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Creativity

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THE SOURCE OF THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

*First proposition: rules can only be imposed by the work itself.*

—One always comes back to the same question—what is true or what is false in artistic matters?—or to the only response worth considering, to refuse all rules outside the work is to refuse to be crippled, blind, and deaf.

—All philosophical thought, all rules are provided in an original way by the actor, by the artist. We touch here upon the foundation of art: what is originality?

—The analysis will certainly bring us back to genetics. It suffices already to remark that though man's original acts are numerous (as in daily life, the event

of walking . . .), the more they are rare and symbolic the stronger is their degree of originality.

*Second Proposition: nothing is born from nothing.*

—To speak of our originality is to speak of our constitution, and as a consequence of the making of the universe and of its process. It is the same for art as for the destiny of humans and of the universe. The preoccupations of the musician join those of the astrophysicist.

—For centuries, scientific tradition has predicted that nothing can come from nothing. It has viewed the universe as an automation, continuing to exist without a point of return, without a new creation. Suddenly in 1973, a professor from New York University put forth an opposing hypothesis: All the matter and energy in the observable universe could have emerged from nothing.

—I am not an astrophysicist, but, for a long time, I have thought that music is nothing but a path among others, permitting humankind first to imagine, then, after long generations, to lead the existing universe to another, entirely created by humanity.

—Since 1958, I have been writing on the subject of the originality of art and music:

τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸν νοεῖν εἰπεῖ τε καὶ εἴπει  
τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸν εἰπειν εἰπεῖ τε καὶ οὐκ εἴπει

“For it is the same to think as to be” (Poem by Parmenides); and my paraphrase, “For it is the same to be as not to be.” In a universe of nothingness. A brief train of waves, so brief that its end and beginning coincide (time in nothingness) disengaging itself endlessly.

*Nothingness works, creates. It engenders being.*

—Still today, through lack of conceptual and suitable experimental tools, astrophysicists are unable to respond to this question, to this captivating notion of a universe open to spontaneous creation, which could form or disappear without respite, in a truly creative vortex. From *nothingness*. A disappearance into nothing.

*Third Proposition: the universe is in perpetual creation.*

Plato already fought, on a more religious level, against the theory of a continually extended universe. According to him, God creates the universe,

builds it and leaves it. The automaton deregulates itself and becomes increasingly chaotic (this could be the current epoch...), to the point where the Creator takes it in hand again and reconstructs the universe.

Transcribed to a scientific level, the anecdote assumes its true force: Because of gravitation, the universe could stop dilating and could commence to contract until it becomes an implosion towards nothingness. This pendulum movement creates the state of perpetual creation.

Again, we are referred back to the foundation of art. You often hear it said: To construct, it is necessary to destroy. In my opinion, this assertion is false. It suffices to put the proposition: The contribution of an individual depends on his originality, his own distinctiveness, even though he is caught in a global and general flux. Einstein would not exist without the breakthroughs of Lorentz. We could extrapolate forever.

Thus opens before us the reason for certain remarkable works, sorts of unsurpassable paradigms (for example the Egyptian bas reliefs...), what is done is an absolute. Likewise in music, the architecture of a work, its performance, depend on technique, but also on factors which are impossible to name—the life of him who composes it, of him who performs it, the instrument, the acoustics. Richness elaborates upon itself by stages, to the point of the highest universal preoccupations.

Thought is nothing but a part of doing, whence the absence of archetypes, and a different existence each time. That is, in effect, at least partly, the theory of probabilities: a flux of aleatoric functions.

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It is in fact the inner initiative, the transfer to a deed which engenders fulfillment. I am not speaking of happiness, which is a myth, for nothing is absolute. They exist, of course, the joys, the tears. But that is not what should count: They are nothing but epiphenomena of that which one does, suffers, or lives. Death, for example, a supreme misfortune, is a part of life. We sense it, we anticipate it. But we prudently avoid speaking about it, as if it were a guest that we must avoid. Nevertheless, it is there, omnipresent, at our sides. Our organism, degenerating every second, knows it. Now, this definitive disappearance can be transposed in the domain of work: the choices that I make when I compose music, for example. They are distressing, for they imply renouncing something. Creation thus passes through torture. But a torture which is sane and natural. That is what is most beautiful: to decide at any moment, to act, to renounce, to propose something else. It's great. The joy is the fulfilment of living. That's what it means to live.

