



GILLES DELEUZE

Foucault

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I

This is going well since we are ending this long history, this long history of power-knowledge relations. And so, I'll remind that we ended on a general problem, one linked to these two axes of power and of knowledge: the problem of the relation that exists between the ensembles of forces and the forms. And so, I won't go back over it, unless... This will be up to you later to say whether there would be an occasion to revisit a point. We have examined in succession the possibility that forms might change over a short period according to the force relations put in play at a particular moment of that period. And we saw an initial case where the forces in man —I won't go back over the explanation of the forces in man — entered into relation with the forces of the outside [*dehors*], forces of such nature that the form that corresponded to and flowed from this aggregate of forces was or could be presented as the form "God," and it is in this sense that the classical age thinks in terms of the "God" form. Good.

That meant that the forces in man entered into relation with the forces of infinite height [*d'élevation infini*]. We have tried to determine the archaeological movement of thought that corresponds to this classical formation, and we've grasped it through the form or the name of an unfolding [*dépli*], a mechanism of unfolding, of rolling-out of deployment [*déploiement*], deployment in tables, in extendable series, in a continuum. And then we saw that a sort of mutation occurred in the force relations coinciding with this passage towards the end of the eighteenth century and further developing in the nineteenth. This time, the forces in man were not unfolded within a relation to forces of infinite height, which are precisely the forces of deployment, of unfolding, but on the contrary, they were folded back up on the forces of the outside—but, this time, these were forces of finitude, and this finitude was found outside of man. This is the finitude of life, the finitude of labor, the finitude of language, and without doubt, the entire configuration of knowledge changed.

It would no longer be the age of the analysis of wealth, but the age of political economy; it would no longer be the age of natural history of the living being, but the age of biology; it would no longer be the age of general grammar, but the age of philology. And what could be called the general scientificities of the classical age, insofar as the general is an order [*inaudible*], were now replaced by scientificities founded on comparison; the compared replaced the general, in the form of a comparative economy, a comparative philology, a biology or comparative anatomy. So, at this level, when the forces in man enter into relation with the



forces of finitude, or, if you prefer, when the order of infinity of the eighteenth century, of the classical age, is replaced by the roots of finitude, by life-labor-language, then the form through which thought is exercised changes. The form is no longer the form “God,” even if many aspects of this form still subsist, the accent is placed now on the form “man.” Good. That, I think it was... I hope it’s become relatively clear. That’s where we were.

This is where I’d like to pick up this question because this is a problem that we’ve all, you could say, embarked on together with Foucault, and it’s a point in *The Order of Things* that seems to me to be delicate, complicated, complex. It’s that... This is where we are: when the forces in man are folded back upon [*se replient sur*] the forces of finitude, life-labor-language, these forces of finitude impose a dispersion upon man: the dispersion of languages, of modes of production, of planes of life. In other terms, at the same time that the form “man” emerges as deriving from new force relations, man only exists in accordance with this form within the dispersion of languages, the dispersion of modes of production, the dispersion of planes of life. Thus, we get the striking text from p. 397 [*French; 386 English*] of *The Order of Things*, which tells us -- We’re going to go very slowly, so accept my slow rhythm -- which tells us: “Man was constituted when language was given over to dispersion” [*Deleuze repeats this phrase*]. And a bit further down on the same page, the same idea finds a different expression: “Man composed his own figure in the interstices of a language [*langage*] in fragments” [386e/397f]

What does that mean? It means: the dispersion of languages [*langues*] – three small points: is it only [a dispersion] of languages [*langues*]?; for the moment, the text says only the dispersion of languages [*langues*] -- the dispersion of languages [*langues*], which, you’ll understand, is a direct consequence of the finitude of language [*langage*], well, the dispersion of languages [*langues*] is the correlate of the form “man.” As a result, the question of a third form, following the nineteenth century, which would no longer be either the form of God or that of man, will come up almost by logical necessity, by the logical sequence as follows: if it comes about that language [*langage*] gathers itself back up again, won’t man be replaced by another form? If it’s true, you understand, if it’s true that the form “man” has for a correlate the dispersion of languages [*langues*], if it comes about for other reasons that language gathers itself back up, won’t the form “man”, at that moment, crumble, so to speak? The form man was at its peak when language was dispersed.

Language gathers itself back up: won’t that be the disappearance of the form “man”? For the benefit of another [form]? OK. Now, Foucault shows -- as I tried to develop last time -- Foucault’s very interesting thesis, it seems to me, is the following: he is going to try to show that at the end of the nineteenth century (thus, the form “man” perhaps hasn’t be around very long), that the end of the nineteenth century begins occur a gathering [*rassemblement*] of language through the action of new forces. He will present this gathering up of language as the constitution of a being of language or of a “there is” [*il y a*] of language.

But careful here! Foucault does not make this into an adventure in linguistics. It’s in this respect that he stands apart, it seems to me, from the whole current to which he is contemporary. If language gathers itself back up, it’s not for the benefit of, nor in the hands of linguistics. Why? Because it happens by way of newer forces than those animating linguistics. Linguistics, in Foucault’s conception, was not separable from the dispersion of languages [*langues*]. If language is gathered back up and thereby, in a way, prefigures the arrival of a new form, this gathering up does not happen through linguistics, but through an entirely other side, literature.

And doubtless literature in its modern form is not without relation to linguistics, but for Foucault, it’s not the relation that we had [*unintelligible*]. For example, it’s not at all the relation that structuralism believed it saw, looking for a kind of unity of linguistics and literature. The relation is entirely different. The relation is a relation, Foucault tells us, of compensation.



Modern literature, far from uniting with linguistics, defines itself as modern literature because it compensates for something that was putting a strain on linguistics. What was putting a strain on linguistics? It was that linguistics had its condition in the dispersion of languages, and so it couldn't attain a being of language.

You'll tell me: it was able to attain [*several inaudible words*] it was able to attain universal components and more. Let's suppose that phonemes are considered as the universal components. Yes, here are some components, but they're not what will allow a gathering up of language or the discovery of a being of language. For the components only exist insofar as they are actualized in irreducible languages [*langues*]. As Jakobson was saying from the beginning, he said, no doubt, if you take a problematic ensemble, you can say that it is present in a multiplicity of languages. Yes, but it cannot be actualized all together. A language will always be defined by a system of choices in the ensemble of phonemes and of distinctive traits, but a single language never actualizes the ensemble of potentialities of the language. Whereas Foucault tells us: what assures and operates a gathering up of language or the instauration of a being of language is not linguistics, but literature, as modern literature.

And I tried to say why. It's not therefore through a unity, if you will, with linguistics that this third moment, this gathering up of language, comes about; it's through a compensation for linguistics. And that, this idea, it seems to me very... There's a risk here of missing something important, hence my insistence; it seems to me very hybrid... Foucault is opposed, if you will, to what was currently a sort of opposition. It's still a relation, an opposition, but an opposition of linguistics and literature. So, I tried... I took a bit of a risk last time by trying to say in what way it's indeed a compensation: modern literature is something entirely different from linguistics. It operates in an entirely different way. And what I was trying to say was this: how modern literature, which however – an immediate objection: what is modern literature as a problematic of language? – how modern literature operates in national languages [*langues*], and thus it operates in the dispersion of languages [*langues*].

But that's not the question. I have tried to show that modern literature, in what defines it as great and as modern, was a literature that tended or that passed through the language in use, as real vectors, and these vectors tended toward what? Well, they tended toward what could be called -- and here you find one of Foucault's notions -- not something that would be outside [*en dehors*] language, but toward an outside [*un dehors*] of language. They tend neither toward something that would be in language, nor toward something that would be outside [*hors*] language, for example, pure ideas. They tend toward an outside [*un dehors*] of language. This outside of language is what I called the agrammaticals [*agrammaticaux*]. These agrammatical constructions constitute something like a limit of language.

Do you see the difference between agrammaticals and phonemes? Phonemes are strictly interior to language. Pure ideas are supposed to be outside of language. But agrammaticals are limits of language towards which grammatical variation tends. And I had tried to show, by taking very scattered, very different examples [?], that this can be said of Joyce, of Céline, of [?], it can be said of authors Foucault really liked, such as Roussel, such as, uh... of Brisset, and of many others of whom I haven't spoken, even to the point that we'll be done, but we could return to this point for some among you, but it's not my topic for the moment. We can see here that, in fact, literature indeed operates a sort of uncoupling from linguistics. Foucault says: it's by a sort of compensation... Let's say, more in order to underscore the originality of this thought, that it's by an uncoupling from linguistics that modern literature constitutes a being of language by causing language to tend towards its proper agrammatical limit, whereas linguistics remained on the side of the internal components of language.

