large number of town halls, funding for all sorts of cultural activities has been cut off—some prominent, but some very small and local—and it's the numerous small ones that are particularly interesting; but there's no way of getting a detailed list. The Right doesn't

face this kind of problem because they've got direct mediators already in place, working directly for them. But the Left needs indirect or free mediators, a different style, if only the Left makes it possible. The Left really needs what, thanks to the Communist Party, has been debased under the ridiculous name of "fellow-travelers," because it really needs people to think.

The Conspiracy of Imitators

How can we define the crisis in contemporary literature? The system of bestsellers is a system of rapid turnover. Many bookshops are already becoming like the record shops that only stock things that make it into the charts. This is what *Apostrophes* is all about.[3] Fast turnover necessarily means selling people what they expect: even what's "daring," "scandalous," strange, and so on falls into the market's predictable forms. The conditions for literary creation, which emerge only unpredictably, with a slow turnover and progressive recognition, are fragile. Future Becketts or Kafkas, who will of course be unlike Beckett or Kafka, may well not find a publisher, and if they don't nobody (of course) will notice. As Lindon says,[4] "You don't notice when people *don't* make it." The USSR lost its literature without anyone noticing, for example. We may congratulate ourselves on the quantitative increase in books, and larger print runs—but young writers will end up molded in a literary space that leaves them no possibility of creating anything. We'll be faced with the monstrosity of a standard novel, imitations of Balzac, Stendhal, Céline, Beckett, or Duras, it hardly matters which. Or rather, Balzac himself is inimitable, Céline's inimitable: they're new syntaxes, the "unexpected." What gets imitated is always itself a copy. Imitators imitate one another, and that's how they proliferate and give the impression that they're improving on their model, because they know how it's done, they know the answers.

It's awful, what they do on *Apostrophes*.[3] Technically, the program's very well done, the way it's put together, the shots. And yet it's the zero-state of literary criticism, literature as light entertainment. Pivot's never hidden the fact that what he really likes is football and food. Literature becomes a game show. The real problem with TV programs is their invasion by games. It's rather worrying that there's an enthusiastic audience that thinks it's watching some cultural activity when it sees two men competing to make a word with nine letters. There are strange things going on, summed up by the filmmaker Rossellini. Listen carefully: "The world today is too pointlessly cruel. Cruelty is crushing someone else's personality, reducing someone to the state where they'll make a total confession of anything. If there was some point in getting the confession, I could accept it, but if it's all done by a voyeur, someone sick, then we have to call it cruelty. I strongly believe that cruelty is always an expression of infantilism. All art these days is becoming daily more infantile. Everyone has the crazy desire to become as childish as possible. Not naive, but childish . . . Art these days is either plaintive or cruel. There's nothing else around, either you complain or you commit some absolutely pointless act of petty cruelty. Look, for example, at all this speculation (for that's what we have to call it) on incommunicability, alienation—I see in it no sentiment whatever, just gross indulgence. And that, as I said, has made me give up cinema." And it's an even better reason for giving up interviews. Cruelty and infantilism test the strength even of those who indulge them, and they force themselves even on those who try to evade them.

The Couple Overfloweth

We sometimes go on as though people can't express themselves. In fact they're always expressing themselves. The sorriest couples are those where the woman can't be preoccupied or tired without the man saying "What's wrong? Say something . . . ," or the man, without the woman saying . . . , and so on. Radio and television have spread this spirit everywhere, and we're riddled with pointless talk, insane quantities of words and images. Stupidity's never blind or mute. So it's not a problem of getting people to express themselves but of providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say. Repressive forces don't stop people expressing themselves but rather force them to express themselves. What a relief to have nothing to say, the right to say nothing, because only then is there a chance of framing the rare, and ever rarer, thing that might be worth saying. What we're plagued by these days isn't any blocking of communication, but pointless statements. But what we call the meaning of a statement is its point. That's the only definition of meaning, and it comes to the

same thing as a statement's novelty. You can listen to people for hours, but what's the point? . . . That's why arguments are such a strain, why there's never any point arguing. You can't just tell someone what they're saying is pointless. So you tell them it's wrong. But what someone says is never wrong, the problem isn't that some things are wrong, but that they're stupid or irrelevant. That they've already been said a thousand times. The notions of relevance, necessity, the point of something, are a thousand times more significant than the notion of truth. Not as substitutes for truth, but as the measure of the truth of what I'm saying. It's the same in mathematics: Poincaré used to say that many mathematical theories are completely irrelevant, pointless. He didn't say they were wrong—that wouldn't have been so bad.

