

L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, avec Claire Parnet

Directed by Pierre-André Boutang (1996)

Translation & Notes: Charles J. Stivale

Credits (shown at the end of each tape):

Conversation:	Claire Parnet
Direction:	Pierre-André Boutang, Michel Pamart
Image:	Alain Thiollet
Sound:	Jean Maini
Editing:	Nedjma Scialom
Sound Mix:	Vianney Aubé, Rémi Stengel
Images from Vincennes:	Marielle Burkhalter

Prelude¹

A short description of the trailer and then of the interview "set" is quite useful: the black and white trailer over which the title, then the director's credit are shown, depicts Deleuze lecturing to a crowded, smoky seminar, his voice barely audible over the musical accompaniment. The subtitle, "Université de Vincennes, 1980," appears briefly at the lower right, and Deleuze's desk is packed with tape recorders. A second shot is a close-up of Deleuze chatting with the students seated closest to him. Then another shot shows students in the seminar listening intently, most of them (including a young Claire Parnet in profile) smoking cigarettes. The final shot again shows Deleuze lecturing from his desk at the front of the seminar room, gesticulating as he speaks. The final gesture shows him placing his hand over his chin in a freeze-frame, punctuating the point he has just made.

As for the setting in Deleuze's apartment during the interview, the viewer sees Deleuze seated in front of a sideboard over which hangs a mirror, and opposite him sits Parnet, smoking constantly throughout. On the dresser to the right of the mirror is his trademark hat perched on a hook. The camera is located behind Parnet's left shoulder so that, depending on the camera focus, she is partially visible from behind and with a wider focus, visible in the mirror as well, at least during the first day of shooting. The production quality is quite good, and in the three-cassette collection now commercially available, Boutang chose not to edit out the jumps between cassette changes. On occasion, these interruptions cause Deleuze to lose his train of thought, but usually he is able to pick up where he left off with a prompt from Parnet.

[Prior to starting to discuss the first "letter" of his ABC primer, "A as in Animal," Deleuze discusses his understanding of the working premises of this series of interviews]

Deleuze: You have selected a format as an ABC primer, you have indicated to me some themes, and in this, I do not know exactly what the questions will be, so that I have only been able to think a bit beforehand about the themes. For me, answering a question without having thought about it a bit is something inconceivable. What saves me in this is the particular condition (*la clause*): should any of this be at all useful, all of it will be used only after my death. So, you understand, I feel myself being reduced to the state of a pure archive for Pierre-André Boutang, to a sheet of paper [Parnet laughs in

the mirror reflection], so that lifts my spirits and comforts me immensely, and nearly in the state of pure spirit (*pur esprit*), I speak after my death, and we know well that a pure spirit finally can make tables turn. But we know as well that a pure spirit is not someone who gives answers that are either very profound or very intelligent. So anything goes in this, let's begin, A-B-C, whatever you want.

"A as in Animal"

Parnet: We begin with "A," and "A" is "Animal." We can cite, as if it were you saying it, a quote from W.C. Fields: "A man who doesn't like animals or children can't be all bad." [Deleuze chuckles] We'll leave aside the children for the moment, but domestic animals, I know that you don't care for them much. And in this, you don't even accept the distinction made by Baudelaire and Cocteau -- cats are not any better than dogs for you. On the other hand, throughout your work, there is a bestiary that is quite repugnant; that is, besides deers (*fauves*) that are noble animals, you talk copiously of ticks, of fleas, of a certain number of repugnant little animals of this kind. What I want to add is that animals have been very useful in your writings, starting with *Anti-Oedipus*, through a concept that has become quite important, the concept of "becoming-animal" (*devenir-animal*). So I would like to know a bit more clearly what is your relationship to animals.

[Throughout this question, Deleuze sits smiling, but moving uncomfortably in his seat as if he were undergoing some ordeal]

Deleuze: What you said there about my relation with domestic animals... It's not really domestic, or tamed, or wild animals that concern me, cats or dogs. . . . The problem, rather, is with animals that are both familiar and familial. Familiar or familial animals, tamed and domesticated, I don't care for them, whereas domesticated animals that are not familiar and familial, I like them fine because I am quite sensitive to something in these animals. What happened to me is what happens in lots of families, there is neither dog nor cat, and then one of our children, Fanny's and mine, came home with a tiny cat, no bigger than his little hand, that he found out in the country somewhere, in a basket or somewhere, and from that fatal moment onward, I have always had a cat around the house. What do I find unpleasant in this -- although that certainly was no major ordeal -- what do I find unpleasant? I don't like things that rub against me (*les frotteurs*) ... and a cat spends its time rubbing up against you. I don't like that, and with dogs, it's altogether different: what I fundamentally reproach them for is always barking. A bark really seems to me the stupidest cry... There are animal cries in nature, a variety of cries, and barking is truly the shame of the animal kingdom. Whereas I can stand much better (on the condition that it not be for too long a time) the howling at the moon, a dog howling at the moon...

Parnet : ... at death...

Deleuze: ... At death, who knows? I can stand this better than barking. And since I learned quite recently that cats and dogs were cheating the Social Security system, my antipathy has increased even more.

[Deleuze has a wry smile in saying this, at some private joke, that he may or may not share with Parnet and that remains unexplained]

Deleuze: What I mean is... What I am going to say is completely idiotic because people who really like cats and dogs obviously do have a relationship with them that is not *human*. For example, you

see that children do not have a human relationship with a cat, but rather an infantile relationship with animals. What is really important is for people to have an *animal* relationship with an animal. So what does it mean to have an animal relationship with an animal? It doesn't consist of talking to it... but in any case, I can't stand the *human* relationship with the animal. I know what I am saying because I live on a rather deserted street where people walk their dogs, and what I hear from my window is quite frightening, the way that people talk to their animals. Even psychoanalysis notices this! Psychoanalysis is so fixated on familiar or familial animals, on animals of the family, that any animal dream is interpreted by psychoanalysis as being an image of the father, mother, or child, that is, an animal as a family member. I find that odious, I can't stand it, and you only have to think of two paintings by the *Douanier* [Henri Julien Félix] Rousseau, the dog in the cart (*carriole*) who is truly the grandfather, the grandfather in a pure state, and the war horse (*le cheval de guerre*) who is a veritable beast (*bête*).² So the question is, what kind of relationship do you have with an animal? If you have a *human* relationship with an animal . . . [Deleuze shakes his head]³

But again, generally people who like animals don't have a human relationship with animals, they have an animal relationship with the animal, and that's quite beautiful. Even hunters – and I don't like hunters – but even hunters have an astonishing relationship with the animal... Yeh ... [Deleuze pauses]

And you asked me also ... Well, other animals, it's true that I am fascinated by animals (*bêtes*) like spiders, ticks, fleas ... They are as important as dogs and cats. [Parnet laughs] And there are relationships with animals there, someone who has ticks, who has fleas, what does that mean? These are relationships with some very active animals. So what fascinates me in animals? Because really, my hatred for certain animals is nourished by my fascination with many other animals. If I try to take stock vaguely of this, what is it that impresses me in an animal? The first thing that impresses me is the fact that every animal has a world, and it's curious because there are a lot of humans, a lot of people who do not have a world. They live the life of everybody, [Deleuze chuckles] that is, of just any one and any thing. Animals, they have worlds.

What is an animal world? It's sometimes extraordinarily limited, and that's what moves me. Finally, animals react to very few things... [To Parnet]: Cut me off if you see that ...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, cassette two"]

Deleuze: Yes, so, in this story of the first characteristic of the animal, it's really the existence of specific, special animal worlds. Perhaps it is sometimes the poverty of these worlds, the reduced character of these worlds, that impresses me so much. For example, oh, we were talking earlier about an animal like the tick. The tick responds, reacts to three things, three stimuli, period, that's it, in a natural world that is immense, three stimuli, that's it: that is, it tends toward the extremity of a tree branch, it's attracted by light, it can wait on top of this branch, it can wait for years without eating, without anything, in a completely amorphous state. It waits for a ruminant, an herbivore, an animal to pass under its branch, it lets itself fall... It's a kind of olfactory stimulus... the tick smells, it smells the animal that passes under its branch, that's the second stimulus: light first, then odor. Then, when it falls onto the back of the poor animal, it goes looking for the region that is the least covered with hair... So, there's a tactile stimulus, and it digs in under the skin. For everything else, if one can say this, for everything else, it does not give a damn (*elle s'en fout complètement*)... That is, in a nature teeming [with life], it extracts, selects three things.

Parnet: And is that your life's dream? [Parnet laughs, smiling at Deleuze] That's what attracts you to animals?

Deleuze: [He smiles, but continues] That's what constitutes a world, that's what constitutes a world.

Parnet: Hence, your animal-writing relationship, that is, the writer, for you, is also someone who has a world...

Deleuze: It's more compl... Yes, I don't know... because there are other aspects: it is not enough to have a world to be an animal. What fascinates me completely are territorial matters (*des affaires de territoire*). With Félix [Guattari], we really created a concept, nearly a philosophical concept, with the idea of territory. Animals with territory -- ok, there are animals without territory, fine -- but animals with territory, it's amazing because constituting a territory is, for me, nearly the birth of art. How an animal marks its territory, everyone knows, everyone always invokes stories of anal glands, of urine, of... with which it marks the borders of its territory. But it's a lot more than that: what intervenes in marking a territory is also a series of postures, for example, lowering oneself/lifting oneself up; a series of colors, baboons (*les drills*), for example, the color of buttocks of baboons that they display at the border of territories... Color, song (*chant*), posture: these are the three determinants of art: I mean, color and lines -- animal postures are sometimes veritable lines -- color, line, song -- that's art in its pure state.

And so, I tell myself that when they leave their territory or return to their territory, it's in the domain of property and ownership (*l'avoir*). It's very curious that it is in the domain of property and ownership, that is, "my properties," in the manner of Beckett or Michaux. Territory constitutes the properties of the animal, and leaving the territory, they risk it, and there are animals that recognize their partner, they recognize them in the territory, but not outside the territory. That's what I call a marvel...⁴

Parnet: Which one?

Deleuze: I don't recall which bird, you have to believe me on this...

So, with Félix -- I am leaving the animal subject, I pass on to a philosophical question because we can mix all kinds of things in the *Abécédaire*. I tell myself: philosophers sometimes get criticized for creating barbaric words (*mots barbares*). But, put yourself in my place: for certain reasons, I am interested in reflecting on this notion of territory, and I tell myself, territory has no term for the relation to a movement by which one leaves the territory. So, to address this, I need a word that is apparently "barbaric." Henceforth, with Félix, we constructed a concept that I like a lot, the concept of "deterritorialization." [Parnet speaks the word along with Deleuze]

We've been told that it's a hard word to pronounce, and then asked what it means, what its use is... So, this is a beautiful case of a philosophical concept that can only be designated by a word that does not yet exist, even if we find subsequently that there are equivalents in other languages. For example, I happened to notice that in Melville, there appears all the time "outlandish" -- I pronounce poorly, you can correct it yourself -- but "outlandish" is precisely the equivalent of "the deterritorialized," word for word.⁵ So, I tell myself that for philosophy -- before returning to animals -- for philosophy, it is quite striking: the invention of a barbaric word is sometimes necessary to take account of a notion with innovative pretensions: the notion with innovative pretensions is that there is no territory, territorialization without a vector of exiting the territory; there is no exiting the territory, that is, deterritorialization, without at the same time an effort of reterritorializing oneself elsewhere, which is something else.

All this functions with animals, and that's what fascinates me. What is fascinating generally is the whole domain of signs. Animals emit signs, they ceaselessly emit signs, they produce signs.

That is, in the double sense, they react to signs – for example, a spider, everything that touches its web, it reacts to anything, reacts to signs – and they produce signs – for example, the famous sign, is that a wolf sign, a wolf track or something else? I admire enormously people who know how to recognize [tracks], for example, hunters – real hunters, not hunt club hunters, but real hunters who can recognize the animal that has passed by. At that point, they are animal, they have with the animal an animal relationship. That’s what I mean by having an animal relationship with an animal. It’s really amazing.⁶

Parnet: And this emission of signs, this reception of signs, is there a connection with writing and the writer, and the animal?

Deleuze: Of course. If someone were to ask me what it means to be an animal, I would answer: it’s “l’être aux aguets”, the being on the lookout. It’s a being fundamentally on the lookout.

Parnet: Like the writer?

Deleuze: The writer, well, yes, on the lookout, the philosopher, on the lookout, obviously, we are on the lookout. For me, you see, the ears of the animal: it does nothing without being on the lookout, it’s never relaxed, an animal. It’s eating, [yet] has to be on the lookout to see if something is happening behind its back, on either side, etc. It’s terrible, this existence “aux aguets.”

So, you make the connection with the writer, what is the relation between the animal and the writer...?

Parnet: ... you made it before I did...

Deleuze: That’s true... One almost has to say that, at the limit... A writer, what is it? He writes, he writes “for” readers, of course, but what does “for” mean? It means “à l’intention de,” toward them, intended toward them, one writes “for” readers. But one has to say that the writer writes also for non-readers, that is, not intended for them\but “in their place.” So, it means two things: intended for them and in their place. Artaud wrote pages that nearly everyone knows, “I write for the illiterate, I write for idiots.” Faulkner writes for idiots. That doesn’t mean so that idiots would read, that the illiterate would read, it means “in the place of” the illiterate. I mean, I write “in the place of” barbarians (*les sauvages*), I write “in the place of” animals.⁷

And what does that mean? Why does one dare say something like that, I write in the place of idiots, the illiterate, animals? Because that is what one does, literally, when one writes. When one writes, one is not pursuing some private little affair. They really are stupid fools (*connards*); really, it’s the abomination of literary mediocrity, in every era, but particularly quite recently, that makes people believe that to create a novel, for example, it suffices to have some little private affair, some little personal affair – one’s grandmother who died of cancer, or someone’s personal love affair -- and there you go, you can write a novel based on this. It’s shameful to think things like that. Writing is not anyone’s private affair, but rather it means throwing oneself into a universal affair, be it a novel or philosophy. Now what does that mean?

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: “Gilles Deleuze, cassette three”]

Parnet: So, this “writing for,” that is, “intended for” or “in the place of,” it’s a bit like what you said in *A Thousand Plateaus* about [Lord] Chandos by Hofmannsthal, in the very beautiful phrase: “the

writer is a sorcerer because he sees the animal as the only population before which he is responsible.”⁸

Deleuze: That’s it, absolutely right. And for a very simple reason, I think it’s quite simple... It’s not at all a literary declaration what you just read from Hofmannsthal, it’s something else. Writing means necessarily pushing language – and pushing syntax, since language is syntax – up to a certain limit (*limite*), a limit that can be expressed in several ways: it can be just as well the limit that separates language from silence, or the limit that separates language from music, or the limit that separates language from something that would be, what? Let’s say, the wailing, the painful wailing...

Parnet: But not the barking, surely!

Deleuze: Oh, no, not barking, although who knows? There might be a writer who is capable.... The painful wailing? Well, everyone says, why yes, it’s Kafka, it’s *Metamorphosis*, the manager who cries out, “Did you hear? It sounds like an animal,” the painful wailing of Gregor. Or else the mouse folk,

Parnet: “Josephine”.⁹

Deleuze: ... one writes for the mouse folk, the rat folk that are dying because, contrary to what is said, it’s not men who know how to die, but beasts (*bêtes*), and when men die, they die like animals. Here we return to cats, and I have a lot of respect... Among the many cats that lived here, there was that little cat who died rather quickly, that is, I saw what a lot of people have seen as well, how an animal seeks a corner to die in... There is a territory for death as well, a search for a territory of death, where one can die. We saw the little cat trying to slide itself right into a tight corner, an angle, as if it were the good spot for it to die in.

So, in a sense, if the writer is indeed one who pushes language to the limit, the limit that separates language from animality, that separates language from the cry, that separates language from the song/chant (*chant*), then one has to say, yes, the writer is responsible to animals who die, that is, he answers to animals who die, to write, literally, not "for" them – again, I don’t write “for” my dog or for my cat --, but writing “in the place of” animals who die, etc., carrying language to this limit. There is no literature that does not carry language and syntax to this limit that separates man from animal... One has to be on this limit.... That’s what I think...

Even when one does philosophy, that’s the case... One is on the limit that separates thought from non-thought. You always have to be at the limit that separates you from animality, but precisely in such a way that you are no longer separated from it. There is an inhumanity proper to the human body, and to the human mind, there are animal relations with the animal...

And if we were finished with “A”, that would be nice...

"B as in *Boire/Boisson* [Drink]"

Parnet: OK, then, we will pass on to “B”. “B” is a little bit special, it’s on drinking (*la boisson*).¹⁰ OK, so you used to drink, and then stopped drinking, [Deleuze smiles] and I would like to know what it was for you to drink when you used to drink... Was it for pleasure?

Deleuze: Yeh, I drank a lot... I drank a lot... So, I stopped, but I drank a lot... What was it? [Deleuze laughs] That’s not difficult, at least I think not... You should question other people who

drank a lot, you should question alcoholics. I believe that drinking is a matter of quantity. For that reason, there is no equivalent with food, even if there are people who eat copiously (*gros mangeurs*) -- that always disgusted me, so that's not relevant in my case. But drinking... I understand well that one doesn't drink just anything, that each drinker has a favorite drink, but it's because in that framework that one has to grasp the quantity.

What does this question of quantity mean? People make fun of addicts and alcoholics because they never stop saying, "Oh you know, I am in control, I can stop drinking whenever I want." People make fun of them because they don't understand what drinkers mean. I have some very clear memories of this, I think everyone who drank understands this. When you drink, what you want to reach is the last drink (*dernier verre*). Literally, drinking means doing everything in order to reach the final drink. That's what is interesting.

Parnet: That's always the limit (*limite*)?

Deleuze [laughs]: Well, what the limit is is very complicated, let me tell you... In other words, an alcoholic is someone who never ceases to stop drinking, I mean, who never stops having arrived at the last drink. So, what does that mean? It's like the expression by [Charles] Péguy that is so beautiful, "It's not the final water lily that repeats the first, it's the first water lily that repeats all the others and the final one." The first drink, it repeats the last one, it's the last one that counts.

So, what does that mean, the last drink, for an alcoholic? He gets up in the morning, if he's a morning alcoholic -- there are all the kinds that you might want --, if he's a morning alcoholic, he is entirely pointed toward the moment when he will reach the last drink. It's not the first, the second, the third that interests him... It's a lot more... He's clever, full of guile, an alcoholic... The last glass means this: he evaluates... there is an evaluation. He evaluates what he can hold, without collapsing... he evaluates... It varies considerably with each person. So, he evaluates the last drink, and all the others are going to be his way of passing, of reaching the last glass.

And what does "the last" mean? That means that he cannot stand to drink one more glass *that particular day*. It's the last one that will allow him to begin drinking the next day... because if he goes all the way to the last drink, on the contrary, that goes beyond his power/capacity (*pouvoir*), it's the last in his power. If he goes beyond the last one in his power in order to reach the last one beyond his power, then he collapses, then he's screwed (*foutu*), he has to go to the hospital, or he has to change his habits, he has to change assemblages. So that when he says, "the last drink," it's not the last one, it's the next-to-last one. He is searching for the next-to-last one. In other words, there is a term to say the next-to-last, it's penultimate... He does not seek the last drink, he seeks the penultimate one. Not the ultimate, because the ultimate [Deleuze gestures with his hands] would place him outside his arrangement. The penultimate is the last one... before beginning again the next day.

So I can say that the alcoholic is someone who says, and who never stops saying -- You hear it in the cafés, those groups of alcoholics are so joyful, one never gets tired of listening to them -- So the alcoholic is someone who never stops saying, "OK, it's the last one", and the last one varies from one person to another, but the last one is the next-to-last one.

Parnet: And he's also the one who says, "I'm stopping tomorrow."

Deleuze: "Stopping tomorrow"? No, he never says "I'm stopping tomorrow." He says, "I'm stopping today", to be able to start over again tomorrow.

Parnet: And since drinking means not stopping... means stopping drinking constantly, then how does one stop drinking completely, because you stopped drinking completely...?

Deleuze: It's too dangerous, if one goes too quickly. Michaux has said everything on that topic. In my opinion, drug problems and alcohol problems are not that separate. Michaux said everything on that topic...¹¹ A moment comes when it is too dangerous.

Here again, there is this ridge (*crête*)... when I was talking about this ridge between language and silence, or language and animality. This ridge is a thin division. One can very well drink or take drugs... One can always do whatever one wants if it doesn't prevent you from working. If it's a stimulus... It's even normal to offer something of one's body as a sacrifice. There is a whole sacred, sacrificial attitude in these activities, drinking, taking drugs, one offers one's body as a sacrifice... Why? No doubt because there is something entirely too strong that one could not stand without alcohol. It's not a question of being able to stand alcohol... That's perhaps what one believes, what one needs to believe, what one believes oneself to see, to feel, to think, with the result that one has the need in order to stand it, in order to master it, one needs assistance, from alcohol, drugs, etc.

[Change of cassette, Boutang: "Gilles Deleuze" (cassette 4), clap; the producer claps his hands]

Deleuze: So, the question of limits, it's quite simple... Drinking, taking drugs, these are almost supposed to make possible something that is too strong, even if one has to pay for it afterwards, that's well known. But it's connected to working, working. And it's obvious that when everything is reversed and drinking prevents one from working, when taking a drug becomes a way of not working, that's the absolute danger, it no longer has any interest. And at the same time, it's more and more obvious that although we used to think drinking was necessary, that taking drugs was necessary, they are not necessary... Perhaps one has to have gone through that experience to realize that everything one thought one did thanks to drugs or thanks to alcohol, one could do without them.

You see, I admire a lot the way that Michaux considers all this... He stops. So for me, there is less merit since I stopped drinking for reasons related to breathing, for health reasons. It is obvious that one has to stop or do without it. The only tiny justification possible would be if they did help one to work, even if one has to pay for it physically afterwards. But the more one continues, the more one realizes that it doesn't help one's work, so...

Parnet: But on one hand, Michaux must have drunk quite a lot and taken a lot of drugs in order to get to the point of doing without in such a state as he did...

Deleuze: Yeh, yeh...

Parnet: And on the other hand, you said that when you drink, it must not prevent you from working, but that you perceive something that drinking helps you to support, and this "something" is not life... so that raises the question about the writers you prefer...

Deleuze: On the contrary, it *is* life...

Parnet: It *is* life?

Deleuze: It's something too strong *in* life. It's not necessarily something that is terrifying, just something that is too strong, it's something too powerful in life. Some people believe a bit idiotically that drinking puts you on the level of this too-powerful-something. If you take the whole lineage of the Americans, the great American writers...

Parnet: From Fitzgerald to Lowry...

Deleuze: From Fitzgerald to the one I admire the most is Thomas Wolfe... all that is a series of alcoholics, at the same time, that's what allows them... no doubt, helps them to perceive this something-too-huge...

Parnet: Yes, but it's also because they themselves had perceived something powerful in life that not everyone could perceive, they felt something powerful in life...

Deleuze: That's right, that's right, obviously... It's not alcohol that is going to make you feel something.

Parnet: ... the power of life for them that they alone could perceive.

Deleuze: I completely agree ... I completely agree ...

Parnet: And the same for Lowry...

Deleuze: I completely agree ... Certainly... They created their works (*une oeuvre*), and what alcohol was for them, well, they took a risk, they took a chance on it because they thought, right or wrong, that alcohol would help them with it. I had the feeling that alcohol helped me create concepts... It's strange... philosophical concepts, yes, that it helped me, and then it wasn't helping me any more, it was getting dangerous for me, I no longer wanted to work. At that point, you just have to give it up, that's all...

Parnet: That's more like an American tradition, because we don't know of many French writers who have this penchant for alcohol, and still it's kind of hard to... There is something that separates their writing from the States and alcohol...

Deleuze: Well, yes, yes, but French writers, it's not the same vision of writing... I don't know... If I have been influenced so much by the Americans, it's because of this question of vision. They are "seers" (*des voyants*) ... If one believes that philosophy, writing, is a question, in a very modest fashion, a question of "seeing" something... seeing something that others don't see, then it's not exactly the French conception of literature. Although there are a lot of alcoholics in France...

Parnet: But the alcoholics in France, they stop writing. Blondin has a lot of problems, at least from what we can tell.¹² [Parnet laughs, Deleuze smiles] But we don't know of many philosophers either who have recounted their penchant for alcohol.

Deleuze: Verlaine lived on a street right nearby here, rue Nollet...

Parnet: Ah yes, with the exception of Rimbaud and Verlaine...

Deleuze: ... and it wrenches my heart because when I walk long rue Nollet, I think that it undoubtedly must have been the route that Verlaine took to go to a café to drink his absinthe... Apparently, he lived in a pitiful apartment, all that so...

Parnet: Well, yes, poets and alcohol...

Deleuze: ... One of France's greatest poets who used to shuffle down that street... It's marvelous... Yes, yes...

Parnet: To the bar, Le Bar des Amis.

Deleuze: Yes, no doubt! [Deleuze laughs]

Parnet: Yes, among poets, we know that there were more alcoholics ... Ok, well, we have finished with alcohol...

Deleuze: Yep, we've finished "B". My, my, we're speeding along...

"C as in Culture"

Parnet: ... so we pass on to "C", and "C" is vast...

Deleuze: What is it?

Parnet: "C as in Culture."

Deleuze: Sure, why not?

Parnet: OK, you are someone who describes himself as not "cultivated" (*pas cultivé*). That is, you say that you read, you go to movies, you observe things to gain particular knowledge, something that you need for a particular, ongoing project that you are in the process of developing. But, at the same time, [Deleuze listens very attentively] you are someone who, every Saturday, goes out to an art exhibit, goes out to a movie, in the broad cultural domain... One gets the impression that you have a kind of practice, a huge effort in culture, [Deleuze smiles, listens with evident fascination] that you systematize, and that you have a cultural practice, that is, you go out, you make an effort at a systematic cultural practice, you aim at developing yourself culturally (*te cultiver*). And yet, I repeat, you claim that you are not at all "cultivated," so how do you explain this little paradox?... You're not "cultivated"?

Deleuze: No, because... I would say that, in fact... When I tell you that, I don't see myself, really, I don't experience myself (*je ne me vis pas*) as an intellectual or experience myself as "cultivated" for a simple reason: when I see someone "cultivated," I am terrified, and not necessarily with admiration, although admiring them from certain perspectives, from others, not at all. But I am just terrified of a "cultivated person," and this is quite obvious to "cultivated people" (*gens cultivés*). It's a kind of knowledge, a frightening body of knowledge especially (*savoir effarant*) ... One sees that a lot with intellectuals, they know everything. Well, maybe not, but they are informed about everything – they know the history of Italy during the Renaissance, they know the geography of the

North Pole, they know... the whole list, they know everything, can talk about anything... It's abominable.

So, when I say that I am neither "cultivated," nor an intellectual, I mean something quite simple, that I have no "reserve knowledge" (*aucun savoir de réserve*), no... There's no problem, at my death, there's no point in looking for what I have left to publish... Nothing, nothing, because I have no reserves, I have no provisions, no provisional knowledge. And everything that I learn, I learn *for* a particular task, and once it's done, I immediately forget it, so that if ten years later, I have to – and this gives me great joy -- if I have to get involved with something close to or directly within the same subject, I would have to start again from zero, except in certain very rare cases, for example Spinoza, whom I don't forget, who is in my heart and in my mind. Otherwise...¹³ So, why don't I admire this "frightening knowledge," these people who talk...?

Parnet: Is this knowledge a kind of erudition, or just an opinion on every subject?

Deleuze: No, it's not erudition. They know... they know how to talk about it. First, they've traveled a lot, traveled in geography, in history, but they know how to talk about everything. I've heard them on TV, it's frightening... I have heard... well, since I am full of admiration for him, I can even say it, people like Eco, Umberto Eco... It's amazing... There you go, it's like pushing on a button, and he knows all of it as well. I can't say that I envy that entirely, I'm just frightened by it, but I don't envy it at all.

To a certain extent, I ask: what does culture consist of? And I tell myself that it consists a lot in talking. I can't keep myself... Especially since I have stopped teaching, since I have retired, I realize that talking is a bit dirty, a bit dirty, whereas writing is clean. Writing is clean and talking is dirty. It's dirty because it means being seductive (*faire du charme*). I could never stand attending colloquia ever since I was in school, still quite young, I could never stand colloquia. I don't travel much, and why not? Intellectuals... I would gladly travel sometime if... Well, actually I wouldn't travel, my health prevents it, but intellectuals travelling is a joke (*une bouffonnerie*). They don't travel, they move about in order to go talk... They go from one place where they talk in order to go to another place where they are going to talk even during meals, they talk with the local intellectuals. They never stop talking, and I can't stand talking, talking, talking, I can't stand it. So, in my opinion, since culture is closely linked to speaking (*la parole*), in this sense, I hate culture (*je hais la culture*), I cannot stand it.

Parent: Well, we will come back to the separation between writing itself and dirty speech because, nonetheless, you are a very great professor and...

Deleuze: Well, that's different...

Parnet: ... and we will come back to it because the letter "P" is about your work as professor, and then we will be able to discuss "seduction"...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, cassette five"]

Parnet: I still want to come back to this subject that you kind of avoided, to this effort, discipline even, that you impose on yourself -- even if, in fact, you don't need to -- to see, well, for example, in the last two weeks, the [Sigmar] Polke exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. You go out rather frequently, not to say on a weekly basis, to see a major film or to see art exhibits. So, you say that

you are not erudite, not “cultivated,” you have no admiration for “cultivated people,” like you just said, so what does this practice, all this effort, correspond to for you? Is it a form of pleasure?

Deleuze: I think... Yes, certainly, it's a form of pleasure, although not always. But I see this as part of my investment in being "on the lookout" (*être aux aguets*) [see "A as in Animal"]. I don't believe in culture, to some extent, but rather I believe in encounters (*rencontres*). But these encounters don't occur with people. People always think that it's with people that encounters occur, which is why it's awful... Now, in this, that belongs to the domain of culture, intellectuals meeting one another, this disgusting practice of conferences (*cette saleté de colloque*), this infamy. So, encounters, it's not between people that they happen, but with things... So, I encounter a... painting, yes, or a piece of music, that's how I understand an encounter. When people want to connect encounters to themselves, with people, well, that doesn't work at all... That's not an encounter, and that's why encounters are so utterly, utterly disappointing. Encounters with people are always catastrophic.

So, as you said, when I go out on Saturdays and Sundays, to the movies, etc., I'm not certain to have an encounter... I go out, I am “on the lookout” for encounters, wondering if there might be material for an encounter, in a film, in a painting, so it's great. I'll give an example because, for me, whenever one does something, it is also a question of moving on from it, getting out of or beyond it (*d'en sortir*), simultaneously staying in it and getting out of it. So, staying in philosophy also means how to get out of philosophy. But getting out of philosophy doesn't mean doing something else. One has to get out while remaining within... It's not doing something else, not writing a novel. First off, I wouldn't be able to in any event, but even if I could, it would be completely useless. I want to get out of philosophy by means of philosophy. That's what interests me...

Parnet: That is...?

Deleuze: Here is an example. Since all this will be after my death, I can speak without modesty. I just wrote a book on a great philosopher called Leibniz in which I insisted on the notion that seemed important in his work, but that is very important for me, the notion of "the fold." So, I consider that it's a book of philosophy, on this bizarre little notion of the fold. What happens to me after that? I received a lot of letters, as always... There are letters that are insignificant even if they are charming and affectionate and move me deeply, others that talk about what I have done... letters from intellectuals who liked or didn't like the book...

Then I receive two other letters that make me rub my eyes in disbelief. A letter from people who tell me, “Your story of folds, that's us!” and I realize that it's from people who belong to an association that has 400 members in France currently, perhaps they now have more, an association of paper folders. They have a journal, and they send me the journal, and they say, “We agree completely, what you are doing is what we do.” So, I tell myself, that's quite something! Then I received another kind of letter, and they speak in exactly the same way, saying: “The fold is us!”

I find this marvelous, all the more so because it reminded me of a story in Plato, since great philosophers do not write in abstractions, but are great writers and authors of very concrete things. So, in Plato, there is a story that delights me, and it's no doubt linked to the beginning of philosophy, maybe we will come back to it... Plato's topic is... He gives a definition, for example, what is a politician? A politician is the pastor of men (*pasteur des hommes*). And with that definition, lots of people arrive to say: “Hey, you can see, *we* are politicians!” For example, the shepherd arrives, says “I dress people, so I am the true pastor of men”; the butcher arrives, “I feed people, so I am the true pastor of men.” So, these *rivals* arrive.

And I feel like I have been through this a bit: here come the paper folders who say, we are the fold! And the others who wrote and who sent me exactly the same thing, it's really great, they

were surfers who, it would seem, have no relation whatsoever with the paper folders. And the surfers say, “We understand, we agree completely because what do we do? We never stop inserting ourselves into the folds of nature. For us, nature is an aggregate of mobile folds, and we insert ourselves into the fold of the wave, live in the fold of the wave, that’s what our task is. Living in the fold of the wave.” And, in fact, they talk about this quite admirably. These people are quite... They think about what they do, not just surfing, but think about what they do, and maybe we will talk about it one day if we reach “Sports”, at “S”. [“T as in Tennis”]

Parnet: So, these belong to the “encounter” category, these encounters with surfers, with paper folders?

Deleuze: Yes, these are encounters. When I say “get out of philosophy through philosophy,” this happened to me all the time... I encountered the paper folders... I don’t have to go see them. No doubt, we’d be disappointed, I’d be disappointed, and they certainly would be even more disappointed, so no need to see them. I had an encounter with the surf, with the paper folders, literally, I went beyond philosophy by means of philosophy. That’s what an encounter is. So, I think, when I go out to an exhibit, I am “on the lookout,” searching for a painting that might touch me, that might affect me. [Same] when I go to the movies... I don’t go to the theater because theater is too long, too disciplined, it’s too... it’s too... it does not seem to be an art that... except in certain cases, except with Bob Wilson and Carmelo Bene, I don’t feel that theater is very much in touch with our era, except for these extreme cases.¹⁴ But to remain there for four hours in an uncomfortable seat, I can’t do it any more for health reasons, so that wipes theater out entirely for me. But at a painting exhibit or at the movies, I always have the impression that in the best circumstances, I risk having an encounter with an idea...

Parnet: Yes, but there is no... I mean, films only for entertainment (*distraction*) do not exist at all?

Deleuze: Well, they are not culture...

Parnet: They may not be culture, but there is no entertainment...

Deleuze: Well, entertainment (*la distraction*)...

Parnet: ... that is, everything is situated within your work?

Deleuze: No, it’s not work, it’s just that I am “on the lookout” for something that might “pass” (*quelque chose qui passe*), asking myself, does that disturb me (*est-ce que ça me trouble*)? Those [kinds of films]... they amuse me a lot, they are very funny.

Parnet: Well, it’s not Eddie Murphy who is going to disturb you!

Deleuze: It’s not...?

Parnet: Eddie Murphy, he’s a director... no, an American comedian and actor whose recent films are enormously successful with the public.

Deleuze: I don’t know him.

Parnet: No, I mean, you never watch... no, you only watch Benny Hill on television...

Deleuze [smiling]: Yes, well, I find Benny Hill interesting, that interests me. Well, it's certainly nothing that is necessarily really good or new, but there are reasons why it interests me.

Parnet: But when you go out, it's for an encounter.

Deleuze: When I go out ... if there is no idea to draw from it, if I don't say, "Yes, he had an idea"... What do great filmmakers do? This is valid for filmmakers too. What strikes me in the beauty of, for example, a great filmmaker like Minnelli, or like [Joseph] Losey, what affects me if not that they are overwhelmed by ideas, an idea...

Parnet [interrupting]: You're starting in on my [letter] "I"! Stop right away! You're starting in on my [letter] "I"!

Deleuze: Ok, let's stop on that, but that's what an encounter is for me, one has encounters with things and not with people...

Parnet: Do you have a lot of encounters, to talk about a particular cultural period like right now?

Deleuze: Well, yes, I just told you, with paper folders, with surfers... What could you ask for that's more beautiful?

Parnet: But...

Deleuze: But these are not encounters with intellectuals, I don't have any encounters with intellectuals...

Parnet: But do you...

Deleuze: ... or if I have an encounter with an intellectual, it's for other reasons, like I like him so I have a meeting with him, for what he is doing, for his ongoing work, his charm, all that... One has an encounter with those kinds of elements, the charm of people, with the work of people, but not with people in themselves. I don't have anything to do with people, nothing at all (*Je n'ai rien à foutre avec les gens, rien du tout*). [Deleuze pauses]

Parnet: Perhaps they rub up against you like cats.

Deleuze: Well yes, if that's how it was, if there's rubbing or barking, it's awful!

[Change of cassette (cassette 6); the producer claps his hand]

Parnet: Let's think about culturally rich and culturally poor periods. [Deleuze rubs his eyes as Parnet speaks] So what about now, do you think it's a period that's not too rich, because I often see you get very annoyed watching television, watching the literary shows that we won't name, although when this interview is shown, the names will have changed. [Parnet and Deleuze smile at some shared joke as she speaks] Do you find this to be a rich period or a particularly poor period that we are living through?

Deleuze: [Deleuze laughs, and Parnet along with him] Yes, it's poor, it's poor, but at the same time, it's not at all distressing (*angoissant*).

Parnet: You find it funny? (*Ça te fait rire?*)

Deleuze: Yes, I find it funny. I tell myself, at my age, this is not the first time that impoverished periods have occurred.¹⁵ I tell myself, what have I lived through since I was old enough to be somewhat enthusiastic? I lived through the Liberation and the aftermath. It was among the richest periods one could imagine, when we were discovering or rediscovering everything... The Liberation... The war had taken place and that was no piece of cake (*pas de la tarte*)... We were discovering everything, the American novel, Kafka, the domain of research... There was Sartre... You cannot imagine what it was like, I mean intellectually, what we were discovering or rediscovering in painting, etc. One has to understand... There was the huge polemic, "Must we burn Kafka?"¹⁶ It's unimaginable and seems a bit infantile today, but it was a very stimulating, creative atmosphere.

And I lived through the period before May '68 that was an extremely rich period all the way to shortly after May '68. And in the meantime, if there were impoverished periods, that's quite normal, but it's not the fact of poverty that I find disturbing, but rather the insolence or impudence of people who inhabit the impoverished periods. They are much more wicked than the inspired people who come to life during rich periods.

Parnet: Inspired or just well-meaning? Because you referred to the Kafka polemic at the time of the Liberation, and there was that Alexander What's-his-name who was very happy with the fact that he had never read Kafka, and he said it while laughing...

Deleuze: Well, yes, he was very happy... The stupider they are, the happier they are, since... Like those who think, and we come back to this, that literature is now a tiny little private affair... If one thinks that, then there's no need to read Kafka, no need to read very much, since if one has a pretty little pen, one is naturally Kafka's equal... There's no work involved there, no work at all...

I mean, how can I explain myself? Let's take something more serious on this [subject] than those young fools (*jeunes sots*). I recently went to the Cosmos to see a film...