I see a confirmation of this interpretation that I'm proposing to you in a text by Foucault, *The Order of Things*, when he tells us, in order to define this modern literature: "that



formless, mute, unsignifying region where language can find its freedom” [382 *English* / 395 *French*]. “That formless, mute region”: formless [*informe*], that is, non-formed [*non-formée*], not grammatically formed. “That formless, mute, not spoken, unsignifying region”: we should understand “unsignifying” in the strong sense, as “which does not refer to any signifier, where language can find its freedom.” That is, in what sense does it find its freedom [*se libère*]? Precisely in literature. Language is shot through with vectors or with tensors that make language tend towards its own outside, not something that would be outside [*en dehors*] of it, but towards its own outside, [the outside] of language, and when language is brought back to this region, so, there you go. There’s the problem we were dealing with.

How is the third form or the third age after the classical age and the humanist age of the nineteenth century defined? For the moment, it’s defined thus: new forces of the outside appear and the foremost among these forces is the being of language. A gathering of being comes about. First result: there comes about a gathering of the being of language that does not derive from the linguistics of the nineteenth century. It’s a new result. Is this new result enough to make us say that a new form appears, one that would no longer be God or man, but would be something like the overman? Here... I don’t know. And immediately I said, it’s on this point, I believe, that today’s meeting will be established... Immediately I said: but we need to develop this idea of Foucault’s, because this is my question for you: Why not say the same thing about the two other forms of finitude? The triple root of finitude is life-labor-language.

Shouldn’t we say about life and labor what Foucault says about a third age of language, and in the same conditions? What does this mean, “in the same conditions”? The biology of the nineteenth century only discovers the form of finitude of life through the dispersion [*inaudible*]. For us moderns, won’t a gathering up of life or a discovery of being come about in the same as it did earlier for language? This discovery would put life into relation not with an outside, but with its own outside [*son propre dehors*] and thus gather the being of life. Musn’t we still and also say this about labor? Isn’t labor as a force of finitude, that existed during the humanist age of the nineteenth century only insofar as it existed in the form of the dispersion of modes of production, going to integrate or tend to integrate into our modern world a gathering of the being of labor that would put labor into relation with its own outside? Must we not extend to the two other forces of finitude, life and labor, what Foucault has just said to us about language? And is it not necessary to extend to life and to labor under the same condition noticed by Foucault, namely: if literature gathers a being of language, it is not through an alliance with linguistics, but through a compensation for linguistics. Similarly, if life gathers a being of life, gathers itself up into a being of life, it doesn’t do so as an alliance or in evolution with biology, but through a compensation for and an uncoupling from biology. And if labor gathers a being of labor, it is not in alliance with political economy, but in a sort of compensation or rupture or uncoupling from political economy. That’s my question.

That’s my first question. We’re proceeding very slowly. This is still a very gentle session. We’ll develop things very, very progressively. Because, see the advantage of this hypothesis that I’m considering here. I haven’t yet explained what this being of life or of labor would consist of. We’ve seen vaguely -- and I’m not asking anything more for the moment than to see it “vaguely” -- since we’re talking about life, we’re talking about the overman, you understand, and talking about the overman is not a small thing, even though we’ll learn that the overman is something any greater than God or “man”, after all, so not enough to make big deal of it. The drama is that we’ll want to make something more out of the overman, but, you know, it’s not a big deal, or just a little one, so...

I’m saying: what would be the advantage [of this], before we even know what this extension of Foucault’s hypothesis would consist of? You see that at least there would then be a new



figure of the forces of the outside, a new being of language discovered in an outside of language, a new being of labor, a new being of life. I'm saying: what would render this hypothesis, it seems to me, interesting, is if someone told me that, in order to give an account of the formation "overman," that is, of the form that is neither God nor man, we would only need to invoke an adventure of language, my own reaction would be... I'd be very seduced, seduced from the start... But, all the same, I'd have a bit of regret. I'd say to myself: oh, well then, it's a literary concern. And, after all, we have no reason to believe that literature is its own concern

I mean: we have no reason to believe that, if literature is something as serious as... uh... that it would be something autonomous, a sort of ghetto, or if the avatars of literature do not also produce their shocks elsewhere and literature only received its shocks from elsewhere, I don't see how literature would have a privilege while life or labor wouldn't. For these reasons, the tendency to generalize Foucault's hypothesis seems interesting to me. All at once, we get a kind of return shock.... You see, it's delicate, all that, it's delicate. We get a return shock, and what is it? It's why Foucault tells us... Why does Foucault maintain that the theme he's just sketched -- and it really is a matter of a sketch, given that the texts are very short -- concerning literature cannot be transported to life or to labor? He tells us: literature has the capacity to carry out an uncoupling with respect to linguistics, an uncoupling that will establish a new age. Here, I say: That's literally his thesis. He doesn't tell us: but at the same time life and labor operate analogous uncouplings. He tells us so little like that, moreover, he says the opposite of it. He says: life and labor do not have to do it and could not do it. Only literature does it. That troubles me enormously. For, we can say, fine, he has his reasons.

For my part, I only see two, at least insofar as they're given in *The Order of Things*. *The Order of Things* is a very great book. I'm not teaching you anything in telling you that it's a very great book. It has its very strong moments and those moments... that are not at all weak moments, nor moments in which things go faster, in which we get rid of something, etc.. To the point that, in a very great book -- and generally, this is the proof it's a great book -- you get tripped up, you collide against something. And for my part, I collide with these two reasons. Maybe there are some that I haven't noticed.... We'll see in a moment.

But for my part, I see two reasons given explicitly in *The Order of Things* that would reserve for language what Foucault refuses for life and labor, that is, the force of constituting a being [*être*] or a gathering. You'll find the first reason on pp. 303-304 [315-316 French]. I'll read it aloud since it leaves me perplexed. "This scattering [*éparpillement*], this scattering of languages....," what I called [*the sound of a hammer pounding starts*] or what Foucault calls, what he called the dispersion of languages, "This scattering of languages" -- Listen closely because evidently [*noises of the hammer continues*] Oh no!! -- "This scattering imposes upon language, if not a privilege, at least a destiny that seems singular" -- it's not far from a privilege -- when compared with labor or life" [303; 315 French].¹ All right. "When the table of natural history was dissociated...." Recall that biology was constituted through the dissociation of the table of natural history of the seventeenth century, that is, by affirming the dispersion of planes of life and thus breaking apart the continuous series... "When the table of natural history was dissociated, living beings were not dispersed, but, on the contrary, regrouped around the enigma of life" [303; 315 French, translation modified]. I can't help but reacting here! Can an enigma regroup? Indeed, since the defining feature of an enigma seems to me to be that it leaves open the question of the enigmatic thing's power to regroup as something fundamentally problematic; otherwise, the enigma would no longer be enigmatic.

¹ Translation modified.



In any case, living beings haven't been dispersed. Yet, when he was analyzing [*inaudible*] -- and I took another look at those very important passages from *The Order of Things* -- he was speaking to us of the heterogeneity of the planes of life in Cuvier, which for him is the founding act of biology, and the heterogeneity of the planes of life in Cuvier implied a dispersion of the living being. I'm not saying at all that this is contradictory: here, well, living beings haven't completely been dispersed in the same way that languages were, but they remained grouped around the enigma of life. Fine. And he continues: "When the analysis of wealth had disappeared [to the benefit of political economy and of the diversity of modes of production], all economic processes were regrouped around production..." [303/315 French, translation modified]. "All economic processes were regrouped around production [and all made it possible]." Here too I am perplexed because production [*inaudible*] and what made it possible were the radically diverse and dispersed conditions themselves. So, it's complicated here.

Thus, he tells us -- I'm not at all trying to object, I'm trying to tell you my state of mind regarding this text -- He tells us, I'll start again: when dispersion is imposed on language [*langage*], it's something very particular that holds only for language, since the dispersion of the living being, on the other hand, did not prevent life from remaining grouped around the enigma of life, and the dispersion of economic processes did not prevent the economy from remaining grouped around production and what makes it possible. And Foucault continues: "on the other hand..." "*on the other hand*, when the unity of general grammar -- discourse [as it appeared in the classical age] -- was broken up [to the benefit of the diversity of languages and of comparative philology], whereas language appeared in a multiplicity of modes of being, whose unity was doubtless" -- the "doubtless" seems to me to be very curious -- "something that couldn't be restored" [303/315-316 French, translation modified]. Here it's understood: except by an entirely different movement that would become modern literature [*inaudible*]. This is the first formal text on this matter to affirm a privilege of language. And if I try to sum it up, and please believe that it's not... here too it's not... It's a question that I'm asking, I see nothing other [in this passage] than [the following reasoning]: it's like this because it's like this. Why does the being of... [*Interruption of the recording; cassette change*]

II

... Why didn't life need to recompose its being or gather its being through an uncoupling? Why didn't labor need to gather its being through an uncoupling? [This would be in] just the same way as language needed to gather its being by an uncoupling of literature from linguistics. As a result of this first reason, it seems I'm being told: "in fact, it's like that," and I don't understand why.

