Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on

Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

November 1980 – March 1981

[For the seminar 00, 24 January 1978, see ATP III, session 1, https://deleuze.cla.purdue.edu/lecture/lecture-1-2/]

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Lecture 01, 25 November 1980

Translated by Timothy S. Murphy for Web Deleuze; Augmented Transcription and Translation review by Charles J. Stivale (recording unavailable)

It's quite curious the extent to which philosophy, up to the end of the 17th century, ultimately speaks to us, all the time, of God. And after all, Spinoza, excommunicated Jew, is not the last to speak to us of God. And the first book of his great work *The Ethics* is called "Of God." And from all of them, whether it's Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz, we get the impression that the boundary between philosophy and theology is extremely vague.

Why is philosophy so compromised with God, and right up to the revolutionary coup of the 18th century philosophers? Is it a dishonest compromise (*compromission*) or something a little purer? We could say that thought, until the end of the 17th century, must take considerable account of the demands of the Church, thus it's clearly forced to take many religious themes into account. But one feels quite strongly that this is much too easy; we could just as well say that, until this era, thought's lot is somewhat linked to that of a religious feeling.

I'm going back to an analogy with painting because it's true that painting is replete with images of God. My question is: is it sufficient to say that this is an inevitable constraint in this era? There are two possible answers. The first is yes, this is an inevitable constraint of the era which refers to the conditions of art in this era. Or else to say, a bit more positively, that it's because there's a religious feeling from which the painter, and even more painting, do not escape. The philosopher and philosophy don't escape either. Is this sufficient? Could we not devise another hypothesis, namely that painting in this era has so much need of God that the divine, far from being a constraint for the painter, is the site of his maximum emancipation. In other words, with God, he can do anything whatsoever; he can do what he couldn't do with humans, with creatures. As a result, God is directly invested by painting, by a kind of flow of painting, and at this level painting will find a kind of freedom for itself that it would never have found otherwise. At the limit, the most pious painter who does painting and the one who does painting which, in a certain way, is the most impious are not opposed to each other because the way painting invests the divine is a way that is nothing but pictorial, and in which painting finds nothing other than the conditions of its radical emancipation.

I provide three examples: El Greco. He could only achieve this creation on the basis of Christian figures. So, it's true that, at a certain level, these were constraints operating on them, and at another level, the artist is the one who -- Bergson said this about the living thing [vivant], he said that the living thing is what turns obstacles into means; this would be a good definition of the artist. It's true that there are constraints from the Church which operate on the painter, but there is

a transformation of constraints into means of creation. They make use of God in order to achieve a liberation of forms, to push the forms to the point where the forms have nothing to do with an illustration. The forms are unleashed (*se déchaînent*). They embark upon a kind of Sabbath, a very pure dance, the lines and colors losing all necessity to be verisimilar (*vraisemblables*), to be exact, to resemble something. This is the great liberation of lines and colors that occurs owing to this outward display: the subordination of painting to the demands of Christianity.

Another example, a creation of the world. The Old Testament sets up for them a kind of liberation of movements, a liberation of forms, lines and colors. As a result, in a sense, atheism has never been external to religion. Atheism is the artistic power of action [*puissance*] that labors on religion. With God, everything is permitted.

I have the distinct feeling that for philosophy it's been exactly the same thing, and if philosophers have spoken to us so much of God -- and they could well be Christians or believers -- this hasn't been lacking an intense sense of jest (*rigolade*). It wasn't an incredulous jesting, but a joy arising from the labor they were involved in.

Just as I said that God and Christ offered an extraordinary opportunity for painting to free lines, colors and movements from the constraints of resemblance, so God and the theme of God offered the irreplaceable opportunity for philosophy to free the object of creation in philosophy, that is, concepts, from the constraints that had been imposed on them... the simple representation of things. The concept is freed at the level of God because it no longer has the task of representing something; at that moment it becomes the sign of a presence. To speak by analogy, it takes on lines, colors, movements that it would never have had without this detour through God. It's true that philosophers are subject to the constraints of theology, but in conditions such that they make this constraint into a means of fantastic creation. Specifically, they will extract from it a liberation of the concept without anyone even questioning it, except in the case where a philosopher goes too fast or too far.

This is perhaps the case with Spinoza. From the start, Spinoza was placed in conditions in which what he said to us no longer had anything to represent. That's why what Spinoza is going to name God, in the first book of the *Ethics*, [which] is going to be the strangest thing in the world. It's going to be the concept insofar as it brings together the set [ensemble] of all these possibilities. Via the philosophical concept of God arises -- and it could only have been made at this level -- arises the strangest creation of philosophy as a system of concepts. What painters and philosophers caused God to undergo represents either painting as passion or philosophy as passion. Painters subjected the body of Christ to a new passion: they condense (*ramassent*) him, they make him contract. Perspective is freed from every constraint to represent whatever it may be, and it's the same thing for philosophers.

I'm taking Leibniz as an example. Leibniz begins the creation of the world anew. He asks how it is that God creates the world. He goes back to the classical problem: what is the role of God's understanding and God's will in the creation of the world. Let's suppose that Leibniz tells us this: God has an understanding, an infinite understanding, of course. It does not resemble ours. The word "understanding" itself would be equivocal. It would not have only a single sense since the infinite understanding is absolutely not the same thing as our own understanding, which is a

finite understanding. What happens in the infinite understanding? Before God creates the world, there was indeed an understanding, but there wasn't anything else, there was no world. No, says Leibniz, but there are possibles. There are possibles in God's understanding, and all these possibles tend toward existence. That's why essence, for Leibniz, is a tendency to exist, a possibility which tends toward existence. All these possibles have weight according to their quantity of perfection. God's understanding becomes like a kind of envelope in which all the possibles descend and collide. All of them want to pass into existence. But Leibniz tells us that this is not possible, all cannot pass into existence. Why? Because each one on its own could pass into existence, but not all of them form compatible combinations. There are incompatibilities from the point of view of existence. A particular possible cannot be compossible with another particular possible.

There we have the second stage. [Leibniz] is in the process of creating a logical relation of a completely new type: there are not only possibilities, there are also problems of compossibility. Is a possible compossible with another such possible? So then, which aggregate of possibles will pass into existence? Only that aggregate that, on its own, has the greatest quantity of perfection will pass into existence. The others will be repressed (*refoulés*). It is God's will that chooses the best of possible worlds. It's an extraordinary descent for the creation of the world, and, thanks to this descent, Leibniz creates all sorts of concepts. We cannot even say of these concepts that they are representational since they precede the things to be represented. And Leibniz hurls forth his famous metaphor: God creates the world like a chess game; it involves the choice of the best combination. And the calculation of chess will dominate the Leibnizian vision of the divine understanding. It's an extraordinary creation of concepts that finds in the theme of God the very condition of its freedom and its liberation.

Once again, just as the painter had to make use of God so that lines, colors and movements would no longer be obliged to represent some existing thing, so the philosopher sets up God, in this era, so that concepts would no longer be limited to representing some extant thing. The philosopher employs God in this period so that concepts wouldn’t be limited to representing something given and ready-made. It's not a matter of wondering what a concept represents. It's necessary to consider what its place is in an aggregate of other concepts. For most of the great philosophers, the concepts they create are inseparable, and are engaged in veritable sequences. And if you don't understand the sequence to which a concept belongs, you cannot understand the concept. I am using this term “sequence” because I'm making a kind of parallel (*rapprochement*) with painting. If it's true that the constituent unit of cinema is the sequence, I believe that, all things being equal, we could also say it about the concept and about philosophy.

At the level of the problem of Being and the One, it's true that philosophers in their attempt at conceptual creation about the relations of Being and the One are going to re-establish a sequence. In my view, the first great sequences in philosophy, at the level of concepts, are those Plato constructs in the second part of the *Parmenides*. There are actually two sequences. The second part of the *Parmenides* is made up of seven hypotheses. These seven hypotheses are divided into two groups: three hypotheses at first, four hypotheses following. These are two sequences. First moment [*temps*]: let us assume that the One is superior to Being, the One is above Being. Second moment: the One is equal to Being. Third moment: the One is inferior to Being and is derived from Being. You never say that a philosopher contradicts himself; you will ask about a particular

page, in what sequence to put it, at what level of the sequence. And it's obvious that the One about which Plato speaks to us is not the same according to whether it's situated at the level of the first, the second or the third hypothesis.

One of Plato's disciples, Plotinus, speaks to us at a certain level of the One as the radical origin of Being. Here, Being emerges from the One. The One makes Being; therefore, it is not, it is superior to Being. This will be the language of pure emanation: the One emanates Being, that is, the One does not emerge from itself in order to produce Being, because [if] it emerges from itself, it would become Two, but Being comes out of the One. This is the very formula of the emanative cause. But when we establish ourselves at the level of Being, this same Plotinus will speak to us in splendid and lyrical terms of the Being that contains all beings, the Being that encompasses all beings. And he issues a whole series of formulae which will have very great importance for the whole philosophy of the Renaissance. He will say Being complicates all beings. It's an admirable formula. Why does Being complicate all beings? Because each being explicates Being. There will be a [linguistic] doublet here: complicate, explicate. Each thing explicates Being, but Being complicates all things, that is, encompasses them in itself. But these pages of Plotinus are no longer about emanation. You tell yourself that the sequence has evolved: he's in the process of speaking to us of an immanent cause. And indeed, Being behaves like an immanent cause in relation to beings, but at the same time, the One behaves in relation to Being like an emanative cause. And if we descend even further, we will see in Plotinus, who nevertheless is not Christian, something which closely resembles a creative cause.

In a certain way, if you don't take sequences into account, you will no longer know exactly what he's talking to us about, unless there are philosophers who destroy sequences because they want to create something else. A conceptual sequence would be the equivalent of shades [*nuances*] in painting. A concept changes tone or, at the limit, a concept changes timbre. It would have something like timbres, tonalities. Until Spinoza philosophy proceeded essentially by way of sequences. And on this road, the shades concerning causality were very important.

Is original causality or the first cause emanative, immanent, creative or something else entirely, such that immanent cause was present at all times in philosophy, but always as a theme that was never pushed to its own limit (*jusqu'au bout de soi-même*)? Why? Because this was undoubtedly the most dangerous subject. Treating God as an emanative cause might be accepted because there is still the distinction between cause and effect. But [treating God] as immanent cause, such that we no longer know very well how to distinguish cause and effect, that is, treating God and the creature as the same, that becomes much more difficult. Immanence was especially dangerous, such that the idea of an immanent cause appears constantly in the history of philosophy, but as [something] held in check, kept at a particular level of the sequence, having no value, and faced with being corrected by other moments of the sequence. Thus, the accusation of immanentism was, for entire history of heresies, the fundamental accusation: you are confusing God and the creature. That's the unpardonable accusation. Therefore, immanent cause was constantly there, but it didn't manage to gain a foothold (*statut*). It had only a small place in the sequence of concepts.

Spinoza arrives. He was preceded no doubt by all those who had been more or less audacious concerning immanent cause, that is, this cause that's so bizarre that not only does it remain

within itself in order to produce, but what it produces remains within it. God is in the world, the world is in God. In the *Ethics*, I think the *Ethics* is constructed upon an initial great proposition that could be called the speculative or theoretical proposition. Spinoza's speculative proposition is: there is only one single absolutely infinite substance, that is, one possessing all attributes, and what are called creatures are not creatures but modes or manners (*manières*) of being of this substance, therefore, one single substance having all attributes and whose products are the modes, the ways of being. Hence if these are the manners of being of the substance having all attributes, these modes exist in the attributes of the substance. They are contained (*pris*) in the attributes.

All the consequences immediately appear. There isn't any hierarchy in the attributes of God, of substance. Why? If substance possesses all attributes equally, there is no hierarchy among the attributes, one is not worth more than another. In other words, if thought is an attribute of God and if extension is an attribute of God or of substance, between thought and extension there won't be any hierarchy. All the attributes will have the same value from the moment that they are attributes of substance. We are still in the abstract. This is the speculative figure of immanence.

I draw several conclusions from this. This is what Spinoza will call God. He calls it God because it's absolutely infinite. What does it represent? It's quite curious. Can one live like that? I draw two consequences from this.

First consequence: he's the one who dares to do what many had wanted to do, namely, to free the immanent cause completely of all subordination to other processes of causality. There is only one cause, and it's immanent, and this influences practice. Spinoza didn't title his book *Ontology*, he's too shrewd for that; he titles it *Ethics* which is a way of saying that, whatever the importance of my speculative propositions may be, you can only judge them at the level of the ethics that they envelope or implicate. He completely frees the immanent cause, with which Jews, Christians, heretics up until then had so often played around, but within very precise sequences of concepts. Spinoza extracts it from any sequence and accomplishes a forced takeover [*coup de force*] at the level of concepts. There is no longer any sequence. As a result of his extraction of immanent causality from the sequence of great causes, of first causes, as a result of his flattening of everything onto an absolutely infinite substance that encompasses all things as its modes, that possesses all attributes, he substituted a veritable plane of immanence for the sequence. This is an extraordinary conceptual revolution: in Spinoza, everything happens as if on a fixed plane, an extraordinary fixed plane which is not going to be a plane of immobility at all since all things are going to move on this fixed plane -- and for Spinoza, only the movement of things counts. He invents a fixed plane. Spinoza's speculative proposition is this: extracting the concept from the state of variations of sequences and projecting everything onto a fixed plane which is one of immanence. This implies an extraordinary technique.

It's also a certain mode of life, living on a fixed plane. I no longer live according to variable sequences. But then, what would living on a fixed plane be? Spinoza is someone who polishes lenses, who abandoned everything, his heritage, his religion, every social success. He does nothing and before he had written anything whatsoever, he is insulted, he is denounced. Spinoza is the atheist, the abominable. He practically can't publish. He writes letters. He didn't want to be a prof. In the *Political Treatise*, he conceived of the teaching profession as a volunteer activity,

and further, that it would be necessary to pay in order to teach. Professors would teach at the risk of their fortunes and their reputations. That would be a true public prof. Spinoza was involved with a large study group; he sends them the *Ethics* as he writes it, and they explicate for themselves Spinoza's texts, and they write to Spinoza, who replies. These are very intelligent people. This correspondence is essential. He has his little network. He survived thanks to the protection of the De Witt brothers, since he is denounced from all sides.

It's as if he invented the fixed plane at the level of concepts. In my view it's the most fundamental attempt to give a status to the univocity of being, an absolutely univocal being. Univocal being is precisely what Spinoza defines as being substance having entirely equal attributes, having all things as modes. The modes of substance, this is what is be-ing (*l'étant*). The absolutely infinite substance is Being as Being (*en tant qu'Être*). The attributes all equal to one another are the essence of being, and here you have this kind of plane onto which everything falls back and on which everything is inscribed.

A philosopher never been treated by his readers the way Spinoza has been, thank God. Spinoza was one of the essential authors for German Romanticism, for example. But even these most educated authors tell us a very curious thing. They say at once that the *Ethics* is the work that presents us with the most systematic totality, the system pushed to the absolute; it's univocal Being, Being that is expressed only in a single sense. It's the extreme point of the system. It's the most absolute totality. And at the same time, when one reads the *Ethics*, one always gets the feeling that one will never reach a comprehension of the whole (*ensemble*). The whole escapes us. We are not quick enough to keep everything together. There is a very beautiful page where Goethe says that he re-read the same thing ten times and he always fails to comprehend the whole, and every time that I read it, I comprehend another piece. He's a philosopher who has a conceptual apparatus that's among the most systematic in all philosophy. And nevertheless, we always get the impression, we readers, that the whole escapes us and we are reduced to being struck by one piece or another. We are really struck by one part or another. At another level, he's the philosopher who pushes the system of concepts the furthest, therefore one who demands a very extensive philosophical background (*culture*). The start of the *Ethics* begins with definitions: of substance, of essence, etc. This all refers to Scholasticism, and at the same time there is no other philosopher who can so easily be read without knowing anything at all. And the two [approaches] must be maintained.

So, go ahead, then, and ponder this mystery. [Victor] Delbos says of Spinoza that he is a great gust of wind that carries us away. That goes well with my story of the fixed plane. Few philosophers have had this quality (*mérite*) of achieving the status of a great calm breeze. And the miserable, the poor sorts who read Spinoza compare that to the storms that sweep us away. How do we reconcile the fact that there was an illiterate reading and an illiterate comprehension of Spinoza with this other fact, that Spinoza is one of the philosophers who, once again, composes the most meticulous conceptual apparatus in the world? Success occurs at the level of language.

The *Ethics* is a book that Spinoza considers as finished. He does not publish his book because he knows that if he publishes it, he'll find himself in prison. Everyone falls upon him, he no longer

has a protector. Things go very badly for him. He gives up on publication and, in a sense, this doesn't matter since the study group already had the text. Leibniz knew the text.

What is this text made of? It begins with the *Ethics* demonstrated in a geometric manner. It's the use of the geometric method. Many authors had already employed this method, but generally on a sequence in which a philosophical proposition is demonstrated in the manner of a geometrical proposition, a theorem. Spinoza extracts this from the state of a moment in a sequence and he will make it the complete method of exposition of the *Ethics*. As a result, the *Ethics* is divided into five books. It begins with definitions, axioms, propositions or theorems, proofs of the theorem, corollaries of the theorem, that is, the propositions that result from the theorem, etc. That's the great gust of wind. It forms a kind of continuous layer (*nappe*). Geometric exposition is no longer the expression of a moment within a sequence at all. He can extract it completely since the geometric method is going to be the process which consists in filling in the fixed plane of absolutely infinite substance. Thus, [it's] a great calm breeze. And in all of this, there is a continuous linkage (*enchaînement*) of concepts, each theorem referring to other theorems, each proof referring to other proofs.

Gilles Deleuze

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Lecture 02, 2 December 1980

Initial Transcription by Web Deleuze; Paris 8 transcription: Part 1, no credit transcriber; Part 2, Christina Roski; augmented transcription and translation, Charles J. Stivale (duration, 2:04:16)[1]

Part 1

[I start with the problem] which I had sketched out and which was this sort of problem: this problem of the velocities of thought and the importance of these speeds in Spinoza, from the point of view of Spinoza himself. And I was saying that, after all, intellectual intuition -- what Spinoza will present as the intuition of the third kind of knowledge -- is kind of a lightning thought (*pensée comme éclair*). It's indeed a thinking at absolute speed, that is, that goes simultaneously to the deepest level and that embraces, that possesses a maximum amplitude proceeding like a bolt of lightning. There is quite a good book by Romain Rolland called *L'éclair de Spinoza* [Spinoza's Lightning Bolt], very well written.

Now I was saying, when you read or reread the *Ethics*, you must be sensitive or at least think about this question that I only ask, namely that it indeed seems to me, as I said the last time, that book V proceeds differently. That is, it seems to me that, in the last book of the *Ethics*, and especially from a certain moment onward, [as] Spinoza himself signals, the moment when he claims to enter the third kind of knowledge, the proofs no longer have the same scheme as in the other books because in the other books, the proofs were developed under the second order of knowledge. But when he moves into the third genre or into an exposition according to the third kind of knowledge, the demonstrative mode changes, the proofs undergo contractions. There are all kinds, there are areas of proof which, in my opinion, have disappeared. Everything is contracted. Everything is going at full speed. Well, it is possible. But that's only a difference in speed between Book V and the others, the absolute speed of the third kind [of knowledge], that is, of the book V, in contrast to the relative speeds of the first four books.

I was also saying something else the last time: if I focus on the area of relative speeds of thought, a thought that goes more or less quickly, I must explain -- you understand this problem. I insist that it's a kind of practical problem -- I do not mean to say that one should hardly think about this. Of course, thinking is something that takes an extraordinary amount of time. It takes a lot of time. I am talking about the speeds and slowness produced by thought, just as a body has effects of speed and slowness depending on the movements it undertakes. And there are times when it's good for the body to be slow. There are even times when it is good for the body to be still. It's not about relations of value. And maybe absolute speed is absolute immobility, that they merge absolutely. If it is true that Spinoza's philosophy proceeds as and through spreading over a kind of fixed plane, if there is indeed this kind of Spinozist fixed plane where all his philosophy is inscribed, it is obvious that, at the limit, absolute immobility and absolute speed simply become one. But, in the domain of the relative within the first four books, it is sometimes necessary for

thought to produce slowness, the slowness of its own development, and it is sometimes necessary for it to go faster, the relative speed of its development relative to one concept or another, to one topic or another. [*Pause*]

And I was saying that, if you look at the whole of the first four books, then it seems again, I am making, I was making another hypothesis on which I do not want to dwell too much, which is that, in the *Ethics*, there is this unusual thing that Spinoza calls "scholia", alongside and in addition to the propositions, proofs, corollaries. He writes scholia, that is, kinds of additions to the proofs. And I was saying, if you even read them out loud -- there's no reason to treat a philosopher worse than you treat a poet -- if you read it out loud, you will be immediately sensitive to this: that the scholia do not have the same tone, do not have the same timbre as the aggregate of propositions and proofs, and that the timbre becomes, how would I say, a kind of pathos, passion. And [I was saying] that Spinoza reveals therein kinds of aggressivity, of violence to which such a sober, so wise, so reserved a philosopher had not necessarily accustomed us. And there is a speed of the scholia which is really a speed of affect in contrast to the relative slowness of the proofs which is a slowness of the concept as if, within the scholia, affects were projected, whereas in the proofs, concepts are developed.

So this practical, passionate tone -- perhaps one of the secrets of the *Ethics* is in the scholia - I was opposing at that point a kind of continuous chain of propositions and proofs, a continuity which is that of the concept, to the discontinuity of the scholia which operates as a kind of broken line and which is the discontinuity of affects. Fine, so let's assume… All of that, it's for you to… These are impressions gleaned from reading. Understand that if I insist on this, it may be that the form after all is so adequate to the very content of philosophy that the way in which Spinoza proceeds formally already has something to tell us about the concepts of Spinozism.

And finally, I was still making a final remark within this order of relative speeds and slownesses. It's that if I only take the order of the proofs in their progressive development, the order of the proofs, there is not a uniform relative speed. Sometimes it stretches and it develops; sometimes it contracts, and it envelops itself more or less. So, there is, in the succession of proofs of the first four books, not only the great difference in rhythm between the proofs and the scholia, but differences in rhythm in the course of successive proofs. They don't go at the same pace. And there, I would then like to find fully – and it's in this way that these are not merely formal remarks -- to find fully, to complete these remarks on speed, to find fully the problem of ... well, almost the problem of ontology. In what form?

I am taking the start of the *Ethics*. How can we start into an ontology? In an ontology, from the point of view of immanence where, literally, Being is everywhere, wherever there is Being, the existents, the be-ings [*étants*], are within Being, which is what seemed to us to define ontology in our previous meetings. Where and how can we start? This [is] the problem of the beginning of philosophy which has dragged on throughout the history of philosophy and which seems to have received very different answers: What to start with? In a way, here as elsewhere, following the ready-made idea where we say that philosophers do not agree with each other, each philosopher seems to have his answer. It is obvious that Hegel has a certain idea of where and how to start in philosophy, Kant has another, Feuerbach has another and takes Hegel to task about it.

Well, if we apply this problem to Spinoza, how does he start? Where does he start? We would seem to have an answer imposed on us. In an ontology, one can only start with Being. [*Pause*] Yes maybe. And yet ... And yet, Spinoza, the fact is, he does not start with Being. This becomes important for us; it will be a problem. How is it that in a pure ontology, in a radical ontology, one does not start where we'd have expected the beginning to be occur, namely with Being as (*en tant que*) Being?

We have seen that Spinoza determines Being as Being as an absolutely infinite substance and that is what he calls God. Now, the fact is that Spinoza does not start with absolutely infinite substance; he does not start with God. And yet, it's like a ready-made proverb, eh, to say that Spinoza begins with God. There is even a ready-made expression to distinguish Descartes and Spinoza: "Descartes begins with the self, Spinoza begins with God." Well, it's not true. It's not true. At least this is only true of one of Spinoza's books, and it is a book which, literally, is not his. Indeed, in his youth, Spinoza was already doing, according to the method that I described to you -- the method of study groups (*collégiants*) – he taught some kind of private lessons to different groups. And we possess these courses. We possess them in the form of notes from participants. We can't exclude the possibility that Spinoza wrote some of these notes, some very obscure. Studying the manuscript is very, very complicated and has an entire history. In the end, all of these notes exist under the title of *The Short Treatise* (*Le Court Traité*). *The Short Treatise*. And, in *The Short Treatise*, chapter One is thus titled: "That God is". I can say, literally, that *The Short Treatise* begins with God. But afterwards, not at all; afterwards, not at all.

And there that poses a problem because it is very often said that the *Ethics* begins with God and indeed, "Book I" is titled "De Deo", of God, about God. But if you look in detail -- all of these being prompts for you to pay close attention to the letter of the text -- if you look in detail, you will see that God in Book I, at the level of definitions, is only reached in definition Six -- so five preceding definitions were needed -- and at the proof level, [God] is only reached around Nine, Ten, propositions Nine and Ten. So five prior definitions were required and eight prior propositions / proofs were required. I can conclude that, by and large, the *Ethics* begins with God, [but] literally, literally, it does not start with God. And indeed, where does it start? It begins with the status of the constituent elements of the substance, namely, the attributes.

But even better, before the *Ethics*, Spinoza wrote a book, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect.* In this treatise, - this treatise, he did not complete it, for mysterious reasons which we will be able to discuss later, but anyway, it does not matter, he did not complete it. Now I am reading this because I attach great importance to it, you will see, because I would like to raise certain translation problems very quickly.

Paragraph 46: [*Pause*] I am reading the translation -- the best translation of the *Treatise on the Emendation* is the translation by [Alexandre] Koyré in Éditions Vrin, but those who have the Pleïade, you are fine with what you find, it does not matter. Paragraph 46 -- in all editions, the numbering of the paragraphs is the same – "If anyone asks why I have not at the starting-point set forth all the truths of nature in their due order, inasmuch as truth is self-evident, I reply" - and here, there's a series of three small points indicating a lacuna – [*Deleuze rereads the citation up to this point*] "I reply by warning him not to reject as false any paradoxes he may find here."

Understand, I am saying: it's still funny: the editors are not bothered at all, and they are right not to be bothered: when something does not suit them, they throw in a lacuna. [*Laughter*] There is the indication of a lacuna which is not at all in the manuscript, and it's very weird! Do you grasp what I mean? Suppose an editor who is convinced that Spinoza, even nervously persuaded, that Spinoza "must" begin with Being, that is, with absolutely infinite substance, that is, with God, he encounters texts where Spinoza says, on the contrary, that he's not going to start with God, at that point, the editor is faced with several possibilities: either to say that this is a moment in Spinoza's thought that has not yet reached maturity, that is, to say that Spinoza has not reached his true thought; or to presume that there's a gap in the text that would change the meaning of the sentence; or else, a third possibility -- in a sense, it is the best -- barely tampering with the translation.

In this text 46 - and I would just like to expand on this point because it is part of the internal criticism of the texts -- in this paragraph 46, Spinoza tells us formally: there is indeed a due order that is the order that begins with God, but I cannot follow it from the start. It is a clear thought: there is due order, in necessary order; it is that which goes from the substance to the modes; it is that which goes from God to the things, but this necessary order I cannot follow it from the beginning. This is a very clear thought! We are so persuaded that Spinoza must follow it from the start that when we find a text that does not correspond to this, one assumes there's a gap; this isn't right, this just can't be right!

Paragraph 49, I am reading -- and there the editors didn't dare to correct it -- I am reading: "From the beginning, therefore" -- end of paragraph 49 – "from the beginning, therefore, we will principally have to see to it that we arrive as quickly as possible" -- *quanto ocius* – "that we arrive as quickly as possible at the knowledge of the Being."[2] So here, my heart throbs with joy, you understand. He says it formally. It is a matter of arriving as quickly as possible, as quickly as possible, at the position of the Being and at the knowledge of the Being. But not from the start. The ontology will have a beginning: as the Being is everywhere, the ontology precisely has to have a distinct start from the Being itself. As a result, you understand, this becomes a technical problem for me because this beginning cannot be anything more than Being, superior to Being. There isn't any. The great One superior to Being does not exist from the point of an ontology; we saw this at our other sessions.

What is this mysterious beginning going to be? I continue my review of the treatise. Paragraph 49… No, I just did that. Paragraph 75… No, there's nothing. Ah yes! "For us, on the contrary, if we proceed as little abstractly as possible and if we start as early as possible" - in Latin, as early as might occur, *quam primum fieri potest*, as early as might occur – "if we start as early as possible from the first elements" -- from the first elements -- "i.e. with the source and the origin of nature." See! We start with the first elements, that is, with the source and origin of nature, the absolutely infinite substance with all attributes, but we only start there "as soon as possible". Fine... There are indeed… We will get there as quickly as possible. It's the order of relative speed.[3]

And finally, because it's the most beautiful case, paragraph 99, in which the translation is tampered with, which, it seems to me, is the worst! This is what the text translated by Koyré says

and the translators there follow Koyré. I am quoting Koyré because he was a very prodigious man of immense knowledge. I am reading Koyré's translation: "In order that all our perceptions be ordered and unified, it is necessary that as quickly as might be possible" -- we find it again -- "we must act as quickly as might be possible," and Koyré translates: "[hyphen] - reason requires it [hyphen] – we seek out whether there is a Being, and also what It is". See the translation that Koyré provides: "it is necessary that as quickly as might be possible -- reason requires it – we seek out whether there is a Being"; in other words, [Koyré] situates "reason requires it" onto the necessity for discovering if there is a Being.

This is strange for a man who knew Latin admirably since the text doesn't say that at all. I am translating the text into bad French, but word for word: "It is necessary, it is required (*requis*) that as fast as possible and as reason requires it". See, this is not such a big thing, but it is enormous; this changes everything. In Latin: *quam primum fieri potest et ratio postulat,* as fast as possible and as reason requires it. In other words, it is reason which requires that we not start with Being but that we get there as quickly as possible.

And why does that matter to me? It's because of this question of agreement. There is a relative speed. "As fast as possible" is the first ten proofs of the Ethics, from book I. He goes as fast as possible. That's the relative speed of thought. Reason demands that there be a rhythm of thought. You will not start with Being; you will start with what gives you access to Being. But what can give me access to Being? Is it something that "is not ". It is not the One. We saw that it could not be the One. What is it? This is a problem. This is a problem. I would venture my conclusion: if it is true that Spinoza is a philosopher for whom thought is so productive of speeds and slownesses, [then it] is itself caught in a system of speeds and slownesses. This is strange. Again, it goes much further than to tell ourselves, "Thought takes time." Thought takes time. Descartes might have said it, as I pointed out the last time. Descartes might have said it. But thought produces speeds and slownesses and is itself inseparable from the speeds and slownesses it produces. There is a speed of the concept, there is a slowness of the concept. What is that? Well, fine. What do we usually call "fast" or "slow"?

What I'm saying there is very loose (*libre*). This is to make you want to go read this author. I don't know if I'm succeeding; maybe the result will be the opposite. I'm not yet producing word-by-word commentary. I sometimes do that, like [omit: as] I just did but, [*Pause*] you understand me.

What do we usually refer to in saying about something, "It's going fast, it's not fast", "It's slowing down, it's rushing, it's speeding up"? We are saying that about bodies. We are saying that about bodies. And I already told you – with the condition that I only comment on it later -- that Spinoza has a very extraordinary conception of bodies, that is, a truly kinetic (*cinétique*) conception. Indeed, he defines the body, each body, and much more. He makes the individuality of the body depend on it. The individuality of the body for him, of each body, is a relationship of speeds and slownesses between elements, and I have emphasized, between unformed elements. Why? Since the individuality of a body is its form, and if he tells us the form of the body -- he will himself use the word "form" in this sense -- the form of the body, it is a relation of speeds

and slownesses between its elements. The elements must have no form, otherwise the definition would make no sense. So, this has to be unformed material elements, that have no form by themselves. It will be their relation of speeds or slownesses that will constitute the form of the body. But, in themselves, these elements between which the relationships of speeds and slownesses are established are formless, unformed, unformed and informal. What I mean here, I will consider later. But for him, that's what a body is.

And I was saying to you a table, [*Deleuze smacks the desk*] well, that's what it is. Fine, think of physics. Physics will talk to us [of] a system of molecules moving in relation to each other, a system of atoms. This is [Arthur] Eddington's desk, the physicist's desk. Fine. And [Spinoza] has this vision. Again, it is not at all that he anticipates atomic or electronic physics. That's not it. That's not it. It's this: as a philosopher, he has a concept of the body of the kind that philosophy produced at that era, a determination of the body that physics with entirely different means will discover or produce on its own account. These things happen all the time.

And so, it's very odd, because it makes me think of some of Spinoza's particularly beautiful texts. You will find, for example, you will find at the beginning of book III of the *Ethics*, [where] Spinoza really proposes some things that look like… [*Deleuze does not finish this*] Last year I tried to discover or indicate -- not discover, I did not discover – certain relations between a philosopher's concepts and kinds of cries -- basic cries, kinds of cries, kinds of cries in thought.[4] And well, that's how it is from time to time, there are cries emerging from Spinoza. This is all the more interesting since, yet again, this philosopher is one who exudes an image of serenity, so it's odd.

When does he start crying out? He cries out a lot precisely in the scholia, or else in the introductions to a book. He does not shout in the proofs. A proof is not a place or a site where you can cry out. And what are Spinoza's screams? I'll quote one. He says -- he's talking about the little baby, the sleepwalker, and the drunkard – There we are, there we are. Ah! The little baby, the sleepwalker, the little baby on all fours, the sleepwalker who gets up at night while sleeping and who's going to murder me, and then the drunkard who launches into a big speech. Fine. And [Spinoza] says -- sometimes he's very funny, you know, he has a Jewish humor, Spinoza -- he says: "Oh! In the end, we do not know what the body can do." We don't know what the body can do. So there, in your reading, when you come across this kind of sentence in Spinoza, you must not move on as if ... First, you have to laugh a lot; these are funny moments. There is no reason why philosophy should not have its very own comic. "We don't know what the body can do". See a baby there crawling; see an alcoholic talking to you who is completely drunk, and then you see a sleepwalker passing by there. Oh yes! It's true, we don't know "what the body can do."

After all, this is a rather special preparation for another cry that will reverberate long afterward and that will be similar but more contracted when Nietzsche exclaims, "How astonishing the body is." Which means what? This is a reaction to certain philosophers who say: listen, just drop the soul, consciousness, etc. Instead, you should first try to see "what the body can do". What is… You don't even know what the body is and here you come talking to us about the soul. Well, no, you just need to move on.

Fine, what does he mean here? How astonishing the body is, the other [Nietzsche] will say. And Spinoza already says, literally, “You don’t yet know what the body can do.” They certainly have some idea if they are saying that. It’s odd, they are proposing to us a “model” of the body; obviously, it’s quite mean for the other philosophers who still have not stopped talking about consciousness and the soul. They are saying, and after that – when they treat Spinoza as being materialist, saying, “that’s just materialism!” – of course, this isn’t literal; he also never stops talking about the soul, but how does he speak about the soul? He speaks about it in a strange way, and it’s quite comprehensible about the soul and its relations with the body; he has a doctrine that will be known by the name – he didn’t create the term – that will be known by the name of parallelism. And what is parallelism? I am saying that it’s odd because this isn’t his term, but comes from Leibniz who uses it in a completely different context, and yet this term suits Spinoza quite well.

Let’s get back to his basic ontological proposition, his basic ontological proposition, which finally is Being -- it includes several articulations. First of all, "Being is substance, but absolutely infinite substance, having, possessing” -- there I leave a word very vague – “all the attributes," absolute substance possessing all the infinite attributes. For reasons that we will see later, it turns out that "we", who are not absolute substance, we only know two attributes; our knowledge is only of two attributes: extension and thought, and in fact, these are attributes of God. There are many "whys" in all this, but this isn’t what I am dealing with at the moment; we will see it later. Why are extension and thought attributes of God? I am mentioning it to you in passing, but it’s not what I’m dealing with today. That doesn’t prevent absolute substance from having an infinity of attributes; it doesn’t have merely two. We only know two of them, but it has an infinity.

What are we? We are not substance. Why? Here we’ll completely fall right back into a problem that I already tried to raise the last time, in the previous classes.[5] If we also were substance, substance would be understood in at least two senses; it would be understood in several senses. It would be understood in a first sense: God, the infinite substance. It would be understood in a second sense: Me, finite being. In fact, in the first sense, God, the substance, this would be something like that which exists through itself. But if I were a substance, it would be in a very different sense since I do not exist through myself, being a finite creature, being a finite being. I exist, let us assume, through God. I do not exist through myself. Thus, I am not substance in the same sense as God is substance.

Third sense: if my body itself is “substance”, it’s in yet another sense since the body is divisible, whereas the soul is not supposed to be so, etc. In other words, understand: if I am substance, it’s quite simple. I am only substance in one sense of the word “substance”, and henceforth, the word “substance” has several senses. In other words, the word “substance” is “equivocal”. It’s necessarily equivocal. “Substance” will be stated by analogy. If you recall the notions that I vaguely tried to define at the other meetings, “substance” will be stated by analogy since analogy is the status of the concept insofar as it has several senses: this is equivocity. “Substance” will be an equivocal term, having several senses. These senses will have relations by analogy. “Just as God only needs the self to exist”, first sense of substance, “me, finite being, I only need God in

order to exist," second sense. There is analogy between the meanings, and at that point, "substance" is an equivocal term.

See, in fact, Descartes says it explicitly. Descartes remains at least a Thomist despite Descartes's ruptures with St. Thomas [Aquinas]. He absolutely remains a Thomist on a fundamental point, to wit: Being is not univocal. In other words, there are several senses of the term "substance," and as Descartes says, here employing vocabulary from the Middle Ages, substance is expressed through analogy. Notice what these mysterious terms mean, in fact; they mean something quite rigorous.

We've seen this, so I won't go back over it; we've seen that, on the contrary, Spinoza develops, deploys the fixed plane of the univocity of Being, univocal Being. If Being is substance, it is absolutely infinite substance, and there is nothing other than this substance. This substance is the only one, in other words, the univocity of substance, no other substances than absolutely infinite Being, that is, no other substance than Being insofar as it is Being. Being insofar as it is Being is substance. That immediately implies that nothing else may be substance. Nothing else? What else is there than Being? We've seen this at the previous meetings, and this is perhaps the departure point for the ontology we were looking for. So, maybe we are going to have a possible answer to our question!

What else is there than Being, than Being insofar as it is Being, from the viewpoint of ontology itself? We have seen this from the start: what there is other than Being insofar as it is Being, from the viewpoint of ontology itself, is what Being is expressed of, that is, be-ing (*l'étant*), the existent. Being is expressed of what "is", of be-ing, of the existent. Notice the immediate consequence, what is: be-ing is not substance. Obviously, this is scandalous, scandalous, from a certain viewpoint, scandalous for Descartes, for all of Christian thought, for the entire thought of creation. That which is, is not substance.

So what is it? We no longer even have any choice! What "is" is neither substance, nor attribute since substance is Being. Attributes are the elements of Being. All the attributes are equal; there's no superiority from one attribute to another. And, in fact, you indeed notice that Spinoza fully deepens his opposition to an entire philosophical tradition, the tradition of the One superior to Being. What he is going to create is philosophy. I believe that it's almost a Spinozan characteristic, the most anti-hierarchical philosophy that has ever been created. There are few philosophers who, one way or another, either explicitly state or even suggest, at least in general explicitly state, that the soul had greater value than the body, that thought had greater value than extension, and all that, belonging to levels of Being starting from the One. This is inseparable; the hierarchical difference is inseparable from theories or conceptions of emanation, of the emanative cause. I reminded you [that] effects emerge from the cause; there's a hierarchical order from cause to effect: the One is superior to Being; Being, in its turn, is superior to the soul; the soul is superior to the body. This is a descending slope.

The world of Spinoza is very odd, indeed. It is truly the most anti-hierarchical world that philosophy has ever produced! In fact, if there is a univocity of being; if it is the One which depends on Being and not Being which depends on the One, which results from Being; if there is

only Being and that which is expressed of Being, and if that which is expressed of Being is in being; if Being encompasses that which is expressed of [Being], containing it from the point of view of immanence, in a certain way that we will have to determine, [then] all beings are equal. I simply leave a blank space: all beings are equal, as what? From what point of view? As what? So, what does that mean, a stone and a sage, a pig and a philosopher, all are of equal value? It's enough to state "as what". Of course, they're of equal value. As existence, they're of equal value; they're equal. And here, Spinoza will never give up on that. He will say it formally, the wise man and the madman, there is indeed a point of view, an "insofar as", in which one sees quite evidently that one is not superior to the other. That aspect is very odd, very astonishing! I'll try to explain it, but I don't pretend to explain it yet, right?!

So fine, Being, unequivocal Being, is necessarily an equal Being. It's not necessarily that all be-ings (*étants*) are equal, but that Being, Being is stated equally of all be-ings; Being is expressed equally of all that is, whether a pebble or a philosopher, eh! In any case, Being has only one meaning. A great idea, right?! But just having the idea is not enough. One must build the landscape in which the idea works, and he knows how to do it, Spinoza! And univocal Being is necessarily a lost being. Never has anyone advanced farther the criticism of all hierarchy. Extension is like thought; it is an attribute of substance, and you cannot say that one attribute is greater than the other: perfect equality of all attributes.

So, simply put, if there is perfect equality, what must be done? What does parallelism mean? We are modes, right? We are modes; we aren't substances, that is, we are manners of being, we are modes, which means manners of being. We are manners of being, we are modes. In other words, what is Being expressed of? It is expressed of the be-ing, but what is the be-ing? The be-ing is the manner of being. You are manners of being, that's what it is! You aren't persons; you are manners of being, you are modes. Does that mean, as Leibniz pretended to believe, as many commentators have said, that in the end, Spinoza didn't believe in individuality? On the contrary, I believe that there are few authors who have so greatly believed in and grasped individuality, but we have the individuality of a manner of being. And you are worth what your manner of being is worth. Oh! All that is really funny!

So, am I a manner of being? Yes indeed, I am a manner of being. That means a manner of being, a mode of being. A manner of being is a mode of being. I am not a substance. You understand, a substance is a person. Well no, I am not a substance. I am a manner of being. Maybe this is a lot better! We don't know! So, necessarily, I am a being since I am a manner of being. Necessarily, there is immanence, there's the immanence of all manners of being. [Spinoza] is in the process of creating a thought, but we realize at once, well obviously, finally we realize, if that appeals to you, you realize, quite obviously, he's right, but this story is completely twisted. It's quite astounding! He's introducing a completely strange aspect of this! Try for a moment to think of yourself in that way! You have to repeat it over and over: No, no, I'm not a substance; I'm a manner of being. Eh? Yeah, so fine! A manner of what? Well yeh, a manner of being. Huh! So, does a manner of being endure, having a personality, an individuality? Maybe it has no personality, but a manner of being has a very strong individuality, a manner of being.

So, what are the consequences of that? Well, that means that I am within. What am I within? I am within the Being of which I am a manner. And someone else? Someone else too, is within the Being of which he/she is a manner. But then, if we get in a fight, are these two manners of being that are fighting? Yes, these are two manners of being that are fighting. Why? No doubt they are not compatible. Why? Maybe there is an incompatibility of speeds and slownesses. Huh! Why am I bringing back speeds and slownesses? Because manners of being or a manner of being, a mode of being, that's what it is! That's what it is! It's a relation of speed and slowness; these are relations of speed and slowness on the fixed plane of absolutely infinite substance.

Okay, well fine, if that's a manner of being, okay; we're going forward a little bit here -- and I'm nothing else! I'm a relation of speed and slowness between the molecules that compose me. What a world! One must think that obviously, every believer, every Christian, jolted upright when he read Spinoza; he said, but what is that? Even every Jew, I don't know ... Any man of religion. [Spinoza] kept going on, without any worries. He kept going on.

So then, what manner of being am I, what way of being, if I am a manner of being? We will say, it is not complicated! So there, you understand, I have a body and a soul; there he seems to say, he seems to fall back as well, stepping on everyone. I have a body and a soul. Finally, we'll discover, he is saying something like everyone else; this is not going to last long. He says: this is very true, I have a body and a soul, and I even only have that! And there, from one perspective, this is annoying. It's annoying since there's an infinity of attributes of absolute substance, and I simply have a body and a soul.

And in fact, what is it a body? A body is a mode of extension (*étendue*). A soul is a mode of thought. Maybe here, there is already an answer or an initial answer to the question: why, of all the attributes of absolute substance, am I familiar with only two of them? This is a fact. This is the fact of my limitation. This is how I am made. You will say to me: if you are made, you are a substance. No, I'm made as a manner. Well, I am made in the following way: Body and soul, that is, I am both a mode of extension through my body and a mode of thought through my soul. That is, my soul is a way of thought; my body is a manner of extending, of being extended.

So, in the attributes with which I'm not familiar, whose names I can't even say, since there's an infinity of them, there are other manners of being. There, there is the whole domain of a broad Spinozist science fiction, of what's happening in the other attributes that we do not know. But fine, he's very discreet about it. He says, apart from that, one can't say anything. There is a fact of the limitation of knowledge. I only know two of its attributes, because I myself am a mode of extension and thought, period, that's all. But the attributes are strictly equal. This is how, you see, that hardly has he said -- like everyone else -- I have a body and a soul, than he's already said something different from everyone else: I am the double mode of the two attributes with which I'm familiar. I am a body, I am a soul, but all attributes are equal, no superiority of one attribute over another. So, you will never be able to say that my body is less than my soul, no. Moreover, it is strictly the same, it is the same manner of being. My body and soul are the same manner of being. Why?

There, I'm going too quickly, but I'll clarify. There, you can have in a flash the deepest vision of thought, one of the deepest thoughts of Spinoza, to wit: yes, how are my body and my soul distinguished? They are distinguished by the attribute they imply: the body is the mode of extension; the soul is the mode of thought. That's the distinction between soul and body. They are distinguished by the attribute they imply. These are two modes, two manners of being of different attributes, but the attributes are strictly equal. As a result, at the very moment when I say I have a soul and I have a body which are distinguished by the attribute to which they refer, I am also saying, I am one. Why am I one? Because I am one through the unique substance, since all the equal attributes are attributes of a single and same absolutely infinite substance.

So, I am two modes of two attributes: body, mode of extension; soul: mode of thought, but I am a single and same modification of substance. I am single and same modification of substance, which is expressed in two attributes, in the extended attribute as body, in the attribute thought as soul. I am two through the attributes that I implicate; I am one through the substance that envelops me. In other words, I am a modification of substance, insofar as it is expressed, that is, a manner of being, a manner of being of Being. I am a modification of substance, that is, a manner of being of Being insofar as this modification is expressed as body in the attribute extended and expressed as soul in the thought attribute, such that soul and body are the same thing. It's a single and same thing, not a substance; it is single and same manner or modification related to two distinct attributes which therefore appears as body and is body in the extended attribute and soul in the thought attribute. What a strange vision! So, that removes any possible privilege of the soul over the body, or vice versa.

And there, in a sense, it's the first time that we can understand how an ethics is not the same thing as a morality. It is not at all the same thing as a morality, necessarily so, for a very simple reason: there is something which belongs fundamentally to morality. It is the idea of an inverse reason, an inverse rule in the relation of soul and body, necessarily so, since morality is inseparable from a kind of hierarchy, if only the hierarchy of values. Something has to ... There is no morality if something is of no greater value than something else. There is no morality of "everything is of the same value"; there is no morality of "everything is equal". Strangely, I'd say, there is an ethics of "everything is equal". And there, we will see it well later. [Spinoza] says, there is no such thing as "everything is of the same value", of "everything is equal". A hierarchy of values is required for morality, and the simplest expression of the hierarchy of values is the kind of tension, of inversely proportional relation, namely, if it is the body that acts, it is the soul that suffers, and if the soul acts, it is the body that suffers. One acts on the other and one suffers when the other acts such that the wise man's effort is to have the body obey.

That goes so far that it is almost an axiom of all the moralities of the era, in the 17th century. For example, Descartes writes a big book called *The Passions of the Soul,*[6] and *The Passions of the Soul* begins with the following affirmation: when the body acts, it is the soul which has a passion, which suffers; when the soul acts, it is the body which has a passion, which suffers. You understand that at the point we've reached in Spinoza's point of view, this proposition is unintelligible. If I am a manner of being which is equally expressed as a manner of extension and as a manner of thought, that is, as body and as soul; either my body and my soul suffer equally or

else they also act equally. Never has the fate of man been better welded to the body. If my body is fast, with any nuance of speed since it can be a purely interior speed, it can be ... It's a speed, we have seen, it's a molecular speed, it is a molecular velocity. If my body is fast, my soul is fast; if my body is slow, my soul is slow. And perhaps it's good: sometimes my soul is slow, sometimes fast, but in any case, one will go along with the other. My soul will not be fast or slow without my body being as fast or slow.

In other words, you always have both together! You can never play your soul off of your body and your body off of your soul! Never! Both are the same manner expressed in two attributes. Thus, just forget betting on one against the other! There's no point in trying! In the end, it will never work like that! So, I come back to this: where does this cry come from, "how astonishing the body is" which seems to contradict parallelism? You see why it's called parallelism! In fact, two modes of different attributes, a body of extension, a soul in thought, two bodies of the different attribute, the attributes are strictly independent and equal, therefore parallel, and this is the same modification which is expressed in one mode or the other.

Fine, so how can he tell us "how amazing the body is", which seems to construct a model of the body? "You don't even know what a body can do"! What can ... You don't even know that! We do not know! In fact, the prodigious things that a baby, an alcoholic or a sleepwalker can do when their reason is asleep, when their consciousness is asleep -- you don't even know what a body can do! That doesn't correspond to all that precedes! Yes, it does! That obviously corresponds quite well! [Spinoza] is telling us, you see, something very important. He is telling us: the body goes beyond the knowledge that you think you have of it. Your body goes infinitely beyond the knowledge that you think you have, obviously, since you do not even know that the body is only a manner of being of extension; that under the heading "manner of being of extension", it is made up of all kinds of relations of speeds and slownesses transformable into each other, and you know nothing about all that, we know nothing about all that at all, he says. Even today, we can say that we know nothing about all this.

We are making progress. It's odd, I am struck that contemporary biology develops so much within a certain Spinozism but that, we will see, we will see later. So then, so then, so then... He says: your body goes beyond the knowledge that you have of it, and in the same way -- that's what must be added -- and in the same way -- let's try, since there is the parallelism, since body and soul are the same thing, and well – just as your soul infinitely goes beyond the knowledge that you have of it, all that is directed entirely against Descartes, of course. Just as with your body, you had to go through the body to understand what he meant, and thus, the statements "how amazing the body is!", "We don't even know what a body can do", you see; what he means fully is: just as your body goes beyond the knowledge that you have of it, your soul and your thought go beyond the knowledge that you have of them. As a result, what will be philosophy's task as ethics? It will be to reach this knowledge of the soul and this consciousness of the body -- No! Dammit! (*Non! Zut alors!*) -- this knowledge of the body and this consciousness of the soul that go beyond the so-called natural knowledge that we have of our body and the natural consciousness that we have of our soul. We will have to go all the way to discover this unconsciousness of thought and this unknown of the body, and the two are but one and the same.

The unknown of the body ... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:02:07]

Part 2

… And the unknown of the body and the unconsciousness of thought. You are a manner; you are a manner of being. That means, you are an aggregate of relations of speeds and slownesses between thinking molecules; you are an aggregate of relations of speeds and slownesses between extended molecules. And all this is the unknown of the body and it is the unconscious of thought. So, fine, how is [Spinoza] going to manage all this?

Hence, I can move on to a second problem. [*Pause*] Ah yes, because my second problem imposes itself; quite obviously, it is linked. But, after all, why does he call this [book] *Ethics* and not *Ontology*, his grand book? Why call it *Ethics* instead of calling it *Ontology*? He should have called it *Ontology*! No! He should have called it *Ethics*. He surely did well. He knew what he was doing, right? He had a reason for calling it *Ethics*. So, if you will, it's going to be the same problem. I will give you some relief; we'll reset to zero. We completed an entire segment during the previous two meetings, and here, we've just completed an entire first segment on ontology, moving to a second segment: why does Spinoza call this ontology the *Ethics?*

Fine, and here too you sense that we are going to fall right into the problem: is an ethics the same thing as a morality? Does this amount to the same thing? If it doesn't come down at least to the same thing, to some extent wouldn't ethics be the only way that ontology has something to tell us about how to live, how to act? Whereas morality isn't what this is. Perhaps morality still implies – but we'd have to see why – perhaps morality still implies the position of something superior to Being. Perhaps a morality is inseparable from the position of the One superior to Being, to the point that if one believes in or if one creates ontology, Being insofar as it is Being, or the One far from being superior to Being, [this] is, on the contrary, a derivative (*dérivé*) of Being. Only here, it can no longer have any morality. But in what way?

So here we are. I'd like to begin with a story that is not difficult, but I'd like to consider it quickly for itself. It seems to me, all the morality, all the morality of the 17th century – no, I would say from Plato to the 17th century, what could have happened after? We will see all that. My expressions, you correct them by yourself. – For a long time, morality consisted, in a certain way, in telling us, what? In telling us, what? Well, evil is nothing! Evil is nothing. And why was that morality? First, we were not told: above all, do good. We were first told: evil is nothing. Strange! What is this optimism? Is this optimism? So, what then, what? It occurred that these philosophers have to be some kinds of blissful optimists to be saying: is evil nothing? What did they mean? There were all the misfortunes in the world. And then, these guys kept saying evil is nothing. So, I would like to reflect on this. You see, we are restarting from zero. What did they mean, all these people who were saying, "evil is nothing", since Socrates spent his time saying that?

So yes, misfortune existed. Evil always had two forms: misfortune and wickedness, the evil of the unfortunate and the evil of the wicked. And this was not lacking from the Greeks onward, the wicked and the unfortunate. And moreover, at first glance, what is the reason for there being

evil? The reason there is evil at first glance is that the wicked and the unfortunate are not the same. Well, if the wicked and the unfortunate were the same, evil would indeed be nothing; it would destroy itself. The scandal is that the wicked are not necessarily unfortunate, and the unfortunate are not necessarily wicked. It happens from time to time, but not often enough. [*Laughter*] In other words, if the wicked were unfortunate and the unfortunate wicked, evil would destroy itself; there would be auto-suppression of the evil. That's great.

There's an author who, late in life, considered this. He said: well no, you can't do anything else. The law of the world is that the wicked are happy insofar as they're wicked and the unfortunate innocent. He said: that's what evil is. And he said, that's what evil is. And lost in this vision, he was tantalized by it. This is the Marquis de Sade, hence the two great titles, right, of de Sade's two great novels: *The Misfortunes of Virtue* and *The Prosperities of Vice*. There would be no problem of evil if there was not an irreducibility between the wicked man who was happy by himself and the innocent man who was by himself unhappy. For it's her virtue that keeps making Juliette -- is Juliette the nice one? [*Students whisper "yes"*] -- that keeps making Juliette unhappy. -- It's Justine? No, she's wicked, Justine. So, fine.

It is no coincidence that Socrates himself already, in the Platonic dialogues, never ceases to introduce a series of propositions which, at first sight, seem feeble to us and which consist in saying: basically, the wicked man is basically unhappy and the virtuous man is basically happy. Of course, it doesn't show, it doesn't show; it doesn't show, but he says: "I will prove it to you ". He's going to prove it. I emphasize why I am making this long and also somewhat feeble parenthesis: it is to have you sense that, in a certain way, one should not assume people are morons -- that would be my plea -- and when very serious philosophers say, "Evil is nothing, only the wicked man is unhappy", they may have a very bizarre idea in mind and such an idea that they are delighted if they are told: "but you're a dreamer!" Maybe we are wrong about what they're up to. Perhaps at the very moment when they are saying that, they are very singularly diabolical because you can't think that Socrates believes in his thing. That's not what he believes in. He does not believe that the wicked are unhappy insofar as they are wicked. He knows that it doesn't happen like that.

So, my question is -- that's why I am saying let's not take Socrates for an idiot -- we're going to ask: but why does he tell us that? What is he up to in order to tell us that, when obviously that's not how things are? One must not imagine Socrates so lost in ideas and in the clouds that he believes that the wicked are unhappy. The Greek city abounds with very happy villains. So, does he mean they will be punished afterwards? Yes, he says it like that. He says it splendidly; this is how he even invents myths. But no, no, no, that's not it. What does he want? What is he looking for? Do you already sense it?

He projects a kind of cry: "So, evil is nothing". But he throws out a kind of provocation in a way that the fate of philosophy is at stake within this. Literally, I would say: they're playing the fool, playing the fool. Playing the fool has always been a function of philosophy. The fool, in what sense? In a sense that really comes from the Middle Ages, when the theme of the idiot is constant, for the Russians, I mean, for Dostoyevsky, for a successor of Dostoyevsky who died

not too long ago, namely [Léon] Chestov. However, this doesn't form a tradition; Chestov doesn't recognize himself in Descartes.

But I am trying to trace this tradition very quickly; I am not tracking it from the beginning. -- Here, if someone had ideas on this, it would be very good, even randomly within the readings. Research surely has been done on this, but I have not had the time. -- I randomly refer to Nicholas of Cusa, a very, very important philosopher; he was also Cardinal. Nicholas of Cusa is a very, very important man of the Renaissance, a very great philosopher. Cardinal of Cusa introduces the subject of the idiot, and in what sense? It has a very simple meaning: It is the idea that the philosopher is the one who has no knowledge at hand and who has only one faculty, natural reason. The idiot is the man of natural reason. He possesses nothing but a kind of natural reason, natural light, you see, as opposed to the light of knowledge and also as opposed to the revealed light. The idiot is the man of natural light. So, it starts by being Nicholas of Cusa.

Descartes will write a little text which is, in fact, hardly known, but that is in the complete works, in which contains the idiot in its title and which is an exposition of the cogito. And in fact, when Descartes introduces his great statement, "I think therefore I am", in what way is this an idiot's expression? It is presented by Descartes as the idiot's expression because this is the man reduced to natural reason. And in fact, what does Descartes tell us literally? He tells us: "I cannot even say man is a reasonable animal." He says this verbatim; I'm not interpreting. He tells us: "I cannot even say man is a reasonable animal, as Aristotle said, because to be able to say 'man is a reasonable animal', we would first have to know what 'animal' means and what 'reasonable' means. In other words, the phrase 'reasonable animal' has explicit assumptions that must be clarified. And I am incapable of doing it."

And Descartes adds: "I say, I think therefore I am." Ah, well? The opponent would be quite ready to say: well say, you don't have any problem with that, do you, because when you say "I think therefore I am", you have to know "to think" means, what "to be" means. I think; I am. What does it mean: I? Here, Descartes becomes very, very odd, but these are the best pages of Descartes, it seems to me. He becomes very subtle because he says: "No, it's not the same at all, not at all the same." Here's why it's not the same: it's because, in the case of "reasonable animal", there are explicit presuppositions, namely, you aren't obliged to know what animal and reasonable mean, whereas when I say "I think therefore I am", Descartes claims, it is quite different. There are many presuppositions, but there they are implicit, namely, you cannot think without knowing what it means to think; you cannot "be" without at least confusedly knowing what it means to think; you cannot "be" without knowing at least confusedly what it means to be. You sense it from a feeling that would be the feeling of thought. In other words, "reasonable animal" refers to explicit presuppositions on the order of the concept; "I think therefore I am" refers only to implicit presuppositions on the order of feeling, of inner feeling.

This is very, very odd, this… This interests me, all the more so since modern linguistics rediscovers this distinction between explicit presuppositions and implicit presuppositions. They are Cartesian without knowing it; it's very, very odd. There is a linguist named [Oswald] Ducrot today who is creating an entire theory from the distinction between explicit presuppositions and

implicit presuppositions. No matter. Look at the idiot: he is the man of implicit presuppositions. That's it, reason as a natural function, natural reason. You cannot think without knowing what it means to think, even confusedly. So, you don't have to explain yourself. Descartes said: I don't have to explain what it means "I think therefore I am"; everyone experiences it in himself, whereas what "reasonable animal" means, that's written in books, and the idiot is the opposite of the man of books. The man of natural reason is the opposite of the man of learned reason, such that the cogito will be the idiot's statement.

So, this topic of the Idiot is entirely grounded in a Christian, philosophical tradition which is the tradition of natural reason. So, by what means -- since it continued throughout the West; it does belong to Western tradition -- by what means does it emigrate to Russia to be pushed to the climax and to take on a new look, [*Pause*] a new look obviously favored by Russian orthodoxy, by Russian Christianity? So, there I have all kinds of links that I am missing about the comparison between the subject of the Russian idiot since the idiot is a truly fundamental figure of Russian literature, not only in Dostoyevsky. And there too, in a way, the character of Dostoyevsky, whom Dostoyevsky will call "the Idiot", he precisely is much more dramatic than Descartes's idiot, of course, his illness etc. But he retained something of that, the power of natural reason reduced to itself, so reduced to itself that [reason] is ill. And yet it retained some bolts of lightning. The prince, the idiot, he knows nothing. But he is the man of implicit presuppositions. He understands everything. This figure of the idiot continues to say: "I think therefore I am" at the very moment when he is rather mad, or distracted, or a bit enfeebled.

But Descartes already agreed to pass for someone feeble. What is it with these philosophers, wanting to play at being the moron? It's very odd as a business already. They oppose this philosophical feebleness to philosophy since Descartes opposed that to Aristotle. He says: "No, no, I am not the man of knowledge, I know nothing", etc. Socrates said it already: "I know nothing, I am the idiot and the utility idiot (*idiot de service*)". Why? What do they have in mind? Okay then, what does he want?

I am starting over. What does Socrates want when he says: "Ah, you know ... but yes, look carefully: there's only the wicked man that's unhappy." He poses a kind of paradox, the auto-suppression of evil. We have to see: if the wicked are unhappy, there is no more evil. But why would there be no evil or no longer any evil? "Evil is nothing"! What does that mean? There we are; that means: you think you're so clever. You talk about evil, but you can't think of evil. If philosophers meant that, that would be interesting. In the end, that would be interesting. You cannot think that. Why would a philosopher need to say that? You can't think of evil. And I'm going to show you that you can't think of evil. "Evil is nothing", that wouldn't mean that evil is nothing. That would mean evil is nothing from the point of view of thought. You cannot think it. It is a nothingness. Might as well try to think nothingness.

In Socrates's texts, or rather Plato's, the subject, "evil is nothing," traverses two levels, a grand objective level and a subjective level. Evil is nothing objectively; what does that mean? It means: all evil comes down to deprivation, and deprivation comes down to negation. So "evil is nothing"

is a pure negation. Evil is not. In fact, there is no being of the negative. There is no being of the negative.

There, this is very simple. It is very simple and very difficult at the same time. This reduction, you understand, of evil or of contradiction, if you will, to deprivation and of deprivation to simple negation.

Let's suppose [that] he does that, he develops his thesis. And subjectively, evil is nothing; what does that mean? Subjectively, it means -- and here Socrates develops all his talent -- he says: "Well, yes, listen, I'm going to show you through dialogue." He brings in a wicked man. He says to him, "You want to kill, right?" The other said, "Yes, yes I want to kill. [*Laughter*] I want to kill everyone". "Ah", says Socrates, "Fine, you want to kill everyone. But why do you want to kill everyone?" Then the wicked man says: "Because it makes me happy. Like that, it makes me happy, Socrates, I want to. It makes me happy." "Ah, you want to. But pleasure, tell me, wicked man, is it good or is it bad?" Then the wicked man says: "Obviously it is good, it feels good." [*Laughter*] And Socrates says: "But you're contradicting yourself! You're contradicting yourself because what you want is not to kill everyone. Killing everyone is a means. What you want is your pleasure. It happens that your pleasure is to kill everyone, fine. But what you want is your pleasure. And you told me yourself, pleasure is good, so you want good. You're simply fooling yourself about the nature of good." [*Laughter*] So the wicked man says: "Socrates, nobody can talk with you!" [*Laughter*] See, it's extremely simple.

The wicked man, subjectively, is someone who is in error, and this is going to be very important for us, this expression, "the wicked man." Hence Socrates's expression: "No one is voluntarily wicked," which means, by definition, all will is will of a good. There are simply some who are in error about the nature of good, so they are not voluntarily wicked. They are seeking good. He says: "I am seeking 'my' good." But Socrates says: "You are right. You must seek your good. Obviously, it is your good. So, for you, it is murder, very good, but it's always good, your good. So, then, you can't be seeking evil." Then, the wicked man goes mad. Socrates hopes that, in this way, he will himself be destroyed, but in the end, that only works at a certain level.

So, you see? What do I already understand about this? It's that this philosophy tells us: evil is nothing, which tells us this in two modes, on two registers: objectively, evil is pure negation, there is no being of the negative; and which tells us subjectively: you will not be able to want evil because it is contradictory. You can only want something good. No one is willfully wicked. What are they doing? What are these philosophers already slogging through? No, not slogging. They already entered into what element? They're in the element of judgment.

In fact, the wicked man is the one who judges badly. The whole philosophy will be brought into the system of judgment, and perhaps that's what philosophy first invented, even if it's going to be ruinous, catastrophic, I don't know here. I am making no value judgment. I believe that philosophy was born with a system of judgment. And the wicked man is the one who judges badly. And the philosopher may be a fool, but he is good because he claims to judge well.

Let’s suppose -- I'm still far from being able to say what I would like to have you feel; it takes so many words to come up with a tiny little feeling – fine, what does it mean that philosophy would be and would merge with the constitution of a system of judgment? Perhaps it was for better or for worse. Perhaps that’s what certain philosophers then tried to shake off and to escape, philosophy as a system of judgment, a judgment without sanction. Philosophy has never hurt anyone, but it is true that philosophers have not stopped judging. What is it that authorized them? No doubt by the fact that they were the ones who invented the system of judgment. They had made a system out of judgment. Why and how? What does that mean? There I tell you almost the substance because these are extremely simple things. But I am so unhappy, I am so dissatisfied with what is generally said about the origin of philosophy, and including the Hellenists, Heideggerians, etc., that I am trying to work this out on my own account.