Oedipus in the Colonies

Maybe journalists are partly responsible for this crisis in literature. Journalists have of course always written books. But they used, when writing books, to adopt a form different from newspaper journalism, they became writers. The situation has changed, because journalists have become convinced that the book form is theirs by right and that it takes no special effort to use this form. In one fell swoop and en masse, journalists have taken over literature. And the result is one variant of the standard novel, a sort of *Oedipus in the Colonies*,[5] a reporter's travels, arranged around his pursuit of women, or the search for a father. The situation affects all writers: any writer has to make himself and his work journalistic. In the extreme case everything takes place between a journalist author and a journalist critic, the book being only a link between them and hardly needing to exist. Because books become accounts of activities, experiences, purposes, and ends that unfold elsewhere. They become nothing but a record. So everyone seems, and seems to themselves, to have a book in them, simply by virtue of having a particular job, or a family even, a sick parent, a rude boss. A novel for everyone in the family, or the business . . . It's forgotten that for anyone, literature involves a special sort of exploration and effort, a specific creative purpose that can be pursued only within literature itself, whose job is in no way to register the immediate results of very different activities and purposes. Books become "secondary" when marketing takes over.

If Literature Dies, It Will Be Murder

People who haven't properly read or understood McLuhan may think it's only natural for audiovisual media to replace books, since they actually contain all the creative possibilities of the literature or other modes of expression they supersede. It's not true. For if audiovisual media ever replace literature, it won't be as competing means of expression, but as a monopoly of structures that also stifle the creative possibilities in those media themselves. If literature dies, it will be a violent death, a political assassination (as in the USSR, even if nobody notices). It's not a matter of comparing different sorts of medium. The choice isn't between written literature and audiovisual media. It's between creative forces (in audiovisual media as well as literature) and domesticating forces. It's highly unlikely that audiovisual media will find the conditions for creation once they've been lost in literature. Different modes of expression may have different creative possibilities, but they're all related insofar as they must counter the introduction of a cultural space of markets and conformity—that is, a space of "producing for the market"—together.

The Proletariat in Tennis

Style is a literary notion: a syntax. And yet one speaks of style in the sciences, where there's no syntax. One speaks of style in sport. Very detailed studies have been done on style in sport, but I'm no expert on this; I think perhaps they show that style amounts to innovation. Sports do of course have their quantitative scale of records that depend on improvements in equipment, shoes, vaulting-poles . . . But there are also qualitative transformations, ideas, which are to do with style: how we went from the scissors jump to the belly roll and the Fosbury flop; how hurdles stopped being obstacles, coming to correspond simply to a longer stride. Why not start here, why do we have to go through a whole history of quantitative advances? Each new style amounts not so much to a new "move" as to a linked sequence of postures—the equivalent, that is, of a syntax, based on an earlier style but breaking with it. Technical advances play their part only by being taken up and incorporated in a new style. That's why sport's "inventors" are so important; they're qualitative mediators. In tennis for instance: when did the kind of return of serve where the returning ball lands at your opponent's feet as he runs to the net first appear? I

think it was a great Australian player, Bromwich, before the war, but I'm not sure. Borg obviously invented a new style that opened up tennis to a sort of proletariat. There are inventors in tennis, just as elsewhere: McEnroe's an inventor, that is, a stylist—he's brought into tennis Egyptian postures (in his serve) and Dostoyevskian reflexes ("if you insist on banging your head on the wall all the time, life becomes impossible"). And you then get imitators who can beat the inventors at their own game: they're sport's bestsellers. Borg produced a race of obscure proletarians, and McEnroe gets beaten by a quantitative champion. You could say the copiers get their results by capitalizing on moves made by others and that sporting bodies show remarkable ingratitude toward the inventors who allow them to survive and prosper. Never mind: the history of sport runs through these inventors, each of whom amounts to something unforeseen, a new syntax, a transformation, and without them the purely technological advances would have remained quantitative, irrelevant, and pointless.