Parnet: By Parajanov?

Deleuze: No, it wasn't Parajanov, although he's quite admirable. It was a very moving Russian film that was made about thirty years ago, but that has only been released very recently...

Parnet: *Le Commissaire* ?

Deleuze : *Le Commissaire*.¹⁷ In this, I found something that was very moving... The film was very, very good, couldn't have been better... perfect. But we noticed with a kind of terror, or a kind of compassion, that it was a film like the ones the Russians used to make before the war...

Parnet: In the time of Eisenstein...

Deleuze: ... in the time of Eisenstein, of Dovzhenko. Everything was there, parallel editing notably, parallel editing that was sublime, etc. It was as if nothing had happened since the war, as if nothing

had happened in cinema. And I told myself, it's inevitable, the film is good, sure, but it was very strange too, for that reason, and if it was not that good, it was for that reason. It was literally by someone who had been so isolated in his work that he created a film the way films were made 20 years ago... It wasn't all that bad, only that it was quite good, quite amazing for twenty years earlier. Everything that happened in the meantime, he never knew about it, I mean, since he had grown up in a desert. It's awful... Crossing a desert is nothing much, working in, passing through a desert period is not bad. What is awful is being born in this desert, and growing up in it... That's frightful, I imagine... One must have an impression of solitude...

Parnet: Like for young people who are 18-years old now, for example?

Deleuze: Right, especially when you understand that when things... This is what happens in impoverished periods. When things disappear, no one notices it for a simple reason: when something disappears, no one misses it. The Stalinian period caused Russian literature to disappear, and the Russians didn't notice, I mean, the majority of Russians, they just didn't notice, a literature that had been a turbulent literature throughout the nineteenth century, it just disappeared. I know that now people say there are the dissidents, etc., but on the level of a people, the Russian people, their literature disappeared, their painting disappeared, and nobody noticed.

Today, to account for what is happening today, obviously there are new young people who certainly have genius. Let us suppose, I don't like the expression, but let us suppose that there are new Becketts, the new Becketts of today...

Parnet: I thought you were going to say the "New Philosophers"!

Deleuze: [chortling] It's not about them because...¹⁸

But the new Becketts of today... Let us assume that they don't get published -- after all, Beckett almost did not get published -- it's obvious nothing would be missed. By definition, a great author or a genius is someone who brings forth something new. If this innovation does not appear, then that bothers no one, no one misses it since no one has the slightest idea about it. If Proust... if Kafka had never been published, no one could say that Kafka would be missed... If someone had burned all of Kafka's writings, no one could say, "Ah, we really miss that!" since no one would have any idea of what had disappeared. If the new Becketts of today are kept from publishing by the current system of publishing, one cannot say, "Oh, we really miss that!"

I heard a declaration, the most impudent declaration I have ever heard -- I don't dare say to whom it was attributed in some newspaper since these kinds of things are never certain -- someone in the publishing field who dared to say: "You know, today, we no longer risk making mistakes like Gallimard did when he initially refused to publish Proust since we have the means today..."

Parnet: The headhunters...

Deleuze: [laughing] ... You'd think you were dreaming, "but with the means we have today to locate and recognize new Prousts and new Becketts." That's like saying they have some sort of Geiger counter and that the new Beckett -- that is, someone who is completely unimaginable since [Deleuze laughs] we don't know what kind of innovation he would bring -- he would emit some kind of sound or emit some kind of glow if...

Parnet: ... if you passed it over his head...

Deleuze: ... if you passed it in his path. So, what defines the crisis today, with all these idiocies (*conneries*)? The crisis today I attribute to three things -- but it will pass, I still remain quite optimistic -- this is what defines a desert period: First, that journalists have conquered the book form. Journalists have always written [books], and I find it quite good that journalists write, but when journalists used to undertake a book, they used to believe that they were moving into a different form of writing, not the same thing as writing their newspaper articles.¹⁹

Parnet: One can recall that for a long time, there were writers who were also journalists... Mallarmé, they could do journalism, but the reverse didn't occur...

Deleuze: Now, it's the reverse... The journalist as journalist has conquered the book form, that is, he finds it quite normal to write, just like that, a book that would hardly require a newspaper article. And that's not good at all.

The second reason is that a generalized idea has spread that anyone can write since writing has become the tiny little affair of the individual, with family archives, either written archives or archives [Deleuze laughs]... in one's head. Everybody has had a love story, everybody has had a grandmother who was ill, a mother who was dying in awful conditions. They tell themselves, ok, I can write a novel about it. It's not at all a novel, I mean, really not at all. So...

Parnet: The third reason?

Deleuze: The third reason is that, you understand, the real customers have changed. One realizes... Of course, people are still there, still well informed (*au courant*), but the customers have changed. I mean, who are the television customers? It's not the people listening, but rather the announcers, they are the real customers. The listeners want what the announcers want.

Parnet: The television viewers (*les téléspectateurs*)...

Deleuze: Yes, the television viewers.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, seventh cassette"]

Parnet: And the third reason is what?

Deleuze: Like I was saying, the announcers are the real customers, and there is no longer... And I was saying that, in publishing, there is a risk that the real customers of editors are not the potential readers, but rather the distributors. When the distributors become the real customers of the editors, what will happen? What interests distributors is the rapid turnover, which results in mass market products, rapid turnover in the regime of the best seller, etc., which means that all literature, if I dare say it this way, all creative literature in the manner of Beckett (*à la Beckett*), will be crushed by it, naturally.²⁰

Parnet: Well, that exists already, they are pre-formed on the basis of the public's needs...

Deleuze: Right, which is what defines the period of drought: Bernard Pivot, literature as nullity, the disappearance of all literary criticism outside commercial promotion.²¹

Yet, when I say that it's not all that serious, it's obvious that there will always be either parallel circuits or a means of expression for a parallel black market, etc. It's not possible for us to live... The Russians lost their literature, but they will manage to win it back somehow. All that falls into place, rich periods following impoverished periods. Woe betide the poor! (*Malheur aux pauvres!*)

Parnet: Woe betide the poor. About this idea of parallel markets or black markets: for a long time [literary] topics have been pre-determined. That is, in a given year, one sees clearly on publication lists that it's war, in another year, it's the death of one's parents, another year, it's attachment to nature, that sort of thing, but nothing appearing to emerge anew. So, have you seen the resurgence of a rich period after an impoverished one, have you lived through that?

Deleuze: Well, yes, like I already said, [Deleuze appears a bit tired here with the question] after the Liberation, it wasn't very strong until May '68 occurred. Between the creative period of the Liberation and... when was the beginning of the "New Wave", it was 1960?

Parnet: 1960... even earlier...

Deleuze: Between 1960 and 1972, let's say, there was a new rich period. Certainly! It occurred... It's a little like Nietzsche said so well, someone launches an arrow into space. That's what... Or even a period, or a collectivity launches an arrow, and eventually it falls, and then someone comes along to pick it up and hurl it out elsewhere, so that's how creation happens, how literature happens, passing through desert periods.²²

"D as in Desire"

Parnet: On that hopeful note, we pass on to "D." So, for "D," I need to refer to this page since I am going to read what's in the *Larousse*... In the *Petit Larousse Illustré* [an important French dictionary with biographical references], "Deleuze, Gilles, French philosopher, born in Paris in 1927..." Uh, "1925," excuse me...

Deleuze: So they've put me in the *Larousse* now, eh? They change things every year, the *Larousse*...

Parnet: Well, this is [the] 1988 [edition]...

Deleuze: Ah, fine...

Parnet: "With Félix Guattari, they show the importance of desire and its revolutionary aspect confronting all institutions, even psychoanalytic." For the work demonstrating all this, they cite *Anti-Oedipus*, 1972. So precisely, since everyone wants you to pass for the philosopher of desire, I want you to talk about desire. What was desire exactly? No doubt the most scintillating question in the world regarding *Anti-Oedipus*...

Deleuze: It's not what they thought it was, in any case, not what they thought it was, even back then. Even, I mean, the most charming people who were... It was a big ambiguity, it was a big misunderstanding, or rather a little one, a little misunderstanding. I believe that we wanted to say something very simple. In fact, we had an enormous ambition, notably when one writes a book, we

thought that we would say something new, specifically that one way or another, people who wrote before us didn't understand what desire meant. That is, in undertaking our task as philosophers, we were hoping to propose a new concept of desire. But, regarding concepts, people who don't do philosophy mustn't think that they are so abstract... On the contrary, they refer to things that are extremely simple, extremely concrete, we'll see this later... There are no philosophical concepts that do not refer to non-philosophical coordinates. It's very simple, very concrete.

What we wanted to express was the simplest thing in the world. We wanted to say: up until now, you speak abstractly about desire because you extract an object that's presumed to be the object of your desire. So, one could say, I desire a woman, I desire to leave on a trip, I desire this, that. And we were saying something really very simple, simple, simple: You never desire someone or something, you always desire an aggregate (*ensemble*). It's not complicated. Our question was: what is the nature of relations between elements in order for there to be desire, for these elements to become desirable? I mean, I don't desire a woman -- I am ashamed to say things like that since Proust already said it, and it's beautiful in Proust: I don't desire a woman, I also desire a landscape (*paysage*) that is enveloped in this woman, a landscape that, if needs be -- I don't know -- but that I can feel. As long as I haven't yet unfolded (*déroulé*) the landscape that envelops her, I will not be happy, that is, my desire will not have been attained, my desire will remain unsatisfied.

I'm choosing an aggregate with two terms: woman/landscape, and it's something completely different. If a woman says, "I desire a dress," or "I desire (some) thing" or "(some) blouse," it's obvious that she does not desire this dress or that blouse in the abstract. She desires it in an entire context, a context of her own life that she is going to organize, the desire in relation not only with a landscape, but with people who are her friends, with people who are not her friends, with her profession, etc. I never desire some thing all by itself, I don't desire an aggregate either, I desire *from within* an aggregate.

So, we can return to something we were discussing earlier, about alcohol, drinking ["B as in *Boire*"]. Drinking never meant solely "I desire to drink" and that's it. It means, either I desire to drink all alone while working, or drink all alone while relaxing, or going out to find friends to have a drink, go to some little café. In other words, there is no desire that does not flow -- I mean this precisely -- *flow* within an assemblage (*agencement*). Such that desire has always been for me -- I am looking for the abstract term that corresponds to desire -- it has always been constructivism. To desire is to construct an assemblage, to construct an aggregate: the aggregate of a skirt, of a sun ray,

Parnet: ... of a woman ...

Deleuze: ... of a street, an assemblage of a woman, of a vista...

Parnet: ... of a color...

Deleuze: ...of a color, that's what desire is: constructing an assemblage, constructing a region, really, to assemble (*agencer*). Desire is a constructivism. So, I'm saying that we, in *Anti-Oedipus*, we were trying...

Parnet [interrupting]: Can I...?

Deleuze: Yes?

Parent: Is it because desire is an assemblage that you needed to be two in order to create it? In an aggregate, where Félix was necessary, who emerged then to help write?

Deleuze: Did it... well, perhaps that will be more connected to what we have to discuss about friendship, of the relationship between philosophy and something that concerns friendship... But certainly, with Félix, we created an assemblage, yes.... There are assemblages all alone, I repeat, and then there are assemblages with two people – Félix, everything I did with Félix was a shared assemblage (*agencement à deux*), in which something passed between both of us. That is, all of this concerns physical phenomena. In order for an event to occur, a difference of potential is necessary, and for there to be a difference of potential, two levels are required, so that something occurs, a flash occurs or a flash doesn't occur, or a little stream... And that's in the domain of desire. That's what a desire is, constructing. Every one of us spends his/her time constructing... When anyone says, every time anyone says, I desire this or that, that means that he/she is in the process of constructing an assemblage, and it's nothing else, desire *is nothing else*.²³

[Change of cassette (cassette 8); the producer claps his hand]

Parnet: So, precisely, is it just by chance that, since desire exists in an aggregate, in an assemblage, that *Anti-Oedipus*, where you talk about desire, where you start to talk about desire, is the first book you wrote with someone else... that is, with Félix Guattari?

Deleuze: Yes, you are quite right... No doubt, we had to enter into what was a new assemblage for us, to write as two (*à deux*), that each of us did not interpret or live in the same way, so that something might “pass” (*pour que quelque chose passe*). And if something “passed,” this was finally a fundamental reaction, hostility against the dominant conceptions of desire, the psychoanalytical conceptions. We had to be two, Félix who had been in psychoanalysis, myself interested in this subject, we needed all that so that we could say we had the possibility here of a constructive, constructivist concept of desire.

Parnet: Can you define better, maybe quickly, simply, how you see the difference between this constructivism and analytical interpretation? ... Are there any ...

Deleuze: It's quite simple, I think, it's quite simple, given our position regarding psychoanalysis... There are multiple facets, but in terms of the problem of desire, really psychoanalysts speak of desire exactly like priests talk about it – this is not the only comparison -- they are psychoanalyst-priests. And they talk about it under the guise of the great wailing about castration – castration, it's worse than original sin, castration is... It's a kind of enormous curse on desire that is quite precisely frightening.

What did we try to do in *Anti-Oedipus*? I think there are three main points directly opposed to psychoanalysis. These three points are -- well, for me and I think for Félix as well, we would change none of these points at all.²⁴ That's because we are persuaded that the unconscious is not a theater, not a place where Hamlet and Oedipus interminably play out their scenes. It's not a theater, but a factory, it's production... The unconscious produces there, incessantly produces... It functions like a factory, it's the very opposite of the psychoanalytical vision of the unconscious as a theater where it's always a question of Hamlet or Oedipus moving about constantly, infinitely...

The second theme is that delirium, which is very closely linked to desire – to desire is to become delirious (*délirer*) to some extent... If you look at delirium whatever it might be about, any delirium whatsoever, it is exactly the contrary of what psychoanalysis has latched onto about it, that is, we don't go into delirium about the father or mother. Rather, one “délires” about something

completely different; this is the great secret of delirium, we "délire" about the whole world. That is, one "délires" about history, geography, tribes, deserts, peoples . . .

Parnet: Climates...

Deleuze: ... races, climates, that's what we "délire" about. The world of delirium is, "I am an animal, a Negro", Rimbaud.²⁵ It's: where are my tribes, how are my tribes arranged, surviving in the desert, etc.? The desert... uh, delirium is geographical-political; psychoanalysis links it always to familial determinants. Even after so many years since *Anti-Oedipus*, I maintain that psychoanalysis never understood anything at all about a phenomenon of delirium. One "délires" the world and not one's little family. And all this intersects: when I referred to literature not being someone's little private affair, it comes down to the same thing: delirium as well is not a delirium focused on the father and mother.

3) The third point, it returns to desire: desire always established itself, always constructs assemblages there and establishes itself in an assemblage, always putting several factors into play, and psychoanalysis ceaselessly reduces us to a single factor, always the same, sometimes the father, sometimes the mother, sometimes the phallus, etc. It is completely ignorant of what the multiple is, completely ignorant of constructivism, that is, of assemblages.

I'll give some examples. We were talking about the animal earlier. For psychoanalysis, the animal is the image of the father, let's say, a horse is the image of the father. It's a fucking joke (*c'est se foutre du monde*). I think of the example of Little Hans, a child about whom Freud rendered an opinion... He witnesses a horse falling in the street and the wagon driver who beats the horse with a whip, and the horse is twitching all around, kicking out... Before cars, automobiles, this was a common spectacle in the streets, something quite impressive for a child. The first time a child sees a horse fall in the street and a half-drunk driver trying to revive it by whipping it, that must have caused such an emotion... It was something happening in the street, the event in the street, sometimes a very bloody event. Then you hear the psychoanalysts talking about the image of the father, etc., it's in their heads that things get confused. That desire might concern a horse fallen and beaten in the street, dying in the street, etc., well that's an assemblage, a fantastic assemblage for a child, it's disturbing to the very core.²⁶

Another example I could choose, another example: we were talking about the animal. What is an animal? There is no single animal that could be the image of the father. Animals usually group together in a pack, there are packs.²⁷ There is case that gives me a lot of pleasure, in a text that I adore by Jung, who broke off from Freud after a long collaboration. Jung told Freud that he had a dream about an ossuary, and Freud literally understood nothing.²⁸ He told Jung constantly, "if you dream about a bone, it means the death of someone." But Jung never stopped telling him, "I didn't tell you about a bone, I dreamt about an ossuary." Freud didn't get it. He couldn't distinguish between an ossuary and a bone, that is... An ossuary is one hundred bones, a thousand bones, ten thousand bones... That's what a multiplicity is, that's what an assemblage is. I am walking in an ossuary... What does that mean? Where does desire "pass"? In an assemblage, it's always a collective, a kind of constructivism, etc., that's what desire is. Where does my desire "pass" among these thousand cracks, these thousand bones? Where does my desire "pass" in the pack? What is my position in the pack? Am I outside the pack, alongside, inside, at the center? All these things are phenomena of desire. That's what desire is.

Parnet: This collective assemblage precisely... Since *Anti-Oedipus* is a book that was written in 1972, the collective assemblage came at an appropriate moment after May '68, that is, it was a reflection...

Deleuze: Exactly.

Parnet: ... of that particular period, and against psychoanalysis that maintained its little affair...?

Deleuze: One can only say: delirium “délires” races and tribes, it “délires” peoples, it “délires” history and geography -- all that seems to me to correspond precisely to May '68. That is, it seems to me, [May '68 was] an attempt to introduce a little bit of fresh air into the fetid, stifling atmosphere of familial deliriums. People saw quite clearly that this is what delirium was... If I am going to get delirious (*délirer*), it won't be about my childhood, about my little private affair. We “délire”... Delirium is cosmic, one “délires” about the ends of the world, about particles, about electrons, not about papa and mama, obviously.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: “Gilles Deleuze, cassette nine”]

Parnet: Well, precisely about this collective assemblage of desire, I recall several misunderstandings... I remember at Vincennes in the 1970s [where Deleuze taught], at the university, there were people who put into practice this “desire” that resulted instead in kinds of collective infatuations (*amours collectifs*), as if they never really understood very well. [Deleuze smiles] So I would like... Or more precisely, because there were a lot of “crazies” at Vincennes... Since you started from schizoanalysis to fight against psychoanalysis, everybody thought that it was quite fine to be crazy, to be schizo... So we saw some incredible things among the students, and I would like you to tell me some funny stories, or not so funny ones, about these misunderstandings regarding desire.

Deleuze: Well, the misunderstandings... I can perhaps consider the misunderstandings more abstractly. The misunderstandings generally were connected to two points, two cases, which were more or less the same: some people thought that desire was a form of spontaneity, so there were all sorts of movements of “spontaneity”...

Parnet: The “Mao-Spontex”, they're renowned!²⁹

Deleuze: ... and others thought desire was an occasion for partying (*la fête*). For us, it was neither one nor the other, but that had little importance since assemblages got created, even the crazies, the crazies, the crazies (*les fous*) – there were so many, all kinds, they were part of what was happening then at Vincennes. But the crazies, they had their own discipline, their own way of... they made their speeches, they made their interventions, and they also entered into an assemblage, they constructed their own assemblage, and they did very well in the assemblage. There was a kind of guile, comprehension, a general good will of the crazies.

But, if you prefer, on the level of theory, practically ... These were assemblages (*agencements*) that were established and that fell apart. Theoretically, the misunderstanding was to say: Ok, desire is spontaneity, hence the name they were called, the spontaneists; or it's *la fête*, and that's not what it was. The so-called philosophy of desire consisted only in telling people: don't get psychoanalyzed, never interpret, go experience/experiment with assemblages, search out the assemblages that suit you, let each person search...

So, what was an assemblage? For me, an assemblage --- for Félix, it's not that he thought something else, but it was perhaps... I don't know – but for me, I would maintain that there were

four components of an assemblage, if you wish... This said very very roughly, so I am not tied to it, maybe there are six...

1) An assemblage referred to "states of things", so that each of us might find the "state of things" that suits us. For example, earlier, for drinking, I like this café, I don't like that café, the people that are in a particular café, etc., that's a "state of things."

2) Another dimension of assemblages: "les énoncés", little statements, each person has a kind of style, his/her way of talking. So, it's between the two things (*à cheval*). In the café, for example, there are friends, and one has a certain way of talking with one's friends, so each café has its style – I say the café, but that applies to all kinds of other things.

Ok, so an assemblage encompasses "states of things" and then "statements," styles of enunciation ... Eh... it's really interesting... History in the space of five years can produce a new kind of statement... For example, in the Russian revolution, when did statements of a Leninist kind appear, how, in what form? In May '68, when did the first kinds of so-called '68 statements appear? It's very complex. In any case, every assemblage implies styles of enunciation.

3) An assemblage implies territories, each of us chooses or creates a territory, even just walking into a room, one chooses a territory. I walk into a room that I don't know, I look for a territory, that is, the spot where I feel the best in the room.

4) And then there are processes of what one has to call deterritorialization, that is, the way one leaves the territory.

I would say that an assemblage encompasses these four dimensions: states of things, enunciations, territories, movements of deterritorialization. It's within these [components] that desire flows. So... the crazies...

Parnet: Did you feel particularly responsible for people who took drugs, [Parnet laughs, apparently a bit embarrassed] who might have read *Anti-Oedipus* a bit too literally? Because, I mean, it was, it's not a problem, not like someone incites who young people to commit stupid acts (*conneries*). [Deleuze looks visibly uncomfortable with the subject]

Deleuze [speaking very softly and precisely]: One always feel quite responsible for anyone for whom things went badly (*tournaît mal*)...

Parnet: What were the effects of *Anti-Oedipus*?

Deleuze: ... and I always tried to do what I could so that things went well. In any case, I believe -- it's my point of honor -- I never tried being cagey about those things. I never told a student to go on, it's ok, go get stoned, but always tried to do all that I could to help people make it through. For I am entirely too aware of the *slightest* thing that might suddenly push someone over and reduce him/her to a pulp-like state (*état de loque*). If they drink, ok... I could never cast blame on anyone... Whatever they did, I just don't have the desire to cast blame... But I felt that one had watch for the moment when things were no longer acceptable. Let them drink, let them take drugs, let them do what they want. That is, we aren't cops, nor are we their fathers. I wasn't expected to prevent anything, but I tried nonetheless to keep them from being reduced to pulp (*état de loque*).

Whenever there is a risk, I can't stand it. I can stand a person taking drugs, but a person taking drugs to such an extent that he reaches, I don't know, a wild state (*un état sauvage*), that's it, I tell myself, he's going to crack up. I can't stand it, especially young people... You referred to young people, I can't stand a young person cracking up, it's just unbearable. An old man who cracks up, who commits suicide even, he at least has already lived his life, but a young person who cracks up, out of stupidity (*par connerie*), out of carelessness, because he drinks too much, because of, etc. ...

So I was always divided between the impossibility of finding fault with anyone (*donner tort à quelqu'un*) and the absolute desire, or rather the absolute refusal, that anyone might be reduced to pulp.

So, you know, it's a thin line. I cannot say that there are principles that apply, one just deals with each case, and it's true that the role of people in those moments is to try to save these young kids (*les petits gars*) as much as one can. And saving them doesn't mean making them walk the straight and narrow, it means preventing them from heading towards being reduced to pulp. That's all I can say.

Parnet: No, but it was about the effects of *Anti-Oedipus*, were there any?

Deleuze: That's it, that's it, prevent people from being reduced to pulp, from anyone at that time developing the early stages of schizophrenia, [prevent them] either from falling into a condition where they get thrown into a repressive hospital, or else doing everything to stop someone who couldn't stand being alcoholic from getting into trouble, to do everything so that he might stop, stop...

Parnet: Was it nonetheless a revolutionary book to the extent that it seemed for the enemies of this book, the psychoanalysts, to be an apology for permissivity and to say that everything you said...?

Deleuze: Surely not. The book never was ... I mean, when one reads this book, this book always marked out an extreme prudence. The book's lesson was: don't become a shredded rag (*loque*). We never stopped opposing the schizophrenic process to the repressive hospital type, and for us, the Terror was in producing a "hospital creature". Nothing else counts. And I would nearly say that promoting the kinds of values of the "trip," what the anti-psychiatrists called the "trip" of the schizophrenic process, was precisely the way to prevent and ward off the production of pulp-like hospital creatures (*loques d'hôpital*), that is, the production of schizophrenics, the fabrication of schizophrenics.³⁰

Parnet: Do you think, to finish with *Anti-Oedipus*, that this book still has effects today?

Deleuze: Yes, it's a beautiful book, it's a beautiful book, because it has a conception of the unconscious, in my opinion, the only case in which there was this kind of conception of the unconscious. I mean, with the two points, or the three points: 1) of multiplicities of the unconscious, 2) of delirium as world delirium, and not the family delirium, [but] the cosmic delirium, the delirium of races, the delirium of tribes, that's good; and 3) and the unconscious as a machine and a factory, not as a theater. I have nothing to change in these three points, and in my opinion, it remains absolutely new since all of psychoanalysis has been reconstituted. So, I believe, I hope that it's a book that will be rediscovered, perhaps, perhaps [Deleuze raises his hands together in the prayer gesture] I offer up a prayer for it to be rediscovered...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, cassette ten." During this cassette change, the camera is closely focused on Parnet's reflection in the mirror, with Deleuze completely off camera. Parnet playfully makes a face at the camera, and when Boutang says, "Claire, whenever you like...", she begins, smiling as she sets up the next discussion topic.]

"E as in *Enfance* [Childhood]"

Deleuze: Ten...

Parnet: So, "E" is "*Enfance*" [Childhood]. You have always said that you began your life living on the avenue de Wagram, you were born in the 17th arrondissement, then you lived with your mother on rue Daubigny in the 17th arrondissement, and now you live near the place de Clichy, that is, a poor neighborhood in the 17th arrondissement on the rue de Bizerte. One can say it because you will be dead when people see this, so we can give your address. [Deleuze laughs] What I want to know, first, is if your family was *bourgeoise*, what was known as a bourgeois family on the right (*de droite*), I believe.

Deleuze: I say it, I always say it when my friends ask me. It's true, it's something of a descent (*chute*), I started at the high point of the 17th, a very beautiful part of the 17th, and then, during my childhood, I lived through the crisis before the war – I have some childhood memories of the crisis, I wasn't very old, but one of these memories was the number of empty apartments.... People really had no more money, and there were these apartments for rent everywhere, everywhere. So, my parents had to abandon the beautiful apartment at the high spot of the 17th, near the Arc de Triomphe, and then they went down a level, but it still wasn't bad, it wasn't far from the boulevard Malesherbes, in a little street, the rue Daubigny, and then when I returned to Paris, having grown up, it was at the far border of the 17th, a 17th full of small shops, a bit proletarian (*prolo*), rue Nollet, not far away from Verlaine's house, who was not rich. So, it's a descent, and in a few years, I don't know where I will be, but the outlook isn't good. [Deleuze is smiling throughout this]

Parnet: In Saint-Ouen, I hope.

Deleuze: In Saint-Ouen, yes... As for my family, yes, they were a bourgeois family, on the right (*de droite*), no... well, on the right, yes, they certainly weren't on the left. One has to return to the circumstances back then. I have few memories from my childhood because memory, it seems to me, is a faculty that should reject the past rather than recall it... Memory, one needs a lot of memory to reject it, precisely, because it's not an archive. I have this memory... There were these iron railings where there were signs saying, "Apartment for rent", and I lived through a lot.

Parnet: In what years was that?

Deleuze: Oh, I have no recollection of the years... It was, uh, 30-uh, between '35 and... I really don't know...

Parnet: You were 10 years old.

Deleuze: People were without money... I was born in '25, yes, but I remember the money problems... That's what kept me from going to study with the Jesuit priests (*chez les Jésuites*), my parents had no more money and I had been destined for the Jesuits, and then I went to the public high school (*lycée*) when the crisis came. Then, another aspect... I don't recall... there was another aspect of the crisis I recalled... I forget, another aspect.... Well, it doesn't matter...

And then there was the war, and my father... Yes, it was a family, indeed, a family *de droite*, yes, because I recall this quite clearly -- nothing has changed, and it's why I understand employers better, bosses now (*les patrons*), certain employers right now – the terror that they retained from the [Socialist] Popular Front is unbelievable, no doubt even employers who did not live through it, but

there are still many who did live through it, and for them, the Popular Front was the image of chaos worse than May '68. I remember nonetheless that all this bourgeoisie *de droite* were all anti-Semitic, and [Léon] Blum... It was something ghastly, the hatred directed toward [Pierre] Mendès-France.³¹ But that was nothing, *nothing*, compared to the hatred that Blum had to undergo because Blum was really the first... The paid vacation, the reaction to it was frightening.

Parnet: The July First of the Left...³²

Deleuze: Ahhh, really, Blum was.. was... -- I don't know how to say it -- he was for them worse than the devil. One cannot understand how Pétain could seize power without understanding the level of anti-Semitism in France at that period. The French bourgeoisie's [anti-Semitism] at that period, and the hatred against the social measures taken by Blum's government, it was ghastly. So, my father was a bit *Croix-de-feu*, yes... [Deleuze laughs]³³ Oh, it was very common at that period. So, it was a bourgeois family *de droite*... uncultivated... There was a cultivated bourgeoisie, but this was a completely uncultivated bourgeoisie.

But my father, he was a lovely man, very benevolent, very good, very charming, and what really seemed astonishing to me was this violence against... He had gone through the 14-18 War [World War I] which is a world that one can understand very well in general terms, but that one cannot know in fine detail. These veterans of the 14-18 War, at once the anti-Semitism, the regime of crisis, what this crisis was, these are all things about which no one had any clue... So, there you are...

Parnet: And what was his occupation?

Deleuze: He was an engineer, but a very special kind of engineer. I can recall two of his activities. He had invented -- did he invent it or not, or did he just develop it? -- a product with the function of making roofs watertight... the watertightness of roofs... But with the crisis, he ended up with only one worker, an Italian -- a foreigner as well, so that didn't work out too well. And then, this business collapsed, so he resituated himself in a more serious industry that made balloons, the kind of... dirigibles, you see? But at a certain moment, these were completely useless to the point where, in '39, there were a few high above Paris to stop German planes... I don't know why, but they really seemed like homing pigeons.

So when the Germans took over the factory where my father worked, they were more rational (*raisonnable*), and so they transformed everything for the production of rubber rafts. [Deleuze laughs] Rubber rafts were more useful, but they certainly did make balloons and zeppelins. And me, I saw this start of the war -- I *saw* it, I have lots of memories, I wasn't very old, still I was fourteen -- the way people knew quite well that they had gained a year with Munich, a year and a few months, until the war. So, all that was connected, the crisis, the war, all of that... It was an atmosphere, I don't know, it was very tense, when people older than me lived through some really awful moments.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Cassette eleven"]

Deleuze: When the Germans really arrived, coming down over Belgium and invading France, I was in Deauville because it was the place where my parents always spent summer vacations. They had already returned [to Paris], and they had left us, which was unimaginable since we had a mother who had never left us... But we found ourselves in a *pension*, they had entrusted us to an elderly woman

who ran a *pension*, so I had a year of schooling in Deauville, in a hotel that had been transformed into a *lycée*, and the Germans weren't far off...

Wait, I am confusing everything... That was during the "phony war" [1939-40], when I was in this *lycée*. So, Deauville had always been... When I was talking earlier about paid vacations, I recall all the more clearly the arrival of the first paid vacationers to the beaches in Deauville. That would have been something for a filmmaker, that would be... a master work, because when you saw these people who saw the sea for the first time, it was something astounding. I recall seeing someone who saw it for the first time, and even after, and it was splendid. It was a young girl from the Limousin province who was with us and who saw the sea for the first time. And it's true, if there is something that's unimaginable when you haven't ever seen it, it's the sea. One can tell oneself that it's something grandiose, something infinite, but a person is nothing next to it. When one sees the sea... And that little girl stayed standing there, I don't know, for four or five hours before the sea, completely dumbstruck as if she had been born an idiot, she just did not tire from standing before such a sublime, such a grandiose spectacle.

Now, this was the beach at Deauville that was a private beach, [Deleuze laughs] had been for a long time, for the bourgeois, it was their property. And here the paid vacationers arrive and people who no doubt had never seen the sea. That was grandiose! If class hatred means anything, it's in expressions like – alas, my mother, who was nonetheless the best of women, said, "The impossibility of frequenting beaches where there are people 'like that'." So, these were... very hard statements... I believe that the *bourgeois* never forgot... May '68 was nothing [Deleuze bursts out laughing] next to this...

Parnet: Talk a little about the fear that they had, that you referred to earlier.

Deleuze: Their fear? Well, there couldn't be any stop to that [process]. If they gave paid vacation to the workers, then it was all the bourgeois privileges that were disappearing... And the sites... it was also a question of territory. If the jack of all trades [Deleuze laughs] can come to the beaches in Deauville, it was, I don't know, as if suddenly the return to the age of dinosaurs... or, I don't know, it was an aggression, it was worse than the Germans, worse than the German tanks arriving on the beaches. It was... indescribable.

Parnet: People from another world!

Deleuze: Also, and this is a detail, but what was happening in the factories, the employers, I mean... They never forgot that, and I think they even developed an hereditary fear... I don't want to say that May '68 was nothing at all, '68 was something else, but they did not lose their memory of '68 either.

So, there I was in Deauville, without my parents and with my younger brother, when the Germans broke through. And yes, it was there that I ceased being an idiot. I have to say that I was a young person who was completely mediocre in my studies, with no interest whatsoever in anything at all, and I think my stamp collection was my greatest activity. I was completely nil in class. And it happened, something that occurred to a lot of people, I guess, people who are awoken, they are always awoken by someone in particular. And for me, in this hotel converted into a *lycée*, there was a guy, young, who seemed quite extraordinary to me because he spoke very well, and it was a total awakening for me, I had the fortune of coming upon a guy.

Later he was rather well known, first because he had a somewhat famous father, then because he was very active in the leftist movement (*dans le gauchisme*), but much later. His name was Halbwachs, Pierre Halbwachs, the son of the sociologist [Maurice Halbwachs].³⁴ At that time,

he was young, and he had an odd appearance (*drôle de tête*), he was very thin, very tall, or rather tall as I recall it, and he only had one eye, that is, one eye open and the other one closed, not naturally, but that's how he presented himself, kind of like a Cyclops, with very curly hair like a goat's... [Parnet laughs through this] no, more like a sheep's. When it got cold, he turned green or purple, with very fragile health, so he had been deferred from military duty. He completed his degree [*license*], and so he had been placed there as a professor during the war to fill in.

And for me, it was a kind of revelation. He was full of enthusiasm, and I can't even remember what year I was in, I don't know, in 8th or 9th grade (*quatrième ou troisième*), and he communicated to us, or communicated to me, something that, well, it was overwhelming for me. I was discovering all sorts of things... He spoke to us about Baudelaire, he read to us, he read extremely well. And we became close necessarily because he saw very well that he had impressed me enormously. And I remember, in winter on the beaches of Deauville, he took me for walks, I followed him. I realize that literally I was something like his disciple, I had found a master (*maître*). So, we sat down out there on the dunes, in the wind, next to the sea – it was great! -- and he read to me, I remember, he read to me [André Gide's] *Les Nourritures terrestres*. He screamed it out – there was no one on the beaches in winter – he screamed out *Les Nourritures terrestres*. I was seated next to him, and I was a little worried that if someone else came out there, obviously, they'd say, "That's pretty strange!" So, he read, and it was quite varied. He helped me discover Anatole France, Baudelaire, Gide, those were the principal ones, his great loves, and I was transformed, completely transformed.

As a result, rather quickly, people began talking about this guy and his strange appearance, his huge eye and all that, with this kid who followed him everywhere, going down to the beach together. And so the lady in whose pension I was staying (*ma logeuse*) quickly got worried and had me come talk to her, and said that she was responsible for me in the absence of my parents, she warned me against... she said it was a relationship... I couldn't understand anything, anything at all... If there ever had been a pure, indisputable, entirely frank relationship, it was that one.

And I only understood afterwards that people assumed that Pierre Halbwachs was a dangerous pederast. So, I said to him, "I am upset, and my *logeuse* told me that" – I used the *vous* [formal] form in addressing him, and he used the *tu* [familiar] form with me – "she said we musn't see each other," that it wasn't normal. So, he told me, "Don't worry about it. No lady, no elderly lady can resist me," he said, "I am going to explain it to her, I will go see her, and she will be reassured." And nonetheless, I was just smart enough, he had made me smart enough so that I had doubts, I was not at all calmed down by that because I could foresee that it was not at all certain that the elderly *logeuse* would be... And indeed, it was catastrophic: He went to see the elderly *logeuse* who immediately wrote to my parents that it was urgent for them to have me return, that he was an extremely suspicious individual... So, he completely blew the attempt.

But there we were, the Germans arrive – all this was during the "phony war" [1939-40] – the Germans arrive, no longer any questions about Pierre -- so my brother and I took off on our bicycles to meet our parents who had been taken to Rochefort – the factory was being moved to Rochefort, that is, to escape the Germans... So, we did that on our bikes, and I still recall having heard the speech made by Pétain, the famous and hideous speech, in some village inn, and there we were on our bikes! [Deleuze laughs] And at an intersection where we stopped, there was a car, something worthy of a cartoon, there was the elder Halbwachs, the young Halbwachs, an aesthetician called Meyer... And they were going not far from La Rochelle, it was predestined... [Deleuze laughs]

I tell you all that only in order to say... Years later, I met Halbwachs, I knew him, I knew him very well, I did not have the same admiration for him, it's true, but that taught me something at least, which is that when I was 13 or 14, at the moment that I admired him, I knew that I was completely right.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: “Gilles Deleuze, Cassette twelve”]

Parnet: So, you return...

Boutang: Wait, wait.... Ok, go ahead...

Parnet: So, then you returned to Paris with a certain difficulty, to *lycée* Carnot, the “phony war” and the vacation were finished, and in *lycée* Carnot, you were in philosophy classes. I think at that time in *lycée* Carnot, [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty was a professor there, but strangely, you were in a philosophy class that wasn't Merleau-Ponty's, you were in the class of the other philosophy professor named Monsieur Vialle. I seem to recall that you said that name...

Deleuze: Yes, Monsieur Vialle, about whom I have a very, very fond memory. But it was completely by chance that I was assigned... So, I could have tried to have myself reassigned to Merleau-Ponty's class, but I didn't, I don't recall why. Vialle was.... Indeed, Halbwachs had helped me learn something about what literature was, yet from my very first classes in philosophy, I knew this was what I would do...

I recall bits and pieces of things... For example, I remember quite well that I was in philosophy class when we learned about Ouradour... Ouradour had happened.³⁵ I have to admit that I was in a class that was slightly politicized, rather sensitized to questions about the Nazis, etc. I was in the class of Guy Moquet,³⁶ and there was a strange atmosphere in this class... In any case, the announcement about Ouradour, it was really very impressive for a class of boys at age seventeen or, I don't know how old one is when finishing the *bachot*,³⁷ seventeen-eighteen years...

Parnet: Eighteen is the normal age...