Here’s what I would like to say: it seems to me that philosophy has always started by taking a very curious form that it will never abandon, namely, the paradox, the paradox. The philosopher is a guy who arrives and, in a sense, he’s a good for nothing; it’s true. It’s… Imagine, in the Greek city, the philosopher: he walks onto the public square; he is always ready, he is always ready to chat. "Ah well, where are you going?", it’s Socrates who begins: "where are you going?" "What is happening to you?" And then the conversation begins. But it is not just any conversation: we will call the philosophical conversation one in which the paradox emerges that designates a certain power. A certain power or a certain impotence? And what is the paradox at the simplest level? Really, here I am saying rudimentary things; I am not wondering about what the paradox is. I'm looking for a little common thread.

And I believe that the paradox at the simplest level consists in saying to you: "there is something which ‘is’ and, at the same time, you cannot think it. Go work this out”. X is, and yet, what a wonder, admire that: It is unthinkable. In technical terms, I would say: the paradox is a proposition that consists in posing the unthinkability of a be-ing [*étant*]. This would be a good definition of the paradox. That, the philosopher does not say; it is not. You have to be there; the commentators are really lamentable.

I'm choosing an example, an example apparently different from what I’m discussing, but it's the same thing. For example, there is a famous paradox from one of the first philosophers who called themselves philosophers. Moreover, he is considered to be the inventor of dialectics, it is Zeno. There are two Zenos: there is Zeno the Stoic and Zeno of Elea. I'm talking about Zeno of Elea, disciple of Parmenides, the one who said: "Being is," so there we are, the founder of ontology. Zeno creates some famous paradoxes concerning movement, and he explains that Achilles, for example, can't catch the tortoise. He explains that the arrow cannot hit the target. In other words, Zeno is an idiot. That's what it is to be an idiot. So, he explains: the arrow cannot reach the target, cannot find the target, nor can Achilles catch the tortoise. You recall how he explains it: he divides Achilles's path or the arrow's arc in half. The second half, he divides it in half, etc., etc., infinitely, and there will always be a distance, however small it may be, between the arrow and the target. Similarly, Achilles jumps forth, and he covers half of his difference with the tortoise; he will have to cover half of what is left, half the rest of the rest, endlessly: he’ll never catch up with the tortoise.

You will tell me, ah fine, but Zeno has a strong Greek mathematical background. It's very interesting. This is very interesting because it involves what the Greeks had set up as a method of exhaustion, that is, the analysis of the infinitely small. It's less nonsense than it would seem, but in what way is this philosophy? You understand, Zeno is no idiot, nor Socrates. He's an idiot in another way, but not in the way you would think because he knows things move. He certainly knows that Achilles catches the tortoise. He certainly knows that the arrow hits the target. He knows all that. Likewise, Socrates knows that there are wicked people.

So, what they want to tell us is something quite different: evil or movement are be-ings (*étants*). Only the problem is how to think about be-ing. What Zeno is trying to show is that movement as movement is unthinkable. It's not that the movement as a movement "is not" as many commentators have him say. That's foolish. It is that movement as movement cannot be thought. What Socrates wants to show is that evil as evil cannot be thought. Well, here it's getting more interesting; that's what a paradox is. A paradox states the unthinkability of a be-ing.

But why does that give them intense pleasure, these paradoxes? They are delighted. The more they were told: "But you are stupid to say that: the movement does not exist! What do you mean?", they reply: "Ah well, whatever. How are getting along with my paradox?" Hence, the reputation that philosophers have always had for being talkative. They are not talkative; they are the quietest men in the world since they think that ultimately be-ing is fundamentally unthinkable. That can be comforting because if be-ing is unthinkable, perhaps it may be because Being itslef is thinkable, but that thinking of Being isn't easy either. And that would be philosophy, then. But no matter, there we are. Why are they saying that? Why are they so happy? At first glance, it is not a triumph for thought, it is not a victory for thought, far from that. It cannot think movement, it cannot think evil, it cannot think anything.

What can thought think then? It will think "Being is": Parmenides. Only justice is just. Righteous men are only righteous, second; what is truly and totally just is justice. Justice is just. We can create litanies: Virtue is virtuous, wisdom is wise. This is what Socrates does in a series of dazzling dialogues, but that infuriate everyone. A lengthy discussion occurs in order to come to the revelation: justice is just, and there is only justice that is just. There is only the being that "is". We'd like to say: "but it really didn't require 40 pages on that." But yes, it did, on the contrary; 40 pages were needed since, and this is inseparable: be-ing is unthinkable.

What is thinkable? Pure ideality, the idea, the idea. But in the end, it's not so brilliant. Why do philosophers rejoice? The less they can think of be-ing, the happier they are, the more they laugh in their own way. They annoy everyone, all that, and then they explain that you can't think anything, you can't think movement, you can't think Being, no, you can't think evil, you can't think becoming, we can't think everything that is the object of paradox. And they proceed to say: yes, we can think: "justice is just, being is", etc. What are they doing? Understand! They are really fulfilling the destiny of philosophy, it seems to me, in its original emergence, namely, to constitute a system of judgment. It's about judging everything that is.

And what is the possibility of judging all that is? Ultimately, it is to rise to the position of something which is beyond Being. We will judge what is, and we will judge Being itself as a function of something which is above Being. We fall back on the One above Being. In other

words, the basic idea of this whole philosophy is that Good alone, with a capital G - and this is how it produces this optimistic appearance - only Good creates Being and makes acting. Only Good makes one be objectively and makes one act subjectively. So Good is above Being. Good is One. Henceforth, we can judge all that is. It was less about decreeing as unthinkable movement [or] becoming than of submitting them to the system of judgment as a function of criteria which do not become, which are the criteria of Good, which are not in motion, etc. So Good is both reason for being (*raison d'être*) and reason for acting (*raison d'agir*). In Latin, it will become Good as *ratio essendi* and *ratio agendi*. Evil is necessarily nothing. And that's what they mean: Evil is necessarily nothing since only the Good creates Being and creates acting. Good is above Being. This is the condition of the judgment system.

So, in the end, if you will, this is not in the name of stupid optimism. This is in the name of logic, of a logos taken to the extreme. The power of paradox is the logos. It's not the philosopher who is optimistic; it's logic that is. [Logic] cannot think of Evil; it cannot think of movement; it cannot think of becoming. It is much later, much later, much later that logic will make a considerable movement over itself in order to try to think evil, being, and movement… Euh, no, to think evil, movement and becoming. And the reconciliation of evil, movement and becoming with logic and with the power of logic will mark a turning point for philosophy. -- [*Interruption, noise from outside the class*] Someone better close that door…. What did I do with my watch? What time is it? [*Answers from students*] Quarter past twelve. --

That will mark a very important date. Overall, we can say that the reconciliation of logic with being as such, with evil, becoming, movement, what will this be? This will be high German Romanticism. This will be Hegel. At that point, logic will find a way to bring a being into accord with the negative. There is a being of the negative. It will be the reconciliation of logic, if you will, and of the tragic. Up until then, logic had been incurably optimistic and in the service of good. So fine, here's what I would like to say, and I would like to finish quickly because you have had enough, but I don't know what… Ah, yes, right…

Finally, here's what I mean: well yes, I seemed to have given up on Spinoza completely. Now is the time or never to come back to this. I'm going to ask you, how does he fit into all this? I seem to be creating a history of philosophy that goes off in all directions. And it's very odd because Spinoza keeps telling us, like everyone else at the time, evil is nothing. He doesn't stop. He constantly tells us evil is nothing, objectively and subjectively: objectively because the opposition comes down to deprivation, and deprivation comes down to negation. There is no being of the negative; subjectively because the wicked man is a mistake; wickedness is a mistake. The wicked man is someone who is in error. So, he keeps telling us that.

Moreover, he treats for own account the problem of evil in an enthralling text that I spoke of last time, namely his exchange of letters with [William van] Blyenbergh and which relates solely to the question of evil. And yet, if you will then, on the first reading, one says: Yes, he is saying what we'd already been told for centuries before Socrates, what many others have said: this is the system of judgment; it's this logic that refuses, that cannot think of evil. This is the famous paradox of logos. And then, when we read at the same time, when we read, we have a completely different impression at the same time. – [*Noises from outside*] They really are infuriating!

(*chiants*) – One has a completely different impression. It's because, in words that have been said a thousand times, Spinoza tells us something completely different, entirely different. What is he telling us?

This is what he tells us: evil is nothing! And so far, that works very well. Until then, it can be endorsed, it's like in petitions, you know? You can sign the first sentence, and then comes the second sentence, and so there, I can no longer sign, no, no, no, that's just not right. Well, it's the same thing in the story that I'm telling you. Evil is nothing, who does that refer to? If we run a contest, then we answer: Who can say that? Socrates! Descartes! Leibniz! Spinoza! Fine, from there, the sentence branches off. Is evil nothing? This is a proposition that is not yet complete. If you are told evil is nothing, you must above all be careful; you wait, you wait - the sentence hasn't ended. As it is, it's without sense since evil can be nothing for the most opposite of reasons.

You require some directional arrows, and some people follow the first fork: evil is nothing because only Good "creates Being" and "creates acting". That's the road: Good, that is the One above Being. Good creates Being, that is, Being derives from Good; the One is more than Being. – [*Interruption; someone leaves the room*] You're coming back, right? [*Answer:* Yes] – This is because evil is nothing, because only Good "creates Being" and reason for being (*raison d'être*) and reason for acting (*raison d'agir*). This is also signed Plato; it's signed Leibniz who, moreover, completely renews the expression: "Good creates Being and creates acting". He gives a very, very curious, and very, beautiful interpretation, but finally, it is completely within this first bifurcation.

And then, there are a certain number of the philosophers who say: "Of course, evil is nothing." See, I am not creating limits because there are also those who say: "Yes, evil is something." There is a being of the negative. So, there's a lot of variety. But I'm interested in the second fork, a race of strange philosophers telling us what? They tell us: "Yes, yes, fine, evil is nothing." They add very quickly, so that their meaning won't be mistaken, they add: "because neither is good." [*Laughter*] In other words, evil is nothing, of course, since there is neither good nor evil. This draws reactions (*ça rebondit*). What do they mean? These are complete madmen. There's neither good nor evil? So what, murdering people, let's go right ahead! Anything at all! There's no good nor evil. It's equality of being, yes? Okay, fine! It's equality of being. Can we do anything at all? Well no, they say, you can't do just anything. We answer them: "Shut up, it comes down to the same thing." No, it doesn't come down to the same thing; these are not the same things that I am going to defend and that the others are going to defend. They are not the same things. And then it becomes more interesting. But to defend why? What does that mean, to defend? It is a system of judgment. Ah, fine, I said one word too many. It's not "to defend" that one must say. So, what is it? Aaahh, we shall see, it's a completely different world.

"Evil is nothing", that doesn't mean either good or evil. So, Spinoza uses -- he's very sneaky Spinoza, you see it in his philosophical loyalty, in his greatness; he speaks like everyone else to say something completely different -- evil is nothing, yes, but I am the man who announces to you that there is neither good nor evil, and this why evil is nothing. And there again, long

afterwards, long afterwards, it will be taken up, this will be taken up by someone who titles one of his main books: *Beyond Good and Evil*. And the writer who titled this main book *Beyond Good and Evil* is so misunderstood, like Spinoza, that he feels the need to write another main book titled *The Genealogy of Morals*, in which he shows that morality is, he says, something vile, but that, but that, but that, but his previous book was still misunderstood, *Beyond Good and Evil*. And he proposes this expression that, I swear to you, could literally be signed by Spinoza, that corresponds to the letter of "Spinozism" which is: beyond good and evil, understand, that there's neither good nor evil, that there is no more good than there is evil, at least that does not mean beyond the good and the bad. At least that doesn't mean beyond the good and the bad. It means: okay, there is neither good nor evil, but there is some good and some bad. You might tell me, is that all you're trying to say?… Just stay with me and grant me the minimum of confidence; this may well make a huge difference.

In ethics, there's neither good nor evil; there is some good and some bad. This is exactly the link between ethics and ontology. It has neither good nor evil; that means the Good is not superior to Being. There is only Being, there is only Being. Good and evil are meaningless words. [*Pause*] There is no less of good and of bad whereas morality is the art of good and evil and of their distinction or of their opposition and of the triumph of one over the other. Ethics is the art of the good and of the bad and of their distinction insofar as the distinction does not overlap with that of good and evil.

So, ethics is directly connected to ontology. Moreover, I would say that [ethics] accompanies it constantly, but [ethics] is its necessary starting point, this beginning that resulted in us not being immediately able to settle into Being. This means that only the unraveling of the good and the bad can transport us to Being with the greatest speed. Ethics is the speed that transports us as quickly as possible to ontology, that is, to life within Being, hence the importance of the problem. Fine. So, what we must emphasize is the good and the bad as an introduction to ontology, namely: what is the ethical difference between the good and the bad as distinguished from the moral difference between good and evil?

There this seems very simple to me, that is, I'd just like to finish this point, just propose this point, and postpone its continuation because I have to go to vote. I'd just like to propose the analysis, I'd say, so that you might think about it; all of you, think about it. I'd like to indicate what direction I want to develop now. For me, there are two differences. There are two basic differences between morality and ethics, that is, between the art of the good and the bad and the discipline of good and evil.

I believe that good and bad imply two things which are not at all, which are even unintelligible for morality. The good and the bad imply, first of all, the idea that there is a quantitative distinction between be-ings, that is, existents. The good and the bad is the idea of a quantitative distinction between be-ings, between existents, which amounts to the same, quantitative, but what quantity, what bizarre quantity? Ethics is fundamentally quantitative. And my second idea, but it's the same, is that the good and the bad designate an opposition between, a qualitative

opposition between modes of existence. See, quantitative distinction between be-ings, qualitative opposition between modes of existence. What does that mean?

From the ethical point of view, the wicked, I would say, what is it? In finishing this, I would just like to make you sense some very concrete things, not at all developed philosophically. We were told earlier, from the point of view of morality, the wicked man is someone who is in error, that is, who judges badly. He is in error about the nature of the good. He judges badly, he makes a false judgment. From an ethical point of view, I believe that the wicked, what is called the bad, is also about being false. But this is not at all the same conception of the false because in the previous case, the false was a determination of the judgment, and indeed, a judgment is false when it takes that which is not as being that which is. This table is not red, [but] I say: "the table is red", I take it for what it is not, or the reverse. There we have the false as a qualification of judgment, the false as a qualification of false judgment.

Isn't there another meaning of the word false? And in a sense, it's very complicated because all the meanings get mixed together. I say, for example: So, someone gives me a gold coin, and I say: look at the first meaning of the word false. False means what? The inadequacy of the thing and the idea in the judgment. I would say: a judgment is false when there is no adequacy of the idea and of the thing, and in all philosophies of judgment, the false has very often been defined like this: the true is the adequacy of the idea and of the thing, the false is the inadequacy of the idea and of the thing.

I am saying, there is a whole different meaning of the word "false" which specifically no longer concerns judgment. Someone gives me a gold coin, and I touch it, I bite it like in the movies, I bite it, it bends, or else, I take my little bottle of acid, and I say, "this is false. This piece is false. It's counterfeit". You will tell me, this is related to the judgment. Of course, that means, this coin has such an appearance that it will arouse the judgment in me: "it is gold" when it is not. But what I just said just now, this is the way in which the judgment system interprets the falsity of the coin, because in order for the fake gold coin to yield a judgment according to which it would be true, therefore for the false to signify here an adequacy of the object and the idea, there must have been a false precondition: it is in itself that the gold coin is false. It is not simply in relation to the judgment; it yields an erroneous judgment only because it is false in itself, it is false. False is no longer the qualification of a judgment over the thing; it is a manner of being of the thing.

I don't pretend to say anything philosophical; I am trying to say, really, what I am saying is about feeling. I say about someone, well this guy is a phony (*faux*); he's not genuine (*du vrai*). It's odd; you will tell me that it is still judgmental. It's strange because this is a kind of judgment of preference (*jugement de goût*). I weigh the thing; I say: this is just not right! I sometimes have this impression when facing a lie. When faced with a lie, I feel that something is wrong with this. Think of the prodigious pages by Proust, the way he assesses a lie from Albertine, something that's rings falsely. It's strange, what did she just say? He doesn't even remember what she said. There is a tiny thing that makes him tell himself: "But she's telling me a lie; this is abominable. What is she saying?" He can't decide what it is.

So, we can always say [that] this is in the domain of judgment or prejudice. Sense that one might say, one might say: yes, a philosopher of judgment will bring it back to judgment, that is, to the relationship of idea and thing. But I am saying it's something else as well. It is in itself that the thing is true or false. True no longer designates, true and false no longer designate a relation to the idea of the thing, but true and false designate a manner of being of the thing, a manner of being of the thing in itself. It's completely different.

Why do we risk confusing the two, true and false as qualification of judgment over the thing and the true and the false as qualification of the manner of being of the thing? We necessarily risk confusing them. I would say that the second sense of true and false is the deepest sense, it seems to me. True and false as a manner of being of the thing, the manner in which the thing exists [in relation to] Being. It can exist truly (*vraiment*) or falsely. It's the ethics here that interests us, being true to Being. This is not for judging what's true. It's really a mode of existence, being true to Being. [It's] very complicated. Or being false to Being.

I would say that there we have the meaning of true and false: it means authentic and inauthentic. The authentic comes from a complicated Greek word. It is really one who holds himself so as to be truly in Being. Fine, in a way, I get this impression on occasion when faced with existences: they are not authentic. Once again, this doesn't mean having a personality; it's a manner of being authentic and inauthentic, for example, feeling that someone is forcing themselves. You will tell me [that] to feel is a judgment. No, we will try to say a little more than that. It's not a judgment; it's exactly like you are weighing a letter. You toss a coin in your hand: too light, too heavy, what? Maybe we are returning to the topic of speed and slowness. Hey, he spoke too quickly, he spoke too quickly. Surely he is lying. Or else, he draws it out; he is looking for what he wants to say. That's not right, that's not right, it's way too slow. It's not working today, it's just not working, he's not doing well. What is this assessment? It's like assessing the weight of things. That's not judging. That's not confronting the idea and the thing. It's weighing the thing in itself. What is this?

I would say [that] this is something that's the opposite of the judgment system. It's like a world of tests (*épreuves*). A test what? Let's return to the model of the body, "how amazing the body is". These tests are physical-chemical. And you don't test someone; rather, it's someone who keeps undergoing the test. He lacks his speed; he lacks slownesses. He's inauthentic. On the contrary, you know, the days when everything is awful for us, from the moment we get up, we bump into things, we collide, we fall down, we slip and slide, we get yelled at everywhere. So, you get more and more mean yourself. [*Laughter throughout this description*] We are always in discord. These days, being in discord is a manner of being of doom; nothing works. It started in the morning, oh la la, when is this going to end? What a day! These are the days of the inauthentic. Every time I go too fast, I collide; every time I go slow, I slide. There is nothing to be done. Better go back to bed, but when I go back to bed, I don't know what's going on. Even there it's awful. Nothing is going right. It's the long complaint, the long complaint of the inauthentic. Oh la la, I'm unhappy. Nothing's going right, fine. Like the gold coin, you stick some acid on it. Ah, this is the test! This is not a judgment, it's a test. What can the gold coin do? We

don't know what "the body can do". What can the gold coin do, the one I just received? It endures testing with acid; if it's authentic gold, it endures it.

See, the physical-chemical test is opposed to moral judgment. And I would say you recognize, yes – in the end, we have to call those who think in this way immoralists -- they make a distinction between authentic and inauthentic. That does not at all obscure the distinction between good and evil. It's a completely different distinction. It's very different. And how do you recognize them, these authors? [*End of the recording, before end of the session*] [2:04:24]

Notes, 1-6: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 03, 9 December 1980

Initial Transcription by Web Deleuze; Paris 8 transcription: Part 1, Lucie Fossiez (to 38 :00); Part 2, Christina Roski; Augmented Transcription by Charles J. Stivale

Translation, Part 1, Charles J. Stivale; Part 2, Simon Duffy (for Web Deleuze) (duration, 2:04:00)[7]

Part 1

So, I'm considering this point: Spinoza undertakes something that is surely one of the most audacious enterprises in the sense of going farthest with it, specifically, the project of a pure ontology. But my question is still: how is it that he calls this pure ontology an ethics? He doesn't call it ontology; he calls it an ethics. And we began… I'd like for us to hold onto this question somewhat as one that constantly returns to us. Hence, there is no definitive answer. Instead, this would be through accumulating details that little by little would be imposed: ah why yes, that was quite excellent for him to call it an ethics.

And we saw the general atmosphere of this link between an ontology and an ethics with the suspicion that an ethics is something that has nothing to do with a morality. And why are we suspicious about the link that results in this pure ontology taking the title of *Ethics*? As we say, it's because Spinoza's pure ontology is presented as the position of an absolutely infinite and unique substance. Henceforth, be-ings (*les étants*), this absolutely infinite and unique substance, is Being, Being insofar as it is Being. Henceforth, be-ings will not be beings; be-ings, existents, are not beings, so what will they be? We saw the answer: they will be what Spinoza calls quite precisely *modes*, modes of the absolutely infinite substance. And a mode is what? It's not a being; it's a manner of being, a manner of being. So, be-ings, existents are not beings; only the absolutely infinite occurs as Being. Henceforth, those of us who are be-ings, who are existents, we will not be beings; we will be manners of being of this substance. And if I wonder what is the primary meaning of the most immediate sense of the word "ethics", how is it already something other than morality? Well, I'd say that we are more familiar with ethics nowadays under another name, which gained its development and earned its success: this is the word ethology, ethology.

When we speak of an ethology regarding animals, or even an ethology regarding humans, what is this about? Ethology in the simplest, most rudimentary sense of the term, in the end, is a practical science of what? A practical science of manners of being. So, you see, I would say, manners of being possess precisely the status of be-ings, of existents from the viewpoint of a pure ontology.

How is this already different from a morality? What would a morality be? – If we continue on this [topic], just take all this as a kind of, I don't know… take it as within a kind of waking dream; we don't attach a fundamental importance to each proposition we are considering, but we are trying to compose a kind of vista (*paysage*) that would be the vista of ontology. – So, we are "manners of being within Being," which is the object of an ethics, that is, an ethology. Fine.

In a morality, on the other hand, what is it about? I'd say that it's about two things that are fundamentally welded together. It's about essence and values. A morality calls to us, like that, like an impression. I'd say about morality that it's an operation that recalls us to essence, that is, to our essence, and that recalls us there by means of values. You indeed see that it's not the perspective of Being. I don't believe that a morality can be created from the viewpoint of ontology. Why? Because morality always implies something above Being; what exists above Being is something that plays the role of the One, of the Good (*du Bien*), as the One above Being. In fact, morality is the enterprise of judging not only all that is, but also Being itself. And we can only judge Being in the name of an agency above Being. When a great author says, "value does not await the number of years," he was saying in some ways that value precedes Being. – Well, don't laugh, it's a joke, so I withdraw it [*Laughter*] –

But, in a morality, in what way is it a matter of essence [*Pause*] and of values? In fact, what's in question within a morality is our essence. So, what is our essence? In a morality, it's a matter of realizing essence. That already implies a great deal; it implies that essence is in a state in which it is not necessarily realized. That implies that we have an essence, that we would have an essence insofar as being human (*en tant qu'homme*). It's not so obvious that there is a human essence. But I believe that it's necessary for morality to speak and to give us orders in the name of an essence. If we are given orders in the name of an essence, it's because this essence is not realized in itself. So fine, it can be said that this essence is "in potential" (*en puissance*) within humans.

What is human essence in potential within humans from that viewpoint of a morality? This is well known: human essence is that of being a "reasonable animal"; [being] a reasonable animal is the human essence, [from] Aristotle really, the classical definition within Aristotle: Man is a reasonable animal. Essence is what the thing is, [being] a reasonable animal, it's human essence. But Aristotle is like everyone, and all the moralists know it well: although man can have as essence being a reasonable animal, [man] isn't all that reasonable; he even never stops behaving in an unreasonable manner. How is that possible? It's because human essence, as such, is not necessarily realized, is not necessarily realized. Why isn't it necessarily realized? Because man is not pure reason, so there are accidents; humans never stop getting detoured. The entire classical conception of man consists in inviting him to come back to his essence because this essence is like a potentiality that is not necessarily realized, and morality is the process of realizing human essence.

And how can this essence be realized, which is only "in potential"? Through morality. To say that it is realized through morality is to say that it must be taken as an end. Human essence must

be taken as an end, by whom? By existent man. Thus, behaving in a reasonable manner, that is, causing essence to pass into act, is the task of morality. And essence taken as end is its value.

Notice that the moral vision of the world – here, I'm really saying some elementary things; I am just trying to situate the elements of a moral vision of the world – I'd say that the moral vision of the world is made of essence. Essence is only "in potential"; essence must be realized, which will occur to the extent that essence is taken as an end and values guarantee the realization of essence. This aggregate is what I'd call morality, whereas I am immediately trying to transfer into an ethical world. – I'd like you to sense the extent to which, concretely, things… It's already very important, the manner in which notions are organized, privileged.

In one sense, there's nothing more in all that. It's an entirely different portrait, an absolutely different tableau, one that's completely different. What will they say to us here…? – I'm not at all trying to find out who is right. Once again, who is right is ultimately of such little importance. In the end, what they are telling us is that within an ethics, we're not going to discover anything. There will be no essence, no quest for realizing essence, no values taking essence as an end, there's none of that. I am saying that it's a different vista.

What is this different vista? Well, it's very odd, and I do know that Spinoza very often speaks of essence, but for him – and I insist on this so that you raise no objections – essence is never human essence. Essence is always a singular determination. There's an essence of this one, of that one; there is no human essence. And moreover, he will himself say that general essences or abstract essences of the human essence kind are confused ideas. In the end, there is no general idea within an ethics. There's you, this one, that one; there are singularities. So, perhaps the word "essence" exists; the word "essence" runs a strong risk of changing its meaning, and does he still maintain it completely?

It's obvious that what interests him, even when he is speaking of essence, is not essence. What interests him is existence and the existent; in other words, that which is can only be placed in relation with Being on the level of existence, and not on the level of essence. So, if we agree, for example, to call this proposition existentialism, that which can only be placed in relation with Being on the level of existence, and not of essence, then that's what existentialism was. We must say that there already was an existentialism within Spinoza.

So, it's not a question of a human essence; what is it about? I'd say that it's not a question of a human essence that would only be "in potential" and that morality would be responsible for realizing, or having us be realized, causing each of us to be realized. It's an entirely different matter. You recognize an ethics in that the person speaking to you, discussing ethics with you, [says] one thing or another, either this or that. He is interested in existents in their singularity. And he is going to tell you that sometimes there's a distinction among existents, a quantitative difference of existence, there's a quantitative difference of existence; the existents can be considered on a kind of quantitative scale according to which they are more or less… More or less what? We shall see. But, as soon as you recognize this small tone on a page, this tone

developing around the idea of no common essence in several things, but a quantitative distinction of more and less among existents, you can then say it's about ethics.

On one hand, that's what ethical discourse is: between different existents, there's a quantitative scale, there's a quantitative distinction of more and less, and on the other hand, the same discourse is pursued by saying that there is also – and we don't yet know how this can be reconciled – there is also a qualitative opposition between modes of existence. This is where I was during the last session. The two criteria of ethics, in other words, the quantitative distinction of existents and the qualitative opposition of modes of existence, the qualitative polarization of modes of existence, are going to be the two manners in which existents exist within Being. These are going to be the links of ethics with ontology. Existents or be-ings (*étants*) are within Being from two simultaneous viewpoints, from the viewpoint of a qualitative opposition of modes of existence, and from the viewpoint of a quantitative scale of existents.

Fine, so that's still abstract, but today, I'd like for this not to remain abstract. So, if someone tells you… Understand, this is entirely the world of immanence. Why is this the world of immanence? It's obviously the world of immanence because, because, because… [*Deleuze does not complete this*] And [you see] the extent to which it's different, here, from the world of moral values such as I've just defined them, moral values being precisely this kind of tension between essence to be realized and the realization of essence. I'd say that value is exactly essence taken as an end. Essence taken as an end is the moral world. You will take human essence as an end, and it's the moral world. In a sense, for those of you who are a bit familiar with this, we can say that the realization of the moral world is Kant; in fact, it's there that a supposed human essence takes itself as an end, in a kind of pure act, but no matter, no matter. Ethics is not about that at all; it expresses… This is what's fascinating, but it's so different, it's like two absolutely different worlds.

What can Spinoza have to say to the others, if the others are working on morality? Nothing. Nothing, or else misunderstanding will occur when they move from one discourse to the other, when they move from an ethical discourse to a moral discourse. It's crazy how many misunderstandings occur. That's almost why, in order not to create misunderstandings for you, that I plead for us to distinguish between the two kinds of discourse. So, I'll start over.

It would be a question of showing this concretely: what does that mean? In morality, you have the following operation: you do something, you say something, etc., you judge it yourself. This is the system of judgment, once again; it's the system of judgment. Morality is the system of judgment. [It's a system] of double judgment: you judge yourself and you are judged. Those that have a taste for morality, they're the ones having a taste for judgment. You have to enjoy judgment. If you enjoy that, then you're moral; if you don't have the sense of judgment, if you don't want to judge either yourself or others, then you're not moral. So, does that mean you are radically wicked? That's what it could mean, right? Or else, it means that your business is somewhere else.

In fact, judging always implies an agency above Being; it always implies something above ontology. It always implies the One more than Being, the Good creating being and causing action; it's the Good above Being, it's the One. And in fact, value expresses this agency above Being. So, values are the fundamental system and are even the fundamental element of the judgment system. You therefore always refer yourself to this agency above Being in order to judge. Otherwise, you cannot judge.

In ethics, it's completely different, you don't judge. You say, in a way, whatever you do, you never get what you deserve. I mean, someone says something, someone does something, you don't relate that to values in order to judge. You're just asking, ok, but how is that possible? How is that possible internally? How is it possible to say such a thing? How is it possible to do such a thing? In other words, you relate the thing or the statement to the mode of existence that it implies, that it envelops in itself. Once again, you hear a speech, and you say to yourself, but to say that, what is that one must be to say that? What manner of being is implied to say that? To do that, what manner of being does that imply? You seek the enveloped modes of existence, and not the transcendent values. This is the operation of immanence.

Someone finds something – I'm choosing an example so that you understand completely – someone finds something funny, and I don't happen to find it funny at all, or inversely, I find something funny, and the other does not. This topic isn't being considered at the level of discussion. It's just that the person who finds it funny when you don't happen to, he exists following a mode such that what appears to him is indeed funny. So, faced with someone who is laughing [at], euh, an elderly lady falls in the street, ok? [*Laughter*] and you see that someone is laughing -- this might be you, right? fine – so what is the mode of existence that this implies, that an elderly lady's fall comes out as funny in your world? What is the mode of existence that envelops a soul? Yes, someone says something in front of you; suddenly, you are astounded. You say, I could never have believed this possible! I never could have believed that he'd say that! And you have the impression that this is an entire mode of existence, an entire manner of being that is suddenly being revealed to you. You say, well fine, um, in order to have said that, perhaps that's how he is, maybe that's how he is.

And again, we have this test with your closest friends. Suddenly, someone sticks his fingers up his nose, or else says something truly, truly vulgar, and one says: oh my, no, this is not possible! Did I hear right? "What did you say? You said what?" He repeats it with an air of finding it really funny, and you say: My God, I don't know him, I don't know him; that is, he just developed a mode of immanent existence. At the extreme, everyone is unconscious. I am choosing some awful examples, but these could really be sublime acts. Oh, I wouldn't have believed he was able! He was able to do that!

So, look, being able, perhaps that will tell us, being able, from the viewpoint of an ethics, it's: what are you capable of? What are you capable of? Or if you prefer, what can you do? Hence, perhaps, a return to what I was presenting as a kind of cry from Spinoza: what can a body do? But what can a body do? We don't even know in advance what a body can do. We don't even know in advance what someone is capable of, body and soul, we don't know. There are always

some surprises because we never know how modes of existence are organized and enveloped within someone. What are you capable of? What can a body do if he doesn't mean just any body whatsoever? Spinoza explains quite well one specific body or another; what can a specific body do? What can you do, you, in your body? What can you do?

Fine, then, we've made a bit of progress because what I'm now seeking, I finally grasp my hypothesis: once again, it's that the *Ethics*, the discourse of the *Ethics*, has two characteristics: it tells us that be-ings (*étants*) have a quantitative distinction of more and less, and it tells us, on the other hand, in the end, existents have a quantitative distinction of more and less, and it's through this that they are distinguished in their singularity. And it tells us also that modes of existence have a qualitative polarity. In general, there are, if you will, two great modes of existence, with all sorts of variants. So, if that's what my object is today -- once again, I am moving forward here very slowly, trying to make this concrete -- what is this then, this qualitative polarity, and what is this quantitative distinction?

And I am starting with the first point: when it's suggested to us that between you and me, between two persons, between a person and an animal, between an animal and a thing, there only is ethically, that is, ontologically, a quantitative distinction, what quantity is this about? When it's suggested to us that what creates our deepest singularities, the fact that I am this and not that, this is something quantitative, what can this possibly mean? You will learn or you already know that philosophy then, for example, there are nineteenth-century German philosophers, belonging to what's known as German Romanticism that have developed, notably Fichte, then Schelling, that have developed a very interesting theory of individuation that's subsumed under the name of quantitative individuation. If things are quantitatively individuated, good, fine, we understand vaguely, but we don't yet understand anything. What quantity? What is this quantity about? Well, we already do know a bit based on all that we've seen. In fact, it's a matter of defining people, things, animals, anything through what each one *can do*.

You'll tell me, fine, defining someone by what he can do… I mean, I'd both like to – because that's what philosophical propositions are – I'd like for you to manage – this is my goal this year; if I fail, I fail, but it's today that I succeed or fail – I'd like you to sense that in a philosophical proposition, it is good when it really seems the obvious to us, when you tell yourself, "well, obviously, I knew that! That's been thought forever, and is absolutely obvious," as if it were a very, very familiar proposition. And at the same time, it has to be the strangest thing, the most unheard-of thing in the world, but both at once. This is the way in which it's a good philosophical proposition.

And we say, well yes, people, things, animals are distinguished through what they can do, that is, they cannot do the same thing. For example, I cannot fly, right? You will tell me, that's not very strong, but precisely, we are staying, really, within… But you connect that in order… I'd say, literally, that philosophy is the art of impregnating propositions, and this is splendid, it's marvelous. Take the blandest proposition in the world, impregnate it, and it will have become a philosophical proposition. But this is an art, impregnating propositions. It's the most difficult thing in the world.

So, what can I do? I cannot fly, fine. What can I do? I can, I can, what… What is it that I can do? It's strange! Notice already the difference with the moral vision of the world. A moralist would never define man by what he can do. A moralist defines man by what he is, [but] by what he is, how? By what he is by right (*en droit*). That's it: essence is what the thing is by right. This is essence. So, a moralist defines man as a reasonable animal. This is essence. An ethicist, [*Deleuze laughs*] that is, Spinoza, does not define man as a reasonable animal, never, never. He defines man by what he can do, body and soul.

You know, there are things that man can do and the animal cannot, being reasonable, perhaps, but that changes everything. If I say that "being reasonable" is not human essence, but is something that man can do, that changes so much that being reasonable is also something that man can do. Being crazy is also something that man can do; that belongs to man's power. Laughing belongs to man's power. It's very odd, wanting to define things not at all by a supposed essence, but by what the thing can do.

On the level of an animal, we indeed see the problem. I myself had devoted, I recall, an entire session several years ago – I don't know when, two years ago – to this very question, definitions of the animal. But if you take what is known as natural history, which still has its foundation there in Aristotle, it defines the animal by what the animal is. Of course, it is necessary to include there all sorts of other considerations because within things, everything is always complicated. But, in its fundamental ambition, it's a matter of saying what the animal is. [*Pause*] What is a vertebrate? What is a fish? etc., and Aristotle's natural history is filled with this search for essence. Once again, he connects all sorts of other considerations to it; that only shows the complexity of things. But in the pure intention of natural history, or in what is called animal classifications, animal is defined above all, each time that it's possible, by its essence, that is, by what it is.

Imagine these guys that arrive – I always have to try to make things as lively as possible for you – they arrive and proceed quite differently: they are interested in what the animal or the thing can do. They are going to create a kind of register of animal powers. This one can fly – they aren't at all interested in essence – it can fly. Well hey, that one, what does he eat? He eats grass. Eating grass belongs to its power, to its power of action (*puissance*). And then a guy returns, he says, no, he doesn't eat grass, he eats meat. Eating meat, that is, the food regime, you indeed sense that this is about modes of existence, what the thing can do, that will define a mode of existence.

So, there are things that can do extraordinarily little. The table… An inanimate thing as well, what can it do? The diamond, what can it do? Gold, what can it do? That is, what feats is it capable of? What can it stand? What can is stand and what can it do? Any given animal, what does it stand and what does it do? Hey, a camel, it cannot drink for a long while. Oh good, not drinking for a long while, this is a camel's passion, it's a camel's power. Abstaining from drinking, fine. Being thirsty all the time, that's something else, it's another world of existence, good, fine.

Things are defined by what they can do. What does that mean? How does this move us forward? Yet again, it's not at all the same thing as essence. What a thing can do is not the same thing as

essence. So, if needed, this opens up some experimentation. I see something there. I say, hey, he's strange, that guy. I get the impression that if I press against him, he's going to collapse. A hand is raised to see: what can he do? Is he going to fall if I push him or isn't he going to fall? This is a whole exploration of things. It's not the quest for essence.

This manner of seeing is very odd, if you see things in that way, animals and people, as little packets of power, what they can do, what they cannot do. Ah, that guy, he doesn't hold his liquor, he can't drink. As soon as he drinks, he's drunk Oh, that guy, oh, oh, oh. See? I am not seeking someone's essence; I am creating something like a description of what he can do, a diagram of his power (*pouvoir*).

So, where does that lead us? So, I'd say, from the viewpoint of an ethics, that beings, all beings – no, I take back all beings since it's… -- all be-ings (*étants*), all existents, are linked to a quantitative scale which is that of power of action (*puissance*), that which they can do. They have more or less power of action. This differentiable quantity, the expression for which I am seeking, I at least have a name for it – but we are only moving forward very, very slowly – it's power of action (*puissance*). Ethical discourse will not cease speaking to us not of essence; it's hardly concerned with essences, since it does not even believe in essences. It only speaks to us of power of action, specifically the actions and passions that something is capable of, not what the thing is, but what it manages, what it is capable of managing and capable of doing. And if there is no general essence, it's because at this level of power of action, everything is singular. So, we don't know in advance that essence tells us in advance what an aggregate of things is, for example, what men are, what fish are, etc. Ethics tells us nothing, cannot know. A fish cannot do what its neighbor fish can do. A man cannot do what a neighbor man can do. There will thus be an infinite differentiation of the quantity of power of action according to the existents.

So, I have nonetheless made relatively considerable progress. Things receive a quantitative distinction because they are linked to the scale of power of action. And understand, well after Spinoza, when Nietzsche proposes the concept of will to power, I am not saying that this is only what he meant, but above all, he meant that. And obviously, one can understand nothing about will to power in Nietzsche if one thinks that it's the operation through which each of us would be inclined toward power of action or would want power of action. Power of action is not what I want, by definition; it's what I have. I have this or that power of action; I have the power of action of this or of that, and that's what situates me within the quantitative scale of beings.

And, as for will to power, it's a misunderstanding to make power of action into the object of will. It's precisely the opposite. It's power of action that is the subject of will, that is, it's according to power of action that I can want this or that. Thus, it's just the opposite. Nietzsche never expressed commonplace platitudes of the type "Each of us wants power"; this is not what he meant. Will to power even means the opposite; it means that you will define things, beings, animals not by essence, but by the effective power of action they have. Once again, this is the question: what can a body do? You, what can you do? This is quite different from the moral question: what should you do by virtue of your essence? It's: what can you do, you, by virtue of your power of action?

So, there we see that power of action constitutes the quantitative scale of beings. Beings are more or less powerful, that is, they are situated on this scale. It's the quantity of power of action that distinguishes an existent from another existent. Hence the importance of certain of Spinoza's expressions that, if you come upon them, I'd like you to understand them so that they'll be entirely clear. When Spinoza quite often comes to say, "essence is power (*puissance*)", understand the masterstroke he is accomplishing,[8] because in all these propositions that might appear innocent, there is always some philosophical strokes. This philosophical stroke is what? He is undertaking a strange operation when he tells us "essence is power". I am still trying to develop a free commentary here, a free commentary on this expression, "essence is power", that you find in Spinoza as much on the level of God, of substance – he says, God's essence is power -- as on the level of existents, "my essence is power". What does that mean?

First, there is a philosophical proposition since he presents things, it has several layers (*épaisseurs*). I'd say, a first layer – but you must pay close attention; he is doing something extraordinary because, in fact, he creates the complete conversion. -- By saying "essence is power," he changes everything. He means: I am not interested in essences. He tells us, if you want to call something "essence," well then, in the end, you can only give this word to power of action. Thus, this is a conversion of essence into power of action. This comes down to saying there is no essence. There are only powers of action, "essence is power".

But a second layer, morality, the point of view on essence, the Classical point of view on essence, could at the extreme understand the expression, "essence is power." How would it have understood this? You see, it's quite simple; we've seen this. Classical thought – it's what I was earlier calling moral thought – could understand quite well the expression "essence is power" in a precise sense, specifically essence is what the thing is, but given the detours of existence, given the twists and turns of existence, essence is not realized all alone. It must be realized within existence. Essence is only an idea or, if you prefer, essence is only a potentiality, a possibility. Essence is "in potential" (*en puissance*), [*Pause*] essence is "in potential". In this classical thought, "in potential" is distinguished from "in action".

Thus, moral thought at the extreme will tell us essence is "in potential", which means essence as potentiality must pass into action and must be realized. And morality takes responsibility for making it pass into action. You see, this will thus be when Classical thought offers a meaning to the expression "essence is potential (*puissance*)," it's on the condition of opposing potential and action. It understands essence is "in potential", and it's up to us to actualize it. You understand?

When, on the other hand, Spinoza says, "essence is power of action", what is he doing? It's astonishing what he's doing. It's understood that when he says that, he is excluding power of action from having any other status that being in action. All power is in action. There is only power that is actual and in action, [*Pause*] that is, there is no potentiality of power of action. Power of action does not mean potential. Power of action is what I can do, and what I can do is the aggregate of what I do and what I undergo. It's the aggregate of what I act and what I suffer. It's the aggregate of what I act and what I suffer from. It's the aggregate of my real passions and my real actions in action that constitutes my power of action. Thus, all power is in action.

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And this refers to a very, very odd strain of thought. I am citing from memory because it’s here that a philosophy of the creation of concepts is formed. There is an entire line of thinkers that precisely had tried to get beyond the duality we find in Aristotle between the “in potential” and the “in action”. And getting beyond this Aristotelian duality on which all theories of essence rest, this duality between the “in potential” and the “in action”, this is a very curious operation. That occurred in relation to expression of the type “all power is in action,” “there is no other power than in action,” “action and power are the same thing.”

To better [understand], this is where a problem resides. You understand, when a philosopher works with concepts in this way, making his attempts to [*Pause*] bring together previously disconnected concepts, [or] separating concepts heretofore connected, or inventing entirely new concepts, there remain for him/her what we call, as belonging to philosophy as art, there remain for him/her some problems of terminology, of inventing words.[9] In order to designate a new concept, sometimes you will take a very common word; it will be even the best fit there. Only implicitly will this very common word take on a completely new sense. Sometimes you will provide a very special sense of a common word, and you will build up this sense; and sometimes a new word will be necessary. It is for this reason that, when one reproaches a philosopher for not speaking like everyone else, that doesn’t make any sense. It is sometimes this, sometimes that, sometimes something else (*tantôt, tantôt, tantôt*). Sometimes it is quite proper to use only common words, sometimes it is necessary to mark the move, the moment of the creation of concepts, by an unusual word.

And so, I spoke to you the last time of this great philosopher who was of huge importance during the Renaissance, Nicholas of Cusa. Nicolas of Cusa had to create a kind of portmanteau word; he had contaminated two Latin words. Why? To create; this is a good verbal creation. Back then, one spoke Latin, so he proceeded by using Latin. He said: the Being of things is the *Possest*. – It doesn’t matter if you haven’t studied Latin, I am going to explain this – *Possest* [*Deleuze spells it out*] this doesn't exist as a word; it is an inexistent word, he created this word, the *Possest*. It is a very lovely word, it’s a lovely word for Latin. It’s an awful barbarism; this word is awful, but philosophically it’s beautiful, it’s a success. When one creates a word, it has to work; there are disasters, nothing is determined in advance. *Possest* is made of two terms in Latin: *posse*, which is the infinitive of the verb to be able to (*pouvoir*), and *est* is the third person of the verb to be (*être*) in the present indicative, he is (*il est*). *Posse* and *est*, he contaminates the two, and that yields *Possest*. And what is the *Possest*? The *Possest* is precisely the identity of the power of action (*puissance*) and of the act by which I define something. So, I would not define something

by its essence, what it is; I would define it through this barbaric notion, its *Possest*: what it can do; literally: what it can do in action. Fine.

So, what does this mean? It means that things are powers of action (*puissances*). It is not only that they have potential; they come down to the power that they have, as much in action as in passion. So, if you compare two things, they can't do the same thing, but power of action (*puissance*) is a quantity. So, thanks to this very special quantity, you will have, you will understand the problem that this causes. Power of action is a quantity, agreed, but it is not a quantity like length. Is it a quantity like force? Does this mean that the strongest wins? Very doubtful. First of all, one would have to manage to define the quantity that we call force. What is this idea of quantity? These are not quantities as they are known; they are not quantities whose status is simple. I know that they are not qualities; that I know. Power of action (*puissance*) is not a quality, but neither are they so-called extensive quantities. So, even if they are intensive quantities, this is a very special quantitative scale, an intensive scale. This would mean: things have more or less intensity. This is what would be the intensity of the thing, which would replace its essence, which would define the thing in itself. It would be its intensity.

You understand, [this is] perhaps the link to ontology: the more intense a thing is, the more precisely is its relation to Being: the intensity of the thing is its relation with Being. Can we say all this? It is going to occupy us for a long time. Before getting into it, you see which misunderstanding we are trying to avoid. … What? … That what?

Question: [*Inaudible; on intensity and the thing*]

Deleuze: Oh, that's possible. The question is not what we believe. The question is how we try to manage in this kind of world of powers of action. So, when I said intensity, if it is not that, it doesn't matter since it was already determined, this type of quantity. It is not that. We are here still trying to evaluate how it could be important to maintain a discourse on power of action (*puissance*) once we admit that the misunderstandings that, in any case, we are trying to avoid, it is understand this as if Spinoza told us, or even Nietzsche afterwards: what things want is power. Clearly, if there is something that the expression "power is indeed essence" doesn't even mean, if there is something that this formula doesn't mean, [it's] if we translated it by "what each person wants is power". No, "what each person wants is power" is an expression that doesn't have anything to do with this, neither close up nor from afar. First, this is a triviality; second, this is something clearly false; third, this is surely not what Spinoza means. It is not what Spinoza means because it is stupid, and Spinoza cannot say silly things. [*Laughter*] So, it is not: "Ha! everyone, from stones to men, by way of the animals, they want more and more power of action (*puissance*), they want power (*pouvoir*)." No, that's not it! We know that it's not so since it doesn't mean that power of action (*puissance*) is the object of the will. No. So we know this at least; it's a relief.

But I would like to insist, once again I appeal to your evaluative sense of the sorts of importance in what the philosophers have to tell us. I would precisely like to try to develop why this story is very, very important, this story, this conversion in which things are no longer defined by a qualitative essence, "man as reasonable animal", but are defined by a quantifiable power of action (*puissance*). I am far from knowing what this quantifiable power is, but precisely I am

trying to get there by passing through this kind of musing on what is important, practically. Practically, does that change something? Yes, you must already feel that practically, it changes a lot of things. If I'm interested in what something can do, in what the thing can do, it is very different from those who are interested in what is the essence of the thing. I am not looking; I really don't have the same manner of being in the world. But I would like to try to show it precisely through a particular moment in the history of the thought.

So here, I am opening a parenthesis, but still within this vision: what is this tale of power of action (*puissance*) and of defining things by power of action (*puissance*)? I am saying: there was a very important moment, a very important tradition, in which it is very difficult, historically, to get one's bearings if you don't have some outlines and reference marks, some points for recognition. It is a tale – at first glance, this seems to be very different from what I was discussing – that concerns what was called natural right (*droit naturel*). And this tale concerning natural right, it is necessary that you understand this: today this appears to us at first glance very out of date, I mean, as much juridically as politically. The theories of natural right, in the law manuals, for example, or even in the sociology manuals, we always see a chapter on natural right, and we treat it as a theory which lasted until Rousseau, including Rousseau, up until the 18th century, but today no one is interested in it, in the problem of natural right. This is not false, but at the same time I would like you to feel that, at that point, if there was in fact too scholarly a vision, this is terrible because we are bypassing things -- and, about this, why people really fought over this theoretically -- we bypass everything that is important in an historic question. I am saying this, and you are going to see why I am saying it now and how it is really at the heart of the step that I've reached.

I am saying: for a very long time, there had been a theory of natural right, which consists of what? Finally, it seems important to me historically because it was the compilation of most of the traditions of Antiquity and the point of confrontation of Christianity with the traditions of Antiquity. In this respect, there are two important names in relation to the classical conception of natural right: on the one hand, Cicero, who recorded in Antiquity all the traditions on the subject: Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic. He gives a kind of presentation of natural right in Antiquity which is going to have an extreme importance. It is in Cicero that the Christian philosophers, or the Christian jurists, will take (more than other authors), it is above all in Cicero that will occur this kind of adaptation to Christianity of natural right, notably in Saint Thomas. So there, we will have a kind of historical lineage that I am going to call for convenience, so that you can situate yourself in this, the classical lineage of natural right, Antiquity-Christianity.

And, what do they call natural right? [*Pause*] On the whole, I would say that, in this entire conception, natural right, that which constitutes natural right, is what conforms to the essence. I would almost say that there are several propositions in this classical theory of natural right. I would just like you to retain them, because when I return to power of action (*puissance*), you must have these four propositions in mind, these four basic propositions which are the basis of this conception of classical natural right.

First proposition: a thing is defined by its essence. [*Pause*] Natural right is therefore that which conforms to the essence of something. Human essence is: [being a] reasonable animal. This has

defined its natural right. Moreover, in fact, “to be reasonable” is the law of its nature. The law of nature intervenes here. There we have the first proposition, thus reference to the essences.

Second proposition, in this classical theory: henceforth, you understand, natural right cannot refer -- and it is striking that for most of the authors of Antiquity, it is very much like this -- natural right doesn't refer to a state which would be supposed to precede society. The state of nature is not a pre-social state, especially not; it could not be so. The state of nature is the state that conforms to essence in a good society. What do we call a good society? We will call a good society a society where man can realize his essence. So, the state of nature does not precede the social state; the state of nature is the state that conforms to essence in the best possible society, that is, the one most apt to realize essence. There you have the second proposition of classical natural right.

Third proposition of classical natural right, -- they flow from each other -- what is primary is duty; what is primary is duty. We have rights only insofar as we have duties. This is very practical politically, all this. These are duties. In fact, what is duty? Here, there is a term, there is a concept from Cicero that is specific to Latin, that is very difficult to translate and that indicates this idea of functional duty, the duties as function. It is the term *officium*, and one of the most important books by Cicero from the point of view of natural right is a book titled *De officiis*, “On the Subject of the Functional Duties.” And why is it that duty is primary in existence? It’s because duties are precisely the conditions under which I can best realize essence, that is, to have a life in conformity with essence, in the best possible society. [*Pause*]

Fourth proposition, at last: from this follows a practical rule which will have a great political importance. We could summarize this practical rule under the title: the competence of the sage, the competence of the sage. In fact, what is the sage? It is someone who is singularly competent in the studies that relate to essence, and all that results from it. The sage is the one who knows what the essence is. Thus there is a principle of competence of the sage because it is the sage who tells us what our essence is, what the best society is, that is, the society most capable of realizing essence, and what are our *officia*, our functional duties, that is, under which conditions we can realize essence. All this is the competence of the sage. And to the question: to what does the classical sage lay claim? One must reply that the classical sage claims to determine what essence is, and consequently, all kinds of practical tasks follow from this, hence the political claims of the sage.

Therefore, if I summarize this classical conception of natural right, from which [there are] the principles, you understand why Christianity will suddenly be very interested by this ancient tradition of natural right. It will integrate [the tradition] into what it will call natural theology, making it a part, one of its fundamental parts. [1:01:47] The four propositions are immediately reconciled with Christianity:[10]

First proposition: things are defined and define their rights as a function of their essence.

Part 2

Second proposition: the law of nature is not pre-social; it exists in the best possible society. It is life in conformity with essence in the best possible society. Third proposition: what is primary are duties over rights, because duties are the conditions under which you realize essence. Fourth proposition: consequently, there is the competence of someone superior, whether this is the church, the prince, or the sage.

A student: The competence of the sage doesn't follow from this necessarily?

Deleuze: The competence of the sage, ah yes. It seems to me that this necessarily results from this in the end, not mathematically, but necessarily; it's the result to a certain extent. For if you say, I am defining a thing through essence, and I will draw from it the conditions in which essence must be realized, which refers to a kind of knowledge (*savoir*). There is a knowledge of essences. Thus, the man who knows essences will be capable of telling us at the same time how to conduct ourselves in life. Conducting oneself in life will be answerable to a knowledge (*savoir*), in the name of which I could not say if it is good or bad. There will thus be a man of good -- in whatever way this is determined, like a man of God or a man of wisdom -- who will have a competence. It seems to me that this is implied. So fine, there we are. Remember these four propositions well. We are going to take a break.

I'm saying: Imagine a kind of thunderclap; we're going to see that all this is a lot more complicated. Imagine that a guy arrives and says: "no, no, no, but there's a sense in which it's just the opposite". Only, the spirit of contradiction never works, that is, it is necessary to have reasons. One has to have even secret reasons. It is necessary to have the most important reasons in order to overturn a theory. If you overturn a theory out of pleasure, you cannot even do so. A theory would never be overturned for pleasure and out of pleasure. A theory is a body; it has its power of resistance; it has all that. And there we are, let's assume – I will correct this later -- one day somebody comes along who is going to make a scandal in the domain of thought. And here is where I return to my earlier warning: what we are considering today as outdated commonplaces about natural right have no doubt retained and had a kind of possible and enormous revolutionary force. And this someone is an Englishman named Hobbes. He had a very bad reputation. [*Deleuze spells out the name*] He came before Spinoza. Spinoza read him a lot. And here we are – I am almost outlining a graph, proposition by proposition -- here is what Hobbes tells us about this problem of natural right; he accomplishes a rather astonishing feat of strength.

First proposition from Hobbes – I'm summarizing all this, but it's almost my trade (*métier*); I have the sad role of recounting all this to you; I'm telling you a story, so it's just a story – Hobbes shows up and say, "Well, no, the first proposition, that's not it." He doesn't even say, "that's not it"; he has no need to. For him, it's a matter of cleverness. He's developing his theory. They notice that this isn't like what the others are saying. So, what is he telling us? He say, "You understand, things are not defined by an 'essence'; they are defined by a 'power' (*puissance*)". [*Pause*]

Thus, natural right is not what is in conformity with the thing's essence; it is everything that the thing "can do" (*peut*), and in the right of something, animal or man, everything that it can do – this is a very strange proposition – but in its right [is] everything that it can do. It is at this point that start the great propositions of the type "the large fish eat the small ones; it's his right of nature." You understand, when we read that, "the big fish eat," if I just make this… -- Sometimes I say that there is no need for background (*culture*), and I really think that, in many ways, no background is needed; and then sometimes I say, yes, some background is necessary – Of course, when you come across a proposition of this type, you see that it is signed Hobbes. "It is within natural right that big fish eat small ones." I am saying, you risk bypassing it; you risk telling yourself, "Ah fine, it's true what he says, but in fact, there's no point in making a big deal of it; yes, big fish eat little ones, and then that's what you call natural right, ok fine." Good, but in fact, at that point, you can understand nothing. But, it's a bit like that everywhere, if you will. It's like that in painting or if you see a painting, if it's the first painting that you are seeing, it's not the same type of emotion because, in the end, you risk passing it by.

I'll tell you why. Because in saying that it is within the natural right of large fish to eat small ones, Hobbes unleashes a kind of provocation that is enormous, enormous, since up to here, what was called natural right was what was in conformity with essence and thus the set of actions that were permitted in the name of essence, that were allowed. So, you will tell me: "Yes, allowed, but 'allowed here' takes on a very different sense!" Hobbes announces to us: "'is allowed' [is] everything that we can do". Everything that you can do is permitted. So, if you are an even bigger fish and you ate men, this is allowed; it's your natural right. Nonetheless, this is simple; it's a simple idea, but a relatively overwhelming one. In this case, we have to wait. Someone says: "But to say something like that, what is he trying to achieve?" He's telling us: it's in the natural right. He calls that "natural right"! Never has anyone called it "natural right"! Everyone from time immemorial knew that large fish ate small ones; never has anybody called that natural right! Why? For a simple reason: we reserved the term "natural right" for a completely different thing, moral action that conforms to essence. Hobbes comes along and says: "Your natural right is all your power of action (*puissance*). Natural right equals power, therefore what you can do is your natural right. If you can kill your neighbor, it's your natural right." A very odd right! Let's wait; we're going to see the other propositions. Thus, "within my natural right [is] everything that I can do."

Second proposition – it results from what precedes -- henceforth, the state of nature is distinguished from the social state and, theoretically, precedes it. Why? Because Hobbes hastens to say it: "but of course, in the social state, there are prohibitions, there are interdictions, there are things that I can do, for example, kill my neighbor if he isn't expecting it. I could do that, but it is prohibited. That means that it is not natural right, it is social right. It is in your natural right to kill your neighbor, but it is not in your social right. In other words, the natural right, which is identical to power (*puissance*), is necessarily and refers to a state which is not the social state. Hence, at that moment [comes] the promotion of the idea "a state of nature is distinguished from the social state." In the state of nature, everything that I can do is permitted. The natural law is that there is nothing to prohibit me from what I can do. [*Pause*] The state of nature thus precedes the social state.

Already, at the level of this second proposition, "the state of nature precedes the social state", here as well, we understand nothing at all, us, because we qualified all that by saying: is there a state of nature? They believed that there was a state of nature, those who said that. Not at all, they believe nothing in this respect. They are saying that, logically, the concept of state of nature is necessarily prior, is a state prior to the social state. They do not say that this state existed. If the right of nature is everything that there is in the power (*puissance*) of a being, we will define the state of nature precisely as being the zone of this power. It is its natural right. It is thus distinct from the social state since the social state comprises and is defined by the prohibitions that bear upon something that "I can do". Moreover, if I am forbidden it, it's because "I can do it." It is in this that you recognize a social prohibition.

Therefore, the state of nature is primary in relation to the social state from the conceptual point of view. Which is very important, and which means what? Which means: Nobody is born social. Social, fine, perhaps we become so, and the problem of politics will be: what are we to do so that men become social? But nobody is born social. Here, they really are getting strong. That doesn't mean that there is a state of nature prior to the social state, as is often ascribed to them. That means that no one is born social. You can only think society as a product of a becoming. And right is the operation of "becoming social."

And in the same way, nobody is born reasonable. For this reason, these authors are so opposed to a Christian theme to which Christianity equally held, namely the theme that is known in Christianity under the name of the "Adamic tradition." The Adamic tradition is the tradition according to which Adam was perfect before sin. The first man was perfect, and sin makes him lose perfection. This Adamic tradition is philosophically significant, and here's why: Christian natural right as I have defined it earlier is very well reconciled with the Adamic tradition. Adam, before sin, is man in conformity with essence. He is reasonable, and it is sin, that is, the adventures of existence, that make him lose the essence, that make him lose his primary perfection. All of this is in conformity with the theory of classical natural right. Just as nobody is born social, nobody is born reasonable. Reasonable is like social, it is a becoming. And the problem of ethics will perhaps be how to make it so that man becomes reasonable. But not at all. How to make it so that an essence of the man who would be reasonable is realized? This is very different according to whether you pose the question one way or another, [hence] you go in very, very different directions. So, I am saying [that] Hobbes's second proposition will be: the state of nature is pre-social, that is, man is not born social; he becomes it.

Third proposition: if what is primary – this links up, it's good – if what is primary in relation to the state of nature, or if what is primary is the state of nature, or if what is primary is right, it's the same. I am in the state of nature, "everything that I can do is my right." Henceforth, what is primary is right. Consequently, duties will only be secondary obligations tending to limit the rights for the becoming social of man. Fine, it will be necessary to limit rights so that man becomes social. Very good, but what is first is right. Duty is relative to right, whereas, in the classical theory of natural right, it is just the opposite: right, you recall, was relative to duty. What was primary was the *officium*. So, he says all that, and then:

Fourth proposition, and which is practically and no doubt the most important, and politically: if my right is my power, if rights are primary in relation to duties, [*Pause*] something results from

this. If duties are only the operation by which rights are induced to limit themselves so that men become social, once again, all kinds of questions are placed between brackets. Why do they have to become social? Is it interesting for them to become social? All kinds of questions that did not arise at all from the point of view… From the point of view of natural right, Hobbes says – he says it quite well, and Spinoza will take all of this up again; he says it admirably -- but from the point of view of natural right, the most reasonable man in the world and the most complete madman are strictly the same.

Why is there an absolute identity, an equality, an absolute equality of the sage and the fool? It is a funny idea, you understand. It is a very baroque world; it's no longer classical, it's a strange world. And why? From the point of view of natural right, yes, since the point of the view of natural right is: my right equals my power. And the madman is the one who does what is in his power, exactly as the reasonable man is the one who does what is in his. There are certainly… They are not saying idiotic things; they are not saying that there is no difference between reasonable and mad. They are saying that there is no difference between reasonable and mad from the point of view of natural right. Why? Because each one does everything that he can; the madman like the reasonable man, they do nothing other than what they can.

The identity of right and power ensures the identity, the equality of all beings on the quantitative scale. One can quite simply say: fine, they don't have the same power. Fine. However, they do everything that is within their power, one like the other, the insane insofar as being insane, the sage insofar as being sage. Of course, there will be a difference between the reasonable man and the madman, but in the civil status, in the social status, not from the point of view of natural right. Hence, [there's] a fundamental collapse: everything they are in the process of wearing down, of undermining, is the principle of the competent sage or of the competence of someone superior. And that, politically, is very important.

Nobody is competent for me. There we have the great idea that will animate ethics as the anti-system of judgment. In a certain way, "nobody can do anything for me, but nobody can be competent for me." What does this mean? There is something immediately emotive (*de senti*). We must put everything in this sentence "nobody is competent for me". Of course, there are vengeances. They so much wanted to judge in my place. There is also a discovery filled with wonder, ah, it is fantastic. But nobody can know, nobody can know for me, [and] why? Is this completely true? I don't know. I believe, in a certain way, it is perhaps not completely true. I don't know. Perhaps there are competences, but in the end, sense what there could be that is strange in these propositions.

[*Pause; interruption due to a continuing noise at the door, someone tapping gently*]

Deleuze: No, no, no, no, no, don't open the door, no, no, no.

Several students say: It's locked.

Deleuze: Yes, so much the better. [*Pause; the noise at the door continues, with laughter from the students*]

Deleuze: So in my inventory of… This is nonetheless quite important, this story, because you will learn in the manual that from a certain moment onward, there was (as there had been well before), there had been famous theories under the name of the social contract. The theories of the social contract are…

[*Interruption: Someone enters and asks a question, inaudible*]

Deleuze: Couldn't someone go out there and see?... But, you have to feel a bit nasty… [*Laughter*] Someone strong, right? [*Laughter; Pause*] … If he comes back bleeding, obviously… [*Laughter; Pause*] And all that, you understand well, all that's happening here, is an illustration of the question of modes of existence… [*Laughter*]

So, this story of the social contract – follow me – we are told, here we are, these are people who thought -- why, how, we don't know very well -- but they thought that the initiation of society could only have one principle, that of "consent". And we say: well, all that is rather outmoded, because in the end, we didn't consent to being in society. It's not true. That's not how it happened. Is that what the question is? Obviously not, that's not the question. In fact, this whole new theory of natural right, natural right equals power -- what is primary is right, it's not duty – results in something: there is no competence of the sage, nobody is competent for myself. Henceforth, if the society forms itself, it can only be, in one way or another, by the consent of those which take part in it, and not because the sage would tell me the best way of realizing essence. And obviously, the substitution of a principle of consent for the principle of competence has a fundamental importance for all of politics.

Therefore, you see, what I have tried to do is just a table of propositions, four propositions against four propositions. I am simply saying that, in the propositions of the classical theory of natural right, [from] Cicero, Saint Thomas, you have the juridical development of a moral vision of the world, and, in the other case, the conception that finds its starting point with Hobbes, you have the development and all the seeds of a juridical conception of ethics: beings are defined by their power of action (*puissance*). If I've made this long parenthesis, it has been to show that the expression "beings are defined by their power and not by an essence", had political and juridical consequences that we are just in the process of anticipating, that's all.