AIDS and Global Strategy

One very important problem in medicine is the evolution of diseases. Of course you get new external factors, new forms of microbe or virus, new social conditions. But you have to look at symptomatology, the grouping of symptoms, too: over a very short timescale symptoms stop being grouped the same way, and diseases are isolated that were previously split into various different aspects. Parkinson's disease, Roger's disease, and others present major changes in the grouping of symptoms (one might speak of a syntax of medicine). The history of medicine's made up of these groupings, these isolations, these regroupings that, here again, become possible with technological advances, but aren't determined by those advances. What's happened since the war in this context? The discovery of "stress" illnesses, in which the disorder's no longer produced by a hostile agent but by nonspecific defensive reactions that get out of hand, or exhausted. Medical journals after the war were full of discussions of stress in modern societies, and new ways of grouping various illnesses in relation to it. More recently there was the discovery of autoimmune diseases, diseases of the self: defense mechanisms no longer recognizing the cells of the organism they're supposed to protect, or external agents making these cells impossible to distinguish from others. AIDS comes

somewhere between these two poles of stress and autoimmunity. Perhaps we're heading toward diseases without doctors and patients, as Dagognet says in his analysis of contemporary medicine: diseases with images rather than symptoms, and carriers rather than sufferers. That's a problem for the welfare system, but it's worrying in other ways too. It's striking how this new style of disease resembles global politics or strategy. They tell us the risk of war comes not only from specific external potential aggressors but from our defensive reactions going out of control or breaking down (which is why we need a properly controlled atomic weapons system . . .). Contemporary diseases fit the same pattern—or nuclear policy corresponds to our diseases. Homosexuals are in danger of playing the part of some biological aggressor, just as minorities or refugees will fill the role of an enemy. It's one more reason to insist on a socialist government that rejects this twin image of disease and society.

We have to see creation as tracing a path between impossibilities . . . Kafka explained how it was impossible for a Jewish writer to speak in German, impossible for him to speak in Czech, and impossible not to speak. Pierre Perrault comes up against the same problem: the impossibility of not speaking, of speaking in English, of speaking in French. Creation takes place in choked passages. Even in some particular language, even in French for example, a new syntax is a foreign language within the language. A creator who isn't grabbed around the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator. A creator's someone who creates their own impossibilities, and thereby creates possibilities. As with McEnroe, it's by banging your head on the wall that you find a way through. You have to work on the wall, because without a set of impossibilities, you won't have the line of flight, the exit that is creation, the power of falsity that is truth. Your writing has to be liquid or gaseous simply because normal perception and opinion are solid, geometric. It's what Bergson did in philosophy, what Virginia Woolf or Henry James did with the novel, what Renoir did in cinema (and what experimental cinema, which has gone a long way exploring the states of matter, does). Not becoming unearthly. But becoming all the more earthly by inventing laws of liquids and gases on which the earth depends. So style requires a lot of silence and work to make a whirlpool at some point, then flies out like the matches children follow along the water in a gutter. Because you don't get a style

just by putting words together, combining phrases, using ideas. You have to open up words, break things open, to free earth's vectors. All writers, all creators, are shadows. How can anyone write a biography of Proust or Kafka? Once you start writing, shadows are more substantial than bodies. Truth is producing existence. It's not something in your head but something existing. Writers generate real bodies. In Pessoa they're imaginary people—but not so very imaginary, because he gives them each a way of writing, operating. But the key thing is that it's not Pessoa who's doing what they're doing. You don't get very far in literature with the system "I've seen a lot and been lots of places," where the author first does things and then tells us about them. Narcissism in authors is awful, because shadows can't be narcissistic. No more interviews, then. What's really terrible isn't having to cross a desert once you're old and patient enough, but for young writers to be born in a desert, because they're then in danger of seeing their efforts come to nothing before they even get going. And yet, and yet, it's impossible for the new race of writers, already preparing their work and their styles, not to be born.

Conversation with Antoine Dulaure and Claire Parnet
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