The second reason is on pages 292-3 [306-7 in French]. And the validity of this second reason no longer stems from the perspective of a general parallel, language on the one hand, life and labor on the other; this second reason from pages 292-3 holds more strictly for and in the framework of a parallel language-life. And Foucault's argument, there, is exactly the following, I'll sum it up, you'll see it on pages 292-3: when life became historical in the nineteenth century, that is, when it acquired a historicity, it only did so in a secondary sense. Its proof, Foucault will say, is no longer a question. It was only secondarily. In what sense? It's not the composition of living beings, however diverse, that imposed a historicity of life; what imposed a history of life were rather the relations between the living being and the milieu. And that's the whole theme, in Cuvier for example, of the conditions of existence.



Thus, the biology of the nineteenth century discovers the components of the living being, but it is not yet the internal components of the living being that impose a historicity of life. What imposes a historicity of life can be seen from the following consideration: composite organisms are in milieux or environments. It's thus through the intermediary of milieux that life receives a historicity. And that's obviously true in Darwin, but it's already true in Lamarck. The share of historicity that Lamarck recognizes in the living being stems from what he calls the conditions and what he discovers -- he's the first to do a grand theory of conditions of existence, which is different from a simple theory of the action of the milieu on the living being. It's on this level the historicity of life appears.

Whereas, Foucault tells us that, in the case of language, language is directly and immediately grasped in a movement of historicity. In other terms, the philology of the nineteenth century discovers language immediately as diachronic, to the point that, in order to discover language as synchronic -- Foucault adds on page 293/307 --, we had to wait for Saussure, who, bizarrely, is forced here to restore something of the classical age and of the classical conception of language. But language is first discovered as historical force, without having to pass through the secondary character of a milieu. And, here, I'll say that this looks more like a reason to me... But I'll also admit here, and it's not, in my mind an objection, I don't see... I don't see why... [Interruption of the recording]

... to which the philologists of the nineteenth century linked language. I don't understand. I don't understand why he establishes at this level, why he tells us: life, to become historical, needed the milieu, whereas language didn't [*several indistinct words*]. And I see no reason given in the *Order of Things* on which to base this privilege of language or, as he puts it, this singular destiny. We're thus at -- it's not in order to make of it a [*inaudible*], because it's not serious -- in any case the two hypotheses will [*inaudible*].

I'm just saying that, given where we are, we can consider at this stage of our problem a narrow hypothesis that corresponds to the letter of Foucault; and we can consider an enlarged hypothesis, a generalized hypothesis that briefly leaves behind the letter of Foucault, but only in order, perhaps, to make clearer the conclusion that the two hypotheses will still share, specifically, the advent of a third form that is no longer either God or man.... I'm saying that this advent will lead to the same conclusion, that this advent of a third form that is no longer either God or man depends only on the factor of a *gathering of a being of language* (restricted hypothesis) or depends (enlarged hypothesis) on the gathering of the three aspects, being of language, being of life, being of labor. Each of the three linking its relation with its outside. It's for this reason that there's no point in making a drama out of it [?].

So, what stays with me, given where I am here, what I would like to choose -- in order to get back very quickly to the letter of Foucault, to the literal text of Foucault -- what I'd like to choose is the enlarged hypothesis and, once again, for a reason that I'll recapitulate: if we were told that something as important as a new form of thought that would no longer be either God or man depends only on literature, something would seem to be to be missing, to begin with the relationship of literature to life and labor. After all, literature is itself indissolubly linked with life as such and with labor as such. On the other hand, [Georges] Comtesse told us at last session that -- understand where we are here, and it's about a very precise point -- Comtesse told me at the end of the last session: "Well, for my part, I see why Foucault gives this privilege or this singular destiny to language." And he even added, if I've properly understood his thought, "I understand even why he is forced to do it." There we are. So, given where we are, at this point I would like to turn things over to Comtesse if he is willing, and he will tell us how he has read these texts, of this problem [*inaudible*]. Are you willing? And then afterwards we'll see if together, I don't know, he didn't tell me what he was going to say.



Comtesse: [In this barely audible introduction, that lasts for about 75 seconds, Comtesse speaks about Foucault's conception of language as related not only to literature, but also to a conception of the "outside." In all, the intervention lasts for about 28 minutes.]

... and it's, as he says, the way in which language is doubled in representation. What is more, literature can be thought, Foucault says, only on the basis of a theory of signification, and Foucault defines it not simply as a gathering, but as a way, he says, of re-ascending, as a re-ascent from the representative function of language to its brute being. The brute being of language therefore differs from the depth of organization, for example, of organization [inaudible] as from the structural diachronic system of language. The language in question can already be approached through something that was not very accentuated, from a space which, however, I'll show this, still circumvents it.

What Foucault discovers to his advantage in *The Order of Things*, what overturns or transforms or sweeps away the very traditional and classical philosophical form of thought as the site [a cough; word inaudible], specifically, this is what is certain: one only knows, whatever might be the figure of knowledge or the form of thought, one only knows and feels already on the basis of a space of language that simultaneously distributes all the knowledges of a determinate historical formation, through the unfolding or refolding of knowledges, and imposes even their form or their relative founding figure. The space of language, the episteme that he sometimes calls -- there are several names -- fundamental knowledge of language, [inaudible] order of knowledge, historical *a priori*, the space of language is neither a ground [fondement] of truth, nor a soil of knowledge, but a foundation [fondation], a bedrock, a sub-soil, an archaeological layer anterior to any difference or opposition between theory and practice.

According to a famous text by Foucault, if we wish to oppose practice to pure speculation, each of them in any case represent a single and same fundamental knowledge. In a culture and at a given moment, there is only ever one single *episteme* that defines the conditions of possibility of every knowledge than the one manifested in a theory or one manifested in a practice. The space of language is not the thinking of being, that is, the thinking of a truth or of a founding form or constitutive figure. He deconstructs, almost ahead of himself, the primacy or the priority of an epistemology. It's not thought AS SUCH [LA pensée], but only an event of thinking language where the relationship of the sign, of meaning and a law of language formally repeats itself or always reproduces itself, a law that assures, in fact, this relationship of sign and sense, which makes it, like all laws, constant, in other words, always, in every culture, in every age, in every formation, always a sense of signs for a law of language, always a play of signs measured by sense, kept by the law. The signs can be conjoined to the world as a textual surface. They can separate or withdraw from the world in order to be conjoined to the representative scene of order, of the chain of reasons or ideas. They can [inaudible] to the representation in order to designate its irreducible outside, to express a [inaudible] depth that overflows them, at any rate.

The semantic conjunction of signs is always repeated by the law of language. It's only the semantic conjunction that changes form, but the law goes on repeating in the disjunctive series of events of thinking language. What varies from one space of language to the other is only the function of the sign, the place of sense, the status of the law, the form of the conjunction and maybe the figure of the disjunction. Every [inaudible] a sexual sense, specular destiny, given natural, opaque, according to the law of resemblance and that results in speaking not being seeing, but [rather] striving to read the ciphered, symbolic text of the world, and to try to mark its resemblance to the sacred text of the Book, that is, the sacred difference in sense or meaning between them.

Second [point]: a status, a sense internal to signs, representative, arbitrary, a transparent knot, according to the law of order or of difference [inaudible], ensuring that speaking is not



seeing but looking at a distance through the reflexive optic of the power to represent oneself, to judge, to put in series, to classify, to form a representative table, folded out.

Third [point], the modern age: a sense that is no longer interior, but an exterior sense, either a finite deep finite outside exterior to representation, or an outside of the transparent and full inside. Deep sense, precisely, of signs that now designate, express, according to the law of time, inclusive difference as a law of representative signification.

Time, says Foucault, is language's interior mode of analysis and not its place of birth. Which means that speaking is not seeing, but elaborating representative significations, expressing complex organizations, up to the point of discovering structural systems as the very outside of these significations.