Now, to finish with this topic, I am just adding that Spinoza takes up this whole conception of Hobbes's natural right. He will change things; he will change relatively significant things; he will not have the same political conception as that of Hobbes. But on this very point of natural right, he himself declares his status as a disciple of Hobbes, "and why?" Notice here, in Hobbes, he found the juridical confirmation of an idea that he himself formed on his own, namely an astonishing confirmation of the idea according to which the essence of things was nothing other than their power of action. And this is what interests him in the whole idea of natural right.

And I add, to be completely honest historically, that never does it emerge like that all at once. It would already be possible to seek in Antiquity a current, but a very partial, very timid current, in which a conception like this of "natural right equals power" would be formed in Antiquity. But it will be stifled; you find it in certain Sophists and certain philosophers called Cynics, but its modern explosion will be with Hobbes and Spinoza.

There you are. So, I am just saying that, I have not even explained… For the moment, I've indicated what it could indeed mean to say: "existents are distinguished from a quantitative point of view." That means exactly: existents are not defined by an essence, but by power of action, and they have more or less power, and their right will be the power of action of each of them. The right of each one will be the power of action of each one. They have more or less power of action. There is thus a quantitative scale of beings from the point of view of power of action. It will now be necessary to pass to the second thing, namely the qualitative polarity of modes of existence and to see if the one follows from the other. As a result, you see, the aggregate will give us a coherent vision, or the beginnings of a coherent vision of what is called an ethics.

So, you suddenly see why you are not beings from Spinoza's point of view. You are manners of being. This is understandable: if each of us is defined by what he can do, it's still very curious. You don't define yourself by an essence, or rather, your essence is identical to that which you can do, that is, you are a degree on a scale of power of action (*puissance*). If you are a degree, if each one among us is a degree on a scale of power of action, you will say to me: are there some who are worth more or less? Let's leave that to the side. That's going to get quite complicated. We don't know; for the moment, we don't know. But if this is how it is, you don't have an essence or you only have an essence identical to your power, that is, you are a degree on this scale, then henceforth you are, in fact, manners of Being.

The manner of being will be, precisely, this kind of existent, of existence quantified according to power of action, according to the degree of power of action which defines it. You are quantifiers. You are not quantities, or rather you are very special quantities. Each of us is a quantity, but of what type? This is a very, very curious vision of the world, very new: to see people as quantities, as packages of power. But is necessary to live it; it is necessary to live it if that suits you. Hence the other question, but at the same time, these same authors, for example, Spinoza, will not cease telling us: there are, on the whole, two modes of existence, and no matter what you do, you are led to choose between the two modes of existence. You exist in such a way that you exist sometimes in one such mode, sometimes in another such mode, and ethics will be the exposé of these modes of existence. Here, this is no longer the quantitative scale of power; it's the polarity between modes, the polarity between distinct modes of existence.

How does he move from the first idea to the second? And what is it he wants to say to us with the second? [That] there are modes of existence which are distinguished as poles of existence.

[*Pause; Deleuze makes a sound, perhaps from fatigue; someone near him suggests that someone open a window*]

Deleuze: Yes, there we are, I am asking you this … There are times that we do this [*the session*] without a stop (*continu*), but today… Could those of you in the back open the windows a little? And then we will take a five-minute break, and I will finish after. [*Interruption of the recording*]

Deleuze: [There is] something else to say as well. [Georges] Comtesse reminds us of what some of you already know, that for Spinoza, there is a fundamental notion that Spinoza presents as a tendency to persevere within Being.[11] Each thing tends to persevere within Being. And when he is coming to grips with persevering, sometimes one must state the variations of the expression,

this is sometimes a tendency to conserve, sometimes a tendency to persevere, and this is sometimes persevering within Being, and sometimes within one's being. So, in any case, there is an aggregate here that comes to asking what does this mean, tending to persevere within Being? So there, I respond: as this question is posed, I respond, we'll put it aside because I don't have the means to answer it as a function of what I said today. I don't have the means to answer this question, given that, I just want to say: that is absolutely not an effort to conserve power of action. That cannot be so since, once again, power of action is never an object. It's "through power of action" (*par puissance*) that I create or that I submit. Recall Nietzsche's mysterious expression: "And it's even through power that I endure (*subis*)." It's through power of action that I act, but it's also through power of action that I endure since power of action is the aggregate of what I can do as much in action as in passion. So then, I can just say – this is the opposite of an answer that I'm giving to this question – I can just say: fine, there is an expression in Spinoza, that will be for us and is already for us a problem of knowing what he could indeed mean with this matter of persevering within being or within one's being. So, I haven't answered at all.

So, I pass on to the matter of modes of existence, no longer the quantitative distinction between "be-ings" (*étants*) from the viewpoint of power of action, between "existents" from the viewpoint of power of action, but the qualitative polarity between modes of existence, two at least. How can that really occur? And in fact, I was telling you [that] the *Ethics* never ceases telling us this. The *Ethics* never stops proceeding, it's out of convenience, with two modes of existence. It never stops telling us: these are people who tell you generally -- really generally, you know – [that] you have the choice between modes of existence, and notably between two poles, and whatever you do, you will see, you correspond to one of these poles or the other. When you do something, doing something or enduring something, it's existing in a certain fashion. So, you do not ask: what is this worth? You ask, what is the mode of existence that this implies. It is what Nietzsche also said with his story of the eternal return; he said: it is not difficult to know if something is good or not; this question is not very complicated; it is not an affair of morality. He said, take the following test, if only in your head: Do you see yourselves doing it an infinite number of times?

This is a good criterion. You see, it is the criterion of the mode of existence. Whatever I do, whatever I say, could I make it into a mode of existence? If I couldn't, it's not good; it's awful, it's evil, it's bad. If I can, then yes! You see that everything changes; this is not morality. In what sense? I say to an alcoholic, for example, I say to him: you like to drink? You want to drink? If you drink, drink in such a way that with each time you drink, you would be ready to drink again and again and again an infinite number of times. Of course, at your own rhythm; one must not push it; at your own rhythm. At that moment at least, be in agreement with yourself. [*Laughter*] So people are going to give you an easier time when they agree with themselves. What one must dread above all in the life are the people who do not agree with themselves.

This was something Spinoza said admirably. The venom of neurosis, that's it! The propagation of neurosis, I propagate my illness to you; this is above all those who are not in agreement with themselves. It's terrible, terrible. They are vampires. Whereas the alcoholic who drinks following the perpetual mode of "ah, this is the last time, this is the last glass! One more time, or once again after", you see, this is a bad mode of existence. If you do something, do it as if you had to do it a million times. If you don't manage to do it like that, do something else. So, you

understand, that applies to everything (*ça capte tout*). It's Nietzsche who said this; this is not me. Address all your objections to Nietzsche. [*Laughter*] That might work, that might not work, all of that is not meant for discussing what I said. It's so that… so that those for whom this might be of use can use it. All that is not an affair of truths; it's a matter of -- how should I say this -- practices of living. There are people who live in this way.

But in fact, what does Spinoza want to say to us? It is very odd. I would say that the whole of book four of the *Ethics* develops above all the idea of the polar modes of existence. And in what way do you recognize this in Spinoza? – For the moment, I am saying some extremely simple things – In what way do you recognize it? You recognize it in a certain tone of Spinoza's, when he speaks, from time to time, of the "strong"; he says in Latin: "the strong man", or else "the free man," and sometimes, on the contrary, he says "the slave" or "the impotent". There you recognize a style which truly belongs to the *Ethics*. He does not speak about "the wicked" or "the good man". The wicked and the good man, these are man related to values as a function of his essence. But the way in which Spinoza speaks, you feel that it is another tone. It is like for musical instruments. It is necessary to feel the tone of people. It is another tone; he tells you: that is what makes the "strong man"; that is how you recognize him as strong and free. Does that mean a beefy type (*costaud*)? Of course not! One indeed feels that the strong man can be far from strong from a certain point of view; he can even be sick; he can be whatever you want. So, what is this thing about the strong man? It's a way of life, it's a mode of existence, and that is opposed to the modes of existence which he calls "the slave" or "the impotent".

What do they mean, these styles of life? It is a lifestyle (*style de vie*). Would there be a lifestyle living as a slave, [or] living as powerless? And then, another type of life, what does this mean? Once again, this modal polarity under the form and under the two poles -- the strong or the powerful, and the impotent or the slave -- that must tell us something. Let's continue to go into the dark and examine, following his texts, what Spinoza calls "the slave or the impotent". It's odd because we realize that what he calls the slave or the impotent, it is there, -- and I don't believe I'm forcing the texts when I say -- that the similarities with Nietzsche are fundamental because Nietzsche will do nothing other than to distinguish these two polar modes of existence and to distribute them in very much the same manner. For we realize with astonishment that what Spinoza calls "the impotent" a mode of existence, what is it? The impotent are the slaves. Fine, but what does "the slaves" mean? Slaves of social conditions? Would Spinoza be against slaves? We sense that the answer is no! It is a way of life. So, there are people who are not at all slaves socially, but they live like slaves, slavery as a way of life and not as social status. Thus, there are slaves. But on the same side as the impotent or the slaves, whom does he place? This will become more significant for us: he puts tyrants. Tyrants, fine, tyrants! And oddly, because here there will be plenty of stories, the priests. The tyrant, the priest and the slave. Nietzsche will not say more. I mean, in his more violent texts, Nietzsche will create the trinity: the tyrant, the priest and the slave. It's odd that it is already so literally within Spinoza.

And what is there in common between a tyrant who has power (*pouvoir*), a slave who does not have power, and a priest who seems only to have spiritual power? What is there in common? And how are they "impotent" since, on the contrary, they seem to be, at least for the tyrant and the priest, men of power, one of political power, and the other of spiritual power? If we consider this, it's what I call sorting things out by feelings (*se débrouiller par sentiments*). We feel that

there is indeed a common point, and when we read Spinoza, text after text, we are confirmed on this common point. It is almost like a riddle: for Spinoza, what is there in common between a tyrant who has political power, a slave, and a priest who exercises a spiritual power? Is this something in common that is going to make Spinoza say: but they are impotent? It's just that, in a certain way, they feel the need to bring sadness to life. Curious, this idea. Nietzsche will also say things like this: they need to make sadness reign! This is how Spinoza thinks, he feels it, he feels it very deeply: they need to make sadness reign because the power that they have can only be founded on sadness.

And Spinoza creates a very strange portrait of the tyrant by explaining that the tyrant is someone who needs, above all, the sadness of his subjects, because there is no terror that doesn't have as its basis a kind of collective sadness. [*Pause*] The priest, perhaps for completely different reasons, has need of man's sadness on his own condition. And when he laughs, it is not more reassuring because the tyrant could laugh, and the counselors, the favorites of the tyrant could also laugh. It is a bad laugh, and why is it a bad laugh? It's a bad laugh not because of its quality; Spinoza would not say that. It is precisely a laugh that has for its object only sadness and the communication of sadness. What does this mean? This is bizarre. The priest, according to Spinoza, essentially needs an action motivated by remorse, introducing remorse. This is a culture of sadness, whatever the purposes (*fins*). Spinoza will say that at that moment, we don't care about the purposes. He judges only that: cultivating sadness. The tyrant for his political power needs to cultivate sadness, the priest needs to cultivate sadness as far as Spinoza can see, who has the experience of the Jewish priest, the Protestant priest, and the Catholic priest.

And Nietzsche launches a grand phrase by saying: "I am the first to create a psychology of the priest," he said in some very comical pages, and to introduce this topic into philosophy, he will define the operation of the priest precisely by what he will call "bad conscience", that is, this same cultivation of sadness. He will say that this is to bring sadness to life. It is always a matter of bringing sadness to life somewhere. And, indeed why? Because it's a matter of judging life. And you will not judge life. You won't submit it to judgment. Life is not able to be judged. Life is not an object of judgment. The only way in which you could pass judgment on life is, first of all, to inject it with sadness. At that moment, one is able to judge it.

And of course, we laugh; I mean that the tyrant can laugh, the priest laughs, but, Spinoza said, in a page that I find very beautiful, "his laughter is that of satire, and the laughter of satire is a bad laugh." Why? Because it is laughter which communicates sadness. One can mock nature; the laughter of satire is when I mock humans. I'm being ironic, a kind of irritating irony. I am making fun of humans. Satire is another way of saying that human nature is miserable. "Ah you see what the misery of human nature is!" This is the proposition of moral judgment: "What misery human nature has!" This could be the object of a sermon or the object of satire. And Spinoza, in some very beautiful texts, said: "What I've called an ethics is precisely the opposite of satire."

And yet, there are some very comical pages in Spinoza's *Ethics*, but it is not at all the same laughter. When Spinoza laughs, it is in the mode: Look there at what he's capable of doing! That's something we've never seen. So, in fact, that could be an atrocious villainy; Spinoza's impression would likely be, "So fine, going that far, it was probably necessary to do that."

[*Laughter*] It is never the laughter of satire, never: "See how miserable our nature is!" This is not the laughter of irony. It is a completely different type of laughter. I would say that it is much more a Jewish humor; it's very Spinozist. It's like, "Go on, yet another step; I would never have believed that one could have done it!" It is a very special kind of laughter, and in one sense, Spinoza is one of the most cheerful authors in the world. But I believe, in fact, that what he hates is what religion has conceived as the satire of human nature since the tyrant and the man of religion indulge in satire, that is, above all they denounce human nature as miserable since it's all about passing judgment on it.

And, henceforth, there is a complicity -- and this is Spinoza's intuition -- there is a complicity of the tyrant, the slave, and the priest. Why? Because the slave is the one who feels better the more things go badly. The worse it gets, the happier he is. This is the mode of existence of the slave! You know, he always has to… For the slave, whatever the situation, he always has to see the awful side of things, the nasty stuff there. There are people who have a genius for this: these are the slaves. "Did you see that?" It could be a painting; it could be a scene in the street. The slave, you recognize this sometimes; they have a genius for it. And at the same time, he is the buffoon. The slave is the buffoon. Dostoyevsky wrote some very profound pages on the unity of the slave and the buffoon, and of the tyrant; these are tyrannical types. They cling to you; they don't let you go. They don't stop shoving your nose into whatever shit there might be. [*Laughter*] They are not happy otherwise; they aren't happy. They always have to degrade things. It is not that these things are necessarily elevated, but it is always too high. They must always discover a small disgrace underneath the disgrace. "Ah, there's that guy over there, he's …" They get all pink with joy. [*Laughter*] Magnificent! Magnificent! The more repulsive, the happier they are. They live only like this. That's what the slave is. It's also the tyrant, and it's also the man of remorse. It's also the man of satire. It's all of that.

And this how Spinoza opposes that with the conception of a strong man, a powerful man, whose laughter is not the same. It's a kind of very, very benevolent laughter, the laughter of the man said to be free or strong. He says: "Fine, if this is what you want to do, then go on; it is funny." This is the opposite of satire. This is ethical laughter![12] … Yes?

A student: *[Inaudible; a reference to Nietzsche and comparison with Spinoza on the slave*]

Deleuze: Yes, it is, there is indeed this kind of, let's say, kind of tonality, tonality of two modes of existence. What we need to have now is precisely along the path that we have just proposed to ourselves in other directions. What does that tonality of two modes of existence in an ethics cover over?

And so, I come back to the question – which would be good for me, to find a link between the first question I have considered up to now and this second question that I've reached – on the tonality of two modes of existence. And in fact, I believe that something is causing us to pass very rigorously from the first to the second question. For, within the perspective of the first question, I have just shown that all power (puissance) was "in action" (*en acte*), that literally power of action was not "in potential" (*en puiissance*), that there was strictly an identity of power and act, that is, an identity of power of action with what the thing "does" or "endures",

does and endures (*fait et subit*). Fine, we have to return to that. This must be our departure point for understanding the connection of these two aspects.

If it's true that every power (puissance) is in action, that means that at every instant, it is realized. You will never have an instant in which my power of action will contain something unrealized. In other words, you will never have the right to say: "there is in me something better than what I've done or have endured." At every instant, everything is in action. At every instant, my power of action is realized. Fine, by what is it realized? If all power is in action – you see, I am creating a series of notions of the identity of concepts – I am saying "power = action" for Spinoza. Henceforth, every power of action, at each instant, is realized (*effectuée*).

Hence, the question: what is it that realizes power of action at every instant? Here there's a very important terminological question for Spinoza. Spinoza will call "affect" that which realizes power of action. The concept of power of action for Spinoza will be in correlation with the concept of affect. Affect is defined exactly in this way: that which at a given moment fulfills my power of action, realizes my power of action. So, you see, to say that my power of action is realized is to say that it is realized by affects. That means [that] at each instant, affects fulfill my power of action. My power of action is a capacity that never exists independently of affects that realize it.

So, as long as I was considering – here we are almost, we are getting hold of something, and then we are going to stop because it's too… It's going to get too difficult. -- But just understand theoretically, as long as I was staying with the concept of power of action, I could only say one thing: strictly speaking, I don't understand how, but existences are distinguished quantitatively because power of action is a quantity of a certain kind. So, they [existences] have more or less power of action. But, second, I see that power of action is a notion that only has sense in correlation with the notion of affect since power of action is what is realized, and it is affect that realizes power of action. This time, no doubt, this will be from the point of view of affects that realize my power of action that I could distinguish some modes of existence. As a result, the two ideas would become very, very coherent: to say at the same time that there is only a quantitative distinction according to the power of action between existents and to say that there is a qualitative polarity between two modes of existence, the first proposition would refer to the power of action-act, the second proposition would refer to that which makes power of action an act, that is, that which realizes the power of action, that is, affect. There would be something like two poles of affect, according to which the two modes of existence are distinguished. But affect, at each moment, fulfills my power of action and realizes it.

What does that mean, affect, at each moment, fulfills my power of action and realizes it? Here Spinoza insists greatly on things, so he relies enormously on their literal truth. So, a blind man is not someone who as a potential sight. Here as well, there is nothing that is "in potential" and not realized. Everything is always completely realized. Either he has no sight at all, that is, he does not have the power to see; or he kept some very vague and very fuzzy luminous sensation. And the affects realize his power of action such as it is, that's all. There is always realization of power of action. But simply, here we are, that doesn't prevent [limitations].

So, you understand well this idea of affect. Affect is that which comes to fulfill my power of action. I can [act]; I define myself by a power, a power of action. Affects are what, at each moment, fulfills my power of action. So, what will this affect be? This can be perceptions, for example, luminous perceptions, visual perceptions, auditory perceptions. These are affects. This can be feelings, these are affects as well: hope, chagrin, love, hate, sadness, joy; these are affects. Thoughts are affects. These realize my power of action as well. So, I am realized under all the modes, perceptions, feelings, concepts, etc. These are fulfillments, realizations of power of action. So, can we ask, what does it mean that affects have two poles? [*Pause*] Here, Spinoza is trying to explain something that I only want to outline since we will take this up the next time. It would be too difficult to talk about in our current state. In general, he says: there are two poles of existence. The two poles are sadness and joy, sadness and joy. This is it, the two basic affects. He creates an entire theory of passions in which sadness and joy are the two basic affects, that is, all the other affects deriving from sadness and joy.

And how are the two affects, sadness and joy, distinguished? You understand, it's right here that a little problem arises.. So, we just have to live through it (il faut la vivre). When it gets difficult to think, one has to try to live through it. He tells us: both of them, sadnesses like joys realize my power of action, that is, complete my power. They realize my power, my power of action. Affect realizes it, and does so necessarily. At the moment that I feel a particular affect, it's not a question that my power of action might be realized in some other way. The affect that emerges is the one that fulfills my power of action. It's a fact; that's how it is. You won't be able to say [that] something else could have occurred. No, this is what fulfills your power of action. Your power of action is always fulfilled, but by variable affects. I suppose that it might be a form of sadness that fulfills you, that fulfills your power of action.

What happens? Here is Spinoza's very odd idea: sadness fulfills my power of action but fulfills it in such a way that this power diminishes. You have to understand this. Don't go looking for a contradiction. There are manners. My power of action is supposed, I mean… I'm going to proceed in order: My power of action is supposed to be a certain quantity, a quantity of power of action. Second proposition: It is always fulfilled. Third proposition: it can be fulfilled by sadnesses or joys. These are the two basic affects. Fourth proposition: when it is fulfilled by some sadness, it is completely realized, but it is realized in a manner of being diminished. When it is fulfilled by joys, it is realized in a manner of being increased. Why is that? We shall see; we will try to see this the next time, why he says all this. I am trying to state what he says for the moment or what it seems to me that he is saying.

We sense that there's something that's not right. But if we understood what isn't right, we'd understand at the same time something astounding. He is telling us: at each instant, my power of action is all that it can be, it is always realized, but it is realized by some affects that diminish it and some that increase it. Reflect on this well; there is no contradiction. Rather, there is an astonishing movement of thought because here as well it's fine: when I was saying [that] every philosophical concept has several thicknesses, has several levels, judge this at one level, and then, you will not have exhausted it, there being another level.

At the first level, I'd say that Spinoza is telling us – we have to proceed from the simplest to the most complicated; in all the arts, that how it goes, or in all the sciences, that's how it goes – at the first level, Spinoza is telling us: I am defining things, beings, etc., by a quantity of power of action. He doesn't want to say too much about it; he doesn't want to clarify this completely. And the reader understands all by him/herself that this quantity of power of action is like an absolute quantity for each person. Second, he says that what fulfills the power of action at each instant are affects, either sadness or joy. Third, so affects of sadness realize my power of action in such a way that my power of action is diminished; affects of joy realize my power of action in such a way that my power of action is increased.

What is he in the process of telling us? It's as if he was saying, "listen closely, he's speaking through my mouth." He's telling you, he's telling you, what's he telling you? He's telling you: "I have indeed been forced in the first proposition to act as if power of action was a fixed quantity, but in fact -- and it's already in this way that power of action is a very strange quantity -- power of action only exists in a relation between quantities. Power of action in itself is not a quantity; it's the passage from one quantity to another. So, what he is saying gets very, very strong, I believe; it's the passage from one quantity to another. I would say literally – here, I am inventing a word because I need it – this is a transitive quantity. It's a quantity of passage.

Henceforth, if power of action is a quantity of passage, that is, it is less a quantity than a relation between quantities, it is indeed required that my power of action is necessarily realized, but that when it is necessarily realized, it can only be realized in one direction or in another, that is, in such a way that insofar as it's a passage, it's a passage at a greater power or a passage at a more reduced power. All this is beautiful. It's fine. He perceived something truly profound concerning what one must call power of action. So, being a manner of being is precisely being a passage. That's what it is to be a mode, a manner of being. The power of action is never an absolute quantity; it's a differential relation. It's a relation between quantities in such a way that realization is always going in one direction or another. Henceforth, you will have two poles of existence, you will have two modes of existence: existing along the mode in which I fulfill my power of action, I realize my power of action within such conditions that this power diminishes; or the other mode of existence, existing along the mode in which I realize my power of action in such a way that this power increases.

I'd like for you to reflect – this is remaining very abstract; I will try to be more concrete the next time – for you to reflect; let this move around in your head, and figure out how… [*End of session*] [2:03:56]

Notes, 7-12: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Session 04, 16 December 1980

Transcription, Part 1, Marc LeDannois (for Paris 8), Part 2, Cécile Fredet, Emmanuel Péhau (for Paris 8); Translation (Part 1, partial text, on Web Deleuze) by Simon Duffy, Augmented and Complete Translation by Charles J. Stivale (duration, 2:04:21)

Part 1

[*Intervention by Georges Comtesse, precedes start of the recording*]

Deleuze: This is always interesting. Already, in light of the question that you asked me the last time, you tend very quickly to stress an authentically Spinozist concept, that of the "tendency to persevere in being." I am saying this because it's interesting for the entire reading, such as yours. Someone who reads, you understand, is necessarily forced to emphasize one point or another. It's like in music, the accents are not placed within a piece. So, here we have Comtesse who already the last time, he told me, "Ok that's all very fine, but the *conatus*, that is, a term usually translated as 'the tendency to persevere in being,' what do you do with it?" And I responded: well, listen, you'll have to excuse me, for the moment I cannot introduce it because, in my reading, I am stressing other Spinozist notions, and the "tendency to persevere in being", already went without saying. In light of what I was saying, I would take it as given, whatever importance that I place on it. I will take it as given based on other notions which are, for me, the essential notions – and I'm not all saying that I am correct -- those of power of action (*puissance*) and affect.

Today, you return somewhat to the same theme. What returns and what seems interesting to me is a manner of telling me, well, so – I don't read exactly even if we agree more generally, you are telling me, in substance: "I am not reading Spinoza exactly as you do, because I am immediately emphasizing the 'tendency to persevere in being'." So, you understand that at this level, I find that there is not even a basis for a discussion. What interests me greatly, as Comtesse is saying, it's not at all a contradictory reading. He would clearly propose a different reading, that is, a differently accentuated reading, as regards the problem that you just posed. Your first [problem], what you announced as a first problem that you posed to me, concerning the reasonable man and the insane man, given the point that I have reached here, I would on this point, I was answering exactly like this:

What distinguishes the insane person and the reasonable one according to Spinoza? And conversely, at the same time in the same question, there is: what doesn't distinguish them? From which point of view can they not be distinguished? From which point of view, do they have to be distinguished? I would say, for me, for my reading, that Spinoza's response is very rigorous, even if it's one we don't understand until later. If I summarize Spinoza's response, it seems to me that this summary would be: from a certain point of view, there is no reason to create a distinction between the reasonable man and the insane person. From another point of view, there is a reason to create a distinction.

First, from the point of view of power of action, I am still not introducing "tendency to persevere in being" – no doubt, this notion appeals to me less than the others, I don't know, maybe one doesn't choose – from the point of view of power of action, there is no reason to introduce a distinction between the reasonable man and the insane man. What does that mean? Does that mean that they have the same power of action? No, it doesn't mean that they have the same power of action, but it means that each one, as much as there is in him, realizes or exercises his power of action, that is, to speak like both Spinoza and Comtesse, each one, as much as there is in him, endeavors (*s'efforce*) to persevere in his being.

Therefore, from the point of view of power of action, insofar as each, according to natural right, endeavors to persevere in his being, that is, to realize his power of action… You see, I still never follow (in parentheses) "effort" there because it is not that he or she makes an effort to persevere, it's not because [the person] is trying. In any case, he or she perseveres in his/her being as much as there is within the person. This is why I do not like the idea of *conatus,* of effort, which does not translate, it seems to me, Spinoza's thought in fact. For what he calls an effort to persevere in being is the fact that I exercise my power of action at each moment, as much as there is in me. In fact, it's not an effort, Georges; but this matters little.

But from the point of view of power of action, therefore, I can say that each person is valued the same, not at all because each person would have the same power of action. In fact, the insane man's power of action is not the same as that of the reasonable one. But what there is in common between the two is that, whatever the power of action, each realizes his own. Therefore, from this point of view, I would not say that the reasonable man is worth more than the insane one. I cannot, I have no way of saying that: each has a power of action, each realizes as much power of action as there is in him. This is natural right; this is the world of nature. Fine, from this point of view, I could not establish any difference, I could not establish any difference in quality between the reasonable man and the insane one.

But, but, but, but, but… second point: from another point of view, I know very well that the reasonable man is "better" (in quotes) than the insane one. Better, what does that mean? That means, no doubt, with more power of action, in the Spinozist sense of the word. Therefore, from a certain point of view, from another point of view, I must make and I do make a distinction between the reasonable man and the insane one. Fine, what is this other point of view? In light of what I was saying the last time, what I tried to explain the last time, my response, according to Spinoza, would be exactly this: from the point of view of power of action, you have no reason to distinguish the reasonable man and the insane one, but from the other point of view, namely that of affects, you distinguish the reasonable man and the insane one. Where does this other point of view come from? Do you remember? Power of action is always in action (*en acte*); it is always realized, fine. But what realizes it? The affects do. Affects are the realizations of power of action, that is, what I experience in actions, in passions; that's what realizes my power of action, at every moment. And so, if the reasonable man and the insane man are distinguished, it is not through power of action. Each one realizes his power of action, so it is not through power of action. It's through the affects. It's through affects, [and] the affects of the reasonable man are not the same as those of the insane one.

Hence the whole problem of reason will be converted by Spinoza into a special case of the more general problem of affects. Reason indicates a certain type of affect, and that is very new; such a conception of reason is very new. To say [that] reason is not going to be defined by ideas, of

course, it will also be defined by ideas, but there is a practical reason that consists in a certain type of affects, in a certain manner of being affected. That poses a very practical problem of reason. What does it mean to be reasonable in that case? Inevitably reason is an aggregate of affects, for the simple reason that it is precisely the forms under which power of action is realized in one condition or another.

Therefore, to the question that has just been posed by Comtesse, my response would be relatively strict, in fact: what difference is there between the reasonable man and the insane one? From a certain point of view, none; from the point of view of power of action, from another point of view, [there's an] enormous difference, from the point of view of the affects which realize power of action.

Your second question, if you please.

Comtesse: [*NB: This intervention remains in French, untranslated, in the WebDeleuze English text, completed here to the extent possible given problems of the recording's sound quality*] My second question concerns the distinctions that you made among conceptions of natural right or law. Can we say that Spinoza is a disciple of Hobbes because he defines natural right or law as a power (*puissance*) in action (*en acte*)? For Spinoza, the functional pact that institutes the social state implies that this social state precisely is only good if it consolidates or increases my own power of action as expression of the power of divine life? In other words, this is to say that for Spinoza, civil right or law, the right or law of what he calls "the sovereign power (*puissance*) of the nation", well, civil right or law is that which extends, that which continues in a certain way, that which pursues natural right or law. And, precisely for Hobbes, even if the state of nature, of war, of wolves becomes a threat for the state of society, it still remains that the State, the Leviathan, is that which dispossesses possessive or devouring individuals from natural right. And precisely for Spinoza, nation's sovereign power continues natural power. There is no disposession. Here there is a problem of difference between Spinoza and Hobbes, and the liberal monarchy, the monarchy of Kant and Spinoza, the monarchy that he calls "well established", anticipates the degeneration of a tyrannical State that would guarantee neither peace, nor security, nor freedom. So, the second point was that perhaps Spinoza is not a simple disciple of Hobbes because, for him, there is no discontinuity, no rupture, but an extension of natural right and civil right.

Deleuze: My answer would be as follows: here again, this puts manners of reading into play, you understand? You note a difference between Spinoza and Hobbes, and you are completely right to note this, and you note it very precisely. If I summarize it, the difference is this: for the one as for the other, Spinoza and Hobbes, we are supposed to emerge from the state of nature through a contract. But in the case of Hobbes, this is a matter of a contract by which I give up my natural right – I am clarifying immediately because it is nonetheless more complicated than you stated it. If it is true that I give up my state of nature, my natural right, on the other hand, the sovereign himself does not also give up his. Therefore, in a certain way, the natural right is also preserved through…

Comtesse: It's constantly threatened.

Deleuze: I agree, it's preserved, but in another manner than for Spinoza. For Spinoza, on the contrary, in the contract, I do not give up my natural right, I do not give up my natural right. And there is Spinoza's famous expression given in a letter: "I preserve the natural right even in

the civil state." This famous expression of Spinoza, "I preserve the natural right even in the civil state," clearly means, for any reader of the era, that on this point, I am breaking with Hobbes who, in a certain way, also preserved natural right in the civil state, but only to the advantage of the sovereign – still what I am saying is done too quickly, but no matter.

That does not take away from what I was saying: Spinoza, on the whole, is a disciple of Hobbes. Yes, why? Because on two general but fundamental points, he entirely follows what might be called the Hobbesian revolution, and because I believe that Spinoza's political philosophy would have been impossible without the kind of strongarm move (*coup de force*) that Hobbes had introduced into political philosophy. What is this very, very important strongarm move, this double move? I tried to state this, what was the prodigious, extremely important innovation by Hobbes. It is, first innovation, to have conceived the state of nature and natural right in a way that broke entirely with the Ciceronian tradition. And, on this point, Spinoza entirely ratifies Hobbes's revolution; second point: consequently, to have substituted the idea of a pact of consent as the foundation of the civil state, to have substituted the idea of a pact of consent for the relation of competence such as it was in classical philosophy, from Plato to Saint Thomas.

And, on these two fundamental points -- the civil state can only refer to a pact of consent and not to a relation of competence where there would be a superiority of the sage, and furthermore, the whole conception of the state of nature and of natural right as power (*puissance*) and realization of power -- these two fundamental points belong to Hobbes. It is as a function of these two fundamental points that I would say: the obvious difference that Comtesse has just signaled between Spinoza and Hobbes presumes and can only be inscribed in one preliminary resemblance, a resemblance by which Spinoza follows the two fundamental principles of Hobbes. This then becomes a balancing of accounts between them within these new presuppositions introduced into political philosophy by Hobbes.

Finally, a small [comment] to fully answer: when you speak of Spinoza's political conception, I believe that we will be led to speak about this from the point of view of the research that we are undertaking this year on ontology: in what sense can ontology entail or must it entail a political philosophy? One must not forget that as concerns background, when you alluded to the liberal monarchy, don't forget there is a whole political path of Spinoza – I am stating [this] very quickly since I haven't talked about it before -- a very fascinating political path because we cannot even read one book of book of Spinoza's political philosophy without understanding what problems it poses, and what political problems he lived through. Because the Netherlands in the era of Spinoza was not simple, the political situation. All Spinoza's political writings are very connected to this situation. So, it is not by chance that Spinoza wrote two books on political philosophy, one the *Theological-Political Treatise,* the other the *Political Treatise*, and that, between the two [publications], enough events occurred in order for Spinoza to have evolved.

What occurred? The Netherlands already in that era was torn between two tendencies. There was the tendency of the House of Orange, and then there was the liberal tendency of the De Witt brothers. Now the De Witt brothers, under very obscure conditions that we shall see, had won at one moment. The House of Orange was not insignificant; I mean [that] this put into play nonetheless the entire relations of foreign policy, relations with Spain, war, war or peace. The De Witt brothers were basically pacifists; this put into play the economic structure. The House of Orange supported the great trading companies; the brothers DeWitt were very hostile to the great companies. This opposition House of Orange-brothers De Witt stirred everything up.

And the De Witt brothers were liquidated, that is, assassinated, in absolutely horrible circumstances. Spinoza felt this as really the last moment in which he could no longer write, [that] this could also happen to him. All of this was not simple, but the assassination of the De Witt brothers was a blow for him especially since it indeed seems that the De Witt brothers' entourage was protecting Spinoza. And the difference in political tone between the *Theological-Political Treatise* and the *Political Treatise* is explained because, between the two, there was the assassination, and Spinoza no longer believed in what he was saying before, at the time of the *Theological-Political Treatise;* yes, when he was still saying that a liberal monarchy was possible.

He presents his political problem in a very beautiful, still very current, way. He says that, in the end, there is only one political problem, and we would have to try to understand it: one mustn't create satire here as well. One must understand, that is, to make ethics into politics, and understand what? To understand why people really do fight for their slavery. They seem to be so content to be slaves that they will do anything to remain slaves. How does one explain such a thing? It fascinates him. Literally, how does one explain that people don't revolt? But at the same time, revolt or revolution, you will never find that in Spinoza. But why? Here, we're saying very silly things. At the same time, he made drawings; there's a reproduction of a very odd drawing of his – Spinoza's life is a very obscure thing – in which he had drawn himself during the evening like that, when he was done working for the day, he drew himself in the form of a Neapolitan revolutionary who was well-known in that era, and in which he had inserted his own head. Yes he had depicted himself as a revolutionary; it's quite strange.

But at the same time, why does he never speak about revolt or revolution? Is it because Spinoza is a moderate? Undoubtedly, he must be a moderate; yes, he had to be a moderate – although there is this story of the revolutionary drawing that is strange – but, even if we suppose that he is a moderate, at that era, even the extremists hesitated to speak of revolution, even the leftists of the era. And Collegians, all these guys who were against the Church, all these Catholics were near sufficiently what we would call today the Catholics of the extreme left – that was odd, these were some really odd groups – but why didn't these people discuss revolution? Because, in contrast to what is said, there is a stupidity that is said, even in the history handbooks of all periods, that no English revolution occurred. Everyone knows perfectly well that an English revolution took place, an impressive revolution: this was Cromwell's revolution, and Cromwell's revolution is almost the case in which everything was extremely pure. This was the revolution betrayed as soon as it was done.

When people pretend today to discover the problem of the betrayed revolution, one must not joke around, who are they trying to kid? The whole of the seventeenth century is full of reflections on this, how might a revolution not be betrayed. One must not believe that this is a new problem in 1975, concerning the rights of man, no, or with the discovery that there's a gulag in Russia.[13] Revolution was always thought by revolutionaries in these terms: how is it that such a thing as that is constantly betrayed? And the modern example, the recent example, for Spinoza's contemporaries, is Cromwell's revolution who was the most fantastic traitor to the revolution that Cromwell himself had imposed. If you take that – I am almost speaking gibberish (*n'importe quoi*), but it's to have you sense that this problem is very, very current for these people – if you take, at that time well after, what we call English Romanticism, this is not only a fantastic poetic and literary movement, but it's an intense political movement.

The whole of English Romanticism is centered on the theme of the betrayed revolution, how to live on when the revolution has been betrayed and seems destined to be betrayed. The model that obsessed the great English Romantics was the older case, since it was of the time, always Cromwell. And for the English revolutionaries, the image is at once fascinating and abject. What happened? What had this guy done? If you will, Cromwell is experienced – here I believe that I am hardly exaggerating – he's exactly experienced in that era as Stalin is today. And what happens? If Spinoza never speaks of revolution, it's because they don't speak about revolution; nobody speaks about revolution, not at all, because they do not have an equivalent in mind. I believe that it's for a very different reason because the word is absolutely… They do not at all exclude any violent actions, I believe, not at all. They won't call that revolution because the revolution is Cromwell. In the end, that's part of it; I may be exaggerating, but that's part of it.

And, at the time of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza still believed in the chances of a liberal monarchy, on the whole. Here, what Comtesse just said at the end of the second intervention is true of the *Theological-Political Treatise,* in my view. This is no longer true about the *Political Treatise*. The De Witt brothers were assassinated; on this, compromise is no longer possible. Spinoza knows well that… He gives up publishing the *Ethics*, he knows that it's screwed. And finally, at that moment, it seems that Spinoza would have tended much more to think about the chances – about the chances, but under what concrete forms? -- of a democracy. And the theme of democracy appears much more in the *Political Treatise* than in the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, which remained in the perspective of a liberal monarchy. But what would a democracy be at the level of the Netherlands? This is precisely what was liquidated with the assassination of the De Witt brothers. So, this isn't easy, and Spinoza dies, as if symbolically, when he is at the chapter "democracy". We will never know what he would have said in that chapter.[14]

There we are, but if you will, Comtesse's comment seems to me entirely correct on the Hobbes-Spinoza difference. However, I maintain, for the reasons I've just said, that before this difference and in a deeper sense of this difference, Spinoza can indeed be treated or called on a specific point "a Hobbes disciple" since he draws upon this Hobbes revolution in his political philosophy. There's a third question? You were saying?

Comtesse: [*The start of his comments are inaudible*] … There is a difference between Hobbes and Spinoza that involves a question of climate. It seems to me that Hobbes could never have said, as Spinoza did in the *Theological-Political Treatise,* Hobbes could never had made the distinction, the factual difference of master and slave, of Christ and the subject; he could never have said that a possible line of salvation passes through the eternal son or God, that is, the Christ, insofar as being spirit and a model to imitate, a model for imitation. He could never have said that. In my view, [Deleuze: You're right!] this is another climate of violence, [Deleuze: You're right! You're completely right!] a climate of extremely great wars, of extreme violence. And Spinoza seems to do so.

Deleuze: But you know why Spinoza can say this and not Hobbes? It's because Spinoza is Jewish, and Hobbes is not. I mean, all the very, very strange pages by Spinoza on Christ in which he creates and traces the portrait of a Christ literally having become independent from the Church, from the Christian Church, the Catholic Church, this entire operation could only have been undertaken by a Jew who himself was excommunicated by the Jews. Spinoza's situation allowed him something like that. Hobbes couldn't have. If he had attempted that, he'd be tried in

court. So, there remains what you are saying of greater importance, that in fact, the violence of Hobbes's texts and the kind of, on the contrary, I won't say it's a gentleness in Spinoza. He's not a man… I don't at all have the impression that he was a gentle man, but this kind of – how to say it – what is this opposite? It's not that it lacks violence; it's a very cold violence, very… this violence. I couldn't define Spinoza's violence, anyway not now. But you are right about the complete difference. If we go back to Nietzsche's idea that philosophers express something like temperaments, or instincts of the philosopher, for Hobbes, yes, yes. It's obvious that they don't have the same temperament. But managing to define what Spinoza's was, it's a bit our purpose with the topic of modes of existence. In any case, I agree with this third comment; this isn't the same style, it's another world, yes, it's true.

Comtesse: [*The start of his comments is inaudible*] … [There's] the problem of questioning Spinoza's political function, between the rapport of the *Ethics* and ideology.

Deleuze: Yes, completely, but that belongs to our task.

Comtesse: And on this point, I wanted to ask if there wasn't always in the history of philosophy a necessary rapport between the thinkers of Being, even if Spinoza says that Being is the truth as necessary cause of the idea of the freedom of desire. But, in any case, he's still a thinker of Being. And the problem is of knowing if there isn't a necessary rapport between the entire thought of Being and the plane of organization of the State. Isn't any thinker of Being led at a certain moment to think, as Spinoza does in chapters 4 and 5 of the *Theological-Political Treatise,* where he is precisely led to construct in certain moments of his ontological thought a plane of organization of the State, thus to refer in a certain way to the State, or to a model of the State? [*Return to Web Deleuze translation*]

Deleuze: Here I would agree without somewhat less. Here's I'd say something a bit different, that there's a fundamental relation between ontology and a certain style or a certain type of politics. Here we do agree. What this relation consists of, we don't yet know. We will encounter it this year. I assume that this rapport is fundamental. But what does a political philosophy which is placed in an ontological perspective consist of? Is it defined by the problem of the state? I'd say: not especially, because the others as well, a philosophy of the One, will also pass by way of the problem of the State. The real difference would appear to be elsewhere between pure ontologies and philosophies of the One. Philosophies of the One are philosophies that fundamentally imply a hierarchy of existents, hence the principle of competence, hence the principle of emanations. The sage practically is more competent than the non-sage, from the point of view of emanations: from the One emanates Being, from Being emanates other things, etc., the hierarchies of the Neo-Platonists. Therefore, the problem of the State, they will encounter it when they encounter it at the level of this problem: the institution of a political hierarchy. There is, and think of the Neo-Platonists tradition, there is the word "hierarchy" coming up constantly. There is a celestial hierarchy, a terrestrial hierarchy, and what the Neo-Platonists call hypostases are precisely the terms in a hierarchy, in the institution of a hierarchy.

What appears to me striking in a pure ontology is the point at which it repudiates the hierarchies. And in fact, if there is no One superior to Being, if Being is said of everything that is and is said of everything that is in one and the same sense, this is the point that we have reached, this is what appeared to me to be the key ontological proposition: there is no unity superior to Being. And, consequently, Being is said about everything that is spoken of, that is, is said of everything that is, is said of all be-ings (*étant*) in one and the same sense. This is the world of immanence. This

world of ontological immanence is an essentially anti-hierarchical world to the point that perhaps -- of course, it is necessary to correct; each time I say a sentence, I have an urge to correct it, of course -- these philosophers of ontology will tell us: evidently a practical hierarchy is needed. Ontology does not lead to statements that would be those of nihilism or non-being, of the type where everything is the same (*tout se vaut*).

And yet, in certain regards, "everything is the same", from the point of view of an ontology, that is, from the point of view of Being. Any be-ing (*étant*) realizes its being as much as there is in it, full stop, that's it. This is absolute anti-hierarchical thought. At the extreme, it's a kind of anarchy. There is an anarchy of be-ings in Being. If you will, this is the basic intuition of ontology: all beings are the same (*se valent*). This is a kind of cry, well yes, after all, after all, the stone, the insane, the reasonable, the animal, from a certain point of view, from the point of view of Being, they are the same. Each "is" as much as there is in it. And Being is said in one and the same sense of the stone, of the man, of the insane, of the reasonable, etc. This is a very beautiful idea. We don't see what causes them to say this, but it's a very beautiful idea. It even implies its cruelty, its savagery. This is a very savage kind of world. Fine.

With that, obviously, they encounter the political problem. But the way in which they will approach the political problem depends precisely on this kind of intuition of equal being, of anti-hierarchical being. And the way in which they think the State is no longer the relation of somebody who commands and others who obey. And there, in fact, I again encounter Comtesse's earlier comment. In Hobbes, the political relation is the relation of somebody who commands and of somebody who obeys. This is the pure political relation.

From the point of view of an ontology, it is not that. There, Spinoza did not go along with Hobbes at all. The problem of an ontology is, consequently, a function of this: Being is said of everything that is; this is how to be free, that is, how to realize its power of action under the best conditions. And the State, even more the civil State, that is, the entire society, is thought like this: the aggregate of conditions under which man can realize his power of action in the best way. So, this is not at all a relation of obedience. Obedience will come as something more; they are not idiots. They know that obedience is included there. But obedience will have to be justified by what it inscribes in a system in which society can mean only one thing, namely the best means for man of realizing his power of action. Obedience is second compared to this requirement, whereas in a philosophy of the One, obedience is obviously primary, that is, the political relation is the relation of obedience; it is not the relation of power of action's realization.

A student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: This isn't obvious. That depends on what you have in mind. In the political sense of the term "aristocracy", aristocracy designates a certain type of regime, a certain regime or a group of being who call themselves "aristocrats" [and] command others. So, this is a type of regime that can be distinguished from the monarchy, democracy, etc. This regime existed, there were aristocracies in Greek cities, in certain Greek cities. There were some aristocracies in certain Italian cities; a regime called aristocratic did exist. If you think of other senses of the term "aristocracy" or other uses of the term "aristocracy", for example, the use that Nietzsche makes in certain contexts concerning the aristocracy, "aristocracy" there means something completely different. I wouldn't want… Is this what you had in mind? [The same student: Yes] Yes; I don't

even dare approach the question of Nietzsche because politically that becomes very, very complicated, so different from both Hobbes and Spinoza. … What?

Another student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, the problem of ontology, at that level, we will find this problem again, in fact, in Nietzsche, on this level. What is it, what is equal? What is equal is quite simple: that each being, whatever it is, in every way realizes all that it can of its power of action. That makes all beings equal. Powers of action are not equal. For example, the power of action of the stone and the power of action of an animal are not the same. But each one endeavors to "persevere in its being," that is, to realize its power of action. And, from this point of view, all are equal, all beings are the same. They are all in Being and Being is equal. Being is equally said of everything that is, but everything that is, is not equal, that is, does not have the same power. But Being which is said of everything that is, that, that is equal, that is, does not have the same power of action. But Being is said of all that is, and it is equal. Understand? Good.

In this light, it doesn't prevent there being differences between beings. So, from the point of view of the difference between beings, a whole idea of aristocracy can be established, yes, namely there are some better, there are some better. It's a bit what we had seen. I mean, during the entire previous meeting, if I try to summarize, understand where we were the last time, before I consider a new topic.

The last time, we were posing a very precise problem since our whole goal for the year is ontology. So, we must not lose sight of it. The problem which finally I have dealt with until now is this: what is the status, not of Being, but of be-ing (*étant*)? That is, what is the status of that which is from the point of view of an ontology? The last time, I tried to say what was the status of the existent in Spinoza, this status of the existent constituting the correlate of ontology, specifically constituting an ethics. You see [that] ethics is the status of the existent, of the be-ing; ontology is the status of Being. And Being is said of be-ing or of the existent.

Well, my response was double: the status of be-ing in Spinoza's ontology is double. On one hand, [there's] quantitative distinction between be-ings. From what point of view? What quantity? Quantity of power of action. [*Pause*] Be-ings are each degrees of powers of action. So, [there's] quantitative distinction between be-ings from the point of view of power of action. On the other hand, and at the same time, [there's] qualitative distinction between modes of existence. From what point of view? From the point of view of affects that realize power of action. And what I had tried to show was that these two conceptions, that of the quantitative distinction between existents, and the other point of view, that of the qualitative opposition between modes of existence, far from contradicting themselves, have been interlinked with one another the whole time. I believe, that's it. If you haven't understood, that is upsetting. If you have understood that, you have understood everything. So, that has completed, if you will, the first heading. In the end, during this first trimester, we will have completed a first great heading: ontology, what does it mean, ontology, and how is it distinguished from philosophies which are not ontologies?

Second major heading: what is the status of be-ing (*étant*) from the point of view of a pure ontology like Spinoza's? There we are; if you are ready, I am passing on to a third heading.

A student: [*Inaudible comments; it concerns a question of the terms: quantity, difference, in the context of ontology*]

Deleuze: Yes, it is. You understand perfectly based on what you just said. I hope so, in any case, since you are saying, for example, you say that from the point of view of hierarchy, what is primary is difference, and one goes from difference to identity. What you are saying is quite right, but I would just add: which type of difference is it about? Response: in the end, it is always a difference between Being and something superior to Being, since the hierarchy is going to be a difference in judgment. Hierarchy implies a difference in judgment. Therefore, judgment is done in the name of a superiority of the One over Being. We can judge Being precisely because there is an authority superior to Being. Thus, hierarchy is inscribed starting from this difference since hierarchy, its very foundation, is the transcendence of the One over Being. OK? And what you call difference is exactly this transcendence of the One over Being. When you invoke Plato, difference is only primary in Plato in a very precise sense, namely the One is more than Being. So, this is a hierarchical difference. On the other hand, when you say ontology goes from identity, that's not exactly right; in any case, it goes from Being to be-ings (*étants*), that is, it goes, let's say, from the same or from Being, right, to what is and only what is different. It goes therefore from Being to the differences. It is not a hierarchical difference. All beings are equally in Being.

In the Middle Ages, -- we will see this, we will return to all this more closely -- there is a very, very important school. You know, these schools of the Middle Ages, one cannot just liquidate them by saying that it was the great era of Scholasticism. There was a school given the name the School of Chartres, and the School of Chartres, they depend on, they are very close to Duns Scotus about whom I've already spoken a bit. And they insist enormously on the Latin term "equality," equal Being. They say all the time that Being is fundamentally equal. That doesn't mean that existents or be-ings (*étants*) are equal, no. But Being is equal for all, which means, in a certain way, that all be-ings are in Being. It's here that, subsequently, whatever is the difference for which you strive, since there is a difference, there is a non-difference of Being, and there are differences between be-ings; these differences are not conceived in a hierarchical way. Or, they will be conceived in a hierarchical way very, very secondarily, to catch up with, to reconcile the things. But in the primary intuition, the difference is not hierarchical. Whereas in philosophies of the One, difference is fundamentally hierarchical. I would say much more: the difference between be-ings is quantitative and qualitative at the same time, quantitative difference of powers of action, qualitative difference of modes of existence. But it is not hierarchical.

Then, of course, they often speak as if there had been a hierarchy. They will say, fine, they will say, obviously that the reasonable man is better than the malicious one. He is better, but in what sense and why? This is not due to reasons of hierarchy. It's due to reasons of powers of action and realization of power of action. Anyway, we will see all this.

In fact, I would like to pass progressively to a third heading which is connected to the second and which would come down to saying that if ethics - I defined ethics as the two coordinates, the quantitative distinction from the point of view of power of action, the qualitative opposition from

the point of view of the modes of existence. And I tried to show last time how we passed perpetually from the one to the other. Fine. I would like to begin a third heading which is, from the point of view of ethics, so what is this situation and how does the problem of evil arise? Because, once again, we have seen that this problem arose in an acute way. Why? Because I remind you, and I won't be returning to this point, I am just recalling it, in what sense, from time immemorial, really from time immemorial, classical philosophy had set up this paradoxical proposition, knowing very well that it was a paradox, to wit: evil is nothing. And precisely, evil is nothing, I was telling you; understand that we can read it in this way and say, fine, this is a manner of speaking. But strangely, this is not one manner of speaking; there are at least two possible manners of speaking and these are not reconciled at all.

For when I say, "evil is nothing", you know – I won't return to the commentary that I made about this expression – but when I say this, "evil is nothing", I can mean a first thing: I can mean, evil is nothing because everything is good. If I say everything is good, how is "everything is good" written? It's written "t-o-u-t e-s-t B-i-e-n" [*Deleuze spells it out*]. If you write it like that with a capital G, you can comment on the expression word for word. That means, there is Being, fine; the One is superior to Being, and the superiority of the One over Being makes Being turn back towards the One as being the Good. In other words, "evil is nothing" means, inevitably, evil is nothing since it is the Good superior to being which is the cause of Being. In other words, the Good makes Being. The Good as reason for Being (*raison* d'être), the Good is the One as the reason for Being. The One is superior to Being. Everything is Good means that it is the Good that causes to be that which is.

A student: That's a bit Platonist, isn't it?

Deleuze: That's precisely right; I am discussing Plato. [*Laughter*] So that works out. If you had said it wasn't Platonist, I would have been upset because…

Another student: When you use the word "be-ing" (*étant*), are you giving it the Heideggerian sense? Are you defining the "be-ing" as which is in…

Deleuze: Yes, yes, I defined it quite well, very well, very well, briefly, but very well. I said: it is not Being; it's that which is. No, it was not in a sense… But Heidegger never said anything different. So, fine. Wait a bit. Just wait.

So, you understand, "evil is nothing" means that only the Good creates Being, and correlatively: creates action. It was Plato's argument, as we saw, the wicked one is not voluntarily wicked since what the wicked one wants is the Good; it's just any Good whatever (*un Bien quelconque*). So, I can say that "evil is nothing" in the sense that only the Good creates Being and creates action, therefore evil is nothing. In a pure Ontology where there is no One superior to Being, I say evil is nothing. Finally, there is no evil; there is Being. Okay. But that engages me with something completely new. If evil is nothing, this is because Good is nothing either. You see that this is therefore for completely opposite reasons that I can say in both cases that evil is nothing. In one case, I am saying that evil is nothing because only the Good creates being and creates action; in the other case, I am saying that evil is nothing because the Good is nothing as well, because there is only Being.

And we have seen that here as well, this negation of the Good as of evil did not prevent Spinoza from creating an ethics. How can I create an ethics if there is neither good nor evil? You see, starting from the same expression, in the same era, if you take "evil is nothing", signed by

Leibniz and signed by Spinoza, they both are using the same expression, “evil is nothing”, but it has two opposite senses. In Leibniz, he derives it from Plato, and in Spinoza, [he] creates a pure ontology. So, it becomes complicated. Hence my problem: what is the status of evil from the point of view of ethics, that is, of the whole status of be-ings, of existents, especially as there is going to be a very important problem here as practice? We really are going to enter into points in which ethics is really practical.

And, I am saying in this regard that we possess, and I had alerted you that I wanted you to read or reread it, [we possess] an exceptional text from Spinoza. This exceptional Spinoza text is an exchange of eight letters, four for each, four for each, four-four. This isn’t very long, an exchange of eight letters with a young man called Blyenbergh, a young man from the Netherlands, a young man from over there, who wrote to Spinoza. Spinoza doesn’t know him. Everything is important because there are mysteries in this correspondence immediately. The sole object of this correspondence is evil, in which Blyenbergh, the young [Willem van] Blyenbergh asks Spinoza: “could you explain something about evil?”[15]

There’s something very strange: the commentators – here as well, read the text, so you can decide yourselves – many commentators, for example, the editors of the Pléiade edition, decided – in notes, that’s always easy – that Blyenbergh is an idiot, an idiot, that he’s idiotic, stupid and confused. I read these letters, and I do not at all have the same impression. I get the impression that Blyenbergh is a strange guy, but not at all stupid nor confused. First, one thing that supports my view from the start: four letters from Spinoza is a lot. Spinoza doesn’t much like writing letters, or else he writes to friends he trusts. He especially does not like writing to strangers. He is always telling himself, what’s going to happen to me next from this? So, he writes very little. On the other hand, Spinoza detests insolence. He doesn’t at all like someone being insolent, having bad manners; he doesn’t like that at all. That’s his preference.

And, starting from the second letter, Blyenbergh begins snickering, making demands, saying to Spinoza: “Explain yourself, I summon you to… so what is this?”, inventing grotesque consequences of Spinozism, in short, being quite annoying, so, a troublemaker (*chieur*), but not at all an idiot. Irritating, he’s very irritating, very irritating. And I also notice that Spinoza doesn’t like irritating people at all; irritating people annoy him, and to whom he has to answer he doesn’t have the time. First, this is quite simple, he doesn’t like this, and Spinoza notices it from the second letter he receives. Spinoza gets very hard and tells him: Ok, Blyenbergh, what do you think you’re doing? Leave me alone. Are you going to drop this? But here is where I am saying there is something extraordinary: he continues the correspondence. And, to my knowledge, we’ve never since this in Spinoza. He received many insulting letters; we have insulting letters against Spinoza, and he doesn’t answer them, he doesn’t answer them. You’re annoying? He doesn’t answer. But what is happening? If the guy was an idiot, Spinoza wouldn’t respond to him. And why does Spinoza stand this tone that he doesn’t like at all? Why does he stand this? Why does he consent to answer all this?

I do have an answer. It’s in order to give you a kind of feeling for the importance of this excerpt. I do have an answer: it’s that Blyenbergh is the only one who engaged Spinoza on a precise problem about which Spinoza had never elsewhere provided an explanation, to wit: the problem of evil, and this subject fascinates Spinoza. Henceforth, he accepts everything that’s annoying from Blyenbergh, all this behavior as a little jerk (*petit con*), he takes it, he takes it. He will answer because for himself, he wants to clarify this matter of evil. And he is going to answer,

and he sweeps aside Blyenbergh's kinds of insolence because he feels that Blyenbergh is nonetheless quite intelligent. And in fact, Blyenbergh does not drop it. And Blyenbergh's prodigious feat, that was meant to render an homage despite everything, is that Blyenbergh forces Spinoza to say things that Spinoza would never have said and some very, very imprudent things, very imprudent – we'll see in the text – some very, very odd things, declarations, kinds of paradoxes about evil that astonish us to find written by Spinoza. And all this is thanks to Blyenbergh.

And my interpretation would solely be that Spinoza accepts this correspondence because it's a unique case in which he sees a chance to clarify himself on this problem of evil. What would confirm this is how does Spinoza cease the correspondence? Suddenly, Blyenbergh goes a bit nuts. First, he acts imprudently by going to visit Spinoza. Spinoza already couldn't stand getting letters, but visits… [*Laughter*] So, suddenly, Spinoza glimpses Blyenbergh for a short moment, and then says, that's it, so long. And following this, Blyenbergh writes to Spinoza and ruptures the implicit pact that existed between them. That is, he begins asking questions in all directions about ethics. He moves away from the problem of evil. Then, Spinoza writes back immediately; no, on the contrary, he waits to answer this last letter from Blyenbergh. It's a response with great dryness, saying: no, no more questions; you had the right only to one topic. You've left the topic, so we're done. I don't want to see you, I don't want to read you, leave me alone! So, this is very odd. Spinoza took it; he took being treated in a way that he doesn't like being treated over the course of eight letters, the time to clarify himself about this problem of evil.

Fine. So, I am saying that this problem of evil is indeed at the heart of ethics. And yet, it isn't considered in the *Ethics*. It's in this correspondence with Blyenbergh that it's explicitly addressed. I believe that it's this problem that can now allow us to make a great leap forward regarding our remaining question – I am saying this to remind you – fundamentally, what is the rapport of the existent and Being, what is the rapport of be-ing and Being? So, this is why I'd sort of like to start again very gently from this problem of evil. And I am saying that Blyenbergh, starting from his first letter, moves forward directly and says to Spinoza: "Explain to me what this means: God forbade Adam to eat the apple, the fruit, and yet Adam did it." That is, God forbade something; the man, the existent sidestepped this interdiction. "How does this happen in your own system, in your ontology?" And already at this point, Blyenbergh knows Spinoza quite poorly; he isn't familiar with the *Ethics*, necessarily so, since it wasn't a public text. So, he's not even addressing Spinoza as Spinoza; he's addressing more of a Spinoza that… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:02:12]

Part 2

… It's a manner. We'd say something else today, but it comes down to the same thing, eh? Let's choose an example… Well… And what's important is Spinoza's answer – starting with the first letter there, it's really their attack. Spinoza answers something like, "Fine." He's already responding to Blyenbergh, almost, "Oh yes, pal, this doesn't really appeal to me, but fine, fine, for this problem, I'll give you some kind of explanation." And he answers him with a very, very odd thing then, very odd, to the point that one has to read the text several times. One wonders: "But what is he trying to tell us?"

And I am reading the text:[16] "The prohibition [to Adam] of the fruit of the tree…" – here, Spinoza is answering Blyenbergh – "The prohibition [to Adam] of the fruit of the tree consisted only in this: God revealed to Adam [*Deleuze rereads the start of this sentence*] that eating of that tree caused death, just as he also reveals to us through the natural intellect that poison is deadly to us" (XIX). Reading the text like that… If I number the paradoxes of the correspondence with Blyenbergh, I'd say this starts with a very, very odd paradox. Since Spinoza answers essentially: There you are, you are speaking in the name… In fact, when you say: "God prohibited Adam from eating of the fruit," you aren't expressing a fact; you are already giving an interpretation. It happens that this interpretation is from the Old Testament. It's an interpretation; it's not a fact. You are telling a tale, the very tale told in the Old Testament. And this tale implies a certain "code", as we'd say today. What is the code? It's the system of judgment. "You are translating a fact" – there is indeed a fact; Spinoza is going to try to discover this fact – "but when you recount: 'God prohibited Adam and Adam did it anyway," well, this is a tale, indeed, it's fine, it's interesting, it's a tale that has its code, and the code is the system of judgment.

Why is this the system of judgment? Because it implies a first judgment, a prohibitive judgment from God, "you will not do that," "you will not do that," God's first judgment. In fact, nothing has yet been done; it's from the domain of judgment. Nothing yet has been done; Adam hasn't done anything yet. And God tells him: "You will not eat of the fruit." It's a divine judgment. "Don't eat the fruit." It's a divine imperative, it's a judgment. Second thing, second judgment: Adam judges that it's fine for him to eat the fruit. It's the famous "false judgment." Third, judgment of punishment: God condemns Adam, and the sanction is he is expelled from paradise. In all this, at all the levels, at all the steps, someone has judged, that is, judgments have been substituted for facts. This is what Spinoza is in the process of telling us: "You have substituted judgments for facts."

For Spinoza, the philosophy of judgment is a catastrophe. In fact, once again, judgment implies the primacy of the One over Being. Judging Being can only happen in the name of something that is superior to Being. And all the philosophies of judgment, I believe, will precisely oppose an ontology in this regard. Fine…

So, notice Spinoza saying: "Fine, good, all that – you can keep on telling me this tale, but it belongs entirely to the system of judgment. On the other hand, if I am trying to grasp a fact in this, where is the fact?" This implies: no judgment. You eliminate judgments. What's left? What's left is the following fact: Adam ate of the fruit, and he lost perfection, that is, power of action. There's the fact. There's the assumed fact. It's a very good method, looking for the fact. Adam ate of the fruit, and in this way, loses his perfection, that is, his power of action. Notice that in the fact as I have just stated it, I have not held onto "God had prohibited", which was a judgment. We'll see if I can integrate it into the fact, God's pseudo interdiction. But we are staying here. We are still attempting to dig out this fact.

God ate of the fruit and Adam had… Ah, no, no, no! [*Laughter*] Adam ate of the fruit, and there, he lost perfection, that is, his power of action. Spinoza really doesn't hold back, eh? "Just as he also reveals to us through the natural intellect that poison is deadly to us". In other words, he explicitly says: the apple acted on Adam as a poison. Adam didn't do anything at all that was forbidden; he got poisoned… Ah yes? Ah, that changes everything! I thought he had done something forbidden, but not at all! He had what? So there, already, we're going to make a leap forward for later, but here we have to go very slowly, right?

What happened to Adam precisely? Losing his perfection, that is, his power of action, what is this? You see, it's not a sanction; a sanction implies judgment. It isn't "God punished Adam." This happens all the time in nature, these kinds of things, an animal eating something that's not good for it. Afterwards, we say that the animal died – "this is the way that we know, etc., that a poison results in death" – we say, "oh well, it's dead." Here, it's not a judgment; it's a statement of fact: "It's dead." It's no longer moving. Or else, it's sick, it's sick. Adam ate something that made him sick. Sickness is the reduction of power of action. What does it mean to be sick? It's loss of power of action.

Fine. What's the difference between health and illness? There you sense that we are beginning to grasp a problem; we're beginning to grasp a problem. Isn't it going to be the role of ethics and ontology to create a kind of conversion of values from good and evil into health/illness? Isn't ethics fundamentally going to be, fundamentally, a what? A medicine? Something other than medicine? And what kind of medication? Fine, I am coming back… For this, let's go very, very slowly. Adam ate the apple, eh? And he gets sick; he's gotten poisoned, so he falls ill. "Falling ill" means "becoming less powerful." This is well known: when I get ill, I can no longer do certain things that I could do before. Fine. In fact, this happens all the time. I am saying: animals, in fact, eat just what they shouldn't. Cats, for example, in the wild, they happen to eat things that are poisons for them. Rats don't stop eating some – no, rats are quite intelligent, contrary to cats that they [the rats] avoid. [*Laughter*] But sometimes, a rat goes down. That is, fine… And us, us all the time.

In other words, Spinoza is in the process of telling us, of slipping into our ear (and into Blyenbergh's ear): "But Adam made only one error: eating the apple; he wasn't able to do so," "he wasn't able to do so." What does that mean? Well, I'm not able to swallow arsenic either. Fine. Adam's stupidity is not to have understood that he was not capable of doing that. This is getting complicated, right? "This is the way that we know or don't know that a poison results in death."

