

## *Preface to the English edition*

This book does not set out to produce a history of the cinema but to isolate certain cinematographic concepts. These concepts are not technical (such as the various kinds of shot or the different camera movements) or critical (for example the great genres, the Western, the detective film, the historical film, etc.). Neither are they linguistic, in the sense in which it has been said that the cinema was the universal language, or in the sense in which it has been said that the cinema is a language. The cinema seems to us to be a composition of images and of signs, that is, a pre-verbal intelligible content (*pure semiotics*), whilst semiology of a linguistic inspiration abolishes the image and tends to dispense with the sign. What we call cinematographic concepts are therefore the types of images and the signs which correspond to each type. The image of the cinema being, therefore, 'automatic' and presented primarily as movement-image, we have considered under what conditions it is specifically defined into different types. These types are, principally, the perception-image, the affection-image and the action-image. Their distribution certainly does determine a representation of time, but it must be noted that time remains the object of an indirect representation in so far as it depends on montage and derives from movement-images.

It is possible that, since the war, a direct time-image has been formed and imposed on the cinema. We do not wish to say that there will no longer be any movement, but that – just as happened a very long time ago in philosophy – a reversal has happened in the movement-time relationship; it is no longer time which is related to movement, it is the anomalies of movement which are dependent on time. Instead of an indirect representation of time which derives from movement, it is the direct time-image which derives from movement, it is the direct time-image which commands the *false movement*.<sup>1</sup> Why did the war make possible this reversal, this emergence of a cinema of time, with Welles, with neo-realism, with the new wave . . .? Here again, it will be necessary to discover which types of images correspond to the new time-image and which signs combine with these types. Everything perhaps suddenly appears in a shattering of the sensory-motor schema: this schema, which had linked perceptions, affections and actions, does not enter a profound crisis without the general regime of the image being changed. In any case, the cinema has undergone a much more important

change here than the one which happened with the talkie.

It is not a matter of saying that the modern cinema of the time-image is 'more valuable' than the classical cinema of the movement-image. We are talking only of masterpieces to which no hierarchy of value applies. 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. This is why this study must interweave concrete analyses of images and signs with the 'monographs' of the great directors who have created or renewed them.

The first volume deals with the movement-image. The second will deal with the time image. If, at the end of this first volume, we try to understand the full importance of Hitchcock – one of the greatest English film-makers – it is because we think he invented an extraordinary type of image: the image of mental relations. Relations, as external to their terms, have always been the subject of English philosophical thought. When a relation terminates or changes, what happens to its terms? Thus Hitchcock asks in *Mr and Mrs Smith*, a minor comedy, what happens to a man and a woman who suddenly learn that, as their marriage is not legal, they have never been married? Hitchcock produces a cinema of relation, just as English philosophy produced a philosophy of relation. In this sense he is, perhaps, at the juncture of the two cinemas, the classical that he perfects and the modern that he prepares. In all these respects, it is not sufficient to compare the great directors of the cinema with painters, architects or even musicians. They must also be compared with thinkers. The question of a crisis of the cinema is often raised – under the pressure of television, then of the electronic image. But the creative capacities of both are inseparable from what the great directors of the cinema contribute to them. Rather like Varese in music, they lay claim to the new materials and means that the future makes possible.

Gilles Deleuze

## Note

- 1 *Faux Mouvement* (false movement) is the French title of Wim Wenders' film *Falsche Bewegung*, usually known as *Wrong Move* in English.

## *Preface to the French edition*

This study is not a history of the cinema. It is a taxonomy, an attempt at the classification of images and signs. But this first volume has to content itself with determining the elements, and the elements of only one part of the classification.

We will frequently be referring to the American logician Peirce (1839–1914), because he established a general classification of images and signs, which is undoubtedly the most complete and the most varied. It can be compared with Linnaeus's classifications in natural history, or even more with Mendeleev's table in chemistry.

Another comparison is no less necessary. Bergson was writing *Matter and Memory* in 1896: it was the diagnosis of a crisis in psychology. Movement, as physical reality in the external world, and the image, as psychic reality in consciousness, could no longer be opposed. The Bergsonian discovery of a movement-image, and more profoundly, of a time-image, still retains such richness today that it is not certain that all its consequences have been drawn. Despite the rather overhasty critique of the cinema that Bergson produced shortly afterwards, nothing can prevent an encounter between the movement-image, as he considers it, and the cinematographic image.

In this first part, we will deal with the movement-image and its varieties. The time-image will be the subject of a second part. The great directors of the cinema may be compared, in our view, not merely with painters, architects and musicians, but also with thinkers. They think with movement-images and time-images instead of concepts. One cannot object by pointing to the vast proportion of rubbish in cinematographic production – it is no worse than anywhere else, although it does have unparalleled economic and industrial consequences. The great cinema directors are hence merely more vulnerable – it is infinitely easier to prevent them from doing their work. The history of the cinema is a long martyrology. Nevertheless, the cinema still forms part of art and part of thought, in the irreplaceable, autonomous forms which these directors were able to invent and get screened, in spite of everything.

We are not providing any reproductions as illustrations to our text, as it is in fact our text alone which aspires to be an illustration of the great films, of which each of us retains to a greater or lesser extent a memory, emotion or perception.

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