This tormented life is necessary. Everywhere, at all times. Only, one does not live with it, one refuses it. We surround ourselves with references, politeness, taboos, ethics, for ourselves as well as for others. Or, as a last resort, we spread butter on the psychoanalyst's bread, but what a myth it is to believe that in remembering something, we delve more profoundly into ourselves! The subconscious also forgets. Like memory, it is putrescible. It is not a veil one can lift from the shadow cast by a long abandoned planet. A sort of Hades from Antiquity. In our life, there are entire patches of the past which have completely disappeared, or that we will never find again. It is illusory to think that the subconscious can retain the fantastic quantity of impressions, of suggestions, of fascinations experienced at such and such a moment in our existence.

I can nevertheless ponder: Is it because I no longer remember it that a particular thing no longer exists? The fact that I do not remember it does not mean that the thing no longer exists in my subconscious, certainly. However, I cannot maintain that these memories exist, since they are inaccessible. And if anyone claims that they are accessible, I would very much like to possess the methods for access to them. Because it would be fascinating to explore them, only in order to turn one's past into a cinema.

The inaccessibility of this memory thus implies that we cannot prove its existence. That is the theory. In addition, practically speaking, it is unthinkable, impossible that the human brain conserve intact, and not degraded, traces or prints of the past. Which are extremely fine and subtle. Let's take the example of our most recent recollections. When we remove them from memory's drawer, we damage them like pinned butterflies. In fact, we replace them with others. And, if we go back further, we realize that memory, if it still exists somewhere, is still more inaccessible, tucked away more deeply. Because it is covered with new traces. Starting from the oldest, yes, but completely restructured. We are speaking of a theoretical view. For me, psychoanalysis is a subconscious view. Moreover (just as other disciplines) it has suffered from an abusive extrapolation; people have wanted to see it as a panacea.

<sup>1</sup>Palaeontologist, geneticist, biologist, physician, chemist, mathematician, historian and expert in human sciences. These qualifications comprise the identification card of tomorrow's musician. Of him whom I call the conceiving artist. Who searches after the secret order that rules the universal apparent disorder. Who considers a new relation between art and science, notably between art and mathematics. Since Greek Antiquity and right up to our twentieth century, moreover, certain conquests in music and several discoveries in mathematics spring forth almost at the same moment. And, contrary to what we often think, there have been interactions, osmosis, reciprocal influences. In 500 B.C., for example, the relation between the pitches and the lengths of strings had been established. Music thus gives a serious impetus to the theory

of numbers (positive rational) and to geometry. Later (eleventh century), the bi-dimensional spatial representation of pitches as a function of time by the use of staves and *puncta* undoubtedly influenced Descartes' analytical geometry, proposed six centuries later. Direct influence? I do not know, not knowing Descartes in person at all! But ideas cross one another like currents of air. And sometimes very little suffices for the spark to burst forth.

Another interesting example: the fugue. A fixed structure, and fixed if there ever was one, when speaking of school work, the fugue is an abstract automatism, which was utilized two centuries before the birth of the theory of abstract automata. It was the first automaton. And what is an automaton if not the expression of mankind's profound need to reproduce? To project worlds, universes, to create himself in his proper image?

In constructing robots, man took the place of gods. For he felt that the latter were nothing but his own reflection. And now, we are constructing biological robots which tomorrow will give birth to little robots: The dreams of the gods are materialized!

Yet, we always live in the shadow of Sisyphus and Tantalus. Because everything around us moves, shifts, is in constant turmoil. We are not moving through an epoch of certitudes: Cosmonauts in a swarm, we navigate in the provisional, we must reconsider each thought at every instant. This isn't all bad, moreover, for our life thereby becomes much more complicated, more complex, more alive, finds itself all the more enriched. We live more intensely when we must confront swarms of problems, when we must decipher this growing complexity, which is here, before our eyes, hieratic, even if we try to ignore it. That which we live is a bloody hand-to-hand with nature. Which engenders anguish. But, luckily, when we are afraid of something, when it becomes bitter, acidic, we immediately erect defenses. We cannot live without defenses, anyway, at the risk of being immediately annihilated. And our defense is to refuse to see, is to deny the complexity that surrounds us. It is also to create beliefs, myths, good or bad gods. Or elegant theories of physics, which structure our spiritual environment and reassure us, be they legitimate or not. These are our bunkers, our mental machines, veritable automata interconnected with our defensive tactics, with our lines of conduct, with our physical and mental self-protection. So that we can act, know how to act and what to do.