Deleuze: Yes, I recall that well. So, Vialle, he was a professor who spoke very softly, he was old, he was... and I liked him enormously. Merleau-Ponty, I only recall his melancholy. At Carnot, it's a big *lycée* where there's a balustrade that goes all around the first floor, and there was the very melancholic gaze of Merleau-Ponty who looked at all the kids there, down below, playing, yelling, an enormous melancholy, it seemed like he was saying, “What in God's name am I doing here?” Whereas Vialle, whom I liked so much, he was finishing his career, and so in this as well, I got very close to him, very close. Since we didn't live very far from one another, we used to walk back and forth to school together, and we never got tired of talking, of ... And there I knew, either I would do philosophy, or I would do nothing.

Parnet: Starting from your first courses?

Deleuze: Yes, yes. It was as if, if you like... When I learned of the existence, that there were such strange things called “concepts,” that had the same effect on me as, for some other people, the encounter with characters from a magnificent novel. God, I was excited to learn about...

Parnet: *The Count of Monte Cristo*, for example?

Deleuze: Oh, Monsieur de Charlus ... or a great literary character from a novel, I don't know, Vautrin, anything, Eugenie Grandet.³⁸ When I learned that, I don't know, even things like “What did

Plato call an ‘idea’?,” that seemed to me to be as lively, as animated, as... I knew that this was it for me.

Parnet: And immediately, you did very well, you were the best?

Deleuze: Ah, yes. Henceforth, I no longer had any scholastic problems. From Halbwachs onward, I did well, I did well in literature, even in Latin. Yes, I did well. I was a good student, and in philosophy, I became a very good student.

Parnet: I would like to go back a little... Weren’t the classes somewhat politicized at that period? You said that something special was happening in that class because Guy Moquet was in it.

Deleuze: Politicized? Well, that wasn’t possible during the war. We weren’t politicized. There certainly were guys who, at seventeen or eighteen, were already participating in the Resistance, but it wasn’t something public (*connu*). People who were in the Resistance didn’t talk about it unless they were cretins. So, we can’t talk in terms of politicization or not. There were people who were indifferent, there were supporters of the Vichy regime...

Parnet: *Action française*?³⁹

Deleuze: *Action française*? Ah, no, this was much worse. They were Vichy supporters... One could say... No, that has no comparison with the politicization during peacetime, because the active elements were the Resistance, the young Resistance participants, or young people in relations with the Resistance participants. It has nothing to do with politicization, it was much more secretive...

Parnet: So, in your class, for example, there were young people who were already sympathetic toward the Resistance and who talked about it?

Deleuze: Well yes, like I said, Guy Moquet, who would die... who was assassinated by the Nazis, a year later, I think...

Parnet: And you talked about it?

Deleuze: Well obviously. Just as I told you, the immediate news, the immediate communication about Ouradour was the theme, I think, a secret communiqué, the theme on the wireless [*T.S.F.*]... The news was known on that very day. All the Parisian *lycées* knew about it. For me, that was one of the most emotional things, to learn about Ouradour almost immediately.

Parnet: So, to finish with “Childhood,” if one is ever finished with it... Precisely it seems that, for you, your childhood really has little importance. That is, neither do you talk about, nor is it a reference point. You don’t seem to see childhood as having much importance.

Deleuze: Yes... yes... yes... [*Deleuze agrees as Parnet is asking the question, and a brief silence ensues as he thinks about the question*] Well, necessarily so since it’s almost part of all that we were talking about earlier. I consider, really, that the writing activity has nothing to do with one’s individual situation. That does not mean that one doesn’t put all of one’s soul into it. Literature and writing is profoundly connected to *life*. But life is something more than personal. Everything that brings into literature something that has a relation with the life of the person, the personal life of the

writer, is annoying (*fâcheux*) by its very nature, lamentable by its nature, since that prevents one from seeing, that prevents one... It makes one fall back, really, on one's tiny private affair.

That's never what my childhood was. It's not that it horrifies me. What would matter to me, strictly speaking, is this: just as there are becomings-animal (*devenirs-animaux*) that men envelop, [so] there are becomings-child. I believe that writing means always becoming-something, but it's for that reason that one doesn't write just to write either. I believe that one writes because there is something of life going through you, whatever it might be ... There are things that... One writes for life, that's it, and one becomes something. Writing is becoming, becoming anything that one wants except [a] writer, and it's doing everything one wants except [creating an] archive. As much as I respect the archive -- what we are doing [in the *Abécédaire*] is fine. We are creating the archive, but it's not... It has an interest only in relation to something else... If there is a reason to create an archive, it's because it has a relation with something else and that, through the archive, one will perhaps grasp a little bit of that something else. But the very idea, for example, of speaking about my childhood seems to me... It seems nothing, it has no interest, [Deleuze laughs] because it's, it's the opposite of all literature.

If you permit me, [Deleuze leans over, off camera, reaching for a book] I have read that a thousand times, everyone has said it, all the great writers have always said it. But I came upon this book that I didn't know -- everyone has his gaps -- a great Russian poet Mandelstam, that I was reading yesterday, as I told you...

Parnet: With the very beautiful first name, can you read it?

Deleuze: Osip... yes, Osip... He says in this sentence... He says -- there are these equivalencies, and this kind of sentence overwhelms me. And that's, the professor's role, that's what it is, to communicate a text, to have kids like a text. That's what Halbwachs did for me -- So he says: "There's something that I don't quite understand, I don't know exactly what it is." He says: "I never could understand people like Tolstoy," and even Tolstoy, eh? "in love with the family archives with their epic poems made of domestic memories." Here it starts to get serious: "I repeat: my memory is not of love, but of hostility, and it labors not at reproducing, but at distancing the past. For an intellectual of mediocre background," like him, "memory is useless, it would suffice for him to talk about the books he had read, and his biography would be complete," like me with Halbwachs. "There, where for fortunate generations, the epic poem was spoken in hexameters and in chronicles, for me, there stands a gaping sign, and between me and the century there lies an abyss, a ditch filled with time that murmurs (*du temps qui bruit*). What did my family wish to say? I do not know. It had been stuttering since birth, and yet it had something to say. This congenital stuttering weighs heavily on me and on many of my contemporaries. We were not taught to speak but to stammer -- and only by listening to the swelling noise of the century and being bleached by the foam on the crest of its wave did we acquire a language."⁴⁰

Now, I don't know, what that means for me, really... Yes, what that means is to write is to bear witness to life, bear witness *for* life, *for* in the sense we were saying earlier, *for* the animals who die. It's stammering in language (*bégayer dans la langue*). Doing literature by calling upon childhood, it's typically to make literature into one's tiny private affair, it's totally disgusting (*une dégoutation*), really K-mart literature (*littérature de Prisunic*), bazaar literature, it's bestsellers, truly shit. If you don't push language up to this point where it stammers --- it's not easy, it isn't enough to stammer, beh beh beh, like that... If you don't reach that point, well then... Perhaps in literature, just as, through pushing language to a limit, there is a becoming-animal of language itself and of the writer, there is also a becoming-child, but it's not *his* childhood. He becomes child, yes, but it's no longer his childhood, or anyone's childhood, it's the childhood of the world, the childhood of a

world. So those writers who are interested in their childhood, who open that up, and then they continue, well and good, they create the literature they deserve. If there was someone who was not interested in his childhood, it was Proust, for example...

Fine, so, the task of the writer is not to go digging through the family archives, it's not interesting oneself in one's childhood, no one is interested... No one worthy of anything whatsoever (*personne de digne de quoi que ce soit*) is interested in his/her childhood. Our task is to become child through writing, reach a childhood of the world, restore a childhood of the world. That's the task of literature.

Parnet: A Nietzschean child?

Deleuze: Nietzsche, among others, understood... Mandelstam as well. All writers know it... It's becoming, I could not find any other expression than that. Writing means becoming, but it means becoming neither writer, nor one's own memorialist. And it's not because I had a love story that I am going to go write a novel all of a sudden, it's vile (*immonde*) to think things like that. It's not just mediocre, it's vile.

Parnet: Well, an exception to the rule is that Nathalie Sarraute, who is a great writer, just wrote a book entitled *Enfance*. Is this a little bit of a weakness?

Deleuze: Not at all, not at all. I agree with you, Nathalie Sarraute is an immensely important writer. *Enfance* is not at all a book about her childhood, it's a book that typically bears witness...

Parnet: I was playing the devil's advocate role ...

Deleuze: I well understood that you are playing the devil's advocate role, but it's a very dangerous role, you understand? ... She invents a child of the world. What interests Nathalie Sarraute finally in her childhood? It's a certain number of stereotyped formulae from which she derives marvelous effects. That could just as well be what she already did with the final words of... the final words of who there?

Parnet: Of [Anton] Chekhov?

Deleuze: Chekhov... She is going to draw from... she is going to draw from ... a little girl, who heard someone say, "How are you?" (*Comment vas-tu?*), what is this "how are you? how are...?" etc., and from that, she is going to draw out a world of language, going to cause language to proliferate from itself. So, come on, as if she were interested in her childhood...⁴¹

Parnet: Well, all that is well and good, but still...

Deleuze [laughing]: Claude Sarraute [a French cultural commentator] would be interested in her childhood, but not Nathalie Sarraute!

Parnet: Well yes, Clo-Clo, yes, Clo-Clo, so Clo-Clo...⁴² So I find all that well and good, but still, at the same time... First, it was a very early training that pushed you toward literature. That is, you repressed your childhood, you rejected it like an enemy and as something hostile, first, starting at what age, was this a training? And on the other hand, childhood returns nonetheless in bursts, even if

they are disgusting bursts, childhood still returns. So, is it necessary to have a nearly daily training or a daily form of discipline?

Deleuze [laughing]: That happens all by itself, I imagine, because... Childhood, childhood, childhood... You know, it's like everything, one has to distinguish a bad childhood from a good childhood. I call...

What is interesting there [in childhood]? Well, besides the relations with the father, the mother, and childhood memories in the direction of my father and mother, that doesn't seem really interesting to me. It seems very interesting and quite rich for oneself, but not really interesting to write about. There are other aspects of childhood... I was talking about it earlier, a horse dies in the street before automobiles were around... It's a way to rediscover the child emotion (*émotion d'enfant*)... It's *a* child, in fact... One ought to say, "The child I once was is nothing, but I am not merely the child I have been, I was *a* child among others, I was a child just like any other (*un enfant quelconque*)."⁴³ And it's always under the heading of any child whatsoever that I have seen what was interesting, not under the heading, I was this particular child.... Ok, "I saw a horse die in the street before there were automobiles," not for me, but for those who saw this. Well, yes, very good, very good, perfect, perfect... It's a task of becoming writer, perhaps a factor that resulted in Dostoyevsky seeing it -- there is a wonderful page by Dostoyevsky, I think, in *Crime and Punishment*, about the horse dying in the street -- Nijinski the dancer saw it, Nietzsche saw it.... He was old already when Nietzsche saw it, a horse dying like that... Well, that's fine...

Parnet: And in your case, you saw the demonstrations of the Popular Front! There you go!

Deleuze: Yes, I saw demonstrations of the Popular Front, yes, I saw my father struggling between his honesty and his anti-Semitism... Yes, indeed... I have been *a* child... I have always pleaded, that is, in the sense that people don't understand the importance of the indefinite article.... *A* child is beaten, *a* horse is whipped, etc.... That doesn't mean, that doesn't mean, me, me... The indefinite article has an extreme richness (*l'article indéfini est d'une richesse extrême*).⁴³

Parnet: It's the multiplicity, we will return to that.

Deleuze: It's the multiplicity, yes... yes.

Parnet: Good... We are going to pass on to "F"

Deleuze: Let's pass on to "F", yes...

"F as in Fidelity"

Parnet: I chose the word "fidelity" (*la fidélité*), fidelity in order to speak of friendship (*l'amitié*) since you have been friends for thirty years with Jean-Pierre Bamberger, a day doesn't go by without you calling one another or seeing each other, it's like a couple... In any case, you are faithful in friendship, faithful to Félix Guattari, Jérôme Lindon... I can name others: with Elie [Sambar], Jean-Paul Manganaro, Pierre Chevalier -- Your friends are very important for you -- François Châtelet, Michel Foucault, who were your friends, you paid homage to them as your friends with a very great fidelity.⁴⁴

So, I would like to ask you if this impression is correct, that fidelity is necessarily linked to friendship for you, or the reverse?

Deleuze: There is no fidelity... Yes, it's because we are in "F"...

Parnet: Yes, and the "A" was already taken, so we've not gotten quite arbitrary...

Deleuze: ... but it's something other than fidelity, friendship [is]... In order to be the friend of someone, it's a matter of perception. It's the fact that... It's not that one has shared ideas, but what does it mean to have something in common with someone? I am speaking banalities here... You understand each other without needing to explain yourselves. It's not... It's not talking on the basis of ideas in common, but you have a language in common, or a pre-language in common. There are people, I cannot understand a thing they say, even if they say things quite simple, even if they say, "Pass me the salt," I still have to ask myself, "What are they saying?" On the other hand, there are others who may speak to me about an extremely abstract subject, and I may not agree with them, yet I understand everything, I understand everything they say... Ok, that means that I have something to say to them and they have something to say to me, and it is not at all the community of ideas which... In this, there is a mystery, this kind of indeterminate basis that results in...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand and announces: "Cassette fourteen"]

Parnet: Whose turn is it? Is it still your turn?

Deleuze: Ah, yes?... So, it's true, there is a huge mystery there, the fact of having something to say to someone, getting along so well, without ideas in common, without being able to attribute that to... I have a hypothesis, that each of us is apt to seize a certain type – no one is ever able to seize all the types at once – a certain type of charm, a perception of charm. And what do I call "charm"? It's not at all that I am trying to reduce friendship to homosexuality, not at all, but rather a gesture someone makes, a thought someone has, even before the thought is meaningful (*signifiante*), or someone's gesture, someone's modesty. It's these kinds of charm that extend all the way into life, into its vital roots, and this is how someone becomes the friend of another.

If you take a person's statements... There are statements that can be spoken only if the person saying them is vulgar, or disgusting, a kind of statement... We'd have to look for examples, and we don't have the time, but everyone can find plenty of examples. For each of us, there are statements, if you hear that statement, you say, "My God, what am I hearing? Who is this disgusting person?" One mustn't think that one can make a statement like that at random and then take it back. There are statements that can't be...

And inversely, for charm, there are insignificant statements that possess such a charm, that demonstrate such a delicacy, that you say immediately, "That person, he's mine," not in the sense of property, but he is of my own kind (*mien*), and I hope to be able to be of his own kind (*sien*). From there, friendship is born, can be born. So, there is indeed a question of perception, perceiving something that suits you or that teaches you something, that opens you, that reveals something to you.

Parnet: Always deciphering signs.

Deleuze: Yes, that's it, that's it. You describe it quite well. That's all there is, that's all there is, someone who emits signs, we receive them or we don't. All friendships are on this basis. To become sensitive to the signs emitted by a person, that's what I think explains... So, in this way, one can

spend hours with someone without saying a word, or preferably, saying things that are, well, not completely meaningless, but saying things generally ... It's comical, friendship is comic art.

Parnet: There you are, you really like the comedy of couples, likes [Flaubert's] *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, or Beckett, *Mercier et Camier* ...

Deleuze: Well, you know, with Jean-Pierre, I tell myself that we are the pale reproduction of Mercier and Camier, yes, yes, indeed... Jean-Pierre and I, we are tired out all the time, I have fragile health, Jean-Pierre is a hypochondriac, and our conversations really are like the kinds in *Mercier et Camier*... One says to the other, "how are you doing?" The other answers, "I'm pumped, but not to the max" (*Je suis gonflé, mais pas à bloc* [the translation lacks the cleverness and inherent ambiguity of the French idiom]). Now that's such a charming reply that you have to love someone who says that... "How are you doing?" "Like a cork buffeted by the sea" (*comme un bouchon ballotté par la mer*). So, these are excellent phrases.

With Félix, it's different... With Félix, we wouldn't be Mercier and Camier, we'd be, I don't know, Bouvard and Pécuchet, having thrown ourselves into all our work together, we threw ourselves into our encyclopedic endeavor, really... It's the kind, "Hey, we have the same hat brand, yes," and then the attempt, the encyclopedic attempt to construct a book that touches on all fields of knowledge... With someone else, we'd exchange dialogue like Laurel and Hardy. I don't mean that one has to imitate these grand couples, but that's what friendship is. Great friends are Bouvard and Pécuchet, they're Camier and Mercier, they're Laurel and Hardy, even if they had a fight and broke up, that makes no difference.

Obviously, in the question of friendship, there is a kind of mystery... I mean that it's closely connected to philosophy.⁴⁵ It's philosophy, as everyone has noted, that introduced this word. I mean that the philosopher is not a wise man (*un sage*), first because that would make everyone laugh. He presents himself, at the limit, as a friend of wisdom, a friend. What the Greeks invented is not wisdom, but the very strange idea, "friend of wisdom." What could "friend of wisdom" possibly mean? And that's the problem of "what is philosophy?": what does "friend of wisdom" mean? It means that he is not wise, this friend of wisdom. So, obviously, there is an easy interpretation, that he tends toward wisdom, but that doesn't work.

What is it that inscribes friendship into philosophy, and what kind of friendship? Do we have to... Is it in relation to a friend? What did the Greeks think about this? What does it mean, the friend of... I say it again, if one interprets the friend to be someone who "tends toward...", this is someone who lays claim to (*prétend à*) wisdom without being a wise man. And what does "lay claim to wisdom" mean? It means there is another who lays claims since there is never only one claimant. If there is a suitor for a girl, it means there is more than one suitor, the girl has several suitors.

Parnet: Above all, you're not promised wisdom...

Deleuze: You're not promised wisdom...

Parnet: ... you're only a claimant to wisdom.

Deleuze: ... you're a claimant to wisdom.⁴⁶ So, there are a number of claimants to wisdom, and the Greeks, what did they invent? In my opinion, it's the invention of the Greeks: in their civilization, they invented the phenomenon of claimants. That is, it's huge, what they invented is the idea that there is a rivalry of free men in all domains. Elsewhere that did not exist, the idea of the rivalry of free men, but in Greece, yes: eloquence... which is why they are so litigious (*procéduriers*), it's the

rivalry of free men, free men, friends sue each other, fine... And the young boy or the woman has suitors (*prétendants*), Penelope's suitors, ok... there are several suitors. It's the Greek phenomenon *par excellence*... For me, it's not the miracle, the Greek phenomenon is the rivalry of free men.

That explains the friend: Philosophy lays claim, there is a rivalry toward something. Toward what? So, one can interpret... If you consider the history of philosophy, there are a number of people for whom philosophy is linked to this mystery of friendship... There are some for whom it is linked to the mystery of "engagement" (*fiançailles*) -- which perhaps isn't too distant -- Kierkegaard, the "broken engagement" (*fiançailles rompues*). There would be no philosophy without the broken engagement, his first love.

Parnet: Régine.⁴⁷

Deleuze: But as we said earlier, it's perhaps the rehearsal (*répétition*) of the final one, so it's perhaps the final love.

So in philosophy, perhaps the couple is important for philosophy. It's strange. I believe that we cannot know what philosophy is until we have dealt with these questions: about the fiancé(e), about the friend, about what the friend is. That's what is very interesting, it seems to me... Well, rather interesting ...

Parnet: And Blanchot, in *L'Amitié (Friendship)*, he had an idea...

Deleuze: Ah, well, Blanchot, that belongs... Blanchot and [Dionys] Mascolo are typical, they are the two contemporary writers who, in relation to philosophy or even in relation to thought, give the importance to friendship, but in a very special sense. They don't tell us, you have to have a friend in order to be a philosopher or to think. They maintain that friendship is a category or a condition of the exercise of thought. That's what is important. It's not the actual friend (*l'ami de fait*), it's that friendship as a category is a condition for thinking, hence the relationship Mascolo-Antelme, for example, hence their relationship,⁴⁸ hence Blanchot's declarations about friendship. It matters little if ... So, I had the idea, rather, that I adore distrusting the friend...

Parnet: It's the litigious tendency of the Greeks...

Deleuze: For me the friend is... friendship is distrust. There is an hour... There's a poem that I like very much by a German poet... "Between dog and wolf, the hour in which one must distrust even the friend." There is an hour in which one must even distrust the friend. I distrust my Jean-Pierre like the plague, I distrust my friends, but I distrust them with such gaiety that they do no harm because whatever they might do to me, I find it quite funny, all right, very... And there is such a conversation and such a community between friends, or with the fiancé(e), or with... But, if you will, one cannot believe that all of these are events of little private affairs. When one says "friendship," when one says, "the lost fiancé(e)," etc., it is a question of knowing under what conditions thought can occur (*s'exercer*). For example, Proust judges that friendship is zero, not just for him personally, but for thought, that there is no thought in friendship. On the other hand, there is a thought of jealous love, as the condition of thought.

[Change of cassette (cassette 15)]

Parnet: I would like to ask the final little question about friends: it seems that with Foucault... Châtelet is yet another case, since you were friends with him at the Liberation and you did all your

studies together.⁴⁹ But with Foucault, you had a friendship that was not a friendship of a couple, was not a friendship like you have with Jean-Pierre or with Félix or with Elie [Sambar] or with Jérôme [Lindon] since we are talking again like in a Claude Sautet film, "... and others".⁵⁰ But your friendship with Foucault was very profound, but still rather distant... It had some quality that was much more formal for someone looking from outside. So, what was this friendship?

Deleuze: Yes, Foucault was someone who was very mysterious for me. Perhaps we met each other too late in life, perhaps... Foucault, for me, was a great regret for me, and since I had enormous respect for him, I did not try to... To say precisely how I perceived him, he was the rare case of a man who entered a room, and it changed, it changed the atmosphere. Foucault is not simply a person... Besides, none of us is simply a person. It was really as if an air, like another gust of air, as if he were a special gust of air, and things changed... There were no... It really was atmospheric, there was a kind of an emanation, there was a Foucault emanation like someone who has a glow.

So, having said this, Foucault corresponds to what I mentioned earlier, that is, there was no need to speak with him, we never talked about the things that we found funny. Having a friend is nearly saying, or rather not saying what we find funny today, finally, what do we find funny in all these catastrophes. But for me, Foucault is the memory of someone... Oh yeh, when I talk about a person's charm, a person's gestures, Foucault's gestures were astonishing... They were a bit like gestures of metal, of dry wood, strange gestures, fascinating gestures, very beautiful. Well... that's enough.⁵¹

Finally, that people only have charm through their *folie* [madness], that's what is difficult to understand. It's the side... The real charm of people is the side of someone that shows that they're a bit unhinged (*où ils perdent un peu les pédales*), the side of them where they don't really know too well where they are at (*où ils en sont*). That doesn't mean they fall apart, on the contrary, these are people who don't fall apart. But if you can't grasp the small root or the small seed of madness in someone, you can't like them, you can't like them. It's really the side where they are completely somewhere -- where we all are, we all are -- a bit crazy (*dément*). But if you don't grasp someone's small point of insanity (*démence*), the point where I am afraid or on the contrary, I am quite happy, the point of madness is the very source of their charm ... Yes...

[Freeze frame of Deleuze, end of Part 1, credits roll in the commercial version]

Notes

¹ The following translation presents the verbatim text of the eight-hour series of interviews between Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet that were filmed by Pierre-André Boutang in 1988-89. Destined to be broadcast only after Deleuze's death, these interviews were shown with his permission on the Arte channel between November 1994 and spring 1995, i.e., a year (or less) prior to his death in November 1995. I have aimed to provide a faithful translation into English, even to include numerous pauses and asides that frequently punctuate the interviews. Moreover, the initial version used by MIT/Semiotext(e) for the subtitles in the "Gilles Deleuze, A to Z" dvd has been updated (August-September 2022).

I adopt the following conventions throughout the transcription to facilitate reading: I indicate the breaks in the video created by the frequent and successive changes of cassettes by Boutang since these breaks have a direct impact on Deleuze's development of responses to Parnet's questions. Also, on occasion, when spelling or pronunciation of a word or expression remain unclear, I indicate this by a bracketed indication. Moreover, I provide French terms in parentheses in italics to specify particular translated words or expressions, and I insert editorial clarifications (e.g. eli,ded words, first names, brief explanations) in brackets.

Intertextual references for the readers' further consultation – to several texts by Deleuze and Deleuze/Guattari, but not to primary texts to which Deleuze and Parnet refer in the course of the interview – are provided in the endnotes, with complete references in the bibliography. The one important title to which I do not refer in endnotes (for the sake of economy) is Deleuze and Parnet's 1977 interview book, *Dialogues* (1987). The *Abécédaire* picks up and extends many themes already introduced a decade earlier, most notably (and alphabetically): assemblages (51-54, 62-74, 132-134), critical and clinical (119-123), desire and *Anti-Oedipus* (89-91), desire and Freud (77-82), desire and hecceities (91-103), desire and semiotic regimes (103-119), friendship (8-11, 16-18), history of philosophy (13-16), joy-sadness (59-62), ideas and "schools" of thought (23-28), literature (36-76), psychoanalysis (77-89), speeds (30-33), territories and the State (135-147), writing (43-51, 74-76), and zigzag (6-7).

² Deleuze refers to two paintings by Henri Julien Félix Rousseau, called the Douanier: the family portrait, *La carriole du père Juniet* (Father Juniet's Cart), in which a small dog is included within the family group in the cart, and *La guerre* (War) which an enormous, dark horse-like form stretches across the entire painting. See Dora Vallier, *Toute l'oeuvre peinte de Henri Rousseau* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970), plates 16-17, 48-49.

³ On Deleuze and Guattari's typology of animals, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 240-241.

⁴ On baboons and their colors, see the Painting seminar, session 7, 26 May 1981; on "properties" in Beckett (specifically, *Molloy*), see the Leibniz and the Baroque seminar, session 8, 27 January 1987.

⁵ On Melville and "outlandish," see Deleuze, "'Bartleby' or, the Formula," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 72.

⁶ On animals, art, and territory, see Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 183-186.

⁷ On "writing for," see Deleuze, "Literature and Life," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 4.

⁸ See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 240.

⁹ The reference is to Kafka's final story, "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk", included in his collection *The Hunger Artist*, published posthumously. See *A Thousand Plateaus*, 243-244.

¹⁰ Deleuze reflects on assemblages and limits of drinking for alcoholics in the seminar on the State Apparatus and the War Machine, session 4, 27 November 1979, and in the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque, session 10, 24 February 1987.

¹¹ Regarding drugs and deterritorialization, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 283-286; on Michaux's views on drugs and "speeds," Deleuze and Guattari refer to his *Miserable Miracle: Mescaline* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) and *Les Grandes épreuves de l'esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966) in *A Thousand Plateaus* 543, footnotes 70 & 73. See also several references to these works in the Foucault seminar, sessions 23, 24, and 26, 13 and 20 May and 3 June 1986.

¹² This is a reference to the contemporary writer Antoine Blondin, a right-wing writer following World War II, then a sports journalist as well as writing several novels in which he celebrates his inebriation.

¹³ On intellectuals as "cultivated people" as well as Deleuze's lack of reserves, see *Negotiations* 137.

¹⁴ On how Wilson and Bene develop creative stammering of language in their theater, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 98. See also Bene and Deleuze's *Superpositions*, and the essay "One Manifesto Less," from *Superpositions*, in *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

¹⁵ On culturally rich and poor periods, see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 26-27.

¹⁶ This is a reference to a debate generated in 1946 by a Communist newspaper, *Action*, that undertook an investigation and sought responses from a range of intellectuals.

¹⁷ The first reference is the Soviet filmmaker, Sergei Parajanov. The second is the Russian film, *Commisar*, by Aleksandr Askoldov, from 1967, only allowed to be released in 1986.

¹⁸ See Deleuze's essay against the French *nouveaux philosophes*, "A propos des nouveaux philosophes et d'un problème plus général" (1977), collected in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 139-147. Deleuze comments briefly on the "new philosophers" (among whom are Bernard-Henri Lévy and André Glucksmann) in a 1988 interview, contemporary with the *Abécédaire*, reprinted in *Negotiations*: "If *Anti-Oedipus* seeks to criticize psychoanalysis, it's in terms of a conception of the unconscious that, whether right or wrong, is set out in the book. Whereas the new philosophers, denouncing Marx, don't begin to present any new analysis of capital, which mysteriously drops out of consideration in their work; they just denounce the Stalinist political and ethical consequences they take to follow from Marx. They're more like the people who attributed immoral consequences to Freud's work: it's nothing to do with philosophy" (145).

¹⁹ On journalists' responsibility for the crisis of literature, see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 130-131

²⁰ On this "system of bestsellers," see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 128-129.

²¹ In *Negotiations*, Deleuze criticizes Pivot in the "Letter to Serge Daney" 75, and in "Mediators" 128-129. In a footnote (199, n.3), Martin Joughin describes *Apostrophes* as "a very influential Friday-evening book program on French TV, hosted by the literary journalist Bernard Pivot from 1975 to 1990 (it was voted 'best cultural program' in 1985)." Pivot went on to host another, broader based cultural program, *Bouillon de culture* (Culture Medium), a title that is a play on words with the biological experimental term.

²² This image from Nietzsche occurs often in Deleuze; see especially *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 106 and 201, note 31, and also the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque, 28 April 1987.

²³ On Deleuze's collaboration with Guattari from this perspective, see *Negotiations* 14 & 125-126; on their goals in *Anti-Oedipus*, see 13-24 et 144-145.

²⁴ On these points, see also Deleuze, *Negotiations* 15-24.

²⁵ This is reference from Rimbaud's "Mauvais Sang", *Une Saison en enfer*, frequently cited by Deleuze and Guattari; see *Anti-Oedipus* 277 (where they cite Rimbaud's words without direct attribution) and *A Thousand Plateaus* 379.

²⁶ On the Hans story, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 259-260, and Deleuze, "What Children Say," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 61-67.

²⁷ On animals and packs, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 240-243.

²⁸ On this Freud-Jung anecdote, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 29-30.

²⁹ This term refers to a Leftist current of the 60s-70s corresponding to a mix of Marxism and Libertarianism, also constituting a pun on the Spontex brand (sponges and textile products). The mix of a kind of Westernized Maoism arose from the May '68 struggles, particularly for those protesters who witnessed how certain striking workers were brutalized. See <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao-spontex>.

³⁰ In *Dialogues*, Deleuze makes a particular, parenthetical intervention on this point: distinguishing lines of rigid segmentarity (e.g., psychoanalysis) from supple, molecular lines, Deleuze and Parnet say: "Some have said that we see the schizophrenic as the true revolutionary. We believe, rather, that schizophrenia is the descent of the molecular process into a black hole. Marginals have always inspired fear in us, and a slight horror. They are not clandestine enough." Then, in a note bearing the initials G.D., Deleuze adds: "In any case, they scare me. There is a molecular speech of madness, or of the drug addict or the delinquent *in vivo* which is no more valid than the great discourses of a psychiatrist *in vitro*. There is as much self-assurance on the former's part as certainty on the latter's part. It is not the marginals who create the lines; they install themselves on these lines and make them their property, and this is fine when they have that strange modesty of men of the line [*hommes de ligne*], the prudence of the experimenter, but it is a disaster when they slip into a black hole from which they no longer utter anything but the micro-fascist speech of their dependency and their giddiness: 'We are the avant-garde', 'We are the marginals'", 139.

³¹ Léon Blum was the Socialist leader of the Popular Front government as well as Jewish. Pierre Mendès-France, also Jewish, was the Socialist minister under Blum.

³² The traditional date of the mass departures on vacation, at least when paid vacations were initiated.

³³ The *Croix de feu* reference is to a proto-fascist French "league" of the 1920s and 1930s.

³⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, according to Wikipedia, was "a French philosopher and sociologist known for developing the concept of collective memory", died in 1945 at the Buchenwald concentration camp.

³⁵ Ouradour-sur-Glane was a small farming village of around 350 inhabitants, located near Clermont-Ferrand, some 15 miles west-north-west of Limoges. During World War II, it was located in the German-occupied zone of France. On June 10, 1944, troops of the 2nd Waffen-SS Panzer Division (armored division), Das Reich, massacred 642 people, almost the entire population, and then destroyed the village.

³⁶ Guy Moquet, a year older than Deleuze and who dies on 22 October 1941, was a young French Communist militant. During the German occupation of France, he was taken hostage by the Nazis and executed by firing squad in Châteaubriant in retaliation for attacks on Germans by the French Resistance. Moquet went down in history as one of its symbols. The farewell letter he wrote to his family at age 17 is now a mandatory reading in all French high schools.

³⁷ The *baccalauréat*, French examination for completing high school.

³⁸ While the latter two are characters from novels by Balzac, Charlus is a character in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

³⁹ Parnet refers to a pre-World War II ultra-right political group.

⁴⁰ Osip Mandelstam, *The Noise of Time: The Prose of Osip Mandelstam* (translation modified), cited in Deleuze, "Begaya-t-il," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 108.

⁴¹ Deleuze refers to Natalie Sarraute's 1983 text, *Enfance* (Childhood).

⁴² Claude Sarraute was a French journalist and social commentator and daughter of Nathalie Sarraute. "Clo-Clo" is a familiar form of Claude in French; Parnet's repetition of it, while peculiar, is probably meant to convey her familiarity with the writer.

⁴³ On the indefinite article, see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 144, and Deleuze, "What Children Say," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 64-65.

⁴⁴ See Deleuze's homage to Foucault and Châtelet, respectively, in *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 1986) and *Périclès et Verdi* (Paris: Minuit, 1988).

⁴⁵ What follows suggests that Deleuze is fully engaged in developing his final collaboration with Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* given that the juxtaposition of philosophy and friendship is part of the book's introduction, 2-6.

⁴⁶ On the claimant in Greek philosophy, see *What Is Philosophy?* 9. See also in the Foucault seminar, session 22, 6 May 1986.

⁴⁷ On the "broken engagement" in Kierkegaard, see *What Is Philosophy?* 70-71. The reference to Régine Olsen is to Kierkegaard's fiancée.

⁴⁸ See Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 4-5 and 219, note 5, notably Maurice Blanchot's *L'Amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) and Dionys Mascolo's *Autour d'un effort de mémoire* (Paris: Nadeau, 1987). See also Deleuze's *Two Regimes of Madness and Other Texts* for his correspondence with Mascolo (327-332), and also the notation: "This brief exchange followed the publication of Dionys Mascolo's *Autour d'un effort de mémoire*. The work opens with a letter from Robert Antelme to Mascolo, the first text he had the strength to write after his return from the Nazi camps" (408).

⁴⁹ On Deleuze's friendship with Châtelet, see his comments in *Negotiations* 162-163.

⁵⁰ This may be a clever reference to Claude Sautet's "Vincent, François, Paul et les autres" (names + "the others").

⁵¹ In *Negotiations*, Deleuze provides three of his interviews on Foucault, including one with Parnet, "A Portrait of Foucault" 102-118, from 1986; see also 150-151 in the same volume. Also, in the YouTube video, there is a ten-second audio drop, with Deleuze listening to something from Parnet, and then his final response comes back in; in the commercial dvd, there is a visible edit of the ten seconds.

L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, avec Claire Parnet

Directed by Pierre-André Boutang (1996)

Translation & Editing: Charles J. Stivale

"G as in 'Gauche'" (Left) [Second Part begins]

Deleuze: Which takes us to "G" (*D'où 'G'*) ... [Deleuze laughs]

Parnet [smiling]: Well, here, we are not in the point of insanity that constitutes your charm since we are going to talk about a very serious subject, how you belong to the Left.

Deleuze [laughing]: Ah, yes, yes...

Parnet [still smiling]: That seems to amuse you, which makes me very happy.... So, as we saw, you came from a bourgeois family with conservative political leanings (*de droite*), and since the Liberation in 1945, you have been what is called a Leftist (*un homme de gauche*). Well, let's go more slowly: at the Liberation, many of your friends, a lot of people around you who were students in philosophy, joined the French Communist Party (PCF) or were very connected to it...

Deleuze: Yes, they all went through that... there was only me... I think, I am not sure, but... they all went through it.

Parnet: So how is it that you avoided that?

Deleuze: Well, it's not really too complicated. All my friends went through the PCF, and what prevented me from doing so? [It was] because, I think... I was very hard-working (*travailleur*), and I didn't like the meetings, meetings where they talked interminably, I simply could never stand attending them. And, being in the PC at that period meant going to cell meetings all the time. This was at the period – this is a kind of reference point – the period of the "Stockholm Appeal" (*appel de Stockholm*), and all of my friends, [Deleuze laughs] people of great talent, spent days on end getting signatures on this Stockholm petition, from a priest, from anyone. They would walk all over with this "Stockholm Appeal," and I cannot even remember what it was! An entire generation of Communists got caught up in this, but that posed a problem for me because I realized -- I had a lot of friends who were Communist historians, very talented, and I thought, my God, if they spent their time finishing their dissertations, it would be so much more important for the Communist Party, which would at least have this work to be promoted, than getting signatures for the Stockholm Appeal, some stupid petition for peace, who knows what. I had no desire [to be involved in] that because I was neither very talkative, I didn't talk much, so all this petition-signing would have put me in a state of complete timidity, complete panic. I never had anyone sign anything. And even going out to sell *L'Humanité* [the PCF newspaper], well, all that was for some rather base reasons, doing that wasn't even a question for me, it never even occurred to me, I had no desire at all to join the Party.

Parnet: But you still felt close to their... commitments (*engagements*)?

Deleuze: The Party's? No, it never concerned me, something else that saved me, you understand... The discussions about Stalin, what they've discovered recently, the horrors committed by Stalin, I mean, everyone has known this for quite a while. And about the revolution going wrong, [Deleuze laughs] that makes me laugh because, really, who are they trying to kid? (*de qui on se moque?*) When the "New Philosophers" (*nouveaux philosophes*) discovered that the revolution turned out badly, you really have to be a bit dimwitted (*débile*), since we discovered that with Stalin. So henceforth, the road was open, everyone discovered it, for example, quite recently, about the Algerian revolution – "Hey, it turned out badly" because they fired on students!⁵¹ Who ever thought that a revolution would go well? Who? Who? People say the English could not have a revolution, but that's absolutely false.

I mean all that... Today we live with such a mystification... The English had a revolution, they killed their king, etc., and who did they get? They got Cromwell. And English Romanticism, what is it? It's a long meditation on the failure of the revolution. They didn't wait for [André] Glucksmann to reflect on the failure of the Stalinian revolution. They had one, really, they had one. And the Americans never get discussed, but the Americans blew their revolution, as badly as if not worse than the Bolsheviks. Let's not kid about it! People never talk about the Americans when they... even before the War of Independence – and "independence," I say --, they presented themselves worse than... or better than a new nation, they went beyond nations exactly like Marx spoke later of the proletariat: they went beyond nations, nations are finished! They bring forth a new people, they have a true revolution. Just as the Marxists count on universal proletarianization, the Americans counted on universal immigration, the two sides of class struggle. This is absolutely revolutionary, it's the America of Jefferson, of Thoreau, of Melville – Jefferson, Thoreau, Melville, all of them, it's a completely revolutionary America that announces the "new man" exactly like the Bolshevik revolution announced the "new man".