The spaces of language, put differently, are not deduced or induced from one another and are not to be described as a natural sedimentation of geological layers; it's not even a geology of knowledges, for each space is a fragile bed, a foundation that will not hold, a moving subsoil, a space doomed to sink and to crumble. The differential series of spaces of language is a series of crises, ruptures, strange breaks, enigmatic discontinuities, and events that emerge and disappear at a blow without any natural evolution, without any regulated historical passage, without any dialectical becoming. The paradox of discontinuity, the aporia of the brusque mutation opens itself only to the enigma of the relationship between the event of thinking language (the *episteme*) and what Foucault calls "erosion from the outside [*du dehors*]."²

In fact, no space of language can give an account of itself by itself, can justify itself, can inscribe itself in a principle of reason. A space of language emerges and disappears through a hitherto unheard-of outside; it is exposed to the erosion of the outside, to the subterranean pressure that cracks it, fissures it, fractures it, producing its break and its crumbling. Each space of language, each event of thinking language, each kind of *episteme* is opened and closed from the outside, opens and close the outside, the language that is other [*le langage autre*] of the outside. The opening and the closing of the outside, of the space of the outside is the secret play [*jeu*] of the emergence and the disappearance of each space of play [*espace de jeu*] of the cultural machinery of an epoch or an age. What is repeated is the disjunction of the series of events of thinking language and of the space of the outside. No event of the thinking of language, no knowledge as unfolding or refolding of the event, no founding truth comes to think or effectuate the outside. The space of the outside, the language of the outside, the outside of language designates, says Foucault, is what remains always unthought at the heart of thought.

What literature serves to gather in its movement of ascent to the brute being of language [*langage*] is thus neither language [*langue*], nor the organization of language [*langage*], nor even the epistemic spaces of language [*langage*]. But precisely the language of the outside as the outside of language. And the space of the outside also has a relation not only to literature, but to the genealogical event of the history of madness, an event of this space of the outside that undoes almost in advance the immemorial conjunction of signs and of sense according to an epistemic law of language; an event at the beginning of the history of madness, in the high Middle Ages, at the end of the fifteenth century; an event in which there is an abyssal whirlwind of forces, of agitated signs, of affects, of a violent intensity; an event of a pure, unsustainable, un-supportable insanity [*démence*] that will be annulled in the history of madness, the history of the infinite reserve of incommensurable knowledge closed from the genealogical event itself.

The history of madness, the history of specular difference with [*inaudible*], of the exclusive difference with the mad person [*insensé*], of the inclusive difference with the mentally ill person. For, in the fifteenth century, in the high Middle Ages, there occurs this genealogical event of

² *The Order of Things* 50e/64f.



the history of madness as an event always covered over by the series of binarities that are [*inaudible*] in history. It is an irresistible thrust, an uncoercible power [*puissance*] that rises, that bursts in a gigantic delirium that invades everything, a violent eruption of madness with hallucinatory, intense, and terrifying figures.

As Foucault shows, following a triple movement, [there is], first, in eruptive madness, in the event of the space of the outside, in the explosion of violence, of madness, the beast [*bête*], the beast dominated, domesticated, trained, socialized, [that] returns, re-emerges, and imposes itself and seizes hold of man. Foucault is going to say, the beast frees itself in order to acquire a fantastic type of force. Madness is already this becoming-beast of man, becoming that scatters, that is multiplied and dispersed in a multiplicity that Foucault calls the multiplicity of delirious animals. Which specifies this multiplicity is the bursting of power [*puissance*] freed from every sacred difference. Becoming-beast, becoming-delirious-animals effaces the great names, and not simply the founding forms, of God or of man. This effacement will become unsupportable and will be reappropriated in the founding forms of God or man, as founding forms or supposedly founding forms of knowledge. But when man as a name is effaced in the becomings, Foucault says that animals became the secret nature of man.

Second point, the eruption of the beast, animal madness that bursts apart, coincides with the thermodynamic explosion of the earth, with the explosion of nature, with the dislocation of the support of the power of nature. The earth catches fire and vomits its dead; the stars snuff out and sink into an unprecedented cosmic catastrophe; all life, says Foucault, is undone and comes to death, life as mortification of death dies.

Third point: the annihilation of the world, the cosmic power that is conjugated to the explosion of the earth or the dislocation of nature frees then what Foucault names pure destruction; this delirium is the extreme exasperation or becoming-beast or the intensification of becoming-animal. It is the violent or savage intensity that incessantly rises. And Foucault insists on the somber [*a cough, inaudible words*] or the universal fury of delirious animals, the devastating fury of animals with their demented cries, their fanatic vociferations, the mad vengeance, their voluptuous devouring or their raw carnage.

Only Foucault doesn't say only that the history of madness and the history of time, of these modes of integration, of differentiation as violent outpouring of the multiple event, the event multiplied with the eruptive power of madness—he doesn't speak of time only as the effectuator of forgetting, nor even of the forgetting of forgetting. He does not speak of time or of the history of madness as a simple space of a project of rejection, exclusion, segregation, of a power to appropriate the re-appropriation of madness, the inspection of madness according to a figure of mastery or domination or according to the founding forms of knowledge; he does not speak of time as a power from which a knowledge would be extracted, and he is not content to speak of the play between strategies and archives, the complex play of culture that societies need to survive. He does not annul the genealogical event of the history of madness, only he does not stop at this event either; he does not inscribe himself in it. He is not content to register it or to accentuate the break-up of power, the explosion, the dislocation or the affects of delirium of pure destruction or the annihilation of the world.

For the event, the genealogical event of madness does not belong to the space of the outside as outside of the spaces of language, this event is not mute; it is defined not by what happens, but concerns on the contrary what is produced or arises [*se produit*] in what happens [*se passe*], that is, what is reproduced or what is repeated. Before, in other words, a power is exercised to annul or reject the event, to reduce it to what happens, what happened or what could happen; before a knowledge is withdrawn or extracted from this power to fix, to solidify, to consolidate, the event of the space of the outside itself repeats, strangely, a knowledge or a language. It is, as an event, the harbor [*recev*] of a buried knowledge or the veiling [*cèlement*] of a



lost language. Animals called delirious are, says Foucault, the elements of a difficult, closed, esoteric language.

In this closed and guarded language kept by the mad, the cruelty of the final completion shows itself. Closed knowledge, the closed and foreign knowledge of the genealogical event of the history of madness as event of the space of the outside is that of the unleashed power of madness, of the violent intensity of desire, and it announces what Foucault calls the last happiness and the supreme punishment. It announces the catastrophe, the fulgurating crumbling; it's the advent, Foucault writes, of a night where the old reason of the world is swallowed up.

One does not want to know anything of what the mad person wants; one wants the mad person not to come to say what he knows; that is what necessitates the gesture of power, by exclusion, the rejection, the segregation of the mad; the closed strange knowledge of the event of madness as what Foucault calls a knowledge forbidden and anterior to power and to knowledge that is extracted from this power. Power, with respect to the language of the outside and the language of this time, is elaborated as the radical non-knowledge of language, that is, the will to ignore the body of madness.

[End of Comtesse's intervention; shuffling sounds]

Deleuze: It's perfect! It's perfect. *[Pause]* Well, I should say that this seems to me obviously to have been a very remarkable intervention. It directly concerns our problem: for what reason does Foucault grant language this singular destiny with respect to life and labor? Well, there, I don't wish at all to raise objections to Comtesse, just as Comtesse didn't raise any about the direction I was going in. You have some elements; it's not impossible that some among you can add still other elements. There's no reason that we keep ourselves to two hypotheses. The advantage of Comtesse's version—everyone will have felt it—is that it respects from one end to the other—or it presents itself as respecting—the letter of Foucault.

Well... For my part I'd just like once again, on this point, to make a few remarks, that in spite of everything... I listened carefully... What Comtesse said, I maintain the possibility of a broad hypothesis, not in order to impose it on you, since in any case the two hypotheses meet each other at the level.... It's like a bifurcation. If I try to classify my way, I'm going a bit in the vein of what Comtesse said; if I try to bring out the points, I'll mark... uh... where with each point I bifurcate from what Comtesse said. And once again, it's not at all in order to prolong a discussion since I believe that, what he said was the best of what he could say, and what I'm saying is the best of what I can say, so there's not... We each do what we can.... It's up to you to choose or to find something else. But, once again, the world is large and there are a thousand things still to find.

I'm saying: the first point of intervention made by Comtesse was to take up and accept the problem, as I raised it, with an absolute honesty and rigor. So, no problem, let's start there, let's start from that problem: why this singular destiny of language? So, no question.

Second point in Comtesse's intervention: he wanted to indicate from the outset that, when Foucault brings up literature, it's not surprising that it involves an uncoupling from linguistics since literature grasps language under a form (*a form* is a bad word)—under a power that is not of linguistic nature. Namely, literature does not treat language from the point of view of designation or signification, nor even—this is included, I believe, in what Comtesse said—from the point of view of the signifier. But, he was telling us, we should recall the importance in Foucault of the term “a brute being of language.” On this point, I agree entirely, since what I was suggesting myself was to define this brute being of language independently of any reference to designation-signification-signifier, and I think for my part that I can find it in those vectors that tend toward an outside of language.