So, it's time for me to catch up, within the fact, the interdiction – God's pseudo-interdiction. The text says formally: "God acted well," but not at all a prohibition to Adam which would be the order of judgment; "It gave him a revelation." There, you see, all the words are important: a revelation is not a judgment. A prohibition is a judgment: "don't do this." A revelation, it's letting him know. By what means? It doesn't matter here; Spinoza wasn't… It was letting him know. What was it letting him know? Well, in its immense goodness, God – fine, we can hold onto this bit of… -- let it be known to Adam that the fruit would act on him like a poison. Only, Adam didn't understand a thing. Having a weak understanding – Adam not really being terribly clever (*malin-malin*) – he understood nothing. God let him know that this fruit is a poison. That's nice, because otherwise, how are we to know that a fruit is a poison? I'm walking in the forest; I see some wonderful fruits; how can I know that it's a poison?

In three ways: I eat it, and I collapse… [*Laughter*] This is the Adam method. [*Laughter*] It's not really the best. [*Laughter*] I fall sick. First way. Second way: I observe, I observe. I am bringing – I have my cat in my pocket; [*Laughter*] I give him a piece of fruit to eat; he's overcome by convulsions and dies. [*Laughter*] I can conclude through experience that this fruit is poison, right? I'll have experimented. This implies a certain wisdom. A second possible method. It's the experimental method. Third method: the divine method. God spares me the experience and lets me know that it's a poison. It reveals to me that it's a poison. By what means? Let's read the

books of the prophets: by a sign that I interpret. That's how the prophets proceed. And Spinoza has an admirable and beautiful theory of prophetism and prophetic signs in the *Theological-Political Treatise*. But we conceive that God might, in fact, make a revelation to Adam. It indeed did so for Moses; it indeed did so for the prophets. It can make a revelation to Adam, to tell him: "This fruit is poison." Adam understands nothing. Suddenly he tells himself – this is really how he is – he tells himself, "Ah ok, what is God telling me there?"

Claire Parnet: Like Rantanplan, then?[17]

Deleuze: Yes, entirely, entirely, like Rantanplan… And he says, "Ah, what is my God telling me?" And he understands that God forbids him something. But God isn't forbidding him anything at all. Out of kindness, God sets up a poster, like that, [*Laughter*], it puts up a poster about the fruit: "poison". The other one says, "Oh la, la, God is forbidding me to eat of the fruit." Not at all. God could care less – completely, completely, completely. God just doesn't care, it doesn't care. It was warning Adam. God could really care less. And Adam tells himself: "Is God forbidding me from this? This really must be good, this fruit! It must be good." He eats the fruit.

So, the fact, what is it? Once again, the fact is this: God… Here we have our reduction to the fact… We converted the system of judgment into a simple fact, complex but unique: God revealed that the fruit was poison; Adam still at the fruit, and he fell ill. Fine. He fell ill.

Shouldn't this open some horizons for us? And I am starting… You just accept this departure point for Spinoza, and I'd already like to comment on it to the maximum, because if we grasp that… This seems a bit like a humorous proposition. When you read the text, it's up to you also to place your accents. I believe that Spinoza gets an intense thrill in extracting this supposed fact of history from judgment. He cannot not know himself what he is in the process of stirring up. He cannot not think, for example, of the state in which priests are, in reading… The priests of the era. Nowadays, they are used to it… [*Laughter*] In what state could the priests be in reading things like that? "Ah, Spinoza, Spinoza, do you know what stories he's telling about Adam?" Anyway… Delightful! Delightful!... I believe it to be a text of great philosophical humor. It's a great text, yes, of Jewish humor, of positivist humor, and in short, just humor.

Claire Parnet: [*Comments barely audible; she asks him if he doesn't think that this connects to there being two kinds of prophets, the "Averell Daltons" (the stupidest Daltons, nemesis of the hero) and the "Lucky Lucks"*] There are some [prophets] who understand everything – Jeremy and Daniel – and those who understand nothing: Adam…

Deleuze: Yes, indeed, since [Spinoza] is opposed to the whole tradition of "Adam, the perfect man". For him, it's very important that Adam cannot be the perfect man. The bit of perfection that he has, he loses it at the start, and he doesn't have great perfection. So, … Yes?

A student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: To mix everything up, it would be Kierkegaardian: Adam would be agonized facing this interdiction about which he doesn't understand what its meaning is. But, once again, I recall that for Spinoza – and it's Spinoza that we're discussing – there is no interdiction, there is absolutely no interdiction, there are absolutely no tales, there is absolutely no agony for Adam. There is only the fact that Adam gets poisoned. And that is the only fact there is.

What I mean is… And so, that's it… Just hold on to that, but I'd already like to draw some ethical consequences to show this proposition to you: "Adam eats of the fruit and falls ill because

he is poisoned," [that] it's rather inexhaustible. Before we even try to see what it means philosophically, I believe, let's consider some consequences. Well, I believe that there are already many practical, that is, ethical consequences.

In the end, there is a rather popular expression: "to poison one's life." There are people who poison their lives. What does that mean? I mean, let's take Adam's behavior. He had the means to know if the fruit was poison or not, either from God's revelation, or by experimentation. He leaped on the fruit, and he ate it, and then he fell down – he fell ill… Isn't this to some extent, if it makes Spinoza laugh so much, isn't this to some extent what we do? And if he chooses this example, isn't it a very representative example of what we do every day? Specifically, we never stop… And perhaps morality doesn't have much to tell us about this, but perhaps ethics has lots to tell us about this. We never stop, literally, putting ourselves in impossible situations. Poisoning one's life is the art that we have of placing ourselves in impossible situations. "Impossible situations," what does that mean? [They're] situations, well, in the end, that are going to make us fall ill. And we go running into them. It's quite strange.

What does that mean? And at that point, what would the opposite be? Since there we have a phenomenon of illness; eating the fruit, he falls ill. But we never stop getting ill. We make ourselves ill. Adam made himself ill. Fine. I make myself sick all the time. What is it that we must do? What would it be "not making oneself sick"?

So, here we are in the process of outlining a new face of ethics. I was saying: ethics means there is no good (*bien*), nor evil, but be careful, there is some good (*bon*) and some bad. This is in the process of becoming, slowly, from our first move onward, [that] there is no good nor evil, but careful, there is health and illness. And in one very, very general sense, there is health and illness. I never stop putting myself in impossible situations that make me sick. "It makes me sick". What must we do? What would be the good (*le bon*)? What would ethics advise us? "Before even creating morality, act on the situations." Hey, there the ethics would become an art of action preventatively on the situation. "Above all, don't wait to be in your impossible situation; start by not getting yourself into it". Fine, that seems to be something prudent, but the more it's banal, perhaps the more it will swell into something philosophical. We are going to see where that leads us, where that could lead us.

Understand, morality is… Fine… "Given the situation, one must act for the best." Ethics will not say that. "Oh, if you are in a particular situation, whether you are a coward, or you are awful, it's required. It's required." It's not a matter of being brave in impossible situations because there, no… At first, it's hard. No, it's not a matter of throwing yourselves into that situation. So, does that mean "run away"? We'll see all that, we'll see… We have to weigh each word… We have to go very, very slowly.

So, what would ethics be? Not at all an art of withdrawing from every situation, but this would be the art of operating a kind of selection at the level of the situation itself. What does this mean, this art of selection at the level of the situation itself? What did he get wrong?... Well, it's precisely… I am getting ahead here because… This will be the first sense – I'm not saying it's the final sense – but this will indeed be the first sense of what Spinoza will call "Reason". What is the difference between the reasonable man and Adam? At what point did Adam not behave in a reasonable manner? It's that the reasonable man is the one who makes a kind of selection. He is experimenting. He is looking for what is poison and not poison in a situation. He is eliminating from the situation what is poison, or he is trying to. As much as it's in him, as much as he can,

each person makes the effort, each person will make the effort… to select the givens in the situation. There's a task that's not about morality, eh? It's ethical, still within our practical concern to distinguish an ethics and a morality.

And here, as I am saying this, I tell myself: "obviously, I'm right". Why am I right? Because, after years and years of distance, some very, very odd pages reverberate by someone who had as much humor as Spinoza – the strangest humor in the world – who wasn't openly Spinozist, and who wrote about this single point from the Spinozist pages, namely: Jean-Jacques Rousseau. And Jean-Jacques Rousseau, despite everything that's said, didn't like morality. He didn't like morality at all.

And in the *Confessions* that is, up to a certain point, up to a certain moment, the funniest book in the world, anyway, one of the funniest, most amusing books in the world… The *Confessions* is even composed in extraordinary fashion. That is, Rousseau is absolutely unleashed throughout all the first books of the *Confessions*, really relating just anything, compromising himself up to his neck. It's a really, really funny book; one cannot read it without really laughing at every page, at least at some pages, all of Rousseau's adventures, all that is delightful.

And then a kind of process occurs – so here, this is a great book on the formation of what can be called the pathological process. It makes… As he moves forward in the book, the laughter dies out, the big guffaw dies out, and this links, really, to a kind of thing… There's the theme of persecution that first emerges little by little, and there is the influence, the fall, then, into this terrible illness, into this kind of delirious paranoia. And the book becomes darker and darker and darker, but it's an admirable book through its composition. The arrow of laughter there, throughout all the first books, the kind of manner in which Rousseau never stops telling the reader, "see how completely ridiculous I am, how grotesque, but I'm going to win, in the end, I'll be the one that'll get them!" Then, more and more: "Oh no, they are in the process of getting at me, they are in the process of getting at me!" Up to the end, in which there are pages of agony that are, so… It's a tremendous book of both voluntary and involuntary composition.

But I am saying, in the *Confessions,* Rousseau explains, at one moment, that he was reflecting on a great book that he could never create, and that this great book would be called *Morality* – but be careful – *Sensitive Morality*. Sensitive morality – sensitive – or *the Materialism of the Wise Man*. You see, morality, yes, but sensitive, in opposition to morality all by itself; the wise man, yes, but materialism of the wise man. And what are these, sensitive morality or the materialism of the wise man? We are not surprised to see here a tone and a theme, literally – here I am not exaggerating; it's following the very letter of the text – a truly Spinozist tone and letter. For the entire theme of this morality that Rousseau wanted to create and that he could never do consisted in saying this: morality is not interesting. Why isn't morality interesting? Because it dwells entirely on a theme that is absolutely a false theme, that of the combat of virtue and interest, the combat of virtue and interest. And what morality never stops imitating, and what it never stops beckoning us toward, is toward this struggle of virtue and interest in which virtue is supposed to be victorious over our interest. We have to make ourselves the agents of virtue and justice, if necessary, against our interest, and that's what morality is. Rousseau says: that never worked, something like that.

And Rousseau proposes a thing that he believes in enormously and that he believes in all the more since at the beginning, it makes him laugh greatly, and then it's going to make him enormously… it's going to agonize him a lot. But at the beginning, he finds that very, very

funny. He says: “But you will be wicked, and you will be vicious as long as it’s in your interest to be vicious and wicked.” There is never any struggle of virtue and interest. Virtue follows. It adapts – that’s even what creates hypocrites. It always adapts; virtue follows interest. There is never any conflict of justice-interest, virtue-interest. This is not true. He says, “I know something about this, me, never”, Rousseau says. He says everything there, in the *Confessions*. He says very well: “However, I stood in for morality, I stood in for the moral being, I’m known for that, but I can tell it to you all the more: virtue always follow interest, and I know something about this.”

So, what do we do if virtue always follows interest? Well, he says: “here we are, we are in situations” – that’s what materialism is; it’s really being-in-situation – [*Pause*] “We are in situations. Well, in situations, there are always things, or there are always elements of the situation that give us an interest in being wicked. Sensitive morality is selecting within a situation, eliminating the elements that give us an interest in being wicked. If you have an interest in being wicked, you will be so; although you yourself will hide it, you are hiding it even from yourself, from others, from yourself; you will be cowardly and wicked. So, it’s not there that one must struggle. One must not struggle there; even, at the extreme, one must not struggle at all. One must initiate situations in which you will have no interest in being wicked or else in which you select well within the situation while eliminating the elements that cause an interest in being wicked. If you will, it’s at once an extremely flat idea, but if you understand it, it is nonetheless very, very odd, this idea, if you imagine someone who lives like that. Because what does this yield? There, that’s the first text that I’m considering, the *Confessions*. I am saying that it’s strictly Spinozist.

The second text that I’m considering [is] *The New Héloise*, Rousseau’s novel in letters. It’s a strange text. The heroine… -- Oh, la la, I should have looked at it. Really, I no longer know… Julie? It’s Julie? It’s Julie, right? I better not get this wrong, that would be catastrophic [*The students confirm this*] – It’s Julie. The heroine, Julie, loves -- falls in love with, as a young girl – falls in love with her tutor, Saint-Preux. Fine. She is forced to marry a gentleman, that she respects and regards highly, but doesn’t love deeply who is called Monsieur de Wolmar. Saint-Preux will return, again attempting a new seduction. So, there we are. But there are two very odd episodes. Monsieur de Wolmar – in fact, this is a very, very strange novel – Monsieur de Wolmar leads Julie and Saint-Preux into the grotto where they had exchanged their first kiss and leaves them there. What art! What ethical skill! [*Laughter*] Eh? And here, they both look at one another, like that. Good. On the other hand, Monsieur de Wolmar is extremely, he falls gravely ill, and Julie makes a decision as a vow, almost before a notary. She declares: “Even if my dear husband dies, I will not marry Saint-Preux.” You see?

What am I in the process of recounting? I am commenting – because I am commenting following Rousseau’s own commentary. *The New Héloise* is made of letters, an exchange of letters, but in one case, or perhaps in two cases, there is a personal note from Rousseau precisely regarding Julie’s commitment not to marry Saint-Preux even if Wolmar dies. And here, Rousseau inserts a note in his own name, and says, “This is how one must behave in life.” What does Julie do, in fact? According to Rousseau’s literal commentary – you’ll go find it in the text, I hope – Rousseau’s literal commentary: she was in a terrible situation. Everything was swirling around her; she told herself: Saint-Preux is back, etc. She changes the situation. She makes the commitment that, whatever happens, even if Wolmar dies, she will not marry Saint-Preux, even for social reasons. She cannot go back on this; everyone heard her commitment, etc. It’s a bit as

if one makes… Gamblers, what do they do, gamblers, when it's really going badly? Gamblers have themselves banned from the casino. So, they complete a document. Gamblers complete a document that they… Fine… Or else, they will be dragging themselves through a life of infamy, in which father, mother and children, etc., will no longer be able to eat, and they will waste all their family's money gambling. And this will be shameful, the degradation from one catastrophic situation to another. Or else they have themselves banned. An extraordinary energy is required; it only takes two minutes, right? They run to the casino, fill out the document requesting the banishment, self-banishment. The document is recorded; they can no longer enter any casino for the rest of their lives. Fine. This is why it exists, for this reason. It's perfect. If you have the slightest gambling tendency, even before having ever gambled, fill out your banishment document, eh? [*Laughter*] It won't happen to you.

What did they do? I'd like you to sense that we are, in the end, getting close to saying some things, some stupidities like that, we are getting close to something. We nonetheless grasp something… Through this action, it happens that, in this precise case, it's an act of will. Fine. Through this act of will – which didn't take… which isn't heroic – they changed the situation, they modified the situation, they introduced a new element into the situation. And in Rousseau, in fine form, adds a third example. – No, the gambling example is not his, but he adds nothing. – It's exactly what Julie did. By declaring publicly, "whatever happens, I will not marry [Saint-Preux],"[18] she modified the situation. And Rousseau adds an even better example, to which he is personally committed. He says, you understand, inheritance is a funny thing. "Inheritance is a strange institution," Rousseau says. Because, whatever you do, to the extent that you will inherit, you cannot, at one moment or another, you cannot be prevented from wishing for your parents' death. What heir hasn't wished, at some point, for the father's death?

And that's the situation. It's the situation, it's the situation, there, typically, according to Rousseau… Perhaps you understand, at that point, that what I am in the process of saying, this connects to many things in Rousseau's thought. Why is he such a critic of society? It's because, for him, society – it's not complicated – it's a system that, at every moment, makes being wicked in your interest. This is an objective definition of society. In society, you do not stop having an interest in being wicked, unfair, whatever you want. Tyrant, coward, everything. Fine. So that's how society is? Well, yes, according to Rousseau. That's how society is. You always have an interest in being the biggest bastard possible in society. Good, so, although with your morality you'll say, I'm noble and generous, that doesn't prevent you from behaving like everyone. Inheritance is typical. If your parents have money, well, you are required, at some moment, -- your father or your mother annoyed you, and you say: "ah la la, quick, let them die, let that one die!" Fine. You have an interest in being wicked, of wishing someone's death.

And Rousseau says: the only act of sensitive morality – materialism of the sage – is what? To renounce one's inheritance, renounce the inheritance in advance. Before a notary, I renounce my inheritance. Suddenly, oh, well, I've gotten out of a difficult situation. I'm fed up, dragging through twenty or forty or sixty years of life telling myself, "When is papa going to die?" [*Laughter*] This is not a particularly brilliant or noteworthy life. There's more to do in life. There's more to do than await one's inheritance. There are still lots of people, if you think of the history of humanity, that have lived awaiting inheritances. Well, no, it's stupid, it's a lousy life, it's a stupid life, imbecilic. So then, fine, like that, I am taking care of everything. I'm taking care of it all. I've gotten myself out of a bad situation. I renounce the inheritance before a notary.

So, I tell myself: this example from Rousseau is odd because Rousseau didn't know it, but it's exactly what Spinoza did, exactly what he did. His father had a business concern, in fruits. It was on the Spain-Portugal-Netherland route, his business concern. It did very well, it seems. Here, opinions are divided, but finally… Spinoza's detractors say that it wasn't doing well, [*Laughter*] but the Spinozists say that it did well. [*Laughter*] So, let's assume that it did well. So, fine, Spinoza was involved in it at one point. He had a brother-in-law – so he had a sister – and then he had a brother in law, so he worked with the brother in law. All of that must have annoyed him at some point… So, he said: "Fine, go on, go on", and he renounced the inheritance. He renounced it. Just like that, he had peace; he removed himself from that situation; no one was going to come tell him: "So, you live with your family". No, he went off to polish his lenses, like that. He got out of the situation. Fine, it's odd that Rousseau refers to the same… In fact, because if there is something in society that gives one an interest in being wicked, it's no doubt precisely inheritance. It's a… [*Deleuze does not finish*]

But this goes much farther. All of Rousseau's life, he constructed it, Rousseau's wisdom himself, he constructed it like that. Avoiding placing himself… He knew that – this is why the *Confessions* is so funny as a book – he knew that, in most classical situations, in most ordinary situations of society, Rousseau knew very well that he turned fully into the grotesque. He speaks of this; he speaks of this a lot. Whatever happened, he was the comic. [*Laughter*] It was a destiny; he made everyone laugh. Rousseau walked into room; he was certain to collide (*se cogner*). It was drama; drama strolled along beside him. He entered; it was certain: gaffes! Rousseau tells about all the gaffes he made; it was a marvel. As soon as he felt a bit relaxed, he'd say something to his neighbor, and fine, he had no luck: it was just the guy to whom he shouldn't have said it. [*Laughter*] So… Moreover, he had urinary incontinence, as he declared it, so that he couldn't stay five minutes in a salon without running to the bathroom. So, all that… [*Laughter*] Everyone said: "Ah, Rousseau, he's nothing." [*Laughter*] He tells himself: "I have to get out of here, I have to get out of here." He himself pretends – only, in my opinion, it's poorly understood by commentators – he himself pretends that his whole anti-social attitude came precisely from that, that he wanted to get out of these situations in which he was ridiculous. So, many commentators, especially those that don't like Rousseau, conclude that "you see, his ideas weren't serious." On the contrary, I believe that it's proof of the extent to which he was serious.

What Rousseau was living fundamentally was this: "We are not wicked by nature." That's his idea of natural goodness. "We are not wicked by nature; it's not true," he said. It's not that we are worth much more that the wicked. He didn't think that we were very good; he said, we're mostly egotistical, we adapt; we're not wicked by nature. On the other hand, a situation make us wicked, and then, we become ruthless. We become the worst bastards on the level of situations, but it's situations that make us wicked. Hence his idea, he who feels himself particularly good – "I am the best of men" – he is going to be able effectively to become what he is, namely the best of men, only if he gets out of situations, that is, if he exerts a selective action over the givens of the situation.

And understand that from this, he then draws a kind of very grandiose vision – that I call once again Spinozist – because his entire theory of the child comes from here. It's not that the child is wicked, he says. It's just that the child is simply placed, society places the child immediately in situations in which he/she has the particular interest in being wicked so that then he/she becomes so rapidly. What are these situations? Rousseau has defined them admirably – and this is the third text that I am citing, to finish with Rousseau – and he defined it admirably in *Emile* [*or On*

Education]. He says: what is the child's situation? Well, in the end, it's a situation that we can name, that we can describe. If we look for this situation, it's dependence-tyranny, dependence-tyranny, with perpetual reversal, slave-tyrant. That's the child's situation in society, from the very start. The child is a slave because he/she depends entirely on the parents, [*Pause*] and, as a repercussion, he/she becomes the tyrant of his/her own parents.

In what sense? Rousseau tells us: well, education itself states it. The child, because he/she is dependent, never stops screaming. In fact, what is screaming? It's like when a cat meows. A cat doesn't meow to say, "I want some milk"; that's an adult proposition, a human adult, "I want some milk," "a cat meowing". It's what Americans call, when they are undertaking good proposition analysis, they say: "to meow" is not an object proposition. "I want some milk" is an object proposition; "to meow" is not an object proposition, it's a relation proposition. "To meow" is about the relation of dependence. When the cat meows in an apartment, this is the relation of dependence: it's attracting the master's attention. A child screaming is not an object proposition; it's not "I want some milk." It's "Mama, ooo ooo!" "Hey, you over there, mama!" It's a proposition of dependence. Immediately, the mother brings him/her some milk. In other words, it's in the same situation that the child is made a slave and turns him/herself into a tyrant. And Rousseau says: in education, there's a bad principle the begins from the start, well before the child speaks: it's that parents never stop bringing things to the child. Bringing things to the child is already the corrupting situation. You see what there is in this, what it means to say, "a situation gives one an interest in being wicked." The little baby understands that quickly; he/she won't stop screaming so that each time someone brings something to him/her. This is diabolical, all that; it's… Fine, it's the same. It's the slave-tyrant. It's the situation of dependence-tyranny.

And, notice what Rousseau means – and here, this becomes very profound – [when] he says: in the end, this is the matrix of all social situations. The slave-tyrant is the social situation, it's the key social situation. And Rousseau proposes his great statement in *Emile*: education ought to consist in substituting for the dependency on things, [*Deleuze corrects himself immediately*] for the dependency on persons, the dependency on things. Understand: to substitute for dependency in relation to persons the dependency in relation to things. That is, never bring something to the child; bring the child to the thing. Fine… Here you already change the situation. No doubt, you bring him/her. [If] the child can't walk, ok, so you bring him/her there. But it's [the child] that will be brought there; it's not the thing that will be moved [to him/her]. And you will turn the child more and more toward propositions that might be called object propositions and less and less toward propositions that might be called relation propositions, substituting for the dependency on persons, a dependency on things. Fine, that means changing the situation. You understand?

So, if I have made this long parenthesis, it's because this interests me enormously – at many years removed – [that] you can find in an author who takes this up within his system. I don't mean that Rousseau is Spinozist; I mean and I am saying that he is so on this point and that, in Rousseau's thought, there is a kind of Spinozist kernel that doesn't simply exist as kernel since, on Rousseau's level, this is perfectly coherent with the whole of Rousseau's thought itself, everything that I have just told you. But what matters to me is this resonance between the two authors, a truly literal resonance since, yet again, what will Spinoza call the effort of reason? The effort of reason will typically be an effort to select within situations that which is apt to give me what Spinoza calls joy and to eliminate that which is apt to give me sadness. And, this is word for word what Spinoza… Either substituting that which is apt to give me independence and

eliminate that which is apt to give me dependence. And well, this is word for word what Rousseau called "materialism of the wise man or sensitive morality," and that's what ethics is.

So, this is just a first point in my research on the status of evil. As a result, we return to the fact: Adam wasn't a wise man; he didn't have sensitive morality, otherwise he would have found the means to avoid the fruit. He wouldn't have placed himself in this situation. But there we see that he did place himself in this situation. Fine; what's going to occur? Well, he falls ill. Adam is no longer what he was. You see, I am returning to my topic: he ate of the fruit, he fell ill, that's the fact. And Spinoza can say to us very happily: "On this point, we can be told all the tales that you'd like. This still doesn't prevent them from being tales. The sole fact that can be drawn from this tale is what I am telling you: Adam fell ill after having eaten of the fruit."

And already here – I believe that this authorizes me to say that Blyenbergh is all that you wish except someone stupid. Already here then, Blyenbergh doesn't let it get by. He doesn't let it get by. And he really catches Spinoza here. He tells him: "But do you realize what you are saying there, and what that commits you to?" [*Pause, silence*] "Do you realize, eh? I don't know if you realize what you've just said to me, Spinoza, what that commits all of us to, since… Awful. Awful…" Blyenbergh is going to tell him three things; he is suddenly going to make three objections to him. And everything is unleashed. The entire correspondence is going to be justified immediately. Blyenbergh is going to answer: "But do you realize? This is just not nothing that you've said to me with Adam and the apple. This story is not nothing." And he makes three objections.

Namely, the first objection: "Well then, vice and virtue – you have pretended to have extracted a fact; ok, but then, vice and virtue are a simple matter of taste." Here, he is very forceful, Blyenbergh, because he could have let this go, not understanding all that well. But he tells him: "But you must take it all the way there, since, in the end, you are assimilating, you are assimilating 'Adam ate of the forbidden fruit' with 'Adam was poisoned, he ate some arsenic, he ate some arsenic that made him sick'. So, take it all the way; say it frankly: 'vice and virtue are a matter of taste.'" Ok, eh? I find that this is a strong objection. What is Spinoza going to answer? This is getting interesting. So that's the first objection.

Second objection, the most technical: "But knowing if something is a poison or not is a matter of experimentation. We don't know it in advance. So, not only what can that mean, 'God revealed to Adam, before the experience'? There cannot be any revelation there if it's a matter of poison. There is no revelation concerning poisons. We imagine revelations about mathematics, that God might teach me that 2+2 = 4. That's ok, that could be an object of revelation because it's a truth known as necessary. But something, that arsenic might be poison for me, that's not a necessary truth. It's what is known as a factual truth. There is no revelation concerning factual truths. Factual truths are a matter of experience. So, all morality… There is no morality; all morality becomes a matter of experience." So, that's Blyenbergh's second objection.

Blyenbergh's third objection, the most dangerous: "If it's true that, for you, vice and virtue are a matter of taste, what are you going to say about someone for whom crime has a nice taste? That is, the criminal, what are you going to say against him if he tells you, 'I like that'? Crime is perhaps poison for the one enduring it – in fact, the crime acts like arsenic – but for the one committing it, it's not a poison; on the contrary, it's something delicious, or so we assume. So, for the one doing the harm and not for the one enduring it, the crime thus becomes a virtue, necessarily." Ah, this isn't bad, not bad at all.

Here's Blyenbergh's text on this topic… 216… 200… But I have to say that it was preceded by… It's in letter XXI. Here's what Spinoza said. There, he was trying… Spinoza went far: "Someone who abstains from crime uniquely through fear of punishment does not at all act through love and does not at all possess virtue." Someone who abstains from crime through fear is not virtuous, says Spinoza. OK: a platitude. He adds: "As for myself" – as for me – "I abstain from those things, or try to, because [crime is] explicitly [repugnant] to my singular nature."[19] Bizarre… See: he isn't speaking the language of morality. He isn't saying: "because crime repulses my human essence, my human nature." He is saying, "As for myself, I abstain from those things because [crime is] explicitly [repugnant] to my singular nature," my own, Spinoza's. He says: crime doesn't interest me, no, so I abstain from it. I am not a criminal because that doesn't interest me.

Hence, Blyenbergh's answer… Here it is: "You abstain…" – In letter XXII – "You [abstain from] the things that I call vices because they are [contrary] to your singular nature and not because they [are] vices. You [abstain from] them like we [abstain from] eating food that our nature finds disgusting."[20] Here… He understood quite well. He understood completely, I find. "You abstain from them like we abstain from eating food that our nature finds disgusting." For example, I don't like cheese, so I abstain from eating cheese; good, fine. "Well then, for you, vice and virtue are the same. You abstain from them…" And here he continues: "Indeed, the person who abstains from wicked acts because his nature is disgusted by them can hardly boast about his virtue." It's not virtue, says Blyenbergh. You understand? You abstain from what is the equivalent of arsenic for you. We don't say that someone abstaining from taking arsenic is virtuous. In other words, you are negating vice and virtue. And if you are shown someone for whom crime is quite suitable, you'll say: "Well, in the end, in the end, he's right to be a criminal."

If you will, here we've really reached an extreme text in which morality is calling upon ethics to explain itself. And at once, at the same time, one says: fine, we're far from having finished with this matter. Why? Because we only have our very general outline. The apple would have acted like… like… like a way to make someone sick. Understand my problem here. I always seem to be going in all directions, but in fact, we'll see the extent to which I'm not doing so. [Acted] like… what? Up to now, I've said: like arsenic. Oh, no! Have I gotten too committed to this? Have I already… have I already said too much? Is it like arsenic that the apple acts on Adam? However, Spinoza indeed tells us "like poison." But wouldn't there be another possibility? We may need one. I am looking since we tell ourselves: we must really go slowly within texts like that. So yes, there is another possibility.

For illness, and the problem of illness – getting sick, what does that mean? – that's been posed in many, many different ways. If you are truly interested in the question of the rapport of ethics with health and illness, we'll necessarily be led to encounter these problems, evaluations of what "being sick" means. And I am not trying here to insert a grand classification of types of illness. But, as my commentary progresses, I need this, I need that, since in the background of my intention, I will have the project: did Spinoza propose a certain original idea about what "being sick" means? I am just commenting that – from time immemorial, eh, but particularly in relatively recent medical practice, not immediately recent, but anyway, already at Spinoza's era, there were glimpses of this – there was already a great distinction made between two types of illness, illnesses called "by intoxication" and illnesses called "by intolerance." Intoxication and intolerance are not the same things. Illnesses by intolerance are very quickly situated, and they

have nourished an entire category of allergies. These could be combined; there could be both intoxication and intolerance. But there can be intoxication without intolerance and, above all, intolerance without intoxication. Hay fever is a famous illness of intolerance. Many skin diseases are illnesses by intolerance, you know, right? Hey, this is helping me; everything is coming together. It's indeed because… That works because… What is the simplest way?

You know, an illness by intolerance is difficult to find. I am thinking of a truck driver, one who transported artichokes. He came down with an awful case of eczema, awful eczema, over his entire body. So, you know how they proceed: the body is divided into sectors, right? The doctor divides the body into sectors – not at Spinoza's era, but… Now, we have had to discover methods, well, in the recent past – the body was divided into segments, and tests were run. I am saying "that works". Sense that this is already selective, sensitive morality. They were attempting to select. So, the body is divided into sectors and experiments are made with all the elements in which the subject comes familiarly into contact. As this was a transporter of artichokes, obviously he was inoculated for artichokes, specifically, on a certain area of the back. Nothing, nothing. There was dust; he was inoculated for dust; -- there are inoculations for that, in order to find the source of intolerance, in cases of illnesses by intolerance or that are presumed to be so – Nothing was found. I remember this because this is an observation that really interested me and that I read in a medical review while waiting at the dentist's office. [*Laughter*] I kept it. This was a long time back that I read it and kept it because – these are always superb articles – because that showed the doctors to be so attentive, so – in fact, like we don't see them – so attentive that they didn't stop searching for what this guy was suffering from. Fine…

Up to the day that the doctor tells himself: "Ah, but careful, the artichoke stem and the artichoke leaf are not composed the same way." And he had been inoculated for the leaf. He gets inoculated for the stem, and the guy then had an intolerance, a major eczema crisis. Marvelous! Marvelous!... See: the back was sectored… He selects things. For what will the fundamental treatment… What will the medical action be in the case of "illness by intolerance"? Each time that it's possible, the key medical action will be to tell the guy, "don't go near that anymore; get yourself out of that situation!" It's obvious that it was necessary to transform the artichoke specialist into a carrot specialist. [*Laughter*] He could no longer transport artichokes. Fine… He had to pull himself out of that situation. Good.

What is this? This ought to interest us a bit because this is going to bring back our problem. What is the difference between an illness by intolerance and an illness by intoxication? No doubt the two illnesses exist, but they require… [*End of the Paris 8 recording, clearly before the end of the session*] [2:04:18]

Notes, 13-20: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 05, 6 January 1981

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Part 1

Deleuze: … Well, a silence of marble[21]… [*Laughter*] So, we are continuing forward very gently because, in order for you to follow your own reading… [*Laughter*] The very idea that this makes you laugh is very, very disturbing… And today, I'd really like to go almost numerically, so that you'll understand the succession of problems. And so, I am saying, first, here we are… First, for today, well… Necessarily, what point have we reached? This will go very quickly, the point we've reached…

In the end, we've vaguely acquired, at the level… You see, over several meetings, we've been in the process of looking into what is that status of modes, since the status of modes is really what constitutes ethics. Good, and well, we are beginning to perceive, even a bit confusedly, a certain status of what Spinoza calls modes, that is, you or me, or the table, or anything. That is, the mode is what is. It's "be-ing" (*étant*). The status of any "be-ing", in the end, is what? Let's imagine… Because we still don't know if this is true, everything that Spinoza is saying… It's obvious that it's true! It's so beautiful, so deep, it's true! It can't be otherwise; it occurs like he says, things… And how does he say that it occurs? Well, he says that what constitutes a thing is, in the end, an extremely complex aggregate of relations (*rapports*).[22]

I insist on the necessity of going slowly because at each sentence, we'd almost have say: Ah yes? Well, yes, but it's not all that great what he is saying there. That was already stated, all that… [*Deleuze does not complete this*] And then, we do sense that it's not true. What he concludes is something absolutely new, something very, very odd. He says: you understand, a body, or a thing, or anything, or an animal, or you, or me, each of us is constituted by an aggregate of relations. Let's call these relations: *constitutive relations*.[23] I'm saying this out of convenience as it's not an expression he used, but I am saying: constitutive relations. These relations – we saw this, and it was very vague – we baptized them according to Spinoza's very expressions, but we don't yet know what this means: relations of movement and of rest, and of rest. And between what are these relations established? [Between] relations implying terms. -- We are still remaining entirely vague, for the moment. – [Spinoza] would say: between particles. For us, our vocabulary has been enriched since then, so we could say: these are relations between molecules, and then components of molecules, and finally, we'd also come upon "relations between molecules." We still don't know at all where these particles come from. This we haven't seen;

we are proceeding in order. So, I am constituted by an aggregate of so-called constitutive relations, relations of movement and rest that are established between particles.

What does that mean, an aggregate of relations? It means that my constitutive relations are mine, and in what sense? There isn't any "me" [*moi*] yet. What does "me" mean? So, what is going to define the aggregate of constitutive relations of a particular thing as an aggregate "one", when I say a body? Here, we have no choice… To some extent what I am calling "my constitutive relations" must never stop constituting each other, and decomposing each other, that is: they never stop passing into one another in both directions, in the direction of a greater complexity, and in the direction of an analysis, a decomposition. And if I can say these are my constitutive relations, it's because there is this mode of penetration of relations, of interpenetration of relations such that my simplest relations never stop composing between them in order to form my most complex relations, and my most complex relations never stop decomposing one another to the benefit of the simple ones. There's a kind of circulation that is going to define or that is going to be defined by the aggregate of relations that constitute me.

I am choosing an example from one of Spinoza's letters, not one to Blyenbergh, but a letter to someone else; I believe that it's letter 32, it's the only page from Spinoza in which he… -- well, it's not 32… wait, yes it is 32 – It's a text in which he goes quite far in analyzing relations. Yes, it's 32, a letter to [Henry] Oldenberg.[24] He takes the example of blood, and he says: Well, classically, we say that blood has two parts, chyle and lymph. Today, we no longer say that, but that's not important. What 17th-century biology calls chyle and lymph isn't what we call chyle and lymph today, but that's not serious. Generally, if you will, for a superficial analogy, let's say that chyle and lymph are sort of like white blood cells and red blood cells. So, fine, blood has two components: chyle and lymph. Understand what that means. And on this point, Spinoza explains… Well, I'd say: chyle and lymph are themselves two systems of relations between particles. These are not simple bodies; there are no simple bodies. Simple bodies are particles, that's all. But when I qualify an aggregate of particles by saying: that's some chyle and some lymph, that mean's I have already defined an aggregate of relations. So, chyle and lymph are already two aggregates of relations. The one and the other are composed, the kind of natures that they compose are in order form a third relation. This third relation is what I call "blood".

So, if you will, blood will be a body of the second power, if I call chyle and lymph a body of the first power – this is arbitrary because I am beginning there. – I'll call chyle and lymph bodies of the first power. They are each defined by a relation of movement and rest. These relations agree (*conviennent*). You see what that means: two relations agree when one and the other are directly composed. If they are directly composed, they compose a third, more complex relation. This third, more complex relation we can call a "body of the second power." This will be blood, my blood. After all, my blood is not my neighbor's.

In its turn, my blood, a body of the second power, is directly composed with other organic elements. For example, with my tissues that, themselves, are also bodies, the tissues… They are directly composed with tissues, tissue-bodies, in order to yield a body of the third power, specifically: my irrigated muscles – on days that they happen to be! – Are you following me?

Etc., etc. I can say that, at the extreme, I am a body of "n" powers. And what guarantees in the end my duration? What guarantees my duration, that is, my persistence… For such a conception of bodies implies that they are going to be defined by persistence. You already see where the theme of duration can be concretely connected. It's odd how all this really is quite concrete. This is a very simple theory of the body, very certain of itself.

What is persistence? The fact that I persevere, persistence. I persevere in myself. I persevere in myself to the extent that this aggregate of relations of relations that constitutes me is such that the most complex relations never cease passing into the less complex one, and the less complex ones never cease reconstituting the most complex ones. There's a circulation of relations. And in fact, they never cease being unmade and being remade. For example, I am taking up some very elementary contemporary notions from biology; I never stop recreating bone. That is, bone is a system of relations in movement and rest. You'll tell me that we really don't see this moving all that much, except in voluntary movements. But yes, it does; it moves, it moves. It's a system of relations of movement and rest between particles.

But this relation never stops being undone. I borrow reserves from my bones; I borrow mineral reserves from my bones all the time. We have to imagine bone in duration, but not in spatiality. In spatiality, this is nothing; it's a skeleton, it's death. But bone in perseverance, in duration, is simply this: it means that the relation of movement and rest between particles that bone represents never ceasing to be unmade, specifically: I borrow mineral reserves from my bones in order to survive, and being remade, notably: bones borrow nutriments that I absorb from mineral reserves for reconstitution. So, the organism is a phenomenon of duration, much more than of spatiality. And you see, for what I am going to call perseverance, or duration, at least I have a first Spinozian, Spinozist definition of perseverance.

And this is why you will notice – here, I'm making a reference for those of you who followed this moment – in the problems that [Georges] Comtesse had raised [*during the 16 December 1980 meeting*], I was saying: my progression would be to understand, once we've said that in Spinoza's works the expression "tendency to persevere in Being" constantly appears, I was saying: I can only understand "tendency" as arising as a secondary conceptual determination. The idea of perseverance in Spinoza is primary in relation to that of "tendency to persevere." How perseverance is going to become a "tendency to persevere", it seems to me, is the way in which we can pose the problem.

But if I had fully understood [that] – we'll get back to this when I have finished all this – another perspective can be Comtesse's viewpoint in which he'd tend to say: ah well, no, in *conatus*, in "tending to persevere", what's fundamental is "tendency", and not "perseverance". That might be one very legitimate viewpoint for a reading that would yield a slightly different reading, I suppose, not the opposite, but slightly different. But for me, if you will, this is how I see it – I don't know, to each his/her own mode of reading – I understand that in the expression "tending to persevere in Being", I understand "persevere" before having understood "tendency". And I am saying, "perseverance", you indeed see that it's… it's as long as an organism lasts, however little it lasts; it's essentially the fact that it endures. And why does it essentially endure? Because it can

only be defined by an aggregate of relations of movements and rest if these relations of movements and rest never cease passing into each other, being decomposed and recomposed. And that's what perseverance is, this communication of relations.

So, this is still the point that we've reached. But on this topic, you understand that I have just tried to define a kind of perseverance, or, I could say, a kind of "consistency" of each thing. I'd say [that] each thing consists or perseveres to the extent that the relations constituting it never cease passing into each other, that is, in being decomposed from the most complex to the simplest, and in being recomposed from the simplest to the most complex. And there we are! All at once, I have a certain autonomy concerning what I am calling "a thing"; I've defined the "a" of "a thing." In what way is a thing "a/one"? This, it seems to me, is an original definition of "a/one".

You see, in fact, why he has to say that, Spinoza? It's for our joy that he does so! But why does he have to? He has no choice, in a certain way since by defining things, beings, "be-ings" (*étants*) as modes, he has blocked off considering them as substances. So, he cannot define their unity, the unity of each thing, in a substantial way. So, as an outcome, he's going to define [unity] as a system of relations, that is, the opposite of a substance. And his strength is managing so simply, really with a great sobriety, a great simplicity, to tell us what "a/one" might mean at the level of an aggregate of multiple relations. Each thing is constituted through an aggregate of multiple relations. "Ah, fine! But how is it 'a/on'?" This isn't difficult; [it's] a very strict and very rigorous answer: its relations never cease passing into one another, that is, in being decomposed and recomposed. This is how the "a/one" is made of "a thing."

You see why is Spinoza forced to do this. It is for our joy that he does all this. He has no choice since, by defining things, beings, as modes, he has forbidden himself from considering them as substances. Therefore, he cannot define the unity of each thing in a substantial way. As a result, he defines it as a system of relations, that is, the opposite of a substance. And his strength is to arrive so simply, truly with great sobriety, great simplicity, at telling us what one can mean at the level of a set of multiple relations. Each thing is constituted by a set of multiple relations. "Oh really! But in what way is it one?" This is not difficult, [having] a very strict and rigorous answer: its relations never cease passing into one another, that is, decomposing and recomposing themselves. That is what makes the "a/one" of "a/one thing".

And so, and so, and so, still within this first point, what point have we reached? But this thing bathes within a milieu that is itself modal, not substantial, a modal milieu of other things. There are other things; there isn't just one thing. Why isn't there just a single mode? You've already guessed it: it's because if there were just a single mode, this would be substance. If there were a single "be-ing," this would be Being. There has to be more than a single "be-ing"; there have to be modes, an infinite infinity of modes, since Being is said of the substance… Oh, excuse me: Being is said of "be-ing", Being is said of the mode. But the mode is multiple. So, there are other things, and there are some of these other things that are completely foreign to me, with which I have no dealing, but there are some that act upon me. And these other things are exactly like me: for their own account, they also are systems of relations that pass into one another, which is the

way in which the thing, each thing, perseveres. That each thing perseveres is true of all. This isn't just about organisms; it's true of all: the table perseveres. The table also is a system of relations of movements and rest that pass into one another, which is the way in which I am saying "a" table. Fine… So, there are other things that act upon me.

And well, among these things, from my point of view – you see what "my point of view" means' what is my point of view? Why can I speak about my point of view? – We are going to define my point of view: it's the point of view of my perseverance. That is, my point of view is the point of view of the aggregate of relations that compose me and that never cease being decomposed within one another and of each being recomposed with the other. That's what my point of view is. From my point of view, I'll say that certain of these exterior things are good for me – are good, or are good for me, it's the same – and that others are bad for me. Or, with a word still used by Spinoza, that certain of them suit me (*me conviennent*), and that others disagree with me. My mode of living is: "Hey, that suits me… Ah no, that thing disagrees with me."

But what does that mean? These aren't judgments of taste, "that suits me, that disagrees with me". What is a "bad" thing? A "bad" thing is a thing in which the relation decomposes all or part of my constitutive relations. [*Pause*] That is, it forces my particles to take on an entirely different relation that doesn't correspond to my aggregate. There you have "bad," it's poison! I have the model of poison, here, from the start: poison decomposes one of my constitutive relations; it destroys one of my constitutive relations, and in this way, it is "bad".

You see that, already, one must say, Ah, well yes, we are taking "to decompose" in two senses, since from the point of view of perseverance, the relations that constitute me never cease decomposing and recomposing. But that means: the complex relation passes into the simple relations, and the simple relations again yield the complex relation. Whereas the other [sense of] decomposition, when poison acts on me, there we have a decomposition of a completely different type, notably: one of my relations is destroyed, or else at the extreme, all of my relations are destroyed. That is, my particles take on completely different relations. [*Pause*] In other words, I get sick, or I die.

So, we have a rather strict definition, even very strict, of "bad". [Something] is bad… A thing can be said to be bad only from a certain point of view, that is, from the point of view of the body whose relation a thing decomposes. So, when Spinoza said: "Ah well, this isn't difficult; God didn't forbid absolutely anything from Adam. God simply revealed to Adam that if Adam ate of the fruit, Adam would be poisoned." You see what that means in all Spinozist rigor. That means: God revealed to Adam that if he ate of the fruit, one of his relations, or even all of his constitutive relations, would be decomposed. He would no longer be the same Adam. He'd no longer be the same… Like when we undergo an ordeal, or when we've consumed a violent poison, and then we say, "Ah no! I won't be the same anymore!" Now there we have something that's bad!

And you suddenly understand what it means to be "good". The good will be attributed to each thing of which one or several relations compose themselves directly – I insist on the importance of "directly" – directly with mine, directly or with few intermediaries. [*Pause*] For example, here

– but perhaps this example will direct us to another, into a subtler analysis later – I breathe, the air is good for me. First, what air? What air? Well, that depends. Let's say, overall, the air is good for me. What does that mean? It means that the constitutive relation of the air composes itself – I am putting "directly" in quotes – with one of my constitutive relations. What does that mean? In fact, it's not as simple as that. But you see, nonetheless, what this means… This is so that you feel what "directly" means. This isn't that simple because what is my constitutive relation in question, in relation to air? It's the constitutive relation that is going to define my lungs.

In relation to air, this constitutive relation, this relation that I am calling out of convenience "pulmonary", this is a system of relations of movements and rest between particles. And well, the lungs breathe, and this means they decompose the constitutive relation of air. Why do they decompose it? In order to appropriate for themselves the part of air that suits them, let's say, so as not to complicate this, oxygen. If I am a fish and I have bronchi, this occurs with water, since it's water that suits me. Because the bronchi are another system of relations of movements and rest that is capable of decomposing the constitutive relation of water in order to extract oxygen from it. But myself, I am not able to. Moreover – here we see that things are extremely individual – everything depends on the state of your lungs. Can you stand a kind of air strongly containing oxygen, with a great proportion of oxygen? There are cases in which you cannot stand this. What does that mean, too much oxygen? Too much oxygen is going to be something strange. It means that in a kind of air too loaded with oxygen, you cannot make – in certain cases, I am saying in certain cases – you cannot make your extraction. You see, this is a whole world of modes that is extremely varied.

But you see what "good" means, in general. What is "bad" is that for which the relation decomposes in the most direct way possible one of my relations. What is "good" is that for which the relation is composed the most directly possible, rather directly, with one of my relations. Very good. The difference between nutriment and poison is there. Arsenic let's say – I am returning to this example, since there is a text by Spinoza on fruit that acts as poison, another text on blood – Take a poison that decomposes blood. We see how it acts. I was saying, in the state of health, you have chyle-lymph that never stops composing blood, and blood never stopping to decompose into chyle-lymph, and chyle-lymph recomposing blood. Very good. When you absorb a poison that decomposes blood, there you have the constitutive relation of blood: it's destroyed! For example, an excess of white blood cells, whatever you wish… Anyway… You can invent your own examples.

So, there we are. All this has to be extremely clear because if it isn't quite clear, then it's… [*Deleuze does not finish*] But this is only the summary of where we had arrived on the status of mode. You see, it's quite strong to define a thing as a… really, as a complex of relations. You will tell me: in some ways this goes without saying. This goes without saying, but this implies such a choice. You understand, the whole idea in the back of our minds, notably "the others", all that exists as implied. Other philosophers believed that they could only define the individual as substantial. And Spinoza tells us: well, not at all; the individual is not a substance. There, from Aristotle to Descartes, there is at least one point in common. They all differ over understanding

and defining substance, but from Aristotle to Descartes, the agreement is total – including Leibniz after Descartes. Up to Leibniz, traditional philosophy's agreement – I'm not saying there weren't some strange thinkers who had already brought this point into question – considered that we could only define a body with reference to the category of substance, an individual only by substance.

A student: And for Spinoza, can we say that substance or substrata support relations, relations…

Deleuze: No!

The student: … or else that relations are interior to substance?

Deleuze: No, neither one nor the other. In my view, neither one nor the other. No. There has to be a completely original form of relation, which will be the relation of substance and of modes. But we can only look at that when we pass over into the topic of ontology, since there, it's *ethics*. Yes, that's a good question, what will the relation of substance and modes be? But that exceeds by far what I'm currently [saying].

A student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: [Letter] 32. On blood, yes… Yes, a very beautiful letter, in which he talks about the unity of Nature since, at the extreme, there's only one and same Nature, Nature being the infinity of relations that pass into one another. So, that is what Nature is, with a capital N.

Good. I am passing on to my second point. This will go quickly. I just said: there are two kinds of decomposition when I say, "a relation is decomposed". There is a decomposition-circulation that never ceases being decomposed, at the same time that my simple relations never cease recomposing complex relations. So, this is a decomposition-recomposition that belongs to perseverance. This is a decomposition-circulation. But we saw that when I say: "poison decomposes one of my relations," it's no longer a matter of that at all. It's a matter of decomposition-destruction. One of my relations is destroyed by the constitutive relation of poison. For example, my blood is defined by a relation, so well… There we are! Do you follow me?

What does it mean, "a relation is destroyed"? Eh? What does that mean? Well, it's quite funny in Spinoza; it's… He doesn't say it, but it's as if he said it. There are things, you have to know them by heart. It would be good to learn the *Ethics* by heart. Learn it by heart! [*Laughter*] Yes! If there are texts that we learn by heart, if there are any of them in philosophy, it's the *Ethics*. Learning Kant by heart makes no sense! It would be useless. Learning Spinoza by heart, that will serve you throughout your life. You tell yourself, in every life circumstance, you tell yourself, "ah good… what proposition does this refer to?" And there will always be one, in Spinoza! So, that can be enormously useful for you.

So, fine! One of my relations is destroyed, so what does that mean? Quite rigorously, that means the following: how can a relation be destroyed? After all, I don't see… And in fact, here we are nonetheless going to make a very important comment, perhaps. A relation… What can be destroyed is the terms of a relation. But where is a relation? How could it be destroyed? Where is

a relation? If I say: Pierre is smaller than Paul, this is a relation; “Pierre is smaller than Paul”, eh? I indeed see that Pierre or Paul can be destroyed, assuming they are themselves not relations. But, “smaller than”, how could this be destroyed, something like that? How could a relation be destroyed?

You see, this is an abyss… [*Pause*] A relation cannot be destroyed. Why is it that a relation cannot be destroyed? There’s a very simple answer: it’s because, like each of you knows and lives this, a relation, a relation is an eternal truth. An eternal truth cannot be destroyed… 2 + 2 = 4 is a relation. 2 + 2 = 4 is a complex of relations, since 2 + 2 = 4 is the affirmation that there is a relation of equality between two relations: the relation 2 + 2 and the relation 4. So, this is a relation between two relations. That cannot be destroyed! Eternal truths are indestructible! Pierre and Paul can die, but the fact still remains no less eternally true that Pierre will have been smaller than Paul.

So, what can that mean? Something very simple: that necessarily means – It’s out of convenience that we say that a relation is destroyed, it’s a way of speaking; we really have to speak this way, otherwise we’d get bogged down – But, in reality, this means, “a relation stops being realized”. It's not destroyed; it stops being realized. This is very important for what Spinoza will call “eternal life,” when he teaches us that we are eternal. What I am in the process of saying is therefore uniquely in order introduce a particular topic about eternity. In fact, when I say, “one of my relations is destroyed,” that solely means and cannot mean anything other than: one of my relations has stopped being realized.

What does it mean to realize a relation? Realizing a relation, this is very simple: a relation is realized when are present, when the terms are presented between which the relation is established with truth. If I say, “smaller than”, I have stated a relation, but this is an empty relation. I realize the relation when I find or present two terms that are, the one and the other, in the relation conforming to the relation “smaller than.” This is why we can create a logic of relations. A logic of relations has always been considered as being distinct from what is called a logic of attribution, the logic of attribution being the relation of quality in substance. I say, “the sky is blue,” at first glance – I am not certain that there is a logic of attribution; maybe there isn’t one – But, at first glance, when I say, “the sky is blue”, I attribute a quality or a predicate to a subject. The subject is the sky; blue is the quality, or the predicate. And how can I say, “the sky is blue”? Here, this is the problem of the logic of attribution.

What does that mean, “how can I say, ‘the sky is blue’”? It means that it doesn’t go without saying. In a certain way, when I say, “the sky is blue”, I am saying “A is B”. It’s strange; how, by what right can I say, “A is B”? This is a problem. I mean that all sorts of logics are logics of attribution, to the extent that this is indeed the problem that they pose. But understand that when I say, “Peter is smaller than Paul,” “smaller than” is not one of Pierre’s quality. The proof is that Pierre who is smaller that Paul is larger than Jules. The relation is not a quality attributable to the thing. Even at the level of feeling, you indeed sense that this is another domain, the domain of relations. Hence, the possibility of a logic of relations has never ceased historically, in the history

of the logics and of philosophy, has never ceased historically teasing, tormenting the logic of substance or of attribution.

What do we do about relations from the point of view of a logic of substance? This means that relations are going to pose problems… Once again, I cannot say that "smaller than Pierre" is an attribute or a quality of Paul. This is something else. Irreducibility of relations and of qualities… It's a drama! Henceforth, what do we think? This is what struck a great blow against what could be called substantialism. You understand, on the contrary, that Spinoza would be particularly at ease within a logic of relations since, precisely, he hasn't defined bodies as substance.

When I have defined bodies as substance, I find myself facing one hell of a problem. How do we think about relations between bodies? At least, Spinoza took upon himself some very strange problems by rejecting that bodies are substances, but as a result, he avoids certain problems. Relations for him are, on the contrary, the domain that goes the most without saying. We are packets of relations; each of us is a packet of relations. So, he's not one to be astonished by relations.

Once again, henceforth, "one of my relations is destroyed," which means, "it stops being realized". What realizes my relations? We saw the answer, still quite insufficient since I have not analyzed this – and it's not for today that I'll be analyzing that. -- In any case, [Spinoza] tells us something for the moment as vague as: what realizes relations, in any case, are particles, more or less complex particles. And what are these particles? You sense then that these are nothing other, at the extreme, than relational supports (*supports de relations*). Obviously, the particles don't have an interiority; they are uniquely relational supports, relational terms, variable relational terms. As a result, we could almost create a very formal logic of the relation in Spinoza. But, in the end, this would be something else…

Well, well, what does that mean? Some particles that realized one of my relations are no longer realizing it. What can that mean? This becomes quite clear! They no longer realize it, obviously, obviously that they no longer realize it. Why do they no longer realize it? They no longer realize it because they have been determined to return under another relation, incompatible with mine. So, they no longer realize my relation; they have taken up another one. And the new relation that they have taken is not compatible, that is, does not circulate with mine. Example: once again, arsenic. Arsenic decomposes my blood. Fine, what does that mean? The particles of my blood, that constituted my blood insofar as they entered into a particular relation – the constitutive relation of my blood, which itself was a relation of movement and rest between particles --, well, there we see that under arsenic's action, these particles are determined to take on another relation. And, the new relation that they have taken on does not circulate with mine, does not compose themselves with mine. And I can say, "Oh, my God, I no longer have any blood!" Shortly after, I die. I've eaten an apple. You see…

Fine; this second comment had the sole purpose of saying, "Careful!" What does it mean, "a relation is destroyed"? Well, that doesn't prevent relations from having eternal truths. But "a relation is destroyed" means that it is no longer realized. There are no longer any particles to actualize the relation, that is, to furnish terms for the relation. Actualizing the relation, realizing

the relation, means furnishing terms for the relation, entirely relative terms, since these terms will be relations in their turn, but other sorts of relations. As a result, every relation is a relation of relations to infinity, the terms being simply the terms relative to a particular level of relation. This is a beautiful vision, a beautiful vision of the world! Substance is missing here, precisely, no more substance in this. There we have my second point. So, when I say out of convenience "one of my relations is decomposed or destroyed", there's no longer any problem. I'll say this out of convenience because it's faster than saying "this relation is no longer realized through particles." Fine, this is ok up to this point, right? Up to this point, it's crystal clear. Very good!

My third comment; this is going to get complicated. This is going to get complicated, and it's not my fault; it's necessary for this to get complicated. It has to get complicated because I am returning to my point of view: what defines my perseverance is the aggregate of communications of relations, notably between my constitutive relations; these never cease communicating. And "these never cease communicating" means that these never cease being decomposed from the most complex to the simplest and being recomposed from the simplest to the most complex. I never cease unmaking my bones and recreating them. There's a bony chronology that's much more important than the bony spatiality.

Well, what does this imply? This system of perseverance or of consistency, what does this imply? It's in this that something funny is implied because – I'm opening a parenthesis – You remember that, in the long introduction that I presented to situate this problem, I spoke of one of Spinoza's doctrines, parallelism [*in the 2 December 1980 session*], and I said some very simple things about parallelism -- I didn't want to consider it for itself – I said some very, very elementary things of the kind: well, you understand, a body is a mode of an attribute of substance, this attribute of substance being extension. A body is a mode of extension.

And you and me, or even all the things that we know, according to Spinoza, we aren't only bodies. In fact, we are dual modes. We are also souls. And what does that mean, a soul? For Spinoza, it's not difficult, a soul: it's a mode of thought. A body is a mode of extension; a soul is a mode of thought. And we are indissolubly body and soul. Spinoza is even going so far as to say, "each thing is animated", that is, each body has a soul.

What does that mean, each body has a soul? It means that for each mode of body-extension corresponds a mode of soul-thought. So, I am a body in extension, but I am a soul in thought, and thought is an attribute of God no less than extension is an attribute of God. Thus, I am soul and body. You see, you see, as a parenthesis, Spinoza's very beautiful vision, notably, there is no problem of the union of soul and body. Why? Because soul and body are strictly the same thing, under two different attributes. Soul and body are the same modification, in two modes. Soul and body are the same modification of substance, in two modes of different attributes. They are distinguished through the attribute, but this is the same modification. I will call "soul" a modification referring to the attribute "thought" and "body" the same modification referring to the attribute "extension". Hence, [we have] the idea of a parallelism of soul and body. What the body expresses within the attribute "extension," the soul expresses it within the attribute "thought".

If you understand this even in the slightest, hardly do we understand… That's what's so joyous in life: it means that as soon as we understand something, as soon as we've avoided a misunderstanding, we risk falling into another misunderstanding. [*Laughter*] For hardly have we understood this -- that, for Spinoza, soul and body were the same thing, and that body and soul expressed strictly the same thing – and we run the risk of having difficulties all over again. Because we almost want to say: Ah, fine, well since a body is defined through an aggregate of relations of movement and rest, a soul also will have relations of movement and rest… [*Pause*]

Listen to me closely: we really want to say that! Moreover, Spinoza says it sometimes. He says it sometimes: "Well yes indeed, there are parts of the soul as there are parts of the body, and the parts of the soul enter into relations entirely like parts of the body enter into relations." And he was right to say this because one has to speak as simply as possible. There are moments in which one has to speak like that, when this isn't exactly the problem that is being posed. This goes faster; this allows us better to outline another problem. But seriously, in all rigor, why can he not say this? To the point that even if he says it… [*Deleuze does not finish*] So indeed, we are not going to allow ourselves to correct Spinoza and say: here, he's wrong, he's wrong about his own thought. I am saying something entirely different. I am saying: he can seem to be saying that, but he doesn't really say it. He might seem to be saying that for a very simple reason: it's in order to go faster because the real problem he poses within that text is another problem. But, in fact, he cannot say it in all rigor, for a very simple reason – here, you should already provide me the answer in advance – he cannot say it for a very simple reason: it's that movement and rest are modes of extension. These belong to extension. Moreover, I can speak of a movement of the soul, but this is through metaphor… The soul's business is not movement. Movement and rest are a pulsion of bodies.

So, I can say – understand me – I can say: by virtue of parallelism, there must be something within thought that is, to thought, what movement and rest are to extension. But I cannot say: there is a movement and rest within thought as there is a movement and rest within extension. For movement and rest are not said of thought; this is said of extension. In all rigor, I cannot conclude about movement and rest, about relations of movement and rest such as they are presented within bodies situated within extension, I cannot conclude about them, infer about them, that there are therefore also movements and rest, relations of movement and rest within the soul that is situated within thought. So, even if he says it, even if he seems to say it, he only says it in jest – in the end, you understand me – in order to go quickly when this isn't the problem. When it is the problem, he indeed must say something else.

And what is he going to be able to say? Well, he tells us something very interesting. For I find in the book… [*Pause*] Which book? In the *Ethics*, book II, proposition 13, scholium (the section is called scholium), I read this: [*Pause*] "I will say generally" – he specifies – "I say generally," this is a general proposition. What does he say generally? "I say generally that the more a body is suited in relation to others for being active or passive…", "the more a body is suited in relation to others for being active or passive…" Grant me that this means: the more a body is suited to be with others, in relations – with other bodies – in relations of movement and rest. That is, the more a body is suited to undergo the effects of another body and to be the cause of an effect on

other bodies. I am active if I act on another body; I am passive if I received the action of another body.

So, according to what we've seen, this aptitude for being active or passive is exactly the aptitude that I have for entering into relations with exterior bodies, relations of movement and rest. Thus, I can transform the sentence without any basic modification: I am saying, in general, that the more a body is apt to have relations of movement and rest with other bodies… "The more its mind (*esprit*)", the more its mind, that is, its soul… The more its mind… -- in fact, for Spinoza, these are identical terms; he prefers to use the Latin term "mind", *mens*, rather than the term *anima* – The more a body is apt to be active or passive, that is, to have relations with others, "the more its mind is apt in relation to other minds to…", he doesn't say to be active or passive; he says, "to form perceptions of several things all at once", to form perceptions of several things all at once. Here, we have a true problem, it seems to me… [*Pause*]

He tells us formally: that which corresponds to action-passion within the body – or if you prefer, movement-rest… Within the soul, what is this? This is not even action-passion; this is "perception". In all rigor, the more a body… – and this, I believe that it's truly the basis (*fond*) here, I believe that Spinoza is saying the basis of his thought – what corresponds to the aggregate of actions and passions of a body within extension are the perceptions of the soul. So, what corresponds to relations of movement and rest within the body are perceptions of the soul. All at once, we tell ourselves: fine, what is happening? What does that mean?

You see, parallelism doesn't place into relation movement and rest within extension and movement and rest within the soul, but movement and rest within extension – movement and rest being modes of extension – and perception within the soul. As a result, parallelism has nothing to do with a… -- Already, we have more choice, that's what is so good – Parallelism has nothing to do with the way in which we usually interpret it, when we think that there are movements of the soul that correspond to movements of the body.

Spinoza doesn't say that at all. What corresponds to movements of the body are perceptions. You'll tell me: but these perceptions are in movement. Perhaps that will allow us to provide a meaning to a movement proper to the soul, perception… But this is because these are perceptions first. These are not movements first; these are perceptions. That there's a dynamism of perception is something else.

So… But at the same time, I imagine, someone could make an objection to me about this: but what are you up to… in meddling with this text? Because the text seems to say something very simple: "The more my body has relations of movements and rest, through which it enters into relation with exterior bodies, the more it perceives things." Someone will tell me: this is very simple. This is so simple; this is so simple. That means, well necessarily so, when a body has an effect on mine, I perceive the exterior body. This isn't more complicated than that, and then, what's the big deal (*et après*)? This is obvious. The table acts on me; I bump against it; I knock into the table; I perceive the table as colliding with me. Fine, where is the problem? And well, fine, good, the problem is there… What corresponds to a movement-rest within the body, once again, this is a perception within the soul.

Well, this seems so simple, but no! Because this is like earlier, if I have complex relations from the point of view of my body, this is also because I have very simple relations. The complex relation is composed through simpler relations, etc., to infinity. There is a system of circulation. If I have global perceptions that correspond to complex relations, notably, "I perceive the table," I really must have some elementary perceptions, or simpler ones. What are these elementary perceptions and simpler ones? There will have to be a circuit of communication of perceptions between them, and this circuit of communications will define perseverance in the soul.

What do I mean? Pay attention even more closely, and we are going to rest after, because you are wiped out. Well, sense what this means… Let's return to blood. And then we will see that it's indeed a question of something else than perception in the ordinary sense of the term. Chyle and lymph have relations that suit them. What does it mean, "chyle and lymph have relations that suit them"? That means that these relations are directly composed. For what reason are they directly composed? In order to constitute a third relation: blood. [*Pause*] Fine… All these relations insofar as I persevere are realized through particles. If they stopped being realized, I would be destroyed, and my blood would be destroyed. Fine… Imagine an instant, you are a lymph particle. That means [that] you realize a relation, or you enter into realization of a relation which is directly composed with the relation that the particles of chyle realize – or the opposite, I no longer know what I'm saying. Do you follow me?