That revolution failed (*a foiré*), all revolutions fail, everybody knows this, and now people are pretending to "rediscover" that. They really have to be dimwitted. As a result, everyone is getting lost in this, this contemporary revisionism. There is [François] Furet who discovered that the French Revolution wasn't as great as had been thought. Well, sure, fine, it failed too, everybody knows that. The French Revolution gave us Napoleon! People are making "discoveries" that to me are not very impressive in their novelty (*on fait des découvertes qui ne sont pas très émouvantes par leur nouveauté*). The British Revolution resulted in Cromwell, the American Revolution's results were worse, the political parties, Reagan, which does not seem any better to me.

So, people are in such a state of confusion... Even if revolutions fail, go badly, that still never stopped people or prevented people from becoming revolutionary. They are confusing two absolutely different things: the situations in which the only outcome for man is to become revolutionary... And yet again, we have been talking about that from the start: it's the confusion between becoming and history, and if people become revolutionary...

[Change of cassette (16)]

Deleuze: Yes, this historians' confusion... Historians speak of the future of the revolution, the future of revolutions, but that is not at all the question. They can always go so far back and try to demonstrate that if the future was bad, it's because the bad element (*le mauvais*) was there right from the start.

The concrete problem is how and why do people become revolutionary? And fortunately, historians can't prevent them from doing so. It's obvious that the South Africans are caught up in a becoming-revolutionary, the Palestinians are caught up in a becoming-revolutionary. Then, if someone tells me afterwards, "oh you will see, when they have won, if their revolution succeeds, it will go badly," etc., well, first of all, there will not be the same kinds of problems, and then a new situation will be created, once again becomings-revolutionary will be unleashed. The business of men (*des hommes*), it's in situations of tyranny, of oppression, effectively it's to enter into becomings-revolutionary because there is nothing else to be done. And when someone tells us afterwards, "oh, it's not working out," we aren't talking about the same thing, it's as if we were speaking two different languages -- the future of history and the current becomings of people (*les devenirs actuels des gens*) are not at all the same things.

Parnet: And this respect for the "rights of man" (*les droits de l'homme*) which is so fashionable these days, but it is not becoming-revolutionary, quite the opposite.

Deleuze [wearily]: Listen, this respect for the "rights of man" – this really makes me want to say, almost to make some odious statements. It belongs so much to this weak thinking (*pensée molle*) of the empty intellectual period that we discussed earlier [under "C as in Culture"].⁵¹ It's purely abstract, these "rights of man." What is this? It's purely abstract, completely empty. It's exactly like what I was saying earlier about desire, what I tried to say about desire: desire does not consist of erecting an object, of saying I desire this... We don't desire, for example, freedom, etc. It's zero. Rather, we desire... we find ourselves in situations.

I choose the example of the contemporary problems of Armenia, it's very recent.⁵¹ What is this situation, if I understood it well? One never knows, really, you can correct me, but that would not change it much. An enclave in another Armenian Soviet republic, there is an Armenian republic, an enclave, so that's the situation, a first aspect. There is this massacre by some sort of Turkish group, to the extent that we know anything right now because we could learn, I guess... But here we have yet again this massacre of Armenians. So, in the enclave, the Armenians retreat into their republic, I guess – you can correct all my mistakes -- and right then, there is an earthquake. You'd think you were in something written by the Marquis de Sade, these poor people go through the worst circumstances that humans face, and when they reach shelter, it's nature that gets involved.

When people say, "the rights of man," it's just intellectual discourse, for odious intellectuals at that, for intellectuals who have no ideas. First, I have always noticed that these declarations are never made as a function of the people who are directly concerned, the Armenian society, the Armenian communities, etc. Their problem is not "the rights of man." What is it? It's... Now this is what I call an assemblage (*agencement*). When I was saying that desire always comes through assemblages, well, there's an assemblage: what is possible in order to suppress this enclave or to make it possible for this enclave to survive? What is this enclave within all that? It's a question of territory, not one of "the rights of man," it's the organization of territory. What do they think that Gorbachev is going to make of this situation? What is he going to do so that this Armenian enclave is not given over to Turks threatening all around them? I would say that it's not a question of "rights of man," it's not a question of justice, rather it's a question of jurisprudence.

All the abominations that humans undergo are *cases*, not elements of abstract rights. These are abominable cases. You might tell me that these cases resemble each other, but these are situations of jurisprudence. This Armenian problem is typically what can be called an extraordinarily complex problem of jurisprudence. What can we do to save the Armenians and to help them save themselves from this crazy situation they find themselves in? Then, an earthquake occurs, an earthquake, so there are all these constructions that had not been built as well as they should have

been. All these are cases of jurisprudence. To act for freedom, becoming revolutionary, is to operate in jurisprudence when one turns to the justice system. Justice doesn't exist, "rights of man" do not exist, it concerns jurisprudence... That's what the invention of law is. So those people who are quite satisfied to recall and to recite "the rights of man," they are just dimwitted, it's not a question of applying "the rights of man," [Deleuze laughs] but rather of inventing forms of jurisprudence, so that for each case, this would no longer be possible. It's entirely different.

If you like, I will give an example that I like a lot because it's the only way to help people understand what jurisprudence is, and people understand nothing... well, not all, but people don't understand it very well. I recall when smoking in taxis was forbidden... People used to smoke in taxis... So, a time came when people were no longer permitted to smoke in taxis. The first taxi drivers who forbid people smoking in the taxis created quite a stir because there were smokers who protested, and there was one, a lawyer...

I have always been fascinated by jurisprudence, by law... If I hadn't studied philosophy, I would have studied law, but precisely not "the rights of man," but rather I'd have studied jurisprudence. That's what life is; there are no "rights of man," only rights of life, and so, life unfolds case by case.

So, [back to] taxis: there is a guy who does not want to be prevented from smoking in the taxi, so he sues the cab. I remember this quite well because I got involved in listening to the arguments leading up to the decision. The cab lost the case – today it would not have happened, even with the same kind of trial, the cab driver would not have lost. But at the start, the cab lost, and on what grounds? On the grounds that when someone takes a taxi, he is renting it, so the taxi occupant is assimilated to the [status of] renter or tenant, and the tenant has the right to smoke in his rented location, he has the right of use and abuse. It's as if he were renting, it's as if the owner of a building told him, "No, you're not going to smoke in your place..." "Yes, yes, I am the tenant and I'm going to smoke where I live." The taxi is assimilated into being a rolling apartment of which the customer is the tenant. Ten years later, that [practice] has become universalized, there are none or practically no taxis in which one can smoke. The taxi is no longer assimilated to renting an apartment, it has become assimilated instead into being a form of public service, and in a mode of public service, there exists the right to forbid smoking.

All this is jurisprudence... It's no longer a question of the right of this or of that, it's a question of situations, of situations that evolve, and fighting for freedom is really to engage in jurisprudence. So, the example of Armenia seems to me quite typical: the "rights of man," you referred to them, so what do they mean? It means: The Turks don't have the right to massacre Armenians. Fine, the Turks don't have the right to massacre Armenians, and then? How far does that really get us? It's truly the feeble-minded or hypocrites, all this thought about the "rights of man," it's zero philosophically, zero. The creation of law, it's not the creation of "rights of man." Creation in law is jurisprudence, and only that exists, and therefore fighting for jurisprudence.⁵¹

Parnet: Well, we are going to return to two things that are connected...

Deleuze: That's what being on the Left is, creating the law, creating the law...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, cassette seventeen, the last one, at least for today," to which Deleuze responds, "Yes, that's good."]

Parnet: We'll return to this question, this philosophy of the "rights of man" and this respect for the "rights of man" now is like a repudiation of May '68 and a repudiation of Marxism as well. So, Marx, you must not have repudiated him since you were never a Communist, yet you still make use

of Marx who continues to be a referent for you. And as for May '68, you are one of the last persons around who refers to May '68, not saying that it was meaningless, just schoolroom pranks, and that everyone now has changed. So, I'd like you to talk a bit about May '68.

Deleuze: It's simple... but I think you are being too harsh in saying that I am one of the rare persons. There are a lot of people, if only the people around us, and among our friends, there are very few... I know no turncoats...

Parnet: But these are your friends.

Deleuze: Yes, but there are lots of people that have made no repudiation. It's almost a given, the answer is quite simple: May '68 is the intrusion of becoming. People have often wanted to view it as the reign of the imaginary, but it's not at all imaginary. It's a gust of the real in its pure state (*une bouffée du réel à l'état pur*). It's the real that arrives, and people don't understand that, they say, "What is this?" Real people, or people in their reality, it was astounding, and just what were these people in their reality? It's a becoming. Now, there can be bad becomings, and it's what historians did not understand well, and that's understandable since I believe so strongly in the difference between history and becomings... May '68 was a becoming-revolutionary without a revolutionary future. People can always make fun of it after the fact, but there were phenomena of pure becoming that took hold of people, even becomings-animal, even becomings-children, becomings-women for men, becomings-men for women. All this is in a very special domain that we have been pouring over since the start of our questions, that is, what is a becoming? In any event, May '68 is the intrusion of becoming.⁵¹

Parnet: Did you have a becoming-revolutionary yourself at that moment?

Deleuze [smiling]: If I have a becoming-revolutionary? Yes, although your very smile suggests that this is a form of mockery. So, tell me instead: what does it mean to be *de gauche*, on the Left?... It's a bit more discreet than "becoming-revolutionary."⁵¹

Parnet [stammering a bit]: Well, I wouldn't say that, I wouldn't say that, I would like to pose the question differently...

Deleuze: Yes?

Parnet: It's that between your civic duty as a Leftist (*homme de gauche*) devoted to all that and your becoming-revolutionary, since you are a Leftist, how do you manage (*te débrouilles*), and what does it mean for you to be *de gauche*, on the Left?

Deleuze [pausing before answering]: Yes... well, I think that no leftist government exists, which is not astonishing, whether is a leftist government or no leftist government. It's not that there are no differences between governments. The best one can hope for is a government favorable to certain demands from the Left. But a leftist government does not exist since being on the Left has nothing to do with governments (*n'est pas une affaire de gouvernement*).

So, if one asked me, how to define being on the Left? In two ways: first, it's a matter of perception. This matter of perception means this: what would *not* being on the Left mean? Not being on the Left... It's a little like a postal address, extending outward from a person: the street where you are, the city, the country, other countries farther and farther away. [Deleuze gestures outward]

It starts from the self, and to the extent that one is privileged, living in a rich country, one might ask, what can we do to make this situation last? One senses that dangers exist, that it might not last, it's all so crazy, so what might be done for it to last? So, someone might say, "Oh la la, the Chinese, they are far away, what can we do so that Europe lasts?" etc. Being on the Left is the opposite: it's perceiving... And people say the Japanese perceive like that, not like us... they perceive first the periphery, [Deleuze gestures outward inward] they would say the world, the continent -- let's say Europe --, France, etc. etc., rue de Bizerte, me: it's a phenomenon of perception, perceiving just the horizon, perceiving on the horizon.

Parnet [objecting]: Well, the Japanese aren't really so Leftist...

Deleuze: It's not from generosity ... [gesturing at Parnet dismissively] Your objection isn't, isn't... adequate (*c'est pas une raison*). On the basis of that [their perception], they're Leftist, on the basis of their sense of address, postal address. First, you see the horizon. And you know that it cannot last, that it's not possible, [the fact that] these millions of people are starving to death, it just can't last, it might go on a hundred years, one never knows, but there's no point in kidding about this absolute injustice. It's not a matter of morality, but of perception itself.

So, if you start with the edges, that's what being on the Left means, and knowing how, and say what one might, knowing that these are problems that must be dealt with. It's not saying simply that the birth rate has to be reduced, which is just another way of keeping the privileges for Europe, it's not that. [Being on the Left] is really finding arrangements, finding world-wide assemblages. Being on the Left, it is often only Third World problems that are closer to us than problems in our neighborhoods. So it's really a matter of perception, more than being a question of "well-meaning souls" (*belles âmes*), that's what being on the Left is for me, first of all.

And second, being on the Left is a being by nature, or rather it's a problem of becomings, of never ceasing to become minoritarian. That is, the Left is never of the majority as Left, and for a very simple reason: the majority is something that presupposes – even when one votes -- that it's not the huge quantity that votes for something, but the majority presupposes a standard (*étalon*). In the West, the standard that every majority presupposes is: 1) male, 2) adult 3) heterosexual (*mâle*), 4) city dweller... Ezra Pound, Joyce say things like that, it was perfect. That's what the standard is. So, the majority by its nature, at a particular moment, will go toward whomever or whatever aggregate will realize this standard, that is, the supposed image of the urban, heterosexual, adult male such that a majority, at the limit, is never anyone, it's an empty standard. Simply, a maximum of persons recognize themselves in this empty standard, but in itself, the standard is empty: male, heterosexual, etc.⁵¹

So, women will make their mark either by intervening in this majority or in the secondary minorities according to groupings in which they are placed according to this standard. But alongside that, what is there? There are all the becomings that are minority-becomings. I mean, women, it's not a given, they are not women by nature. Women have a becoming-woman; and so, if women have a becoming-woman, men have a becoming-woman as well. We were talking earlier about becomings-animal. Children have their own becoming-child. They are not children by nature. All these becomings, that's what the minorities are...

Parnet: Well, men cannot become-men, and that's tough!

Deleuze: No, that's a majoritarian standard, heterosexual, adult, male. He has no becoming. He can become woman, and then he enters into minoritarian processes. The Left is the aggregate of processes of minoritarian becomings. So, I can say quite literally, the majority is no one, the

minority is everyone, and that's what being on the Left is: knowing that the minority is everyone and that it's there that phenomena of becomings occur. That's why, however great they think they are, they still have the scandal of their doubts about the outcome of elections. All these things are well known.

[The film fades here, and the new cassette – announced as “Gilles Deleuze, 1-A first” -- shows a seated Deleuze dressed differently for the second session of filming. Henceforth, Parnet will no longer be visible in the mirror. She begins by announcing:]

"H as in History of Philosophy"

Parnet: “H” is “History of Philosophy.” It is usually said that in your works, the first phase is devoted to the history of philosophy. In 1952, you write a study on David Hume, followed by works on Nietzsche, Kant, Bergson, Spinoza. Someone who didn’t know you and took you for an annotator (*commentateur*) would be very surprised by *Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*, and of course, by *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. From these, it would seem that there is a Mr. Hyde hidden within a Dr. Jekyll. And when everyone was explicating Marx, you dove into Nietzsche, and when everyone felt they had to read Reich, you were reading Spinoza, with the famous question, “what can a body do?” (*que peut un corps?*).⁵¹ Today, in 1988, you return to Leibniz. So, what did you enjoy and still enjoy in the history of philosophy?

Deleuze [pausing]: It's a complicated matter because this history of philosophy encompasses philosophy itself. I assume that a lot of people think of philosophy as being something quite abstract and a bit for specialists. But I believe strongly that philosophy has nothing to do with specialists, it's not a specialization, or is so only in the way that music or painting is. So necessarily, I try to pose the problem differently.

So, when people say that the history of philosophy is abstract, it is abstract in the second degree since it does not even consist of talking about abstract ideas, but of forming abstract ideas about abstract ideas. But there is another way... For me, the history of philosophy has always been something else. Here I return to painting. I think of the discussions, in the letters from Van Gogh,⁵¹ one finds the discussions about portraiture or landscapes: am I going to do portraits? Do I have to return to portraits? They attach great importance to that, in their conversations, in their letters. Portrait or landscape, it's not the same, it's not the same problems. For me, the history of philosophy is, as in painting, a kind of art of the portrait. One creates *the* philosopher's portrait, but a philosophical portrait of a philosopher. I would say just as well a “spiritist” portrait (*portrait médiumnique*), that is, a mental or spiritual portrait, it's a spiritual portrait. As a result, it's an activity that belongs fully within philosophy itself, just as a portrait belongs to painting.

So suddenly, by the very fact that I refer to painters, I am making some progress. If I return to painters like Van Gogh or Gauguin, it's because something in their work has an enormous effect on me, the kind of immense respect or even fear and panic, not merely respect, that they evince when faced with color, when faced with engaging with (*aborder*) color. It is particularly enjoyable that the two painters that I invoke, and limiting myself to them, are among the greatest colorists ever. But if we refer to the history of their works, they undertake the use of color only with great fearful hesitation (*tremblement*), they were frightened. Throughout the beginning of their careers, they used earthen colors (*couleurs patate, de terre*), not at all striking... Why? Not because that appeals to them, but because they did not yet dare to engage with color. What could be more moving than this? It's as if, literally, they did not yet judge themselves worthy of color, not yet able to engage with color and really do painting. It took them years and years before daring to engage

with color. Once they feel that they are able to engage with color, well, then, it results in the works that everyone knows. When you see the point that they reach, one has to reflect on this immense respect, this immense slowness to undertake that work. Something like color for a painter is something that can take him/her into madness, into insanity, thus it is something quite difficult, taking years to dare to come close to it.

So, it's not at all that I am particularly modest, but it strikes me as being quite shocking, it would be shocking if there were philosophers who simply said, "Hey, I'm going into philosophy now, going to do my own philosophy, yes, I have my philosophy." These are statements made by the dimwitted – doing *one's* philosophy -- because philosophy is like color. So, before entering into philosophy, one has to take so many, so many precautions, I would say, before conquering the "philosophical color" (*la couleur philosophique*) -- and the philosophical color is the concept. Before knowing how to invent concepts or to succeed in doing so, an enormous amount of work is necessary.

I believe that the history of philosophy is this slow modesty, taking a long time doing portraits, one has to do portraits. It's as if a novelist were to tell us, "well, I write novels, but you know, I never read them in order never to compromise my inspiration. Dostoyevsky, nope, don't know him." I've heard young novelists make such frightening statements... which comes down to saying, I don't need to work. So, given that whatever one does, you have to work hard for a long time before engaging with something, the history of philosophy has this role that is not only preparatory, it succeeds quite well by itself. It is the art of portraiture in so far as it allows one to reach toward something.⁵¹

At this point, all this is becoming a bit mysterious... We need to be more precise, you have to force me to be more precise, I don't know, by some other little question because... Or else, I can continue like this. What does one do when one does history of philosophy? No? Do you have something else to ask me about this?

Parnet: No, well, the usefulness of the history of philosophy for you, we see it clearly, you just explained it. But the usefulness of history of philosophy for people in general, since you don't know... since you say that you do not want to talk about the specialization of philosophy, that philosophy also is destined for non-philosophers.

Deleuze: This is very simple. You can only understand what philosophy is -- that is, the extent to which it is no more an abstract thing than a painting or a musical work – it's not at all abstract, and one can understand that only through the history of philosophy, provided that one conceives of it, it seems to me, if I dare put it this way, provided that one conceives of it in the proper manner (*comme il faut*). What might that be? One thing is certain to me: a philosopher is not someone who contemplates or even reflects. A philosopher is someone who creates, simply that he creates a very special kind of thing. He creates concepts. Concepts don't exist ready-made, they are not located in the sky, they are not stars that one gazes at in the sky. You have to create, fabricate concepts.⁵¹

So, there are a thousand questions, here we are almost lost since so many questions emerge: Why is it useful? Why create concepts, and what is that exactly, a concept? But let's drop this for the moment, let's drop this. I mean... Let's take an example: if I write a book about Plato, people know well that Plato created a concept that did not exist before him, translated generally as "Idea", with a capital I. And what *he* calls an Idea is not at all what other philosophers call an idea. It's truly a Platonic concept to the point that if someone uses this concept in a manner similar to this term, then people tend to say, "This is a Platonic philosopher."

But I mean, concretely, what does this mean? One should always ask oneself what doing philosophy means... If not, one just shouldn't do philosophy. One should always ask, what is it? as

if it were a dog, what is an idea? A dog, I can define what an idea is, for Plato. So, here, I am already doing history of philosophy. I try to explain this to people, you don't need a professor, it seems to me, you can readily understand....

[Change of cassette, cassette 2]

Deleuze: I think that what he calls an Idea is a thing [Deleuze speaks very precisely here] that wouldn't be something else, that is, that would *only* be what it is.⁵¹ Now, here, that seems abstract, like I was saying earlier, one mustn't be abstract.... But no, no, no, let's choose an example that is not found in Plato: a mother, a mom (*maman*), this is a mother, but she is not *only* a mother... I mean, she is, for example, a wife, and she is herself a daughter of a mother. Let us imagine a mother who might *only* be a mother... It matters little if such a thing exists or not... For example, is the Virgin Mary, who Plato didn't know, [Deleuze smiles] is she a mother and only mother? No matter if it exists or not, a mother that would be nothing other than mother, who would not be in her own turn the daughter of another mother, it's this that we then have to call "mother Idea" (*idée de mère*), i.e., a thing that is only what it is. This is what Plato meant more or less when he said only justice is just, because only justice is nothing other than just. And for me, that becomes quite simple. An Idea... of course, Plato doesn't stop there, but his departure point is, let us imagine particular entities that are only what they are, we call them "Ideas." So, he created a veritable concept, this concept did not exist before, the Idea of the thing as (*en tant que*) pure... It's purity that defines the Idea.

But this still remains abstract, and why is that? If we proceed to read through Plato, that's how everything becomes concrete. Plato doesn't proceed haphazardly, he didn't create this concept of Idea by chance. He found himself in a given situation: that whatever happens, in a very concrete situation, whatever happens, or whatever might be a given therein, there are rivals (*prétendants*). That is, there are people who say: for this thing, I'm the best example of it. For example, Plato gave an example of the politician, and he says, that is, with an initial definition, that the politician is the pastor of men, who takes care of people. As a result, lots of people step forward to say, "if that's the case, then I am the politician, I am the pastor of men" -- the merchant can say that, the shepherd who nourishes, the doctor who heals -- can all say, "I am the true pastor of men." In other words, there are rivals.

So, with that, things start to appear a bit more concrete. I maintain that a philosopher creates concepts, for example, the Idea, the thing in so far as it is pure (*la chose en tant que pure*). The reader doesn't understand immediately why or what it's about, or why one would need to create such a concept. If he/she continues and reflects on the reading, he/she understands the following reason: there are all sorts of rivals who present themselves as claimants (*des prétendants*) for things, and that the problem for Plato is not at all, what is the Idea? That way, things would just remain abstract. Rather, it's how to select the claimants, how to discover among them which one is the valid one (*le bon*). It's the Idea, that is, the thing in a pure state, that will permit this selection, that will select the claimant who is closest to it.

This allows us to move forward a bit since I would say, every concept, e.g., the Idea, refers to a problem... In this case, the problem is how to select the claimants. If you do philosophy abstractly, you do not even see the problem, but if one reaches this problem... One might wonder why the problem isn't *stated* clearly by a philosopher since it certainly exists in his work, we find it, it's there, it smacks you in the face (*crève les yeux*) in some ways. And it's because one can't do everything at once. The philosopher's task is already that of exposing the concepts that she/he's in the process of creating, so she/he can't expose the problems on top of that, or at least one can discover these problems only through the concepts being created. If you haven't found the problem to which a

concept corresponds, everything stays abstract. If you've found the problem, everything becomes concrete. That's why in Plato, there are constantly these claimants, these rivals.

So, I can add --- suddenly this [topic] is taking a turn, it goes without saying -- why does this occur in the Greek city, and why is it Plato who invents *this* problem? You see, the problem is how to select claimants, and the concept – *that's* what philosophy is, the problem and the concept – the concept is the Idea that is supposed to provide the means of selecting the claimants, however that would occur, it matters little. But why did this problem and this concept take form in the Greek milieu? It begins with the Greeks because it's a typically Greek problem, of the democratic, Greek city. Even if Plato did not accept the democratic character of the city, it's a problem of the democratic city. For it's in the democratic city that, for example, a magistracy is an object of pretension... There are "prétendants," claimants, I pose my candidacy for a particular function. In an imperial formation, as they exist in the Greek era, there are functionaries named by the emperor, there is not at all this rivalry. The Athenian city is this rivalry of claimants, it was already there with Ulysses, the suitors for Penelope, there is an entire milieu of Greek problems. It's a civilization in which the confrontation of rivals constantly appears: that's why they invented gymnastics, they invent Olympic games, they invent – they are litigious, no one is as litigious as a Greek – they invent legal procedures also, it's the same thing, legal proceedings, claimants. You understand?

And in philosophy, there are claimants as well... Plato's struggle against the Sophists. He believed that the Sophists were claimants for something to which they had no right. What would define the right or the non-right of a claimant? That's also a problem that's very... And all this is as amusing as a novel. We know that there are great novels in which claimants confront each other before the tribunal. It's something different, but in philosophy, there are two things at once: the creation of a concept, and the creation of a concept always occurs as a function of a problem. If one has not found the problem, one cannot understand philosophy, philosophy remains abstract.⁵¹

I take another example... people usually don't see to what problem that corresponds, they don't see problems, because problems usually are a bit hidden, somewhat stated but somewhat hidden, and to engage in the history of philosophy is to restore these problems and, through this, to discover what's innovative in these concepts. Whereas bad history of philosophy links up concepts as if they appeared to go without saying, as if they weren't created, so there tends to be total ignorance about the problems to which...

I take a final example quickly...

[The producer suggests "Let's move on to the next cassette"; change of cassette]

Deleuze: So, I am going to select a second example that precisely does not at all concern diversity. Much later, there arrives a philosopher called Leibniz who creates and invents an extraordinary concept to which he gives the name, monad. He chooses a technical, complicated name, monad. And in fact, there is always something a bit crazy in a concept... this mother who would only be mother, in the other case, a pure idea... there is something there that's a bit crazy. Well then, Leibniz's monad designated a subject, somebody, you or me, in so far as he/she expresses the totality of the world, and in expressing the totality of the world, he/she only expresses clearly a tiny region of the world, one's territory – we've already spoken about territory – one's territory, or what Leibniz calls his "department". So, a subjective unity that expresses the entire world, but that only clearly expresses a region, a "department" of the world -- this is what he called a monad.

So here as well, this is a concept; Leibniz created it. This concept did not exist before him. But one might ask, "Why did he create it? It's quite lovely, but why say that rather than something else?" One has to find the problem. And it's not that he hides the problem... If you don't look a bit,

you won't find it. That's the charm of reading philosophy, as charming or amusing as reading a good book, or looking at paintings. It's amazing.

What do you discover when you read him? Indeed, he didn't create the "monad" for the pleasure of it. There is another reason: Leibniz poses a problem, which is what? Specifically, that everything in the world only exists as folded. That's why I wrote a book on Leibniz called *The Fold*. He saw the world as an aggregate of things folded within each other. Let's step back a bit: why did he see the world like this? What is happening? Just as for Plato earlier, perhaps the answer is: at that period, what... Were things being folded more than they are now? Well, we don't have the time. What counts is this idea of a world that is folded, but everything is the fold of a fold, you can never reach something that is completely unfolded. And matter is constituted by folds overlapping back onto it, and things of the mind, perceptions, feelings, ideas, are folded into the soul. It's precisely because perceptions, feelings, ideas are folded into a soul that [Leibniz] constructed this concept of a soul that expresses the entire world, that is, in which he discovers the entire world to be folded.

One almost wants to ask, what is a bad philosopher, or a great philosopher? The bad one creates no concepts, is someone who uses ready-made ideas. So, he puts forth opinions then and does not do philosophy.... He says, "There, that's what I do, that's it, opinions, they have always been around." He does not invent concepts, he poses – in the true sense of the word – he poses no problems.

So, to do history of philosophy is this long apprenticeship in which one learns, or one is truly an apprentice in this double domain, the constitution of problems and the creation of concepts. And there is no... What is it that kills, what makes it possible for thought to be idiotic, dimwitted, etc.? Some people talk, but we never know what problems they're talking about. Not only do they create no concepts while busy spouting opinions, but moreover, we don't know what problems they're talking about.⁵¹ I mean, at most, one knows the questions, but not the problems behind certain questions... If I say, Does God exist? That doesn't pose any problem. Does God exist? I haven't stated the problem, because why do I ask that question? What is the problem behind that? So, people are quite ready to ask the question: ah, do I believe in God or don't I? Well, everyone could care less who believes in God or doesn't believe in God. What counts is why he says that, that is, to what problem asking that question corresponds and what concept he is going to fabricate, what God concept he is going to fabricate. If you have neither a concept nor a problem, you remain in stupidity (*la bêtise*), that's it, you aren't doing philosophy. All this is to express the extent to which philosophy is amusing. So that's what doing history of philosophy is -- to discover... It's not all that different from what you do when you find yourself in front of a great painting or listening to a musical work.

Parnet: Precisely, returning to Gauguin and Van Gogh since you evoked their quaking and hesitation from fear before taking on color, what happened to you when you passed from history of philosophy to doing your own philosophy?

Deleuze: This is what happened: no doubt, the history of philosophy gave me the chance to learn things, I mean, I felt more capable of moving toward what color is in philosophy, that is... But why does this come up at all, I mean, why does philosophy not cease to exist, why do we still have philosophy today? Because there is always an occasion to create concepts. So, today this notion of creation of concepts is taken over by the media, publicity; with computers, they say you can create concepts, an entire language stolen from philosophy.

Parnet: Communication.

Deleuze: "Communication," "one has to be creative to create concepts." But what they call "concepts," what they call "to create," [Deleuze is dismissive] is truly comic, there's no need to insist on it.

That still remains philosophy's task. There is still a place today... I never was affected by people who proclaim the death of philosophy, getting beyond (*dépasser*) philosophy, it's philosophers who say such complicated things as that. All that never affected me or concerned me because I tell myself, ok, what could all that mean? As long as there's a need to create concepts, there will be philosophy since that's the definition of philosophy, creating concepts, not expecting them to be ready-made -- we have to create them, and we create them as a function of problems. Well, problems evolve, so there is still a place...

Certainly, one can be Platonist, one can be Leibnizian, today even, in 1989, one can be Kantian. What does that mean exactly? It means that one judges that certain problems -- not all, no doubt -- posed by Plato remain valid provided one makes certain transformations, and then, one is Platonist since one still has use for Platonist concepts. If we pose problems of a completely different nature... in my opinion, there is not a single example among the great philosophers of one who does not have something to say about the great problems we face today. But doing philosophy is creating new concepts as a function of problems that arise today.

The final aspect of this extremely lengthy question would obviously be, ok, but what is the evolution of problems, what guarantees it? I could always say historical, social forces, sure, fine, but there is something deeper. It's all very mysterious, maybe we don't have time to pursue it, but we reach a kind of becoming of thought, evolution of thought that results not only in no longer posing the same problems, they are no longer posed in the same way. A problem can be posed in several successive ways, and that has an urgent appeal, like a huge gust of wind, a call for the necessity always to create and re-create new concepts. So, history of philosophy cannot be reduced to sociological influence, or to another influence... There is an entire becoming of thought, something very mysterious that we would have to succeed in defining, but that causes us perhaps no longer to think in the same way as a hundred years ago. So, ok, I think of new thought processes, of ellipses of thought. Thought has its history, there is a history of pure thought, so that's what history of philosophy is for me. It has always had only one function, in my opinion, philosophy, so there's no need to get beyond it, as it has its function.

[Change of cassette; hand clap, "4-A"]

Deleuze: So, yes, did you want to say something?

Parnet: Yes, how does a problem evolve through time?

Deleuze: That must... I don't know, that must vary...

Parnet: Since thought evolves...

Deleuze: It probably varies according to each case. I choose... Here again, another example will have to suffice: back in the seventeenth century, for most of the great philosophers, what was their negative concern? Their negative concern was preventing error. It was a matter of warding off the dangers of error. In other words, the negative of thought is that the mind might err, to prevent the mind from erring, how to avoid falling into error.

Then there was a long, gradual slide, and in the eighteenth century, a different problem begins to be born. It might appear to be the same, but it is not at all the same: no longer denouncing

error, but denouncing illusions, the idea that the mind falls into and even is surrounded by illusions, and furthermore could even produce them itself, not only falling into error, but it might produce illusions. So this is the whole movement in the eighteenth century, of the eighteenth century philosophers, the denunciation of superstition, etc. So, while it might appear to be somewhat similar to the seventeenth century, in fact something completely new is being born. One might say that it's due to social causes, but there is also a secret history of thought that would be a passionate subject to pursue. The question is no longer how to avoid falling into error, but how to succeed in dissipating the illusions by which the mind is surrounded.

Then, in the nineteenth century -- I am deliberately stating things in an extremely simple and rudimentary way -- so in the nineteenth century, what happens? It's as if things have slid farther, it does not explode completely, rather it's more and more how to avoid... illusion? No, it's that the mind... it's that men, as spiritual, mental creatures (*créatures spirituelles*) never stop saying inanities (*bêtises*), which is not the same thing as illusion, it's not falling into illusion, how to ward off *bêtises*, inanities.

That appears clearly in [work by] people on the border of philosophy: a Flaubert is at the border of philosophy and the problem of the *bêtise*, Baudelaire and the problem of the *bêtise*, all that is no longer the same thing as illusion, etc. And there again, one can say it's connected to social evolution, for example, the evolution of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century that turned the problem of the *bêtise* into an urgent problem. Fine, but there is also something deeper in this kind of history of problems that thought confronts, and every time one poses a problem, there are new concepts that appear.

As a result, if we understand the history of philosophy this way -- creation of concepts, constitution of problems, problems being more or less hidden, so we have to discover them --, we see that philosophy has strictly nothing to do with the true or the false. Looking for the truth means nothing. If it is a question of creating concepts, what does that mean? Creating concepts and constituting problems are not a question of truth or falsehood, it's a matter of meaning (*sens*)... A problem, well, there has to be a meaning... There are problems that have no sense, yes? There are problems that make sense, so doing philosophy is to constitute problems that make sense and create concepts that cause us to advance toward the understanding and solution of problems.⁵¹

Parnet: I would like to return to two questions that concern you particularly...

Deleuze [visibly perplexed]: Uh, well, it seemed to me that I had very well... Yes? Yes?

Parnet: When you once again undertook doing history of philosophy with Leibniz last year [in *The Fold*], was it in the same way as you did 20 years earlier, that is, before you had produced your own philosophy?

Deleuze: Mmm... [Deleuze doesn't answer, rubbing his eyes]

Parnet: Was it in the same way?

Deleuze: No, certainly not, certainly not because before, I used history of philosophy as this kind of indispensable apprenticeship where I was looking for the concepts of others, that is, of great philosophers, and the problems to which their concepts corresponded. Whereas, in the book on Leibniz -- and there's nothing vain in what I am about to say --, I mixed in problems from the twentieth century, that might be my own problems, with those posed by Leibniz, given that I am persuaded of the actuality of philosophers.

If you prefer, what does it mean to create like (*faire comme*) a great philosopher would? Creating like him is not necessarily to be his disciple. To create like him means to carry on with his task, to create concepts in relation to what he created, and pose problems in relation to and in evolution with what he created. By working on Leibniz, I was more in this path, whereas in the first books on the history of philosophy, I was in the "pre-color" stage.

Parnet: And you stated about your work on Spinoza, and we could apply it to Nietzsche, that you focused therein on the rather hidden area and accursed area of philosophy. What did you mean?

Deleuze: That, well, perhaps we will have a chance to return to this. For me... We may be able to return to this. For me, this hidden area means those thinkers who rejected all transcendence. So rejecting all transcendence, we would have to define this, and perhaps we will have a chance to return to this, to discuss transcendence. It refers to those authors who reject all universals, that is, the idea or concepts having universal values, and all transcendence, that is, any agency (*instance*) that goes beyond the earth and men...

Parnet: To come back to what you said...

Deleuze: They are authors of immanence.

Parnet: To return to something you said earlier, your books on Nietzsche or on Spinoza are landmarks (*font date*), that is, you are known for your books on Spinoza and Nietzsche, yet one cannot say that you are a Nietzschean or a Spinozan, like one could call someone a Platonist or a Nietzschean. You passed through all that, even when you used them during your apprenticeship, and you were already Deleuzian. [*Pause*] One cannot say that you are Spinozan.

Deleuze [visibly embarrassed,]: You have given me an enormous compliment, that is, if it's true, that makes me very happy...

Parnet: And how did you feel... [*Her words are lost under Deleuze's*]

Deleuze: What I always hoped for, I think indeed that, whether my work was good or bad, and I knew I could fail, but I think that I always was trying to pose problems for my own purposes (*pour mon compte*), and to create concepts for my own purposes. Almost, at the limit, I would have wanted a kind of quantification of philosophy. That is, each philosopher would be attributed a kind of magic number corresponding to the number of concepts he really created, referring to problems, etc. – so there would be these magic numbers, well, Descartes, Hegel, Leibniz. I find that an interesting idea. So, obviously, I don't dare place myself there, but perhaps I would have had a small magic number, specifically for having created concepts as a function of problems. Simply, I tell myself, my point of honor is that, whatever the kind of concept I tried to create, I can state what problem the concept corresponded to.

Parnet: To finish with...

Deleuze: Otherwise, otherwise, it would have all been empty chatter. There we are, so fine, yes... I think we've finished this point... no? Yes, yes?

Parnet: And to finish up, this is the final question, but I absolutely want to ask it (*j'y tiens absolument*)... It's a bit... aggressive (*provocante*)... At the time when -- around the period of 1968, even before -- when everyone, everyone was explicating Marx, everyone was reading Reich, wasn't it a rather provocative act to turn toward Nietzsche, who was really suspected of fascism in those years, and to talk about Spinoza and the body, when everyone was making us sick talking about Reich? [*Pause*] Didn't history of philosophy serve a bit as a dare, a bit of provocation for you?

[Change of cassette (cassette 5); interruption by Boutang: So, Claire, we'll redo that since we forgot about the cartridge]

Parnet: Wasn't there an element provocation, frankly?

Deleuze: No, but this is entirely connected to what we have been discussing all along, it's nearly the same question because what I was looking for, even what I was looking for with Félix, was this kind of truly immanent dimension of the unconscious. When, for example, all of psychoanalysis is entirely full of transcendental elements -- the law, the father, the mother -- all that, whereas a field of immanence that would allow me to define the unconscious, that was the domain into which perhaps Spinoza could go the farthest, along the path where no one had ever been, and perhaps where Nietzsche could also go the farthest that anyone had gone.

So it seems it was not so much provocation, but it was because Spinoza and Nietzsche form in philosophy perhaps the greatest liberation of thought, almost in the sense of an explosive, and perhaps the most unusual concepts, because their problems were somewhat accursed problems, that people did not dare pose, certainly at Spinoza's time, but even during Nietzsche's... Problems that people did not dare consider, what people call "burning problems"... Eh? [Deleuze stops, smiling at Parnet, then laughing a bit]

Parnet [responds almost in the tone of scolding parent]: Well, we can go on since you don't want to answer further. [He seems perplexed by her reproach]

"I as in Idea"

Deleuze ... So, are we at 'K'?

Parnet: No, we are at 'I'.