So, on this point, I believe that my agreement with Comtesse was.... With a nuance, it's that I understand very well that modern literature doesn't grasp language at the level of linguistic components and doesn't grasp it at the level of significations. But when I ask the question "and why would there not be a brute being of life?" I understand equally that such a brute being could only be discovered through an uncoupling from organisms and that, just as the language about which literature is concerned surpasses the dimension of signification, the brute being of life about which this third figure is concerned, if it existed, would also surpass the organization of life. The same holds with labor.

The third point... So, it seems to me that this first point does not yet settle the question "narrow or wide hypothesis?" because: why would life not be capable of a similar operation that would release a brute being just as literature does for language? Third strong point in Comtesse's intervention... and, now, this will put into play the significant differences between him and me... His third point is: don't believe that language is a force like the others, or do not believe that the space of language is a space like the others, or – but this comes down to the same thing, given where we are—don't believe that it is one stratum among the others. If then there is a destiny of language, it is, I'll borrow here an expression from Comtesse, not decideable from a geology. Or it's the bedrock of bedrocks, it's whatever you'd like, but it's not a bedrock, it's really, he tells us... and it's not a knowledge. So maybe life is a knowledge, maybe labor is a knowledge, a know-how [*savoir-faire*] and a *savoir-vivre*, but language is not a knowledge; it's not a knowing-how-to-talk [*savoir-parler*], it's something quite different, Comtesse tells us, and in his simplest and least lyrical expression, Comtesse tells us: it's a condition of possibility... it's the condition of possibility of all knowledge. Based on this, it's doubtless... one cannot even say that it's a basis... well.... It's the condition of possibility of all knowledge—OK. Here, I'd say: sure, why not? I'd certainly say: Comtesse is right, but it's just that, for me, for me, that doesn't exhaust the matter because "condition" has many meanings. I'll take up the expression "condition of possibility" myself—if it doesn't satisfy Comtesse, he can always correct me—by saying: yes, but possibility is a word quickly said. I am saying: whatever the meaning or the precision that one gives to "language is not a knowledge"...

III

Language is not a knowledge, but the condition of -- three small points -- the condition of possibility, let's put it, of all knowledge. My response: yes, and after that? Does that exclude my problem, from the point of view of the wide hypothesis? Does that settle my problem from the point of view of the wide hypothesis? For, from the point of view of the enlarged hypothesis I'm dreaming up, "condition" is like "finitude"; I mean that there are many meanings to *condition* just as there are many roots of finitude. If use the expression "sufficient reason" for a bit of an equivalent of "condition" in philosophy, I recall immediately a great text of Schopenhauer entitled *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*.³ The fourfold root. So, there are many conditions.

I'll accept, in listening to Comtesse, that language is the condition of all knowledge. I don't know if I'm convinced, but I understand what that means. On the other hand, I won't understand if someone tells me: "condition of possibility" exhausts all the meanings of the word "condition." If, for example, I take up Schopenhauer's list of reasons [*ratio*], I see that

³ *Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde*. Deleuze says "*De la quadruple racine de raison suffisante*."



there is a *ratio* called, in Latin, *ratio cognoscendi*, a condition of knowledge [*connaissance*]. It's not the same thing, but, let's add a condition of knowing [*savoir*]. But there is also a *conditio fiendi*, condition of becoming. There is also a *conditio agendi*, a condition of doing.

At this level, I rediscover my problem. I can grant to Comtesse all the privilege he wants to give to language, or a singular destiny of language. But I am saying: that doesn't exclude my doubts on the... my doubts, on the contrary: my urges toward an enlarged hypothesis. For if it's true that language is, or can be, called "condition of possibility of all knowledge," isn't life—for knowledge is not only said and spoken— isn't life the *ratio fiendi* of all knowledge? And isn't labor the *conditio agendi* of knowledge? As a result, to the extent that there would be a triple root of the condition, I could say of the two other powers, life and labor, exactly what Comtesse kept to language -- with the simple restriction, of course, that it's not the same sense of the word "condition." So, in this sense, I'm not at all saying... Understand, I'm not in the process of saying: I'm the one who's right! I'm saying, well yes, but I see the possibility of maintaining a wider hypothesis, and I see reasons that would make it a sort of necessity to keep this hypothesis.

Third remark, or fourth, I no longer know: with great... which confirms the preceding [remark], and here I'll touch on what I call the essential differences between Comtesse's reading of Foucault and my own. At several moments, and with great precision at several moments, Comtesse repeated, "To speak is not to see." At a particularly brilliant moment during his intervention, he even made it into a kind of litany. *To speak is not to see*. Each time he showed in what way speaking wasn't seeing. But we can see how, on the sly -- well, "on the sly," I'm afraid to say "on the sly"; he does nothing on the sly, as we can clearly see -- In any case, I saw very well how each time it was a way to expel seeing [*le voir*]. He said, to speak is not to see, for example, it's to read. But, each time, it was a way of overdetermining speaking [*le parler*]. As for the power of seeing, he recognized no domain and no particular force to it. From the beginning, I have believed for my part that one can very easily read Foucault through this form, from the start, and that was the starting point of these sessions on Foucault. Their purpose was to propose an entirely different interpretation of "to speak is not to see." [*Brief interruption in the recording*]

...put radically in question, it's what we did in the first trimester, and on that point, I see strictly nothing wrong. I've always told you: if you prefer another reading, go for it. But I believe that in all this, well, at the level of this third point, the real difference between my reading and Comtesse's falls on what "to speak is not to see" means. I would say -- but then I would already be proving my point -- that Comtesse gave an interpretation of "to speak is not to see" that better fits Blanchot than it does Foucault, but I'm not sure, because.... In any case he gave a very Blanchotian interpretation of "to speak is not to see."

I myself believe in the irreducibility of seeing [*du voir*] in Foucault, so, in a sense, that confirms me when I say: no, no, language does not have a singular destiny. Because it does not have.... Rather, everything has a singular destiny. Language only has a singular destiny because seeing has a singular destiny. Another point -- the last one, in my opinion, but a complex one, uh... complex because, here, I was... I was troubled and bothered that Comtesse landed so well on his feet, if I might say that --the real reason for the primacy [of language], Comtesse tells us, is in sum this: the space of language is the only one to be a condition (once again, I just said that it doesn't seem to me to be obvious that the space of language is the only one to be a condition; everything depends on the meaning of "condition"), but he goes further in his final point, which was the longest point of his intervention. In the longest point of his intervention, he not only told us that the space of language is the only one to be a condition, but, if language has this privilege, it's because it alone is a relation with the outside, with what Foucault calls the outside, this space of power [*puissance*] that we haven't



yet seen, that we've approached, about which we haven't yet sought what it... But that we feel that, and there Foucault uh... Comtesse would entirely agree, I suppose, the outside has nothing to do with the external world. It's a power to the nth degree, but Comtesse tells us that it's in fact the space of language, or it's in fact language in its power that constitutes the space of the outside.

In other terms, it's through language that the true confrontation with the outside occurs. Or: that is the privileged site with respect to the outside. And this is what I understand what Comtesse to be saying. Again -- but almost by virtue of my preceding remarks -- I do not see why one would say that. I don't see why life -- I'm starting over -- does not offer (*tend*) a space that would be entirely vectorized towards and on a relation with the outside. I don't see why there isn't an outside of life just as much as there's an outside of language and that henceforth, as Comtesse so well says so well, this would be a life of the outside as well as a language of the outside. Maybe we'd have to put this aside for when we got to this notion of the outside as ultimate power [*puissance*], but ultimately, that does not seem to me at all obvious, especially since, on this point, given his wish to show that language weaves this space of the outside and confronts the outside in its space, Comtesse has made the problem of madness burst apart, a problem he can rightly or likely think traverses the entirety of Foucault's body of works.

And, when he spoke to us of madness, what struck me is that he kept on invoking—in order to give an account of what he himself called this explosion of madness, that is, of this reason beyond all reason—he kept on invoking nature, life, the beast. Of course, he corrected himself: all that is part of the language of the outside. But I'll repeat: why say that? Or why only say that? Why act all the time as if life, in all its exacerbated forms, belonged to the language of the outside, without affirming at the same time that the language of the outside belongs to the deepest level of life? Otherwise, why would Comtesse need to speak of a veritable explosion of nature? He may well tell us that all that is still the speech of the outside, but you know, I don't see why we'd think that the process of madness happens or finds in language a singular destiny, but doesn't find in life or labor a singular destiny. I'm not at all saying... Everything depends there also, I'll come back to this... and this is almost my essential reaction to what Comtesse said: he only wants one meaning for a word like "condition"; he only wants one meaning for "beyond every condition," but the conditions are multiple. Once again there is a condition of labor and a condition of life just as much as a condition of speaking.