What does that imply? It's that chyle has a power to discern lymph, lymph has a power to discern chyle. The particles of chyle and the particles of lymph are united to constitute blood. How would they be united if they didn't distinguish one another? If chyle had no power of discernment, what would prevent these particles from being united with particles of arsenic, whereas arsenic destroys the constitutive relation of chyle? The particles of chyle and the particles of lymph must have a power of reciprocal discernment… [*Interruption of the recording; end of cassette*] [1:01:59]

Part 2

Here we must indeed endow all particles, however small they may be, with a certain power that I call – this is convenient – a power of perception. When two relations are composed, the particles that realize this relation must, under this relation, have the power of discerning the other particles of the other relation with which the first relation is composed. The result of this discernment is that particles of lymph and chyle will go seeking each other out, if nothing prevents them [*Pause*] from joining and composing the blood relation.

In other words, a discernment in thought responds to the particles in extension. The particles, however humble they might be, particles of oxygen, hydrogen, etc. – Spinoza is elaborating a very prodigious chemical thought – the particles are modes of bodies, are modes of extension, granted. Modes of thought are perceptions. Every particle is animated; every particle has a soul; what is the soul of a particle? Is Spinoza here goofing around (*déconner*), getting delirious, with "everything has a soul"? What does he mean? He means something extremely rigorous,

something very, very positivist; I don't know if it's true. We'll see later; we're going to try to situate this.

But, in any case, he means something very rigorous when he says that everything has a soul. This means: each body, however simple that it might be, even the most elementary particle, you cannot separate it from a power of discernment that constitutes its soul. For example, a hydrogen particle combines with an oxygen particle, or else two hydrogen particles combine with an oxygen particle. No doubt, chemical affinities are the simplest case of molecular discernment. There is a molecular discernment. Well, molecular discernment is what you'll call a perception, just as you call "mode of extension" molecular movement and rest. Molecular movement and rest are only possible in extension to the extent that, at the same time, a discernment in thought is exerted. Everything is animated; every particle has a soul, that is, each particle discerns. A hydrogen particle doesn't confuse, literally, doesn't confuse an oxygen particle with a carbon particle. This is the basis of chemistry.

So, I insist on this because here I am sure that I'm right. This is not at all… Spinoza's thought is not at all geometric; I believe strongly that it's a thought… It's not even a thinking [like] physics (*une pensée physique*). Each time that I read his theory of bodies, I really get the impression of a chemical or pre-chemical thinking. This is why in his letters, for those among you who… What would confirm, what would support me factually in saying this, is that in his letters, he has a very long correspondence with a great chemist of the era; he is enormously interested in the chemical composition of the body. You will see; this is a series of letters with an English chemist named [Robert] Boyle, where he speaks considerably of the composition of saltpeter. How is saltpeter constituted, and what is it that creates…, what is a saltpeter particle?

So, in short, I'd say that discernment responds to movement-rest on the side of the body, and it is discernment that constitutes the thing's soul. You see, this becomes quite simple, saying "every particle, however small it might be, has a soul"; this solely means: within extension, [the soul] moves, it receives movement, and it yields movements; it's in movement, and in this way, even in thought, it is in perception, it's in a state of discernment. In other words, how would we say what this is today? No doubt, we'd say lots of things. We could say that it is potentialized, that it's valorized, that it has valences. That's what the soul is: it has potentialities, it has affinities. Or even, we would emerge from the domain of chemical affinities in order to say what?

Here, today, I am insisting, and I only do so with considerable repugnance, because I do not at all want to say that Spinoza anticipated things that he couldn't have anticipated. The precursor theme, lots of people have already stated this, the precursor theme is one of the most dangerous themes ever, and in fact, we realize each time that this is complicated. You know, above all we must not succumb to the idea, "Ah! Evolutionism! It was already present in Empedocles, etc." These are stupidities in the end. This is not at all what I mean.

But, on the other hand, if I think that, in fact, there are never any precursors, that it's completely idiotic to try finding people who might have already proposed a kind of evolutionism before Darwin, etc., on the other hand, I strongly believe that a phenomenon occurs in the history of thought that is very, very odd: that someone, with some determined means – in Spinoza's case,

with concepts – discovers something in his era, which in another domain will only be discovered much later and with completely different means. As a result, he isn't at all a precursor. But there are phenomena of resonances, and resonance doesn't only occur between different domains during the same era. That can occur between a domain, for example, in the seventeenth century and a domain in the twentieth century.

For, in fact, according to what I am saying, Spinoza fully participates in a theory that – he isn't the only one to support it – this theory of minute perceptions, molecular perceptions. Leibniz, Spinoza's contemporary, will create an admirable theory, and one that's much more developed, much more explicit than Spinoza's, concerning minute perceptions or molecular perceptions. [*Pause*] Fine… And this, they create this with their philosophical concepts, their mathematical concepts, their chemical concepts of the era. They are not precursors in the least. But I am saying that today, in the twentieth century, an absolutely different domain: we are informed – and we're almost spared nothing about this – about this relatively recent discipline, molecular biology. And molecular biology is famous for its use of a certain information science model. And what does that mean today – so, I'm opening a parenthesis with all this – What does "information science model" in molecular biology mean today? The genetic code is interpreted in terms of information. And in this case, what receives information? What transmits information? The genetic code contains what is called "information" in quotes. This [information] is transmitted through certain protein-type bodies. This [information] is received by bodies, by molecules, etc., that are composed, that compose more and more complex aggregates based on this information.

What does this informative, informational conception of the genetic code imply? It implies this: that at several levels, there is – and this is the very word used by certain authors today – a power of discernment of molecules. Power of discernment goes quite far. Because sometimes it's chemical: a molecule discerns the molecule with which it has chemical affinities. But, sometimes the power of "election-discernment" overflows the chemical affinity, and the entire current theory of enzymes – you see, enzymes, such an important thing from the point of view of genetic code – the enzymes are bodies or substances -- well finally, not substances, so we might remain Spinozist – they are bodies that literally choose something, as is said, a body that is going to be used as their substratum – it matters little in what sense this is taken --: enzyme, substratum. I am taking this solely as an abstract example. And the enzyme has the power to discern its substratum. Moreover, this power of discernment is extraordinary since between two bodies called isomers, let's say between two bodies that are extremely close to each other chemically, the enzyme always elects only one, one of the two isomers and not the other. That's odd, this power of discernment that corresponds to the particle's action.

I'd imagine that Spinoza would say, this is what he'd call the soul. A particle's power of discernment is the soul, or its mind (*esprit*). This isn't important; we can call it something else. We can call it information, for example, why not? That wouldn't be awkward; Spinoza wouldn't mind at all calling that information. This has no importance. At the era, it was called soul; it's a question of words, you understand.

But, don't remember Spinoza as this author that talks to you about soul because readers of his era, who said, that Spinoza, what a strange guy, he's completely materialist, so obviously, Spinoza answered, as a countermove: "Listen, open my book; I never stop talking about the soul or the mind…" -- Obviously he had an interest in not getting noticed – But what matters is not if someone is talking about the soul or the mind; what matters is what he places beneath the word. I can make declarations about God and still get burned; this is even what happened during the Renaissance, generally. People never stopped talking about God; only what they placed beneath all that, this was what caused the Church to wince in horror, saying: "But what have they done with our God?" I can speak about the soul at great length, I can present one course after another on the soul; everything depends on what I put into this. And I still must have a reason for calling that "soul".

You see what Spinoza's reason was, to wit: if discernment is what responds in thought, in the thought attribute; if that's what responds in the thought attribute, to what is movement and rest in the extension attribute, there is every reason to say: the particle, insofar as it has rest and movement, refers to extension, but insofar as it discerns, it refers to thought. And the particle, insofar as it refers to thought, is soul. This is a marvel; this is beautiful, so beautiful.

So, this, I am saying it only very quickly because we haven't yet reached it, but what I want to suggest to [Georges] Comtesse is that… My idea would be that it's only to the extent that this theme of discernment appears that we will be able to understand how perseverance is going to become a tendency to persevere, for it's in this way, in fact, that I can say: insofar as [the particle] discerns the particle with which it can be composed, a particle tends to be joined (*s'unir*). Here, the notion of tendency results directly from the particle's power of discernment. The particle tends, within extension, it tends toward something within extension, because it discerns within thought. It's power of discernment that is going to determine movement as a tendency toward movement.

But in the end, here we are, here's the point we've reached. So, there will be this discernment that results in… There is more: this discernment is going to become extremely complicated. I return to my examples. Up until now, when I was speaking of arsenic and blood, I was placing myself on blood's side, that is, on my side. I was saying: arsenic decomposes the constitutive relation of blood. Let's situate ourselves on the side of arsenic. I'm an arsenic particle. – You have a domain here of great richness in imaginary experience – Constitute yourself there, within your imagination, as a particle of this or that, and your point of view is going to change. All of you here, we are all arsenic particles, except some of us. [*Laughter*] You see that there is only one remaining here; we are all arsenic particles. We are managing… And we find ourselves within another person's blood, and there, insofar as being a particle, we find… What do we find? We find other particles that obey a blood relation. So, we're here, fine. And we have the power to decompose, but this is not a global power of decomposing, one always has to decompose in a very precise way when one destroys; when we decompose, it's minute. We can imagine two kinds of poisons, one that attacks white blood cells, the other that attacks red blood cells. That must exist within nature, as nature is so rich…

So, in any case, even within relations of decomposition, there is indeed a discernment. I suppose; I don't know anything at all about it. I am imagining, poison – I call it that; I don't dare say "arsenic" because this is a word that exists – Imagine an imaginary word: that poison destroying red blood cells obviously has to recognize them. It has to recognize them in the blood. In a certain way, it's a counter-affinity with them. Very good. The power of discernment extends as far as particles' movements and rest extend. It seems that we've gained a lot. Here's what I can say: the actions and reactions of bodies are inseparable from the discernment of souls. And there is no movement and rest within the body without there also being discernment in souls, discernment for good and for ill, for the best and for the worst, for the best in the case of compositions of relations, for the worst in the case of destruction of relations. Particles recognize each other; this is how they are animated, as Spinoza says. Particles recognize each other through the relations, and under these relations, they are realized. There we are…

Hence, I can move on to a fourth point. Once again, this appears to me very close to today's information theory. Simply put, information theory returns, it seems to me, to notions of this kind while giving them an entirely new content thanks, precisely, to techniques of information. And the difference is enormous.

I am passing on to a fourth point of view, unless you'd like a break? [*Beside Deleuze, someone (perhaps Claire Parnet) says*: No, no…] A short break? [No, no] No break? [No, no] … No break… Of course, [*Laughter*] there are some here that need a break. [*Pause*] So, a short break, ok? A very short break… [*Pause*]

All this, [*Pause, as people get settled*] all this should give us some starting points. I mean by this that I don't want to approach the entirety of the question here, at the moment, but it ought to give us some principles for problems like those of what illness is, or what death is, for Spinoza, you see, because finally this whole story of modes… We are all modes, that is, we are not beings; we are manners of being. This is what you must not lose sight of.

But, generally, other philosophers… Other philosophers were always quite tormented by Spinoza. In all the history of philosophy, Spinoza is the one, I believe, who sometimes created the most enthusiasm, who created a kind of enthusiasm that, nonetheless, the others didn't produce, and sometimes created the most irritation. And he is irritating because… he irritates, yes… And the people that he irritated greatly, the Cartesians, the Thomists, finally, everyone… At the start, he irritates all of those for whom beings are substances; all of those for whom "be-ings" are necessarily substances, these [philosophers] are eminently irritated by Spinoza. And they are going to challenge him with a kind of diabolical bet. They tell him: "Listen, Spinoza, it's one thing or the other: if you say that beings aren't substances, although you will try to hide it, you are necessarily even saying with this that beings, you and me, are nothing but dreams, God's dreams, that we are imaginary creatures, that we are phantasms. Or else, at the extreme, if you offer us a being, since in any case this isn't a being of substance, you will only have the choice between this and that: either you will makes us into kinds of geometrical beings, or else into phantasms from the imagination."

And it's very odd that Leibniz, for example, in his critique of Spinoza, of Spinozism, Leibniz being obsessed by Spinoza as were many thinkers at this period, he never stops saying, sometimes: "You see what Spinoza makes of creatures. He assimilates creatures; he gives them exactly the status of geometrical figures." The geometrical figure, in any case, brings the two together, because if I consider the geometrical figure traced in sand, it's like a phantasm of the imagination. If I consider it in itself, this is a series of necessary consequences that result from axioms, from principles. So, Spinoza is told: by refusing the quality of substance for "be-ings", the status of substance, necessarily you no longer have any choice except between assimilating them to simple geometrical figures or assimilating them to dreams from the imagination. So, from both approaches, you refuse them all their own consistency. Henceforth, we will only either be dreams of the unique substance, or necessary properties resulting from the unique substance.

And Spinoza remains quite calm. He judges that he has found an entirely different path. There is a consistency of modes, and nonetheless, modes are not substances. And this consistency is not substantial; it's a consistency of relations. So, at the point we've reached, you understand, all that was a bit theoretical, [so] what changes practically? Obviously, this is why I am coming to this fourth point, that specifically, what changes practically, well, it's not in the same way. If you present yourself as a manner of being – and this is not a question for reflection --, one has to have a taste for that; it's a matter of sensibility.

There are substantial sensibilities, at that time, those having a substantial sensibility… I dream really of creating a thing on philosophical sensibility. Sensibilities, that's how you'll discover authors that you'll like. Now, I am not trying to tell you, "Be Spinozists", because I could care less. What I do care about is that you discover what you need, that each of you might find authors that you need, that is, authors that have something to say to you, and to whom you have something to say. And I am saying that with this choice, what torments me in philosophy, is this: in the same way that we speak about artistic sensibility, for example, a musical sensibility, etc., and indeed, musical sensibility is undifferentiated. It doesn't only consist in saying, "I love music"; it also means: I'm concerned, strangely, with things that I myself don't understand; I am particularly concerned with a particular [musician], a particular one. Ah, for me, it's… I suppose, for me, it's Mozart… Mozart says something to me. It's odd, this… Because for everyone, that's not it. There are others who will say "no".

In philosophy, it's the same thing, there's a philosophical sensibility, hence someone … It's a matter of molecules here as well. In this, if we apply everything we just said earlier, fine, well, it happens that someone's molecules will be attracted, will already in some way be Cartesian… There are Cartesians… Good, I understand, a Cartesian is someone who has indeed read Descartes well and who wrote books on Descartes, but that isn't very interesting. There are Cartesians, nonetheless, at a better level. They consider that Descartes whispers something in the ear to them, something fundamental for life, including the most modern life. Good, I… I take up my example: really, Descartes says nothing to me, nothing, nothing, nothing… He drops from my hands; he pisses me off (*me fait chier*). [*Laughter*] And nonetheless, I'm not going to say that he's a poor slob; obviously, he's got genius, Descartes. Good, fine, he's got genius; for myself,

that's not my concern. He never spoke to me at all. Fine. There we are, so how do we explain these matters of sensibility? Good… Hegel… Hegel? What is that? Good.

What does that mean, these molecular relations? I am making a case here for molecular relations with the authors that you are reading. Find what you like. Never spend a second criticizing something or someone. Never criticize, never, never, never. And if someone criticizes you, you say, "fine, move along", [*Laughter*] eh? Nothing to be done. Find your molecules. If you don't find your molecules, you cannot even read. That's what reading is: it's finding your very own molecules. They are in books, your cerebral molecules. They are in books, and these books, you have to find them. I find that nothing is sadder for gifted young people, in principle, than growing old without ever having found the books that they really liked, or never finding any, in the end, and then all at once, playing the scholar about all books. That's a funny thing; it makes you bitter, you know, this kind of intellectual bitterness that takes things out against others for your not having been able to find what you loved. So… The air of superiority that one acquires by dint of being stupid…. All that is unfortunate. But you've got to have a relation, at the extreme, only with what you love. [*Laughter*] Good, so…

And so, what relation is there between sensibility in itself and philosophical sensibility? What relation is there as well between sensibility in itself and musical sensibility? When I say, for example, "Ah for me, in music, above all I place…", stupid kinds of expression, idiotic kinds of expression, but that are easy, expressing what people say… When someone tells me, for example, "Above everyone, I place Mozart…" What is it in his sensibility that vibrates to Mozarat? What makes me say… and then, this gets extremely differentiated, a particular moment in Mozart, above all, above all the other moments in Mozart… "Ah, the little kettle drums there, ah, the little kettle drums… Now that's music!" It's really odd…

Philosophy is the same. Being Spinozist means… -- That doesn't at all mean having Spinoza's doctrine – That means having had this feeling, having vibrated to certain texts by Spinoza, saying: Ah yes, nothing more can be said. So, in this, philosophy is part of literature and art in general; it yields exactly the same emotions. So, I am saying, you understand in this story of sensibility, it's obvious that here, it's not… Forget the complicated words, but if you live like a substance, like being, it's a certain manner of living. You say, myself, I feel like a being. There's nothing wrong with that. I'll tell you simply: Good, fine, drop Spinoza; don't read Spinoza… Or stop coming to this course, it's not worth the trouble since… This might be of interest to you then, but in very, very exterior way. Your real interest… You're wasting your time, so your real interest would be to go listen to things about people or listen to people who truly think that they are beings. Once again, that means something; it's an entire sensibility, and even quite varied, since that could perhaps be an Aristotelian sensibility, perhaps a Cartesian sensibility, perhaps a Christian sensibility, all sorts of very different sensibilities that result in experiencing oneself a bit like beings.

So, doing philosophy will mean doing philosophy following your taste. If you experience yourself as a being, henceforth this comes down to saying: "What does being mean?", in the sense of "I am a being." You must get informed about all this. You must read people who have

said this. If you have the slightest emotion when faced with Spinoza, I have a feeling that it's as a function of this: that in your sensibility, there is something in you that makes you tell yourself, even if you aren't thinking about this: "No, I don't experience myself as a being." So, fine… Do I experience myself as a dream? That could happen, but at that point, I'd say: Spinoza is not what you need. If you experience yourself as a dream, there are certainly some great authors that have lived a bit like a dream. You have to find them. I assume there are some great… some great… some great Germans who have truly lived like a dream, some great German Romantics, yes indeed. Go look at them; they're what you need…

You understand, I don't believe… I think about an author that I suppose many among you deeply like. But why, why does Beckett really represent an entire sensibility in our era? He invented this sensibility; he gave it its literary expression. One cannot say that Beckett's characters experience themselves as beings. How do they experience themselves? They don't experience themselves like Spinoza either. It's difficult to say that they're Spinozists. There are so many manners of living unless they experience themselves a bit like a Spinozist, to some extent, I don't know. They don't experience themselves as dreams either.

In any case, I would define the Spinozist sensibility as a sensibility such that I experience myself as a manner of being. I experience myself as a mode, that is, as a manner of being. It's very different between being a being or a manner of being. So, at that point, I can sense that Spinoza has something to tell me, if that interests me, concerning the question: But what does "a manner of being" mean? And what is this, living in a way that's a manner of being? Living as a manner of being? And what is life and death for a manner of being? And what is illness and health for a manner of being? Etc. This must not be the same thing as for a being. It's in this way that all this has practical consequences. So…

Hence my question, and there… Oh… [*Pause*] All this snapping [*of tape recorders, cassettes being changed*]. [*Laughter*] Doesn't yours work? It's broken? [*Laughter*] [*Pause*]

I'm trying to create a kind of typology of cases. What might happen that's bad? You recall, in my first point, I had in fact said: What is it that happens that's bad, from my point of view? What happens to me that's bad, in general, is when one of my relations is destroyed. That's something bad because, in fact, that suppresses my perseverance. [*Pause*]

[*The tape recorder snapping continues*] But this is hallucinating… [*Pause*] I have the impression of being in a Target (*Prisunic*). [*Laughter*] This is straight out of Jerry Lewis… [*Laughter*]

Parnet: You really think so? [*Pause*]

Deleuze: So, yes… I am creating a kind of study of cases with this general formula: what's bad is when one of my relations is destroyed. And here we have the simplest case, to which I won't return because… we already know it well now. Adam and the apple, or arsenic and blood. Quite simple: an exterior body, under its own relation, destroys one of my relations. You see, the expression is quite simple; it's quite precise. So, all or part of my relations are destroyed. There we have a first case of something bad. And my question starts from there: isn't this the simplest case? Isn't there grounds for considering other cases, nonetheless, and more complicated ones?

I'd say, a second case… Imagine this: my relations, in general, are… -- this is very delicate, all that; this is meant to have you sense that, in fact, the second case already bites into the first – in general, my relations are conserved. All or part, the most of, most of my relations are conserved. But here we are: they've lost their mobility or their communication. This is another case… This can happen… I am telling myself, concretely, this happens: all my relations are conserved generally and from the outside. But they've lost this kind of property that belongs to them insofar as they are relations of movement and rest, notably their property of communicating with one another. We've seen this, and it's why I was insisting so much, in my [point] "two" today, in my second section, on this communication… No, in my [point] "one", in my starting point today… I was saying, necessarily, relations that compose me are perpetually in communication with each other, since my complex relations never stop being decomposed into the simplest, and the simplest never stop recomposing the most complex. It's even in this way that I have a duration. And here, imagine, most of my relations are conserved. But everything occurs as if they were solidified; they no longer communicate very well, or certain ones no longer communicate with others.

In what way is this interesting? Because that interests me, I don't know why, but… I tell myself: the first case, the apple and arsenic, there, the poison… It was quite simple. I return to my theme, my problem, which was to derive a theory of illness from Spinoza. I'd say, this is a very simple case: it's illness by intoxication. It's illness of intoxication. [*Pause*] I'd say, these are illnesses of action. These are illnesses of action. In this sense, a toxic body, since its relation does not compose itself with mine, acts upon mine, thus destroys my relation. A foreign body acting on me in bad conditions equates to illness of action, or illness of intoxication. You see, all viral illnesses, bacterial illnesses, etc., are of this type. [*Pause*]

My second case, it seems to me, is already entirely different. There can be an intervention of bacteria and viruses, but this is no longer the essential. There can be an exterior agent, but this time, this exterior agent is defined less by the fact that it would destroy my relation – it destroys certain ones if necessary, you see that there are fringes between the two cases. -- But it's less this that counts, it's less the relations that it destroys, than the interior communication of my relations that is compromised. If necessary, each relation continues to function, but the phenomena of co-functioning, of metabolism, of transformation of relations with one another no longer occur. I'd say that for you here, it's an entirely different domain, illnesses of metabolism, or of communication, that affect the communication of relations between them. And at the extreme, understand, I can have -- At the extreme! All these are cases; I'm trying to indicate diverse cases – At the extreme, I am able to have conserved all my relations, but in fact, I am already dead. It's a kind of premature death. Here I am still breathing, fine… My blood circulates, fine… But there is no longer any communication between the circulation of blood and the respiratory circuit; it no longer works, or at least, communication works poorly. The oxygenation of the blood no longer occurs.

Fine, so let's group this… There's a word, in fact, I see… the word among words in modern science, in biology, it's… Which would refer back to this domain of communication of relations that is decomposed and recomposed at the core of my persistence; it's what would be called,

today, the interior milieu and metabolism. So, I'll say, this second case of illness are illnesses of interior milieu and metabolism, very different from the others. And this is very interesting because, at the extreme, I was saying… hence, my call for you to read two texts from book IV [of the *Ethics*] that I indicated to you, this so very beautiful text by Spinoza that consists in telling us: "But you know, we can even, at least apparently, stay the same, and in fact, we are already dead." And this question that seemed to be raised by this text, about what is called artificial life support – you maintain a respiratory circuit, but the blood circulation is screwed. The electroencephalogram shows that there's no longer any cerebral communication. You maintain a poor guy; you maintain a cadaver in a living state -- The recent case of Tito, the recent case of Franco, etc. – You maintain kinds of articulated systems that have absolutely nothing living any more, but you maintain them, like that, simply… You maintain each circuit, but there is no longer any metabolism, that is, there is no longer any communication of circuits between them. There you have a second case of illness, it seems to me, entirely… [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

Third case: the essential aspect of my relations subsists – You see, we are moving into more and more complicated cases – The essential aspect of my relations subsists, at least in appearance, from the point of view of movement and rest. And my second case was: the relations subsist generally, generally, but they've lost their suppleness, that is, their metabolism or power of communicating, their communications within the interior milieu. Here, I imagine another case: the essential aspect of my relations subsists, apparently, but what is lost is the power of discernment over exterior bodies. [*Pause*] That is, … What does this case mean? I am breathing, yes, but I have greater and greater difficulty decomposing air, that is, capturing the oxygen necessary. Another case, you see, my respiratory relation subsists, but it subsists in conditions such that it lacks discernment, and I have greater and greater difficulty uniting myself, literally, uniting myself with the oxygen molecules that I need. In other words what is compromised here are the reactions that result from relations. In fact, relations can orient reactions only through the intermediary of molecular discernment.

I ask myself the question: couldn't we say that here, there's a third group of illnesses, illnesses of intolerance? This would even be an interesting schema of illnesses of intolerance, because what happens when someone has an intolerance, an allergy, for example, to dust, to dust? Or else, what happens in asthmatic breathing? All these are very difficult subjects. Couldn't we say this: my pulmonary relation indeed subsists, but what isn't functioning well is the power of discernment, specifically the discernment of oxygen molecules, the molecular discernment. The oxygen molecules, there's something that snaps inside them. Perhaps I unite myself, even in the air, perhaps my system is sufficiently misfunctioning for me to unite myself, in the air, with molecules that are not precisely oxygen? But this would place us perhaps within another case… In any case, here, this is the reaction; these are illnesses of reaction. This groups all the illnesses that have gained greater and greater importance following discoveries connected to what's been called stress, which are not illnesses of action, or of the intoxication type, but are illnesses of reaction, in which what constitutes the illness is the reaction. You see, this would make a third group of illnesses.

And so, I've kept for the end, obviously, the most beautiful, the most troubling one. Let's go farther still. This time, what's broken is that my very interior, notably… It's a new step. Already at level three, there was an affection of power of discernment, of power of molecular discernment. Here, at the level of this final case, of my fourth case, this is the power of internal discernment that is going to be broken. Not the power of external discernment, but the power of internal discernment. What do I call internal discernment? It means molecules of my body recognize, distinguish molecules… No, excuse me, it means that molecules of my body, under a given relation, distinguish other molecules of my body under a given relation and distinguish them as belonging to a one and same body. This is what we've seen; this is constitutive of persistence. For example, my pulmonary molecules recognize, in a certain way, discern my blood molecules.

So, this time, you see the third case put into play, put into question the power of exterior discernment; here, I am speaking of power of interior discernment, notably: in my organism, under all the relations that compose it, the particles that realize these relations recognize one another. This is the domain of perception, assuming this time that it's this regime. There you have certain molecules, under a given relation, going to engage with other molecules of mine under a relation as foreign ones, as foreign ones from which they are going to decompose the relation. [*Pause*]

And this is why I invited you to read this second text from book IV about an astonishing thing, something that appears to me very, very strange, in which Spinoza says: but this is what suicide is, that is, he proposes a typically noxious (*maladif*) model of suicide. Here, I believe that he sees something so profound that this touches on points… [*Deleuze does not finish*] You understand what he is telling us about suicide; he says it's very simple – and here, I didn't need to force the texts; if you read this during vacation, as it was your task, these two texts at least – these two texts on suicide are quite astonishing since this consists in telling us: well, yes, certain parts of ourselves, under a relation, behave as if they had become the enemy of other parts of ourselves, under other relations. As a result, we witness this astonishing thing: a body for which an entire part is going to tend toward suppressing the others, as if it took literally, if you will, the suicide gesture of, for example, I'm turning my own hand against myself by shooting myself with a revolver or something like that. It's like a rebellion of the parts, of certain parts, that's going to lead to a destruction of all the parts. Never have I seen anyone think of suicide in as intense and as molecular a manner.

For, in the end, when we read a text today, I was telling you the last time, we have an entirely different idea. But if Spinoza found only suicide to invoke, it's because the biology of his era didn't give him the means. But today, when medicine speaks to us and discovers this fourth type of illnesses, which is neither of intoxication, nor of metabolism, nor of intolerance, but is called auto-immune illnesses, and which seem precisely to promise a brilliant future, that is, a very great intuition and of discovering all sorts of other maladies that we didn't know very well how to treat, [these] belong precisely to this new category. What are auto-immune illnesses? Well, I was telling you, if we have an immune system, the immune system is defined today as follows: it's precisely molecules, genetic molecules, that have the power to discern other molecules as

belonging to my body. This is what biologists currently call precisely something like self-molecules (*molécules du soi*), when [the biologists] begin using almost metaphysical concepts. These are self-molecules since they have for biological function to recognize my component molecules. This is the immune system. So, they are going to sort out component molecules and foreign molecules. They are notably going to bring about phenomena of rejection in grafts: Ah, this, it's not mine, it's not mine, so throw it out!

And I was telling you, suppose that the immune system, in one way or another, is attacked (*atteint*). What happens? There are only two cases possible. What is going to be attacked is the power to repulse foreign molecules. This is one possible case. Or else, what is going to be attacked, and this is going to be even more odd, is going to be the power to recognize its own molecules. There you have my body that no longer recognizes, in certain zones, in certain parts, its own molecules. So, it treats them as intruders, as intruding foreign molecules.

What kind of illness is this? The auto-immune illnesses are illnesses of perception. Biologists currently will say that these are illnesses of information. This constitutes an enormous group of illnesses, enormous right now. One type of relatively known auto-immune illness is multiple sclerosis, which is an extremely serious illness. And it's a very new conception of the illness, and why? Because, at the extreme, this is what? [Georges] Canguilhem devoted a text to this, to these illnesses, but he hasn't yet… It's a text that precedes recent developments on auto-immune illnesses. And he says, what does this come down to? There are a dozen very beautiful pages by Canguilhem where he says, well yes, what does this come down to? This comes down to treating the illness in an entirely new manner, he pretends, notably, the illness as error, illness as genetic error. This is a certain model of illness that is valid for certain illnesses. Illness as genetic error is nonetheless a very interesting concept, which in fact groups together all the current data of biology and information science. The connecting point of biology and information science today is this group of illnesses that can be considered as genetic errors, that is, errors in relation to the genetic code. Either – so here, they are infinite – Either the genetic code itself creates an error, or its transmission creates levels of error. You see that this is already a very, very varied domain.

In any case, illness as error, what does the error consist of? Here, I don't need to force this to say: well yes, for Spinoza, there is indeed an entire type of illnesses that are errors. What does the error consist of? What is affected? It's the system of molecular perceptive discernment. And the illness consists of this: a difficulty of perception, notably, here you have my molecules of discernment beginning to create and multiply errors.

And today, how do we interpret old age? A word for the concept of old age has been formed, given its great biological importance, which is senescence. How is it interpreted? Among the interpretations of senescence, of old age, of the aging process, today one of the most interesting ones is this: it's a hypothesis, like this, but it appears to me one of the most beautiful ones among the specialists of senescence, of the aging process. They say: errors, in the sense of genetic errors, errors of transmission in the information of the genetic code, the cells are constantly created, but these errors simply are compensated. So here, errors and the little disturbances owing to errors of reading of the genetic code are constant. But they say, a cell, well, it has an

average of errors, there's an average of possible errors. And then, there's a moment in which a threshold is reached. And it's when the threshold of possible errors is reached that, at that moment, there really is something irreducible, notably a phenomenon of senescence, of aging of the cell, as if it collapsed under the number of its errors. Pathological error is a beautiful concept.

So, you understand, we mustn't exaggerate, eh? When Spinoza said: "But evil is error," he cannot completely mean that. But when it's a philosopher who really created an entire explicit theory of perception, of the minute perception, of the power of discernment of particles, the particles create errors, they no longer recognize each other. And old age would be this crossing over the threshold of a cell's tolerance, of a particle's tolerance, in relation to these errors. So, there we have a fourth type of illnesses, illnesses of error or of perception.

And so, what appear to me very odd, in the text to which I referred you, is the way in which Spinoza brings suicide back to an illness of error, specifically: the entire zone of particles, under given relations no longer recognizes the other particles under their relations as being my own, or being their own, and turns against them. As a result, one would have to say about auto-immune illnesses, literally, that they are organic suicides, [*Pause*] just like suicides are kinds of psychic auto-immune illnesses. Yes, fine… There you have what I wanted to say about this possible schema that gives us the concept of illness, the status precisely of modes and manners of being.

And so this works out well because – I'm going to stop soon – this works out well because we now nonetheless dispose of a better – how to say this? – a better interpretation grid in order to return entirely to the correspondence between Blyenbergh and Spinoza.[25] For now that we have access to this aggregate, I remind you of Blyenbergh's immediate reaction, and the whole correspondence, I hope, is going to take on a different meaning for us more concretely. For Blyenbergh, from the point of view of sensibility, this is precisely – I believe that this is someone who profoundly experiences himself – no one is going to make him budge from this -- Blyenbergh does experience himself as a being. And this is why that all of Spinozism at once attracts him as something very, very strange and repulses him quite deeply. And he interrogated Spinoza in a demanding way, on the mode of: Well, come on, what does all that mean? Oh right, you aren't a being? And the entire topic of good and evil, it's here, with his attitude, and on the level of the grid that I proposed to you today that we must resituate this topic.

And on this level, here we have, it seems to me, Blyenbergh making two very strong objections. The two strong objections – you're going to sense that they are completely linked with everything that we discussed today – I'd say, the first one concerns nature in general. It consists of saying: your modal point of view, from the point of view of such a conception of modes, you won't be able to work your way out of this: nature can only be chaos. You remember that Spinoza just defined nature in general as an aggregate of all the relations that are composed and decomposed, not only from my own point of view, but from all points of view.

Blyenbergh's retort, which seems quite interesting: what are you talking about there? This nature, then, is pure chaos! Why is it pure chaos? Because you'll notice that each time a body acts on another, there is always composition and decomposition at the same time. It's not on this level that I could say there is good and bad. Why? Because there necessarily is composition and

decomposition, both within each other. If arsenic acts on my body, it's a case of what's bad; it decomposes several of my relations, but why? Because it determines my particles to enter under another relation. With this other relation, arsenic's relation is composed, so there is not only decomposition, there's composition as well, in the case of poisoning. My organism dies, but precisely… [*Interruption of the recording*] [2:04:12]

Part 3

… For example, I am eating, and I say it's good. What am I in the process of eating when I'm eating beef or wheat? I decompose the relation of the particles under which they belong to wheat, and as I say, I incorporate them, that is, I submit them to my own relation. Here as well, there is decomposition and composition. But I never cease decomposing and recomposing; moreover, I can hardly imagine that I could have a composition that wouldn't lead to or have decompositions as its reverse or flip side.

So, nature is the aggregate of decompositions as much as of recompositions. And I could never distinguish pure compositions and decompositions. They exist entirely within each other. So, nature is pure chaos. And in fact, when Spinoza had said, "be careful, there is neither good nor evil," there's good and bad; but there's good and bad – he had specified this – there's good and bad, from my point of view, that is, from the point of view of a determined body. But, from the point of view of nature in general, there's neither good nor evil, but there is neither good nor bad either. Any composition implies decompositions; any decomposition implies compositions. This is chaos! And [Blyenbergh's] objection is very, very strong. How would nature not be chaos?

And there's Blyenbergh's second objection. Blyenbergh says: "This time, fine, I place myself in the point of view of the point of view," that is, of the point of view of a precise body, for example, mine, [where] there's good and bad. What's bad is that which decomposes my relations; what's good is that which is composed with my relations.

So, fine, there's good and bad, from the point of view of a body. He will distinguish arsenic and nourishment. Arsenic, bad; nourishment, good. But, a new objection from Blyenbergh, you'll see that it's very different: that gives no objective content to the notions of vice and virtue. That gives no objective content to the notions of vice and virtue since if you distinguish arsenic and nourishment, this is because one agrees with you and the other doesn't agree with you. And are you going to say that vice is what doesn't agree with you, and that virtue is what agrees with you? In fact, morality has always told us the opposite, to wit: for virtue, a difficult effort was necessary to attain it, that is, it didn't particularly agree with you, and on the contrary, vice could very well agree with me, but that didn't make it any less vice. In other words, morality begins from the moment that one doesn't assimilate vice and virtue into simple tastes.

Hence, Blyenbergh's objection: you only have a criterion of taste to distinguish actions, and you, Spinoza, if you abstain from committing crime, if you abstain from committing crimes, it's solely because they would have a bad taste for you. And in fact, Spinoza himself had said in an earlier letter: "I abstain from committing crimes because these horrify my nature." But this is completely immoral! Abstaining from committing crimes because this horrifies your nature is

not what morality asks of you. Morality begins from the moment in which it tells you to abstain from committing crimes even if you want to. Because, what assures me that Spinoza's nature is going to continue to be horrified by committing crimes? Hence, Spinoza's even stranger statement, what does it mean when, at the end of his correspondence, he says: "If someone saw that committing crimes agreed with his essence, or killing himself did, that person would indeed be wrong not to kill himself or not to commit crime"?

So, both of Blyenbergh's objections, you see that they are very different and that they are quite strong. And, to understand how Spinoza is going to be able to attempt a response to these objections, I believe that we simply must make a final – after this, I'm done – a final reorganization. This final reorganization is a concrete reorganization because we may get lost in all this; it's very subtle. It's easy to understand, but it's very subtle.

So, let's return to some examples of evil, and in what way does this indeed concern the same domain about which Spinoza is speaking to us, concretely? I am choosing three incontestable examples of evil: theft, there we have evil; crime is evil; and an example that runs through all the manuals of morality and theology during that era, adultery. What interests me… I am choosing these three examples because Spinoza chooses them in his correspondence with Blyenbergh, and these are very concrete examples. And all that I am asking in finishing up for today is this: in what way do these – theft, crime, adultery -- concern everything that we've discussed today? Listen to what Spinoza tells him: So, what is not good in these? Fine, I am speaking like everyone: this is evil. What is evil in crime? Well, what's evil, says Spinoza, is quite simple; here, there aren't many problems. By my act, I decompose the constitutive relations of another body. That is: I kill someone; so, I decompose the constitutive relations of another body. You see, this is interesting for crime because this appears more difficult for theft and adultery. And in fact, it's obvious that Spinoza has something in mind and that he didn't choose these examples at random. But whatever the example might be, this works.

Theft; imagine theft. What is evil in theft? We are told that it's evil, but we cannot believe it if we don't see what is evil in theft, so we have to see what this evil is. So, nobody else will steal anymore if he sees clearly what the evil is in theft; this is because people don't see what's evil in theft. And, you recall Spinoza's expression. Generally, evil, or what's bad in any case, consists in one thing: it's always that a relation is destroyed. A relation is decomposed, a relation is destroyed. And so, in theft, there is indeed a relation that is destroyed. It's this: how is property defined? We have to do some law. Because property is very interesting for all our problems. Because in all this, these are very concrete problems; substances, modes, etc., these stories are very concrete. Are we substances? Are we modes? Is property a quality? Well, what is property? I am saying this as obscurely as possible. Is it of the kind "the sky is blue", of the kind "Pierre is smaller than Paul"? Is property an attributable quality, or else is it a relation? And a relation between what and what?

I'm going to tell you; I believe that property is a relation. But I very well imagine some theories of property that would show, or would try to show, that property is a quality attributable to someone. But I don't believe this; I believe that it's a relation. It's a relation between two terms,

one term that we'll call property, another term that we'll call the property owner. What is this relation? What does this relation of property consist of, if it's a relation? Property's relation is very interesting; it would require me a long while to try to define this type of relation that is called property. Once again, this isn't certain. There are people who will be able to consider property as an attribute, but I'm not certain about this, but in any case, they're wrong. I wonder if St. Thomas, if theologians don't consider property as an attribute, but here, then, I haven't reflected on this, so I'd have to go consult the texts to see.

Fine, but in the end, it doesn't matter; we ourselves don't consider property as an attribute. We consider it as a relation, I mean you and me. And here we are, this relation, fine… For example, here's a text, a text by another philosopher, and he says: there is a right of property. We'd have to study all the property rights in order to see what types of relations are in play in property. Here's a case, a case that I cited to you because it is so moving, a classic case, that constituted jurisprudence from Antiquity. You have… There's an abandoned city. A city is abandoned, and there are two guys that are running toward the city. They're running very, very fast. And one of them touches the door with his fingers, fine. And the other, behind him, shoots an arrow into the door… Not into the first guy, into the door. [*Laughter*]

A juridical problem: who is the owner? What is the property right here? This is property of non-occupied things, the right of occupation. Over non-occupied things, you have a right of property through occupation. What's going to define occupation? First case, jurisprudence said: you have to touch the thing. We have created our entire empire by planting our flag into lands which, no doubt, were occupied before, but we've forgotten that, [*Laughter*] and it wasn't occupied by other Europeans. We planted our flag; it was an act of property by right of the first occupant, as it was said. Obviously, that caused problems, but… Fine. Here we have the question: the hand on the door of the city initiates a relation. Conventionally, henceforth this relation is – you see, I'm introducing the idea that there are relations through convention, which will be very important for what follows – there are natural relations and conventional relations. The law, the system of law decides through convention that this relation – which is relation of contiguity, my hand touching the door… Whereas in the other case, the guy who shoots the arrow, there is no relation of contiguity. There's a relation of causality. He fired the arrow, and the arrow is in contiguity with the door when it was planted in it.

To do law and to enjoy doing law means enjoying problems of this kind. Who is the owner? Did the relation arrow-shooter suffice to induce through convention a relation of property or not? You see, being a judge means deciding cases of this kind. It's not easy. Or else, did the sole relation of the hand-door contact induce the conventional property relation? You see that in these cases, a natural relation is selected, a natural relation is chosen, in order to signify a conventional relation: property. So, this is a very beautiful problem, the problem of property from the point of view of a theory of relations.

And, I am just saying, notice how the problem of property, the problem of theft, returns fully within Spinoza's schema: when I steal, I destroy the relation of convention between the thing and its owner. And this is uniquely because I am destroying a relation that I am committing evil. This

is a good idea from Spinoza: each time that you destroy a relation, you are doing evil. But you'll tell me, how does one avoid doing evil? When I eat, I am destroying a relation; I am destroying the relations of the beef in order to incorporate the beef molecules within me. [*Laughter*] Fine, fine, he'll say, ok, ok… Let it go; let it go its own way, along its own path…

And so, adultery? Ah, ah… [*Laughter*] Everything is explained, it's quite marvelous. And so, this is evil because you decompose a relation. Oh yes? So, if I don't decompose any relation, I can commit adultery. Yes! Because his understanding is limited, Spinoza thinks that this is not possible, that within adultery, in any case, a relation is decomposed. It's not certain; there can be some arrangements made with Spinozism, [*Laughter*] for what does he mean by decomposing a relation? He means that marriage, and here, he even adds more to it, -- because on one hand, he's a bachelor [*Laughter*] and, on the other hand, he doesn't really care about it that much – here, he adds more to it in the sense that he takes things literally. He says: "You tell yourself that marriage is the initiation of a sacred relation between the legitimate woman and the husband." This is a relation of convention, he will say: the relation of sacrament is by convention. He wrote the *Theologico-Political Treatise* to relate all this quite well.

But the conventional relations are perfectly founded and, in the end, are founded in natural relations. Fine, this is very important. So, in adultery, what you destroy is the conventional relation that unites one of two partners, or both, to their respective spouse. You destroy a relation. And once again Blyenbergh's objections resound: whatever I do, I am destroying relations, because after all, even love with my legitimate wife destroys relations. What relations? For example, the relation that she had with her mother. Ah… By getting married, I am nonetheless destroying the eminently natural relation that my legitimate wife had with her mother. Am I destroying it, or am I composing it? So fine, we must have the legitimate wife's mother intervene in order to see if this is a composition of relations or if there's a destruction of relations. In each act of life, this isn't complicated, we must take all of that into account. What do I decompose as a relation, and what do I compose as a relation?

You understand what he's getting at. There is going to be a funny thing within the *Ethics*, that occurs constantly: "You don't understand anything in life, and that's what being a manner of being is." When needed, he doesn't tell you anything more: each time that you do something, look, be a little discerning, see what relations you are in the process of composing and what relations you are in the process of decomposing. So, [there's] a kind of prodigious calculus of relations, a prodigious composition-decomposition of relations. And Blyenbergh arrives with his objection: "But everything is simultaneously composition-decomposition, so in any case, you will be within pure chaos because you yourself, to the extent that you consider yourself to be a manner of being, you are only pure chaos, you've reduced yourself to the state of pure chaos". Do you understand?

And here we have Spinoza who's going to answer; here, Spinoza has reached one of his limits. He doesn't like someone treating him like chaos. [*Laughter*] He reaches one of his limits; he's going to say: "No, above all not that." You might be correct on all the other points, he tells Blyenbergh – besides, he doesn't care, but there is a point on which he cannot yield; it's that the

Ethics is not a pure benediction of chaos; that, to the contrary, the *Ethics* gives us the means to distinguish good and bad; he won't yield on this – and there are two sorts of acts, that is, acts that have as dominant trait to compose relations, and these are good acts, and acts that have as dominant trait to decompose relations, and those ones are bad acts. But how?

A student: So, for example, if I steal a book at a supermarket, I am composing a relation, and the theft in that case would be a positive act to the extent that I am composing a relation, then, with the book, which is more interesting than the relation that the book had with the supermarket…

Deleuze: Spinoza would say "no", because the book's relation with the supermarket that is the [book's] legitimate owner has value not only through the nature of the supermarket and of the supermarket's director, but by the sacredness of conventional relations, of symbolic relations. That is, when you committed this act, well, when someone commits this act, [*Laughter*] this abominable act of stealing the book, [*Laughter*] the act is only abominable to the extent that it consists of destroying the integrality of all symbolic relations. Because, afterward, if you're told, "well, ok, you stole a book, and so, eh? What's next for you?" It's all relations… Are there conventional relations that you respect, or is it all conventional relations that you are going to destroy? And there are certain book thieves who, by stealing a book, destroy the aggregate of all conventional relations. There are even some who destroy the aggregate of conventional and natural relations. It's at them that this expression is aimed: whoever steals a book, steals an egg. [*Laughter*] There we are.

So, this is the exact point that we've reached: how is Spinoza going to maintain his position, "there's indeed a distinction between good and bad"? There we are; try to live, until next week.

Notes, 21-25: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 06, 13 January 1981

Transcription (for Paris 8): Part 1, Vanessa Duvois, Part 2, Carmela Chergui

Partial translation, Timothy S. Murphy (for Web Deleuze); augmented translation: Charles J. Stivale (duration: 2:07:01)

Part 1

… Dutch painting. This text is called "The Eye Listens" [by Paul Claudel] – it's an awful title, but that doesn't matter – "The Eye Listens" contains analyses of Rembrandt, Vermeer, that are beautiful, so very, very beautiful. So, indeed, this would almost be a transition since Claudel himself in his text suggests some very curious connections between a certain kind of Spinozism and Dutch painting, notably light in Dutch painting. So, it would be interesting if you could get hold of this text. It came out, for those who have this, it came out in the Pléiade edition, in the Claudel volume titled "Works in Prose," but if you could read it, Claudel's text, that would make a very nice transition between our two subject his year,[26] a very, very beautiful text. Yes, there are some admirable analyses of Rembrandt. There we are. And so, we can come back to Spinoza. Is it 10:30? [*Answer from someone sitting near him:* Yes]

A participant: Excuse me; would it be possible to ask a question? He doesn't speak of Stendhal in that text, about "The Night Watch"?

Deleuze: He speaks quite a lot about "The Night Watch" [by Rembrandt].

The participant: It's not that I am intelligent, but…

Deleuze: Of course, you are! Of course, you are! Of course, you are!

The participant: But do you find that in "The Night Watch," there is an Amsterdam bourgeois side to it? [There's] a guy, a figure lying in a corner, yes, there is something that's… a mysterious, bizarre, out-of-place side alongside the established, Amsterdam bourgeois within this mystery, this aspect…?

Deleuze: Well, yes… No. I don't have it in front of me. What I have here are two kinds of very, very lovely pages, one having an immensely philosophical sense and that seems to me to say this at one point; he says: you understand what there is that's essential in Dutch painting, it's that they have become conscious -- and he glorified Dutch painting, but here, I doubt that he had completely… well, he was no doubt right – he says: the Dutch have become particularly conscious of this: that the work of art, the work insofar as it is an actual, immediate work, no longer referred to essence, but referred to the accident, the little accident, the way in which a glass is a bit unbalanced, in which a cloth has a fold that indicates that it's been rumpled, in

which a piece of fruit is gradually ripening, and he says, well then, this is it; he says, painting truly means relating, right, what one is supposed to reproduce out of the accident.

In fact, I am saying that this is very important, something like that, because if we go far back in time, to the East, I believe there was an entirely different problem because, for the East, the essence-accident categories had no great importance. But if we ourselves say just anything about a Western kind of pseudo-painting, about Western painting, it seems to me that it begins precisely in a kind of somewhat comparable non-painting, with Egyptian bas relief. And what is Egyptian bas relief? With contour, you see, proximity equals form plus depth, the contour outlining the character, and so, this is character that contour really removes from variation. Here, if you will, the figure in Egyptian art, the figure that is as if organized, surrounded by contour, is brought back to essence, essence being removed from variability.

And here, this will mark, it seems to me, all of Western art because even to consider this from the opposite view, I am saying that in the East, the idea of an essence would be beyond appearance; this is not an idea from the East, but this is already an idea indeed at work fundamentally in Egypt, will move into Greek art and, as it is said, will have an impact on all our Western art. And what occurs in all Western art? It is going to realize that the figure or form can no longer be brought back, given the chaos in the world, can no longer be brought back to essence, to Egyptian essence, but must be brought back to accident, the tiny thing that goes wrong, the tiny thing that leans, and I think that this is what has been fundamental in this history, notably you will no longer bring figures back to essence, but rather to accident, to change, to the event and no longer the eternal.

And so, here as well, we realize that things are very complicated because, in my view, what was a decisive factor was Christianity, it was Christianity. In fact, with Christianity, things – this is something that is a source of great joy for me – Christianity never stopped opening up amazing possibilities for atheism, fantastic, because Christianity begins by telling us: why yes, the measure of things, more than essence, is the event. And, in fact, there is a kind of gesture from God, that is, the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, etc. In this series of events, God is no longer thought of as a function of essence; it really is thought of as a function of the event. And starting from this, was it possible to stop? Only with difficulty!

This is why I am returning to a theme that I outlined, at the beginning, vaguely about Spinoza, because we are told: well yes, you understand that in painting considered to be Christian, this is quite odd. It wasn't possible to stop. To the extent the Christ figure and that of God are not brought back to essence, but to events, although these events are highly coded within a sacred history, or according to rules of the Church, they are going to be twisted in all directions. Thus, you will have all the descents from the cross that you like; you'll have a madness for painting, a madness for painting is going to take hold of this, by bringing the figure into all imaginable accidents. You'll have Christs with the head lowered; you'll have Christs with an arm at, as is said, extraordinary Mannerist angles; you're going to have entirely homosexual Christs; you're going to have anything you like because of bringing the figure back to the accident.

As a result, at the heart of this Christian painting, there will arise a veritable joy from what must be called "deformation," notably the figure brought into the accident; this is deformation. Here, I am using a word when, for example, Cézanne precisely claims a deformation of bodies by distinguishing quite well the deformation from what could be called transformation and also decomposition, the properly pictorial deformation of the body that is neither transformation nor decomposition. Obviously from the point of view of painting, Christianity was one of the first possibilities.

So, as was applied to the Christ figure, then it goes without saying that this is applied to objects. First this could be applied to all the objects surrounding Christ. But it can also be applied to still life or to fruit in Rembrandt's works, and here, Claudel speaks admirably of the lemon, half pealed, where there is a whorl of lemon (*spire de citron*) – does one say "un" or "une"? [*spire*] [*Answer*: Une] Yes, finally, I don't know, you can fill this in yourself – the whorl of lemon that hangs, creating a spiral here, and that shows half the lemon, the lemon half divided, and the impression that… Or else, Cézanne's apple, we get the impression that there is a force of ripening, etc.

There's a text on Cézanne by [D.H.] Lawrence, the English novelist, that seems to me to be the most beautiful text, finally the most beautiful text that I've read on Cézanne; he also says something very beautiful there which is – you know, Lawrence also painted, he did gouaches, and he was quite involved in his gouaches, and it's about an exhibit of his own gouaches that he wrote something, this very, very beautiful text on Cézanne – and he says: well, yes, painting is difficult – he knew something about this; he didn't consider himself to be a great painter, and he needed to paint – and he said, painting is very difficult, you know, because understanding something pictorially, even for a great painter, this is necessarily very limited. He says, look at Cézanne, for example, what did he grasp? In forty years of painting, in fifty years of painting, I no longer recall, what did he grasp? And Lawrence has a splendid expression, he says: he grasped an apple and one or two vases, and he said: well then, when someone has done that, when someone is a painter and has achieved that in fifty years, one can say that he's quite fortunate.

And in fact, here he becomes quite brilliant; he says: you know Cézanne, in any case, of course, he's a great genius, but for example, pictorially he never grasped women well; first, he was so very tormented in that area, so puritanical, so… he didn't understand. The proof, he says, Lawrence says, and it's true when we see a woman painted by Cézanne, he paints them like apples [*Laughter*], these are apples, Cézanne's women, these are apples, and he says: that worked out well because Cézanne's very own wife, and he painted his wife, she was an apple. And this is what he calls the "apple-y" being (*être pommesque*) of the apple; Cézanne's stroke of genius, says Lawrence, would be to have grasped the "apple-y" being of the apple. So, he applied it, sometimes it worked, onto the woman figure; there were "apple-y" women, his wife was "apple-y", so that works quite well. And on the other hand, he grasped two or three vases, one or two vases, a few vases, or some vases and pots, and he says, this is fantastic, fantastic. Having said this, that doesn't prevent the rest from being works of genius as well, but this is the source…

So, we can say that, it seems to me, we can say, here, really of all painters, we can say of all that, of all these people trying to create something, you see, this is why one must be so very, very modest. For me, what Lawrence says is exemplary. If you are a painter and in fifty years, you have grasped an apple within its pictorial reality, well, you can tell yourself, this is great what I've done. So, [there's] Mondrian with his squares, yes, very good… How much time was required for him then to grasp the pictorial being of a square? One might think this to be simple; it's not simple at all… All this is so philosophers might be modest as well. How much time is needed to grasp a tiny bit of a concept? The concept of an apple… If I managed to grasp the concept of an apple philosophically, this would be prodigious, but that wouldn't at all be easy, not at all.

What did Spinoza grasp? He grasped something then, certainly as he understood. [*Pause*] You see this is a clever transition… [*Laughter*] So, here we are…

Georges Comtesse: There's something written on the relation of Cézanne's painting to Paul Klee with ontology that is one of Merleau-Ponty's final texts, called "The Eye and the Mind" [*L'Oeil et l'esprit,* 1960]. [Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes] You see, that could work as transition with… When [Merleau-Ponty] tries to think the visible and the invisible [Deleuze: Yes, yes], to think raw Being (*Être brut*) and the savage mind, at that point, he began considering questions of painting.

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes… I'm going to say… What seems quite striking to me is that Cézanne, in general, was the painter *par excellence* for phenomenologists. If we understood this, it's a very small aspect, too technical and without great interest, but if we understand this, perhaps we understand just a bit about Cézanne because what are the most beautiful pages written on Cézanne today? Strangely, these pages don't really appear in art criticism. There's a very good text by Merleau-Ponty; there is a quite beautiful text, so admirable, no, there are two or three texts by [Henri] Maldiney; there are some texts by Erwin Straus. And they have in common precisely the fact of being phenomenologists. So here there is a linked aspect; it's not at all surprising since phenomenology centers itself on sensation, which is a phenomenology of feeling, and Cézanne is no doubt the one who pushed this practically as well as theoretically, pushed farthest the relation between painting and what he called sensation. So, in this light, I am not surprised that philosophers like Merleau-Ponty and Maldiney had been particularly inspired or had a special relation to Cézanne, yes.

So, we then return to Spinoza… So here, you certainly remember the point that we've reached, which is the following point: we find ourselves facing the two objections from Oldenburg, of… euh, no, excuse me, [*Web Deleuze translation starts here*][27] we find ourselves facing Blyenbergh's two objections, and the first concerns the point of view of nature in general. It comes down to saying to Spinoza that it's very nice; you just explained that every time a body encounters another, there are relations (*rapports*) that compose and relations that decompose, sometimes to the advantage of one of the two bodies, sometimes to the advantage of the other body.[28] Fine. But nature itself combines all the relations at once. So, in nature in general, what doesn't stop is the fact that all the time there are compositions and decompositions of relations,

all the time since, ultimately, the decompositions of relations are like the flip side of the compositions, or the reverse side. But there is no reason to privilege the composition of relations over the decomposition since the two always go together.

For example: I eat, and I compose my relation with the food I absorb, but this occurs by decomposing the food's own relations. Another example: I am poisoned. Arsenic decomposes my relation, okay, but it composes its own relation with the new relations into which the parts of my body enter under the action of the arsenic. Thus, there is always composition and decomposition at once. So, nature, says Blyenbergh, nature such as you conceive it, is nothing but an immense chaos. You see, what an objection! Spinoza wavers. [*Pause*] What would you answer in his place? Here, this is Blyenbergh's first objection. And well, he answers, [in] the answer, you'll see that, according to the cases, the answer is quite different. In this, Spinoza sees no difficulty, and his reply is very clear. You could answer for him; if you are a Spinozist, you already have the answer in your head.

He answers this: nothing at all. Nothing at all. He says, well then, no, it's not like that, for a simple reason: it's that from the point of view of the whole of nature, one cannot say that there is composition and decomposition at once since, from the point of view of the whole of nature, there are only compositions. There are only compositions of relations. It's really from the point of view of our understanding (*entendement*) that we say: one relation or another is composed to the detriment of another such relation, which must decompose so that the two others can be composed. But it's because we isolate a part of Nature. From the point of view of the complete whole of Nature, there is never anything but relations that are being composed with each other.

And so, I like this reply very much: the decomposition of relations does not exist from the point of view of the whole of nature since the whole of nature embraces all relations, so there are inevitably compositions, full stop, that's it (*un point, c'est tout*). This is good, very satisfying for me. So, if you tell me you aren't convinced, there's no basis for arguing. It means that you aren't Spinozists, that's it. But there's nothing wrong with that! [*Laughter*]… But you are convinced, I can tell. [*Laughter*]

And you understand that this answer is very simple, very clear, very beautiful; it sets up another difficulty: it refers, in fact, to Blyenbergh's second objection. Let us suppose, at the extreme, that he concedes the point on the problem of the whole of nature. So then, let's approach the other aspect: a particular point of view! My particular point of view! That is, the point of view of a precise and fixed relation, actually, what I call me (*moi*), is an aggregate of precise and fixed relations which constitute me. And well, from this point of view, from this point of view, and it's solely from a particular, determinable point of view, you or me, or anything that I can say: yes, there are compositions and decompositions, notably I would say that there is composition when my relation is conserved and composed with another, external relation, but I would say that there is decomposition when the external body acts on me in such a manner that one of my relations, or even many of my relations, are destroyed, in the sense of "to destroy" that we saw at last class, specifically, cease to be realized (*effectués*) by the current parts.

So here, just as from the point of view of nature I was able to say, ah yes, that there are only compositions of relations, as soon as I take a particular determined point of view, I must say: well, yes, there are decompositions which are not to be confused with compositions, hence Blyenbergh's objection here which consists in saying: well, in the end, what you are calling vice and virtue is whatever suits you, and you will call it virtue every time you compose relations, no matter what relations you destroy, and you will call it vice every time that one of your relations is decomposed. In other words, you will call virtue whatever is agreeable to you and vice whatever is not agreeable to you. You will call arsenic wicked because it kills you, fine, because it decomposes you. On the other hand, you will say that food is good. But in the end, this comes down to saying that food is agreeable to you and poison is not agreeable to you. And, when we speak generally of vice and virtue, we appeal to something other than a particular criterion of taste, specifically, what suits me and what doesn't suit me. [*Pause*]

So, this objection, you see, is distinct from the preceding one since it is made in the name of a particular point of view and no longer in the name of the whole of nature. And it is summarized in this line that Blyenbergh constantly repeats, well yes, you reduce morality to a matter of taste. So there, fine, what is Spinoza going to reply? He's going to throw himself into a very, very strange endeavor. He's going to throw himself into an endeavor to show that… He preserves an objective criterion for the distinction of the good from the bad, or of virtue from vice. He's going to try to show that Spinozism proposes a properly ethical criterion to us and not simple a matter of taste, an ethical criterion about good and bad, about vice and virtue. [*Throughout this entire paragraph, Deleuze speaks very slowly, deliberately*] He's going to show this then in two texts which, to my knowledge, are the two most astonishing texts, the strangest texts by Spinoza, really, the strangest of texts, to the point that one of them seems incomprehensible – we don't see what he means, I believe – and the other is perhaps comprehensible, but seems very, very bizarre. In the end, everything gets resolved with a marvelous clarity, but we had to go through these two strange texts.[29]

The first [text] is in the Letters to Blyenbergh. And Spinoza wants to show in the letter of the text -- here I must read the letters because it's letter 23 – he wants to show not only that he has a criterion to distinguish vice and virtue, but that this criterion applies in cases that appear very complicated. And that further, this is a criterion of distinction not only for distinguishing vice from virtue, but if one comprehends this criterion well, one can make distinctions in cases of crimes, even those that are not at all similar to one another. I'll read this text which seems quite odd.

He says, so here we are, he says to Blyenbergh: Let's choose two cases and let's choose the same act which really is considered as being extremely bad, a case of matricide, someone killing his mother. And here we have Spinoza's letter 23, "Nero's matricide, insofar as it contained anything positive, was not a crime." You see, insofar as it contained anything positive, what does this mean? You recall, you vaguely see, confusedly, what Spinoza means: Evil isn't anything. We've seen what nuances he gave to this proposition, "evil isn't anything". So, insofar as an act is positive, it cannot be a crime, it cannot be evil. So, an act as a crime, if it is a crime, it's not so

insofar as it contains something positive, it's from another point of view. Very well, we can comprehend it abstractly, and we wonder what he's getting at here.

"Nero's matricide, insofar as it contains something positive, was not a crime. Orestes," -- Nero killed his mother; Orestes also killed his mother – "Orestes was able to accomplish an act which, externally, is the same," – killing his mother -- "Orestes was able to accomplish an act which, externally, is the same, and at the same time, intended to kill his mother." You see, [there's] not only identity of the act of killing his mother, but identity of intention, notably premeditated murder. "Orestes was able to accomplish an act which, externally, is the same, and at the same time, intended to kill his mother, without deserving the same accusation as Nero." Fine, and in fact, for those who recall what they learned at school, we treat Orestes in a different way than we treat Nero, even though both of them killed their mothers intentionally.

"Orestes was able to accomplish an act which, externally, is the same, and at the same time, intended to kill his mother, without deserving the same accusation as Nero. What, therefore, is Nero's crime?" This is where the text gets very bizarre. "What, therefore, is Nero's crime. It consists solely… It consists solely in the fact that, in his act, Nero showed himself to be ungrateful, unmerciful and disobedient." We wonder, what is he trying to… What does he mean? The act is the same, the intention is the same, there is a difference at the level of what? "In his act, Nero showed himself to be ungrateful, unmerciful and disobedient." What is the order? This is neither the intention, nor the act, it's a third determination, it's a third dimension of the act. What dimension? He doesn't say any more; Spinoza concludes here, triumphant – he's really great here -- none of these characteristics expresses anything to do with an essence. So, I reveal myself as unmerciful, ungrateful, and disobedient, none of these characteristics expressing anything to do with an essence.

We don't know what to think, right? Even though, here, we're quite prepared to feel ourselves being Spinozists, we're left wondering, what is he saying? Is this a reply to Blyenbergh? And we say: there's an urgency in this text; we have to get something from this text, but what? What can one get out of such a text, so bizarre and vague? Ungrateful, unmerciful and disobedient, yes? If Nero's act is bad, it's not because he killed his mother; it's not because he intended to kill her; it's because Nero, in killing his mother, showed himself to be ungrateful, unmerciful and disobedient. And Orestes kills his mother, but is neither ungrateful nor disobedient, so then what does all that mean? Fine.

So, we keep searching, we search, and then, after much searching, since we have to read all of the *Ethics*, we come across Book IV and a text which doesn't appear to have anything to do with… so there, this text doesn't leaves us hesitating because of its vagueness; it leaves us hesitating because we get the impression that Spinoza has acquired either a kind of diabolical humor or has gone mad! It's in Book IV, proposition 59, and it's the scholium of proposition 59, and I'm reading slowly with hopes that you will be astounded. This is the scholium. The text of the proposition already does not appear simple. For Spinoza, it involves demonstrating that all the actions to which we are determined through a feeling which is a passion, we can be determined to do them without [the feeling], we can be determined to do them by reason.

All that we are doing impelled by passion, we can do it impelled by pure reason. And we tell ourselves: oh, fine, so in fact, why not kill your mother? If I do it out of passion, I can do it out of reason, right? This is a strange proposition. And the scholium tells us that the demonstration is rather abstract, and we wonder, alright? But we'd really like something a bit concrete. You'll read the text, and the scholium arrives, beginning with: "These things are more clearly explained by an example." And we say, finally, this is what we've been asking for! And it continues, listen to this: "These things are more clearly explained by an example. Thus, the act of beating," [*Deleuze makes a striking gesture and says* "PAN"] – you'll see why I do that; I could strike differently, but according to the letter of the text, this is it [*He makes the gesture, raising his arm*] like that and… I lower it. [*Laughter*]

"Thus, the act of beating, insofar as it is considered physically…", so you see, right? "insofar as it is considered physically and insofar as we attend only to the fact that the man lifts his arm" – lifts his arm – "closes his fist" – lifts his arm, so in order "insofar as we attend only to the fact that the man raises his arm" – ah no, wait! [*Laughter*] lifts his arm [*Laughter*], "closes his fist, and moves his whole arm forcefully up and down" [*We hear a huge BOUM on the table, followed by laughter*], "this is a virtue" – *virtus* – "this is a virtue which is conceived from the structure of the human body." But we must not… we must take everything literally; you understand in what sense he is taking virtue here; in fact, he does not cheat; it's a realization (*effectuation*) of the body's power of action. It's what my body can do. It's one of the things it can do.