Deleuze: Ah, yes... [still smiling]

Parnet: "I as in Idea," no longer in the Platonist "Idea" that you were just referring to. It's first... Rather than preparing an inventory of theories, you have always spoken passionately about philosophers' ideas, just as you have shown us, brilliantly, about the ideas of thinkers in cinema, that is, the directors, about the ideas of artists in painting. You have always preferred the "idea" to explications and commentary, your own "idea" and others' "idea." So why, for you, does the "idea" preside over everything else?

Deleuze: Ok, you are quite right, the "idea" as I use it -- no longer concerning Plato -- traverses all creative activities... Creating means having an idea.⁵¹ But it's quite difficult to have an idea, there are people -- not at all to be scorned for this -- who go through life without ever having an idea. And

having an idea, it's in every domain, I don't see any domain in which a place for having ideas is missing, but it's rare, indeed it's a ball (*une fête*) to have an idea, it doesn't happen every day.

So, I'm saying a painter has no fewer ideas than a philosopher, just not the same kind of ideas. One has to ask therefore, if we reflect on different human activities, in what form does an idea occur in a particular case or another? In philosophy, at least, we just considered this: the idea in philosophy occurs in the form of concepts and creation of concepts. There is no discovery of concepts, one doesn't discover concepts, one creates them. There is as much creation in a philosophy as in a painting or in a musical composition.

As for others, well, they have ideas... I am struck by what we call a film director (*metteur en scène*) from the moment he becomes important – there are lots of directors who have never had the slightest idea. But ideas are quite haunting, they are like things that come, then go, and disappear, and take on diverse forms, but through these diverse forms, as varied as they may be, they are still recognizable.

So, to state things quite simply, I take a cinema author at random like Minnelli. One can say that throughout his entire *oeuvre*... Well, not all of it, this doesn't cover everything, but I choose this example because it's easy... One can say that here is someone who asks himself, it seems to me: what does it mean exactly that people dream? They dream... It's been discussed a lot, it's a platitude, one could say... So, people dream at a particular moment. But Minnelli asks a very strange question, and it belongs only to him as far as I know: "what does it mean to be caught up in someone else's dream?" And it goes from the comic or the tragic to the abominable. What does it mean to be caught, for example, in a young girl's dream? Being caught in someone else's dream can produce some truly awful things, to be the prisoner of someone's dream, this is possibly horror in its pure state. So, sometimes in Minelli's work, he offers a dream, asking "what does it mean to be caught in the nightmare of war?" and that produces the admirable...

Parnet: The horsemen...

Deleuze: *The [Four] Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, in which he doesn't envisage war as war – that wouldn't be Minelli's work – he envisages war as an enormous nightmare. What does it mean to be caught in a nightmare? What does it mean to be caught in a young girl's dream? That results in musical comedies, in famous musical comedies, notably in which Fred Astaire or Gene Kelly – I'm not quite sure which -- escapes from tigresses and black panthers, it's unclear to me, and that's what it means to be caught in someone's dream. And there, that's an "idea." In short... and yet it's not a concept. Minelli, if he thought up concepts, he would be doing philosophy, [but] he's into movie-making (*il fait du cinéma*).⁵¹

We almost have to distinguish three dimensions, three kinds of things... so strong that they get mixed up

constantly... One would have to talk about... And here, that's where I am right now, it's my future work that I

am explaining, it's really what I would like to do now, to consider this, to try to get a clear sense of all this:⁵¹

- 1) There are concepts that are truly invented by philosophy;
- 2) There is what one can call percepts, and they are in the domain of art. So what are percepts? I believe that an artist is someone who creates percepts. So why use this bizarre word, percept, rather than perception? Well, precisely because percepts are not perceptions... What does a man of letters, a writer want, a novelist, what does he want? I think that he wants to be able to construct aggregates of perceptions and sensations that outlive those who experience them. That's what a percept is: an aggregate of perceptions and sensations that outlive those who experience them.

I'll choose some examples: there are pages by Tolstoy that describe like a painter could hardly manage, or by Chekhov, in a different manner, who describes the heat in the steppe. So, it's an entire complex web of sensations, visual sensations, auditory, nearly taste sensations, something that enters the mouth, all of that...

So, he'd say, fine, [*Pause*] try to give to this complex web of sensations a radical independence in relation to the person who experienced them. Tolstoy also described atmospheres; Faulkner, in the great pages of Faulkner, if you look at great writers, they attain this... There is one [writer] who nearly stated this, and whom I like very much, who isn't very well known in France, I believe, a very great American novelist, Thomas Wolfe, who says in his short stories: someone goes out in the morning, and he breathes some fresh air, and an odor comes past, of anything, some toast, let's say, there is a complex web of sensations, a bird flies by in the sky... There is a complex web of sensations. [*Pause*]

So, what happens when someone who experiences the sensations dies, or goes on to do something else? What does that [web of sensation] become? This is rather the question that art poses, that's where we find an answer. It's to give a duration or an eternity to this complex web of sensations that are no longer apprehended as being experienced by someone, or at the limit, that may be apprehended as experienced by a character in a novel, that is, by a fictional character. It's precisely that which engenders fiction.

And what does a painter do? Well, he doesn't do only that, but a painter gives consistency to percepts, he tears percepts out of perception. There is a sentence by Cézanne that moves me more than anything...

[Change of cassette, 6; interruption of Deleuze's development]

Deleuze: A painter does nothing different ... One can say that already the Impressionists utterly twisted perception. We can say that a concept literally, in certain ways, splits your skull open (*fend le crâne*), it's a habit of thought that is completely new... If people aren't used to thinking like that previously, then that cracks their skulls, since in some ways, a percept twists our nerves (*tord les nerfs*). We can say that, in this, the Impressionists invent a percept. There is an expression by Cézanne that is quite beautiful; he says something like, we have to make Impressionism last/durable; that is, it still hasn't... the motif has not yet acquired its independence if it's a question of making it last and if new methods are necessary to make Impressionism last... He doesn't simply mean that paintings have to be better conserved; he means that the percept must acquire an even greater autonomy, so it must have new techniques, it must have... etc.... in order to...⁵¹

3) And then there is a third set of things, I think, very connected to all the others: they are what we have to call affects. Of course, there are no percepts without affects, but the affect is not like... I tried to define the percept as an aggregate of perceptions and sensations that become independent from the person experiencing them. For me, affects are becomings, becomings that overflow (*débordent*) him or her who goes through them, that exceed the force of those who go through them, that's what an affect is. I would almost say... Wouldn't music be the great creator of affect? Doesn't music lead us into these powers of action (*puissances*) that exceed us? It's possible, but in any case, all I mean is that the three are connected.⁵¹

I mean, if you take a philosophical concept, simply, it's more like questions of accent... If you take a philosophical concept, it causes one to see things (*faire voir des choses*), it causes one to see things. Philosophers have nonetheless this "visionary" side or aspect (*côté 'voyant'*), at least in the philosophers that I admire: Spinoza causes one to "see", he is even one of the most visionary (*voyants*) philosophers, Nietzsche as well, he makes one "see" things. They also hurl forth fantastic affects such that one really has to discuss this, it becomes evident all by itself: there is a music in

these philosophies, and inversely, there's no use insisting that music makes one "see" some very strange things -- were these sometimes even only colors, music causes one to "see" colors that don't exist within music or outside it, and percepts as well, all that is completely linked. I would dream of a kind of circulation of these dimensions into each other, between philosophical concepts, pictorial percepts, and musical affects. There's nothing surprising in there being these resonances, because however independent they may be, there is the labor (*des travaux*) of completely different people, but that never stops interpenetrating... Yes... [Deleuze smiles slowly at Parnet as she pauses before continuing]

Parnet: So, these ideas of painters, of artists, and of philosophers, whereas they have "ideas," but which are an idea of perception, an idea of fiction, an idea of reason... Why... You... Well, in life one can see a book or read a book in which there is no idea at all, and for you, that bores you to the point that you are not interested at all. There is absolutely no interest for you in looking at something that might be funny or reading something that might be entertaining (*divertissant*), if this idea is missing, if there are no ideas.

Deleuze: In the sense that I just defined "idea," I have difficulty seeing how that would be possible. If you show me a painting that has no percepts, where there is a cow represented that is more or less realistic but where there are no cow percepts (*percepts de vache*), or it hasn't been lifted to the percept state, or play for me some music without affect... At the extreme, I can hardly understand what that could possibly mean. If you show me a film, ok, well... and if you show me a stupid book of philosophy, I have trouble understanding what kind of pleasure I would derive from it, other than an extremely unhealthy pleasure (*plaisir malsain*).

Parnet: Well, it might not be a stupid book of philosophy, it might simply be a humorous book (*livre humoristique*)...

Deleuze: Well, this humorous book could very well be full of ideas, I don't know, it all depends on what you call humorous (*humoristique*). No one has ever made me laugh more than Beckett and Kafka, so I am very sensitive to humor, I find them, in fact, extremely funny... I'm find television comedians much less interesting, it's true...

Parnet: Except Benny Hill, who certainly has an idea...

Deleuze [laughing]: Except Benny Hill, since he has an idea... But in fact, in this domain, the great American comics (*burlesques*) have lots of ideas.⁵¹

Parnet: Does it ever happen -- to finish with a more personal question -- that you sit down to your writing table without an idea of what you are going to do, that is, without having any ideas at all? How does that work for you?

Deleuze: Of course not, if I have no ideas, I don't sit down to write. But what happens for me is that the idea hasn't developed enough, the idea escapes me, the idea disappears, there might be some holes. I have painful experiences like that, and it just doesn't go all by itself since ideas are not ready-made, one has to create them, I repeat... There are terrible moments, that is, there are moments in which one literally despairs, in which people are not capable of... oh, yes...

Parnet: Is this like the expression: the idea that creates a hole that is missing (*l'idée qui fait un trou qui manque*)...? Is it both?

Deleuze: It's impossible to distinguish: Do I have an idea that I am just unable to express, or do I just not have any ideas at all? In my opinion, it's so much the same thing: if I cannot express it, I don't have the idea, or a piece of it is missing, a piece of this idea, since ideas don't arrive in a completely formed block, there are things that come in from here, from there, they come from diverse horizons, ideas, and if you are missing a piece, then it is unusable.

[Change of cassette, 7]

"J as in Joy"

Parnet: So, "J" is "Joy," this is a concept to which you are particularly attached to since it's a Spinozist concept, and Spinoza turned joy into a concept of resistance and life: let us avoid sad passions, let us live with joy in order to be at the maximum of our power of action (*puissance*) [see note 20]; therefore, we must flee from resignation, bad faith, guilt, all sad affects that judges and psychoanalysts would exploit. So we can see entirely why you would be pleased by all that. So first, I would like you to distinguish what the difference is between joy and sadness, both for Spinoza and necessarily for you? First, is Spinoza's distinction entirely yours? Did you find something there on the day you read of about that?

Deleuze: Ah yes, since these texts are the most extraordinarily charged with affect, in Spinoza. That comes down to saying -- to simplify greatly -- it comes down to saying that joy is everything that consists in fulfilling a power of action (*remplir une puissance*)... You experience joy when you fulfill it, when you realize one of your powers of action. So, what is that? Let's return to some earlier examples: I conquer, however little this might be, a small piece of color, I enter a little further into color. I think that is what joy might be. That's what fulfilling a power of action is, realizing (*effectuer*) a power of action, causing a power of action to be fulfilled. But it's the word *puissance* that is ambiguous.

What about the opposite, what is sadness? It occurs when one is separated from a power of action of which I believed myself, rightly or wrongly, to be capable: I could have done that, but circumstances didn't allow it, or it was forbidden, or etc. That's what sadness is, and one must say that all sadness is the effect of a power (*pouvoir*) over me.

[Change of cassette; director indicates that Parnet can continue; Deleuze sits smiling]

Parnet: No, but it's Gilles's turn to speak, he was talking about the... well, the opposition joy/sadness.

Deleuze: So I was saying that realizing the power of action of something is always good, that's what Spinoza said. Obviously, all this poses problems, more details are needed because there are no bad potentials; what is bad, one must say, is the lowest degree of power of action, and its lowest degree is power (*le pouvoir*). I mean, what is wickedness? It's preventing someone from doing that of which he/she is capable, wickedness is preventing someone from realizing one's power of action. Such that there is no bad power of action, only wicked powers... Maybe all power is wicked by its very nature, but perhaps not necessarily, maybe it's too easy to say that.

But it's indeed the idea of... the confusion between powers of action and powers is quite costly because power (*pouvoir*) always separates people who are subjected to it from what they are capable of doing. Spinoza started from this point, and you were saying that sadness is linked to priests, to tyrants...

Parnet: To judges...

Deleuze: ... to judges, and these are perpetually the people, right? who separate their subjects from what they are capable of doing, who forbid them from realizing powers of action. You alluded earlier, it was very curious, you alluded to the reputation of Nietzsche's anti-Semitism. There, we see quite well, because it's a very important question... There are texts of Nietzsche that are, in fact, quite disturbing, or that one might consider quite disturbing if they are read, in fact, in the manner mentioned earlier about reading philosophers, that is, if one reads them a bit too quickly.

What strikes me as curious is that in all the texts in which [Nietzsche] lashes out against the Jewish people, what does he reproach them for? And what made people then say, "Oh, he's anti-Semitic," etc.? What Nietzsche reproaches the Jewish people for is very interesting. Nietzsche reproaches them in quite specific conditions for having invented a character that had never existed before the Jewish people, the character of the priest. To my knowledge, never in any text by Nietzsche concerning Jews is there a general attack mode, but always an attack against the Jewish people-inventors of the priest. Although, according to him, in other social formations, there can be sorcerers, scribes, these are not at all the same as the priest. They made this astonishing invention, and Nietzsche, since he has great philosophical strength, Nietzsche never ceases to admire that which he detests... He says, it's simply an incredible invention, to have invented the priest, it's something quite astounding.

And this results in an immediate connection occurring between the Jews and Christians, but simply not the same type of priest. So, the Christians will conceive of another type of priest and will continue in the same path, with the character of the priesthood. This shows the extent to which philosophy is concrete. I mean that, I would say that Nietzsche is, to my knowledge, the first philosopher to have invented, created, the concept of the priest, and from that point onward, to have posed a fundamental problem: what does sacerdotal power consist of? What is the difference between sacerdotal power and royal power, etc.? This is a question that remains entirely actual. For example, shortly before his death, Foucault had fully discovered, and through his own means – and here, we could start all over from the beginning about what it means to continue, to extend philosophy, what does it mean to do philosophy? – Here, it's with Foucault proposing pastoral power, a new concept that is not the same as Nietzsche's, but that engages directly with Nietzsche, and in this way, one develops a history of thought.⁵¹

So, what is this power of the priest, and how is it linked to sadness? According to Nietzsche, in any case, this priest is defined as follows: he invents the idea that men exist in a state of infinite debt, that they have infinite debt. Before, there were certainly stories about debt, it's well known, but Nietzsche preceded ethnologists, and they would do well to read some Nietzsche. When the ethnologists discovered, well after Nietzsche, that in so-called primitive societies, there were exchanges of debt, and perpetually it did not function so much by exchange in kind (*troc*) as had been believed, things functioned through pieces of debt – a tribe that has a piece of debt vis-à-vis another tribe, etc. etc. ... Yes, but these were blocks of *finite* debt, they received and then gave it back. The difference with the exchange in kind is that there was time, the reality of time... It's differed return (*du rendu différé*). This is immense since it suggests that debt was primary in relation to exchange. These are all properly philosophical problems – exchange, debt, debt that is primary in

relation to exchange, it's an enormous philosophical problem. I say "philosophical" because Nietzsche was talking about this well before the ethnologists.

In so far as debt exists in a finite regime, man can free himself from it. When the Jewish priest invokes the idea by virtue of an alliance of infinite debt between the Jewish people and their God, when the Christians adopt this in another form, the idea of infinite debt linked to original sin, this reveals the very curious character of the priest about which it is philosophy's responsibility to create the concept. And as an atheist – if that happens to arise, I am not claiming that philosophy is necessarily atheist – and in the case of an author like Spinoza who had already outlined an analysis of the priest, of the Jewish priest, in the *Theologico-Political Treatise*... It happens that philosophical concepts are veritable characters, and that's what makes philosophy so concrete. Creating the concept of the priest is like another kind of artist would create a painting of the priest, the portrait of the priest.⁵¹

So, the concept of the priest pursued by Spinoza, and then by Nietzsche, and finally by Foucault forms an exciting lineage. I would like, for example, to link myself with this as well, to reflect a bit on this pastoral power, that some people say no longer functions. But, one would have to see how it has been taken up again, for example, psychoanalysis as the new avatar of pastoral power. And how do we define it? Priests are not the same thing as tyrants, one mustn't mix everything up... but they at least have in common that they derive their power (*pouvoir*) from the sad passions that they inspire in men, of the sort: "Repent in the name of infinite debt, you are the objects of infinite debt," etc. It's through this that they have power (*pouvoir*), it's a source of power, it's always an obstacle blocking the realization of powers of action, whereas... I would say that all power is sad, even if those who have it seem to revel in having it, but it is still a sad joy. There *are* sad joys, and this is a sad joy.⁵¹

On the other hand, joy is the realization (*effectuation*) of a power of action. I know of no powers of action that would be wicked. The typhoon is a power of action, it must delight in its soul, but... but it's not in destroying houses that it delights, it's in its being... Taking delight (*se réjouir*) is always delighting in being what one is, that is, in having reached where one is. Joy is not self-satisfaction, not some enjoyment of being pleased with oneself, not at all, not the pleasure of being happy with oneself. Rather, it's the pleasure in conquest (*conquête*), as Nietzsche said, but the conquest does not consist of enslaving people, conquest is, for example, for a painter to conquer color, yes, that's what a conquest is. That's what joy is, even if it goes badly because... in these stories of power of action, when one conquers a power of action, when one conquers something in a power of action, it happens that it is too strong for one's own self, so he will crack up (*donc il craquera*), Van Gogh.

[Change of cassette, "8-A"]

Parnet: So, a little question about something you said yesterday... You, who have been fortunate to escape from infinite debt, how is it that you complain from morning to night, [Deleuze smiles as she continues] and that you are the great advocate of the complaint (*plainte*) and the elegy?

Deleuze [rubbing his eyes]: This is a personal question. [He laughs] First, the elegy is one of the principal sources of poetry, it's the great complaint (*la grande plainte*). So, there is quite a bit... there is an entire history of the elegy to be done... I don't know if it already has been done but it's very interesting because there is the complaint of the prophet – the prophetism, the prophet is the one who complains/wails (*se plaint*), is the one who says, "Oh why did God choose me? What did I do to be chosen by God?" In a sense, it's the opposite of the priest.

So, he complains and complains about what occurs to him. It means: it overwhelms me, that's what the complaint is: what's happening to me overwhelms me. If one accepts that this is what the complaint is... It's not something we always see. It's not "ow ow ow, I'm in pain," although it could also be that, but the person complaining doesn't always know what he/she means. The elderly lady who complains about her rheumatism, she means, in fact, what power of action (*puissance*) is taking hold of my leg that is too great for me to stand it? It overwhelms me.

If we look at history, it's very interesting. The elegy, first, is a source of poetry, it's the only Latin poetry, the great Latin poets... I used to know them, I used to read them quite a bit, like Catullus, Tiberianus, they are astounding poets. And what is the elegy? I think that it's the expression of he/she who, temporarily or not, no longer has any social status. That's why it's interesting... A little old man (*un pauvre vieux*) complaining, sure ok... some guy in prison complains -- it's not sadness at all, but something quite different than making a demand (*la revendication*), there is something else in the complaint that is astonishing, there is an adoration in the complaint... The complaint is like a prayer.

So, popular complaints... One has to include everything in this: the complaint of the prophet, or something you are particularly interested in since you have worked on it so much -- the complaint of hypochondriacs. The hypochondriac is someone who complains, and the intensity of their complaints is beautiful -- why do I have a liver? why am I losing it? It's not even how much it's hurting me, it's why do I have it? why do I have organs? why am I... So, the complaint is sublime. And the popular complaint... The complaint of the assassin, the complaint that is sung by the people. I would say that it's the socially excluded who are in a situation of complaint. There is a Chinese specialist... He's not Chinese, but Hungarian, I think, called [Ferenc] Tökei, who prepared a study of the Chinese elegy, and he showed, as I recall it, that the Chinese elegy is enlivened above all by the person who no longer possesses a social status, i.e. the freed slave. A slave, however unfortunate he or she might be, still has a social status. He might be very unfortunate, might be beaten, whatever you like, but he still has a social status. When he is freed, there were periods when there was no social status for the freed slave. He is outside everything. It must have been something like at the liberation of American blacks with the abolition of slavery, or in Russia, when no statute had been foreseen. So they find themselves excluded, which has been interpreted stupidly as, "You see? you see? they are still being kept as slaves!" But they have no status and so are excluded from any community. Then the great complaint is born, Aie aie aie aie... However, it does not express the pain they have, but is a kind of chant/song (*chant*). This is why the complaint is a great poetic source.⁵¹

If I hadn't been a philosopher and if I had been a woman, I would have wanted to be a wailer (*pleureuse*)...

[Parnet laughs] The wailer is marvelous because the complaint rises and it's an art. And that also has this rather perfidious side as well, as if to say: don't take on my complaint, don't touch me. It's kind of like people who are too polite... For these too polite people, who would like to be more and more polite, it's: "don't touch me," so it's a kind of... And the complaint is the same thing: "don't feel sorry for me, I'm taking care of it." And in taking care of it for oneself, the complaint is transformed. Once again, it's: "what is happening to me overwhelms me." That's what the complaint is.

Now, I would like to say every morning, “what’s happening to me overwhelms me,” because this is joy. In some ways, this is joy in a pure state, but we are careful to hide it because there are people who aren't very pleased with someone being joyous, so you have to hide it in a kind of complaint. But this complaint is not only joy, it’s also an incredible anxiety, in fact... realizing a power of action (*effectuer une puissance*), perhaps, but at what price? Am I going to risk my skin/life in this (*laisser ma peau*)? As soon as one realizes a power of action... I am speaking about things as simple as a painter taking on color, might he not be risking his skin/life? Literally, after all, I don’t think it really is some literary invention (*faire de la littérature*) to say that the way Van Gogh went toward color is more connected to his madness than all these psychoanalytical stories. For color itself intervenes here in any case. Something risks getting broken, it overwhelms me, and that's what the complaint is, something overwhelms me, in misfortune or in happiness, but usually misfortune, but well, that’s just a detail.

[Change of cassette]

“K as in Kant”

Parnet: So, K” is Kant. Of all the philosophers that you have written on, Kant seems the farthest from your own thought. However, you have said that all the authors you have studied have something in common. So, first of all, is there something in common between Kant and Spinoza, which is not at all obvious?

Deleuze [pauses]: I’d prefer, if I might dare, the first part of the question, that is, why I took on Kant, once we say simply that there is nothing in common between Kant and Spinoza, nothing in common between Nietzsche and Kant although Nietzsche read Kant closely, but it’s not the same conception of philosophy, it’s not...

So why am I nonetheless so fascinated by Kant? For two reasons: Kant is present at so many turning points, and another reason: he initiates and then pushes something as far as possible (*pousse jusqu’au bout*), something that had never been advanced in philosophy. Specifically, he establishes tribunals (*il érige des tribunaux*), perhaps under the influence of the French Revolution.

Now, up to the present, one always tries, or I try, to talk about concepts as characters (*personnages*). So, before Kant, in the 18th century, there is a new kind of philosopher presented as an investigator (*enquêteur*), the investigation, *Investigation into Human Understanding* (*Enquête sur l’Entendement humain*), investigation of this, investigation of that. The philosopher saw himself to some extent as an investigator. Even in the 17th century, and Leibniz is no doubt the last representative of this tendency, he saw himself as a lawyer, defending a cause, and the greatest thing

is that Leibniz pretended to be God's lawyer. So, there must have been things to reproach against God at the time, and [Leibniz] writes a marvelous little work, "God's Cause". He doesn't mean that God has a cause in the sense of [causation]... but God's juridical cause, God's cause to be defended.⁵¹ So, it's like a sequence of characters -- the lawyer, the investigator -- and then with Kant, the arrival of a tribunal, a tribunal of reason, things being judged as a function of a tribunal of reason. And the faculties, in the sense of understanding -- the imagination, knowledge, morality -- are measured as a function of the tribunal of reason. Of course, he uses a certain method that he invented, an amazing method called the critical method, the properly Kantian method.

Now, I have to admit that all of this aspect of Kant almost makes me cringe in horror, but it's both horror and fascination, because he's so ingenious. If I say... if I return to the question... among the concepts that Kant invented, and Lord knows he invented them, there is concept of the tribunal of reason which is inseparable from the critical method. But finally, it's not... what I dream of, rather... This is a tribunal of judgment, it's the system of judgment, simply, a system of judgment that no longer needs God, a system of judgment based on reason, and no longer on God.⁵¹

With all the writers that affect me -- we haven't considered this problem, but we can introduce it now, it will save us the trouble of returning to it, that will make... eh?

Parnet: Not at all?

Deleuze [smiling]: Maybe that will save us the trouble, it's... One can always wonder about this because there is something mysterious: why does someone, someone in particular, you or me, get connected to or identify (*se reconnaître*) especially with one kind of problem and not another? What is someone's affinity for a particular kind of problem? That seems to me to be one of the greatest mysteries of thought. A person might be fated for one problem since we don't take on just any problem. And this is true for researchers in the sciences, a person's affinity for a particular problem, but with some other problem, he just doesn't get involved. And philosophy is an aggregate of problems, with its own consistency, but it does not pretend to deal with all problems, thank God.

Well, I feel rather connected to problems that aim at seeking the means to do away with the system of judgment, and to replace it with something else. So there, we have the great names... Indeed, it's a different tradition. Yes, you were right when you said there's an opposition. I see Spinoza, I see Nietzsche, in literature I see [D.H.] Lawrence, and finally the most recent and one of the greatest writers, Artaud, his "To Have Done With the Judgment of God," which means something, not the words of a madman. We really have to take this literally: to have done with the system of judgment.⁵¹

And underneath -- as always, it's like when I say that one has to look underneath concepts for problems -- and underneath, there are some astonishing problems posed by Kant, that are really marvels. He was the first to have created an astonishing reversal of concepts. Here again, this is why I get so sad when people, even young people preparing the baccalaureate [French *lycée* diploma], are taught an abstract philosophy without even trying -- perhaps it's not possible -- to have them participate in problems that are quite fantastic problems, equally yet differently interesting as ... I don't know exactly what.

I can say that, up until Kant, for example, time was derived from movement, it was second in relation to movement, it was considered to be a number of movement or a measure of movement.

What does Kant do? However, he does it, there's the creation of a concept, and in all I am doing here, we never stop moving forward in considering what it means to create a concept. Kant creates a concept because he reverses the subordination. With him, it's movement that depends on time. And suddenly, time changes its nature, it ceases being circular. Because, when time is subordinate to movement (for reasons that would be too long [to explain]), finally the great movement is the periodic movement, it's the periodic movement of heavenly bodies (*des astres*), so the movement is circular. On the other hand, when time is freed from movement and it's movement that depends on time, then time becomes a straight line. And I always think of something that Borges said -- although he has little relation to Kant --, that a more frightening labyrinth than a circular labyrinth is a labyrinth in a straight line, marvelous, but it's Kant, it's Kant who lets time loose.

And then this story of the tribunal, measuring the role of each faculty as a function of a particular goal, that's what Kant collides with at the end of his life, as he is one of the rare philosophers to write a book as an old man that would renew everything,

Parnet: *The Critique of Judgment*.

Deleuze: *The Critique of Judgment*. He reaches the idea that the faculties must have disorderly relations with each other, that they collide with each other, and then reconcile with each other, but there is a battle of the faculties where there is no longer any standard (*mesure*), where they are no longer subject (*justiciable*) to a tribunal. He introduces his conception of the Sublime, in which the faculties enter into discordances, into discordant accords (*accords discordants*).⁵¹ So, all that pleases me infinitely: these discordant accords, this labyrinth that is nothing more than a straight line, his reversal of relations... I mean that all modern philosophy flows forth from this point, that it's no longer time that depended on movement but rather that movement depended on time -- that's the creation of a fantastic concept. And the whole conception of the Sublime, with all the discordant accords of the faculties. I am enormously moved by these things.

So, what can one say? It's obvious that he's a great philosopher, a very great philosopher, and there is a whole substratum in his works that excites me enormously. And all that is built on top of this has no interest for me, but I don't judge it, it's just a system of judgment that I'd like to do away with, but without standing in judgment.

Parnet: What about Kant's life...

Deleuze: Oh, Kant's life...

Parnet: Because I have a quote from de Quincey...

Deleuze: That wasn't planned for our discussion.

Parnet: Yes it was!

[Change of cassette, "cassette 10-A"]

Parnet: There is another aspect of Kant's work that might also please you greatly, the aspect that Thomas De Quincey discussed [in *The Last Days of Immanuel Kant*], this fantastically regulated life full of habits, his little daily walk, the life of a philosopher that one might imagine mythically (*dans une vision d'Épinal*), something very special. And one thinks of this when one thinks about you, that is, something quite regulated, with an enormous number of habits,

Deleuze: Well, I think that..

Parnet: ...work habits, I mean...

Deleuze [smiling]: I do see what you mean, because De Quincey's text is one you find quite exciting, and so do I, it's a real masterpiece. But I see this aspect as belonging to all philosophers. They don't all have the same habits, but to say that they are creatures of habit seems to suggest that they don't know... It's obligatory, it's obligatory that they be creatures of habit, because in Spinoza... My impression of Spinoza is that there's not very much turbulent in his life, he polished his lenses, he was expected to polish his lenses, he received visitors...

Parnet: He earned his living polishing lenses...

Deleuze: So, it wasn't a very turbulent life except for certain political upheavals at that time, but Kant also lived through some very intense political upheavals. Thus, all that people say about Kant's clothing apparatuses, that he invented for himself a little machine to pull up – I don't know – his underwear, his stockings, etc., all that makes him extremely charming, if one needs that kind of thing.

But all philosophers... it's a bit like Nietzsche said, philosophers are generally chaste, poor, and Nietzsche adds, we simply guess at how philosophers make use of all of this, how they make use of this chastity, how they make use of this poverty, etc. Kant had his little daily walk, but that's nothing in itself. What happened during his little walk, what was he looking at? One would have to find out.

In the long run, that philosophers are creatures of habit... I think that habit, I am going to tell you, it means contemplating, it's the contemplation of something. Really, habit in the true sense of the term means contemplating. What did he contemplate during his walks? We don't know... As for my own habits, well, it's shameful, I mean... yes, ok, I have quite a few of them, these are contemplations, I get into contemplations... Sometimes these are things that I am alone in seeing, ok, that's what a habit is.

"L as in Literature"

Parnet: So, "L" is Literature.

Deleuze: "L"? We're moving on to "L"?

Parnet: Already!

Deleuze: Yes?

Parnet: So literature haunts your philosophy books and your life. And you read lots of books, and re-read them...

Deleuze: Yes, yes...

Parnet: ...books of what's called "great literature" (*la grande littérature*). You have always considered great literary writers as thinkers. Between your books on Kant and Nietzsche, you wrote

Proust and Signs, it's a famous book, and then subsequently you enlarged it. Louis Carroll and Zola in *Logic of Sense*, Masoch, Kafka, British and American literatures -- and one sometimes gets the impression that it's through literature more than through the history of philosophy that you inaugurate a new kind of thinking. So, I would like to know first if you have always read copiously?

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes. At one point, I was reading a lot more philosophy since that was part of my craft (*métier*), my apprenticeship, and I no longer had much time for novels. But great novels, I have read them throughout my life, and I read them more and more. So, is that useful for philosophy? Yes, certainly, I find it useful (*ça me sert*). For example, I owe an immense amount to Fitzgerald who is, nonetheless, not a very philosophical novelist, what I owe to Fitzgerald is immense. What I owe to Faulkner is enormous as well, and... I forget here...

But all that is completely comprehensible by itself as a function of what we discussed earlier because we've made a lot of progress here – and I'm sure that didn't escape you [Deleuze smiles]: it's this story that the concept is never alone. At the same time that the concept pursues its task, it makes us see things, that is, it's plugged into percepts, and all of sudden, one finds these percepts in a novel. There are perpetual communications from concepts to percepts. Moreover, there are also problems of style that are the same in philosophy and literature.

The great literary characters – let's pose the question in very simple terms -- the great literary characters are great thinkers. I re-read Melville a lot, and it goes without saying that the Captain Ahab is a great thinker, it goes without saying that Bartleby is a thinker, not in the same way, but he's a thinker. In any case, they cause us to think in such way that a literary work traces as large a trail of intermittent concepts (*concepts en pointillé*) as it does percepts, certainly. Quite simply, it's not the task of the literary writer who cannot do everything at once, he/she is caught up in the problems of percepts, of creating visions (*faire voir*), causing perceptions (*faire percevoir*), and creating characters – do you have any idea of what it is to create a character? It's something frightening. And a philosopher creates concepts, ok, but it happens that they communicate greatly since, in certain ways, the concept is a character, and the character takes on dimensions of the concept, I believe.⁵¹

You know what I find in common? What these two grand activities have in common: "great literature" and "great philosophy" bear witness for life (*ils témoignent pour la vie*), what I was calling "power of action" (*puissance*) earlier, they bear witness for life. This is even the reason why [great authors] are not often in good health, except sometimes there are cases... Victor Hugo, ok... One must not say that all writers do not enjoy good health since many do. But why are there so many literary writers who do not enjoy good health? It's because he/she experiences a flood of life (*flot de vie*), that's why. To some extent, whether it's the weak health of Spinoza or the weak health of [D.H.] Lawrence, what is it?⁵¹ It corresponds almost to what I said earlier about the complaint: these writers have seen something that overwhelms them, they are seers, visionaries. They saw something that was too much for them, so they cannot handle it and it breaks them. Why is Chekhov broken to such an extent? He "saw" something. Philosophers and literary writers are in the same situation. There are things we manage to see, and in some ways, literally, we never recover, never return. This happens frequently for authors, but generally, these are precisely percepts at the edge of the bearable (*du soutenable*), at the edge of the thinkable. So, between the creation of a great character and the creation of a concept, so many links exist that one can see it as constituting somewhat the same enterprise.⁵¹

Parnet: Do you consider yourself to be a writer in philosophy, as one would say writer in a literary sense?

Deleuze: I don't know if I consider myself a writer in philosophy, but I know that every great philosopher is a great writer.

Parnet: There's no nostalgia for creating a great fictional work when one is a great philosopher? I'm referring to you...

Deleuze: No, for me, that does not even come up, it's as if you asked a painter why he doesn't create music. One could conceive of a philosopher who also wrote novels, of course, why not? Sartre to a stab at it...

Parnet: Bernard-Henri Lévy?

Deleuze [continuing with reference to Sartre]: ... that wasn't... I don't consider Sartre to have been a novelist, although he did try to be. Are there any great philosophers who were also important novelists? No, really, I can't think of any. But on the other hand, philosophers have created characters, it has happened: Plato created characters, eminently, and Nietzsche created characters, notably Zarathustra. So, these are intersections that are discussed constantly, and I consider the creation of Zarathustra to be an immense success poetically and literarily, just as Plato's characters were. These are points about which one cannot be completely certain whether they are concepts or characters, and these are perhaps the most beautiful moments.⁵¹

[Change of cassette (11)]

Parnet: And your love for secondary literary authors, like Villiers de l'Isle-Adam or Restif de la Bretonne, have you always cultivated this affection?

Deleuze [Pause, covers his face with one hand]: I find it truly bizarre to hear Villiers referred to as a secondary author. [Deleuze laughs] If you consider that question... [He pauses, shrugging his shoulders] ... But there is something really shameful, entirely shameful: when I was quite young, I liked the idea of reading an author's work in its entirety, the complete works. As a result, I had great affection not for secondary authors, although that often coincided, but for authors who had written little. So it was because some things were too much for me, like Victor Hugo was so far beyond me that I was ready to say that Hugo wasn't a very good writer. On the other hand, I knew the works of Paul-Louis Courier nearly by heart at the time, completely, completely, although what he wrote really wasn't substantial. So yes, I had this penchant for so-called secondary authors, although Villiers is not a secondary author.

Parnet: Well, he is an author of great importance, but secondary in relation to his era in relation to the major writers.

Deleuze [interrupting]: Joubert, [Joseph] Joubert was also an author I knew completely, on the one hand because it – and this is really a shameful reason -- it gave me a certain prestige to be familiar with authors that were unknown, or hardly known. But all that was a kind of mania, and it took me quite a while to learn just how great Hugo is, and that the size of his work was no measure. So, it's true that in so-called secondary literatures... It's true, it's true that so-called secondary authors... In Russian literature, for example, it's not limited to Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, but one dare not call [Nikolai] Leskov secondary since there is so much that is astonishing in Leskov. So, these are still great geniuses. I feel I have little to say on these points, but in any case, that's behind me now, this

search for secondary writers. But what I am happy about is when I happen to find in an unknown author something that might show me a concept or an extraordinary character. But yes, I have not engaged in any systematic research [in this domain].

Parnet: But, other than your [book on] Proust, which is a sustained work on a single author, literature has such a presence in your philosophy, and one could say that, at the same time, [it's] also a reference for examples. But you never truly devoted a full-length book to literature, a reflective book (*livre de pensée*) on literature.

Deleuze: I just haven't had the time, but I plan to do so.

Parnet: I know that this has haunted you.

Deleuze: I plan to do so, I plan to do so because I want to.

Parnet: [A book] of criticism?

Deleuze: Of criticism... well, yes, well, on the problem of what "writing" means, for me, in literature. You are familiar with my whole [research] program, so we'll see if I have the time.⁵¹

Parnet: Yes... [Pause] And I wanted to pose a final question: you read and re-read the classical authors, but one doesn't get the impression that you read many contemporary authors, or that you don't really like to discover contemporary literature, that is, that you always would prefer to select a great [canonic] author, or re-read one, than to see what is being published or whatever is directly contemporary for us.

Deleuze: It's not that I don't like... I understand what you mean here, and I can answer quickly: it's not at all that I don't like to read them. Rather it's such a truly specialized activity, and very difficult, in which one has to have training (*formation*). It's something very difficult in contemporary production to have the inclination (*goût*). It's just like some people finding new painters: in this as well, it's something that one has to learn about (*ça s'apprend*). I greatly admire people who go into galleries and feel that there is someone who is truly a painter there. But I simply cannot do this, I always am in need, I... [*Deleuze does not finish the sentence*]

To show how correct you are, it took me five years to understand even just a little the kind of innovation -- not for Beckett, that happened immediately -- the innovation of Robbe-Grillet's writing. I was as stupid as the stupidest [person] when talking about Robbe-Grillet when he started out. I understood absolutely nothing. It took me a long time, it took me five years. So, in this respect, I am not a discoverer, whereas in philosophy, I am more confident because I am sensitive to a new tone and what, on the other hand, is completely nil, repetition, and redundant statements, etc. In the [domain of the] novel, I am quite sensitive, I am sufficiently confident to know what has already been said a thousand times and is of no interest. It did happen to me one time, for Farrachi, I managed to discover -- at least in my own way -- someone I judged to be a very, very good young novelist, Armand Farrachi.⁵¹

So, the question you raise is quite sound, but I answer by saying: one must not believe that, without experience, one can judge what is being created. I would almost say that what I prefer, something that happens and that brings me great joy, is when something that I am creating off on my own has an echo in a young writer's or a young painter's work. I am not saying that, for this reason, he is good and so am I. But this is how I have a kind of encounter with what is happening currently,

that belongs to another mode [of creation]. I mean that my radical insufficiency as regards judgments is compensated by these encounters with people who are doing things that resonate with what I am doing, and inversely.