And there is a beyond of these conditions that is very different. If you take the experience the most... I don't want to... I don't dare to... Comtesse was rather lyrical and very lyrical and I don't even need to try to be, and I wouldn't know how to be... If you take uh... uh... what we feel of madness, whatever our individual adventures have been, when we feel that madness concerns us, don't you see that this concerns not only language in whatever sense you take it, even in the sense of this profound power [*puissance*] that traverses us and that Comtesse was talking about, but also that life traverses us no less and that there is a vitalism of madness just as there is a language, a language of madness and a labor of madness?

I mean, and here I am falling back on platitudes, how do you recognize someone who isn't doing well, and how do you recognize...? Because, you know... madness... For me, if I had a single reproach to make of Comtesse, it's a very modest reproach that I'd make, it's... uh... There is something still more beautiful than madness; it's the one who comes out on the other side of it... uh... And it's there that you'll find life, language, and labor. Uh... otherwise, what madness has to teach us is nothing much, it's something very derisory; its greatness begins from the moment that you leave it. And how does one get out on the other side? And how does it manifest itself when things aren't going well, and how does it manifest itself when things are going better? It's obvious that this already manifests itself from the outside, well,



it's quite flat: it's through a certain way of speaking; yes, it's true: you open up through all of language, and so there, you open up vectors, you open up vectors, you want to reach an outside of language. It happens that this fails, that your vectors crack, it happens that it's... It happens that, here, you are aphasiac, you are a stammerer, you are uh... Nothing! Nothing passes. The vectors turn into jam, sirup, what, it's... uh...

But what else is happening? When that happens like that, in the power of language, well you know, it happens alongside. Uh... you are trying to construct an object; you are trying to write a page: how do you want to go about distinguishing the raw being of labor and the raw being of language? You try to finish your page. Did you... Did you... I suppose.... Did you ever see at some time schizophrenic handwriting? I'm supposing you have done so. Did you see how a page is crammed full? Did you see the pain, the sort of pain that this supposes? This sort of cramming, as if one were forcing something into a box? And if the schizo takes an object, or if he wants to make something -- one of the most beautiful texts by Michaux is the description of a table constructed by a schizophrenic. The cramming. We're using "cramming" to indicate something that concerns language in schizophrenia, "crammed language" of the schizophrenic. But his production is crammed as well, the table is crammed, the table that never has enough, where there is an addition upon an addition, etc. What pain is there in this sort of perpetual addition? And life. And life. What is the life of madness? That's why I was struck that... I am not at all speaking about what Comtesse said about beasts and becoming-beast [*devenir-bête*] since those are things Félix Guattari and I participated in, but for my part, I've never grasped, when we had spoken of this -- something that Foucault did not do -- when we discussed about the becomings-animal [*devenirs-animaux*] that traverse madness and schizophrenia, well uh... we had linked them fundamentally, I believe, to a power of life [*puissance de vie*] that was life within schizophrenia and that was something indissociable from the nature, from the life, from language. I don't think... [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

So, Comtesse carried out a reinstatement that, for me, seems astonishing because at the very moment where he was at his most lyrical -- buried in his *explosion of the nature* uh, the *crumbling of life*, etc. -- he explained to us nonetheless that all of this happened by way of the space of language. I'll repeat my remark once again: yes, he's right, that happens by way of the space of language—from the point of view, shall we say, of the condition of possibility, but it passes through the space of life from the point of view of the *ratio fiendi*, the condition of becoming, and it passes through the space of labor from the point of view of the *conditio agendi*, the condition of doing. Now, the mad person, you know, is not someone who speaks, but someone who pursues an experience with speech, someone who is thrown into a painful experience with respect to life, to labor and to language.

So, it's in the name of these remarks... I won't argue with anything in what Comtesse said. All of it seems to me to be of a very high quality, and that's why I can say: there you go, you now have the data on two possible hypotheses.... At this level of *The Order of Things*. So, obviously Comtesse is right in a certain sense. He's right because it's a fact that Foucault reserves this singular destiny to language, in this text. If I also wanted to as well, I wouldn't attempt to argue with what Comtesse said. If I wanted to save my enlarged hypothesis -- which I'm doing, in any case, which I'm trying to do -- I'd have to appeal to other texts. And the texts I'd appeal to would no longer come from *The Order of Things* -- but Comtesse himself gave himself the right to make abundant use of the texts of *History of Madness*, uh... To clarify this problem of *The Order of Things*, I'd appeal to all the texts that seem to me not to have really been noticed in Foucault. We'll talk about them after Easter. They bear witness to a very deep kind of vitalism. And that's why I have, on each occasion, underlined the importance of the texts on Bichat, on life and death in Foucault. Because, for example, the great text on Bichat



that ends with “it’s a vitalism, yes, but a vitalism against the background of mortalism,”⁴ uh... What I have told you, what I’ve felt the need to tell you the last time about Bichat’s book put us in a region where the power of life confronted death in a very reserved manner with respect to language; it no longer went through language, but rather the inverse held: it is language that passes through that region.

But that is all I wanted to say. You have before you the two hypotheses. What we still have to do is, I believe, finish with my enlarged hypothesis in order to recover our unanimity because the two hypotheses, at least, have almost the same result, namely: the emergence of a new form that is neither God nor man. And this is what we still have to explore. Shall I do that now so that we can then finish, or would you like a little break? [*Several voices respond*]

Deleuze: Shall we finish? OK, we’ll finish, then we won’t speak about it anymore! Uh... yes, no one has anything to say? It’s complicated, huh? Well, I like it, because it’s complicated and it doesn’t have to do with what’s essential, I mean. It’s not essential because, even if we slightly changed the restricted hypothesis, Comtesse and I could probably come to terms. I would give him his restricted hypothesis, and he would give me my enlarged hypothesis, but he does not like compromises. But finally, it’s not.... It’s not serious. OK then. Let’s just meditate, two minutes of meditation. I’m like that sometimes. During a silence... silence is really... Silence is great! When can one be quiet? [*Pause*] There was a professor of political economy in the nineteenth century, no, at the beginning of the twentieth, who gave shorter and shorter courses and longer and longer silences. [*Laughter*] It was great! [*Several seconds of silence*]

I’ve been told that Lacan – I never never heard Lacan; [*he laughs*] yes, I did but it was only in the provinces -- People said that Lacan had a sort of enormous silence, enormous, enormous between two sentences... That’s great, but, you have to know how to do it, there’s a technique [*Laughter*]. I mean everything is technical; it’s very difficult, very difficult. [*20 seconds of silence*] This is an exercise of silence before vacation. But you see, silence is so bizarre that I have to speak nonetheless. [*Laughter*]. There you go! That would be a beautiful problem, a beautiful problem for the DEA.⁵ In what sense is speaking an aggression toward the other? It’s an aggression. For example, the cases vary: if you speak to me before I’ve had my morning coffee, it’s an aggression and indeed a terrible one; [*Laughter*] it’s as if you were sticking a needle in my brain. There are people, on the contrary, who get out of bed while babbling.... Wonderful! And yet... obviously...

A student near Deleuze: And children!

Deleuze: What?

The student: And children.

Deleuze: Children? Yes. There must be children that get up silently, right? Well, that could at least be arranged with a few whacks... [*Laughter*] No, there are certain natures, eh? A course works because it’s a violence, a violence. A course must be a violence for the one who speaks and a violence for the one who listens. There’s no course in.... I mean... it’s better to keep quiet. That’s why we continue.... Well, OK!

⁴ Deleuze quotes very loosely here, obviously from memory. The actual phrase reads: “L’irréductibilité du vivant au mécanique ou au chimique n’est que seconde par rapport à ce lien de la vie et de la mort. Le vitalisme apparaît sur fond de ce ‘mortalisme’” (*Naissance de la clinique*, 148). The English translation reads: “The irreducibility of the living to the mechanical or chemical is secondary only in relation to the fundamental link between life and death. Vitalism appears against the background of this ‘mortalism’” (*Birth of the Clinic*, 145).

⁵ Diplôme d’études approfondies.



So, the enlarged hypothesis is thus very simple, especially since I said that... OK, I really like to vulgarize the overman, and, indeed, I believe it's a grotesque notion, this notion of the overman, if you don't add: but the overman is something very simple. It's really something simple. Moreover, there's an error that we should not make, which is to believe that the overman is a splendid advent that ensures that the old problems are liquidated. But not at all! I'm forcing Nietzsche's texts a bit here, but whatever; since Nietzsche doesn't care, we can force them a bit. The overman himself has his mud, his... I don't know what to say... his crabgrass. Don't believe that everything is beautiful... Everything is not beautiful under the form of God. Everything is not beautiful under the form of man. But everything is not beautiful under the form of the overman. We should not believe that the overman burst forth with all the problems solved. Notably, the entire age of man had to argue with the remainders of God. What Nietzsche called *the last pope*. And the age of man is inseparable from the last pope. In other words, it's not really settled. The struggle continues, and it seems to me... We'd have to re-read very closely.... We'll see; maybe we'll have the time if we [*several lost words*]...