I was about to forget memory, which is forgettable, we all know that. Fortunately. It is even made to be forgotten, it is perishable. For, if we should remember, what with the acuity of reality, of all the past instants, marvels and transformations, we could never take the shock. Memory, nothing but the trace of these instants, equalizes, cushions, lulls. Another self-defense.

But in other respects, one must avoid the trap of becoming imprisoned in memory. It is good to look around, to risk shock, to keep a critical spirit, a

power of constant renewal. In brief, a fresh outlook. This risk, for there is one, comprises a part of our existence, just as defense, survival. It is our fate to be destiny.

Society, which stifles us, constitutes an additional risk. It is thus in self-defense that we try to participate as little as possible. So that we can judge it from the exterior. For it rubs off on us, just as history taints the present. Thus, I would rather be outside—putting on the decals—than within—being plastered with decals. Everyone of us tries, according to our ability, to pull away from society and from the work it implies. Work which, for many, is synonymous with slavery. Yet another proof—if one were wanting—that servitude always exists. For if one does not find in his work the possibility of being oneself, the joy—or anguish—of existing, then one is enslaved. And one buys moments of release time—but which are not free—liquified instants of real life, which one doesn't know how to live anyway. Because one doesn't know, one no longer knows.

In his *Republic*, Plato says that a society is just when its citizens do what they like to do. This amounts to saying that all present societies are unjust. In spite of social or socializing theories which seek to liberate humans, to render them creative, to lead them to make decisions in their own interior solitude. And not to impose them from the outside. If only that were practiced since childhood! When I was at school, we were set one against the other, creating an idiotically competitive spirit, a superficial emulation. For what reason? Perhaps one day to obtain recompenses, glory, fortune, privileges... material things. Thus, from the very beginning, we do not act according to our own, profound individuality. We must recognize that this aberration, that this false route is a powerful arm of society.

The force of a work is in its truth. And truth is that which can exist without crutches. Those crutches which are often sentimentality, sensitivity, "emotional filth," as Kundera says. Sentiments, understood in this sense, are the alibi of cruelty, of barbarity, of blackmail. Me, I again find myself in that which I do. In movements outside of creation, in the strings which hold it as if in perpetual expectation. Movements of clouds, of galaxies, of crowds, of ourselves within ourselves. All truly creative people escape this foolish side of a work, the exaltation of sentiments. They are to be discarded like the fat surrounding meat before it is cooked. This blubber which envelops the work can also be secreted by our own way of seeing, now: Thus, when one listens to the "Ride of the Valkyries," for example, we should make an effort to abstract ourselves from all the mythology which surrounds these viragos, from all that which Wagner and his crowd have found to say about this music. So as to listen only to the music, to have it within us. That is what confers its value, its perenniarity, independently of the sentiments of the time. That is also why we listen to it.

It is the same for African, Hindu, Chinese, or Egyptian art. Why am I so

sensitive to them without ever having studied them? Because I appreciate them just as I appreciate the curl of a leaf, the photograph of a galaxy or of a cosmic dust cloud lighted by the stars. For in these sorts of things there exist signs made by mankind. Signs that we must see, not as representations, but as relations among them, without any romanticism. If these relations are sufficiently rich, necessary, and elegant, then the piece is a work of art.

The greatest work is thus that which invokes the highest level of abstraction. That which presents the fewest possible references to representation. In this sense, Altdorfer's *The Battle of Alexander*, with its myriads of soldiers advancing under the vault of heaven, immense, is a much more abstract painting than a Mondrian or a Malevitch, because it implies an effort of abstraction on our part, of enormous reduction to nothingness. We must cleanse it from the historical time that clogs it. There is the true festival of the imaginary: to construct abstractions from that which is the most scrupulously concrete. There also is the force of humanity, which is in its power of generalization, of universality. To see reality with new eyes, that is reality, that is life itself.