Parnet: But for you, painting and cinema, for example, these encounters take preference since you make an effort to go [to galleries and to the movies], whereas for bookstores, one would have trouble imagining you strolling into a bookstore and looking at books that just came out over the previous few months.

Deleuze: You are right, but this is perhaps linked to the idea that literature is not very strong at the moment -- an idea that is not in my mind, one that is not preconceived -- it's obvious that literature is not very strong at the moment, and that it is so corrupted -- no need even to talk about all that -- that it's corrupted by the system of distribution of literary prizes, etc., that it's not even worth the trouble. [*Deleuze begins smiling as he remains silent*]

Parnet [*With Deleuze still smiling at her*]: Ok, we are going on to "M" since you don't want to say anything more.

[Change of cassette; "12-A"]

"M as in 'Maladie'" (Illness)

Parnet: "M" is "Illness" (*maladie*).

Deleuze [almost whispering]: "Maladie".

Parnet: At the very end of completing *Difference and Repetition* in 1968, you were hospitalized for a very severe case of tuberculosis. You who were saying, regarding Spinoza and Nietzsche, the extent to which great thinkers have a weak state of health, henceforth, from 1968 onward, you were forced to live with illness. Did you know for a while that you had tuberculosis, or did you know that your illness was there for a while?

Deleuze: An illness, yes, I knew that I had some illness for quite a while, but like a lot of people, I had no real desire to find out, and also like most people, I just assumed that obviously it was cancer, and so I wasn't in a big hurry. So, I did not know it was tuberculosis, not until I was spitting up blood. I am the child of someone with tuberculosis, but at the moment [of my diagnosis], there was no real danger thanks to antibiotics. It was serious, and ten years earlier, or even three years earlier -- it was in the beginning -- a few years earlier, I might not have survived, whereas in 1968, it was no longer a problem. Moreover, it's an illness without much pain, and so I could say I was very ill, but it's a great privilege, an illness without pain and curable, without suffering, hardly an illness at all, though it is an illness, yes. Before it, my health was not all that great, I became fatigued easily.

So, is the question whether the illness makes it easier for someone who undertakes -- I am not talking about the success of the undertaking -- for someone who undertakes, who enjoys an enterprise of thought, an attempt to think? And I think that a very weakened state of illness favors this. It's not that one is tuned in (*être à l'écoute*) to one's own life, but for me, thinking does seem like I am tuning into life. Now it's not what's going on inside you, tuning into life. It's something entirely different from thinking about one's own health. But I think a fragile state of health favors this kind of tuning-in. When I was speaking earlier about authors like Lawrence or Spinoza [see note

31], to some extent they saw something too enormous, so enormous that it overwhelmed them. It's true that one resists [*ne veut pas*] thinking if one isn't already in a domain which goes a bit beyond one's strength, that is, that makes one fragile. Indeed, I always had a fragile state of health, and this was confirmed from the moment I was diagnosed with tuberculosis, at which point I acquired all the rights accorded to a fragile state of health. Yes, it's precisely as you stated it.

Parnet: But your relations with doctors and drugs changed from that moment onward: you had to go see doctors, you had to take drugs regularly, and it was a constraint imposed on you, all the more so since you do not like doctors much.

Deleuze: Yes... Personally it's not a matter of individuals because I often come across, like everyone, some very charming doctors, delightful (*délicieux*), but it's a kind of power (*pouvoir*), or a way in which they handle power – here, once again, we return to questions previously discussed, as if half of the letters already discussed were encompassed and folded back upon the totality. I find it odious the way doctors manipulate power, and they are odious – *as doctors*, they are odious.

I have a great hatred, not for individual doctors – on the contrary, they can be charming --, but I have hatred for medical power and the way doctors use this medical power. There is only one thing that thrilled me – and at the same time, it displeased them – is when it would happen that they used their machines and tests on me. I consider these to be very unpleasant for a patient since you get the impression that these tests really seem completely useless, except to make the doctors feel better about or confirm their diagnoses. But if they are doctors with all this talent and they already have their diagnoses, and these cruel tests only serve to make them feel better, then they are playing with these tests in an inadmissible way.

So what made me quite happy was when, each time I had to be tested under one of their machines – that is, my breath was too weak to register on their machines, or they weren't able to give me a sonogram [*échographie*] – well, they couldn't give it to me because I passed under their machine, and to my complete delight, they just got furious with me. At these moments, I think they hate their poor patient, because they could accept quite easily the fact that their diagnosis might be wrong, but they cannot accept at all that their machine wouldn't work on me.

Otherwise, I consider them to be far too uncultivated, or when they attempt to be cultivated, the results are catastrophic. They are very strange people, doctors, but my consolation is that if they earn a lot of money, they don't have time really to spend it, they don't have the time to take advantage of it because they lead a very hard life. So, it's true, I do not find doctors very attractive, except for the individual personalities which can be quite exquisite. Yet they really treat people like dogs in their official functions. So, it really reveals class struggle because if one is a little bit wealthy, they are a lot more polite, except in surgery. Surgeons are a different case altogether. So, doctors really are a problem, and some kind of reform of doctors is needed.

Parnet: Do you have to take drugs all the time?

Deleuze: Yes, I like doing that, it doesn't bother me except that they tend to tire me out.

Parnet: You actually enjoy taking medicine?

Deleuze: When there's a lot, in my current state [in 1989], yes, because there are a lot. [Deleuze smiles] My little pile every morning is a real hoot (*bouffonnerie*)! But I also consider them to be quite useful. I can say that I have always been in favor of drugs, even in the domain of psychiatry, I have always been in favor of the pharmacy.

Parnet: And this fatigue that we have spoken about, which is very connected to your illness, and was even there already before the illness, one thinks, in fact, of Blanchot writing about fatigue or friendship.⁵¹ [Deleuze rubs his face and eyes often as he answers and listens] Fatigue plays a great role in your life, that is, sometimes one gets the impression that it's an excuse for avoiding a lot of things that bore you, and that you use fatigue and that fatigue has always been very useful for you.

Deleuze: Well, here is what I think: when one is affected in this way – and here, we're returning to the theme of power of action (*puissance*), i.e., what it is to realize a little power of action, to do what one can do, use what is in power of action -- it's an awfully complicated notion. For, what strikes you with lack of power of action (*impuissance*), for example, a fragile health or an illness, it's a question of knowing what use to make of it so that, through it, one can recuperate a little power of action. So, I am certain that illness should be used for something, as everything else. I'm not only talking about in relation to life for which it should give one some feeling. For me, illness is not an enemy, not something that gives the feeling of death, but rather, something that sharpens the feeling of life, but not at all in the sense of "Oh, how I still want to live, and so once I'm cured, I'll start living." I cannot think of anything more abject in the world than what people call a *bon vivant*, it's abject. On the contrary, [people we call] *bon vivant* are men with very weak health. I return to my question: illness sharpens a kind of vision of life or a sense of life. When I say vision, vision of life, and life, it's in the sense of me saying "to see life," but it's crisscrossed by [life] (*traversé par elle*). All that [life] sharpens that, gives life a vision of life, illness does, life in all its force, in all its beauty. I am quite certain of this.

But how can one have secondary benefits from illness? That's quite simple: One has to use it, even in order to be a bit freer. One has to use it, otherwise it's very troublesome. That is, one works too hard, which is something one ought not to do. To work too hard -- if it's a question of working and to realize any power of action, then it's worth it. But working too hard socially, I don't get it, I don't get it. For a doctor to work too hard because he has too many patients... [Interruption of recording]

[Change of cassette (13)]

Deleuze: So, to realize a benefit, to gain a benefit from illness is, in fact, to free oneself from things that one cannot be free from in ordinary life. Personally, I never liked traveling, and I never was able, nor really knew how to travel, although I have great respect for travelers. But the fact that my health was so weakened insured my being able to decline invitations to travel. Or going to bed too late was always difficult for me, so once I had my fragile health, there was no longer any question of going to bed too late. I'm not talking about people closest to me in my life, but from social duties, illness is extraordinarily liberating, it's really good in that way.

Parnet: Do you enjoy being fatigued like being ill?

Deleuze: Fatigue is something else. For me, it means: I've done what I could today... I've done what I could today, that's it, the day is over. I see fatigue biologically as the day being done. It's possible that it could last further for other reasons, for social reasons, but fatigue is the biological formulation of the day being done, You won't be able to draw anything further from yourself. So, if you take it this way, it's not a bothersome feeling. It's unpleasant if one hasn't done anything, then indeed, it's quite agonizing, but otherwise, it's fine. It's to these states of fatigue, these flimsy, numb states (*états cotonneux*) that I have always been sensitive. This fuzzy fatigue, I like that state... I like that state,

the end of something, and it probably has a name in music. I don't know how you would call it... A coda, fatigue as coda.

Parnet: I'd like us to talk a little bit, before discussing old age, your relationship to food which is quite special...

Deleuze [interrupting]: Ah! Old age... No? Not old age... fine, food...

Parnet: ... first, because you like food that seems to bring you strength and vitality, like marrow and lobster. You have a special relationship to food since you don't like eating, not really.

Deleuze: It's true. For me, eating is the most... If I tried to describe the quality of eating for me, it would be boredom. It's the most boring thing in the world. Drinking, well, that was "B", we already did that, but drinking is something extraordinarily interesting, but eating never interested me, it bores me to death. So, given that, eating alone... But eating with someone, well, that changes everything, but it does not transform the food, it only helps me stand eating, making it less boring even if it happens that I have really nothing to say. But eating alone, well, a lot of people are like that, everybody says that eating alone is boring, and it proves how boring eating is since most people admit that eating alone is an abominable task.

Having said this, I certainly have things I enjoy immensely (*mes fêtes*), that are rather special, to see the universal disgust that they.... But, after all, I can stand it when others eat cheese...

Parnet: Yes, you don't like cheese...

Deleuze: ... and for someone who hates cheese, I am one of the rare people to be tolerant, that is, not to get up and leave or throw the person out eating cheese. For me, the taste for cheese is a little like a kind of cannibalism, [Parnet laughs out loud] a total horror.

I imagine that someone might ask me what my favorite meal would be, an utterly crazy undertaking. It's true that I always come back to three things because they are three things that I always found sublime, but that are quite properly disgusting: tongue, brains, and marrow. I imagine that these are all quite nourishing. But there are a few restaurants in Paris that serve marrow, and after, I can eat nothing else. They prepare these little marrow squares, really quite fascinating... Brains, then tongue...

But if I tried to situate this taste in relation to things we've already discussed, it's a kind of trinity because one might say – all this is a bit too anecdotal – one might say that brains are God, that it's the father; that marrow is the son since it's linked to vertebrates that are little crabs. So, the little vertebrate crabs are the son, so the marrow is the son, Jesus, and tongue is the Holy Spirit, which is the very force of the tongue/language (*langue*). Or, that could also go, but here I don't know... It's the brain that is the concept, marrow is affect, and tongue, the percept. You really mustn't ask me why, it's just that I see that these trinities are very ... [He does not complete the sentence]

So, that's what would make a fantastic meal for me...

Parnet [interrupting]: And old age?

Deleuze [continuing]: Has it ever happened that I have had all three together at once? Maybe on a birthday with friends, [Parnet laughs] they might make me a meal like... [Deleuze smiles at Parnet], eh? a party (*fête*), a party... [He laughs, very amused]

Parnet: You can't be eating these three things at the same time since you are speaking to us about your old age.

Deleuze: Yes, that would be a bit much.

Parnet [laughing]: Every day, it's constant!

Deleuze: Ah, old age... Yes? There is someone who has spoken about old age very well, a novel by Raymond Devos. Of course, one can always say something else, but for me, he said it the best...⁵¹ For me, I find old age to be a splendid age, truly splendid. Of course, there are a lot of difficulties (*embêtements*), one is overcome by a certain slowness. But the worst is when someone says to you, "No, you're not as old as all that," because he doesn't understand what the complaint is. I complain, I say, "Oh, I'm old," that is, I invoke the powers of action (*puissances*) of old age, the powers of action, but then somebody tries to cheer me up by saying, "No, you're not so old." So, then I smack him with my cane (*alors je vais lui foutre un coup de canne*), [Parnet laughs] I don't know what I'd do, because it's not a question of saying, while I'm here in my old age complaint, it's not a question of saying, "No, you're not all that old." On the contrary, it would be better just to say: "Yes!"

But it's pure joy, I mean, because where does that joy come from, through this bit of slowness? What's awful in old age – really, it's nothing to joke about – what's awful is pain and misery, but they are not old age. I mean, what makes old age pathetic, something sad, is these poor old people who do not have enough money to live, nor this minimum of health, not even this very weak health that I am talking about, and who suffer greatly. That's what is abominable, but it's not old age, it's not an illness at all. With enough money and a little bit of health remaining, old age is great. And why is it great? Because first, it's only in old age... First, one has reached it. It counts for something, just the fact of having reached it, after all, in a world that included wars and filthy viruses, one has crossed through all that, viruses, wars, filth (*saloperies*)... One made it [to old age].

And it's an age where the only point is being. No longer of being this or being that, but being... The old person is someone who just is, period, that's it. One can always say, "oh, he's grumpy, oh, he's in a bad mood," but quite simply, he just is. He has earned the right to be, period. For an elderly person can still say, "I have plans," but it's true and not true, not true in the way that someone who is thirty has plans. I do hope to complete the two books that I really am committed to, one on literature, another on philosophy, but that does not change the fact that I'm free of all plans. When one is old, one is no longer touchy (*susceptible*)...

[Change of cassette; "14-A"]

Deleuze: One is no longer thin-skinned, one no longer has any fundamental disappointments, one tends to be a lot more disinterested, and one really likes people for themselves. For me, it seems that it hones, for example, my perception of things that I wouldn't have seen before, elegant things (*des élégances*), to which I would never be sensitive. I see better because I look at someone else for him/herself almost as if it were a question of carrying away an image, a percept, a characteristic (*trait*), a percept of the person. All that makes of old age... And days pass by with such a speed (*allure*) divided by fatigue periods. But fatigue is not an illness, but something else, not death, nor... Again, it's just the signal of day's end.

Of course, there are agonies in old age, but one has to ward them off, and it's easy to ward them off, a little like with loup-garous or vampires – besides, I like that [image] -- one mustn't be

alone at night when it starts getting cold because one is too slow to survive. So, one has to avoid some things...

And what's marvelous is that people release you, society lets you go. Being released by society is so wonderful, not that society really had me in its grip, but someone who isn't my age, not retired, cannot suspect how much joy one can feel being released by society. Obviously, when I hear the elderly complaining, these are old people who don't want to be old or not as old as they are. They can't stand being retired, and I don't know why... They could just read a novel since they might discover something. I do not believe in retired people who cannot – well, except maybe in the case of the Japanese – who cannot find something to do. It's marvelous... People let go of you... So

Or else, one has to give oneself a shake (*se secouer*) so that all the parasites that one has on one's back the whole life through fall off, and what's left around you? Nothing but the people that you love and that support you and that love you, if they feel the need. The rest have let go of you. And what's really tough is when something catches hold of you again. I can't stand ... I no longer have... I only know society now through my life in retirement. I see myself as being completely unknown to society. So what's catastrophic is when someone who thinks I still belong to society asks me for an interview. This [*Abécédaire* filming] is different since what we're doing belongs entirely to my dream of old age. But when someone seeks an interview, a conversation, I would like to ask, are you nuts? (*ça va pas, la tête?*) Aren't you aware that I am old and society has let go of me? [Deleuze laughs]

But I think people confuse two things: one should not talk about the elderly, but about misery and suffering, for when one is old, miserable, and suffering, there is no word to describe it certainly. But otherwise, a pure elderly person (*un vieux pur*) who is nothing other than elderly means that one just is, yes.

Parnet: With you being ill, tired, and old, [Deleuze laughs] distinguishing the three things, it's sometimes difficult for people around you, who are less elderly, less ill, less tired, than you... your children, your wife.

Deleuze: For the children, the children, there's not much problem. There could have been if they were younger, but now since they're big enough to live on their own, and I'm not a burden for them, I don't think I create a huge problem, except perhaps in terms of affection, like them saying, "oh, he really looks too tired." But still, I don't think there's any acute problem for the children. As for Fanny, I don't think it's a problem either, although it could be, I don't know. It's quite difficult to guess what someone that one loves might have done in another life. I guess that Fanny would have liked to travel more, yes, ok... She surely hasn't traveled like she might have wanted to, but I wonder what she would have discovered so different if she had traveled. She, and you too, have a strong literary background, so she was able to find splendid things through reading novels, and that largely equals traveling. Certainly, there are problems, but I would say that they are beyond my understanding.

Parnet: To finish up, your projects... Like you undertake the one, your next book, on the history of literature, or the final book, *What Is Philosophy?*, what do you find enjoyable in undertaking these as an old man because earlier you said that perhaps you won't finish them, but that there is something amusing in them?

Deleuze: Ah, that's something quite marvelous, you know, there is a whole evolution, and when one is old, one has a certain idea of what one hopes to do that becomes increasingly pure, I mean, that becomes more and more purified (*épuré*). I conceive of the famous lines of Japanese sketch artists

(*dessinateurs*), these lines that are so pure and then there is nothing, nothing but little lines. That's how I conceive of an old man's project, something that would be so pure, so nothing, and at the same time, it would be everything, marvelous. I mean this is reaching a sobriety, something that can only come late in life.⁵¹

For example, *What is Philosophy?*, my research on it: first, it's quite enjoyable (*très gai*) at my age to feel like I know the answer, and like I'm the only one to know, as if I got on a bus, nobody else there could know what philosophy is. [Parnet laughs] All of this, for me, is very enjoyable. Perhaps I could have created a book on *What is Philosophy?* thirty years ago, I know that it would have been a very, very different book from the way I conceive it now. To arrive at a kind of sobriety such that... whether I succeed or not – I know that it's now that I have to conceive of this, that before I couldn't have done it, but now I see myself able to do it, to do something, in any case, that doesn't resemble ... ok...

[Deleuze does not finish the sentence; freeze frame of Deleuze, end of Part 2, credits roll]

Notes

L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, avec Claire Parnet

Directed by Pierre-André Boutang (1996)

Translation & Notes: Charles J. Stivale

“N as in Neurology” [Third tape begins]

Parnet: So, “N” is neurology and the brain.

Deleuze [pausing]: Yes, it's very difficult, neurology. It's true that neurology has always fascinated me, but why? It's the question, what happens in someone's head when he/she has an idea? I prefer, “when there's an idea,” because when there are no ideas, it works like a pinball machine. So, what happens? How does it communicate inside the head? Before people start talking about communication, etc., they ought to see how it communicates inside the head. Or in the head of an idiot... I mean, it's the same thing as well, someone who has an idea or an idiot... In any case, they don't proceed along pre-formed paths and by ready-made associations.

And so, what happens? If only we knew, it seems to me that we'd understand everything. That interests me greatly, for example... And the solutions must be extremely varied... What I mean is: two neural extremities in the brain can very well establish contact. That's even what are called electrical processes in the synapses. And then there are other cases that are much more complex perhaps, where it's discontinuous and there's a gap that must be jumped. It seems to me that the brain is full of fissures (*fentes*), and that jumping occurs, and that this jumping happens in a probabilistic regime, that there are relations of probability between two linkages (*enchaînements*), that all this is much more uncertain, very, very uncertain, that these communications inside a brain are fundamentally uncertain, regulated by laws of probability. What makes me think about something? Someone might tell me that I'm inventing nothing, that it's the old question of associations of ideas.⁵¹

[Change of cassette, “15-A”]

Deleuze: So, one would almost have to wonder... For example, when a concept is given or a work of art is contemplated, looked at, one would almost have to try to sketch a cerebral map, to what that [contemplation] would correspond, what the continuous communications would be, what the discontinuous communications would be, from one point to another. Something has impressed me greatly -- and perhaps this might lead to what you were looking for -- what has impressed me greatly is a story that physicists use quite a bit, called the “baker's transformation”: taking a segment of dough to knead it, you stretch it out into a rectangle, you fold it back over, you stretch it out again, etc. etc., you make a number of transformations, and at the limit of x transformations, two completely contiguous points are necessarily located at a great distance from each other. And there are distant points that, as a result of x transformations, are found to be quite contiguous.

I tell myself, when one looks for something in one's head, aren't there these types of mixing (*brassage*)? Aren't there two points that at a particular moment, in a particular state of my idea, I cannot see how to associate them, make them communicate, and as a result of numerous transformations, I discover them side by side? So, I would almost say, between a concept and a work of art, that is, between a mental product and a cerebral mechanism, there are some extremely exciting similarities. So it seems to me that with the questions, how does one think? or what does thinking

mean?, the question is that thinking and the brain are absolutely intertwined. I mean, I believe more in the future of molecular biology of the brain than in the future of information science or of any theory of communication.⁵¹

Parnet: You have always given a special place to nineteenth century psychiatry that extensively addressed neurology and the science of the brain in relation to psychoanalysis, and you have given a priority to psychiatry over psychoanalysis precisely for psychiatry's attention to neurology. So, is that still the case?

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, completely. As I said earlier, there is also a relationship with the pharmacy, the possible action of drugs on the brain and the cerebral structures that can be located on a molecular level, in cases of schizophrenia. For me, these aspects appear to have a more certain future than mentalist psychiatry (*la psychiatrie spiritualiste*).

Parnet: That leads to a methodological question because it's no secret that to open yourself to science, you are rather self-taught (*autodidacte*), when you read a neurobiological or a scientific journal. Also, you're not very good in math, as opposed to some philosophers you've studied -- Bergson had a degree in math; Spinoza, strong in math; Leibniz, no need to say, very strong in math -- so, how do you manage to read? When you have an idea and need something that interests you, and when you necessarily don't understand it at all, how do you manage?

Deleuze: Well, already there's something that gives me great comfort: I am firmly persuaded in the possibility of several readings of a same thing, and already in philosophy – this I believe in strongly - - one need not be a philosopher to read philosophy. Not only is philosophy open to two readings, philosophy *needs* two readings at the same time. A non-philosophical reading of philosophy is absolutely necessary, without which there would be no beauty in philosophy. That is, with non-specialists reading philosophy, this non-philosophical reading of philosophy lacks nothing, it is entirely adequate. It's simply a reading. Perhaps that might not work for all philosophers. I have trouble seeing the possibility of a non-philosophical reading of Kant, for example. But in Spinoza, I mean, it's not at all impossible that a farmer could read Spinoza, it's not at all impossible that a storekeeper could read Spinoza...

Parnet: Nietzsche...

Deleuze: Nietzsche, that goes even more without saying, all the philosophers that I admire are like that.

So, there is no need to understand, since understanding is a certain level of reading. It's a little like if you said to me, to appreciate, for example, a painting by Gauguin or a great painting, you must have expertise in painting (*il faut s'y connaître*). Of course, some knowledge is necessary, but there are also extraordinary emotions, extraordinarily authentic, extraordinarily pure, extraordinarily violent, within a total ignorance of painting. For me, it's entirely obvious that someone can take in a painting like a thunderbolt and not know a thing about the painting itself. Similarly, someone can be overwhelmed with emotion by music or by a particular musical work without knowing a word. For example, I am very moved by [Alban Berg's operas] *Lulu* or by *Wozzeck*, without mentioning [Berg's] *Concerto to the Memory of an Angel*, that moves me perhaps above everything else in the world. Fine.⁵¹

So, I know it's better to have a competent perception, but I still maintain that everything that counts in the world in the realm of the mind is open to a double reading, provided that the double

reading is not something done randomly as a self-taught person (*autodidacte*). Rather, it's something that one undertakes starting from one's problems taken from elsewhere. I mean that it's on the basis of being a philosopher that I have a non-musical perception of music, which makes music extraordinarily thrilling for me. Similarly, it's on the basis of being a musician, a painter, this or that, that one can undertake a non-philosophical reading of philosophy. If this second reading (which is not second) did not occur, if there weren't these two, simultaneous readings, it's like both wings on a bird, this need for two lectures simultaneously. Moreover, even a philosopher must learn to read a great philosopher non-philosophically. The typical example for me is yet again Spinoza: having Spinoza in paperback, and reading him like that, for me, creates as much emotion as a great musical work. And in a way, understanding is not even remotely the point since in the courses that I used to give, it was so clear that sometimes the students understood, sometimes they did not, and we are all like that with a book, sometimes understanding, sometimes not.

So, to come back to your question on science, I think it's true, and as a result, to some extent, one is always at the extreme point (*pointe*) of one's ignorance, which is exactly where one must settle in (*s'installer*). One must settle in at the extreme point of one's knowledge or one's ignorance, which is the same thing, in order to have something to say. If I wait to know what I am going to write -- literally, if I wait to know what I am talking about --, then I would always have to wait because what I would say would have no interest. If I do not run a risk, if I settle in also and speak with a scholarly air on something I don't know, then this is another example without interest. But I am speaking about this very border between knowing and non-knowing: it's there that one must settle in to have something to say.

In science, for me, it's the same, and the confirmation I have found is that I've always had great relations with scientists. They never took me to be a scientist, they don't think I understand a whole lot, but they tell me that it works -- well, a few anyway tell me that it works... You see, I remain open to echoes, for lack of a better word. If I give an example... I'll try to give a simple example: a painter that I like greatly is Delaunay, and what -- I try to sum this up in a formula -- what does Delaunay do? He observed something quite astounding, and as I say this, it takes us back to the start: what is it to have an idea? What is Delaunay's idea? His idea is that light forms figures itself, there are figures of light... It's quite innovative, although perhaps someone long ago had this particular idea already...

[Change of cassette, 16]

Deleuze: What appears in Delaunay's thought is this creation of figures that are figures formed by light, light figures. He paints light figures, and not -- which is quite different -- aspects that light takes on when it meets an object. This is how Delaunay detaches himself from all objects, with the result of creating paintings no longer with any objects at all. I recall having read some very beautiful things by Delaunay: he says, when he judges cubism severely, Delaunay says that Cézanne succeeded in breaking the object, breaking the fruit bowl (*compotier*), and that the cubists spent their time hoping to glue it back together. So, regarding the elimination of objects, for rigid and geometric figures, Delaunay substitutes figures of pure light. That's something, a pictorial event, a Delaunay-event.⁵¹

Now, I don't know the dates, but that doesn't matter... There is a way or an aspect of relativity, of the theory of relativity, and I know just enough -- one need not know much, it's only being self-taught (*autodidacte*) that's dangerous, but one does not need to know a whole lot. I only know something about an aspect of relativity, which is this: instead of having subjected lines of light, lines followed by light (*lignes suivies par lumière*) to geometric lines, belonging to the experiments of [Albert] Michelson, there's a total reversal. Now lines of light will condition geometric lines. This is a considerable reversal from a scientific perspective, which will change everything since the line

of light no longer has the constancy of the geometric line, and everything is changed. I'm not saying that's [the theory] in its entirety, it's this aspect of relativity that best corresponds to Michelson's experiments. I don't mean to say that Delaunay applies relativity; I would celebrate the encounter between a pictorial undertaking and a scientific undertaking that should normally not be in relation with each other.⁵¹

I was saying something similar... I select another example: I know only that Riemannian spaces – it's really beyond me (*ça me dépasse*), I don't know much in detail – I know just enough to know that it's a space constructed piece by piece, and in which the connections between pieces are not pre-determined. But for completely different reasons, I need a spatial concept for the parts in which there aren't perfect connections and that aren't pre-determined. *I need this (j'en ai besoin, moi)!* I'm not going to spend five years of my life trying to understand Riemann, because at the end of five years, I will not have made any progress with my philosophical concept. And I go to the movies, and I see a strange kind of space that everyone knows as being the use of space in Bresson's films, in which space is rarely global, where space is constructed piece by piece. One sees little pieces of space – for example, a section of a cell, in the [*Un*] *Condamné à mort [s'est échappé]*– the cell, in my vague recollection, is never seen in its entirety, but the cell is a tiny space. I am not even talking about the Gare de Lyon in *Pickpocket*, where it's incredible. These are little pieces of space that join up, the links not being pre-determined, and why? It's because they will be manual, hence the importance of hands for Bresson. It's the hand that moves (*c'est la main qui va*). Indeed, in *The Pickpocket*, it's the speed with which the stolen object is passed from one hand to the other that will determine the connections of little spaces. I do not mean either that Bresson is applying Riemannian spaces. I say, well, that an encounter can occur between a philosophical concept, a scientific notion, and an aesthetic percept. So that's quite perfect.⁵¹

I say that, in science, I believe I know just enough to evaluate encounters. If I knew more, I'd do science, I wouldn't be doing philosophy, there you are. So, at the limit, I speak well about something I don't know, but I speak of what I don't know as a function of what I know. All of this is a question of tact, no point in kidding about it, no point in adopting a knowledgeable air when one doesn't know. But once again, just as I have had encounters with painters, they were the most beautiful days of my life. I had a certain encounter -- not physical encounters, but in what I write --, I have had encounters with painters. The greatest of them was [Simon] Hantaï. Hantaï told me, "Yes, there is something" – it wasn't on the level of compliments, Hantaï is not someone who is going to make compliments to someone like me, we don't even know each other – there is something that "passes" [between us]. What about my encounter with Carmelo Bene [in *Superpositions*]? I never did any theater, I have never understood anything about theater, but I have to believe that something important "passed" there as well.⁵¹ There are scientists with whom these things work too. I know some mathematicians who, when they were kind enough to read what I have written, said that, for them, what [I was] doing is absolutely coherent (*ça colle absolument*).

Now, this is going badly since I seem to be taking on an air of completely despicable self-satisfaction, but it's in order to answer the question. For me, the question is not whether or not I know a lot of science, nor whether I am capable of learning a lot of it. The important thing is not to make stupid statements (*bêtises*)... It's to establish echoes, these phenomena of echoes between a concept, a percept, a function -- since, for me, the sciences do not proceed by concepts, but by functions – a function. From this perspective, I needed Riemannian spaces, yes, I know they exist, I do not know exactly what they are, but that's enough.⁵¹

[Change of cassette]

"O as in Opera"

Parnet: So, “O” is “Opera,” and as we have just learned, this heading is a bit of a joke since, other than *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* by Berg, it's safe to say that opera is not one of your activities or interests. You can speak of the exception of Berg, and in contrast to Foucault or [François] Châtelet who liked Italian opera, you never really listened to music or particularly to opera. What interested you more was the popular song, particularly Edith Piaf... You have a great passion for Edith Piaf. So I'd like you to talk a bit about this.

Deleuze: You are being a bit severe in saying that. First, I listened to music quite a bit at a particular time, a long time ago. Then, I stopped because I told myself, it's not possible, it's not possible, it's an abyss, it takes too much time, one has to have time, I don't have the time, I have too much to do – I'm not talking about social tasks, but my desire to write things --, I just don't have the time to listen to music, or listen to enough of it.

Parnet: Well, for example, Châtelet worked while listening to opera...

Deleuze: Well, yes, that's one method. I couldn't do that. He listened to opera, yes, but I'm not so sure that he listened to opera while working, perhaps. When he entertained people at his home, that I understand. That sometimes covered over what people were saying when he'd had enough. But for me, that's not how it works.⁵¹

So, I would prefer rather to turn the question more in my own favor if you transformed it into: what is it that creates a community between a popular song and a great musical work of art? That's a subject that I find fascinating. The case of Edith Piaf, for example: I consider her to be a great *chanteuse*, with an extraordinary voice. Moreover, she has this way of singing off-key and then constantly catching the false note and making it right, this kind of system in imbalance that constantly is catching and making itself right. For me, this seems to be the case in any style. This is something I like a lot, really a lot, because it's the question I pose about everything, on the level of the popular song, something I like a lot: what does it bring that is original (*de nouveau*)?

[Change of cassette]

Deleuze: It's especially in the productions above all that the question arises: what does it bring that's original? If it's been done 10 times, 100, times, maybe even done quite well, indeed I understand then what Robbe-Grillet said: Balzac is obviously a great genius, but what interest is there in creating novels today like Balzac created them? Moreover, that [practice] sullies Balzac's novels, and that's how it is in everything.⁵¹

What I found particularly moving in Piaf was that she introduced something original in relation to the preceding generation, in relation to Fréhel and... and the other great [singer]...

Parnet: Damia...

Deleuze: ... in relation to Fréhel et Damia. [It's] what [Piaf] brought that was original, even in the outfit (*la tenue*) of the *chanteuse*, and in Piaf's voice. I was extremely sensitive to Piaf's voice.⁵¹

In more modern singers, one has to think – to understand what I mean – one has to think about [Charles] Trenet. What was innovative in Trenet's songs, quite literally, one had never heard anyone sing like him, singing in that manner. So, I am insisting strongly on this point: for philosophy, for painting, for everything, for art, whether it's the popular song or the rest, or sports even – we'll see this when we talk about sports -- the question is exactly the same, what's happening

that's innovative? If one interprets that in the sense of fashion – no, it's just the opposite. What's innovative is something that's not fashionable, perhaps it will become so, but it's not fashionable since people don't expect it, by definition, people don't expect it, something that makes people... that stupefies them. When Trenet was singing well, people said he was crazy. Today, that no longer seems crazy to us, but one can comment eternally that he was crazy, and in some ways, he remained so. Piaf appeared grandiose to us all.

Parnet: And Claude François, you admired him a lot too?

Deleuze: Claude François, right or wrong, I don't know, but Claude François also seemed to bring something innovative because... There are a lot of them, I'm not going to cite them all. It's really sad because people have sung like that ten times, a hundred times, thousands of times, and furthermore, they don't have the least bit of voice, and they try to discover nothing. That's the same thing, to introduce something innovative and to try to discover something. For Piaf, what was she trying to discover, my God? All that I can say about weak health and strong life, what she saw in life, the force of life, and what broke her, etc., she is the very example, we could very well insert the example of Edith Piaf every time into what we said earlier. [See above, "M as in *Maladie*" (Illness)]

I was receptive to Claude François because he was trying to discover something, he was looking for an original kind of show (*spectacle*), a song-show (*un spectacle-chanson*), he invented this kind of danced song, that obviously implied using playback. So much the better or so much the worse (*tant pis ou tant mieux*), that also allowed him to begin research into sound. To the very end, François was dissatisfied with one thing, the texts [of his songs] that were stupid, and that still counts in songs. His texts were weak, and he never stopped trying to arrange his texts so he might achieve greater textual qualities, like "Alexandrie, Alexandra," a good song.

So today, I am not very familiar with music, but when I turn on the t.v. – it's the right of someone who's retired, to turn on the t.v. when I'm tired -- I can say that the more channels there are, the more they look alike, and the more nil they become, a radical nullity. The regime of competition, competing with each other for everything whatsoever, produces the same, eternal nullity, that's what competition is, and the effort to know what will make the listener turn here to listen instead of there, it's frightening, frightening, the way they What I hear there can't even be called a song (*chant*), since the voice doesn't even exist, no one has the slightest voice.

But really, let's not complain. What I mean is, what they all want is this kind of domain that would be treated doubly by the popular song and by music. And what is this? It's in this that, with Félix, I feel like we did some good work because here, well, I could say if necessary, if someone asked me, "what philosophical concept have you produced since you are always talking about creating philosophical concepts?", we at least created a very important philosophical concept, the concept of the ritornello (*ritournelle*) [a.k.a. the refrain], and the ritornello is, for me, this point in common [between the popular song and music].

Because what is it? Let's say, the ritornello is a little tune, "tra-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la." When do I say "tra-la-la?" I am doing philosophy here, I'm doing philosophy in asking when do I sing "tra-la-la," when do I sing to myself? I sing to myself on three occasions: I sing to myself when I am moving about in my territory, wiping off my furniture, radio playing in the background, that is, when I am in my home (*chez moi*). Then, I sing to myself when I am not at home and I am trying to reach home (*regagner le chez moi*), at nightfall, at the hour of agony, I'm seeking my way, and I give myself courage by singing, "tra-la-la," I'm going toward my home. And then, I sing to myself when I say "farewell, I am leaving, and I will carry you with me in my heart," it's a popular song, [Deleuze softly sings these words] when I am leaving home to go somewhere else, and to go where? In other words, for me, the ritornello is absolutely linked -- which takes the discussion back to "A - Animal" -

- to the problem of the territory and of exiting or entering the territory, that is, to the problem of deterritorialization. I return to my territory, or I try, or I deterritorialize myself, that is, I leave, I leave my territory.⁵¹

You ask, what relation does this have with music? One has to make headway in creating a concept, that's why I invoke the image of the brain: taking my brain at this moment as an example, I suddenly say to myself, "the *lied*." What is a *lied*? That's what it has always been: It will always have been the voice as a chant that would rise from its position in relation to the territory. My territory, the territory I no longer have, the territory that I am trying to reach again, that's what a *lied* is. Whether it's Schumann or Schubert, that's what it is fundamentally. And I believe that's what affect is. When I was saying earlier that music is the history of becomings and the potentials of becomings, it was something of this sort [that I meant] ... It could be great, or it could mediocre, but...⁵¹

What is truly great music? For me, it appears as an artistic operation of music. They start from ritornellos, and... I don't know, I am talking even about the most abstract musicians. I believe that each musician has his/her kinds of ritornellos. They start from little tunes, they start from little ritornellos. We must [look at] Vinteuil and Proust [in *A la recherche du temps perdu*], three notes then two, there's a little ritornello at the basis of all Vinteuil, at the basis of the septet, it's a ritornello.⁵¹ One must find in music, under music, it's something incredible.

So, what happens? A great musician, on the one hand, it's not ritornellos that he/she places one after the other, but ritornellos that will melt into an even more profound ritornello. This is all ritornellos of territories, of one particular territory or another particular territory that will become organized in the heart of an immense ritornello, which is a cosmic ritornello, in fact! Everything that Stockhausen says about music and the cosmos, this whole way of returning to themes that were current in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance – I am quite in favor of this kind of idea that music has a relationship with the cosmos...⁵¹

So, here is a musician that I admire greatly and who greatly affects me, Mahler. What is his *Song of the Earth*? For me, one can't say it better. This is perpetually like elements in genesis, in which there is perpetually a little ritornello sometimes based on two cow bells.