I believe that, if we take into account the texts of Nietzsche, the overman has to do with what Nietzsche sometimes calls the last *man* and sometimes the last *men*. Consequently, in each form, there's always a very considerable sort of agitation, so much so that it helps me say: you know, the overman, don't expect it to be extraordinary. It's something else. It's something else. But that's even more reason to try to say what it is. And, well, I have an initial dimension of the overman, which we won't come back to: I call overman.... Foucault doesn't often use this word, and when he does he relates it explicitly to Nietzsche; he doesn't take it up on its own, but when he uses it, he refers explicitly to Nietzsche; he doesn't use while taking credit, but what Foucault does take credit for is a form of life that would no longer be God or man. Thus, for the sake of convenience and in virtue of Foucault's perfect knowledge of Nietzsche, I'll say, to put it hastily, "the overman."

So here, we see a first constitutive force of the overman, the force of gathering or of the being of language when literature uncouples from linguistics in the sense that Comtesse just clarified. Literature, thereafter, becomes indeed a real force. I won't revisit this. I'll just add, from the perspective of my enlarged hypothesis: well, let's suppose that – it's up to you to judge – life is capable of such a movement, such a gathering of a brute being of life, uncoupled from biology. You see, it's our enlarged hypothesis. Just as the gathered force of language leaps up in literature when uncoupled from linguistics, so too does the gathering force of life leap up out of biology when it is uncoupled from biology, namely, through molecular biology. You will tell me: molecular biology is abstract, and ultimately what's all this talk about the overman? You're giving a scientific interpretation of the overman! No, it would be stupid to take me as saying that. Exactly what do I take "molecular biology" to be? Not simply a science, nor even a knowledge [*savoir*], but rather something that brings in an entirely new evaluation of life. Although this implies a science, it doesn't reduce to a science. What does that imply notably? I'd say: it's truly the discovery of what can be called a genetic code. What is the discovery of the genetic code? It's a leap out of biology, an uncoupling from biology.

Just as the brute being of language... uh... leapt out of designations [as] "significations", the genetic code and the components of the genetic chains uncouple from the problem of organization, from the problem of the organism. Once again, it's a molecular biology, but it's also an entirely different evaluation of the form of life; life gathers itself in a brute being, A brute being of life that is created by the chains of the human body and that, moreover, also cannot be said: just as it wasn't a matter earlier of constituent pieces of language, in the form of phonemes, so too here we're not dealing with constituent pieces of life in the form of cells or micro-cells. It's really an outside [*dehors*] of life; it's life that discovers its outside. But I'd tell you, I can understand it scientifically if I'm a biologist, but I can [also] understand it another



way. And what is the... [*Deleuze looks for a word*]? In what respect is there indeed a brute being of life? The point is that all the evolutionary schemas are changed or are in the process of changing.

One of the deep schemas of evolution in the nineteenth century was essentially that evolution goes from the less differentiated to the more differentiated. You know that molecular biology considers evolutionary schemas of an entirely different nature, that is, schemas that go from a differentiated line to another line that is no less differentiated. Or it considers evolutionary schemas that go from a more differentiated line to a less differentiated one, that is to say, collateral evolutions—what's striking is that this would be unintelligible for the nineteenth century—collateral evolutions or even retrograde evolutions.

What does that mean? You know the whole current of experiments at present on which we will all depend, namely, the experiments in which evolution finds a privileged agent and a singular destiny in the virus, namely, a virus that can borrow a fragment of code from lineages that have an entirely different code, e.g., a form of code of the baboon gets carried into the genetic chain of code of the cat, which leads [François] Jacob, for example, to say.... That is the type called collateral evolution, through the intermediary of a virus that is not a translator. This is the essential point: the virus does not translate a fragment of code into another code; it does much better. If it were only a translation, we would still be in the old biology. The virus enacts a capture of code, of another code, in the given code. Here, then, we see the idea, the vague idea appear of a brute being of life. Good. This is what makes Jacob say, in *The Logic of Life*, that this is the modern way of reconstituting—I'm citing by memory—the abominable loves so dear to the Middle Ages, man and baboon, rabbit and... and... I don't know, whatever.

But the example seems to me still more beautiful: the wasp and the orchid. God [knows] that these creatures have nothing to do with one another and how one captures a fragment of code from the other: thus, we go from the vegetable to the animal, from the animal to the vegetable, etc. This is where I would see a sort of equivalent to the brute being of life, with, as a corresponding knowledge, molecular biology. Now just it's proper that life must, in order to gather itself up in this way, uncouple from biology and leap into another element, because it has to leap into something that constitutes molecular biology, I'd say the same thing for labor, to go very fast. Today we all know what a being of labor, a brute being of labor is. We all know what it is: of course, it's the so-called machines of the third kind; in the classical age, in the age of God, [what did they] correspond to? Simple machines -- this is easy, and I am even ashamed of what I'm saying -- [they] corresponded during the classical age to simple machines and clockwork mechanisms. These were the tools of God or God's machines. God was proven through the movement of clockwork.... I'm exaggerating... uh... You can correct this yourself. OK.

The humanist age was the age of finitude, with energetic machines of the type of the steam engine. The forces in man folded back onto the forces of the outside that are the forces of finitude. It's the great age of thermodynamics. What are machines of the third kind? Cybernetic and digital machines. You and I both know that these machines.... Is it exaggerated to say: yes, this is the prefiguration of a brute being of labor? It's the vector in which labor finds itself confronted with its own outside. And that implies an uncoupling. That implies an uncoupling with respect to the economy and to human labor, exactly in the way that molecular biology implies an uncoupling with respect to biology, exactly in the way that modern literature in Foucault's sense implies an uncoupling with respect to linguistics. And, I was saying to you, you'll find this same schema again at the level of my triple root. You'll find a revenge of literature against linguistics, but also a revenge of the genetic code against organism, the grand revenge of the virus.... The overman and his viruses: it's marvelous! There are good viruses.



The problem is to domesticate viruses. And then: revenge of silicon upon carbon. Revenge of silicon on carbon: yes, the human laborer is formed from carbon, like his organism. Machines of the third kind....

I was telling you: indeed, it's a problem, and I really like this problem, maybe we'll also have the time to come back to it. It's an exciting problem: what did life pass through carbon? Why not something else? Why not silicon, which has marvelous properties? Well, we're told that silicon couldn't work and that all that couldn't.... Nevertheless, there would be advantages to a life guaranteed on the basis of silicon, a life indexed on silicon; it's a marvel, but it's not stable; fine, that's what we're told. But that doesn't prevent silicon from finding its stability on the level of the machines of the third kind. OK: revenge of silicon over carbon. This is maybe the most important of the revenges, and that why I'm sticking to my triple *ratio*.

So, what then? I would say: the overman is not something complicated, but rather that which confronts this new triple root, that which confronts this new triple force. The forces of the agrammaticals, the a-grammaticals in the gathered being of language, the force of genetic chains in the gathered being of life, the force of silicon in... the gathered force of labor. And what does that mean? I'll add that we'll finish there because all of this, it's becoming so vague, so... My only question is: however vague it might be, does that authorize us to announce a new form? Yes. The forces in man indeed enter into relation with new forces. The forces in man enter into relation with new forces. The forces are no longer those of finitude, nor of the elevation to the infinite. Lacking anything better, I'd suggest calling these the forces of the unlimited finite [*fini illimité*]. The forces of the limited finite are defined in this way or characterized thus: a situation.... Each time there is a situation of force in which a finite number of components gives an unlimited number of combinations. Don't believe that this means that everything depends upon a combinatorics; combinatorics is a special case of this situation.

What is the fundamental operation of this confrontation of forces in man with these new forces, of which silicon is an element? I was talking about it: let's make use of a word, since we have unfolding [*dépli*] and fold [*pli*], let's not resist calling this the overfold [*surpli*]. And what's the overfold? It's a very special fold that the age of the nineteenth century could not foresee; it's precisely the fold onto outside. The fold on this line of the outside that we were just talking about and that we're talking about again today. We have yet really attacked the subject. And how do I see the overfold? Well it would be that operation that we saw the last time on language when, in fact, I was calling up the name of Burroughs, in his fold-in methods.⁶ Fold-ins operated upon language. It's the fundamental problem of chains in the genetic code, which is a problem of what? How do they fold onto one another and how do they refold? What ensures that a chain folds onto itself at a given moment? You don't have a popularizing book on the genetic code... the formula in this domain of molecular biology, the typical case of the overfold, of what I'm calling the overfold, is the double helix. It's [James D.] Watson's double helix that was the basis, that was one of the bases of molecular biology. But already since Watson—and it hasn't been very long that, since Watson, there were... uh.... All of this developed, all these problems of foldings, of fold-ins of the chain, since everything depends precisely on these foldings.