This responds to the question that I've already tried to comment on, specifically this question from Spinoza: but we don't even know that the body can do. [Realizing the body's power of action] is rather something that everyone knows: we know what the human body can do… A dog cannot, right? It can do other things, [*Laughter*] but it cannot do that, so this is something that the human body can do. This makes it part of the *potentiae* of the human body, of this power (*puissance*) in action, it's a power of action. For that very reason, this is what we call virtue. So, there's no problem; we cannot criticize him on this initial point.

So, the action of striking insofar as it is considered physically and as we consider it the sole fact "that a man lifts his arm, closes his fist, and moves his whole arm forcefully up and down is a virtue that is conceived through the structure of the human body…" Ok, there's nothing to say. He continues, "Therefore if… Therefore, if a man moved by anger or hate" – there you have the case here; I'm going to make this action impelled by anger or hate, that is, by a passion [*Deleuze makes a gesture*], I'm doing this onto my mother's head [*a heavy sound*] [*Laughter*]… Well, there's really no reason for laughter [*Laughter*] – "Therefore, if a man moved by anger or hate is determined" -- determined by the passion, this is a… You see the word there… He uses the word "determination", "determined" – I tell myself fine, we place it off to the side because perhaps that's the third dimension of action; this is not the same thing, neither action, nor intention. Besides action and intention, there would be determination.

Fine, in any case, "Therefore, if a man moved by anger or hate is determined to close his fist or move his arm, that happens, as we have shown in Part II, that happens because one and the same

action can be associated with any images of things whatever." Here [Spinoza] is in the process of telling us something, but which is something very, very strange. He is in the process of telling us: I call the determination of the action the association, the link, that unites the image of the action with an image of a thing. That is the determination of the action. The determination of the action is the image of a thing to which the image of the act is linked. It's truly a relation that he himself presents as being like association, only one, a relation of association, "a single and same action can be associated with any image of a thing whatever," semi-colon, "And consequently, we can be determined to one and the same action, both from those images of things which we conceive confusedly," [*Deleuze repeats himself here*] "we can be determined to one and the same action, both from those images of things which we conceive confusedly and from those images of things we conceive clearly and distinctly." [*Pause*] "It is clear as well" – he judges that he is done – "It is clear as well that every desire which arises from a feeling which is a passion would be of no use if men could be guided by reason," that is, that all the actions that we do, determined by passions, we could just as well do determined by pure reason.

You see what he means here, and what is this introduction of the confused and the distinct? He says -- there it is, here is precisely what I retain from the letter of the text, and it's literally in the text – he says, he says, "an image of action can be associated with images of very different things. Consequently, the same action, according to its image, can be associated just as well with images of confused things as with images of clear and distinct things." This is strange; I am saying that this text, if we understand it well, we should touch on something concrete in the way that Spinoza experiences action, experiences problems of action and how he manages these. We say, fine, but what is he, what is he in the process of telling us?

So, we have to come back to the example to extend it; I don't know, here we have a text that literally requires being extended. We cannot be content reading this and then moving on to the next proposition. So, that's where I am at, I come back to it: well, I do this [*Deleuze repeats the striking gesture*] and… I bring my fist down on my mother's head. There's one case. I am making the same gesture, and with the same violence, I bring my fist down on the head (*membrane*) of a bass drum. [*Pause*] – I am abusing your patience by asking you to consider this example; it's not my fault. -- Make an objection immediately: It's not the same gesture. It's not the same gesture.

But Spinoza suppressed this objection. He replied to it in advance because it's possible not to agree with him, but he posed the problem in conditions such that this objection could not be valid. In fact, he asks us to consent to an extremely paradoxical analysis of action, as follows: between the action and the object on which it bears, there is a relation which is a relation of association. In fact, if between the action and the object on which it bears, the relation is associative, if it's a relation of association, obviously Spinoza is quite right, to wit, it's clearly the same action, whatever the variants might be – an action always includes variants – but it is indeed the same action which, in one case, is associated with my mother's head, and in the other case, is associated with a bass drum. Thus, the objection is suppressed.

Good, then, let's try to extend this: what difference is there? What difference is there between these two cases? At the point we've reached, we can perceive one [difference], which means that we can very well see what Spinoza means. We already sense what Spinoza means, and what he means is not nothing. – [*The door slams, a student leaves*] So you see, someone just left. He'll never know! That's disturbing for him, for his life. What's he going to do? – Well, here we are, here we are, I'm just saying, let's come back, let's return now to the criteria; we're going then to see how to grasp hold of the letter of the text, but let's return to the criteria we're sure of, at the point that we've reach in our analysis. What evil is there when… Or what bad is there, to speak as does Spinoza, what bad is there when I do this thing that is a realization of the power (*puissance*) of my body and which, in this sense, is good? And which is always good! I simply do this, and I whack someone on the head. What is there that is bad? It's because I decompose a relation. I decompose a relation, specifically, on my mother's head.

You remember a very beautiful text by Beckett perhaps [*Deleuze chuckles*], a text by Beckett [*the novel* Molloy] in which one of Beckett's creatures, right, in order to speak with his deaf and blind mother, I don't recall, who only exists in a state of living remains, indeterminate remains, has to smack his mother on the head like that. So, he whacks her head, and so if it's two smacks, that means I don't know what, if it's one smack, if it's three smacks, and so on. The poor old woman cannot stand it anymore, but in the end, he doesn't kill her in this case, but finally, he indeed makes this gesture. So fine, here we are.

What is there that is bad? My mother's head cannot stand it – that is, my mother's head is a relation, it's a relation of movement and rest between particles, like everything – because there, in beating like that on my mother's head, I am destroying the constituent relation of the head, which can be simply expressed, for example, as my mother passing out under my blows, or else she dies. [*Pause*] So, in Spinozist terms, I would say that in this case, I associate my action with the image of a thing whose relation is directly decomposed by this action. Thus, the constitutive relation that I associate there, I am in the process of commenting the text, literally, it seems to me. I associate the image of the act with the image of something whose constituent relation is decomposed by this act. [*Pause*]

And here, you have understood everything when I do this [*Deleuze makes the gesture*] and when I bring my fist down on a gong or on a bass drum, what am I doing? This time, the drumhead is defined how? The drumhead or the gong is defined how, -- I'm saying anything at all – according to the tension of the head? The tension of the drumhead will also be defined by a certain aggregate of relations. A drumhead will have what power of action if it belongs to my power of action? To do that, the drumhead as well, and my mother's head as well, all that has a power of action. It happens that, in the case of the [mother's] head, once again, I decomposed the constitutive relation corresponding to the power of action of the head. In the case of a drumhead, what is its power of action? Let's say that is harmonics. Oh! The gong! I've associated my action with the image of something whose relation was composed directly with this action, that is, I have drawn harmonics out of the drumhead. [*Pause*] You have to understand that because, otherwise, you are going to be lost for all the rest.

What's the difference? It's enormous, enormous. You have to understand that: in one case I associated my action, once again, the image of a thing whose relation is composed directly with the relation of my act, and in the other case, I associated my act with the image of a thing whose relation is immediately and directly decomposed by my act. [*Pause*] Ah! You grasp the ethical criterion for Spinoza, which is a very, very modest criterion as well, but here, it's not a question… It's a matter of managing as best we can, and here, [Spinoza] gives us a rule. He gives us a rule; you're going to see that results in a rather special kind of life, the way in which Spinoza surely lived. He liked decompositions of relations very much. His biographies, there are two or three biographies of his era that recount his life somewhat. It's said that he adored battles of spiders, that he had them fight each other; he left spiderwebs at his home – yet he was extremely clean – he left spiderwebs, then he caught flies and placed them onto the webs to see what would happen, or else he caused spiders to fight among themselves. He liked doing that; it made him laugh. It was… Yes?

Richard Pinhas: The problem that would be posed would be to know: can you introduce the good and the bad in the form of the decomposition of a relation without immediately including a hierarchy? All that you were saying up to now seemed to exclude this. And, in the case of Orestes that you cited as the second example, can we decompose a relation for the continuation of a relation?

Deleuze: Well, you are getting ahead of me, right? You're going too fast! One must already have understood everything to ask that! That's fine. Hierarchy? For the moment, I'm not introducing hierarchy. I am saying here that the fact is there. Imagine your everyday actions. Well, there are a certain number of them – you're going to see – there are a certain number of them which are characterized by composing themselves directly with an action or rather of associating themselves with an image of a thing or being which is composed directly with the action, and others – I'm not saying that one is any better – this will be, consequently, what we're going to say, and you undertake a type of actions that are associated with images of things whose relation is decomposed by the action. So, out of convenience, we'll call the actions of direct composition "good" and the actions of direct decomposition "bad".

Fine, but here, we are still floundering among many problems. First problem: what is there in the text of the *Ethics* that can cast a glimmer of light for us on the text of the letter? The difference between Orestes and Nero since, in the text of the *Ethics,* it's not a question of Orestes and Nero. And, in the case of Orestes-Nero, it's not like me having taken a privileged example – the fist, the raised arm that comes down either on the head, or on a gong. But, in the letter, it's not a question of that; it's a question of two actions which are both crimes.

So, why is what Nero did something bad while, according to Spinoza, one can't even say that Orestes, in killing his mother, has done something bad? There, nonetheless, at the point we've reached, we also have a little glimmer of light: how can one say such a thing? One can say such a thing as a function of what follows, specifically: we now have the Spinozist method of the analysis of action. The action will be decomposed according to two images; every action will be decomposed according to two images, will be analyzed according to, rather, two dimensions: the

image of the act as power of action of the body -- what a body can do -- and the image of the associated thing, that is, of the object on which the act bears. Between the two, there is a relation of association. It's a logic of action. It's not customary, it's not… But perhaps that's how it is: it's a manner of living. [*Pause*]

Let's return to Nero-Orestes: Nero kills his mother. Perhaps she was nasty, perhaps she was annoying, perhaps she killed other people herself. Fine, despite everything, in killing his mother, Nero, despite everything, I'm saying – this is very nuanced as judgment – she might have been a criminal herself, she might have done whatever you like, all sorts of despicable things, behaving badly. That doesn't prevent, as is said, her from being his mother; that doesn't prevent her from being his mother, that is, Nero associated his act directly with the image of a being whose relation would be decomposed by this act: he killed his mother, full stop, that's it. Thus, the relation of primary, direct association is between the act and an image of a thing whose relation is decomposed by this act. Orestes kills his mother because she killed Agamemnon, that is, because she killed her husband, because she killed Orestes's father. In killing his mother, Orestes pursues a sacred vengeance. What does vengeance mean? Spinoza would not say vengeance. According to Spinoza, Orestes associates his act, not with the image of Clytemnestra whose relation will be decomposed by this act, but rather he associates it with the relation of Agamemnon who had been decomposed by Clytemnestra. In killing his mother, Orestes recomposes his relation with the relation of Agamemnon.

Let's take another step forward: in what way is this an answer to the question, to the second objection? Obviously, this is a very strong answer, in any case, because Spinoza is on the process of saying, "yes, fine." On the level of a special point of view, you, me, on the level of a special point of view, this was the level of the second objection. There is always composition and decomposition of relations at once. Yes, it's true; there is always composition and decomposition at once. Does that mean that the good and the bad are mixed up and become indiscernible? No, replies Spinoza, because at the level of a logic of the particular point of view, there will always be a priority (*primat*). Sometimes the primacy is very complicated, a very nuanced primacy. Sometimes, the composition of relations will be direct and the decomposition indirect; sometimes, on the contrary, the decomposition will be direct and the composition indirect. – No, or the reverse, I don't know; I'm mixed up; you correct it yourself -- And Spinoza tells us: I am calling "good" an action that implements (*opère*) a direct composition of relations even if it implements an indirect decomposition; and I am calling "bad" an action that implements a direct decomposition even if it implements an indirect composition. [*Pause*]

In other words, there are two types of actions: actions in which the decomposition comes about as if through consequence and not through principle, because the principle is a composition. This has value only for my point of view; from the point of view of nature, everything is composition. It's through this that, in any case, that God knows neither evil, nor the bad. It doesn't even know what "the bad" means. But me, yes, from my point of view, there is good and bad. And that doesn't mean… So, you see, "there is good and bad," says Spinoza, about this objection. There is no good nor bad since there is always at once composition and decomposition. Spinoza's response: "Yes, but from my point of view"; there are sometimes actions that are composed

directly and that only bring about decompositions indirectly, and inversely, there are actions which directly decompose and imply compositions only indirectly. This, then, is the criterion of the good and the bad; it's with this that it's necessary to live. What does that mean, "it's with this" that it's necessary to live?... Yes?

A participant: I have the impression that this is a model of an absolute physics, that is, of an absolutely physical movement that would allow us to cancel and do without the symbolic dimension. And are you truly considering in depth the problem of matricide? I don't know what Spinoza's perspective is when he evokes the problem of matricide, but in the way that you describe it, one gets the impression that the symbolic power of matricide is completely annihilated, that it no longer exists. But is this correct?

Deleuze: The question can mean several things: is it correct in itself, or is it correct in relation to Spinoza? Is it true in itself all that I am saying? That's for you to judge; I don't want to brutalize your consciousness, right? The only question that I can retain is this: is it correct in relation to Spinoza? Given how you ask the question, the answer appears to pose no problem, to wit: Spinoza is an author who, whenever he encounters the problem of a symbolic dimension, continually expunges it, hunts it down, and tries to show that it was a confused idea of the worst imagination.

Georges Comtesse: But nonetheless, in the example of Orestes, if the matricide by Orestes is different from the matricide of Nero, it remains, despite everything, that when Orestes kills his mother, according to Spinoza's interpretation, Orestes's crime is simply the affirmation of the filiation decomposed by the mother. So, we cannot reduce the whole simply to a physical question. This is quite simply the affirmation of a decomposed filiation. Moreover, …

Deleuze: Filiation, here, you're saying too much with filiation; what is it? Is it a composition of relations, filiation?

Comtesse: Perhaps not…

Deleuze: Ah, well then, this becomes more important. My question is this: for Spinoza, in his works, since we are only reflecting about him, right? How for Spinoza is filiation anything else than a composition of relations?

Comtesse: Well, precisely, this is a mystery.

Deleuze: Spinoza isn't familiar with mystery; you know this as well as I do! There is no mystery for Spinoza.

Comtesse: The fact that he says that it's, that it's a different crime. He can say the crime is different only to the extent that it affirms a good filiation that has been decomposed precisely by the mother. What is this, for example? This refers, for example, to texts in the *Theological-Political Treatise* in which curiously Spinoza insists on the relation of father and son.

Deleuze: Aie, aie, aie.

Comtesse: How is it that he insists so much on this privileged relation? Does this simply correspond to something physical? This is a question. And in the example that even you gave, for example, in the Letters to Guillaume de Blyenbergh, precisely the example of the apple, the matter, the story of the apple: in the end, the story of the apple is one way like another to tell us that there's a good father, the one who gives good advice and that there's really an imbecile who doesn't follow the father's good advice. So, for Spinoza, through all his texts, there is a very odd relation of filiation, which is perhaps a relation of filiation, which is perhaps a relation, but can we say that a relation of filiation is physical? [*Deleuze coughs*] There's a problem here.

Deleuze: Listen…

Claire Parnet: I'd really like to say something as well…

Deleuze: There, your heart, Comtesse, is suffering as much as mine when you are practically in the process of treating substance for Spinoza as a father, yes? [*Laughter*] When God made a revelation to Adam, to say that this is indeed proof that there is a relation of filiation of the father-son type, in the end, you can say all you want, but you indeed feel that you are broadly leaving the domain of Spinozism, eh? Here, for Spinoza, that never worked like that. So, what I maintain is that if we introduce, one way or another, a symbolic dimension in which, according to which, if I understand well, substance there would be acting paternally in relation to mode, this is a murder of all Spinozism, you know this so well, in the end, it's to tease me that you're saying all this! [*Laughter*] It's… It's…

It happens, in fact, at that point, we must take, as you refer to them yourself, the pages of the *Theological-Political Treatise.* Each time that he comes upon the idea of a symbolic dimension, he explains that this is a thing for prophets, the men of the symbolic dimension and who interpret the God-mode relation as a relation of the father-son type, in fact, and which calls for signs. It's even in this way that he defines prophetism quite profoundly. Prophetism is the act by which I receive a sign, or I believe that I receive a sign, and by which I emit signs. And the whole theory… There is clearly a theory of the sign in Spinoza. This consists in relating the sign to the most confused understanding and imagination in the world. And in the world, such as it is, according to Spinoza, the very idea of the sign does not exist. There are expressions; there are expression, there are never signs.

As a result, when God – here, I am strongly opposing the interpretation that you suggest of the text of the apple – when God reveals to Adam that the apple will act as a poison, he reveals to him a composition of relations, he reveals to him a physical truth. He doesn't send him a sign at all. He doesn't at all treat Adam as if he were a prophet, for the simple reason that at God's level, there are no prophets. There is no prophet since prophetism exists to the extent that we are not Spinozist, according to Spinoza. It's only to the extent that one comprehends nothing of the substance-mode relation that one invokes signs and that one says "God sent me a sign."

But Spinoza says a thousand times, "God never made any signs; he sends expressions." And what does that mean about expressions that precisely are univocal? He does not send a sign which would refer to a signification or a signifier; it's not a matter of any signifier whatsoever --

any notion which, for Spinoza, would truly be "crazy" -- It [God] expresses itself, that is, it reveals its relations, and to reveal doesn't at all mean something [like] a mystical act or a symbolic act. Revealing is giving something to be understood. It gives relations to be understood within the understanding of God; it does not give them in the manner of a father giving advice, absolutely not! It gives it in the manner of Nature when it [Nature] presents me with a law, specifically, for example, the apple falls. Well, this is a revelation of God: the apple falls, it's a composition of relations, yes. But, if you want to introduce into Spinoza whatever it might be that exceed this composition of relations, you perhaps are right from your own point of view; allow me to curse you from Spinoza's point of view because at that point, that which is quite legitimate, you are in an atmosphere and in a problematics that have nothing to do, up close or from afar, with Spinoza's… Yes? Excuse me.

Richard Pinhas: I think that, yes, every composition of direct relation is entirely necessary in the sense in which an absolute necessity is implied, in the sense that if [the composition] is not realized, the power of the act is not realized either.

Deleuze: Ah, here, that's more complicated.

Pinhas: There's no choice; I am even excluding any political dimension…

Deleuze: Orestes had no choice… Well, yes he did! Since Nero made a direct decomposition.

Pinhas: And if Orestes didn't kill his mother, he didn't realize relations necessary for the continuation of the aggregate of relations in which he was implicated. We have a schema of "necessary" (in quotes) implication and obligation for the moment in relation to the necessity of the realization of the relation.

Deleuze: From the point of view of the composition?

Pinhad: Yes, completely.

Deleuze: But it isn't necessary that direct compositions occur.

Pinhas: No, but when a particular direct composition is suggested, for example, by an aggregate of modalities between diverse relations, if this composition does not occur, if this direct composition is not realized, that is, if it's necessity, for example, is denied, an even greater decomposition will result, notably, in the case of Orestes quite precisely…

Deleuze: Oh, he would have withdrawn. No, I believe here, you're too much, suddenly, you're too rigorous a Spinozist.

Pinhas: No, but, it's enough, it's … it's…

Deleuze: We could go all the way there, but I don't think… [*Interruption of the session*] [1:13:31]

Part 2

Deleuze: … He withdraws from his father's affairs; he withdraws from social and worldly life.

Pinhas: So, let's come back to the cases of the very, very simple figures, notably, there's a direct relation that can occur; what happens if one doesn't do it? So, you evoked two cases, either you… Either it's not necessary to kill one's mother and fine, in Orestes's case, that has even more serious consequences, the fact of [*word inaudible*], more serious, not at the level of Orestes, more serious consequences on the level of the becoming of Athens, finally, enormous.

Deleuze: Yes. Well, yes, because the relations are composed; there's a linkage of relations.

Pinhas: So, the harmonics of your power to compose, in the proper, official sense, the power of action to execute then, the physical force insofar as being a virtuoso of the drum, for example, the piece of music suffers, really; the piece of music is missing an awesome harmony…

Deleuze: It will remain with its non-realized eternal truth … Ah, yes, do you mean, do all the relations have to be realized? Then yes, I would agree with Comtesse. If there is an order of filiations in Spinoza, it's obviously not a symbolic order; it's an order that, step by step, results in Nature, since for Spinoza, Nature itself is an individual which encompasses all individuals, well, there is an order of compositions of relations, and all the relations must indeed be realized. Yes, here, we can say, necessarily, the necessity of Nature is that there will not be relations that are not realized. In fact, everything possible is necessary; everything that is possible is necessary, which means that all relations have been, are, or will be realized.

A woman participant: There's an example…

Deleuze (still answering Pinhas): Ah, with no symbolism, that goes without saying… Yes?

The female participant: There's a rather curious example from [Pierre] Clastres, well, in the chronicle of the Guayaquis Indians, when at one moment, he describes a woman whose child has been killed, and the father learns which person killed the child, and he goes right then to avenge himself against someone else, from that person's family. [Deleuze: Yes] And it's quite curious because it continues like that, let's say, about three or four times, and we don't know where this is taking place, but there comes a moment when that stops, that is, it could well continue, and fine, in a tribe, one could very well think that…

Deleuze: Yes, you're right… That's as if they got to the end of a composition of relations, fine, there it falls, it's going to start up again after, it's quite correct… And it's always like that in relations of association. You proceed little by little and then comes a moment when the relation no longer goes through. It's over, it's played out due to being used, being moved, it's played out, whereas Spinoza, he's very… What?

Another student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, it is, yes, it is, the relations themselves, it's the relations themselves that have their limits of application, of displacement, these are distinct. So, they no longer have to be realized. The same relation -- Spinoza wouldn't create the Eternal Return -- the same relation will not be realized twice. There is an infinity of infinities of relations. The whole of Nature is the totality of

realizations of all possible, and thus necessary, relations. That is what identity is in Spinoza, the absolute identity of the possible and the necessary.

Here, you understand, I alluded to this history of prophetism because I was pushed there. Spinoza says something very simple on this which, besides, will be taken up again by Nietzsche, by all those authors of whom one can say that they are, in this sense, those who have pushed positivism as far as possible. And here, I won't retreat concerning Spinoza even when facing a word like *physicalism.* They went quite far in this direction because, there we are, broadly speaking, there is the idea that they create: they say, okay, there are laws. These laws are laws of Nature. Thus, when one speaks of divine revelation, there is absolutely nothing mysterious, nor religious in that. Divine revelation is the exposition of laws. And you see what Spinoza calls a law: a law is a composition of relations. In a law, you always have a composition of relations, and this is what you call a law. And this is what will be called a "law of nature".

Now, Spinoza says, "people are limited" (*borné*). So, when one is quite limited -- and this he says explicitly in the *Theological-Political Treatise* -- when one is quite limited, one doesn't understand laws as laws. So, how does one understand them? I'm told, take a little child in school. The teacher reveals to him: 2 + 2 = 4, 2 + 2 = 4. This is typically a composition of relations. You have the relation 2 + 2, you have the relation 4, and you have, relation of identity between the relation 2 + 2 and the relation 4. So fine, the little child doesn't understand at all. When you don't understand at all, how do you hear the law? You hear it as an order. You hear it as a commandment. The little child says, oh la la, euh, better not forget that! 2 + 2 = 4, 2 + 2 = 4, and he's understood nothing; he understands the law of nature as a moral law. YOU HAVE TO! And if you say anything different, you'll be punished.

Fine, you'll tell me, but this is true, that's how it goes. That's how it goes as a function of our limited understanding. If we were to grasp the laws as what they are, as compositions of relations, and as physical compositions of relations, compositions of bodies, if we were to grasp laws as compositions of relations between bodies, notions as strange as command and obedience, but would remain completely unknown to us, it's to the extent that we perceive a law that we don't comprehend, that we apprehend it as an order. "You'll do this." God forbade Adam absolutely nothing, Spinoza explains. He revealed a law to him, namely that the apple is composed with a relation that excludes my constitutive relation. Therefore, it's a law of nature, exactly like arsenic induces parts of the blood to take on another relation. Adam comprehends nothing of any of this, and instead of grasping it as a law, he grasps it as one of God's prohibitions.

So, when I grasp things under the form command-obedience, instead of grasping them as compositions of relations, at that very moment, yes, I start saying, "ah, it's the father," "ah, God is like a father", and obviously, I transmit, and also, I demand a sign. This is what the analysis of prophetism is for Spinoza; for Spinoza, I was telling you, the prophet is essentially someone who, not grasping the laws of nature, will just say constantly, "where is the sign that guarantees to me that the order is just?" And in fact, if I don't understand that 2 + 2 = 4, that this determines a composition of relations, I understand that as an order, "forbidden to say 2 + 2 = 5." As I

comprehend nothing in the law, I demand, on the other hand, a sign in order to be sure that what I am ordered to do, well, is really what I am ordered to do.

So, the prophet is called upon by God, as we are told in the Old Testament. He doesn't understand at all. His first reaction is: "God, give me a sign that it is really you who speaks to me," and then, when the prophet has the sign, he is going to emit signs. This will be the language of signs. And what is the language of signs linked to? Perhaps you are going to understand better what Spinoza means. He really opposes – I believe that it's even one of the strongest points, which would be one of the most modern points in Spinoza – in what sense is he a positivist? Today, we'd say that this is a very, very odd form of logical positivism, and physical, physical-logical. He opposes expression and sign, why?

He says all the time, God expresses, attributes express, modes express. But precisely, he opposes that to the sign. This is because the sign is always – we'll say in scholarly logical language – the sign is always *equivocal*. There is an equivocity of the sign, that is, that the sign signifies, but it signifies in several senses. [*Pause*] In contrast, expression is uniquely and completely *univocal*. It's the sense, there is only one single sense of the expression: it's the sense according to which relations are composed. [*Pause*]

As a result, if I wanted to summarize literally one of the theses of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, I'd say: God expresses, according to Spinoza. God proceeds by expressions and never by signs. There would be as if two languages, a false language that is the language of signs, a true language which is that of expression. The language of expression is that of the composition of relations to infinity. So, all that Spinoza will consent to is the fact that, precisely because we are not philosophers, because our understanding is limited, etc. etc., we always have need of certain signs. Signs are a vital necessity because we comprehend only a very few of the things in the world. So, there's a vital necessity of signs. That's the way Spinoza justifies society. Society is the introduction (*instauration*) of the minimum of signs indispensable to life. So, there are indeed relations of obedience and command. Well yes, if one has knowledge (*connaissance*), there would be no need to obey or command. But it happens that one has a very limited knowledge.

Thus, all one can ask of those who command and obey is not to meddle with knowledge. As a result, all obedience and commandment bearing on knowledge is null and void. This is what Spinoza expresses on a very beautiful page of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, namely that there is only one absolutely inalienable freedom, and that is the freedom of thought, there, in a text which, for his era, is very, very daring. If you will, the two domains, if there is a symbolic domain, it is that of the order of commandment and obedience. That's the domain of the symbolic. The domain of spirits, that's what the domain of signs is. The domain of knowledge is another domain, the domain of relations, that is, of univocal expressions. [*End of the Web Deleuze translation*]

Despite everything, why is a minimum of symbolism necessary? A minimum of symbolism is necessary because your knowledge (*connaissance*) is strangely finite, limited, and moreover, you have to live before you've perfected it. But, an immediately consequential path is that any order,

any commandment, any obedience within the domain of knowledge is null and void. For the rest, obeying as regards practice, actions, yes oh yes, and after all, the signs of a society, so the social problem will be posed how, the political problem, what is the political regime in which signs are less toxic, that is, infringe less, infringe the least on the power of thought, and create for us the fewest stupidities (*bêtises*) possible, that is, leave all the chances for the free man? And the final answer is that it's democracy in the end [that is] the most satisfying regime. Fine, but this doesn't go any farther (*ça ne dépasse pas ça*).

So, you see, in this sense, yes, I'm correcting somewhat what I just said. I am maintaining that, for Spinoza in the domain of knowledge, any symbolic relation is absolute excluded, rejected, eliminated, the sole permanent dimension of symbolism is prophetic or social signs, and prophetic and social signs, well yes, it's preferably necessary to have the fewest prophetic signs possible. This is necessary because we aren't directed by reason. If we were directed by reason, that is, by the power of thought or of knowing, there would be no need for signs of any sort. So, in this sense, he goes all the way to saying, ah, well yes, Christ is fine, that is, [saying] as a non-Christian, as a Jew excommunicated from his synagogue, he then presents an image of Christ that is rather close to the one Nietzsche presents later. You know, this is a process that consists in imagining, in trying to separate a kind of personality of Christ, the person of Christ independently from the Church.

He says, yes, well yes, Christ is one of the kindest and wisest men who had ever lived on earth. The Churches created something abominable, something quite awful about him, according to Spinoza, but he speaks constantly of Christ – oh, well, not constantly – he speaks occasionally about Christ or about divine understanding. Christ is divine understanding there, in two senses, because it's through Christ that revelation of relations flows, and he'll says this quite willingly, but on the other hand, Christ is straddling two things. It's Christ who creates an economy of the most reasonable signs, in the end, that allow us to live the best. He has a bizarre personal Christianism, Spinoza, something very odd. Finally, all that is complicated.

Good, so there we are, but we haven't finished. What time is it? Noon? Are you tired? A small break? No? No, so I'll stop very soon today.

Georges Comtesse: Would you say that infinitely infinite substance is the expression (*exprimé*) of univocal expressions? [*Pause*]

Deleuze: No, because that would make it – I don't know what you'd say to this but – that would make it, in my view, that would make it, if I take up your very formulation, "substance is the expression (*exprimé*) of expressions," then, expressions would be, if I understand well, modes, and in fact, modes are expressions. Modes are expressions of substance. And that would contain a danger, I believe; the danger would be to make of substance something dispassionate and… almost passive. So, this formulation, "substance is the expression of expressions," in my view, could only be presented, it could only be maintained if you become involved at the same time in an analysis of what you are calling "expression" (*exprimé*), in which finally it would be the "expression" (*exprimé*) that would be truly active within expressions. So, that seems dangerous to me because at that point, we'd greatly have to change the spontaneous sense of "expression"

(*exprimé*). In listening to you, I get the impression that "it's the expression of expressions" means: that results from expressions, the substance of which does not result from modes. It is [substance] that produces modes, so there, it's an "expression" (*exprimé*) that, in the end, would constitute expressions. In this sense, it's possible to say that, yes…

Comtesse: Or that substance might be the inexpressible of signs.

Deleuze: No, because there, once again, if you allow me, I'd say that this is a misinterpretation; that this is would be, contrary to the preceding formulation, this would be an absolute misinterpretation of Spinoza since, for Spinoza, there is no inexpressible by right. There's something inexpressible in fact that solely comes from our limited understanding, but there is no inexpressible by right. God holds back absolutely nothing inexpressible within it [God]. This is the opposite of a negative theology, within all that we've considered right at the start of the [school] year.[30] Negative theology tells us this quite well, from [Jakob] Böhme to Schelling, you recognize negative theology in this, as we are told: in God, there is a depth that, insofar as being a depth, or better than a depth, a without-depth, according to Jakob Böhme's expression, there's a without-depth that, as such, is inexpressible. And to express itself, God must emerge from this without-depth that continues to work it within the depth. There is an entire negative dialectic of negative theology that is quite beautiful, but which is an anti-Spinozism in its pure state. There is absolutely nothing. For negative theology, there is, at the very deepest heart of God, there is something inexpressible that is going to animate all mysticism, all that.

For Spinoza, by right, that is, if I do not take account of limits of fact of one understanding or another, God is expressed, and its expression is absolutely adequate for its being. There is absolutely no inexpressible in God. It's what Spinoza means in saying knowledge is adequate. Knowledge is adequate to the known, that is, there is nothing in the known that exceeds knowledge…. Yes?[31]

A participant [*This intervention is only partially audible*]: Excuse me, I don't know Spinoza… [*words unclear*] This isn't a very properly Spinozist discourse. I find that it's a frightening, boring and drab positivism; it strikes me as having nothing at all that's liberating. First, I find that this model of the physical, taken in an absolute sense, is utopic, pure and simple. This exists nowhere; I mean, this exists nowhere in nature, these relations that obey more or less compositions and decompositions. This is scholarly utopia in a pure state. This is the neutral world of the laboratory in which one imagines that frogs, that men, or anything at all react through [*words unclear*]. I mean that this is atomistic theory that allows one to throw away all dimensions, whether arbitrary, subjective, or in fact, enigmatic, within language and poetry, for example. When you align Nietzsche with Spinoza in a positivist sense, here I believe nonetheless, that is, in Nietzsche, he takes the risk of dropping, of abandoning also the physical world in which these compositions and these decompositions [are produced], in exchange for a completely enigmatic experience through which it is not possible to formulate other than poetically the relations of being in the world. I wouldn't want to say, but for me, this positivist scholarly side resembles… [*Someone near the microphone whispers, blocking the participant*: [For] me, it's funny, this seems very material to me] … excitement there is around biology, for

example, the dream of neutral discourse that would allow one to throw away the truly human dimension, which is the enigma… The problem in fact, with symbolism, the symbolic is nonetheless something other than commandment, obedience. When the symbolic is reduced to the dimension of obedience, this is a restriction…

Deleuze: Not for [Spinoza], not for him… Excuse me, but not for him…

The participant: When we reduce the symbolic to the dimension of obedience, I'm sorry, this is a restriction…

Deleuze: Well yes, it's indeed a restriction, a desired one, a very deliberate restriction.

The participant: Yes, so for example, in the world of animals, when he discusses animals, it's symbolic. The physical, all that doesn't exist, it's not expressed. Their language, in the end, isn't that at all. In the end, two animals, two wolves fight each other, for example, [*words unclear*] … Why do these animals within a fight willingly accept an expression of symbolic submission?

Deleuze: There we are, listen to me closely.

The participant [*It's probable that here he is reacting to comments from students seated around him*] Yes, this is of interest. The problem is that it's of metaphysical interest. Here the problem is that there is perhaps a higher interest of the species, which is not expressed, that the physical is capable of accounting for, at least within the domain of the physical.

Deleuze: I'm going to tell you… Wait... [*The participant wants to continue speaking*], wait… What you are saying interests me enormously because this is almost a proof of the usefulness of what we are doing here. So, everything you've just said interests me enormously. You've said quite a lot of things. But, listen to me well; in your turn, I'd like you [to listen] because I am speaking to you quite sincerely.

You tell me, you say, I don't know Spinoza. That suits me fine because my dream would be that this study [of Spinoza], this course might nearly be of use for two kinds of persons simultaneously, those who know Spinoza and those who don't know him at all. So here, this is very good; I'd like there to be many people who haven't ever read Spinoza. I'd like them to start reading him, but only if this is something they'd enjoy. And then, I still need those who know him as well, otherwise, … That's what prevents me from saying things that, … but fine, here we are.

On this basis, you tell me that you, personally, not knowing Spinoza, by listening to me, you trust me, and you tell yourself, ah well yes, if he's saying this, it's because Spinoza must have said this kind of thing. And you tell me, "well then, my impression is that…," and you've said two things in succession: that this is absolutely not liberating – no, you said three things – this is absolutely not liberating; second, it's utopic in the manner of scientistic utopia; and third, in the end, this kills the entire truly symbolic dimension, which is not that of the order and of commandment, but which is the dimension of the poetic. So, there we have, overall, your three reactions.

So here, please do not see any insolence from me in what I am going to say to you: among those who are taking this course, it's quite normal that, once again, there are some who have never read any Spinoza. If at the end of, nonetheless, a few hours – this isn't the first time that you've come? Ah, it's the first time? So, fine – But, if you had been coming for several meetings, I'd tell you that this is almost the understanding that we've established together: you come to a course; if whatever the topic is in this course seems to you non-liberating and rather abstract and without great interest, above all, it goes without saying that one must not come back, provided that you might return to listen to me when I change the subject, to see if that suits you. So, I can absolutely not object to anything in your reaction if you say to me, "what you're telling me about Spinoza has a non-liberating effect on me."

On the other hand, I'm going to tell you that it's here that there's a problem for me: it's that everything that I've been saying, all that for me seems extraordinarily liberating, extraordinarily concrete. So, I tell myself, for me, this is non-utopian and liberating to the highest degree. So, I tell myself this is becoming more and more interesting since, you and me, we are made the same, apparently, and for you, this seems stifling and abstract, and for me, this seem very lively, very concrete, very liberating.

I'll take up the last point: lack of poetry, you say. There are so many kinds of poetries, and for me, Spinoza is truly, within philosophy, one of the greatest poets that ever existed. So, it bothers me even more since your own sincere reaction is that this really [is not] poetic. And you invoke the example of animals. So, I tell myself, well yes, there's something that is both in this case, in our me-you relation, there is something that I failed, something that I wasn't able to have you feel, to communicate to you, this kind of astonishing gust of poetry. Because here we are, what I'd like to say on this: you yourself chose the example of certain animals, saying that nonetheless, even among animals there is a symbolic dimension of behavior, and that doesn't lead to compositions of relations because compositions of relations crush all poetry.

I would just like to have you feel, not at all to persuade you, because… But, for the others, I'm saying, on the contrary, for me, this vision, this composition of relations that seem to me, throughout things, these are relations that are composed or not, or that are decomposed, these seem to me extraordinarily poetic. Since you like the symbolic dimensions of the animal, I am choosing a typical example from the symbolic dimension. Animals threaten each other, and this menace is called symbolic, fine, that is, baring of teeth. Among wolves, there are symbolic dimensions like that. [*Pause*] In all the hierarchical relations, you know that everyone knows this, the hierarchical relations, within all hierarchical relations, so they really don't fight, and there's the male, the elderly male who bares his teeth, hair standing on end, fine… There we have a certain kind of language that seems to be a language of signs. Fine, then, there's a moment in which a battle approaches, about which it's not known very clearly if it's symbolic or if it's already moved into a real stage. And then, there's one of the two males who lays down and presents his belly or presents his neck, and at that moment, the triumphant male departs. And as all the ethologists say, this is typically a symbolic presentation. The animal poses his defeat, avows his defeat by offering the jugular vein. And at that point, he isn't attacked. The triumphant male departs. This indeed seems to be eminently symbolic.

But I’m not saying that Spinoza is right, but you cannot say that he neglects similar phenomena, to the contrary, since his entire conception of relations is created to take account of these. What is the little wolf doing, the one who offers, who lays down and offers his neck? He reveals to the elder male, Spinoza would say, he reveals his entire body within a new relation, a certain relation. Earlier, the little wolf was chasing after the female wolves. The big wolf didn’t like that. Fine. What was happening there? If I try to translate into Spinozist terms, I’d say that the confrontation of two bodies occurred within non-composable relations. Let’s assume there’s a case, a pack of wolves; there’s only one male, the leader, who reigns over all the females. The little wolf runs behind the females; it’s not going well. There are some relations here that are going to collide. The relations heading toward collision, they will collide really when the two bodies are in contact. As long as the arsenic is ten meters from me, it doesn’t decompose me. If I swallow it, it decomposes me. The little wolf, fine, he’s right there. The two bodies, the body of the elder male and [the body] of the little wolf are going to collide. This [occurs] from the point of view of a logic of relations that what appears to us to be a language of signs is established: the teeth that get bared, the fur raised, etc., notably, this is exactly of the kind, I come up to someone and I do this [*the gesture of the raised hand*], this is symbolic, this is symbolic.

What is this? I present my body within a certain relation. This is what Spinoza ... And don't tell me it's not like that ... I am trying to make, even if necessary, others than you feel what's deeply poetic in this vision. When the little wolf who does not consider himself the strongest, lies down and offers his jugular vein, admire what in my opinion is very, very poetic that has been done. Suddenly, he presents his whole body within a completely different relation. There has been a kind of change. The little wolf shies away from the confrontation of the two opposing relations; he backs away from this opposition of relations, he lies down, he offers his vein, he presents his body within an eminently composable relation. And that’s precisely why the big wolf [acts] -- it isn’t at all for reasons, Spinoza would say, it’s not at all for symbolic reasons. It’s because the little wolf then presents his body in an eminently composable relation with that of the big wolf that the big wolf does not bite him, so this is a composition. We can call it whatever you want, poetic, lyrical; the relations that are composed form a nature, but the most lyrical nature in the world.

When you only retain the scientistic aspect, it is because you cut these compositions of relations from this: that the relations are physically composed according to laws, but that the realization of the relations occurs in concrete bodies , and that these concrete bodies have all kinds of procedures, kinds of appearances (*allures*). What do I call "the appearance" of a body, an eminently poetic notion? The "look" or “appearance” of a body is very typically the aspect under which a body offers itself, that is, in order to present one relation rather than another.

Take a scene, uh, take a love scene, take a scene of seduction; a young girl seduces a young man, or vice versa, you follow me? What could be more poetic? And, if you consider the bodies, if you consider the language of signs which takes place, of course, there are signs which come from our limited understanding, but there is also something else, these are the most superficial (*grossiers*) signs, which aren’t the ones that are interesting. It's not these signs ... It's not the winks, it's not, no, it's not that. But, this is what’s interesting in the scenes of seduction when

they are sincere and lived, it is all these aspects of the body, a whole kind of involuntary dance -- it is never what is voluntary that is interesting -- a trembling of voice, an involuntary glance, whereas if it is a question, as one says so vulgarly, of checking someone out (*faire l'oeil*), that's not interesting; that's not part of a scene of seduction, but, [what's interesting] is, at each moment, the body that changes its aspects.

Because, as the relations are necessarily realized in bodies, they are not realized all alone; that's something we saw. They fundamentally are realized in bodies. I would call – this isn't a Spinozist term, but he could have said it, uh, because, yes… you are my own Blyenbergh [*Laughter*] -- the aspect of a body, it is the aspect under which the body presents this relation rather than another. And it can be a tiny hip movement, it can be ... See, take the way people say hello; it's very interesting how people say hello. No two people say hello the same way. Saying hello to someone is a good case; saying hello to someone is exactly… well, in Spinozist terms, what is it to say hello to someone? Two bodies are approaching each other, oo la la ... How are they going to receive each other? How are they going to alleviate the shock?

So, there are people who say hello from a distance. This is the schizo hello, [*Laughter*] the schizophrenic hello; it is [*Deleuze gestures, laughter*) "you don't cross this limit," and if necessary, if you are ok, the schizo will reach for your hand like that. [*Laughter*] We must not cross the limit; it would be beyond this body limit [that] relations are no longer composed. The relations are going to be decomposed, so it's very, very, very variable, all these stories.

On the contrary, there are the, the, how would I say, the touchers. The hug, the hello with a hug, [*Laughter*] uh, what might this be? Maniacs, you have to ... [*Laughter*] "Ah, you exist, ah, you're good there, uh ...", or else not, that would be the hysterical hello, that one. The hysterical hello is pure presence. You will never be too much, never sufficiently present. "Touch me, since I am present, you see I am there, I am there, did you see me? I'm here. Yes, you did see me! That is true! Did you see me? but it's me, eh, and it's you!" This is the hysterical hello, you see? [*Laughter*] We can't take any more. So you make the choice.

And, it's not just that, it's not just this problem of distance, between bodies. There are problems of the presentation of aspects. I remember a gentleman who always said hello to me, it fascinated me -- I could never find [an explanation] -- He would say hello, it's very curious, he stuck his hand on his hip. It came out of his hip. And, he swiveled on his hip [*Laughter*], and, you had to, uh ... go looking for the hand on his hip, uh ... [*Laughter*] it was like that. [*Deleuze demonstrates the gesture*]

And the people who offer two fingers, that exists, that's well known. There are some admirable pages by Proust on the Prince of Guermantes's greeting, the Prince of Guermantes who has such a dry and admirable greeting, there, that one steps back because of being afraid of receiving his head right in your stomach, when he greets you, with a kind of exaggerated politeness.

There are the ones who offer demonstrations of such joy that one does not believe them; you tell yourself, but this isn't believable, they cannot be so happy to see me; there's no point in exaggerating this!

And under the theme of hello, what would you have in a Spinozist analysis? You would have several points. A first variable should be taken into account. So, if you tell me that this isn't poetic, I'll explain myself last on this point, the not poetic. But I am saying, there would be at least three variables in the hello, in a Spinozist theory of hello. You would have the approach of bodies: this is why he can say, there is no abstract idea, everything is a question of the particular case, the relations that are composed, it's true, you have the approach of the bodies. How do two bodies approach each other, that is, how do they assess each other, from the point of view of the minute perceptions about which I spoke last time? Do they assess themselves as dangerous? It is obvious that in the schizophrenic universe, any approach to another body is dangerous. Okay, fine, so stay away.

You have this theme, so what is the correct distance between two bodies? This is a first variable. It can vary, depending on the body, depending on all kinds of things. It's a bit like saying there's a good distance for looking, but it's not the same good distance to see yourself, or to see a painting. It is not the same, there are variations in distances depending on the nature of the bodies in relations. So that would be a first type of variable: The distance between the two bodies.

A second type of variable, the aspects under which the meeting of the two bodies occurs. How do they get together? And here, once again, I am calling "aspect" the way in which a body presents itself and, in presenting itself, the profile under which it presents itself, and in presenting itself, presents one relation or another. It is obvious that the little wolf that growls and the little wolf that offers his jugular vein, does not present his body within the same relation. The relation has changed. And I am pleading for the extraordinary mobility of the human body, but also of the animal body, to present aspects at a speed – there, the theme of speed, the Spinozist theme of speed would reappear -- at a multiplied speed, the way in which a body can suddenly change speed, passing from an aspect in which it presents a relation of submission, this is a relation. Submission is always submission to something, to someone; it presents a relation of submission, and it passes into another aspect, where on the contrary, it passes into a relation of provocation.

There again, this is a question, it's connected to the distance of the bodies. For example, a guy comes up to me and says, "What did you say, you want my fist in your mouth? I say, "oh no, no, no, no," and then he walks off. He walks away, and then I play the wise guy, I say "ah, ha, ha, the poor guy," but I don't say it too loudly, "the poor guy, eh, you were afraid, eh?" Then he comes back, and I say, "oh, no ... oo look out." [*Laughter*] You see, perpetually just as the distances are changing, the aspects of the body change.

And finally, the third variable, which relation is composed with which other one? This is very variable; there are no two similar cases. Sometimes it is a particular zone, a particular region of relations, which relation is composed rather than another, all that, just in the meeting of two bodies. So, to finish with this question, let me add: poetic or not? Liberating, in my opinion, so very, very liberating that this is a manner of living. And there is no manner of living that is not liberating. If I understand correctly, when you say it is not liberating, you mean I am having no connection with this for my life. There is nothing wrong with having nothing to do with Spinoza

for your life. It just means you'll have someone else to connect with. You'll just connect with others.

But I am saying poetic or not; well, in my opinion, there too one could say that there are two kinds of poetry. Just as I was saying at the beginning [of the course], there is ontology and then there is negative theology; there is a poetry which is really the poetry of light, and then there is a poetry which is the poetry of shadow. Fine. Let's say that we can find other types of poetry. It goes without saying that if Spinoza has a poetry, it's a poetry of harsh light. There are also painters of light and painters of shadow. Rembrandt is a great painter of light. And as Claudel says in the text that I quoted, "what is extraordinary about Rembrandt is that it is the light that separates". That doesn't mean that everything's fine, on the contrary; it's the light that separates. Light can also be what unites, but it turns out that it is light that disintegrates, says Claudel about Rembrandt. You could say that about Spinoza too, it's the light that decomposes in his works. Everything is done in complete light; it is a poetry of harsh light. There is never a shadow in Spinoza.

So, if for you, poetry is fundamentally attached to a symbolic dimension, that is, in shadow, that is, to a dimension where there is always an excess, of the inexpressible over expression, where there is always a plus ultimately or a minus, it is the same, an extra signifier or a missing signifier, it is the same. I'm saying that, right now, quite simply, -- because some of you may be thinking about this – theories, many theories of the signifier and the symbolic dimension, are theories that interpret all kinds of phenomena in terms of the purest negative theology. I'm not saying it's wrong; it's what it is, so for certain, there's a kind of "Can we love both of them?" Yes, certainly, if, in the name of a third, then, in the name of a third point of view, you can love them both. But, on a certain level, it is obvious that Spinoza is the opposite of this poetry of negative theology, this poetry of the shadow, etc.

To say that there is no poetry, it seems to me very ... For me, there is an immense poetry... immense ... So, I would say, at the point that we've reached, one mustn't worry; no one, neither you nor me, is right. You, you tell me, and I have a reaction, fine; and you have a reaction as well, fine, so, what's there to say? I can't contradict you; I can't tell you that you are wrong. You tell me: all that creates a heavy, stifling, suffocating, utopian and not poetic effect. Ah ...

The participant objects: The problem is not there; the problem is… [*Words unclear; Deleuze asks someone near him:* What time is it? *and the answer:* 12:30]

Deleuze: I've deformed, have I? That was not my intention. [*The participant continues with inaudible comments, to which Deleuze responds*]: No, excuse me because here I really must insist on this: at no moment, even if I may have deformed [what you said], I did not make fun of you…

The participant: No, you objectivized [what I said].

Deleuze: Ah, ok, that's nothing.

The participant: That is, it's the same thing: the debate is about this, about objectivation. I want to be very clear about this. You opposed your procedure there; in fact, as things stand (*actuellement*), there are two clans… [*The participant continues speaking, the comment remaining nearly inaudible*] … but at heart, you have a typical reaction, that I detest…

Deleuze: Is it to me or to Spinoza that you are saying that?

The participant: What's been said surely came from a religious viewpoint.

Deleuze: I never attributed this idea to you… [*The participant continues speaking*] I didn't attribute this idea to you, but it doesn't matter.

The participant: What bothers me is that ultimately the philosophical point of view, the existential point of view of Spinoza, is the typical scholarly point of view, that is, for which the existential relations express themselves, can be expressed in complete neutrality. The harsh light [*perhaps a reference to what Deleuze just said about Spinoza*] can just as well be the light in a laboratory. [*Words not clear; reaction among the audience members*] There is a word that you just did not pick up; this one, you would have had difficulty picking it up [*inaudible words*], it is the enigma, it is the problem of the enigma. When Nietzsche talks about the great noontime, it's not about this raw light of the laboratory, this raw light in which one has the impression that atomic and physical relationships can be decomposed in a rational way. I see very well [*words not clear*] how you are trying to marginalize Spinoza's theory, or rather how you try to marginalize it in relation to yourself. [*words not clear*] You pretend that you can get rid of this monstrous mathematical shackle which was the typical character of philosophy at that time. Fine. You try to poeticize it by insisting on marginal observations about Spinoza's work. For example, you described the animal fighting thing; for example, you described seduction relationships, the kinds of hello, these things. All these are marginal comments compared to the central problem. The central problem is if in a philosophy such as you [*words not clear*], there is such a mathematical straitjacket in the presentation of discourse, if there is such a mathematical rhetoric, it is, you nonetheless cannot forget this, [cannot] forget to what extent that is situated. The scientist makes poetry in his laboratory. He will never leave his laboratory, that is, his gaze will never cease being objective, never cease aiming for perfect neutrality. In other words, he separates; the project is a total disengagement from the existential act. [*words not clear*; *Deleuze tries here to speak again*]. There, there, it's Nietzsche that does not disengage; he plunges into this abyss of existence and then there, in the abyss, one finds ignorance. And in what you describe, no ignorance exists. Your whole description was entirely developed according to a certain knowledge, a knowledge which can be objectified at any time.

Deleuze: I can only tell you two things very quickly before we are done today; on the one hand, if it is a matter of telling us that Spinoza and Nietzsche are not the same thing, okay. They're not the same thing. To say that there are huge differences between Spinoza and Nietzsche, yes. But you can't blame me for talking about Spinoza rather than Nietzsche. What I protest against, in

any case – well, I am protesting slightly -- is the idea that there is the slightest laboratory atmosphere in Spinoza. How is it, and I defend myself especially about what you are saying…

The participant: This story of the spiders, for me, that… [*Words not clear; he continues speaking as Deleuze responds*]

Deleuze: But this story of the spiders, he didn't write it, this story; he didn't write it. It was his amusement…

The participant: But it's ridiculous, this story of the spider. The philosopher who staged spider fights, there in his little room…

Deleuze: Well, he has to have some kind of fun, listen! [*Laughter*] I am just saying that Spinoza, regarding the question, did --- in fact, this is a reproach that particularly affects me – did I choose certain texts by Spinoza that are, despite everything, marginal texts, and then give to them disproportionate importance? To this, I would answer for everyone that, it seems to me that whatever the geometric device, you suddenly seem to have fully assessed why he used a geometric method. It seems to me at once obvious that he uses a strongly geometric method, but this seems quite complex to see why.

It's a bit like if you told me, when I was returning to my abstract painters, oh well, these abstract painters who create circles, squares, triangles, there's no poetry, there's no life. Yet it turns out that, nonetheless, everyone knows that they are indeed some very great painters, that is, that their squares are not simply squares, in the sense of crudely geometric, but that, by making these geometric squares, they cause something very bizarre to happen, through which this is painting, and not geometry. Well, I would say the same thing about Spinoza, because his geometric method, he applies it to a book in which he talks to us about what from start to finish? In my view, we might say something different, but I believe that the *Ethics* is a book that, from one end to the other, speaks only of life and death, and not life and death in a laboratory, but life and death as we encounter them and as they might befall us.

In this sense, all the texts that I can draw from Spinoza, provided that I'm quoting them, all the texts that I can bring to bear on this problem, "what are the manners of living?", not at all in the laboratory, but in life and in society as it is, in the open air, that is, in the light, which is not at all the light of laboratories, which is the light of the Netherlands in the 17th century, which is both our light and the light, what manner of living, what manner of dying, that seems to me the opposite of being a marginal problem in Spinoza.

So, when I was acting like a clown, in fact, about something like saying hello, it's because this is no more a clownery than what Spinoza just explained to us about "raising my arm". That's exactly it, the story of raising your arm; it includes as many variables as what I was trying to say about hello, and it has an advantage, which is to show that the composition of relations is not something occurring in the brain of a scientist. It is the relations -- they do not wait for us to be composed or be decomposed -- that is what occurs in the light of life. And life doesn't stop, and life is precisely this process of composing and decomposing relations.

Spinoza may be wrong, but it would seem unfair to me to make him into a kind of scientist who contemplates people like insects. If he is playing with spiders, this is because he indeed has to relax; we have so many relations on our backs that it's kind of fun to take a look at other people's relations. Yes indeed, yes indeed, but he's not the one writing about spiders. This was a pastime that ... And, on the other hand, a final point, maybe this [story] was false. Maybe this was false; maybe it's not true since we only know that from a third party, a highly suspicious third party, by the way, who didn't like Spinoza, therefore, and who may want to discredit him. So, I was wrong to tell the story because ... [*Pause, sounds of students preparing to leave*]

A woman participant: [*Inaudible comments on Nietzsche*]

Deleuze: Yes, here, Nietzsche's life, yes, the spiders that he offered himself… [*End of the session*] [2:06:50][32]

Notes, 26-32: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 07, 20 January 1981

Transcription (for Paris 8): Parts 1 & 2, Denis Lemarchand, Part 3, Raphaëlle Morel d'Arleux

Translation, Simon Duffy (for Web Deleuze); Augmented Translation: Charles J. Stivale

[*The WebDeleuze translation (and hence transcript) begins 13 minutes into the session, based on the BNF recording*]

Part 1

[*Deleuze coughing*] Regarding Spinoza's answers to questions that Blyenbergh asked, the first question: do good and evil exist from the point of view of nature? A very simple answer, as we saw: No, neither good nor evil from the point of view of nature, for a very simple reason, that within nature, there are only compositions of relations. Nature is precisely the infinite aggregate of all the compositions of relations (*rapports*).[33]

Second question: But from a determined point of view, that is, from the point of view of a particular relation -- since we have seen that, not being substances, ultimately we are bundles of relations -- so, from the point of view of a particular bundle of relations, you or me, is there good (*du bien*) and evil (*du mal*)? No, but, but, there is good (*du bon*) and bad (*du mauvais*). The good (*bon*) is when my relation is composed with relations that suit me, which suit someone, that is, which are composed directly with him. The bad (*mauvais*) is when one or the totality of my relations is decomposed. I am still insisting on this since it is toward the goal of reaching this ethical link, and that the individual cannot be defined substantially. It's really an aggregate of relations.

So, there is good and bad, but, but, does that mean that there is a criterion for distinguishing between vice and virtue? Notice that from the point of view of nature, there is not. There is neither vice nor virtue from the point of view of nature; once again, there are only relations that are composed. But from my particular point of view, there is indeed a criterion of distinction of vice and virtue, and that is what Spinoza answers to Blyenbergh, a criterion of distinction which is not reduced to my simple taste. I will not call virtue what I like, and I will not call vice what I do not like. There is a criterion of distinction which makes me say: oh yes, what is good in the sense of virtue is what's bad in the sense of vice.

What is this criterion of distinction? Well it's when you act. It turns out, and this is what, it seems to me, is new in Spinoza: it is this analysis, this mode of analysis of action. When you act, it turns out that your action is associated with the image of a thing. Now, it's one thing or another; the image of the thing associated with your action is such that either your action decomposes the relation of this thing, directly decomposes the relation of this thing, or else is composed directly

with the relation of this thing. [*Pause*] You are involved in an action -- there you have a very solid criterion, and it seems to me very, very new, precisely because it is not a substantial criterion; it is a criterion of relation, it is a criterion of relation.

You commit an action; well, then you will not be looking into the action to see if it is good or bad. In a sense, even any action is good insofar as it expresses a power of action (*puissance*), the power of action of your body. Whatever it is, in this sense, it's good. Unless you launch into an action which indeed suppresses, which destroys the relation of your body, that is, into a suicidal action. But, to the extent that it expresses a power of action in your body, it is good. Yet it can be a perverse action, vicious, like the murder by Nero, like Nero killing his mother.

So, in what way is it bad? It's that this action is associated with an image of a thing or of a being, "Clytemnestra," such that this action directly decomposes the relation of the thing.[34] So, the criterion -- and here I am just summarizing since we saw it in detail the last time -- the criterion, understand, this is a criterion of -- of course, any action simultaneously composes and decomposes relations -- but what tells us this is a practical criterion, it seems very curious to me, specifically, that does not prevent there being a difference. From your point of view, you have only one thing to ask yourself: is the image of something with which your action is associated such that, directly, this thing is decomposed by your action or else such that it is composed, such that its relation is composed with that of your action? In one case, this will be vice; in another case, this will be virtue.

See, in this sense, there is really an objective criterion of good and bad. It's not a matter of taste. And I'm returning to my earlier example, the raised arm, etc. [*From 13 January 1980*] In fact, it's a vice if you use it to associate it, by associating this action with the image of a thing whose relation will be decomposed, for example, someone whose head you are smacking, and if the same gesture or the supposedly same gesture, you associate it with the image of thing, for example, of a drumhead which vibrates under ... [*Deleuze does not finish this*], this is a virtue. -- That would have to be relatively, I mean, [it] must not be abstract; if it remains abstract, this means that you are not Spinozist, it's not ... But this is concrete, it is necessary to imagine someone who lives like that; here, this is a question of a lifestyle. -- Only, I suppose this is clear, that you have understood fully. We are not done with difficulties, we are not done with them; new difficulties will obviously arise, namely, there are good and bad, so in this sense, direct compositions or direct decompositions. There is no good nor evil. There is good and bad from my point of view. This good and this bad can be objectively defined. They are not just left to the taste of each individual. Fine.

But then in what way is this not good and evil here? Why isn't it good and evil? Understand, it seems to me once again that, fine, I am stopping for a short moment because, here, I am only summarizing what we saw the last time. Are there any questions? Is this all very clear? [*Pause*] It's very clear, so perfect, perfect, perfect. So, let's try to make progress within the very terminology of Spinoza. I would like for you to feel here in what sense, for example, a philosopher feels the need to specify at certain times when he has some new criteria for analysis of something. He really must specify it terminologically to create something like location markers for a reader, I really don't know.

So, this relation, what will qualify an action as virtuous or vicious, is its relation association with an image of a thing. For the image of a thing, insofar as it is associated with action, there needs to be a word; an image of thing as associated with an action will be called an *affection*. The image of a thing as an affection, as associated with an action, is an affection, and of what? Not of action, but my power of action (*puissance*).[35] It is an affection -- in Latin, I am giving the Latin word because it will be very important -- you'll see later why -- that's what Spinoza calls "affectio" and is translated, and you must translate it by affection. [*Pause*] – So, affection is exactly the image of something associated with an action or, which amounts to the same thing, the determination of my power of action under such or such an action. [*Pause*]

So, in what sense is there neither good nor evil? In this sense, Spinoza tells us, that I am always as perfect as I can be, I am always as perfect as I can be as a function of the affection, as a function of the affections which determine my power of action. I'm always as perfect as I can be as a function of the conditions that determine my power of action. We are returning -- you have in mind the example because it seems to me a relatively clear one – so, here is my action, raising my arm and I strike. On this point, there are two cases: it turns out that I hit someone on the head and I knock him out, so I decompose his relation directly; I strike a drumhead which resonates there; I directly compose relations. So, these are two different affections, by calling affection the image of a thing to which the action is linked. [*Pause*]

Where did this image of a thing come from? Spinoza is very, at the same time, very vague and very precise. For him, this is determinism: that, at a certain moment, my action is associated with such an image of a thing rather than another, and this involves the whole play of causes and effects which results with me as a part of nature. So, there is a whole external determinism which explains in each case that it's this image rather than another. [*Pause*] And here we have him telling us, in any case, whatever may be the image of a thing to which you associate your action, that is, it's understood, to which you are determined to associate your action, well you are always as perfect as you can be as a function of the affection you have. You see.

What does that mean? Only that we have to… You must sense that there's something there, that we are circling around something very strange. I am always as perfect as I can be as a function of the affection I have. What does that mean? [*Here begins the WebDeleuze translation*] Spinoza's example even in the letters to Blyenbergh: I am led by a basely sensual appetite. Ah, you see. I am led by a basely sensual appetite. Or else, the other case: I feel a true love, I feel a true love. What are these two cases? It is necessary to try to understand them as a function of the criteria that Spinoza just gave us. A basely sensual appetite, even the mere expression, one feels that it is not good, that it is bad. It is bad, in what sense? When I am led by a basely sensual appetite, what does that mean?

It means that, in this regard, there is an action or a tendency to action, for example, desire. What happens with desire when I am led by a basely sensual appetite? It is the desire of… Fine, what is this desire? It can only be qualified by its association with an image of a thing. [*Pause*] For example, I desire a bad woman, [*Pause; Richard Pinhas suggests:* Or several!] or even worse, even worse: several! [*Laughter*] What does it mean? Fine, we saw a bit of this when he suggested the difference between adultery, all that. Adultery, fine, he's just trying to show -- forget the ridiculous aspect of the examples, but they are not ridiculous, they are examples – he

will try to show that, in this case, what he calls basely sensual, basely sensual appetite, the basely sensual consists in this: that the action, in any case, even, for example, making love, the action is a virtue! Why? Because this is something that my body can do, and don't ever forget the theme of power of action. This is in my body's power of action. So, it's a virtue in this sense. This is the expression of a power of action.

And if I just remained here, I would have no means of distinguishing the basely sensual appetite from the most beautiful of loves. But there it is, when there is a basely sensual appetite, why is this? It's because, in fact, I associate my action, or the image of my action, with the image of a thing whose relation is decomposed by this action, in several different ways. In any case, for example, if I am married, in the very example that Spinoza chose, I decompose a relation, the relation of the couple, or if the other person is married, I decompose the relation of the couple. But what's more, in a basely sensual appetite, I decompose all sorts of relations: the basely sensual appetite with its taste, its taste for destruction, for good, we would again returning to the decompositions of relations, a kind of fascination of the decomposition of relations, of the destruction of relations, fine.

On the contrary, in the most beautiful of loves – even here, notice that I don't invoke the mind at all; this would not be Spinozist as a function of parallelism -- I am invoking a love in the case of the most beautiful of loves, a love which is not less corporeal than the most basely sensual love. The difference is, simply, that in the most beautiful of loves -- my action [is] the same, exactly the same -- my physical action, my bodily action, is associated with an image of the thing whose relation is directly combined, directly composed with the relation of my action. It is in this sense that the two individuals, uniting in love, form an individual which has both of them as parts, Spinoza would say. On the contrary, in the basely sensual love, the one destroys the other, the other destroys the one, that is, there is a whole process of decomposition of relations. In short, they make love like they are knocking each other about.

All this is very concrete. It has to function. Only we always come up against this, Spinoza tells us: you don't choose, in the end, the image of the thing with which your action is associated. It engages a whole play of causes and of effects which escape you. Indeed, what is it that occurs for you to grasp this basely sensual love? It's not enough; you cannot say to yourself: Ha! I could do otherwise. Spinoza is not one of those who believes in a will… No, this is a whole determinism which associates the images of things with the actions. [*Pause*] So, what's more troubling is the expression: I am as perfect as I can be as a function of the affections that I have. That is, if I am dominated by a basely sensual appetite, well then, I am as perfect as I can be, as perfect as it is possible, as perfect as it is in my power (*pouvoir*) to be.

And could I say: I am deprived of (*manque*) a better state? Spinoza seems very firm. In the letters to Blyenbergh, he says: I cannot say that I am deprived of a better state, I cannot even say it because it doesn't make any sense. To say at the moment when I experience a basely sensual appetite -- once again, you will see in the text, if you haven't already seen it, this example which returns, because Blyenbergh clings there to this example; in fact, it is very simple, it is very clear – Well then, when I say, at the moment when I experience a basely sensual appetite, when I say: Ha! I am deprived of true love, if I say it, what does that mean? What does it mean to say to say I

am deprived of something? Literally, it doesn't mean anything, absolutely nothing for Spinoza, but nothing!