[Change of cassette]

Deleuze: I find extraordinarily moving in Mahler's works the way that all the little ritornellos, which are already musical works of genius -- tavern ritornellos, shepherd ritornellos, etc. -- the way they achieve a composition in a kind of great ritornello that will become the *Song of the Earth*. If we needed yet another example, I would say Bartók is an immensely great musician, a very great genius. I admire how he connects and reconnects local ritornellos, ritornellos of national minorities, etc., and collects them in a work that has not yet ceased to be explored.⁵¹

And I think that music is a bit... Yes, to link it to painting, it's exactly the same thing. When Klee says the painter does "not render the visible, but renders visible," implied here are forces that are not visible, and for a musician, it's the same thing: he renders audible forces that are not audible.⁵¹ He doesn't render the audible, he makes audible something that hasn't yet been, he makes audible the music of the earth, he makes audible the music in which he invents, almost exactly like the philosopher: he renders thinkable forces that are not thinkable, that are in nature rather raw, rather brutal. I mean it's this communion of little ritornellos with the great ritornello that, for me, defines music, something I find very simple. It's music's potential, its potential to deliver a truly cosmic level, as if stars began singing a little tune of a cow bell, a little shepherd's tune. Or, it might be the reverse, the cow bells that are suddenly elevated to the state of celestial sounds, or of infernal sounds.

Parnet: Nonetheless, it seems to me still, and I can't explain exactly why, with all you tell me, with all this musical erudition, that what you are looking for in music remains visual, the ritornello still belongs to the visual domain. You seem to be engaging the visual, much more... Ok, I do understand the extent to which the audible is linked to cosmic forces like the visual, but you go to no concerts, it's something that bothers you, you do not listen to music, you go to art exhibits at least once a week, and you have your habitual practice.

Deleuze: It's from a lack of possibilities and a lack of time because... I can only give you one answer. One single thing interests me fundamentally in literature, it's style. Style, for me, is the pure auditory (*l'auditif pur*), the pure auditory. I wouldn't make the distinction you do between the visual... It is true that I rarely go to concerts because it's more complicated now reserving in advance. These are all practical details of life, whereas when there's an art exhibit, no reservations are needed. But each time I went to a concert, I found it too long since I have very little receptivity, but I always felt deep emotions. I'm not sure you are completely wrong, but I think you might be mistaken, that it's not completely true. In any case, I know that music gives me emotions... Simply, talking about music is even more difficult than speaking of painting. It's nearly the highest point (*le sommet*), speaking about music.

Parnet: Nearly all philosophers.... Well, there are a lot of philosophers who spoke about music.

Deleuze [interrupting]: But style is sonorous, not visual, and I'm only interested in sonority at that level.

Parnet: Music is immediately connected to philosophy, that is, lots of philosophers spoke about music, for example, Jankelevitch...

Deleuze: Yes, yes, that's true...

Parnet: ... but other than Merleau-Ponty, there are few philosophers who spoke about painting.

Deleuze: Only a few? You think so? I don't know...

Parnet: Well, I admit, I'm not certain... but music, Barthes talked about it, Jankelevitch spoke about it.

Deleuze [reflecting]: Yes, he spoke about it very well.

Parnet: Even Foucault spoke about music.

Deleuze: Who?

Parnet: Foucault.

Deleuze [making a dismissive gesture]: Oh, Foucault didn't talk about music, it was a secret for him.

Parnet: Yes, it was a secret, he preferred talking about Manet...

Deleuze: His relations with music were completely a secret.

Parnet: But he was very close to certain musicians.

Deleuze [clearly unwilling to discuss this]: Yes, yes, but those are all secrets that Foucault did not discuss.

Parnet: Well, he would travel to Bayreuth, he was very close to the musical world, even if a secret –

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes... yes...

Parnet [The voice of the producer is faintly audible, suggesting that she continue with the name of Berg]: And the exception of [Alban] Berg, as Pierre-André was suggesting, what we passed by unfortunately, why this cry...?

Deleuze: Yes, where does this come from? This is also connected to [the reason] why one is devoted to some [topic]. I don't know why, Berg, I don't know. I discovered at the same time [as Berg] some musical pieces for orchestras by... [as he has done on occasion throughout the interviews, Deleuze here has trouble swallowing, stops and says] – Oh, listen... You see what an old man is [motions to his throat], you can't find names -- the orchestra pieces by his master...

Parnet: Schoenberg.

Deleuze: ... by Schoenberg. I recall that at that moment, not too long ago, putting on these orchestra pieces fifteen times in a row, fifteen times in a row, it was, and I recognized the moments that overwhelmed me. It was then, at the same time as I found Berg, and he was someone to whom I could listen all day long. Why? I see this also being a question of a relationship to the earth. Mahler, I only came to know much later, it's the music of the earth. Take this up in the works of very old musicians, there it's fully a relationship of music and earth, but that music might be encompassed in the earth to such an extent, nonetheless, as it is in Berg's and Mahler's works, I found this to be quite overwhelming. Making, truly making sonorous the forces of the earth, that's what [Berg's] *Wozzeck* is for me. It's a great text since it's the music of the earth, a great work.

Parnet: There are two cries in it, you liked very much the cry of Marie and the cry of...

Deleuze: Oh, yes, for me, there is such a relation between the song (*chant*) and cry that, in fact, this whole school [of music] was able to reintroduce as a problem. But the two cries there, I never get tired of these two cries, the horizontal cry that floats along the earth in *Wozzeck*, and the completely vertical cry of the countess – countess, or baroness, I don't recall –

Parnet: Countess...

Deleuze: ...of the countess in [Berg's] *Lulu* -- these are such summits of cries. All of that interests me as well because in philosophy, there are songs and cries. Concepts are veritable songs in philosophy, and then, there are cries of philosophy. Suddenly Aristotle [says]: you have to stop! Or another says, no, I'll never stop! Spinoza: what can a body do? (*qu'est-ce que peut un corps?*) We don't even know what a body can do! Those are cries. So, the relation cry-song or concept-affect is somewhat the same. It's valid (*bon*) for me, it's something that moves me.⁵¹

[Third interview session; Deleuze in open-collared shirt, new glasses]

"P as in Professor"

Parnet: So, "P" is "Professor." [*Deleuze makes a face, like a grimace*] You are 64 years of age, and you have spent nearly 40 as a professor, first in French high schools (*lycées*), then in the university. And so this year, the first time [1988-1989], you plan your weeks without looking forward to teaching courses. So, first, do you miss your courses since you've said that you taught your courses with passion, so I wonder if you miss no longer doing them?

Deleuze: No, not at all, not at all. It's true that [courses] were my life, a very important part of my life. I really, deeply enjoyed teaching my courses. But when my retirement arrived, I was quite happy since I was less inclined to meet my courses.

The question of courses is quite simple: I believe that courses are like -- there are equivalents in other domains -- a course is something requiring an enormous amount of preparation. I mean, it nearly corresponds to a recipe, like in so many activities: if you want five, ten minutes at most, of inspiration, one has to prepare so very much (*beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup*), [*Pause*] to have this moment of... If you don't, well... And so, I began to see that the more I continued in this that -- I always did that, I liked doing that a lot, I prepared a lot in order to reach these moments of inspiration -- and the more I continued, the longer I had to prepare only to have my inspiration gradually diminished. So it was about time, and it didn't make me happy, not at all, since the courses were something I greatly enjoyed, but they became something I needed less. Now I have my writing which poses other kinds of problems, but I have no regrets, but I did love teaching enormously, yes.

Parnet: And, for example, when you say, "prepare a lot," how much preparation time was it?

Deleuze: It's like anything, there are rehearsals (*des répétitions*) for a class, one rehearses. It's like in theater, in popular songs (*chansonnettes*), there are rehearsals, and if one hasn't rehearsed enough, there's no inspiration. In a course, it means having moments of inspiration, without which the course means nothing.

Parnet: You don't mean that you rehearsed in front of your mirror?

Deleuze: Of course not; each activity has its modes of inspiration. But there is no other word than reworking mentally (*se mettre dans la tête*) ... Reworking mentally and managing to find that what one's saying is interesting. It's obvious that if the speaker (*le monsieur*) doesn't even find what he's saying of interest, -- and that doesn't go without saying, finding that what one is saying is interesting, impassioned. And this isn't a form of vanity, it's not finding oneself passionate and interesting, it's the subject matter that one is treating and handling that one has to find passionate. And to do so, one sometimes has to drive oneself, truly whip oneself hard (*se donner parfois de véritables coups de fouet*). The question isn't whether it's interesting, but of getting oneself stimulated (*se monter soi-même*) to the point that one is able to speak about something with enthusiasm: that's what rehearsing is.

So, I needed that less, undoubtedly. And then courses are something quite special, it's a cube, a course is: it's a space-time, and so many things happen in a course. I like lectures much less, I never liked lectures because a lecture is too small a space-time, whereas a course is something that

stretches out from one week to the next. It's a space and a very, very special temporality. It has successive steps (*une suite*). It's not that one can do over or catch up (*ratrapper*) when something didn't go well, but there's an internal development in a course. And the people change from week to week, and the audience for a course is quite exciting.

Parnet: Here, we are going to start with the beginning which was first as a *lycée* professor. Do you have good memories of the *lycée*?

Deleuze: Well, yes, [Deleuze laughs] because that doesn't mean anything since it occurred at a time when the *lycée* was not at all what the *lycée* has become. I understand... I think of young professors today who are beaten down in the *lycées*. I was a *lycée* professor shortly after the Liberation, when it was completely different.

Parnet: Where were you?

Deleuze: I was in two provincial cities, one I liked a lot, one I liked less. Amiens was the one I liked because it was a very free city, very open, whereas Orléans was much more severe. This was still a period when a philosophy professor was treated with a lot of generosity, he tended to be forgiven a lot since he was a bit like the madman, the village idiot. And usually, he could do whatever he wanted. I taught my students using a musical saw, since I had taken it up at the time, and everyone found it quite normal. Nowadays, I think that would no longer be possible in the *lycées*.

Parnet [laughing]: What did you use the musical saw to explain to them? How did that function in your course?

Deleuze: I taught them curves, because the saw is a thing that, as you know, one had to curve the saw in order to obtain the sound from the curve, and these were quite moving curves, something that interested them. [Deleuze breaks out laughing]

Parnet: Already it was about the infinite variation...

Deleuze [laughing]: Yes, but I didn't only do that, I taught the baccalaureate program, I was a very conscientious professor. [Deleuze laughs]

Parnet: It was there that you met [Jean] Poperen, I think.⁵¹

Deleuze: Yes, I knew Poperen quite well, but he traveled more than me, and stayed very little in Amiens. He had a little suitcase and big alarm clock because he didn't like watches, and each day he went out and took his clock to class. I found him very charming.

Parnet: And who were your friends in the *lycée* professors' lounge, because when one is a student ...?

Deleuze: The gymnasts, I really liked the gymnastics professors a lot, but I don't recall very much. The professors' lounge in the *lycée* must have changed a lot today as well, it was quite something.

Parnet: As a student, one imagines the professors' lounge as a very oppressive place, mysterious and oppressive.

Deleuze: No, it's the time when... there are all sorts of people there, solemn or jokers. But in fact, I didn't go there much.

Parnet: After Amiens and Orleans, you were in Paris at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in the preparatory course [Deleuze says, yes, yes, yes, as Parnet reviews this], so can you recall any students you had that were remarkable or who didn't amount to much?

Deleuze: Oh, students who didn't amount to much? I don't know

Parnet: Or who amounted to something?

Deleuze: Who amounted to something? I don't really recall any longer... Yes, I do recall them. To my knowledge, they became professors, but none that I know of who became government ministers. Someone became a police officer, [laughing] but no, really there were none very special, they all went their own way, they were quite fine. [Deleuze smiles]

Parnet: Then there were the Sorbonne years of which one gets the impression that they correspond to your history of philosophy years. And then, after [the Sorbonne], Vincennes which was an entirely crucial and determining experience after the Sorbonne. Well, I am jumping here since Lyon came after the Sorbonne. [Deleuze says "oui, oui, oui, oui" at this rectification] First, were you happy to return to being a university professor after being in the *lycée*?

Deleuze: "Happy, happy" – it isn't really an appropriate word in this case, it was simply a normal career. I had left the *lycée*; if I had gone back to the *lycée*, it wouldn't have been dramatic, it just would have been abnormal, a setback, so the way things worked out was normal, normal, no problem, and I have nothing to say about it.

Parnet: Well, for example, the university courses are differently prepared in relation to the *lycée* courses, I imagine.

Deleuze: Not for me, not at all.

Parnet: For you, it was the same.

Deleuze: Exactly the same, I always did my courses the same way.

Parnet [apparently astonished]: Were your *lycée* preparations as intense as your university preparations?

Deleuze: Of course, of course, of course. In any case, one has to be absolutely imbued [with the material], one has to love what one is talking about, and that doesn't go all by itself, so one has to rehearse, prepare, go over things mentally, one has to find a gimmick. It's quite amusing that one has to find something like a door that one can't pass through from just any position.

Boutang: We're going to move on...

[Change of cassette]

Parnet [pressing this same point]: So, you prepared your courses exactly the same way at the *lycée* and at the university. It was prepared equally at the *lycée* as it was later at the university.

Deleuze: There was no difference in nature at all between the two kinds of courses. Yes, the same.

Parnet: Since we are discussing your university work, you can talk about your doctoral thesis. When did you defend it?⁵¹

Deleuze: I had already written several books before [my defense], I believe, in order not to do it, that is, it's a frequent reaction. So, I worked enormously hard, and at one point, I realized I had to have the thesis, that I had to do this, that it was quite urgent. So, I made a maximum effort, and finally I presented it among one of the very first defenses following May '68.

Parnet: In 1969?

Deleuze: In 1969? Yes, it must have been in 1969, among the very first [candidates].⁵¹ This created a very privileged situation for me because the committee was obsessed with only one thing, how to arrange the defense in order to avoid the student groups (*bandes*) roving through the Sorbonne. They were quite afraid, since it was right after the return to school following the May '68 events, so they didn't know what would happen. I recall the chairman telling me, "Ok, there are two possibilities: either we have your defense on the ground floor, where there is one advantage, there are two exits [Deleuze laughs] so we could get out quickly, the committee, but the disadvantage is that, since it's on the ground floor, that's where the students are more likely to be roving around. Or we could go to the second floor, with the advantage that students go upstairs less frequently, but the disadvantage of only one entrance and one exit, so if something were to happen, we might not be able to get out." So [the result was] that, when I defended my thesis, I could never meet the gaze of the committee members since they were all staring at the door [Deleuze laughs] to see if someone was going to come in, to see if the students were coming in.

Parnet: Who was the committee chairman?

Deleuze: Ah, I'm not saying his name, it's a secret.

Parnet: I could make you confess.

Deleuze: No, especially given the chairman's agony at the time, and also he was very charming. Curiously, the chairman was more upset than I was, and it's rare for a committee to be more disturbed about the defense than the candidate in this completely exceptional situation.

Parnet: You were probably better known (*célèbre*) at that point than three-fourths of the committee members.

Deleuze: Oh, no, I wasn't all that well known.

Parnet: The defense was on *Difference and Repetition*.

Deleuze: Yes.

Parnet: Well, you were already very well known for your works on Proust and Nietzsche. [Here Deleuze makes a kind of growling noise as his only response, visibly uncomfortable, then shrugs his shoulders at Parnet] ... So, we can move on to Vincennes, unless you have something to say about Lyon after the Sorbonne...

Deleuze: No, no, no, no, no... Vincennes, Vincennes, Vincennes, there was indeed a change, you are right, not in nature of the preparation of my courses, in what I call my preparation, my rehearsals for a course, nor in the style of a course. In fact, from Vincennes onward, I no longer had a student audience. This was what was so splendid about Vincennes and not generalized in all the universities that were getting back to normal. At Vincennes, at least in philosophy -- I don't know if it was true for all of Vincennes --, there was a completely new kind of audience, which was no longer made up of students, which was a mixture of all ages, people with all kinds of professional activities, including psychiatric hospitals, even patients. It was perhaps the most colorful (*bigarré*) audience and finding a mysterious unity at Vincennes. That is, it was at once the most diverse and the most coherent as a function of, even because of, Vincennes. Vincennes gave to this disparate crowd a kind of unity. And for me, it was an audience... Later, had I been appointed elsewhere -- I subsequently spent my whole teaching career at Vincennes -- but had I been forced later to move to another *faculté*, I would have completely lost my bearings. When I visited other schools after that, it seemed like I was traveling back in time for me, of landing back in the middle of the nineteenth century.

So, at Vincennes, I spoke before a mixed audience, young painters, people undergoing psychiatric treatment, musicians, addicts, young architects, people from very different countries, with waves of visitors that changed each year. I recall suddenly 5 or 6 Australians who arrived I don't know why, and the next year they were gone. The Japanese were constantly there, each year, and there were South Americans, Blacks... It was an invaluable (*inappréciable*) audience and a fantastic audience.

Parnet: Because, for the first time, you were speaking to non-philosophers, that is, this practice that you mentioned earlier.

Deleuze: It was, I believe, fully philosophy in its own right (*de la pleine philosophie*) that could, that was addressed equally to philosophers and to non-philosophers, exactly like painting is addressed to painters and non-painters, or music not being limited to music specialists. It's the same music, the same Berg or the same Beethoven addressed equally to people that are not specialists in music and to people who are musicians. For philosophy, for me, philosophy must be strictly the same, it is addressed as much to non-philosophers as to philosophers without changing it. Philosophy, when it's addressed to non-philosophers, that doesn't mean one has to make it simple, no more than in music... One doesn't make Beethoven simpler for non-specialists. It's the same in philosophy, exactly the same. For me, philosophy has always had this double audition, a non-philosophical audition as much as a philosophical one. And if these two don't exist together, then there is nothing. Without these, philosophy would be worth nothing.

Parnet: Now, could you explain a subtle distinction (*une finesse*) for me? In lectures (*conférences*), there are non-philosophers, but you hate lectures.⁵¹

Deleuze: Yes, I hate lectures because they're artificial and also because of the before and the after [of lectures]. Finally, as much as I like teaching courses, which is one way of speaking (*parler*), so I hate speaking equally. Speaking really seems like an activity for... So, lectures -- talking before, talking

after, etc., and all that doesn't possess at all the purity of a course. And then, the lecture, there's a circus quality in lectures -- courses also have their circus quality as well, but at least it's a circus that amuses me and tends to be more involved (*profond*). In a lecture, there is a phony side, and the people who go to them... [Deleuze dismisses them] Well, I don't know, but I just don't like lectures, I don't like giving talks: they're too tense, too much like prostitution (*trop putain*), too stressed, too I don't know. That doesn't seem interesting to me at all.

Parnet: We're going to come back to your venerated audience (*cher public*) at Vincennes that was so mixed, and in those Vincennes years, with madmen, addicts, as you said, who made wild interventions, took the floor, never, never did any of that ever seem to bother you. All of these interventions, and you are in the middle of your course which remained completely masterful/authoritative (*magistral*),⁵¹ and no intervention made during the course ever seemed to be of objectionable value. That is, the masterful aspect of the course always remained. [Deleuze makes his embarrassed "oui, oui, oui" as Parnet is completing her statement]

Deleuze: You need to find another word, since this expression -- *cours magistral* -- is imposed by the university, but we really have to find another word. That is, I see two conceptions of a course: the first is one in which the object of the course is to incite rather immediate reactions from the audience by means of questions and the need for interruptions. This is an entire trend, a particular conception of a course. On the other hand, there is the so-called "magistral" conception, with one formal person (*le monsieur*) who speaks. It's not that I prefer one or the other, I just had no choice, I only had practice with the second form, the so-called "magistral" conception. So, a different word is needed because, almost at the limit, it's more like a kind of musical conception of a course. For me, one doesn't interrupt music, whether good or bad, or one interrupts if it's really bad, but usually one doesn't interrupt music, whereas one can easily interrupt spoken words.

So, what does this musical conception of a course mean? I think it means two things, based on my experience, although I don't mean that this is the best conception, just how I see things. Considering how I know my audiences to be, those that have been my audiences, I tell myself, it occurs frequently that someone doesn't understand at a particular moment, and then there is something like a delayed effect, a bit like in music. At one moment, you don't understand a movement, and then three minutes later, it becomes clear, or ten minutes later: something happened in the meantime. So, with these delayed effects in a course, suddenly a guy listening can certainly understand nothing at one point, and ten minutes later, it becomes clear, there's a kind of retroactive effect. So, if he had already interrupted -- that's why I find interruptions so stupid, or even certain questions people can ask. You ask a question because you're in the midst of not understanding... well, you would be better off waiting.

[Change of cassette]

Parnet: So, these interruptions, you found them stupid because people just didn't wait?

Deleuze: Yes, that's a first aspect of it: what someone doesn't understand, there is the possibility that he'll understand it afterwards. The best students were those who asked questions the following week. I had insisted, but toward the end, I don't know who invented it, it was [the students], they would pass me a little note from one week to the next -- a practice I appreciated -- saying that I had to go back over a point. So, they had waited. "You have to go back over this point" -- I didn't do it, it wasn't important, [Parnet laughs] but there was this kind of communication.

There is a second important point in my conception of a course: since a course I taught was two and one-half hours in length, no one could listen that long. So, for me, a course was always something that was not destined to be understood in its totality. A course is a kind of matter in movement (*matière en mouvement*), really matter in movement, which is how it is musical, and in which each person, each group, or each student at the limit takes from it what suits him/her. A bad course is one that quite literally suits no one, but of course, one can't expect everything to suit just anyone.

So, people have to wait, because at the limit, it is obvious that some people nearly fall asleep, and then, by some mystery, they wake up at the moments that concern them. There is no law that foresees that this or that is going to concern someone or another. It's not even the subjects that are interesting, but something else. A course entails as much emotion as intelligence, and if there is no emotion, then there is nothing in the course, it has no interest.

So, it's not a question of following everything or of listening to everything. It is rather a question of keeping a watch so that you grasp what suits you, what suits you personally. That's why for me a varied audience is so crucially important, because I sense clearly that the centers of interest shift and jump from one person to another, and that creates a kind of splendid fabric, a texture, yes. So there you have it (*Voilà, c'est ça*).

Parnet: Well, that's the audience, but for this "concert", you invented the expression "pop philosophy" and "pop philosopher."

Deleuze: Yes, that's what I meant.

Parnet: Yes, but one could say that your appearance (*allure*), like Foucault's, was something very special, I mean, your hat, your fingernails [extremely long, quite visible in the video, and Deleuze glances at them], your voice. Were you conscious that there was this kind of mythification by your students around this appearance, like they had mythified Foucault, as they... mythified the voice of [Jean] Wahl. [Deleuze attempts to interrupt Parnet as she develops this question] First, were you conscious of having this appearance and then of having this special voice?

Deleuze: Oh yes, certainly, since the voice in a course – let's say that if philosophy – as we've talked about this already a bit, it seems to me -- mobilizes and treats concepts, then it's normal that there be a vocalization of concepts in a course, this is normal just like there is a written style of concepts. Philosophers aren't people who write without research into or without elaboration of a style. It's like artists, and they are artists. So, a course implies that one vocalizes, even it implies, yes – I speak German poorly -- a kind of *Sprechgesang*, clearly, obviously, obviously. So, if on top of that there are mythifications -- did you see his nails? etc. -- that kind of thing occurs to all professors, already even in grade school. What's more important is the relationship between the voice and the concept.⁵¹

Parnet: To make you happy, your hat was like Piaf's little black dress... There is a very precise *allure*. [Deleuze's felt hat is visible over his left shoulder on the sideboard throughout the interviews]

Deleuze: Well, my point of honor resides in never having worn it for that reason, so if it produced that effect, so much the better (*tant mieux*), very good, very good. There are always phenomena...

Parnet [interrupting]: Is that a part of your role as professor?

Deleuze: Is that a part of my role as professor? No, that isn't part of my role as professor, it's a supplement to it. What belongs to a professor's role is what I said about prior rehearsal (*la répétition préalable*) and about inspiration within the moment, that's the professor's role.

Parnet: You never wanted either a "school" [based on your work], or disciples, and that corresponds to something very deep in you, this refusal of disciples...

Deleuze [bursting out laughing, shaking his head]: I don't refuse at all. Generally, it works both ways: no one wants to be my disciple any more than I wanted to have any. A "school" is awful for a very simple reason: a "school" takes a lot of time, one turns into an administrator. Consider philosophers who have their own "school": the Wittgensteinians, it's a "school." Ok, it's not much fun (*pas la marrade*). The Heideggerians, it's a "school." First it implies some terrible scores being settled, it implies exclusions, it implies scheduling, it implies an entire administration, a "school" has to be run. I observed the rivalries between French Heideggerians led by [Jean] Beaufret and the Belgian Heideggerians led by [Alphonse] De Waelhens, a real knife fight. [Parnet laughs] It was abominable, at least for me, without any interest.

I think of other reasons. I mean, even on the level of ambition, being the leader of a "school." [Here he sighs] Just look at Lacan, Lacan... Lacan was the leader of a "school" as well. [Deleuze laughs] But it's awful, it creates so many worries. One has to become Machiavellian to lead it all, and then for myself, I despise that. For me, the "school" is the opposite of a movement. A simple example: Surrealism was a "school", with scores settled, trials, exclusions, etc. [André] Breton created a "school" [out of Surrealism]. Dada was a movement. If I had an ideal -- and I don't claim to have succeeded --, it would be to participate in a movement. Yes, fine... To be in a movement, yes, but to be even the leader of a "school" does not seem to me to be an enviable fate. [Deleuze laughs] The ideal is finally the movement. It's not at all to have guarantees and signed notions or to have disciples repeating them. For me, there are two important things: the relationship that one can have with students means to teach them that they must be happy with their solitude. They keep saying: a little communication without being alone, we're so alone, etc., and that's why they want "schools." But they can do nothing except as a function of their solitude, so it's to teach them the benefit of their solitude, it's to reconcile them with their solitude. That was my role as a professor.

And then, the second aspect is a bit the same: I wouldn't want to introduce notions that would constitute a "school," I'd want to introduce notions or concepts that would make it to the everyday arena. I don't mean these would become something ordinary, but that they would become commonly accepted ideas, namely ideas that one could handle in different ways. That could only occur if I addressed this to other solitary people who will twist these notions in their own way, to use them as they need them. So all of these are notions of movements and not notions of "schools."

Parnet: And do you think that, in today's university, the era of great professors has passed, since things don't seem to be going very well in the universities?

Deleuze: Well, I don't have many ideas about that since I no longer have a place there. I left at a time that was terrifying, and I could no longer understand how professors could continue teaching courses. That is, they'd become managers. The university following current political trends is clear: the university will cease being a research site, entirely consonant with the forced entry of disciplines that have nothing to do with university disciplines. My dream would be for universities to remain research sites and that, alongside the universities, technical schools would multiply, where they would teach accounting, information science, etc., but with universities intervening only, even in accounting and information science, on the level of research. And there could be all the agreements

one would like between a technical school and the university, with a school sending its students to pursue research courses at the university.

But once they introduced into the university technical school subjects (*matières d'école*), the university is done for (*foutue*), it's no longer a research site, and one gets increasingly eaten up by these management hassles, the vast number of meetings at the university. That's why I said I could no longer see how professors can prepare a course, so that I assume that they do the same one every year, or they just no longer do any [preparation]. Perhaps I am wrong, perhaps they continue to prepare them, so much the better. But still, the tendency seemed to me to be the disappearance of research at the university, the rise of non-creative disciplines in the university, those that are not research disciplines, and that's what's called the adaptation of the university to the job market. It's not the role of the university to be adapted to the job market. It's the role of technical schools.⁵¹

[Change of cassette]

"Q as in Question"

Parnet: So, "Q" is "Question." Philosophy serves to pose questions and problems, and questions are constructed, and as you say, their purpose is not so much to answer them as to leave these questions behind. So, for example, leaving the history of philosophy behind [see above, "H as in History of Philosophy"] meant creating new questions for you. But here, in an interview, one doesn't ask you questions, they really aren't questions, so how do I leave this behind, how do you leave this behind? What does one do, make a forced choice? First, what is the difference between a question in the mass media and a question in philosophy, to start at the beginning?

Deleuze [pausing]: That's difficult, because... I'd say... [Deleuze puffs his lips, expels air] That's difficult, because... In the media, there are conversations most of the time, no questions, no problems, there are interrogations. If I say, "how are you doing?", it doesn't constitute a problem, even if you aren't doing well at all. [Parnet laughs] "What time is it?", it's not a problem. All of those are interrogations. People interrogate each other (*on s'interroge*). If one sees the usual level on television, even in supposedly serious broadcasts, it's full of interrogations. Saying "what do you think of this?" does not constitute a problem. It's an interrogation, it's "what is your opinion?" That's why t.v. isn't very interesting. People's opinions, they don't have a very lively interest.⁵¹

If someone asks me: "Do you believe in God?" That's an interrogation. Where is the problem there, where is the question? There is no question, there is no problem. So, if one asked questions or problems in a t.v. show, of course, that's really huge vast [*océanique*], but it happens rarely... The political t.v. shows do not encompass, to my knowledge, a single problem. They could do so, they could, for example, ask about people: "How do we pose the Chinese question?" But they don't ask, they usually invite specialists on China [Deleuze laughs] who say things about contemporary China that one could figure out all by oneself, without knowing anything about China [laughing]. It's great! So, it's not at all their domain.⁵¹

I'll return therefore to my example, because it's huge: God, what is the problem or question about God? It's not whether one believes in God or not, which doesn't interest many people, but what does it mean when one says the word "God"? Does this mean... I'm going to imagine the questions. That could mean: are you going to be judged after death? So how is this a problem? Because this establishes a problematic relationship between God and the agency (*instance*) of judgment. Is God a judge? This is a question.

Ok then... I suppose someone might say to us, ok, Pascal, right, Pascal wrote a famous text, the one on the bet: does God exist or not? One bets on it, and then one reads Pascal's text, and one

realizes that it's absolutely not a matter of that [question]. Why? Because it's another question that he asks. Pascal's question is not whether God exists or not, which would not be very interesting, but it's: what is the best mode of existence, the mode of existence of someone who believes that God exists, or the mode of existence of someone who believes that God doesn't exist? Such that Pascal's question absolutely does not concern the existence of God or the non-existence of God. It concerns the existence of someone who believes in God's existence and the existence of someone who believes that God does not exist. For various reasons that Pascal develops, which are his own, but which can be clearly articulated, he thinks that someone who believes that God exists has a better existence than someone who does not. That's his business (*c'est son affaire*), ok, it's a Pascalian matter (*une affaire pascalienne*). In this, there's a problem, a question, and it's already no longer the question of God. There is a story underlying the questions, a transformation of questions within one another.⁵¹

This is the same when Nietzsche says, "God is dead," it's not the same thing as God does not exist. I can say... If I say, "God is dead," what question does that refer to, which is not the same as when I say, "God does not exist"? One realizes if one reads Nietzsche that he could care less about God's death, and that he's posing another question in this way, specifically that if God is dead, there's no reason that man wouldn't be dead as well, one has to find something else than man, etc. What interested Nietzsche was not at all whether God was dead, he was interested in the arrival of something other than man.

That's what the art of questions and problems is, and I believe that this could certainly occur on t.v. or in the media, but that would create a very strange kind of show, on this underlying story of problems and questions. Whereas in daily conversations as well as in the media, people stay on the level of interrogations. One has only to look at... I can refer to... sure, all this is posthumous -- "The Hour of Truth." [Deleuze laughs] There aren't any truths, it's truly full of interrogations... "Mme Veil, do you believe in Europe?"⁵¹ Ok, fine"... What does that mean, "believe in Europe"? It would be interesting if one asked, "what is the problem of Europe?" The problem of Europe, well, I'll tell you what it is because that way, I'll have for once expressed a forewarning (*pressentiment*). That's exactly the same as for China right now, they constantly think about preparing Europe, preparing the uniformization of Europe, they interrogate each other about it, on how to make insurance uniform, etc. And then, they find a million people at the Place de la Concorde from everywhere, Holland, Germany, etc., and [the interrogators] don't control it at all, they don't control it. Fine, so they call on specialists to tell them why there are so many Dutch people at the Place de la Concorde. "It's because ... etc." They just skirt around the real questions at the very moment when they need to be asked... What I've been saying is a bit confused... [Deleuze laughs]

Parnet: No, no, for example, for years you used to read daily newspapers, but it seems to me that you no longer read *Le Monde* or *Libération* on a daily basis. Is there something in the level of the press or the media precisely not asking these questions....

Deleuze: Oh, I don't know... I have a lot less time...

Parnet: ... that disgusts you?

Deleuze: Oh, yes! Really, listen... I get the feeling of learning less and less. I'm quite ready, I want to learn things, since I know nothing, but since the newspapers say nothing either, what can one do?

[Change of cassette]

Parnet: And you, for example, each time that you watch the evening news since it's the only t.v. show you never miss, do you always have a question to formulate each time that is never formulated in the media?

Deleuze: I don't know about that [Deleuze smiles], I don't know.

Parnet: You seem to think that questions never get asked.

Deleuze: The questions? Well, I think that, at the limit, the questions can't be asked. If you take the Touvier story, you can't pose questions – I'm choosing something quite recent. They arrested [Paul] Touvier, ok...⁵¹ So, why now? Ok, so when everyone says, "Why has he been protected?", and everyone knows quite well that there must have been various machinations. He was an information director, so he must have information on the conduct of distinguished dignitaries in the Church during the period of World War II. Ok, so everyone knows what he knows about, but there's an agreement not to ask questions, and they won't get asked. That's what's known as a consensus, it's an agreement, the convention according to which simple "How are you doing?" interrogations will be substituted for problems and questions, that is, ah, well... "That convent helped him hide... Why?" etc. Everyone knows that's not the real question... Everyone knows...

Parnet: Well, I'm not entirely sure about that.

Deleuze: Everyone knows... Let me take another recent example, regarding the reformers on the Right and the political apparatus on the Right. Everyone knows what this is about, but the newspapers don't tell us a thing. I don't know, I am just saying this, but it seems obvious to me that between these reformers *de droite*, there is very interesting problem. These guys -- it's not that they are particularly young, but their youth lies in this: it's an attempt to shake up elements of the Party organizations that are always very centralized around Paris. Specifically, the reformers want regional independence. That's something very interesting, extremely interesting, and yet no one is calling attention to this aspect. The connection to the European question is that they want to create a Europe not of nations, they want a Europe of regions. They want the veritable unity to be regional and inter-regional, rather than a national and international unity.

Now this is a problem, one that the Socialists will have to face at some point, between regionalist and internationalist tendencies. But the Party organizations, that is, the provincial federations, still correspond to an old-fashioned approach, specifically, all that goes back to Paris, and the power is extremely centralized. So, the conservative reformers constitute an anti-Jacobine movement, and the Left will have one as well.

So, I say, fine, they have to be made to talk about this, but no one will do so, they even refuse to because, when they do, they will reveal themselves. Hence, they'll only answer interrogations, and interrogations are nothing, it's just conversation without any interest. Conversations, interrogations, they have no interest at all. Except for rare exceptions, television is condemned to discussions, to interrogations. It's worthless. It's not even a question of deliberate lies, it's just insignificant, without any interest.

Parnet: Well, I'm less of an optimist than you,

Deleuze: No interest at all.

Parnet: ... but it seems to me that there is the journalist Anne Sinclair who, within the consensus, doesn't realize it's there and tries to pose good questions, not entirely interrogations.

Deleuze: Fine, that's her business, I'm quite sure that she's very happy with herself... yes, yes, yes, that's certain, it's her business.

Parnet: You never accept to go on television. Foucault and [Michel] Serres did it. Are you retreating from the world like Beckett did (*à la Beckett*)? Do you hate television? Why won't you go on television? For all these reasons?

Deleuze: Well, here's the proof, this interview, I'll be on t.v.! But my reasons for not accepting relate exactly to what I have already said: I have no desire at all to have conversations and interrogations with people. I cannot stand interrogations, I can't stand it, that doesn't interest me. And arguing (*discussions*) about something, especially when no one knows what problem is being raised. If it's – I return to my example of God -- is it a matter of the non-existence of God, of the death of God, of the death of man, of the existence of God, of the existence of whoever believes in God, etc.? It's a muddle (*bouillie*), and it's very tiring. So when everyone has his turn to speak, it's domesticity in its purest state, moreover with some idiot of a host (*présentateur à la con*) as well... Mercy, mercy (*pitié, pitié*)...

Parnet: The most important thing is that you are here today answering our little interrogations.

Deleuze: On the condition that it's posthumous (*A titre posthume*)!

"R as in Resistance"

Parnet: "R" is "Resistance." As you said in a recent lecture at FEMIS, philosophy creates concepts, and whenever one creates, as you said in this lecture, one resists. Artists, filmmakers, musicians, mathematicians, philosophers all resist, but what do they resist exactly? First, let's take this case by case: philosophers create concepts, but does science create concepts?⁵¹

Deleuze: No. These are rather questions of ends, Claire. Because if we agree to reserve the word "concept" for philosophy, another word is needed then to designate scientific notions. One doesn't say of an artist either that he/she creates concepts. A painter or a musician doesn't create concepts, he/she creates something else. So, for science, one needs to find other words. Let's say, one could say, for example, a scientist is someone who creates functions, let's say. I'm not saying it's the best word: he/she creates new functions, but creating functions occurs as much... Creating new functions... Einstein, Gallois, the great mathematicians, but not only the mathematicians, there are physicists, biologists, all create functions.⁵¹

So... how does this constitute resisting? How is creating resisting in all that? It's clearer for the arts, because science is in a more ambiguous position, a bit like cinema: it is caught in so many problems of organization (*programmes*), funding (*capital*), etc., that the portion of resistance... [Deleuze doesn't complete the thought] But great scientists also mount considerable resistance, if one thinks of Einstein, of many physicists and biologists today, it's obvious. They resist first against being forced in certain tempting directions (*entraînements*) and against the trends in popular opinion, that is, against the whole domain of imbecilic interrogation. They demand their... They really have the strength to demand their own rhythm, they can't be forced to release just anything under

premature conditions, just as one usually doesn't hurry an artist. No one has the right to hurry an artist.

But I think that... That creating would be resistance is because... I believe... Let me tell you, there is a writer I recently read who affected me greatly on this topic. I believe that one of the great motifs in art and thought is a certain "shame of being a man" (*la honte d'être un homme*). I think that Primo Levi is that writer and artist who has expressed this most profoundly. He was able to speak of this "shame of being a man" in an extremely profound book because he wrote it following his return from the Nazi death camps. Levi said, "Yes, when I was freed, the dominant feeling was one of 'the shame at being a man'". It's a statement, I believe, that's at once quite splendid, very beautiful, and not at all abstract, it's quite concrete, "the shame of being a man." But this does not mean certain stupidities that some people might like to have it mean. It does not mean that we are all assassins, that we are all guilty, for example, all guilty of Nazism. Levi says it admirably: it doesn't mean that the executioners and the victims are all the same... You can't make us believe that. There are a lot of people who maintain, "Oh yes, we are all guilty"... No, no, no, nothing of the sort... There will not be any confusion between the executioner and the victim.⁵¹

So "the shame of being a man" does not mean that we are all the same, that we are all compromised, etc. It means, I believe, several things. It's a very complex feeling, not a unified feeling. "The shame of being a man" means at once how could men do that (*hommes*) -- some men, that is, others than me -- how could they do that? And second, how have I myself nonetheless taken sides? I didn't become an executioner, but I still took sides to have survived, and there is a certain shame in having survived in the place of certain friends who did not survive. So it's therefore an extremely composite feeling, "the shame of being a man," and I believe that at the basis of art, there is this idea or this very strong feeling of shame of being a man that results in art consisting of liberating the life that men have imprisoned. Men never cease imprisoning life, they never cease killing life -- "the shame of being a man." The artist is the one who liberates a life, a powerful life, a life [that's] more than personal, it's not *his/her* life.