IV

[*The previous recording overlaps with the start of the final cassette*]

⁶ "Ses méthodes de surpliages."



[You don't have a popularizing book on the genetic code... the formula in this domain of molecular biology, the typical case of the overfold... of what I'm calling the overfold, is this double helix. It's Watson's double helix that was the basis, that was one of the bases of molecular biology. But already since Watson—and it hasn't been very long that... Since Watson, all of this developed, all these problems of foldings, of fold-ins of the chain, since everything depends precisely on these foldings.] And then the possibilities that silicon presents for folding what are called memories and for overfolding memories in a microscopic space would allow me to establish -- I'm going very fast; it's just a hypothesis -- establish onto this hypothesis of the mechanism of an overfold as distinct from both a fold and an unfolding, I could establish this is a many way, just in passing. I'm indicating it in passing all the same if we can come back to it later.

So, if you grant me that, it defines a new ensemble of forces, a new complex [of] forces in man-forces of the outside. It's obvious that another form flows from that ensemble, one which is no longer God or man. But, once again, it's no big deal; there's nothing to be sorry about. There's nothing to rejoice over, you know, there's nothing much to rejoice over because it's not silicon that will bring about our happiness. But neither is there anything to be sorry over because, as I was telling you, the form "man", heh? When people tell you that you'd have to be heartless threaten [*toucher à*] man, you shouldn't exaggerate. The form "man"... We're not, first of all, threatening man, and next, the form "man," well, you know, I'm don't know but this [form] isn't all that good, so then if the form is changed a bit, it's not all that bad. I mean: man did not exist very well under the form "man." No, it wasn't very great. He didn't exist very well under the form "God" either. And I'm not saying that he'll exist very well under the form "overman". These monstrous alliances with silicon [*words unclear*], or else these alliances with the being of language, aren't always joyous [*la gaieté*]; that'll happen as well through madness....

So, there we are. But what can we say, here, about this form "overman"? Well, I'll choose a text, one of the most beautiful texts that exists, that uh... I could have chosen it from Nietzsche because he is the clearest. I'm taking it from somewhere else, and I'll tell you very quickly: "He" -- it could be the overman -- "He takes on humanity's burden," that is, the forms in man are his burden, this is what the overman is "he takes on humanity's burden, even of animals" —"human, and even the *animals*, are his burden."⁷ I think some of you will have recognized the text: "He takes on humanity's burden, even of animals". I'll say that the scientific version of "even the burden of animals" is the genetic code. Let a virus have its nuptials with a baboon, with a rabbit, and all that, but a controlled virus. If you don't control it, it will [*words unclear*]. So, fine. He even takes on the burden of the animals. It's very simple: the man who takes on the animals' burden is the overman, which doesn't mean, although it might concern [*words unclear*] given his enormous importance in the history of Christianity, Francis of Assisi maybe took on the burden even of the animals; it's not by accident that he passed for the village idiot, that he was the madman of Christianity. Fine, wasn't he the first,

⁷ "Il est chargé de l'humanité, des *animaux* même; il devra faire sentir, palper, écouter ses inventions; si ce qu'il rapporte *de là-bas* a forme, il donne forme; si c'est informe, il donne de l'informe." (Fowlie trans., bilingual edition, 376). W. Fowlie translates, "He is responsible for humanity, even for the *animals*." "Responsible," however, is probably too moralistic for Deleuze. Another more recent translation by W. Mason (*Rimbaud Complete*, vol. I, New York: Modern Library, 2003, 376) suggests: "Humanity, and even the *animals*, are his burden; he must make sure his inventions live and breathe; if what he finds *down below* has a form, he offers form: if it is formless, he offers formlessness." However, the word order is important since Deleuze clearly is emphasizing the masculine pronoun "il", "he" to indicate the "overman". Hence, the translation solution, although a bit more cumbersome, retains this agency.



one of the first approximations of the new man, of the overman? He even took on the burden of the *animals*.” And then we can add, -- here we’re cutting up the text; no, I’ll continue -- “if what he finds *down below*” ... “if what he finds *down below* has a form, he offers form: if it is formless, he offers formlessness.” I take this as our second characteristic: “if it is formless, he offers formlessness.” And I am saying: the overman is quite simply the man who takes the boulders themselves as a burden. It’s the man burdened with rocks. You’ll tell me that this “burdened with rocks” has been going on for a long while, right? What boulders we walk about with! You have to believe that this is happening in a different way. What is the rock? The rock here is the domain going all the way to the reign of silicon, of the inorganic, man taking on the burden of the inorganic. He takes on the burden of rocks themselves. This is his marriage ceremony [*épousailles*] with silicon. For too long we’ve [*Interruption of the recording*]....

Burdened with [*unclear words*] we see that this business with silicon, we see, in fact, that these are powers that are no longer the powers of man. And then, I’ll continue the text: “To find a language,” you see?⁸ So, the first theme is: “taking on the burden of humanity, and even the *animals*.” Second theme: to offer form if form is brought back, but to give formlessness if it’s formless. To take on the rocks’ burden, the rocks of silicon. Third theme: “to find a language,” this is neither classical discourse, nor linguistics; finding a language, that is, to create literature, to create literature itself. Fine, here we are. To take on the burden of the being of language, to take on the burden of the being of life, to take on the burden of the being of labor. That’s what the overman is. This text is Rimbaud’s great letter, the “Letter to Paul Demeny” [*Deleuze spells out the name*], and since there are several, it’s dated 15 May 1871, Pléiade Edition p. 275 [p. 252, 1972 edition]. It’s one of the texts on “the seer” [*voyant, voyance*]... [*words unclear*].

OK, so... I would say at this moment that I will just conclude that the overman designates nothing other than the third form of a compound of forces, the third form that emerges when the compound of forces changes. The form “God” responded to a certain compound of forces. The form “man” corresponds to a certain compound of forces. The form “overman” corresponds to a third compound of forces that, once again, [*words unclear*] the infinite list of worldly forms according to the civilizations, according to the periods, etc. [*words unclear*] In any case, I consider that today, this works out fine, as we’ve finished with the knowledge-power relations, [*words unclear*] and that there was perhaps a way of showing in precisely what way [*words unclear*]. And we’d have to show it so that it might be interesting since we are today in the [age of] the new man, we’d have to show it starting from the domain that is in appearance the most obscure, of such a domain, namely, the domain of law or right [*droit*], the domain of right itself which, contrary to what we’re told about the interest in the rights of man, the evolution of rights has taken place for a long while, and that [*words unclear; concerning the interest in the right of man*]. And there too, we rediscover literally what Foucault wrote: if we try to sum up in a word the evolution of right and law from the end of nineteenth up through the twentieth centuries, this evolution is in a certain way constituted to consider that the legal subject of rights [*sujet de droit*] was no longer the person in man, but was the living being [*vivant*] in man.⁹

And we can say that, if there’s something that attests to, uh... a disappearance [*évanouissement*] of the form “man,” it’s exactly where we still think that forms subsist, in law and right themselves. What has rights in man is no longer the person, but the living being. Is

⁸ “Trouver une langue.” (Translation modified.) [—Trans.]

⁹ *Vivant*. Although its primary meaning is “living being,” it also simply suggests unformed, non-organismic, brute life, or “the living.” [—Trans.]



this true of the evolution of law, rights? Is it [words unclear]? What does that mean to say, “the true legal subject of rights has become the living being in man”? In the name and by virtue of what do we accord the right to man of the veritable object of luxury? And, once again, [words unclear] the veritable object of luxury, it to liberate the life in man, liberste the language in man, liberate the labor in man. Liberating life in man, of course. Moreover, in the nineteenth century, once again, the form “man” was a way of imprisoning life. When I speak of a vitalism in Foucault, I mean that, from the end of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* there appears a great appeal to this theme: how to liberate the life in man? Of course, it’s man that is capable of liberating life in man since it’s within him that [words unclear]. But right and political struggle aren’t to be confused, but they do have something in common to the extent that right has an increasing tendency to take on as subject not the human person, but life, the living being. And, on the other hand, political struggle, turning back against right and law, increasingly has for its objective the liberation of life in man. That seems to me quite obvious, and, in my opinion, Foucault was very sensitive to this from the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* on. This is what we’ll rediscover after... after the vacation that’s so short [words unclear]. There you go. Have a great rest.