It means only that my mind compares a state that I have to a state that I don't have; in other words, it is not a real relation; it is a comparison of the mind, a pure comparison of the mind. And Spinoza goes so far as to say: “you might as well say at that moment there that the stone is deprived of sight.” You might as well say at that moment that the stone is deprived of sight. In fact, why wouldn’t I compare the stone to a human organism, and in the name of a same comparison of the mind, I would say: the stone doesn't see, therefore it is deprived of sight? And Spinoza said expressly -- I am not looking at the texts because you are reading them, I hope -- Spinoza responds expressly to Blyenbergh: it is just as stupid to speak of the stone by saying that it is deprived of sight as it would be stupid, at the moment when I experience a basely sensual appetite, to say that I am deprived of a better love.

So then, at this level, you understand, it’s very… We get the impression… We listen to Spinoza, and we tell ourselves, nonetheless, that there is something which doesn't work because in his comparison, I make the two judgments. I say of the stone, it can't see, it is deprived of sight; and I say of someone who experiences a basely sensual appetite, that they are deprived of virtue. Are these two propositions, as Spinoza claims, of the same type? It is so apparent that they are not the same, that we can be confident that if Spinoza says to us that they are of the same type, it is because he wants to be provocative. He wants to say to us: I challenge you to tell me the difference between the two propositions. But one feels the difference, we feel it. So, Spinoza’s provocation is going to allow us perhaps to find it.

In the two cases, for the two propositions, “the stone (*pierre*) deprived of sight,” or “Pierre” -- the name this time – “deprived of virtue”, is the comparison of the mind between two states, a state that I have and a state that I don't have, is the comparison of the mind of the same type? Evidently not! Why? To say that the stone is deprived of sight is, on the whole, to say that nothing in it contains the possibility of seeing, while, when I say he is deprived of true love, it is not a comparison of the same type, since, this time, I don’t rule out that at other moments, this being here has experienced something which resembled true love. In other words, the question specifies -- I will go very slowly, even if you have the impression that all this goes without saying -- is a comparison within the same being analogous to a comparison between two beings?

Spinoza tells us… Spinoza doesn't retreat from the problem. He takes the case of the blind man, and he says to us calmly -- but once again, what does he have in mind in saying things like this to us, which are so obviously, how should I say this, inaccurate? -- He says to us: well, the blind man is deprived of nothing! Why? He is as perfect as he can be as a function of the affections that he has. He is deprived of visual images. Fine, to be blind is to be deprived of visual images. It’s true. That means that he doesn’t see, but neither does the stone see. And he says: there is no difference between the blind man and the stone from this point of view, namely: the one like the other doesn't have visual images. So, it is just as stupid, says Spinoza, it is just as stupid to say that the blind man is deprived of sight as it is to say the stone is deprived of sight. And the blind man, then? Well, he is as perfect as he can be, as a function of what? You see, even so, Spinoza doesn't say to us: as a function of his power of action; he says that the blind man is as perfect as he can be as a function of the affections of his power of action, that is, as a function of the

images of which he is capable, as a function of the images of things of which he is capable, which are the true affections of his power of action. So, it would be entirely the same thing as saying: the stone doesn't have sight, as to say: the blind man doesn't have sight.

Blyenbergh begins to understand something here. He begins to understand, nonetheless, that Spinoza, he… And why, why does he make this kind of provocation? And, Blyenbergh, once again, it appears to me a typical example of the extent to which the commentators are mistaken, it seems to me, in saying that Blyenbergh is stupid, because Blyenbergh doesn't get Spinoza wrong. Blyenbergh answers Spinoza immediately by saying: all that is very pretty, but you can only manage it if you insist upon -- he didn't say it in this form, but you will see, the text really comes down to the same thing – if you insist on a kind of pure instantaneity of the essence. It's interesting as an objection; it is a good objection. Blyenbergh retorts: you cannot assimilate "the blind man not seeing" and "the stone not seeing", you can only make such an assimilation if, at the same time, you pose a kind of pure instantaneity of the essence, namely: there belongs to an essence only the present, instantaneous affection that it experiences insofar as it experiences it. The objection here is very, very strong. If indeed I am saying: there belongs to my essence only the affection that I experience here and now, then, indeed, I am not deprived of anything. If I am blind, I am not deprived of sight; if I am dominated by a basely sensual appetite, I am not deprived of better love, I am not deprived of anything. There belongs to my essence, indeed, only the affection that I experience here and now.

And Spinoza answers quietly: yes, that's the way it is. This is curious. What is curious? That it's the same man who never stops telling us that the essence is eternal, the singular essences, that is yours, mine, all the essences are eternal. That's a way of saying that the essence doesn't endure. And, in the name of… but, as a matter of fact, there are two manners of not enduring, at first sight: the manner of eternity or the manner of instantaneity. And it is very curious how, slyly, he passes from one to the other. He began by telling us: the essences are eternal, and now he tells us: the essences are instantaneous. There belongs to my essence or, if you like, it becomes a very bizarre position, literally from the text: the essences are eternal, but the belongings of essence are instantaneous; there belongs to my essence only what I experience actually insofar as I experience it actually. And in fact, the expression, understand: the expression "I am as perfect as I can be as a function of the affection which determines my essence," implies this strict instantaneity. [*Pause*]

And here, it's against, it's against this, this is pretty much the high point of the correspondence because a very curious thing is going to happen. [*Pause*] Spinoza responds to this very violently because he increasingly loses patience with this correspondence. Blyenbergh protests here, he says: but in the end, you cannot define essence by instantaneity, what does this mean? Then it is a pure instantaneity; sometimes you have a basely sensual appetite, sometimes you have a better love, and you will say each time that you are as perfect as you can be there as if in a series of flashes? [*Pause*] And [Blyenbergh] says, No. In other words, Blyenbergh says to him: "you cannot do away with the phenomenon of duration." There is a duration, and it is precisely according to this duration that you can become better. There is a becoming. It's as a function of this duration that you can become better or worse. When you experience a basely sensual appetite, it is not a pure instantaneity which comes over you. You have to take it in terms of duration, notably: you become worse than you were before. And when a better love forms within

you, you become better. There is an irreducibility of duration. In other words, essence cannot be measured in its instantaneous states. [*Pause*]

And this is curious because Spinoza stops the correspondence. He doesn't answer; on this point, no response from Spinoza. And at just the same time, Blyenbergh does something imprudent, that is, sensing that he has posed an important question to Spinoza, he starts to pose all sorts of questions. He thinks he has caught Spinoza out, and Spinoza tells him to back the fuck off (*l'envoie chier*). He says to him: fine, fine, give me a break, leave me in peace. He cuts the correspondence short; he stops, he won't answer anymore. As a result, then, we can, all that's very dramatic because we could say: he didn't have anything to answer. [*Pause*] Well, yes he did; he did have something to answer… The response that Spinoza could have made, and we are certainly forced to conclude that he could have done it, so if he didn't make it, it is because he did not want to. The response is… it's all in the *Ethics*.

So, just as, on certain points, the correspondence with Blyenbergh goes farther than the *Ethics*, on other points, well… and for a simple reason I think, which is that, above all, Spinoza doesn't want to give Blyenbergh, for reasons which are his own, he above all doesn't want to give Blyenbergh the idea of what this book is, this book of which everyone is speaking at the time, that Spinoza feels the need to hide because he senses that he has a lot to fear. He doesn't want to give Blyenbergh, whom he feels to be an enemy, he doesn't want to give him an idea of what the *Ethics* is. So, he's going to stop; he stops the correspondence. So, we can consider in this respect that he has a response that he doesn't want to give, that he doesn't want to give because he tells himself: I will still have problems. But it now is up to us to try to reconstitute this answer. [*Pause*]

Spinoza knows very well that there is duration. You see that we are now in the process of playing with three terms: eternity, instantaneity, duration. What is instantaneity? Eternity, let's say, we don't yet know at all what eternity is in Spinoza, but eternity, I am saying, is the modality of essence. It is the very modality of essence. Let's suppose that the essence is eternal, fine, that is, it isn't subject to time. What does this mean? We don't know. What is instantaneity? Instantaneity is the modality of affection of essence. [*Pause*] The expression: I am always as perfect as I can be as a function of the affections that I have here and now. [*Pause*] So, affection is actually an instantaneous cut, and in fact, it is the kind of horizontal relation between an action and an image of a thing. It's as if that would make cuts occur. [*Pause*]

But that doesn't prevent -- third dimension -- and it's as if we were in the process of constituting the three dimensions of what we could call the sphere. Here I take a word, which is not at all Spinozist, but I select a word which allows us to regroup them [the dimensions], a Husserlian word -- the "sphere of belonging" of essence. Essence is what belongs to it. I believe that Spinoza would say that this sphere of belonging of essence has three dimensions. There is the essence itself, eternal; there are the affections of the essence here and now which are like so many instants, notably, what affects me at this moment; and then there is what? Well, it happens that, and here the terminology is all the more important, Spinoza rigorously distinguishes between *affectio* and *affectus*. It is complicated because there are a lot of translators who translate *affectus-affectio* by affection; all of the translators translate *affectio* by affection. That, that works, but there are lots of translators who translate *affectus* by feeling. On the one hand,

this isn't said much, in French, the difference between affection and feeling, and on the other hand, it's a shame, even a slightly more barbaric word would be better. But it would be better, it seems to me, to translate *affectus* by affect, since the word exists in French; this retains at least the same root common to *affectio* and to affect. [*The BNF recording is interrupted here; Web Deleuze continues*] Therefore Spinoza, if only by his terminology, distinguishes well between the *affectio* and the *affectus*, the affection and the affect. [38:15]

Part 2

What is it, the affect? Spinoza tells us that it is something that the affection envelops. The affection envelops an affect. [*The BNF recording returns here*] You recall, the affection is the effect, literally, I'd say -- if I wanted to give it an absolutely rigorous definition -- it is the instantaneous effect of an image of a thing on me. For example, perceptions are affections. The image of things associated with my action is an affection. The affection envelops, implicates, all of these are the words Spinoza constantly uses. To envelope: it is necessary really to take them as material metaphors, that is, that within the affection there is an affect. What is it? And yet, there is a difference in nature between the affect and the affection. The affect is not something dependent on the affection, it is enveloped by the affection, but that's something else. There is a difference in nature between the affects and the affections.

What does my affection, that is, the image of the thing and the effect of this image on me, what does it envelop? What does it envelop? A passage. It envelops a passage or a transition. [*Pause*] Only it is necessary to take passage-transition in a very strong sense. Why? Because you see, it means it is something other than a comparison of mind. Here, we are no longer in the domain of a comparison of mind. It is not a comparison of the mind in two states. It is a passage or transition enveloped by the affection, by every affection. Every instantaneous affection envelops a passage or transition, transition or passage, to what? What is this passage, this transition? Once again, [it's] not at all a comparison of the mind. I must add, in order to go more slowly, a lived passage, a lived transition, which obviously doesn't mean conscious. Every state implicates a lived passage or transition.

Passage from what to what, between what and what? And more precisely, however close the two moments of time may be, the two instants that I consider instant A and instant A prime. There is a passage from the preceding (*antérieur*) state to the current (*actuel*) state. The passage from the preceding state to the current state differs in nature with the preceding state and with the current state. There is a specificity of the transition, and it is precisely this that we call duration and that Spinoza calls duration. Duration is the lived passage, the lived transition. What is duration? Never a thing, but the passage from one thing to another. It suffices to add, insofar as it is lived.

When, centuries later, Bergson will turn duration into a philosophical concept, it will obviously be with wholly different influences. It will occur as a function of himself above all; it will not be under the influence of Spinoza. Nevertheless, I am just pointing out that the Bergsonian use of duration coincides strictly. When Bergson tries to make us understand what he calls duration, he says: you can consider states, psychic states as close together as you want in time, that is, you can consider the state A and the state A prime, as separated by a minute, but just as well by a second, by a thousandth of a second, that is, you can make more and more cuts, increasingly

tight, increasingly close to one another. You may well go to infinity, says Bergson, in your decomposition of time, by establishing cuts with increasing rapidity, but you will only ever reach states. And he adds that the states are always of space. The cuts are always spatial. And although you've brought your cuts together very well, you will necessarily let something escape; it is the passage from one cut to another, however small it may be.

Now, what does he call duration? At its simplest, it's the passage from one cut to another; it is the passage from one state to another. The passage from one state to another is not a state. Yes, this isn't strong, but it is of extraordinary…, I believe, it's a really profound status of living because henceforth, how can we speak of the passage, the passage from one state to another, without making a state out of it? And this is going to pose problems of expression, of style, of movement; it is going to pose all sorts of problems. And duration is that, it is the lived passage from one state to another insofar as it is irreducible to one state as to the other, insofar as it is irreducible to any state. This is what happens between two cuts. In one sense, duration always occurs behind our backs, it's behind our backs that it happens and between two blinks of the eye. If you will, an approximation of duration, fine: I look at someone, I look at someone, duration is neither here nor there. Duration is… What has happened between the two? Although I would have gone as quickly as I wanted, my duration goes even more quickly, by definition, as if it was affected by a variable coefficient of speed. As quickly as I might go, my duration goes more quickly; however quickly that I may pass from one state to another, the passage will occur more quickly than me.

So, there is a lived passage from one state to another that is irreducible to the two states. It is this that every affection envelops. I would say: every affection envelops the passage through which we reach it. [*Pause*] And the passage through which we reach it, or equally well, every affection envelops the passage through which we reach it and through which we move away towards another affection, however close the two affections considered may be. So, in order to have my line complete, it would be necessary for me to create a line of three times: A prime, A, A double prime; A is the instantaneous affection, of the present moment, A prime is that of a little while ago, A double prime is what is going to come. Fine, although I have brought them together as closely as possible, there is always something which separates them, namely the phenomenon of passage. Fine, this phenomenon of passage, insofar as it is a lived phenomenon, is duration: this is the third belonging of essence.

So, I would say, I have a slightly stricter definition of affect; the affect: what affection envelops, what every affection envelops, and which nevertheless is of another nature; this is the passage. This is the lived transition from the preceding state to the current state, or from the current state to the following state. Good, so if you understand all that, for the moment we're creating a kind of decomposition of the three dimensions of the essence, of the three elements belonging to essence: the essence belongs to itself under the form of the eternity; the affection belongs to essence under the form of instantaneity; the affect belongs to the essence under the form of duration.

And the passage is what? What could a passage be? We have to discard the too spatial idea of passage. Every passage is there, and this is going to be the basis of his theory of *affectus*, of his theory of the affect. Every passage is there, and he doesn't say "implicates" – understand that at

this level, the words are very, very important -- he will tell us of the affection that it implicates an affect. Every affection implicates, envelops, but the enveloped and the enveloping just don't have the same nature. Every affection, that is, every determinable state at a single moment envelops an affect, a passage. But the passage, I'm not asking what it envelops. It is the enveloped (*enveloppé*); I ask: what does it consist of, what is it? And Spinoza's response, and it's obvious, what it is? It is increase or decrease of my power of action. It is increase or decrease of my power of action, even infinitesimally.

I am choosing two cases. Here I am in a dark room – I mean, I'm developing all of this; it is perhaps useless, I don't know, but it is to persuade you that when you read a philosophical text, it is necessary that you have the most ordinary situations in your head, the most everyday ones -- you are in a dark room. You are as perfect, Spinoza will say, judging from the point of view of affections, you are as perfect as you can be as a function of the affections that you have. Fine, you don't see anything, you don't have any visual affections. That's all, there, that's all there is. But you are as perfect as you can be. Suddenly, someone enters and turns on the lights without warning: I am completely dazzled. Because that I took the worst example for me, so no. I'll change it [*Laughter*] because… my mistake. I'm in the dark, and someone arrives softly, all that, and turns on a light. Fine, this is going to be very complicated, this example. Fine, you have your two states which could be very close together in time, the state that I call: dark state, and small b, the lighted state. They can be very close together. I am saying: there is a passage from one to the other, however rapid as that may be, even unconscious, all that, to the point that your whole body, in Spinozist terms -- these are examples of the body -- your whole body has a kind of mobilization of itself, in order to adapt to this new state.

The affect is what? It is the passage. The affection is the dark state and the lighted state; it's two successive affections, in cuts. The passage is the lived transition from one to the other. Notice that, in this case, here there is no physical transition, there is a biological transition, it is your body which makes the transition. What does this mean? The passage is necessarily an increase of power of action or a decrease of power of action. Already one must understand -- and it is for this reason that this is so concrete – all this is not determined in advance.

Suppose that, in the dark, you were deeply in a state of meditation. Your whole body was focused on this extreme meditation; you were getting hold of something. The other brute arrives and turns on the light. If needs be, you are losing an idea that you were going to have. You turn around, you are furious. We'll hold onto this because we will use the same example again. You hate him, even if not for long, but you hate him, you say to him: "Hey!" You hate him. In that case, the passage to the lighted state will have brought you what? A decrease of power of action. Obviously, if you had looked for your glasses in the dark, there they would have brought you an increase of power. The guy who turned the light on, you say to him: "Thank you very much, I love you." Good. So, we're already saying that, maybe this story of increase and decrease of power of action, this is going to operate in quite variable directions and variable contexts. But, on the whole, there are directions. If we limit you, one could say, in general, without taking the context into account, if one increases the affections of which you are capable, there is an increase of power of action, if one decreases the affections of which you are capable there is a decrease of power of action. We can say this on the whole, even knowing that it is not always like this.

So, what do I mean? I mean something very simple: it is that every instantaneous affection, Spinoza, you see, how he is very, very odd. He'll say, by virtue of his rigor, he will say: well, yes, every affection is instantaneous, and this is what he responded to Blyenbergh. He didn't want to tell him anything else. And here, one could not say that he distorted his thought; he only gave half of it, he only gave one sphere, one small bit. Every affection is instantaneous, he will always say this, and he will always say: I am as perfect as I can be as a function of affections that I have in the instant. It is the sphere of belonging of the instantaneous essence. In this sense, there is neither good nor evil.

But on the other hand, the instantaneous state always envelopes an increase or a decrease of power of action; in this sense there is good and bad. [*Pause*] As a result, not from the point of view of its state, but from the point of view of its passage, from the point of view of its duration, there is something bad in becoming blind, there is something good in becoming a seer (*voyant*), since it is either decrease of power of action or else increase of power of action. And here it is no longer the domain of a comparison of the mind between two states; it is the domain of the lived passage from one state to another, the lived passage in the affect. As a result, it seems to me that we can understand nothing of the *Ethics*, that is, of the theory of the affects, if we don't keep very much in mind the opposition that Spinoza established between the comparisons between two states of the mind, and the lived passages from one state to another, lived passages that can only be lived in the affects. Hence, here then, there remains for us few things to understand. [*Pause*] I would not say that the affects signal the decreases or increases of power of action; I would say that affects are the decreases and the increases of lived powers of action, not necessarily conscious once again.

This is, I believe, a very, very… a very, very profound conception of the affect. So, let's give them names in order to better situate ourselves. The affects which are increases of power of action we will call joys. The affects which are decreases of power of action we will call forms of sadness (*tristesses*). And affects are either based on joy, or else based on sadness, hence Spinoza's very rigorous definitions. Sadness is the affect that corresponds to a decrease of power, of my power of action; joy is the affect which corresponds to an increase of my power of action. [*Here begins a brief gap in the Web Deleuze transcription, of about 1 minute*] So fine, why? If we understand this why, I believe that this is all there is left to understand. You will have all the elements in order to see precisely what is under discussion in the *Ethics* from the point of view of affects, once we've said that this is what interests Spinoza, these are affects.

Why is sadness necessarily a decrease of power of action? You see, henceforth, what there is going to be that's so new in Spinoza's ethics in contrast to all morality. This is the perpetual cry of the *Ethics*: this isn't that there is no good sadness, there is no good sadness. And the entire Spinozist critique of religion will precisely be that, according to him, the mystification of religion is to make us believe that there are good forms of sadness. In terms of power of action, there cannot be any good sadness because all sadness decreases my power of action. But why is sadness a decrease of power of action? Once again, of course, if you understand that, everything will be fine. [*Return to the Web Deleuze transcription*]

Sadness is the affect enveloped by an affection. The affection is what? It is an image of a thing which causes me sadness, which gives me sadness. You see, there we find everything, this

terminology is very rigorous. -- I'm repeating; I don't know any more what I was saying. Ah, fine -- The affect of sadness is enveloped by an affection. Affection is what, it is the image of a thing which gives me sadness. This image can be very imprecise, very confused, eh, it matters little. Here's my question: why does the image of a thing which gives me sadness, why does this image of a thing envelop a decrease of power of action? What is this thing which gives me sadness?

We have at least all of the elements to respond to it; now everything is regrouped. If you have followed me, everything must regroup harmoniously, very harmoniously. The thing which gives me sadness is the thing whose relations don't agree with mine. That is affection. All things whose relations tend to decompose one of my relations or the totality of my relations affect me with sadness. In terms of *affectio* -- you have there a strict correspondence -- in terms of *affectio*, I would say: the thing has relations which are not composed with mine, and which tend to decompose mine. Here I am speaking in terms of *affectio*. In terms of affects, I would say: this thing affects me with sadness, therefore by the same token, in the same way, decreases my power of action. You see I have the double language of instantaneous affections and of affects of passage.

Hence, I return again to my question: why, but why? If we understood why, maybe we would understand everything. What happens? You see that he takes sadness in one sense; they are the two big affective tonalities. These are not two particular cases, sadness and joy; these are the two big affective tonalities, that is, affective in the sense of *affectus*, affect. [*Pause*] So, we are going to see as two lineages: the lineage based on sadness and the lineage based on joy, that are going to traverse the theory of the affects.

Why does the thing whose relations don't agree with mine, why does it affect me with sadness, that is, decrease my power of action? You see we have a double impression: both that we've understood in advance, and then that we're missing something in order to understand. What happens when something is presented having relations which don't compose with mine? It could be a gust of air. I am going back, I am in the dark, in my room, I am calm, no one is in my face (*on me fout la paix*). Someone enters, and he makes me flinch, he knocks on the door, he knocks on the door, and he makes me flinch. Fine, I lose an idea. He enters, and he starts to speak; I have fewer and fewer ideas. I'm affected by sadness, yes, I feel sadness, that is, I've been disturbed. Spinoza will say, the lineage of sadness is what? In response, I hate him; I hate him. I'm saying, "Oh, listen eh? That's enough". This cannot be very serious; it could be a small hate, he irritates me. "Ooo, I cannot have any peace", all that, "I hate him!"

What does it mean, hate? You see, sadness, fine; he said to us, fine, your power of action is decreased, so you experience sadness insofar as your power of acting is decreased. Okay, I hate him: that means that the thing whose relations don't compose with yours, you're tending, this would only be what you have in mind, you're tending toward its destruction. To hate is to want to destroy what threatens to destroy you. This is what hate means, that is, to want, to "want" in quotes, to "want" to decompose what threatens to decompose you. So, sadness engenders hate.

Notice that it engenders joys too. Hate engenders joys, so the two lineages, on one hand sadness, on the other hand joy, are not going to be pure lineages. What are the joys of hate? The joys of hate, as Spinoza says: if you imagine the being that you hate being unhappy, your heart experiences a strange joy. One can even engender passions, and Spinoza does this marvelously. There are joys of hate. Okay, there are joys of hate. But are these joys…? We can at least already say -- and this is going to advance us a lot for later -- that these joys are strangely compensatory, that is, indirect. What is primary in hate, when you have feelings of hate, always look for the sadness at the base, that is, your power of action was impeded, was decreased.

And although you will, if you have a diabolical heart, although you will believe that this heart flourishes in the joys of hate, these joys of hate, as immense as they may be, will never remove the nasty little sadness from which you started off; your joys are joys of compensation. The man of hate, the man of resentment, etc., for Spinoza, is the one for whom all joys are poisoned by the initial sadness, because sadness is in these same joys. In the end, he can only derive from this, he can derive joy only from sadness, the sadness that he experiences himself by virtue of the existence of the other, sadness that he imagines inflicting on the other to please himself, all of these are pitiful joys, says Spinoza. These are indirect joys. We rediscover our criteria of direct and indirect; you see, it all comes together at this level.

As a result, I return to my question: in the end, then yes, it is necessary to say nonetheless, in what way does an affection, that is the image of something that doesn't agree with my own relations, in what way does this decrease my power of acting? It is both obvious and not. Here is what Spinoza means: suppose that you have a power of action, fine, let's say in general the same, and there, first case you come up against something whose relations don't compose with yours. Second case, on the contrary, you encounter something whose relations compose with your own. Spinoza, in the *Ethics*, uses the Latin term: *occursus*; *occursus* is exactly this case, the encounter. I encounter bodies; my body never stops encountering bodies. Well then, the bodies that it encounters, sometimes have relations which compose, sometimes have relations which don't compose with it.

What happens when I encounter a body whose relation doesn't compose with mine? Well then, here we are: I would say -- and you will see that in book IV of the *Ethics,* this doctrine is very strong; I cannot say that it is absolutely affirmed, but it is very much suggested -- a phenomenon happens which is like a kind of fixation. What does this mean, a fixation? That is, a part of my power of action is entirely devoted to investing and to isolating the trace, on me, of the object which doesn't agree with me. It is as if I tensed my muscles.

Take once again the example: someone that I don't wish to see enters into the room. I say to myself, "Uh oh", and in me occurs something like a kind of investment: a whole part of my power of action is there in order to ward off the effect on me of the object, of the disagreeable object. I invest the trace of the thing on me; I invest the effect of the thing on me. In other words, I try as much as possible to circumscribe the effect, to isolate it; in other words, I devote a part of my power to investing the trace of the thing. Why? Obviously in order to subtract it, to put it at a distance, to avert it. Well, understand that this goes without saying: this quantity of power of action that I've devoted to investing the trace of the disagreeable thing, this is as much of my power of action that is decreased, that is removed from me, that is as if immobilized.

This is what is meant by: my power of action decreases. It is not that I have less power of action, it is that a part of my power of action is subtracted in this sense that it is necessarily allocated to averting the action of the thing. Everything happens as if a whole part of my power of action is no longer at my disposal. This is what the affective tonality "sadness" is: a part of my power of action serves this unworthy need which consists in warding off the thing, warding off the action of the thing, with as much immobilized power of action. To ward off the thing is to prevent it from destroying my relations; therefore I've toughened my relations; this can be a formidable effort, Spinoza said: how very like lost time, how much it would have been more valuable to avoid this situation. In any event, a part of my power of action is fixed, which is what is meant by a part of my power of action decreases. In fact, a part of my power of action is subtracted from me; it is no longer in my possession. It is invested, it is like a kind of hardening, a hardening of power of action, to the point that this almost hurts, you see, because of so much lost time!

On the contrary, within joy, well, it is very curious, the experience of joy as Spinoza presents it. For example, I encounter something agreeable, which agrees with my relations, for example, I hear… Let's take an example, the example of music. There are wounding sounds. There are wounding sounds which inspire in me an enormous sadness. What complicates all this is that there are always people who find these wounding sounds, on the contrary, delicious and harmonious. But this is what makes the joy of life, that is, the relations of love and hate. Because my hate toward the wounding sound is going to be extended to all those who like this wounding sound. So, I go home, I hear these wounding sounds which appear to me as challenges in everything, which really decompose all my relations. They enter my head, they enter my stomach, all that. Fine, my power of action, a whole part of it, is hardened in order to hold at a distance these sounds which penetrate me.

I obtain silence, and I put on the music that I like; everything changes. The music that I like, what does that mean? It means the resonant relations are composed with my relations. And suppose that at that very moment my machine breaks. My machine breaks: I experience hate! -- An objection? [*Laughter*] – Well, I experience a sadness, a huge sadness. Good, I put on music that I like, there, my whole body, and my soul -- it goes without saying -- compose its relations with the resonant relations. This is what is meant by the music that I like: my power of action is increased.

So, for Spinoza, what interests me in this is that, in the experience of joy, there is never the same thing as in sadness, there is not at all an investment -- and we'll see why -- there is not at all an investment of one hardened part which would mean that a certain quantity of power of action is subtracted from my power (*pouvoir*). That doesn't occur, why? Because when the relations are composed, the two things of which the relations are composed, form a superior individual, a third individual which encompasses and takes them as parts. In other words, with regard to the music that I like, everything happens as if the direct composition of relations -- you see that we are always in the criteria of the direct -- a direct composition of relations is made, in such a way that a third individual is constituted, individual of which I, or the music, are no more than a part. I would say, from now on, that my power of action is in expansion, or that it increases.

Notice the extent to which, if I am choosing these examples, that it is in order to persuade you nonetheless that, when -- and this also goes for Nietzsche -- that when authors speak of power of action, Spinoza of the increase and decrease of power of action, Nietzsche of the will of power (*volonté de puissance*) which also proceeds -- what Nietzsche calls affect, is exactly the same thing as what Spinoza calls affect. It is on this point that Nietzsche is Spinozist, that is, it is the decreases or increases of power of action. Well, they have in mind something which doesn't have anything to do with any conquest of a power (*pouvoir*) whatsoever. No doubt, they will say that the only power (*pouvoir*) is power of action in the end, namely: to increase one's power of action is precisely to compose relations such that the thing and I, which compose the relations, are no more than two sub-individualities of a new individual, a formidable new individual.

I am returning to an example: what distinguishes my basely sensual appetite from my best, most beautiful, love? It is exactly the same! The basely sensual appetite, you know, it's all these expressions, so we can invite it all; it's a joke (*c'est pour rire*) -- but in the end, you don't find it funny – so it's a joke. So, we can say anything, the sadness, the sadness; after love, the animal is sad. What does… eh? This sadness, what does Spinoza tell us? He would never say this, or else, that it is not worth the effort, there is no reason for me… so, sadness, fine. But there are people who cultivate sadness. Sense, sense this: where does this get us? [There is] this denunciation which is going to run throughout the *Ethics*, namely: there are people who are so devoid of powers of action (*tellement impuissant*) that they are the ones who are dangerous, they are the ones who seize power (*pouvoir*). And they can seize power (*pouvoir*) given how distant are the notions of power of action and of power (*pouvoir*). The people of power (*pouvoir*) are the impotent (*impuissant*) who can only construct their power (*pouvoir*) on the sadness of others. They need sadness. They need sadness. In fact, they can only reign over slaves, and the slave is precisely the regime of the decrease of power of action.

There are people, right, who can only reign, who only acquire power (*pouvoir*) by way of sadness and by instituting a regime of sadness of the type: "repent", of the type "hate someone", and "if you don't have anyone to hate, hate yourself," etc., everything that Spinoza diagnoses as a kind of immense culture of sadness, the valorization of sadness, all of those who tell you: if you don't pass by way of sadness, you will not flourish. And, for Spinoza, this is an abomination. And if he writes an *Ethics*, it is in order to say: no! No! Everything you want, everything you want, but not this. So, yes, in fact, good = joy, bad = sadness.

But I am saying, what is… Yes, I was saying, I have a problem there that I've lost in… I was saying, we have to see. Distinction… distinction what? [*Students near Deleuze help him find the lecture thread*] Distinction between basely sensual instinct and… Ah, yes, the basely sensual appetite, there we are. The basely sensual appetite, you see now, and the most beautiful of loves, the most beautiful of loves, this is not at all a spiritual thing, but not at all. It is when an encounter works, as one says, when it functions well. What does that mean? It's functionalism, but a very beautiful functionalism. What does that mean?

But that means that ideally, it is never like this completely because there are always local forms of sadness; Spinoza is not unaware of that, of course, there are always forms of sadness. The question is not if there is or if there isn't. The question is the value that you give to them, that is, the indulgence that you grant them. The more you grant them indulgence, that is, the more you

invest your power of action in order to invest the trace of the thing, the more you will lose power of action.

So, in a happy love, in a love of joy, what happens? You compose a maximum of relations with a maximum of relations of the other, bodily, perceptual, all kinds of natures. Of course, bodily, yes, why not; but perceptive also. Ah yes? We're going to listen to some music? Fine, let's listen to some music! In a certain way, one never stops inventing, understand. When I was speaking of a third individual that… of which the two others are no more than parts, it didn't at all mean that this third individual preexisted. It's always by composing my relations with other relations and under a particular profile, under a particular aspect, that I invent this third individual of which the other and myself are no more than parts, sub-individuals. Good, well then, that's it: each time that you proceed by composition of relations and composition of composed relations, you increase your power of action.

On the other hand, the basely sensual appetite, it's not because it is sensual that it is bad. It is because, fundamentally, it never stops playing on the decomposition of relations. It is really the "Come on, hurt me" kind of thing, the "Make me sad so I can make you sad" thing, [*Laughter*] the domestic squabble, etc. Ha, like we feel good with our little squabble; oh, how good we feel after, that is, little compensatory joys. All that is disgusting, it's so foul, it's the most pathetic life in the world. "Ah, I'm going… Come on, let's get our squabble on; so, a session, ah yes, because it is necessary to hate each other, afterwards we love each other so much more". Spinoza vomits when…, In the end, that makes… He tells himself: what is going on with these crazy people? If they did this, again for themselves, but these are contagious people, these are propagators. They won't let go of you until they have inoculated you with their sadness. What's more, they treat you as idiots if you tell them that you don't understand, that it is not your thing. They tell you that this is the true life. And the more that they wallow in their squabble, their stupidity, their anguish, and all that, their "oooh", the more that they hold on to you, the more that they inoculate you if they can hold on to you, then they pass it on to you.[36]

Claire Parnet: Richard would like you to speak about appetite… [*She laughs as she makes this joking suggestion*]

Deleuze: Of the composition of relations?! [*Laughter*] I've said everything on the composition of relations because, understand, above all… I don't have that much to say because this is really… That doesn't consist in… The misinterpretation would be to believe [it's] "Let's go look for a third individual of which we would only be the parts". Not at all, this does not preexist, nor does the manner in which relations are decomposed. That preexists in Nature since Nature is everything, but from your point of view, it is very complicated. Here we are going to see what problems this poses for Spinoza because all this is very concrete all the same, about manners of living, how does one live? You don't know beforehand which are the relations. [*Interruption of the BNF recording; Web Deleuze continues*] [1:24:58]

Part 3

For example, you are not necessarily going to find your own music. I mean: it is not scientific, in what sense? You don't have a scientific knowledge of relations which would allow you to say:

“there is the woman or the man who I must have”. [*Return to BNF recording*] We go along feeling our way, we go along blindly, that works, that doesn't work, etc. … And how to explain that there are people who only get involved with things in which they’re aware that it’s not going to work out? [*Laughter*] These are the people of sadness, they are the cultivators of sadness, because they think that that it’s here, the basis (*fond*) of existence.

Otherwise, the long apprenticeship by which, as a function of the foreboding of my constituent relations, I vaguely apprehend first what agrees with me and what doesn't agree with me. You will tell me: “If this is in order to end up there, this isn’t, this isn’t strong.” Nothing but the expression: “Don’t do it, above all, don't do what doesn't agree with you”; no, well, Spinoza’s didn’t say it first, for starters, … But the proposition doesn’t mean anything, “do what doesn't agree with you”, if you take it out of all context, if you bring it as the conclusion of this conception -- that I find very grandiose – of relations which are composed, etc. How is someone very concrete going to lead his existence in such a manner that he is going to acquire a kind of affection, of affect, or of foreboding of the relations which agree with him, of the relations which don't agree with him, of situations where he must withdraw, of situations where he must engage himself, etc.? It’s no longer at all: “one must do this”, it is no longer at all the domain of morality. One doesn’t have to do anything at all, right, one doesn’t have to do anything at all. One must find, one must find one’s thing, that is, not at all to withdraw; one must invent the superior individualities into which I can enter as a part, for these individualities do not preexist.

All that I meant… You see in what sense this takes on, I believe, a concrete signification, the two expressions take on a concrete signification, the two expressions: increase in power of action, decrease in power of action. These are the two basic affects. So, if I group together the aggregate – before asking you… what you think of all this – if I group together the Spinozist doctrine that we can call ethics, I would say – good, here, provided that we can use a more complicated term, but this allows me to regroup this – there is a sphere of belonging of essence. This sphere of belonging for the moment includes – we’ll see that this will get even more complicated – for the moment includes three dimensions: essence is eternal, essence is eternal, what does it mean? Your essence is eternal, your singular essence, that is, your own essence in particular, what does this mean? For the moment, we can only give one sense to this expression, namely: you are a degree of power of action. You are a degree of power of action: this is what Spinoza means when he says, verbatim: I am a part – *pars* – I am a part of the power (*puissance*) of God. I am a part of the power (*puissance*) of God, that means, literally: I am a degree of power of action. Immediate objection: I am a degree of power of action, fine, but after all: me as a baby, little kid… adult, old man, this is not the same degree of power of action; therefore, it varies, my degree of power of action. Okay, let’s leave that aside.

How, why does this degree of power of action have, we’ll say, a latitude? [*Pause*] It has a latitude. Ok, but I am saying, on the whole, I am a degree of power of action, and it is in this sense that I am eternal. No one has the same degree of power of action as another. Fine -- you see, we will have need of this later – at the extreme, this is a quantitative conception of individuation. But it is a special quantity since it is a quantity of power of action. A quantity of power of action, we have always called this an intensity. Fine. It is to this and to this alone that Spinoza assigns the term “eternity”. I am a degree of power (*puissance*) of God, that means, I am eternal.

Second sphere of belonging: I have instantaneous affections. We saw this, it is the dimension of instantaneity. According to this dimension, the relations compose or don't compose. [*Pause*] It is the dimension of *affectio*: composition or decomposition between things. [*Pause*]

Third sphere of… Third dimension of belonging: the affects, notably, each time that an affection realizes my power of action, and it realizes it as perfectly as it can, as perfectly as is possible. The affection, in fact, that is, the sphere, the belonging 2, realizes my power of action; it realizes my power of action, and it realizes my power of action as perfectly as it can, as a function of the circumstances, according to here and now. It realizes my power here and now, as a function of my relations with things. Within the third dimension, each time an affection realizes my power of action, it doesn't do it without my power of action increasing or decreasing. This is the sphere of the affect. So, my power of action is an eternal degree; this doesn't prevent it from ceaselessly, within duration, increasing and decreasing. This same power of action, which is eternal in itself, doesn't stop increasing and decreasing, that is varying in duration.

How to understand this, after all? Well, understanding this, after all, is not difficult. If you reflect, I have just said: essence is a degree of power of action, that is: if it is a quantity, it is an intensive quantity. But an intensive quantity is not at all like an extensive quantity. An intensive quantity is inseparable from a threshold, that is, an intensive quantity is fundamentally, in itself, already a difference. The intensive quantity is made of differences. Does Spinoza go so far as to say something like this?

Here, I am opening a parenthesis solely… of pseudo scholarship because it is important since... I can say, I can say that Spinoza, first of all, said explicitly *pars potentiae*, part of power (*puissance*). He says that "our essence is a part of our divine power" (*puissance*). I am saying, it is not a question of forcing the texts. By saying part of power (*puissance*), this is not an extensive part; it is obviously an intensive part. I am still pointing out -- so in the domain of scholarship, but here I need it in order to justify everything that I'm saying -- that in the Scholastics of the Middle Age, the equality of two terms is absolutely current: *gradus* or *pars*, part or degree. Now, the degrees are very special parts, they are intensive parts. Fine, this is the first point.

Second point: I point out that in letter XII to Meyer, a gentleman named [Louis] Meyer, there is a text that we will surely see the next time because it will allow us to draw conclusions on individuality. I point it out from starting now -- and I would like, for the next time, those who have the correspondence of Spinoza to have read the letter to Meyer, which is a famous letter, which is concerned with the infinite – well then, in this letter, Spinoza develops a very bizarre, very curious geometrical example. And he made this geometrical example the object of all sorts of commentaries, and it looked quite bizarre. And Leibniz, who was himself a very great mathematician, who had knowledge of the letter to Meyer, declared that he particularly admired Spinoza for this geometrical example which showed that Spinoza understood things that even his contemporaries didn't understand, said Leibniz. So, the text is all the more interesting with Leibniz's benediction.

Here is the figure that Spinoza proposes for our reflection: two circles of which one is inside the other, but above all they are not concentric. You see, eh? – I would have drag myself over to the

board, and I cannot, … If there were someone in the back and could move up, well, that would be great… Two [non-]concentric circles of which one is inside the other. [*Pause; Deleuze directs the student volunteer who is writing on the board*] That's perfect, you see now. And then, you mark, would you just mark, the greatest distance and the smallest one, … from one circle to the other… That's it… and the smallest… Perfect![37]

You see, do you understand the figure? Here is what Spinoza tells us. Spinoza tells us something very interesting, it seems to me, he tells us: in the case of this double figure, you cannot say that you don't have a limit or threshold. You have a threshold; you have a limit. You even have two limits: the outer circle, the inner circle, or what comes down to the same thing, the greatest distance from one circle to the other, or the least distance. You have a maximum and a minimum. And he says: consider the sum – here, the Latin text is very important – "consider the sum of the inequalities of distance."

You see, you trace all the lines, all the segments which go from one circle to the other. You evidently have an infinity of them. Spinoza tells us: "consider the sum of the inequalities of distance." You understand, he doesn't literally tell us to "consider the sum of the unequal distances," he doesn't literally tell us to "consider the sum of the unequal distances," that is, of the segments which go from one circle to the other. He tells us: "the sum of the inequalities of distance," that is, the sum of the differences, and he says: "it is very curious, this infinity here". We will see what he means, but I mention this text for the moment because I have a specific idea. He tells us: "it is very curious, this is an infinite sum, the sum of the inequalities of distance is infinite." He could also have said that the unequal distances are an infinite sum. And yet there is a limit. There is indeed a limit since you have the limit of the large circle and the limit of the small circle.

So, there is something infinite, and yet it is not unlimited. And he says, that is an odd infinity; it is a very special geometrical infinity: it is an infinity that you can say is infinite even though it is not unlimited. And in fact, the space encompassed between the two circles is not unlimited; the space encompassed between the two circles is perfectly limited. Fine, I am just reserving the expression of the letter to Meyer, "the sum of the inequalities of distance", whereas he could have made the same reasoning by limiting himself to the simpler case, "the sum of unequal distances."

Why does he want to sum up the differences? For me, it is truly a text which, … which is important because it confirms… What does he have in his head that he doesn't say? He needs it by virtue of his problem of essences. Essences are degrees of power of action, but what is a degree of power of action? A degree of power of action is a difference between a maximum and a minimum. It is in this way that it is an intensive quantity. A degree of power of action is a difference in itself. [*Interruption of the Web Deleuze French transcription*][38] You see the extent to which… then, the extent to which we are far from a substantialist vision of beings, of beings… [*Anne Querrien indicates that she would like to ask a question*]… Yes?

Anne Querrien [*Her comments are only partly audible*]: … are inequalities of distance implies each time making a (…) you said earlier that (…) So, we reach the same types of aberrations (…)

Deleuze: Completely, completely, completely, in all aspects there, this text, … which seems to refer to something else entirely, refers, it seems to me, to the status then of… of mode to a point… yes, it isn't even through a simple integration that… No, no, you're right…

Querrien: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: At the extreme, this would be… in mathematics through a series of so-called local integrations, one has to…

Querrien: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Eh? Me neither, then. [*Laughter*]… Yeah. So, understand, in fact, "sum of inequalities of distance," every essence is a degree of power of action, each degree of power of action is a difference, difference between a minimum and a maximum, henceforth, everything comes together quite well: you have essence, degree of power of action, in itself encompassed between two thresholds, and that goes on to infinity, because if you make the abstraction, if you abstract this threshold, this threshold itself is a difference between two thresholds, etc., to infinity. So, it's quite astonishing how… you aren't only a sum of relations, you are, in fact, a sum of, of differences between relations. This is a very strange conception. So, fine, then… You are a degree of eternal power of action, but degree of power of action signifies difference, difference between a maximum and a minimum.

Second belonging of essence: affection realizes your power of action at each moment, that is, between the two limits, between the maximum and the minimum. [*Pause*] Third… And in this sense, in whatever way it realizes your power of action or your essence, affection is as perfect as it can be, it realizes the power of action in such a way that you cannot say: "there is something that isn't realized." [*Pause*] In any event, it realizes it.

Third dimension, yes, but in this very way, the affection that realizes your power of action does not realize it without "reducing or increasing your power of action" within the frame of this threshold, of this maximum and this minimum, sometimes by increasing your power of action, sometimes by decreasing it.

All these ideas that first seemed to be contradicting each other are gathered into a… into a system with an absolute, an absolute rigor. As a result, you do not stop here being a kind of vibration, a vibration with a maximum amplitude, a minimum amplitude, and what are the two extreme moments? What corresponds then in duration to the maximum and the minimum? To the minimum, it's death; to the minimum, it's death. Death is the affection that realizes at the final instant of your duration, that realizes your power of action by reducing it to the maximum. [*Pause*]

The opposite of death is what, the opposite of death? It's joy. It's not birth, since at birth, you are born at the lowest of yourself necessarily; you cannot be worse, right?… So, joy, but a special joy that Spinoza will call with a special name: "beatitude," beatitude that at the same time will be the experience of eternity according to Spinoza. Here, you realize your power of action in such a way that this power of action increases to the maximum. That is, you can translate "to the

maximum", well, suddenly, if I come back to "belonging of", I would say: under all relations simultaneously. [*Pause*]

Good… There we are, there we are… But it's necessary that this be quite clear. Do you want to take a bit of a break? Eh? And then, you will say: if there are some unclear things, I'd be happy if we… Because at the point we've reached, here's the point that I've reached: it's good, we are… This is like a theoretical outline. How are we going to manage with it concretely? What are we going to do? That is, based on this, what is ethical life? Fine, so let's take a short break. [*Pause in the BNF recording*]

Deleuze: [*Noise of everyone speaking*] You'll have to lower it down, eh?... [*Noise of chairs, of discussions*] I still see some of you talking there, eh? Fine, then… [*The students keep talking; Georges Comtesse says that he wants to ask a question*] Yeh!... Yeh, but speak up since they are quieting down, eh?

Comtesse: At the very end, at the very end of what you said today, you spoke, you spoke of the ... Of beatitude, [Deleuze: yeah] or, what Spinoza calls in the third book ... In the ... last book of *Ethics*, the glory ... [Deleuze: yeah] or freedom. Now, precisely, beatitude is, in a way, a limit for all the variations of power of action which are determined by affects as the realization of instantaneous affections. But can we say, in this case, since both affects and affections are affects and affections of finite modes as affections of nature, says Spinoza, can we say that the limit of variations in power of action, that is, beatitude, glory or freedom, still belongs to the regime of affects? In other words, can we say that beatitude is literally beyond joy and sadness, in other words, without affect?

Deleuze: Well, I don't know. I do see what I would say to this question and what, I think, Spinoza says and, uh, I feel that the answer is not, is not sufficient in the sense that we can always, uh, try to... In my opinion, Spinoza would say -- and here, I have not yet started this point -- Spinoza would say, on this ... In fact, he distinguishes ... You see, in this system that I tried to present as a system of belonging of essence, things branch out a lot because the dimension of affect, we have seen that it has two poles: affects' decrease in power of action-sadness, and affects' increase in power of action-joy. But, in fact, it does not have just two dimensions, the dimension of affects; it has three of them, it has three. And I think that gives an answer to the question that Comtesse has just asked. Because [for] the affects of decrease or increase in power of action, there Spinoza is formal: these are passions. They're passions. What does it mean? It means: "passion", as in all the terminology of the seventeenth century, is a very simple term which is opposed to "action"; passion is the opposite of action.

So, understand it literally: the affects of increased power of action, that is, of joys, are no less passions than forms of sadness, or decreases. The distinction, at this level, the joy-sadness distinction, is a distinction within passion. There are joyful passions, and there are sad passions. Fine, those are the two kinds of passion affects. Why are even joys passions? Spinoza is very firm: he says -- this is exactly to the letter of Spinoza's text -- he tells us: "It is obligatory because my power to act can increase; although it may increase, I am still not its master. I am not yet master of this power to act." So, increasing power to act tends towards the possession of power of action, but it doesn't yet possess power of action. So, this is a passion.

Now he adds, and this is going to be the third dimension of affect. He adds: on the other hand, if you suppose" -- but then how can we suppose? This will throw us into a problem, that. – “If you suppose [there is] someone who is in possession of the power to act, we can no longer say, literally,” -- that will cause all kinds of problems for us. – “Strictly speaking, we can no longer say that his power to act increases: he possesses it to the maximum. Of someone who possesses the maximum power to act, he has exited from the regime of passion; he no longer suffers.” Comtesse’s question is exactly: "Should we say that he still has affects?" Spinoza seems formal to me: yes, he still has affects, but these affects are no longer passions. He has active affects. What does “active affects” mean? These active affects can only be joys. There we are.

So, you see, the answer is complex. Whoever is in possession of his power to act has affects. Second proposition: these affects are necessarily joys, since they arise from the power to act. Third proposition: these joys are therefore not of the same type as the joys of increasing the power to act, which were passions, eh? There is, therefore, only one kind of sadness, decrease in the power to act, but there are two kinds of affect of joy: passion joys and action joys. Passion joys are all those which are defined by an increase in the power to act, action joys are all those which are defined as resulting from a possessed power to act.

You will say to me: what does that mean in concrete terms? What are these active joys that are affects? In what way are they affects? Well, these are the affects under which the essence, that is, me or you, I affect myself, it is like an affection of self by self. Affect is passion or passive as long as it is caused by something other than me. I would then say that affect is a passion. When it is I who affects myself, affect is an action.

You will notice that, for those who know Kant, for example, which is unrelated to Spinoza, in Kant's terminology, you find something like this when he very strangely defines, he says: "space is the form in which external objects affect me ”. And that's how he defines space; it’s very curious. He will say: "Space is the form in which external objects affect me. But time is the form in which I affect myself. " And Kant is developing a very curious theory of affection of self by self. Fine.

For Spinoza, then, uh ... an entirely different world. This is not the same problem at all; there are also passive affects and active affects. Passive affects are passions; active affects are the affects by which I affect myself. Why is it in beatitude that I always affect myself? It’s because, at that moment -- we’ll see this; these are the most complicated things about that which Spinoza calls immortality -- but at the level of beatitude, when I have my power to act, it is that at that moment, I have composed my relations so much, I have acquired such a power of composition of relations there, that I have composed my relations with the whole world, with God itself -- what is most difficult here, that, uh ... this is the final stage, uh ... -- that nothing any longer reaches me from outside. What reaches me from outside is also what reaches me from inside, and vice versa. There is no longer any difference between the outside and the inside. So, at that moment, all of the affects are active.

And in fact, the third kind of knowledge, which is eternity or beatitude, uh ... how will Spinoza define it? He will define it as the coexistence -- but the inner coexistence -- of three ideas: the idea of me, the idea of the world, and the idea of God. God, the world and me, eh, what more do

you want? ... But in such a way that when God affects me, it is I who affect myself through God. ... When I love God ... And conversely, when I love God, it is God who loves himself through me, etc., etc. There is a kind of interiority of the three elements of beatitude (God, the world and me). As a result, all the affects are active. Fine, but this we will see; it is, it belongs to part of a very special experience.

But as for the question posed by Comtesse, I would answer, I would stick to the letter, there, of Spinozist terminology, namely: there is only one kind of sadness, but there are two very different kinds of joys. And you, what would you say? The same thing, right?

Comtesse: Yeh, beatitude consists in affecting oneself by oneself.

Deleuze: That's it. But on the other hand, whatever affects me, it's me that affects me. So, uh ... we are not risking anything there, but precisely that involves something that we have not yet talked about: what is this story ... So, there is no longer only -- we thought we were done: decrease, increase in power to act, it was ... it was uh ... relatively clear; we understood, and lo and behold, there is still something else, namely power of action fully possessed. What is this, this fully possessed power of action? How do we reach this in such a way that there are active affects? It gets complicated. As a result, my sphere of belonging, you see, gets increasingly richer. Uh, there we are. Are there any other ...? Yes?

Anne Querrien: [*Comments nearly inaudible*] Isn't there an idea of crisis?

Deleuze: What? An idea of what? [*She repeats*] Crisis! Of crisis?

Querrien: Yes.

Deleuze: Crisis of what?

Querrien: [*Comments nearly inaudible*]

Deleuze: Ah… I don't understand. With this figure, you are saying, with this figure, everything is the same? [*The "figure" seems to be a reference to the drawing of circles*] [Answer: No] So everything is not the same?

Querrien: [*Comments nearly inaudible*]

Deleuze: This is annoying; I cannot even hear; it's, it's not that I don't understand; I just cannot hear, so it's even simpler. … Did someone hear and could you … [*Whisperings in the room*]

Deleuze: This figure ... This figure ... What is said about this figure? Ah, what bothers me about this figure -- I'll tell you; I don't know if this answers you -- what bothers me about this figure is that I have the impression that this is an example which is suitable for several very different levels of Spinoza's thought. It is suitable ... I mean, it is suitable both for the aggregate of all essences, ... for all, the aggregate of all essences, and the same figure is also suitable for the analysis of each essence. It's very complicated; I can say that; it's my portrait of mine or of you,

or I can say [that] it's all of the portraits of essence. The geometrical problem posed, Anne, it seems to me that it has several aspects. It has an aspect by which it is an infinity which is not infinite through the multitude of parts, that is, a non-numerical infinity. This is the first paradox.

Uh, there are even three paradoxes, it seems to me, and which refer, it seems to me, to three very different themes of Spinozism. And he groups them in this example: it is an infinity which is not constant since it can be double or triple, eh. So, it's an unequal infinity. Second, it is an infinity that has limits since there is a maximum and a minimum. And third, it is a non-numeric infinity.

Anne Querrien: The sum is not finite.

Deleuze: Not only.

Querrien: What?

Deleuze: Not only.

Querrien: But it's, it's the sum. [*Comments nearly inaudible*]

Deleuze: Not only.

Querrien: But the distances, they are…

Deleuze: They aren't finite either, the distance. Each distance is finite.

Querrien: Yes, ok. [*Comments nearly inaudible*] This unequal infinity is the infinite number of time that we can make the action of cutting…

Deleuze: Okay, okay, okay. And this infinity ... This infinity has a second characteristic. The space between the two circles is limited. Moreover, it is this limit which makes it possible to define the conditions of this infinity. Moreover, this limited space includes an infinity of distances. So, it's an infinity that cannot be said to be unlimited. It is an infinity which refers to boundary conditions.

Third, it is a non-numeric infinity since it is not infinite through the multitude of its parts. Exactly like ... Think, for example, there he says something very strong. He prefers geometry rather than algebra, Spinoza; he does not believe in the future of algebra. But he strongly believes in geometry. Uh ... if you take the ... if you take, for example, an irrational magnitude (*grandeur*) ... Well uh, it's the same case, it's very similar. It's a much simpler case, "an irrational magnitude". There you have themes of infinity properly ... which we will call properly geometric infinities, because infinity does not depend on a number. It is not because there is a number of parts, even greater than any given number, that it is infinite. It is not infinite by the multitude of parts. And all I wanted to say is that these three characteristics, it seems to me, are completely consistent, but refer to three different situations in Spinozism.

Querrien: [*Comments nearly inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, yes, but precisely, this is a situation of passage.

Querrien: [*Comments nearly inaudible*] [Deleuze: Yes] [*Comments nearly inaudible*]

Deleuze: You think that… Here, one must force him, eh, Spinoza, because…

Querrien: [*Comments nearly inaudible*] [Deleuze: Yes] [*Comments nearly inaudible*] [Deleuze: Yes] [*Comments nearly inaudible*] [Deleuze: Yes, agreed, on that, I agree. Yes, yes, yes] [*Comments nearly inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, but it's… it's just this that I meant by saying that it's not a global integration. It can only be a succession of local integrations there that make, euh… [*He does not complete this*]

Okay, so, listen, huh, listen. This is the point we've reached; I will continue with that ... and then we must finish. Uh! And to come back ... so ... Here we are exactly in the situation, well, uh ... All that, I suppose that you understood it, but here we are, we tell ourselves and ... although I may say all the time, "look out, it's not theory", it nonetheless remains theory.

It's: so, what do we do in life? Well, then, we are born, well, we are born, but again we are not born with a science of relations, we have no science of relations. What will Spinoza even tell us about this? He is going to tell us something very striking, namely what? When you are born, well, you are at the mercy uh ... Fortunately you have parents, right, who protect you a bit. We are at the mercy of encounters. What is it ... There is even a state, there is even a well-known state which can be defined like this: each being is at the mercy there of encounters. This is called the state of nature. In a state of nature, you are at the mercy of encounters. So, you can still live with the idea ... Oh, my God, am I going to encounter, uh ... something that ... whose relations may or may not compose with mine? Notice that, already, this is agony. And the agony is, "oh la la, what's going to happen to me today, huh? This is starting off badly, it's starting off badly". Well. Perpetual risk ...

Because, if you take a precise body, a precise body, within the immensity of nature, a precise body within the immensity of nature all alone, all naked, admire ... or rather don't, uh ... deplore this, because there are obviously fewer bodies whose relations are composed with one's own than bodies whose relations do not agree with one's own. So, this is not ... We are not winners in this whole story of the *Ethics*, we are -- how to say it? -- as other authors would say, "we are thrown into the world". But the state of nature, that means precisely being thrown into the world, namely, uh ... being in those kinds of relations, we tell ourselves ... we are ... we live at the mercy of encounters. You understand, I see something; I tell myself, that may be good to eat, but I say to myself: "oh ... all this may be arsenic. " So, from the moment in which we are not, in which we do not have a science of relations and of their combinations, how are we going to manage? This is where Spinoza thinks that ethics [or the *Ethics*] really means something. We will have to ... And, and how are we ... We can then imagine the life problems of modes of existence. I mean, in what way? Well, it's obvious; I think he offers us an outline which is extremely practical.

You perhaps remember that I had specifically invoked Rousseau, [*during the session of 9 December 1980*], as different as he may be from Spinoza, when I told you, well yes! There is a

first aspect ... in the end, the problem is this: [*The Web Deleuze translation begins again here*] in contrast to many thinkers of his time, he is one of the philosophers who have said most profoundly: you know, you are born neither reasonable, nor free, nor intelligent. If you become reasonable, if you become free, etc., it is a matter of a becoming. But there is no author who is more indifferent to the problem of freedom as belonging to the nature of man. He thinks that nothing at all belongs to the nature of man. He is an author who thinks everything, really, in terms of becoming. So then, his question is: good, okay, without doubt, what does this mean, becoming reasonable? What does it mean, becoming free, once we admit that we are not? We are not born free; we are not born reasonable. We are born completely at the mercy of encounters, that is, we are born completely at the mercy of decompositions. And you must understand that this is normal in Spinoza. The authors who think that we are free by nature are the ones who create a certain idea out of nature. I believe we can only say we are "free by nature" if we don't conceive it as a substance, [*Interruption in the BNF recording; Web Deleuze continues*] that is as a relatively independent thing. If you conceive of yourself as a collection of relations, and not at all as a substance, the proposition I am free is plainly devoid of sense. It is not at all that I favor the opposite: it makes no sense, freedom or no freedom. On the other hand, perhaps the question has a sense: How to become free?

Similarly, [*Return to the BNF recording*] to be reasonable can be understood if I am defined as a reasonable animal from the point of view of substance; this is the Aristotelian definition which implies that I am a substance. If I am an aggregate of relations, perhaps they are rational relations, but to say that this is reasonable is plainly devoid of all sense. So, if reasonable, free, etc., have a meaning, make any sense at all, it could only be the result of a becoming. Already this is very new. And how [does one become], once we've said "to be thrown into the world" is precisely to risk at every instant encountering something which decomposes me?

Hence, I was saying: there is a first aspect of reason. The first effort of reason, I believe, is very odd in Spinoza; it is a kind of extraordinarily exploratory effort. And there you can't say that it is insufficient because he encounters concrete explorations. It is all a kind of apprenticeship in order to evaluate or have signs; I did indeed say signs, to organize or to find signs that tell me a little of which relations agree with me and which relations don't agree with me. It is necessary to try; it is necessary to experiment, to try… -- And my own experience, I cannot really transmit it because perhaps it doesn't agree with another's -- notably, it is like a kind of exploration so that each of us discovers at the same time what he likes and what he supports.

Good, it is a little like this, if you will, that we live when we take medication. When you take medications, you must find your doses, your way there. You have to make selections, and the prescription of the doctor will not be sufficient. It will come in handy. But, there is something which goes beyond a simple science, or a simple application of science. You have to find your thing. It is like an apprenticeship in music, finding at the same time what agrees with you, what you are capable of doing.

All this is already what Spinoza will call – and I believe it will be the first aspect of reason -- a kind of double aspect, selecting-composing, to select, selection, composition, that is, to manage to find by experimenting those relations with which mine compose, and drawing from them the consequences, that is: at any cost, flee as best as I can -- I can't totally, I can't completely -- but

flee as much, to the maximum, the encounter with relations which don't agree with me, and compose to the maximum, be composed to the maximum with the relations which agree with me. Here again, this seems, this seems, I would say, this is the first determination of freedom or of reason. So Rousseau's theme, what he himself called "the materialism of the wise man", you remember when I spoke a little of this idea of Rousseau's, very, very curious, a kind of art of composing situations, this art of composing situations that consists above all of withdrawing from situations which don't agree with you, of entering into situations which agree with you, and all that. This is the first effort of reason.

But, on this point, I insist, at this level, we have no previous knowledge, we have no preexisting knowledge, we don't have scientific knowledge. It is not about science. It is really about living experimentation; it is about apprenticeship. And I never stop deceiving myself, I never stop jumping into situations which don't agree with me, I never stop etc., etc. And little by little a kind of beginning of wisdom gets outlined, which comes down to what? Which comes down to what Spinoza was saying from the beginning, but the fact that each might know a little, has a vague idea of what he is capable of, once it's said that the incapable people are not incapable people, these are people who rush into what they are not capable of, and then who drop what they are capable of.

But, Spinoza asks: What can a body do, what can a body do? It doesn't mean a body in general; it means: yours, mine, of what are you capable? It is this kind of experimentation with capacity, trying to experiment with capacity, and at the same time constructing it, at the same time that one experiments with it. This is very, very concrete. And we don't have prior knowledge. I don't know, fine… There are domains of what am I capable. Who can say, here, I'm not… in both directions, there are people who are too modest who say: "Ah, I am not capable of it" in the sense of "I will not succeed", and then there are the people too sure of themselves, who say: "Ha that, such a nasty thing, I am not capable of it", but they could perhaps do it, we don't know. No one knows what he is capable of.

I think that, for example, the things in the *belle époque* of existentialism, as it was nonetheless very much connected to the end of the war, to the concentration camps etc., there was a theme that [Karl] Jaspers had launched, and which was a theme, it seems to me, which was very profound: he defined, distinguished two types of situation, limit situations, what he called limit situations, and simple everyday situations. He said: limit situations could befall us at any time. These are precisely situations which we can't anticipate, we cannot anticipate them. If you will, someone… someone who hasn't been tortured, and what does that mean to say… He has no idea if he will hold out or if he won't hold out. If need be, the most courageous guys collapse, and the guys that one would have thought of, in some way, as pathetic, they hold out marvelously. One doesn't know.

The limit situation is really a situation such as this, I learn at the last moment, sometimes too late, what I was capable of, what I was capable of, for better or worse. But we can't say in advance. It is too easy to say: "Oh that, me, I would never do it!" And inversely. So, we all pass our time doing things like that, and then… But what we are really capable of, we pass right by it. So many people die without knowing and will never know what they were capable of, once again, within what's awful as within what's very good. Fine, these are surprises; it is necessary

to surprise oneself. We tell ourselves: “Oh look! I would never have believed that I would have done it.” People, you know, have great skill (*beaucoup d’art*), they have great skill.

Generally, we always speak of the manner – here, this is some very complicated Spinozism -- because we always speak of the manner in which people destroy themselves, but I believe that, finally, it’s… it’s… that this talking for its own sake. There are people who destroy themselves, it’s… it’s, it’s sad, it is always a very sad spectacle, and then it is annoying! They, but they also have a kind of prudence, the cunning of people! This is funny, the cunning of people because there are a lot of people who destroy themselves over points which, precisely, have little need of their own involvement. So, obviously, they are losers because in the end, you understand, yeah, I suppose, fine: at the limit, someone who truly renders himself impotent, this is someone who doesn't really have the desire to do it, it’s not his thing. In other words, for him, this is a very secondary relation; making a move (*bouger*) is a very secondary relation. Good, he manages to put himself in states where he can no longer move, in a certain way he has what he wanted since his limit was a secondary relation.

It is very different when someone destroys himself in what he himself experiences as being his principal constituent relations. If running doesn't interest you a lot, you can always smoke a lot, hey. [*Laughter*] So, we will say to you: “You are destroying yourself.” Well, then, fine, I myself would be satisfied to settle down on a small chair, eh? On the other hand, it would be better like this, I would have peace, very well! So, I’m destroying myself? No, not really. Obviously, I am destroying myself because if I can no longer move at all, in the end, I risk dying of it, yes, because of the problems of another sort that I would not have foreseen. Oh yes, this is annoying. But you see, even in the… experiments, even in the things, there is self-destruction, there are tricks which imply a whole calculus of relations. One can very well destroy oneself over a point which is not essential for the person himself and try to keep the essential. Oh, all this is complex. It is complex. People are sly, you don't know to what extent you are all sly, everyone, everybody. So, fine, there we are.