[Change of cassette]

Parnet: Ok, so I head you back toward the artist and resistance, that is, the role of the shame of being a man, art freeing life from this prison of shame, but it's something very different from sublimation. That is, art is not at all this... It's really a resistance...

Deleuze [interrupting]: No, not at all... It means ripping life forth (*arracher la vie*), life's liberation, and that's not at all something abstract. What is a great character in a novel? A great character is not a character borrowed from the real and even inflated: Charlus [in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*] is not Montesquiou [friend of Proust], not even Montesquiou inflated by Proust's brilliant imagination.⁵¹ These are fantastic powers of action for life (*puissances de vie*), fantastic powers of action for life, however badly it turns out. A fictional character has integrated into it... It's a kind of giant, it's a kind of exaggeration in relation to life, but not an exaggeration in relation to art, since art is the production of these exaggerations, and it is by their mere existence that this is already resistance.

Or, we can connect with the first theme "A [as in Animal]," writing is always writing *for* animals, that is, not *to* them, but in their place, doing what animals can't, writing, freeing life, freeing life from prisons that men [have created], and that's what resistance is. I don't know... That's obviously what artists do, and I mean there is no art that is not also a liberation of a power of action for life, there is no art of death, first of all.⁵¹

Parnet: But sometimes art doesn't suffice. Primo Levi finished by committing suicide much, much later.

Deleuze: He committed suicide personally... Ah yes, ah yes, he could no longer hold on, so he committed suicide to his personal life. But, there are four pages or twelve pages or a hundred pages of Primo Levi that will remain, that will remain eternal resistances, so it happens this way.

And it's even more... I am talking about "the shame of being a man," but it's not even in the grandiose sense of Primo Levi, you understand? Because if one dares to say something of this sort, for each of us in daily life, there are minuscule events that inspire in us this shame of being a man. We witness a scene in which someone has really been too vulgar, we don't make a big thing of it, but we are upset, upset for the other, we are upset for ourselves because we seem nearly to accept this. Here again, we almost make some sort of compromise. But if we protest, saying "what you're saying is base, shameful," a big drama gets made out of it, and we're caught, and we feel -- it doesn't at all compare with Auschwitz -- but even on this minuscule level, there is a small shame of being a man. If one doesn't feel that shame, there is no reason to create art. It's ... Ok, I can't say anything else.

Parnet: But when you create, precisely when you are an artist, do you feel these dangers all the time, dangers that are surrounding you, that are everywhere?

Deleuze: Yes, obviously, yes, in philosophy as well. It's what Nietzsche said, a philosophy that doesn't damage stupidity -- damage stupidity (*nuire à la bêtise*), resist stupidity. But if philosophy did not exist -- already, people act like "oh, philosophy, after all, it's good for after-dinner conversations." But if philosophy did not exist, we cannot guess the level of stupidity. Philosophy prevents stupidity from being as enormous as it would be if there were no philosophy. That's [philosophy's] splendor, we have no idea what things would be like. It's just as if there were no arts, what the vulgarity of people would be... So, when we say "to create is to resist," it's effective, positive (*effectif*), I mean. The world would not be what it is if not for art, people could not hold on anymore. It's not that they read philosophy, it's philosophy's mere existence that prevents people from being as stupid and beastly (*stupide et bête*) as they would be without [philosophy].⁵¹

Parnet: What do you think when people announce the death of thought, the death of cinema, the death of literature, [Deleuze growls, "yes, yes.." derisively] -- does that seem like a joke to you?

Deleuze: Yes, there are no deaths, there are assassinations, quite simply. Perhaps cinema will be assassinated, quite possibly, but there is no death from natural causes, for a simple reason: as long as there would be nothing to grasp and take on the function of philosophy, philosophy will still have every reason to live on, and if something else takes on the function of philosophy, then I don't see at all how this "other thing" could be anything but philosophy. If we say, for example, that philosophy consists of creating concepts and, through that, damaging and preventing stupidity, then what could one possibly expect to die in philosophy? It could be blocked, it could be censored, it could be assassinated, but it has a function, it is not going to die. The death of philosophy always seemed to me to be an imbecilic idea, it's an idiotic idea. It's not because I am attached to philosophy that it will not die. I'm very pleased that it won't die, I just don't even understand what this means, "the death of philosophy." It just seems to be a rather feeble idea, kind of simpering (*gentillette*), just to have something to say, just a way of saying things change, and all the more reason that...

But, what's going to replace philosophy? What's going to create concepts? So, someone might tell me: "You must not create any more concepts," and so, ok, let stupidity reign -- fine, it's the idiots who want to do philosophy in. Who is going to create concepts? Information science?

Advertising agents who have taken over the word “concept”? Fine, we will have advertising “concepts,” which is the “concept” of a brand of noodles. They don't risk having much of a rivalry with philosophy because I don't think that the word “concept” is being used in the same way. But today it's rather advertising that is presented as philosophy's true rival since they tell us: we advertisers are inventing concepts. But, the “concept” proposed by information science, “concepts” by computers, is quite hilarious, what they call a “concept.” So, we shouldn't get worried about it.

Parnet: Could we say that you, Félix, and Foucault form networks of concepts like networks (*réseaux*) of resistance, like a war machine against dominant modes of thought and commonplaces?

Deleuze [embarrassed]: Yes, yes, yes, why not? It would be very nice if it were true, that would be very nice. In any case, the network is certainly the only... If one doesn't belong to a "school" -- and these "schools" [of thought] don't seem good at all --, if one doesn't belong to a “school,” there is only the regime of networks, of complicities. And of course, [it's] something that has existed in every period, for example, what we call Romanticism -- German Romanticism, or Romanticism in general, this was a network. What we call Dadaism, it's a network. And I'm sure that there must be networks today as well.

Parnet: Are these networks of resistance?

Deleuze: By their very existence (*Par là même*). The function of the network is to resist, and to create.

Parnet: For example, you find yourself both famous and clandestine, this notion of living in a kind of clandestinity [Deleuze laughs] that you are fond of.

Deleuze: I don't consider myself at all famous, I don't consider myself clandestine. I would, in fact, like to be imperceptible. But there are a lot of people who would like to be imperceptible. That doesn't at all mean that I'm not... Being imperceptible is fine because... But that's a question that's almost personal. What I want is to do my work, for people not to bother me and not make me waste time, yes, and at the same time, I want to see people, because I need to, like everybody else, I like people, or a small group of people whom I like to see. But, when I see them, I don't want this to create the slightest problem, just to have imperceptible relationships with imperceptible people, that's what is most beautiful in the world. You can say that we are all molecules, a molecular network.

Parnet: Is there a strategy in philosophy, for example, when you wrote your book on Leibniz, was it strategically that you wrote on Leibniz?

Deleuze [laughing]: I suppose that depends on what the word "strategy" means. I assume that one doesn't write without a certain necessity. If there is no necessity to create a book, that is, a strongly felt necessity by the person writing the book, then it would be better not to do it. So when I wrote on Leibniz, it was necessary for me. Why was it necessary? Because a moment arrived for me – it would take too long to explain – to talk, not about Leibniz, but about the fold. And for the fold, it happened that, for me, it was fundamentally linked to Leibniz. But I can say for each book that I wrote what the necessity was at each period.⁵¹

Parnet: But besides the grip of necessity that pushes you to write, I mean, your return to a philosopher as a return to history of philosophy after the cinema books and after books like *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Is there ...

Deleuze [interrupting]: There was no return to a philosopher, which is why I previously answered your question quite correctly. I did not write a book on Leibniz, I only wrote a book on Leibniz because, for me, the moment had come to study what “a fold” was.

[Change of cassette]

Deleuze: I do history of philosophy when I need to, that is, when I encounter and experience a notion that is itself already connected to a philosopher. When I got passionately involved with the notion of “expression,” I wrote a book on Spinoza because Spinoza is a philosopher who raised the notion of “expression” to an extraordinarily high level. When I encountered on my own the notion of “the fold,” it appeared to me to go without saying that it would be through Leibniz. Now it does happen that I encounter notions that are not already dedicated to a philosopher, so then I don't do history of philosophy. But I see no difference between writing a book on history of philosophy and a book on philosophy, so it's in that way that I follow my own path (*je vais mon chemin*).

"S as in Style"

Parnet: “S” is “Style”

Deleuze: Ah, well, good for us! (*nous voilà bien!*)

Parnet: What is style? In *Dialogues*, you say that style is the property precisely of those about whom it is said they have no style. I think that you say this about Balzac, if I recall correctly. So what is style?⁵¹

Deleuze: Well, that's no small question!

Parnet: No, that's why I asked it so quickly!

Deleuze [laughing]: Listen, this is what I can say: to understand what style is, one is better off not knowing a thing at all about linguistics. Linguistics has done a lot of harm. Why has it done a lot of harm? Because there is an opposition -- Foucault said it well -- there is an opposition, and it's even their complementarity, between linguistics and literature. As opposed to what many say, they do not fit each other at all (*ça [ne] s'accorde pas du tout*). It's because, for linguistics, a language (*langue*) is always a system in balance, therefore of which one can create the science. And the rest, the variations, are placed no longer on the side of language, but on the side of speech (*parole*). When one writes, we know quite well that language (*langue*) is, in fact, a system, as physicists would say, a system by its nature far from equilibrium, a system in perpetual imbalance (*déséquilibre*), such that there is no difference of level between language and speech, but language is constituted by all sorts of heterogeneous currents in disequilibrium with one another.⁵¹

So, what is the style of a great author? I think there are two things in a style – you see, I am answering clearly, rapidly and clearly, so I'm ashamed because it's too much of a summary. Style seems to me composed of two things: one submits the language in which one speaks and writes to a certain treatment, not a treatment that's artificial, voluntary, etc., but a treatment that mobilizes

everything, the author's will, but also his/her wishes, desires, needs, necessities. One submits language to a syntactical and original treatment, which could be, let's say -- here we come back to the theme of "Animal" -- that could be making language stutter (*begayer*), I mean, not stuttering oneself, but making language stutter. Or, and this is not the same thing, to make language stammer (*balbutier*).

Let's choose some examples from great stylists: Gherasim Luca, a poet, I'd say, generally, he creates stuttering, not his own speech, but he makes language stutter. [Another example is Charles] Péguy... it's quite curious because generally for people, Péguy is a certain kind of personality about whom one forgets that above all, like all great artists, he's totally crazy (*un fou complet*). Never has anyone written like Péguy, and never will anyone write like Péguy. [His writing] belongs among the great styles of French language; he's one of the great creators of the French language. What did he do? One can't say that his style is a stuttering; rather, he makes the sentence grow from its middle. It's fantastic: instead of having sentences follow each other, he repeats the same sentence with an addition in the middle of it which, in its turn, will engender another addition, etc. He makes the sentence proliferate from its middle, by insertions. That's a great style.⁵¹

So, there is the first aspect: make language undergo a treatment, an incredible treatment. That's why a great stylist is not someone who conserves syntax but is a creator of syntax. I never let go of Proust's lovely formula: masterpieces (*chefs d'oeuvre*) are always written in a kind of foreign language.⁵¹ A stylist is someone who creates a foreign language in his/her language. It's true of Céline, it's true of Péguy, it's true of... *That's* what it means to be a great stylist. Then, second, at the same time as this first aspect -- specifically, one causes syntax to undergo a deforming, contorting treatment, but a necessary one that constitutes something like a foreign language in the language in which one writes, -- the second point is, through this very process, one then pushes all language all the way to a kind of limit, the border that separates it from music. One produces a kind of music. If one succeeds with these two things, and if there is necessity in doing so, it is a style, that's what the great stylists are. And it's true of all of them at once: burrow a foreign language deep within language, and carry all language to a kind of musical limit. This is what it means to have a style, yes.

Parnet: Do you think that you have a style...?

Deleuze [bursting out laughing]: Oh, the treachery! (*O! la perfidie!*) That's a question...

Parnet [continuing]: ...because I see a change from your first books, it's as if it's more simplified.

Deleuze: The proof of a style is its variability, and generally one goes toward an increasingly sober style. But increasingly sober does not mean less complex. I think of one of the writers I admire greatly from the point of view of style, Kerouac. At the end of his career, Kerouac's writing was like a Japanese line, really, a pure Japanese line drawing, his style, reaching a sobriety, but that really implies then the creation of a foreign language within the language, all the more...⁵¹ Well, yes... I also think of Céline, and it's odd when people said to Céline, "Oh, you've introduced spoken language into written language" [in *Voyage au bout de la nuit*], which was already a stupid statement (*bêtise*) because in fact, a completely written treatment is required in language, one must create a foreign language within language in order to obtain through writing the equivalent of the spoken language. So, Céline didn't introduce the spoken into language, that's just stupid to say that. But when Céline received a compliment, he knew very well that he was so far away from what he would have wanted [to create]. So that would be in his second novel, in *Mort à Crédit*, that he is going to get closer. But when it's published and he is told, "Oh, you've changed [your style]", he knows again

that he is very, very far from what he wanted, and so what he wanted, he is going to reach with *Guignol's Band* where, in fact, language is pushed to such a limit that it is so close to music. It's no longer a treatment of language that creates a foreign language, but an entire language pushed to the musical limit. So, by its very nature, style changes, it has its variation.

Parnet: With Péguy, one often thinks of the musical style of Steve Reich, with the repetitive aspect.

Deleuze: Yes, except that Péguy is a much greater stylist than Steve Reich.

Parnet: You still haven't responded to my "treachery." Do you think that you have a style?

Deleuze: I would like to, but what do you want me to say? I would like to, but I have the feeling... If one says that already to be a stylist, one must live the problem of style, then I can answer more modestly: the problem of style, for me, I live it (*je le vis*), yes. I don't write while telling myself, "the problem of style, I'll deal with it afterward." I am very aware that I will not obtain the movement of concepts that I want if the writing does not pass through style, and I am ready to rewrite the same page ten times.

[Change of cassette]

Parnet: So, style is like a necessity of composition in what you write? That is, composition enters into it in a very primordial way?

Deleuze: Yes, there, I think you are completely correct. It's something else, what you are saying there. It's: Is the composition of a book already a matter of style? In this, I think: yes, entirely. The composition of a book cannot be decided beforehand, but at the same time as the book is written. I see that in what I have written, if I dare invoke [these examples], there are two books that seem to be composed. I always attached great importance to the composition itself. I think, for example, of a book called *Logic of Sense*, which is composed by series, it's truly a kind of serial composition for me. And then in *A Thousand Plateaus*, it's a composition by plateaus, plateaus constituted by things. But I see these as nearly two musical compositions. Composition is a fundamental element of style.⁵¹

Parnet: And in your mode of expression, to pick up a statement you made earlier: today are you now closer to what you wanted than twenty years ago, or is it something else entirely?

Deleuze: At this moment (*actuellement*) in what I am doing, I feel that I'm getting closer... in what I have not yet completed, I have a feeling of getting closer, that I am grasping something that I was looking for and haven't found before.

Parnet: Your style is not only literary, you are sensitive [to style] in all domains. For example, you live with the elegant Fanny [Deleuze], your friend Jean-Pierre is also quite elegant, and you seem very sensitive to this elegance.

Deleuze: Well, here, I'm a bit lost. I'd like to be elegant, but I know quite well that I am not. For me, elegance is something... Even in perceiving it, I mean, there is already an elegance that consists in perceiving what elegance is. Otherwise, there are people who miss it entirely and for whom what they call elegance is not at all elegant. So, a certain grasp of what elegance is belongs to elegance.

That impresses me greatly. This is a domain like anything else, that one has to learn about, one has to be somewhat gifted, you have to learn it... Why did you ask me that?

Parnet: For [the question of] style, that is in all domains.

Deleuze: Ah, well, yes, of course, but this aspect is not really part of great art. What one might need to... yes, no, yes, no, I don't know... It's just that... I get the impression that it does not depend only elegance... There's something that I admire a lot, but... What's important in the world -- besides elegance that I like greatly -- is all these things that emit signs. So I was going to say, the non-elegance, vulgarity also emit signs, that's more what I find important: the emissions of signs. So, this is why I have always liked and still like Proust so much, for the society life (*mondanité*), the social relations (*rappports mondains*) -- these are fantastic emissions of signs. What's known as a "gaffe," it's a non-comprehension in a sign, signs that people don't understand. Society life as a milieu of the proliferation of empty signs, absolutely empty, these signs have no interest at all. But it's also the speed of their emission, the nature of their emission. This connects back to animal worlds because animal worlds also are fantastic emissions of signs. Animals and social "animals" (*mondains*) are the masters of signs.

Parnet: Although you don't go out much, you have always been much more favorably disposed to social gatherings (*soirées mondaines*) than to convivial conversations.

Deleuze: Of course, because for me, in social milieus, people don't argue (*discuter*), that sort of vulgarity is not part of that milieu, and conversation moves absolutely into lightness, that is, into an extraordinarily rapid evocation, into speeds of conversations. Again, these are very interesting emissions of signs.

[Change of cassette]

"T as in Tennis"

Parnet: So, "T" is "Tennis."

Deleuze: "Tennis"... hmm? [He nods to continue]

Parnet: You have always liked tennis. There is a famous anecdote about you when you were a child, you tried going after the autograph of a great Swedish tennis player who spotted you, and it was instead the king of Sweden from whom you asked for the autograph.

Deleuze: No, I knew who it was, ok? [The king] was already around a hundred (*centenaire*), and he was well protected, with lots of bodyguards. But I did ask the king of Sweden for an autograph. There is a photo of me in *Le Figaro*, where there's a little boy asking the elderly king of Sweden for an autograph. That's me.

Parnet: And who was the Swedish tennis player whom you were chasing after?

Deleuze: It was [Jean] Borotra. He wasn't a great Swedish player, it was Borotra [a French tennis champion], who was the king's main bodyguard since he played tennis with the king, gave him lessons. So, he tried kicking me a few times to keep me from getting too close to the king, but the

king was very nice, and afterwards, Borotra also got nice. That's not a very flattering moment for Borotra. [Deleuze smiles]

Parnet: There are lots of moments, even less flattering, for Borotra.⁵¹ [Deleuze laughs] Is tennis the only sport you watch on television?

Deleuze: No, I adore soccer, I really like soccer... Yes, so it's that and tennis.

Parnet: Did you play tennis?

Deleuze: Yes, a lot up until the war, so that makes me a war victim!

Parnet: What changes occur in your body when one plays a sport a lot, and when one stops playing it after, are there things that change?

Deleuze: I don't think so, at least not for me. I didn't turn it into a trade (*métier*). In 1939, I was 14 years old, and stopped playing tennis at 14, so that's not dramatic.

Parnet: Did you have a lot of talent?

Deleuze: Yes, for a 14-year-old, I did pretty well.

Parnet: Did you have a ranking?

Deleuze: Oh, no! At 14, I was really too small, and then I did not have the kind of development they have today.

Parnet: And after, you tried other sports, I think, some French boxing?

Deleuze: Well, no, I did a bit, but I got hurt, so I stopped that right away, but I did try some boxing.

Parnet: Do you think tennis has changed a lot since your youth?

Deleuze: Of course, like in all sports, there are milieus of variation, and here we get back to the topic of style. Sports are very interesting for the question of positions (*attitudes*) of the body. There is a variation of positions of the body over spaces of greater or lesser length. For example, it's obvious that athletes don't jump hurdles in the same way now as they did fifty years ago.

And one would have to categorize the variables in the history of sports. I see several: variables of tactics. In soccer, tactics have changed enormously since my childhood. There are position variables for the body's posture. There are variables that put into play... There was a moment when I was very interested in the shotput, not to do it myself, but the build of the shot putter evolved at one point with extreme rapidity. It became a question of force: how, with really strong shot putters, to gain back speed, and how, with builds geared for speed, to gain back force? Now this is very, very interesting. It's almost... The sociologist [Marcel] Mauss introduced all sorts of studies on the positions of bodies in different civilizations, but sports is a domain of the variation of positions, something quite fundamental.

So, in tennis, even before the war – and I still remember the champions from before the war -- it's obvious that the positions were not the same, not at all. And then, something that interests me

greatly, again related to style, is the champions that are true creators. There are two kinds of great champion, that do not have the same value for me, the creators and the non-creators. The non-creators are those who maintain a pre-existing style and unequalled strength, for example Lendl. I don't consider Lendl to be fundamentally a creator in tennis. But then there are the great creators, even on very simple levels, those who invent new "moves" (*coups*) and introduce new tactics. And after them, all sorts of followers come flooding in, but the great stylists are inventors, something one certainly finds in all sports.

So, what was the great turning point in tennis? It was its proletarianization, quite relative of course.⁵¹ I mean, it has become a mass sport (*sport de masse*), masses of the sort young-executive-with-working-class-origins (*jeune cadre un peu prolo*), but we can call it the proletarianization of tennis. And of course, there are deeper approaches to explain how that occurs. But it would not have occurred if there weren't the arrival of a genius at the same time. It was [Björn] Borg who made it possible. Why? Because he brought in a particular style of mass tennis, and he had to create a mass tennis from the ground up. Then, a crowd of very good champions came after him, but not creators, for example, the Vilas type, etc. So, Borg appeals to me, his Christ-like head. He had this kind of Christ-like bearing, this extreme dignity, this aspect that made him so respected by all the players, etc.

[Change of tape]

Parnet: When you were younger, did you attend a lot of tennis matches?

Deleuze: Oh yes, I attended some of them... But I want to finish up Borg. So, Borg was a Christ-like character. He made possible sport for the masses, created mass tennis, and with that, it was a total invention of a new game. Then there are all sorts of worthy champions, but of the Vilas-type who came rushing in and who imposed a generally soporific style onto the game, whereas – and here we always rediscover the law “You are paying me compliments, while I am 100 miles from doing what I wanted to do.” Because Borg changed deliberately: when he was certain of his moves, it no longer interested him, so his style evolved tremendously, whereas the drudges stuck with the same old thing. We have to see McEnroe as the anti-Borg.

Parnet: What was this *prolo* style that Borg imposed?

Deleuze: Situated at the back of the court, at the farthest retreat possible, and twisting in place (*rivetage*), and ball placement high over the net. Any *prolo* could understand that game, any little manager (*petit cadre*) could understand that game, not that he could succeed. [Deleuze and Parnet laugh]

Parnet: That's interesting.

Deleuze: So, the very principle -- back of court, twisting, ball high -- is the opposite of aristocratic principles. These are popular principles, but what genius it had to take. Borg is exactly like Christ, an aristocrat who goes to the people. Well... I'm probably saying something stupid, but.. It still is quite astonishing, quite astonishing, Borg's stroke (*le coup Borg*), very, very curious, a great creator in sports.

And there's McEnroe, it was pure aristocrat, half Egyptian, half Russian, Egyptian service game, Russian soul (*âme russe*), who invents moves that he knew no one could follow.⁵¹ So, he was an aristocrat who couldn't be followed. He invented some amazing moves. He invented a move that

consisted of placing the ball, very strange, not even striking it, just placing it. And he developed a service-volley combination that wasn't... The service-volley combination was well known, but Borg's and McEnroe's were completely transformed. All this, of course, to talk about... Oh, another great player, but without the same importance, I believe, is the other American, but I don't recall his name...

Parnet: Connors.

Deleuze: Connors, with whom you really see the aristocratic principle: ball flat barely over the net, a very odd aristocratic principle, and also striking while unbalanced. Never did he play with such genius as when he was entirely unbalanced. Those were some really odd moves. There is a history of sports, and it has to be explained about every sport: their evolution, their creators, their followers... It's exactly as in art: there are creators, there are followers, there are changes, there are evolutions, there's a history, there is a becoming of sports.

Parnet: And you had started a sentence with, "I attended...?"

Deleuze: Oh, that's just another detail. I believe that I attended... It's sometimes difficult to be specific about when a move really originated [in a sport], yet I do recall that, before the war, there were some Australians. And here, one would have to ask about questions of national origins, why did Australians introduce the two-handed back swing? At the beginning of the two-handed back swing, there were Australians, at least as I recall it, I think. Anyhow, why did the Australians have... This relation between the two-handed back swing and the Australians, I don't know, it didn't go without saying, perhaps there was some reason.

I remember one move that struck me while I was a child because it created no effect (*il ne faisait aucun effet*). We saw that the opponent missed the ball, but we had to wonder why. It was a rather soft blow, and after considering it closely, we saw that it was the return of service. When the opponent served the ball, the player returned it with a rather soft blow, but that had the result of falling at the tips of the server's feet as he was approaching to volley, so he received it, not even at mid-volley, and he couldn't return it. So this was a strange return because we couldn't understand very well why it succeeded so well as a move. In my opinion, the first to have systematized that was a great Australian player, who did not have much of a career on clay courts because he wasn't interested in it, called [John] Bromwich, right before or after the war, I don't recall exactly.

Parnet: Just after the war, I think.

Deleuze: And he was a very great player, a true inventor of moves. But I do recall that as a child or young man, I was astounded at this move that has now become classic, that everybody does. So, there you are, an invention of a move that, to my knowledge, the generation of Borotra [1920s-1930s] did not know yet in tennis, only simple returns.

Parnet: To finish with tennis and McEnroe, do you think he will continue, when he insults the referee, in fact insulting himself more than he does the referee – is this a matter of style, and that he [McEnroe] is unhappy with this form of expression?

Deleuze: No, it's a matter of style because it belongs to McEnroe's style. It's a kind of nervous recharging, yes, just like an orator can get angry, while on the contrary, there are orators who remain cold and distant. So, it's fully part of McEnroe's style.

Parnet: So, "U"...

Deleuze: It's the soul, it's the soul; as we'd say in German, the *Gemüt*, the *Gemüt*.

"U as in *Un*" (One)

Parnet: So, "U" is the "One" (*l'Un*).

Deleuze: The "One".

Parnet: The "One," O-N-E (*U-N*) ... So, philosophy and science concern themselves with "universals." However, you always say that philosophy must always stay in contact with singularities. Isn't there a paradox here?

Deleuze: No, there's no paradox because philosophy and even science have strictly nothing to do with universals. These are ready-made ideas, ideas derived from general opinion. Opinion about philosophy is that it concerns itself with universals. Opinion about science is that it concerns itself with universal phenomena that can always be reproduced, etc. But even if you take a formula like, "all bodies fall," what is important is not that all bodies fall. What's important is the fall and the singularities of the fall. Even were scientific singularities -- for example, mathematical singularities in functions, or physical singularities, or chemical singularities, points of congealing, etc. --, were they all reproducible, well fine, and then what? These are secondary phenomena, processes of universalization, but what science addresses is not universals, but singularities, points of congealing: when does a body change its state, from the liquid state to the solid state, etc. etc. Philosophy is not concerned with the one, being (*l'être*). [To suggest] that is just stupid (*bêtises*). Rather, it is also concerned with singularities. One would almost have to say... In fact, one always finds oneself in multiplicities. Multiplicities are aggregates of singularities. The formula for multiplicities and for an aggregate of singularities is n minus 1, that is, the One is what must always be subtracted.

So there are two errors not to be made: philosophy is not concerned with universals. There are three kinds of universals, yes, that one could indicate: universals of contemplation, Ideas with a capital I. There are universals of reflexion. And there are universals of communication, the last refuge of the philosophy of universals.⁵¹ [Jürgen] Habermas likes these universals of communication. [Deleuze laughs]

This means philosophy is defined either as contemplation, or as reflexion, or as communication. In all three cases, it's quite comical, really quite farcical (*bouffon*). The philosopher that contemplates, ok, he's a joke. The philosopher who reflects doesn't make us laugh, but is even stupider because no one needs a philosopher in order to reflect. Mathematicians don't need a philosopher in order to reflect on mathematics. An artist does not need to seek out a philosopher in order to reflect on painting or on music. Boulez does not need to go see a philosopher in order to reflect on music. To believe that philosophy is a reflection *on* anything is to despise it all, to despise both philosophy and what philosophy is supposed to reflect on since, after all, you don't need philosophy to reflect... Ok...

As for communication, let's not even talk about it. The idea of philosophy as being the restoration of a consensus in communication from the basis of universals of communication, that is the most laughable idea (*l'idée la plus joyeuse*) that we've heard since... For philosophy has strictly nothing to do with communication. What could it possibly have to do...? Communication suffices very well in itself, and all this about consensus and opinions is the art of interrogations. [See above,

“Q as in Question”] Euh! Philosophy has nothing to do with this. Philosophy, again as I have been saying from the start, consists in creating concepts, which does not mean communicating. Art is not communicative, art is not reflexive, art isn't, nor is science, nor is philosophy contemplative or reflexive or communicative. It's creative, that's all. Hence, the formula is $n - 1$, suppress the unity, suppress the universal.

[Change of cassette; hand clap: something that the producer says off-camera causes Deleuze to laugh and gesture to his right, off-camera]

Parnet: So you feel that universals have nothing to do with philosophy?

Deleuze [smiles, shaking his head]: No, no, they have nothing to do with it.

"V as in Voyages"

Parnet: Let's move directly on to "V," and "V" is "Voyages," and this is the demonstration of a concept as a paradox because you invented a notion, a concept, one could say, which is "nomadism," but you hate traveling. We can make this revelation at this point of our conversation, you *hate* traveling. First of all, why do you hate to travel?

Deleuze: I don't like traveling [because of] the conditions for a poor intellectual who travels. Maybe if I traveled differently, I would adore traveling, but intellectuals [Deleuze laughs], what does it mean for them to travel? It means going to lectures, at the other end of the world if needs be, and with all that, this includes before and after, talking before with people who greet you quite kindly, and talking after with people who listened to you quite politely, talk talk talk. So, an intellectual's travel is the opposite of traveling. Go to the ends of the earth to talk, to do something that he can do very well at home, and to see people before for talking, and see people after for talking, this is a monstrous voyage.

Having said this, it's true, I feel no inclination toward traveling, but it's not some sort of principle for me, and I don't pretend even to be right, thank God. Ok, so I ask myself, what is there, what is there for me in traveling? First, there is always a small bit of false rupture. I'd say it's the first aspect of: what is it that makes traveling for me quite distasteful (*antipathique*)! The first reason is: it's a cheap rupture (*une rupture à bon marché*), and I feel just like Fitzgerald [expressed it]: a trip is not enough to create a real rupture. If you want rupture, then do something other than travel because finally, what does one see? People who travel tend to travel a lot, and after, they are even proud of it. They say it's in order to find a father. [Deleuze laughs] There are great reporters who have written books on this, they did it all, Vietnam, Afghanistan, wherever you like, and they say in their fragments that they all were supposed to be in search of a father. [Deleuze laughs] They shouldn't have bothered... Traveling can really be Oedipian in a sense. [Laughing] Well, ok... I say no, that just won't do! (*Ça ne va pas, ça!*)

The second reason: it seems that ... I am greatly moved by an admirable phrase, as always, from Beckett who has one of his characters [Camier] say, more or less – I cite poorly, and it's expressed better than this: sure, we're all dumb, but still, not to the point of traveling for pleasure (*on est con, quand même, mais pas au point de voyager pour le plaisir*). I find this phrase completely satisfying; I am dumb, but not to the point of traveling for pleasure, no, not that dumb (*quand même pas*)!

And there is a third aspect of travel. You said, "nomad"; well, yes, I've always been quite fascinated with nomads, but precisely because nomads are people who don't travel. Those who travel

are emigrants, and there can certainly be perfectly respectable people who are forced to travel, exiled people, emigrants. This is a kind of trip that it is not even a question of ridiculing because these are sacred forms of travel, forced travel. Ok, fine... But nomads don't travel. Nomads, to the contrary, quite literally, they stay put completely (*ils restent immobiles*), all the specialists on nomads say this. It's because nomads don't want to leave, because they seize hold of the earth, their land. Their land becomes deserted, and they seize hold of it, they can only nomadize on their land, and it's by dint of wanting to stay on their land that they nomadize. So in a sense, one can say that nothing is more immobile than a nomad, that nothing travels less than a nomad. It's because they don't want to leave that they are nomad. And that's why they are completely persecuted.

And finally, nearly the last aspect of traveling that, for me, doesn't make it very... There is a phrase from Proust that is quite beautiful that says: after all, what does one always do when one travels? One always verifies something. One verifies that a particular color one dreamed about is really there. And then he adds something very important. He says: a bad dreamer is someone who doesn't go see if the color he dreamed about is really there, but a good dreamer knows that one has to go verify if the color is really there. I consider this a good conception of travel, but otherwise...

Parnet: You've just made a fantastic progression.⁵¹

Deleuze: Ok, at the same time, there are trips that are veritable ruptures. For example, the life of [J.M.G.] Le Clézio at the moment seems to be a way in which he certainly operates a kind of rupture.

Parnet: Lawrence...

Deleuze: There's [T.E.] Lawrence, yes, Lawrence... There are too many great writers that I admire who have a sense of travel. Stevenson is another example, Stevenson's travels aren't negligible. So what I am saying has no generality. I say, for my own account, someone who doesn't like to travel probably has these four reasons.

Parnet: Is this theme of travel connected to your natural slowness?

Deleuze: No, I don't conceive of traveling as slow, but in any case, I feel no need to move. All the intensities that I have are immobile intensities. Intensities distribute themselves in space or in other systems that aren't necessarily in exterior spaces. I can assure you that when I read a book that I admire, that I find beautiful, or when I hear music that I consider beautiful, I really get the feeling of passing into such states... Never could traveling inspire such emotions. So, why would I go seek these emotions in places that don't suit me very well, whereas I have the most beautiful of them for myself in immobile systems, like music, like philosophy? There is a geo-music, a geo-philosophy, I mean, they are profound countries, and these are more my countries, yes?

Parnet: Your foreign lands.

Deleuze: My very own foreign lands that I don't find by traveling.

Parnet: You are the perfect illustration that movement is not located in displacement, but you did travel a little, to Lebanon for a conference, to Canada, to the USA.

Deleuze: Yes, yes, I did that, but I have to say that I was always dragged into it, and I no longer do it because I should never have done all that, I did it too much. At that time, I liked walking, and now I

walk less well, so travel is no longer a possibility. But I recall walking all alone through the streets of Beirut from morning to night, not knowing where I was going. I like to see a city on foot, but that's all over. [Deleuze nods his head]

"W as in Wittgenstein"

Parnet: Let's move on to "W".

Deleuze: There's nothing in "W".

Parnet: Yes, there's Wittgenstein. I know he's nothing for you, but it's only a word.

Deleuze: I don't like to talk about that... For me, it's a philosophical catastrophe. It's the very example of a "school", it's a regression of all philosophy, a massive regression. The Wittgenstein matter is quite sad. They imposed (*ils ont foutu*) a system of terror in which, under the pretext of doing something new, it's poverty instituted in all grandeur (*c'est la pauvreté instaurée en grandeur*)... There isn't a word to describe this danger, but this danger is one that recurs, it's not the first time that it has happened. It's serious, especially since the Wittgensteinians are mean (*méchants*) and destructive (*ils cassent tout*). So in this, there could be an assassination of philosophy. They are assassins of philosophy.

Parnet: It's serious, then.

Deleuze: Yes... One must remain very vigilant. [Deleuze laughs]

"X Unknown, Y Unpronounceable" -- "Z as in Zigzag"

Parnet: "X" is unknown, and "Y" is unspeakable (*indicible*), [Deleuze laughs] so we'll pass directly to the final letter of the alphabet, it's "Zed."

Deleuze: Ah, well, good timing! (*Ça tombe bien!*)

Parnet: Now, it's not the Zed of Zorro, the Lawman (*le Justicier*), since we have understood throughout the alphabet, you don't like judgment. It's the Zed of bifurcation, of lightning, it's the letter that one finds in the names of great philosophers: Zen, Zarathustra, Leibniz, Spinoza, Nietzsche, BergZon, [Deleuze laughs] and of course, Deleuze.

Deleuze [laughing]: You are very witty with BergZon and very, very kind toward me. I consider Zed to be a great letter that helps us connect with "A," the fly, the zed of the fly, the zigging movement of the fly, the Zed, the final word, there is no word after zigzag. It's good to end on this word.⁵¹

So, what happens, in fact, in Zed? The Zen is the reverse of *Nez* [nose], which is also a zigzag. [Deleuze gestures the angle of a nose in the air] Z as movement, the fly... What is that about? It's perhaps the elementary movement, perhaps the movement that presided at the creation of the world. I'm currently reading, like everyone else, I'm reading a book on the Big Bang, on the creation of the universe, an infinite curving, how it occurred, the Big Bang. One must say that, at the origin of things, there's no Big Bang, there's the Zed.

[Change of cassette]

Parnet: So, the Zed of the fly, the Big Bang... the bifurcation...?

Deleuze: We have to replace the Big Bang with the Zed, which is, in fact, the Zen, the route of the fly. What does that mean? For me, when I evoke the zigzag, it's what we said earlier [in "U as in *Un* [One]"] about no universals, but rather aggregates of singularities. The question is how do we bring disparate singularities into relationship, or bring potentials into relationship, to speak in terms of physics. One can imagine a chaos full of potentials.

So how to bring these potentials into relation? Now I no longer recall in which vaguely scientific discipline there is a term that I like a lot and that I used in my books. Someone explained that between two potentials occurs a phenomenon that was defined by the idea of a "dark precursor." This dark precursor is what places different potentials into relation, and once the journey (*trajet*) of the dark precursor takes place, the potentials enter into a state of reaction, and between the two, the visible event flashes, the bolt of lightning.⁵¹ So, there is the dark precursor and [Deleuze gestures a huge Z in the air] then a lightning bolt, and that's how the world was born. There is always a dark precursor that no one sees, and then the lightning bolt that illuminates, and there is the world. Or that's also what thought must be, that's what philosophy must be. That's the grand Zed, but that's also the wisdom of the Zen. The sage is the dark precursor and then the blow of the stick comes, since the Zen master passes among his disciples striking them with his stick. The blow of the stick is the lightning that makes things visible... [Pause, then]: And so we have finished...

Parnet: Are you happy to have a zed in your name?

Deleuze: Delighted! (*Ravi!*) [Laughter]... There we are! What happiness it is to have done this. [Then standing up, putting on his glasses, he looks straight at Parnet]: Posthumous! Posthumous! (*Posthume! Posthume!*).

Parnet: PostZumous!

[The camera tracks Deleuze as he leaves the frame, and then from off camera, Deleuze's voice says]: And so there we are... and thank you for all of your kindness.

[Freeze frame on floor of Deleuze's apartment, end of Tape 3, credits roll]

Notes