I am calling reason, or effort of reason, *conatus* of reason, effort of reason, this tendency to select, to choose relations, this apprenticeship of the relations which are composed or which are not composed. And I am indeed saying: as you have no prior science, you understand what Spinoza means: science, you are perhaps going to arrive at a science of relations. But what will it be? A strange sort of science. It won't be a theoretical science. The theory will perhaps be a part, but it will be a science in the sense of vital science. You will perhaps reach a science of relations, but you won’t absolutely have it. For the moment, you can only guide yourself by signs. And the sign – we’ve seen this, and there will be a moment the next time to return to look at this more closely – this is a crazily ambiguous language. The language of signs is the language of the equivocal, of equivocity. A sign always has several senses. So, what doesn’t suit me under one relation, is suitable for me under another relation. Ah, that one doesn’t suit me, but this one does. This is the language, and it’s here that Spinoza will always define the sign, including within it all sorts of signs through “equivocity.” The sign is the equivocal expression: I manage as best I can.

And the signs are what? It is the signs of language which are fundamentally ambiguous, according to Spinoza. On one hand, they are the signs of language, and on the other hand, the signs of God, prophetic signs, and on the other hand, the signs of society: rewards, punishments,

etc. Prophetic signs, social signs, linguistic signs are the three great types of signs. And each time, this is the language of equivocity.

And, we are forced to start off from there, to pass through there, in order to construct our apprenticeship, that is, what? In order to select our joys, eliminate our forms of sadness, that is, to make headway in a kind of apprehension of the relations which are composed, to reach an approximate knowledge (*connaissance*) through signs of the relations which agree with me and of the relations which don't agree with me.

So, the first effort of reason, you see, is exactly to do everything in my power (*pouvoir*) in order to increase my power of acting, that is, in order to experience passive joys, in order to experience of the passion joys. The passion joys are what increase my power of acting as a function of still equivocal signs in which I don't possess this power of action (*puissance*). Do you see?

So, the question which I have come to is: so fine, supposing that this is how it is, that there is this moment of long apprenticeship, how can I pass, how can this long apprenticeship lead me to a more certain stage, where I am more certain of myself, that is, where I become reasonable, where I become free? How can this be done? We will see next time. [2 :25 :25]

Notes, 33-38: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 08, 27 January 1981

Transcription (for Paris 8): Part 1, Christina Roski, Part 2, Mohamed Salah; Part 3, Hamida Bename; Augmented Transcription by Charles J. Stivale

Translation by Charles J. Stivale (duration: 2:26:15)

Part 1

At 11:30, someone alert me; I have to go to the main office. So, we'll have a break at 11:30. Don't forget to give me your forms if that applies to you. [*Pause*]

Here's what I would like to do today, and I would like you to understand that, today, we have a sort of dual object; we have a double goal. I mean to move forward into the problem where I was the last time, namely, once we've said that, according to Spinoza, we leave, we are born, we are as if thrown into, subjected to conditions of existence, meaning that everything indicates that, in the end, we cannot make our way through this. We are subjected to a kind of encounter with external bodies; so, there is very little chance that many of these will suit us. On the contrary, there is every chance that out of the number of external bodies acting on us constantly, fairly constantly, there will be encounters with bodies which do not suit us, that is, that decompose our relations.[39]

So, how do we manage to pull through in the end, not only from the point of view of knowledge -- since we are in conditions of absolute blindness, bodily shocks, encounters with unpredictable bodies – therefore, not only from the point of view of knowledge, but from a point of view of life itself? And for Spinoza, it's the same. Knowledge is really a way of life. How to act so that, very quickly, an aggressive body, a poisoning body, does not decompose us, does not destroy us? This is the common problem of knowledge and life.

You can already see: Spinoza has his own distinction among philosophers of the 17th century. It is that, like all, like all 17th-century philosophers, Spinoza will say very well that, of course, we have potential, we potentially have true ideas, adequate ideas, clear and distinct ideas. And no doubt, all the philosophers of the 17th century, when they said that we have true ideas, that it was in this way that we are reasonable beings, they knew very well that this was not given by itself, all ready to go. They knew very well that it took a very singular effort that they called a "method" to manage to conquer what we already had, namely so-called innate ideas. These true ideas, which were called innate ideas, were, in fact, ideas that had to be conquered according to a certain method and a certain wisdom. That does not prevent Spinoza, I believe, from putting a particularly strong emphasis on this: perhaps, although true ideas are innate ideas, from our birth onward, that does not prevent everything from separating us from them, everything separating us

from them. As a result, the conquest of what is innate takes on for Spinoza an aspect that truly mobilizes all modes of living.

So, it's that point [that is first], but I said a double goal today because, at the same time, I would almost like, not at all to assert, but pose some questions on this: what are the possibilities from Spinoza, that Spinoza gives us, regarding a modern problem or one which has again become very current in certain modern philosophies? And we will see how the two are linked; that is, as a result, I would like at the same time for you yourself to feel what I have emphasized, making a relatively precise comment on Spinoza as to the first aspect of the question, but as to the second one, almost seeing instead how Spinoza can be useful to us regarding a problem which seems to us to be a modern problem.

What is this modern problem based on which I'd also like to consider Spinoza's text? This modern problem, it's what we can call semiology, something that has returned so strongly today, and by semiology, we mean, overall, the theory of signs. And why then might we think in advance that Spinoza would have something to tell us about the project of a general semiology? From whom and from where did this modern semiology project come? It obviously came from a very important current which is so-called Anglo-Saxon philosophy, but particularly a very great English philosopher – who, alas, is translated very little in France -- and who is called [Charles Sanders] Peirce, [Deleuze spells it out] Peirce who is really a very bizarre, very deep philosopher. You can only find one book translated as fragments in French at Éditions du Seuil under the title *Writings on the Sign*. And indeed, at the same time as Saussure, Peirce made a theory which he himself called semiology.

Why do I name Saussure in the same era? Because he is very important, if only for the basic difference, because Saussure had a very simple principle. I'm not saying he doesn't complicate it; he complicates it greatly. But Saussure's very simple principle is roughly: signs are, above all, a conventional entity; signs are a conventional entity. Signs are a conventional entity, this allowed him to distinguish -- I'm not saying at all that it was his thesis alone -- it is a kind of starting point which allows Saussure to situate his semiology. That means that the sign has a conventional relationship with what it signifies, an institutional relationship and not a natural relationship. That is, a natural relationship, what would it be? It would be a relationship of resemblance, a relationship of contiguity. But there, it is a purely conventional relation. I decide through convention that a particular word refers to a particular thing. You see, this is the famous principle of the arbitrariness of the sign. Once again, I'm not saying this is Saussure's theory; I am saying that it's Saussure's starting point for distinguishing between the domain of signs and other domains. So, the conventional nature of the sign.

What interests me already is that when Peirce, at the same time, launched his great semiology -- this is not at all meant against Saussure, by the way; [Peirce] has his own problems -- he is not content at all with this conventional character even as a way to delimit roughly the field of signs, the domain of signs. And in fact, there is a remark which struck many linguists afterwards, which seems to me very important in considering our problem. It's this: when you have a word, for example, "bull", that the word "bull" designates the thing with horns and which ruminates and -- what is it, what is the bull's cry? -- which bellows, the bull bellows, that's a pure conventional relation. Obviously, we could look here for an onomatopoeia at that time; it would be a natural

relation. If we eliminate the onomatopoeia, it wouldn't go with "cow": "cow" there is no onomatopoeia, it's even impossible to find one [*an onomatopoeia*].[40] Cow designates this thing, a conventional relation. Is this true?

Many linguists have nevertheless pointed this out: that if you take the word, it has a double relation. You will soon understand why I am going through this long detour. If you take a word, it has a double relation. A double relation with what? It has a relation with the designated thing, with something designated. The word cow designates the cow. This relation, maybe I can -- maybe, let's say, at the point we've reached in these very simple premises -- I can say, it's a conventional relation. And indeed, in another language, cow is not said as "cow". So, fine.

But a word is not only in a relation with something designated. A word, as we say, has one or several signifieds. What is that? Imagine a language -- because there are some like this -- that has two words to designate a live bull and a dead bull. It's not the same word, a live bull and a dead bull. What's designated is the same, a live or a dead bull. But there are two signifieds, there are two words. In other words, you understand, it's very simple: even if we say that between a word and what it designates there is a conventional relation, that does not necessarily mean that there is a conventional relation between the word and its signified. Why? Because the divisions of the signified do not exist before the division of words. The signified is divided according to the same laws as the words themselves. We'll say that there is isomorphism. In technical terms, we will speak of an isomorphy of the sign and the signified. This goes beyond the conventional relation. In other words, even for conventional signs, it is doubtful whether one can define their constitutive relations as conventional relations.

So why am I saying that? Let's accept that "conventional" is a pretty bad approximation of the nature of the sign. How then will we define the nature of the sign? This is where I am reflecting on Spinoza in this way, provided that this means understanding the consequences. I am maintaining at the moment that the problem is outside Spinoza. We'll see that maybe it's not. Let's pretend that the problem is entirely outside of Spinoza. And we tell ourselves, nonetheless, there are texts by Spinoza, so let's try to extract them from their context. What would he say, Spinoza, about the status of the sign? Well, progressively, or randomly from the texts, it seems to me that he would say three things. First, it will get complicated; he would say three things, and you will see that the conventional characteristic is only a consequence of these things and not at all the main determination of the sign.

So, I see a first kind of text from Spinoza where he insists on the variability of the sign. Perhaps the conventions result from it. But he tells us: signs are strange; each thing calls for its own. What sort of specific texts am I referring to? To the texts by Spinoza precisely where we realize suddenly that I'm not attributing a problem to him that would be forced, which would, in a certain way, be legitimate to question a 17th-century philosopher, even if he has something to tell us about it, that it's not in order to reproach him for not having seen the problem, but rather, to recognize that he did see something. But this is even more than I've done since I am at least certain that as soon as I start saying variability of the sign, Spinoza had fully encountered the problem; by what means? By means of the problem of writing, that is, of the Holy Scriptures. The problem is the interpretation of Scripture, namely the interpretation of the Old Testament. And so, after all, if he devoted a whole book or at least the major part of a whole big book, one

of the only ones he published during his lifetime, the *Theological-Political Treatise*, to this question of interpretation of the Old Testament, which is the problem that I'm attributing to him, in fact, this is no longer a forced problem, because how would it be possible for him not to encounter fundamentally the problem of signs?

And in fact, we can say that, in a certain way, the *Theological-Political Treatise* is a book of innovation -- even today, from the point of view of a biblical criticism -- it remains a book of astonishing innovation because I believe that it has a method that, in the end, nobody has taken up except perhaps, once again, -- hence the link I'm making -- except from among those who are called the English positivists today. But he also has genius, I think. And after all, I'm making historical shortcuts here. Peirce, about whom I was telling you we should take seriously, and where does he come from? When he develops his whole theory of signs, to what lineage does he lay claim? He lays claim to the Middle Ages. And the Middle Ages, in fact, developed extraordinary theories of signs in all directions. And were there to be a crossing point, because Spinoza is very familiar with the theories of signs from the Middle Ages, and thus if a crossing point were there between recent semiology and certain Spinozist problems, that should no longer surprise us.

And I am thus saying the first characteristic that Spinoza established for the sign, it is the opposite of a fixed state, namely, the sign's fundamental variability. I am saying: each thing calls for a sign, and the signs of one differ from the signs of the other. What is a sign for you is not a sign for me. It's already in this way that the domain of the sign -- you see -- very roughly will be distinguished -- these are the very simple things from which we have to start -- will be distinguished from the world of the laws of nature. The laws of nature do not vary for each person; rather, the signs vary for each person, according to the temperament of each person.

What does this mean? Who knows? I ask for a sign, and all of us are constantly asking for signs. But what is the critical situation? In everyday life, we keep asking for a sign: "tell me you love me", it means, "give me a sign." "Oh my! you don't love me; what's wrong? Why are you looking at me like that? What did I do to you?" This is the life of signs. "You look like you're in a bad mood, you look like you're in a bad mood"; "No, I'm not", the other says; "Yes, yes, you seem to be in a bad mood." "Shit, I don't look like I'm in a bad mood! No, I swear." "Yes, you do, you do look like you're in a bad mood," etc. etc., and it starts there. We are in the realm of this fundamental variability of signs: "No, I didn't signal you" (*te faire signe*). "Yes, you did, you signaled me " "Ah, did I signal you?" "Stop it!" Fine, here we are. Who is it, who collects this kind of situation? So, this is a dimension of our daily experience. We live like that; that's why we have such bad lives. And it's from all this that Spinoza is going to remove us, and it's from this that by being Spinozists, you will be able to get yourselves out. But really, that won't be happening any time soon.

So, you understand, if this situation is widespread in our lives, we don't even notice that we are spending our time, that we are like children. It's children who ask for signs all the time. As they are condemned to signs themselves, they make signs; when they are hungry, they start crying; it's really a world of signs. It's terrible. What does the baby mean? Is he happy, isn't he happy? Is this believable? We never escape from this life. We never get out. When you're in love, it's the same; when you're religious, it's the same. "God, God, God, send me a sign." Maybe this is one

of the foundations of our belief. Maybe in our religious belief, when we have any, we collect, we gather all these scattered moments of signs that we call for left and right, and then, in one go, we ask for a great big sign that would make a huge sign for us: [*Laughter*] "God, send me a sign."

And in fact, the man of the sign is the prophet. And that's how Spinoza defines the prophet. The Jewish prophet is the man of the sign. In what form is he the man of the sign? You see, we are all Jewish prophets in our lives. The Jewish prophet, he only elevates to a higher power what we all experience, namely our calling for the sign. He raised it to such a power that all alone, face to face with God, but turning his face away from God, he said: "Give me a sign." And the relationship of God and the prophet is transmitted through the sign.

And in a splendid chapter in the *Theological-Political Treatise,* Spinoza said -- even if you only read that, read the chapter on prophetism; these [pages] are beautiful. -- For those interested in the question, the bibliography is not long because, of course, there are many very beautiful books on prophetism and especially on Jewish prophetism, but if you want to gather a very precise familiarity at the same time with the problems of Jewish prophetism and yet not devote your life to this question, there are two fundamental books to my knowledge: *The Theological-Political Treatise* by Spinoza -- there are two or three chapters on the prophetism which are a wonder – and, on the other hand, a book of a French Jewish thinker, very, very beautiful, a thinker called [André] Néher [*Deleuze spells it out*], and the book is called *L'essence du prophétisme* [*The Prophetic Existence,* (1955)].

So then, I'm returning [to the point]: the prophet calls for a sign; the prophet has a relationship of signs with God. And each prophet calls for a special sign which is necessarily adapted to him. You see, that's like the first characteristic of the sign; I'm not going far, but this allows me to gather at least some concrete situations. It is in this semiological path [that] we will avoid defining the sign through the conventional nature of the sign, because it is not a, how would we say, pertinent characteristic, conventional characteristic; when there is convention, that will result from other characteristics.

The first characteristic that we will retain is the variability of the sign as opposed to the constancy of the natural law. It's not complicated; it's even crystal clear. A second characteristic, if I search in Spinoza's *Treatise*, so I located the main texts on the level of variability, that's what he says about prophetism.

Second characteristic: this would be associativity, the associativity of the sign, that is, the sign -- and here too, it is simple; this is what I would like you to feel, that to do philosophy and great philosophy as Spinoza does, it is sometimes necessary to say extraordinarily complicated things and sometimes to cast an absolutely new light on some really childish things -- to speak of signs, these are variable. It doesn't seem to take us very far, but if it allows you to gather together all kinds of things, already this takes us quite far.

The second equally rudimentary characteristic is the associativity of the sign. What does this mean? It means that the sign is an element which is always caught within chains of association. So, you see that henceforth, this second characteristic is a little deeper than the previous one. Why is it a little deeper than the previous one? It is deeper than the previous one because, no

doubt, the fact that the sign is always caught within or inseparable from associative chains will explain that it is fundamentally variable. Because, necessarily, if the sign is inseparable from the associative chains in which it enters, it will vary with the nature of the chain.

And it is there, it is at this second level, that Spinoza situates language. It would even be very, very curious as a definition of language that we could extract from Spinoza. He would not define language as a system of conventional signs, once again, not even as a system of signs. He would define it more precisely: language is not the sign, but the associative chain into which the sign enters. What one must call language would be the set of associative chains into which signs enter. What does this mean? There, Spinoza again tells us childish things. There is an association between the word and the thing, for example, between the word apple and the fruit -- he himself chooses the example of the apple -- between the word and the fruit, there is an association. It does not matter whether this association is conventional or not, we're no longer concerned with this. In this case, it's a conventional association, okay, but it's an association. But what matters is that we must not isolate it, precisely, this association, because what matters, if you isolate the association between the word and the thing designated, you do not see the fabric, the network of deeper associations between the thing designated by the word, on one hand, and on the other hand, by other things.

And you cannot think of language, never can you think of language on the level of an isolated word. You can't think of language at the level of the relation. And here, that remark would go rather far. You cannot think of language at the level of an isolated word and the thing designated by that word. You can only think of language at the level of the relation between words insofar as they relate to relations between things. And at that point, there will be isomorphism between the relations between things -- there is perhaps, if you like, a conventional relation between words and things, but there is isomorophism between the relations between words and the relations between things -- yes, that's perfect as a formulation. I mean, in the end, it's clear. This is why "conventional" is not interesting as a way to define the sign. In any case, you have an isomorphism if you take the relations between words and the relations between things.

And precisely, these associative chains that unite things as we unite words, what are they? We can see how they are variable. [*Pause*] They are variable, why? [There's] an example by Spinoza in book II of *Ethics*, and it is a very beautiful text which seems very simple, but it is necessary to be wary about language. He says: a peasant hears the word horse. The word horse is already caught within an associative series with other words, and these word relationships are isomorphic, isomorphic to the relations of things, namely: the peasant who hears the word horse thinks, according to Spinoza, he thinks field, plowing. We are in an extremely simple, rudimentary domain, but again, it seems to me that already the thesis which is outlined through it is very interesting. When you give examples in philosophy, they always have to be childish, otherwise it doesn't work.

So yes, but what if he is a soldier? He's not thinking of a field, of plowing, when he hears the word horse; he thinks of inspection, war, putting on his breastplate, etc. So, ultimately, it is not the same word since it is caught up within one case, and in the other, it is caught within two completely different associative chains. So, the sign is what is inseparable from associativity.

You see, if it is variable, it is precisely because it is inseparable from associativity. So, I would say the second characteristic of the sign is: associativity.

You see, we have moved forward, I would say, more precisely now: conventional is only... an abstract and derived characteristic of the sign. The real characteristics, the real characteristics of the sign are: first, variability; second, associativity; and third, what is it? [*Pause*] The peasant: horse, associative series, plowing, field, horse, plowing, field. What can break the associative chain? What can do so? I don't know what. Plowing, field, God willing; there is always a "God willing". There is always so much of "God willing" that it wasn't by chance that, earlier, I was going from daily variability to prophetic variability. When I said: we live in such a way that we don't stop calling to one another for signs, we quickly learn that our very own signs are always to be started up again, so we would like a sign that reassures us. This sign is one that nobody in the world can give to us except the creator of the world. So, from these scattered signs, we passed on to a divine sign, the prophet, the situation of the prophet.

Here, at the level of associativity, we almost find the same thing: horse, plowing, field, oh yes, God willing, that is, if it doesn't rain tomorrow, I can plow. -- No? I don't know; can one plow when it rains? [*Laughter*] I don't know. -- That works for the harvest; "I can harvest if it doesn't rain tomorrow, God willing." And the warrior: "Ah, obviously I'm riding my horse to win the battle, but God willing." As an associative chain is wide open, it can always be interrupted, it does not have its own guarantee. So, I call for a remedy, I call for a sign of signs, just like the prophet called for ... [*Interruption of the recording*, 32:37; *cassette change*]

Part 2 (duration 46:46)

So there we have God as the great laborer or God as the great warrior, and in one case, his justice will be the justice of plowing and division of lands, and in the other case, it will be justice of the battle field, it will be the justice of the warrior; and in one case, I would say: "God has a sword", and in the other case, I would say: "God has his plow". And in one case, I would say: "I am the humble ear of wheat"; and in the other case, I would say: "I am the warrior of God". Okay, what does that mean, "God is the great warrior", "God is the great laborer"? I understand that this is not literal; I am not as stupid as that, I the peasant, I the warrior. What do I mean when I say, "the sword of God"? I understand that God does not have a sword. So, what do I mean, what am I raving about, since I know it's not true?

From another perspective, I maintain that this is true. I mean, I maintain that God has an *eminent* sword. Eminent, what does that mean? And if I am a pastor who leads his flock to the mountain, I say that God himself is the highest mountain -- see the texts in the Old Testament --, that God is "the mountain of mountains". Okay, but I understand that it is "eminently mountain". What does that mean, "eminent"? As Spinoza says cleverly: "if the triangle could speak, it would say that God is eminently triangular". [*Laughter*] Eminently triangular, what does that mean? Here he has something in mind, Spinoza; he's not joking around. He's addressing people who, obviously at that time, understood very well what he meant. Well, this question is one that has always arisen, and from the point of view of a theory of the sign in the Middle Ages, this was one of the fundamental problems of semiology of the Middle Ages, namely: how can we speak of God?

What can we say about God? It would seem that God is such that all language is canceled out at [God's] approach. There is no "speaking of God"; [God] goes beyond anything one could say.

So, to some extent, I can only say one thing about God: what [God] is not. I can say: it is not square, it is not this, it is not that, it is not, etc. "[God] is not": this is what will be called "negative theology". I can speak of God only in the mode of negation. Can I say God exists? Even at the extreme, I would say -- and how far the mystics have gone down this path -- at the extreme, I would say: "God does not exist". Why would I say, "God does not exist"? Because God goes beyond "existence" in as much as it goes beyond the triangular figure; and "existence" is such a predicate that it remains inferior, inadequate to [God]. So, literally, God does not exist. Or if I say God exists, I will say, "Yes, [God] exists, but eminently". Eminently, that means, literally, in a higher sense, in another sense, in a higher sense.

But then, was it true what I said earlier about negative theology, namely that it speaks of God only by negation? It tells us what God is not, and it cannot say anything other than what God is not; I cannot even say: "it is good, God", [God] is so far beyond goodness. Okay, but this is only a first aspect of negative theology, because I say through negative theology what God is not. Okay, but what it is not is what it is: "it is what it is not". How does that work, "it is that what it is not"? Answer: yes, it is eminently what it is not, it is so "eminently", that is, what it is not in a sense, it is, "eminently ", that is, in a sense superior to the sense that it is not. God does not exist; that means God exists, but precisely it exists "eminently", that is, in another sense than all the existences that the world presents to me, in a "superior" sense. God is not good; that means it is good, but it is good in an eminent sense such that all the goodness of the earth gives us only a very vague idea since [God] is infinitely good, and we are familiar with good things only as good things according to their finiteness. You follow me?

So, here we have negative theology inventing a whole language in which negation is affirmation because affirmation is eminent affirmation. Consequently, the sign, the words of this language, will basically have several meanings. [*Pause*] And here again, let's go back to the most everyday situation. You see, each of these dimensions of the sign has two aspects: daily life and the exceptional situation. If the negative theologian represents the exceptional situation from this point of view, well, in our daily life, we do not stop -- words have several meanings, words have several meanings, they have many meanings – so, I spend my time when I speak saying: ah, yes! okay, but in what sense are you saying that? Let's go back to negative theology, which, ultimately, is like the magnification of this situation. You see, I have three daily situations with three magnifications. I'm not saying that, in his works, Spinoza is so systematic, but I'm saying everything is there.

In fact, let's return to this third characteristic. In that case, I am saying, there is no limit within the language of negative theology. And that can inspire the most beautiful poems: God is a mountain, God is a scent, God is a sword, understanding the implication: it is not a scent, it is not a sword, it is not a mountain, understanding that what [God] is not, it's what it is, but it is "eminently" so, that is, in another sense than the common sense, than common meanings. God is a mountain, but an eminent mountain, that is, that all the mountains of the world, even the Himalayas, give us only a confused and truncated idea; an infinite mountain, "it is an infinite mountain", "it is an infinite sword ", etc., etc. So, this language of negative theology plays on the

common, everyday fact that words have several meanings, and simply pushes things to the extreme, and what is this extreme? It is the existence of an infinite meaning and a finite meaning in the case of theology, the things which are relatively good and God who is infinitely good, things which have a degree of perfection and God who is infinitely perfect, and we will use the same word because we still have to understand each other well, for these different meanings.

And at that point, a language is woven that is basically going to be, depending on the accents that you put there, a language of "equivocity", namely, a sign having several irreducible meanings, or a language of analogy, a sign having meanings that are without that relation. Equivocity is exactly a sign with several meanings, unrelated to each other. "Good" is not said in the same sense of God and the creature -- you constantly find this in the theology of the Middle Ages; you see how this theology is bound to come up against this problem of signs -- Or else the language of analogy, but from a certain point of view, it amounts to the same thing, whatever the differences, namely a word has several senses; these senses are not unrelated to each other, that is, have analogical relationships – an analogy, of what type? What infinite goodness is to God, finite goodness is to man. You see, we will propose a kind of analogy of relation in order to have some kind of law. In other words, analogy introduces a certain rule within the relations of equivocity.

So, according to tendencies within the Middle Ages, you have authors who insist on the equivocity of words when they are applied to God and to the creature. That would be, if you will, very roughly, it would be, for those who know a little about these currents, that would be the tendency of Pseudo-Denys [the Aeropagite], of a mysterious author called the Pseudo-Denys. Or else you have authors who emphasize analogy, that is, a certain rule within equivocity, an analogy of relation, and that is the tendency of Saint Thomas [Aquinas]. But in any case, theology is inseparable from this: the equivocity of words. And you see that this belongs fundamentally to [theology], and that is why Scripture has always been inseparable from a problem of the interpretation of Scripture. In what sense?

And it is necessary that theology pose this problem of signs, of the equivocity of signs, since its fundamental problem is in what sense we can attribute, can we attribute the same predicate to God and to the creature, and on what condition: provided that it is taken in two directions unrelated to each other, provided that it is taken in two directions having a certain relation with each other. Or else what? Theology has never considered either of these two solutions. So, I would say that the third characteristic of the sign is equivocity, equivocity or analogy. [*Pause*]

If I am only summing up what we've acquired here, I would say this -- ah, yes! I am developing a kind of summary although it is very simple, but it is precisely to insist on the simplicity of all this -- I would say: to some extent, in connection with Spinoza, we give up defining the sign by its nature, by a supposed conventional nature. That's not what it is; that's not what it is that allows us to define the sign. On the other hand, three characteristics allow us to define the sign, but these three characteristics have, in each one, two dimensions: a daily dimension, if you will, and an extreme dimension; that is, a daily dimension, a relation with things; an extreme dimension, a relation with God. As a result, you can eliminate one of the two dimensions, but the other remains, but so that's functioning at every step.

First characteristic: variability. The daily dimension, really what is happening... Our life, our life, as our life, does not cease being a matter of calling for signs to one another; we never cease calling for signs. On the other hand, the extreme position, the "prophet" -- not on the contrary – the extreme position, the "prophet", the relationship with God is precisely calling out for a sign of the signs. This is the aspect of variability.

Second aspect: associativity. Here too, the ordinary field, daily existence, is each word that I use can only being defined by its associative chain. The extreme situation, henceforth, there is a sign of signs, namely God as guarantor of an associative chain: "God willing". This time, it would be the attitude, if you will, not of the prophet exactly, but of the "one who prays", of the prayer "ah, God willing".

Third characteristic: signs have an equivocal meaning, that is, any sign has several meanings; the extreme situation, the "theologian". The same word is not said of God and creatures in the same sense: negative theology. [*Pause*]

At least you know, if you compare [this] to what is being said today about the sign, if you grant Spinoza these three [characteristics]... What is being said today about the sign, if it you happen to read or some of you may know Peirce who goes very, very far in his analyses, the starting point in Peirce seems rather worse to me than these starting points in Spinoza. This triple definition of the sign seems very strong to me: variability, associability, and equivocity.

So, what does Spinoza want? Suppose that, for reasons that are his own, he doesn't want all of that; that he is saying to himself that life is not worth living if that's what life is. And this is not simply a problem of knowledge; it's really a problem of lifestyle, living like that, living like that, without ever ceasing to call out for signs which, by nature, are ambiguous signs. Well then, no! It's not good if ..., If there is a truth, it's not within this that we can find it. But this is a sad life, you know, a very sad life, if you think about our life because... [*Deleuze does not finish*]

And in the end, what will Spinoza call the first kind of knowledge? This is life according to signs. I don't see any other means, like what he calls the first kind of knowledge, this is, in fact, very, very mixed, and seems... He invokes many very different examples; the only thing that makes unity of what he calls the first kind of knowledge and which is, in fact, a kind of ignorance, which is not, in fact, a kind of knowledge, which is, in fact, our sad situation, when we don't know, eh, well, it's the sign, it's the sign that gives coherence to what Spinoza calls the first kind of knowledge. And I am saying: why isn't it worth living if it's living like that? There is so... I am saying that, insofar as I am making Spinoza speak because there are, on the contrary, people – imagine that! -- there may very well be people who say: but this is precisely… there would be no poetry without that, there would be no poetry without the variability of the sign, without the associativity of the sign, without the equivocity of the sign. And that's what makes the world a world of light and shadow, and that's the depth (*fond*) of things.

And after all, theologians of negative theology, who were sometimes geniuses, lived in this atmosphere of a world of light and shadow. They even multiplied the words to fix a specific kind (*espèce*), or to approach what they called the "phenomenon of depth". Moreover, they multiplied the words -- in what sense? -- since "depth" already is an equivocal concept, and they had to

indicate the equivocity of the concept "depth", of the word "depth". There was a God of the depth, there was a God of the shadows, and a God of light, and the God of the shadows was a God of wrath, wrath. And the God of light was a God of glory; but the God of wrath, of depth, was even more God, it was a more fundamental God than the God of light who was already "form" to it [God]. And all that will inspire some splendid texts at the edge of mysticism and philosophy, for example, the texts of Jacob Böhme. This will be found in Romantic philosophy, in the very great German Romantic philosophy of the 19th century, in the splendid texts of Schelling where language develops all the way to the end its power of equivocity, in which equivocity is no longer at all grasped from a Spinozist point of view as a defect in language, but on the contrary, as the soul of poetry in language, and the soul of mysticism in language.

So, there, I'm not at all maintaining… I said, well no, Spinoza would not even understand what that means; he would not even understand in the sense... Well, if we told him that, he would say ... There is no point in even saying that to him. Imagine, that doesn't concern him, that doesn't concern him, it's not his problem. He thinks, but why does he think that, that life would not be worth living there, in this kind of muddle, this nocturnal muddle. It's very odd; here we have a philosopher of light.

All, all the philosophers of the 17th century, we will have to ask ourselves -- but I believe that we will not get to this until next time -- try to define these philosophies of the 17th century, so that we feel closer to them, so that we don't have the perpetual impression that Descartes, Malebranche, all that, is over. What did they achieve? What did they not achieve? What made the position of the 17th century no longer possible today, so strong nevertheless, that they offer us things and continue to be currently significant? What happened between the 17th and the 19th century? This is all ..., but what did they achieve? Otherwise, if we don't answer that question, I mean, these are philosophers who will always remain for you, even if you admire them, who will always remain a dead letter. They achieved something that became impossible afterwards, surely not at all because it was out of date, because philosophies are like that, that's how they last, that's how they change. They don't change like that because of a vague whim of a thesis, "I have a thesis", that's… You have to be very young to wake up one morning and say to yourself, "I have an idea". No, it never happens like that; you never have an idea, it doesn't happen like that. So, what was going on in the 17th century that allowed them to develop a certain language which afterwards was no longer ...? [*Deleuze doesn't finish*] Once again, it's not that they were out of fashion.

It is that, in fact, why all these words which have become empty words for us, "clear and distinct", "the clear and distinct idea", "natural light" -- there too then, I am preparing for what we will do in the second semester, on painting -- is it by chance that it's at the same time, in the 17th century, that painters really discover -- I would say, to be very basic -- discover light? Before, was the light not known? Yes, of course it was known. But what we discover in the 17th century, in a very general way -- there, I am telling you things... -- it is indeed a certain independence of light as regards form, in relation to form. Everything happens as if light becomes independent of forms, so that a painting of pure light becomes possible. The famous example, or the extract of this painting of pure light, is known, it's Rembrandt, and even the Late Rembrandt, not… Fine. But Spinoza, I suddenly think that, in a text that I have already pointed out to you, I believe there, the text by Claudel, by Paul Claudel, *The Eye Listens*, the very

beautiful text on Dutch painting, itself makes the connection with Spinoza. Perhaps what these painters do achieve in painting, Spinoza does so in philosophy, that is, what was underlying throughout the 17th century, the enterprise of bringing thought to a kind of pure light.

"Thinking within the light", what does that mean? It sounds so verbal, all that. You understand, if you are open to these somewhat emotional, somewhat sentimental echoes, you can no longer even read a text by Descartes on "the clear and distinct idea" while telling yourself, "clear and distinct," he says it like that in order to say "true". It's not true that he says, "clear and distinct" to say "true". He says "clear and distinct" because he brings along a conception of truth, one that he does not invent. But why, before, were they not speaking of "clear and distinct"? Why does it start with the 17th century? We used to talk about it, "clear and distinct"; you can perhaps find it in Saint Thomas's works, in contrast to "obscure and confused". There is the Cartesian "clear-distinct" couple which is opposed to "obscure-confused". Fine, what does that mean? So, we were harangued so much [about] philosophy being so unfortunate to be caught by... -- and there, I'm only adding one more to everything else – it whined so much due to all the directions that it went through. You understand that "clear and distinct" has been swallowed like that; we tell ourselves: "Good, fine, a Cartesian notion", "clear and distinct", "natural light", fine! But for them, it wasn't like that. For them, it was not a way of saying "true"; it was a way of radically transforming the concept of truth, namely the true, this was what was clear and distinct, that is, the true was what was luminous.

So, it's the same story; notice that it's exactly the same story. I can say Aristotle, so he returns from very far back. Aristotle, how did he define the true? Basically, it doesn't matter, he has a very complicated conception of truth, but Aristotle defined truth by "form". With Descartes, you will still find the word "form," but lo and behold, form has become entirely subordinate, literally, I would say, to intellectual luminosity. As a result, it seems to me, I really did not force things to say that this is the same story as in painting. I mean, the field that 17th century painting will discover, or will promote or invent, it's the technical means to make light independent of forms. The philosophy of the 17th century, in its theory of truth, will define truth by a light, a luminosity, which obviously breaks with Aristotle's formal conception. Ultimately, it is the forms which depend on light; it is no longer light which follows the forms. [*Pause*] There is a guy who compared -- so here, I am making a parenthesis within a parenthesis... it doesn't matter…

A student: It's 11:30.

Deleuze: It is 11:30; I have to run an errand then. I'll just finish this point: there is a guy who compared very, very well, a German critic who compared church interiors, 16th century and 17th century, understanding that the church interior is a common theme; it's a contemporary theme in painting. There are a lot of painters who have created church interiors.[41] So, he compares 16th and 17th versions; it's very, very striking, the distribution of kinds of light inside a church. In the 16th, we see -- here, I am saying very general things; we should look at each particular case -- but quite generally, we could say something like this: in the 16th, the distribution of kinds of light and shadow can be very scholarly; it is at the service of forms, that is, even in the shadows, an object retains its shape.

See what that means? Even in shadow, an object keeps its form; it is very striking in the 16th century. Shadow, in fact, they do not have chiaroscuro yet; the chiaroscuro techniques come in the 17th, it will be part of the 17th; it's not that they were incapable of it [in the 16th]: they are great painters. It's not a question of being able to or not; they have nothing to do with chiaroscuro. Their development is so greatly, it's so greatly a problem of form -- which does not mean simply drawing -- color, light is subordinate, is a treatment of form, shadow as well, which means what? I would say, roughly speaking, which means that this is a space -- and it will be very important for us -- this is a space that must be called "optical-tactile". In fact, if the object in shadow keeps its form, it is obviously through a tactile connection. Do you follow me? And indeed, the entire painting is optical, obviously, since this is painting, but with tactile referents: contour. Hence the reign of the contour, in particular, is a tactile referent in an optical world. So, as is said, this is a tactile-optical space.

What do they do in the 17th? They do one thing, so one might regret… -- you understand, it's here that tastes take on meaning; we can always say: well, I'm sorry, yes, but provided that you know what the topic is; otherwise, tastes at the level of "me, I like, I don't like" do not matter. You have to say what you like and what you don't like -- And we can indeed regret [losing] this tactile-optical world, because the 17th is going to embark on something a little crazy. When we say they are reasonable, that this is the age of rationalism, yes, but rationalism is pure madness. They are going to embark on -- I am saying this about painters for the moment, while being quite ready to consider later if this is not the same for philosophers -- because for painters, they are going to move into ... Listen to me, this enterprise seems prodigious to me: the constitution of an exclusively optical world, that painting drives out its tactile references, that the painting does not pass any more through any tactile reference, this is a crazy idea!

Why is this a crazy idea? At the same time, it's a very reasonable idea, that is, painting is for the eye, so it has no need to flirt with the tactile. With the pure eye, painting will be pure visibility, but precisely what is it that pure visibility makes invisible? This is what makes tactile referents invisible, starting with contours. Painting of light, things will no longer be painted; light will be painted; ultimately, they continue to paint things, sure. But more important than the painted things, there is light. Fine, this can be Rembrandt, this can be Velasquez, this can be many, many [painters], but this great painting known as Classical, in fact, if we use "Classical" in the sense of something well digested, do you realize? Because, after all, no longer painting things in their tactile referents, but painting pure optical space, if I hadn't said all of the above, I might as well tell you, I believe, and maybe you would agree, I might as well tell you, that's what modern abstract painting wanted. Fine, in fact, modern abstract painting wanted to establish -- maybe that's what is happening all the time -- modern abstract painting wanted to establish a purely and exclusively optical world, to eliminate all of the world's tactile references.

Okay, if that's it -- and after all, there are enough statements by Mondrian moving in that direction and others -- if that's it then, what does that mean? Yet they don't paint exactly like Rembrandt; no, they don't paint like Rembrandt. No doubt they are undertaking this initiative on other bases. What has happened in the meantime that causes the initiative to "establish an optical world" to be undertaken on other bases? That doesn't matter; that would take us a lot of time, so we'll see it later.

But I'm just saying, now let's go back to philosophy. And I again am making my plea: when you find "clear and distinct" in Descartes, "natural light", etc., place yourself in the context of the readers of the time. Don't tell yourself that these are ready-made formulas: "ah, yes! Descartes, he is still going to annoy us with 'the clear and distinct idea'", etc., "this is so well known". It's well known because -- we've spent enough time on this; it's like going from comment to comment to comment to comment, everything gets lost. And again, I am saying, you have to be aware that we've added one more [comment] -- But I am telling you, let's take this literally, that is, in the same way as the painters of the 17th claimed to do, claimed to raise painting to the power of a pure optical space without tactile reference, 17th century philosophers claimed to constitute a pure mental space, a purely optical mental space.

That's why we're always told: Descartes, he destroys Aristotle's forms. It was Aristotle, we are told, with the "substantial forms". "Substantial forms", even if you consider the word, even if you don't know a word about what Aristotle means by "substantial forms", this is obviously linked to tactile referents. It is the relationship between form and matter, and all the examples of Aristotle are, at least many of Aristotle's examples, are examples linked to work, namely the form of the bed -- the carpenter who gives form to the bed, taking wood and giving it the form of this or that, the form of the violin, the form of the bed, etc., -- [it's] this activity of information that defines the substance by Aristotle.

It is said that the Greeks were painters. It is said that the Greeks lived in the light. That's wrong, that's wrong, that's wrong. Everything that is said about the Greeks, we can say in advance that it's false, I don't know. [*Laughter*] So they lived in the light? Not at all. The word "eidos" is invoked among them; the word "eïdos", everyone tells us, however, that it's a complicated word, because it means at the same time "form", "essence" and "what is seen" (*le vu*) -- what is seen --, the appearance (*apparition*). It is true that the Greeks invent a certain light, but I insist on this, it is not at all a pure light. The Greeks' artistic space is not at all an optical space; it is still typically a tactile-optical space.

Do you know who will be the first artists to have invented a purely optical space by expelling all the tactile references, if, once again, you agree that the same initiative, apparently, the same one can be undertaken at very, very different levels? Well, it's the Byzantines; you'll have to wait for Byzantium. It's mosaic painting in particular; it's mosaic painting which gives off a pure light, but which does not emit it in some mystical way, for which all the technical processes ensure that light takes on an independence compared to form, that is, form becomes purely optical. An optical form is a form such that, precisely, light is independent of the presupposed form; [form] is born from light.

And it seems to me, we must wait for the Byzantines to have the idea of a pure optical space. I am not at all saying on this matter that the 17th [century] copies the Byzantines, any more than I would say that abstract painting copies the 17th and the Byzantines. Although between Byzantium and abstract painting today, it seems to me that there are extremely disturbing relationships. But, but, but, but, but, what ... For example, in Kandinsky, it is obvious that between abstract painting and Byzantine art, there is a resumption of a kind of tradition very, very ... [*Deleuze does not finish*] And I am saying that they are the ones who invent this. Before

them, I see no pure optical space. So, some strange things have to take place to have this very curious idea.

And I am saying Aristotle..., take the Greeks, let it be Aristotle in philosophy. The form "eidos" is not at all pure optics; essence is not pure vision, it is tactile vision, it is a sight-touch mixture. And from an artistic point of view, if you take the Greek temple, the Greek temple, it is absolutely not pure light. Greek architecture is not at all... Byzantium yes, Byzantine architecture would be an architecture of light; Greek architecture is an optico-tactile, or tactile-optical architecture.

So, fine, well, I am saying the same thing about the problem of truth, and in the end, that's all I want to say. In the 17th century, realize, it's pretty great: what allowed them to do this? So there, I say, it's up to you, on this you can say... "well no, simply, it disgusts me"; you can say that "this painting of light doesn't interest me". But know, at least, why it doesn't interest you. It's because, at that moment, you are beings who do not pose their problems in terms of light. That's your right; at that moment, you will have other painters who suit you. And for philosophers of the 17th, it is the same effect, I tell you, it is the same effect. Here they are projecting thought, the activity of thought, within a mental-optical space. They invent for the mind a pure optical space, therefore, a mental space, of course, but a mental space conceived in an optical way. In this way, Descartes breaks with Aristotle. Because, once again, the "substantial form" in Aristotle is optical-tactile. Descartes's "clear and distinct idea" is, on the contrary, purely optical. Hence the question, what made this discovery of light and pure optical space possible in the 17th century? Hence the importance in the 17th of the problems of optics: Spinoza and his lens grinding for glasses, fine. But for Descartes, one of his scientific works is the *Dioptrics* [Dioptrique].

Furthermore, and in terms of optics, I believe that something is created which is also like one of the secrets of the 17th century. One of the secrets of the 17th century and its philosophies is that science and metaphysics are not in conflict there. They found a balance of science and metaphysics, and there, we must not be in a hurry to say that equilibrium is not good, because something allowed this achievement, this amazing achievement, that science and metaphysics had found a kind of equilibrium and balanced relationship. We're sometimes told, so much nonsense is repeated because, you understand, stupidity is not just when someone says something false; but this is much worse. It's when someone gives a mediocre interpretation of something true. [*Laughter*] So, we acknowledge something true; what's true is that philosophers of the 17th were both great scholars and great philosophers, and it is said, not without melancholy: "well, that moment is long gone". A reasons for this gets assigned, and obviously, the reason that gets assigned is ridiculous. Some maintain that science has become so difficult today that the same person cannot be knowledgeable (*savoir*) in both philosophy and science. This is grotesque; this is absolutely grotesque. This is stupid because you really have to develop a strange idea of 17th century science to believe it was simple. If you think about what they were doing at the time…

But, how do we explain, in fact, that in all the important cases -- even the guys who were not very, very learned, like Malebranche or Spinoza -- there were two among the great philosophers of the 17th, there are two of them that are extremely learned: Descartes who, in mathematics, is a

great creator; in physics he is a great creator, fine. Leibniz, I'm not even talking about him. He's one of the greatest mathematicians who ever existed; in physics, it's amazing what he does, well, these are still extraordinary cases. Fine, but even Malebranche and Spinoza who, I think, have a background -- how to explain this -- that allows them to correspond with, for Spinoza, with people like [Christiaan] Huygens, or be very informed about Huygens's work, and very familiar with the work of the English chemist [Robert] Boyle, have correspondence with Boyle? And you can read the great letter to Boyle; in his correspondence, he speaks of extremely technical problems, and he is indeed perfectly knowledgeable. Could we, in fact, have a correspondence with a contemporary chemist? I think ... I don't know, maybe some of you could; I wouldn't understand what he would be telling me, okay. Okay, could we have...?

But the argument, "it's because science has become so complicated that it takes a lifetime of specialization," seems absolutely stupid to me, you know, so stupid that... Again, if you open a treatise by Huygens, it boggles the mind; you don't get the impression, as they say, "a worthy man (*honnête homme*) is capable of understanding this". [*Laughter*] If you open Leibniz's mathematical writings, don't even go there! You are going to have exactly the same impression as if you are reading a modern math book. Okay, so obviously it's not because science has gotten complicated that... I think it's something else entirely. It is because the 17th century had found, under conditions which it made possible -- and still we would have to determine these conditions -- it is because the 17th century established conditions of a fundamental balance between science and metaphysics that the same individuals could be great scientists and great metaphysicians.

And what was this balance? If I look for its immediate translation, I would say that this balance was located in the development of a "pure optical space" -- of course, I'm exaggerating, but I'm just indicating a direction -- a pure optical space, namely: the constitution of a geometrical optics which, in a certain way, was one of the rallying points of physics and mathematics, and a pure optical space which transformed the status of metaphysics and the whole theory of truth. Thus, pure physical, physical-mathematical optical space, and pure metaphysical optical space. As a result, "clear and distinct"... [*Interruption of recording*] [1:19:46]

Part 3

…the end of a 17th century, or the 17th century's own discovery, is, in fact, currently being questioned. The Age of Enlightenment, it seems to me ultimately, we must keep the expression; it isn't bad... The Enlightenment, the Enlightenment is a kind of inflection of the balance of the 17th century. And indeed, starting from the 18th century, there will be a sort of divorce which will continue to grow between science and metaphysics. That is, the master stroke of the 17th has been achieved forever, and at the same time, it cannot last. It cannot last. So, all I wanted to tell you…

Georges Comtesse: One remark on this is that for everything that speaks of pure optical space, we must not forget either, for example, [for] Descartes, it is the optical space that allows him, this pure optical space, to homogenize the dream with this space. That is, for example, Descartes is creating a science, that he has three incredible dreams that resurface in him, and it's inasmuch as he himself interprets these dreams, that is, makes them pass into this pure space, that the homogenization of the nocturnal world of dreams with space allows the balance between science

and metaphysics. And so, [Deleuze: Quite right] ... [this] allows physical science to continue by repressing for three centuries the science of possible dreams.

Deleuze: Very good, what happiness! very good, very good! Because I am telling myself, even in my concern to extend this philosophy-painting parallel, I am saying, in fact -- so just as I was considering earlier, referring to the interiors of the churches -- the theme of the dream in painting, you have to see how they treat it in the 17th century, the character who dreams, the theme of sleep, meditation etc., precisely, in relation to light; this constantly changes. The meditator of the 17th is not at all the same thing as the meditator of the 16th, nor of the 15th, etc., etc. ... Yes, but your remark is very, very correct. Yes, that's why they didn't have psychoanalysis, see? [*Laughter*] Ah, well, what balance they had achieved, eh! How shameful for us! [*Laughter*] Fine.

A student: I want to recall something very important in terms of discoveries in the 17th century. It is the following: it is the appearance of the world of the infinitely small which was derived from the observations de Leeuwenhoek, and it is particularly an art to confront the 17th about the microscope where the implications for the study of nature had been the most developed. It is true that it remained marginal. Even in the last century, someone like Cuvier called the microscope "that useless flea-market mirror".

Deleuze: No, but, I'm sorry, you are much more correct than you maintain because if Cuvier does that, on the other hand, the people of the 17th century were not fooled, they were not fooled. Leibniz was fully into the topic of the microscope.

The student: The entourage, let's say, of Spinoza's followers, for example: the activity was simmering with regard to the observation of ...

Deleuze: That's right, that's right.

The student: ... the observation. For example, in Leeuwenhoek's home, the visits of several personalities were observed, the King of England Charles II, George 1st, Queen Anne, Peter the Great of Russia, who visited him, and the serious technical problem [*inaudible word*] of Leeuwenhoek's microscope was precisely a human problem rather than the problem of lenses, because he worked only with the microscope.

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I am very happy because these two interventions were perfect, because they are really valuable, it seems to me, and indeed, you have just introduced a theme that will no doubt engage us next time, because we have not finished with this story of balance within the 17th, namely, the entire 17th, in fact, is dominated finally by "what is being thought"? It is dominated by a certain thought of infinity, which is absolutely not Greek, which in fact is truly the opposite of Greek thought.

And I'm just saying that the thought of infinity, whatever it may be, I mean, I am saying: the 17th is dominated by a thought of infinity in two senses -- think of Pascal – the infinite in all its orders, namely, in the order of the infinitely large and in the order of the infinitely small. Now, if I ask the question: how is it possible to think of the infinite in the dual form, both the infinitely

large and the infinitely small, that is, this whole Pascalian theme in which then, as well, in which Comtesse's remark would gather all its..., would reverberate within this, including the space of the dream, including all that you want, the answer seems simple to me. I don't understand why yet -- but we will see next time -- the thought of the infinite under all its orders, which brings together all its orders of infinity, which elevates to infinity, under whatever order it might be, it is precisely the deployment of an optical space. That's when the optical space finally frees itself from finite forms, -- I am giving the answer here -- that's why for the Greeks, this wasn't optical space. Greek light was not simply optical. Greek light ultimately was only experienced on bodies, like a kind of caress or aggression in relation to bodies. That is, what matters in Greek light is the contact of light with the body, with the temple, with whatever you want.

But light for itself, necessarily, light for itself is precisely the independence in relation to the finite form. So, the deployment of a purely optical space is at the same time the necessary condition for a thought of infinity, a thought of infinity under all orders, since as he has just said quite correctly, this will be both the question of light at the level of the microscope and the discovery of what they called at that time an infinitely small or else the mental space of the infinitely large, that is, the theology of light. This is what will weave this "philosophy-science" of the 17th century.

So, you understand at that level, to say as well: "Ah! They believed in infinity!" is just idiotic, I mean, truly idiotic; that even pains me. It's true that they believed in infinity. But in what way? They did not believe in infinity because the Church told them to believe in infinity! And when one creates bad history, you understand, when bad history has been written, things get presented like this. For example, at first, it was said that there were conceptions -- I am thinking of very simple books which always express this point of view -- at first, they discovered infinitesimal analysis, but since they weren't, since they weren't as intelligent as we were, they thought it was about the domain of the infinite, and they interpreted it in terms of infinitely small. And then in a second step, [this is] what is called a pre-scientific conception of infinitesimal calculus. And then a second moment would arrive, coming rather late, in which they realized that so-called infinitesimal analysis made no reference to the infinitely small, that it had to be interpreted in strictly finite terms, in terms of sets. Fine, when things get presented like that, nothing is clear at all, I think!

Well, at that point, it's easy; we seem to be saying, well, we have gone beyond the prejudices of the 17th century. Take… If they link the analysis of the infinitesimal to the infinitely small, it is not because they are stupid or insufficiently learned or because they lack scientific data that would allow them to do otherwise. It is by virtue of all the presuppositions which make them discover infinitesimal calculus. These same presuppositions which make them discover infinitesimal calculus cause them to think of infinitesimal calculus in terms of infinitely small since it is inseparable from this optical space. As a result, it's silly to make some..., it must be said rather, well yes, in each era, they had the secret of something, and the secrets do not stop being lost. The secrets of the paintings, the secrets of philosophy, thank God, they never stop getting lost, [but] it's not sad since we have others.

So, starting from our very own secrets, we can find something of the secret of the secrets in the 17th, exactly as in painting when we say: well, but what was that particular painter using as

binder (*liant*)? What was he using? It's not clear; what was it? Or what glaze? How did he make his glaze? What was that all about? These secrets must be stated about the 17th century philosophers. So, you must not tell yourself, ah! They believed that infinitesimal calculus was infinitely small! You have to tell yourself something much better. They had the secret of linking it to the infinitely small precisely by the development of a pure optical space. That this is not our problem, that's quite possible, it's quite possible, but that we are still dealing with this problem, and today, that this problem rests on other bases, that's obvious. Fine, I have to go run my errand. Yes? [*Comments inaudible*]

Speak louder, I can't hear! [*Comments inaudible*] Perspective, yes, yes, yes. But there, that's so complicated, you know more than I do about perspective... I would say the same thing, that there are purely optical perspectives, and that the 17th century, the contribution of the 17th century to perspective, it is ultimately the discovery of a purely optical perspective because before, there are also perspectives. The Greek perspective, or the perspective known as the vanishing axis, that still seems to me to be a tactile-optical perspective, not a purely optical one. You know, you, maybe if you give some thought to this, and if you made a presentation the next time, that would be very good, on this: What is a purely optical perspective? Yes, eh? Think about it... Perspective by vanishing point, the vanishing point instead of the vanishing axis, what difference is there between [them]? But we would have to, that would lead us to define... But your remark is correct. I would translate it by saying that the problem of perspective in the 18th century… in the 17th century, must be linked precisely to this development of pure optical space… Yes?

Anne Querrien: [*Comments inaudible*] [Deleuze: I can't hear.] [*Comments inaudible*] [Deleuze: Completely, yeah, completely] It made me think of Nicholas of Cusa [*Comments inaudible*; *these comments apparently address something about Nicholas of Cusa on the planet Mars*]

Deleuze: Absolutely. I wonder there, in fact, Nicholas of Cusa, I was no longer thinking about him, but wouldn't that be a kind of hinge point? There are these hinge-guys, the Renaissance hinge, Classical age, very, very...

Anne Querrien: [*Comments inaudible*]

Deleuze: There, at this astronomical level, there, I don't know enough. But at the astronomical level, that would arise, the constitution of a pure astronomical space would emerge, of a pure optical space in astronomy.

So, we would have to start over again, but all that would be too tiring, because we would already have to start again with Greek astronomy, trying to show how the models of Greek astronomy have tactile referents. I am sure it would be possible. It's not an optical space, their astronomy. Oh, yes! We should do that! Don't you want to do this?... Yes. [*Deleuze laughs*] Okay, well, I'm going to run my errand. Wait for me! [*Pause in the session*; 94:15]

Deleuze: Fine, we're not going to…, we're going to finish quickly, because I can feel your extreme fatigue and tension.

Understand all that, don't you feel we've completed it? I mean, we will have to see, I think, next time, we will have to come back to this theme of infinity -- I haven't gotten to it yet -- but precisely, because there, ontology, the problem of ontology, is directly linked to this question of infinity. And yet again, when we say that -- I don't know, that would really be my only goal, for you to consider all these people really as creators, well yes, if I get to that, yes -- understand that the question is not: is it true or is it false? If I tell myself, hey, I'm going to conceive of the activity of thought as if it occurred in a purely mental optical space, you will tell me, well, try it, we'll see what comes from that! I mean, that's not the question: are they right or aren't they right? The question is, as they say, it must be done! It must be done. (*Il faut le faire*) If they succeed, it will be what we can call a "great moment", in a non-Hegelian sense, that is, something that is neither outdated (*dépassé*), nor surpassable (*dépassable*); it will be a very great moment in the history of thought.

And once again, today, if the attempt is again undertaken, if it happened to be undertaken again, it obviously could not be done on the same basis as in the 17th century. So, I would say that the true disciples of the 17th century today are those who undertake this again, but by quite other means. As a result, we do not even realize that they are, in some ways, Cartesian or Spinozist, etc. But, at the same time, those of you who might react with, "ah well! here I am", what I dream about in order to answer the question, what I dream about is that we stop saying: "Oh, no! I'm not interested", for the sake of another answer that would already be an answer, and not a question, which would consist in saying in advance the reasons why it may not interest someone. It's obvious, for example, that the development of pure optical space is not the main problem for someone who has, for a thousand reasons, who has ties or a tactile sense, in such a way that his problem would be quite different.

Someone pointed out to me earlier that, in fact, what I said about 17th century painting applied above all to Dutch painting, but obviously it did not apply to Italian painting. Italy, there too, like the Greeks, is not a people of light at all. Oddly, on this point, the Netherlands was the great people of light and optics. Strangely! Is it strange? No, not at all strange, I think. It's not that strange. If you think of the Dutch landscapes, it's not strange at all that they're the ones.

In the end, the sun is not light, is it? It's the sun, it's a dirty thing, the sun, because it creates reflections. And, the great light painters have always hated reflections. Take a painter like Cézanne. So then, yes, he is not only a painter of light, but there is a strong light in him. He really learned the lessons of the 17th by other means. But Cézanne precisely, when he speaks of light, it is not at all the sun. Sometimes he talks about the sun, he likes it, but ... Other than that, for him, the secret of light is not in the sun, it is within the gray day. Cézanne's famous texts on the gray day, which is very suitable for the Netherlands, that's the receptacle of light. If it has a receptacle, it's gray day.[42]

Claire Parnet: The sun creates forms?

Deleuze: The sun creates forms, yes, or it creates something else which is no longer form but which is...

Parnet: Is that why Italian painters have a pure architecture?

Deleuze: What I am saying does not apply to Italian painting, but precisely Italian painting, it is not what makes…

A student: [*Inaudible*] …were not interested in light.

Deleuze: Ah yes, there are some who are not interested.

The student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze: Oh, no, there are a lot of them [who are interested]. [*Pause*] There are a lot of them.

The student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: What?

The student: [*Inaudible comments*] … It's not that it doesn't interest them.

Deleuze: It's delicate, it's complex, you see. Fine, so here we go, let's go back to our starting point, but we can go back to the starting point now with more strength, namely I was saying: Spinoza wants to pull us from the world of signs to bring us to what? I was saying – this whole time simply, I was trying to give a more concrete meaning to this -- he wants to draw us from this world of signs which is fundamentally variable, an associated world, an equivocal world, in order to bring us, in fact, to a kind of world of light. In some ways, substance, Spinozist substance is light.

But what does that mean? Is it a matter of making signs clear? No. The signs cannot be clarified since their entire nature, it is in their very nature that they are variable, associative, equivocal. So, it's really a matter diverting oneself away from the world of signs. It's about conquering another world, which is going to be the world of light, that is, the optical world. Finally, at the extreme, it should be said that the signs, no, these are not, these are not the optical space. There may be optical signs. So, what is this, this world, were it only the definition of the sign giving us ...? Imagine a language that would be made of expressions: first, constant expressions; [*Pause*] second, systematic expressions; third and foremost, univocal, univocal expressions, that is, expressions for which each -- I can no longer say each sign, since the sign is within its equivocal essence – thus, for which each term of the expressions, each term would have a sense, and would only have one sense. That would be the world of light. That would be the mental world of light. This would be a language of pure univocity, a language made up of unequivocal expressions while our language is made up of equivocal signs.

A question on this point: even when such problems are given to us, that gives us a jolt! I'd almost like you to have foreseen this jolt, namely, what is this strange mania that grips [Spinoza] in making a geometric presentation? What does he expect from geometry? What does he expect from this process? It is not just something casual (*plaqué*), this process. But then what? What does he want to tell us? It is obvious that for him, even if we limit ourselves to this -- in fact, it is even more complicated than that -- but even if we limit ourselves to this, the language of geometry is an essentially univocal language as opposed to everyday language and contemporary

language. The language of this science is a univocal language. Henceforth, he will succeed in making a metaphysics exposed geometrically. He is horrified by all equivocal expressions.

And once again, does that mean that there is no poetry? On the contrary! He makes a poetry of pure univocity. What is this poetry of pure univocity? It is precisely -- understand, it isn't difficult to understand that there is an amazing creation -- a univocal language is not a language in which there is a meaning fixed once and for all. Think about this: our language is naturally equivocal, that is, every word I use has many meanings. So, if you understand me, it's because at the same time as I speak, you manage to determine the meaning, the sense in which I am using each word. But then, if I dare say, that's our natural or conventional language, but no matter. These are the conditions under which we speak.

As a result, what is it to call for an unequivocal language? Well, it's committing oneself to build it. It doesn't arrive fully created! It's committing oneself to building it, and to create a univocal language, it is not at all to choose one meaning for a word by saying, that will be the only meaning! That would be too easy! What would allow me to set a meaning, by saying: "it must be the only one"? An original meaning, I could always invoke an original meaning and say [that] "the word will only have this original meaning". [There's] not much interest, because it will be a completely arbitrary, conventional decision. It will not prevent the word from continuing to be of such a nature that it will have several possible meanings, even if I neglect the other meanings.

In fact, understand that an extraordinary creation is necessary to invent terms, and to invent meanings such that these terms will only have one meaning, and this meaning will be the only possible meaning of the term, all of this is entirely to be invented. As a result, when Spinoza tells us, I take substance, the word substance, as one meaning, in one and only one meaning, we must not believe that he favors a preexisting meaning of the word substance. The word substance was stated in several senses. What does this mean? It is clear, [in] all the philosophies, it is clear, there were spiritual substances. For example, I take Aristotle; there were purely spiritual substances, and then there were material substances. Moreover, there were beautiful material substances in several different senses, namely: there were substances which had no other material than local. There were local materials and other types of materials.

Or else, in all classical theology, God is substance, creatures also are substances; it cannot be in one and the same sense. As we will say, "God is substance 'eminently'", therefore the word substance is said of God and creatures, but it is said of God and creatures "by analogy", St. Thomas said, that is, in different senses, these meanings being simply analogous. When Spinoza says: "I take substance in one and the same sense" and concludes: "there is only one substance", again, do not think that he is satisfied with isolating one sense of the word substance in order to give preference to it. He undertakes to do something quite different, namely: to invent a meaning of the word substance such that this meaning might be unique, and therefore, that there would only be one thing, that there only be one term that verifies this meaning. So, a language of univocity is not a ready-made language, which excludes equivocity. This is a language to be created starting from our equivocal language and in such a way that it releases you from equivocity.

I'm choosing a very specific text by Spinoza that has been the subject of much comment. At one point in the *Ethics*, Spinoza said -- I am not giving too many references because my dream is so much for you to discover the texts that I quote, through your own reading of the *Ethics;* in any case, [it's] close to the beginning, in the first two books of the *Ethics*, this will make you read at least two of them, if you want to find the text -- in the first two books of *Ethics*, Spinoza says this, a very, very curious, very beautiful expression: "If God ... If God had an understanding and a will" -- if God had an understanding and a will -- "the word 'understanding' and the word 'will' should be understood more or less like the word 'dog' which sometimes designates the barking animal, sometimes the celestial constellation."[43] This is a beautiful text; you must feel that it is at the heart of our problem. "If God had an understanding and a will, the words 'understanding' and 'will' should be understood more or less like the word 'dog' which designates both the barking animal and a celestial constellation", the constellation of the dog.

What is he telling us? -- The text is very rich. -- He is obviously telling us -- a wink, for those who know, but you know that -- for Descartes, for the Cartesians, God has an understanding and a will. The difference between us and God is that in God's case, it's an infinite understanding, while for us, it's a finite understanding. At the level of the will, it's more complicated because our will, according to Descartes, is infinite. So, I am leaving the question of will aside which would take us too far. But in the end, God has an infinite understanding; we only have a finite understanding. From finite to infinity, it's not the same form. I mean, everything changes.

In other words, understanding is a word in Descartes exactly like substance. You find in Descartes, because the same author is not completely aligned on a single level -- I told you earlier [that] Descartes was one of these philosophers of light -- that does not prevent him from remaining a Thomist; he remains a disciple of St. Thomas on a very precise point, namely the analogy of being: substance is stated in several senses. And with Descartes, we can clearly see that substance is stated in three senses. It is stated of God, it is stated of the soul, and it is stated of bodies. So, there are three kinds of substances which are substances only by analogy. It is not in the same sense that God and creatures are substances, and it is not in the same sense that spiritual creatures and bodily creatures are substances. So here, on this point, [while] a Thomism emerges from Descartes, it is entirely located prior to the 17th century on this point. Again, an author is not entirely ... Good.

So, Spinoza says -- there, he marks well ... He says, inevitably, at that time, they will not be able -- and Descartes still belongs to the Middle Ages -- the Spinoza's idea, because Descartes was not able to create or did not know how to create the conditions for a univocal language. To the extent that he grants understanding and will to God, this is inevitable; on this, he remains with a simple analogy. He does not have the means to create univocal language. He does not have the means to reach a univocal expression. We can clearly see what Spinoza wants. For Spinoza, "understanding" can only have one sense, and whether it is the understanding of God or the understanding of man, whether infinite or finite, there Spinoza goes very far. By this, I mean: this is one of the most innovative points in his work. He could have said, an infinite understanding is contradictory, that cannot exist. And he doesn't say that. He says: why yes, an infinite understanding can exist, but if it exists, if there is an infinite understanding, it is exactly in the same sense in which there are finite understandings. In other words, he is going to propose his idea which is very linked to a point of view of immanence, namely, finite understandings are

parts of infinite understanding. And there is an adequacy of the part and the whole. It is in one and the same sense that the word “understanding” is stated: there is only one meaning for the word “understanding”.

Henceforth, what does that mean? If infinite understanding, like the finite understanding, if these have the same meaning, that means a very simple thing: understanding is not part of substance. Understanding is a mode; understanding is a mode of thinking. So, substance has no understanding. The idea of a substance endowed with understanding is contradictory since understanding will be a mode of thinking. A substance can be endowed with thought, it even is necessarily so, but thought and understanding... These are not at all the same. Thought is an attribute of substance, of understanding... You see, that forces him to a kind of terminology that renews many things. I would ask you, why, and with what interest? It is precisely, under such conditions, that he can manage to constitute a language in which, whatever the word used, it will have only one meaning. This is on condition of making a whole system of invention in which this new meaning, the one meaning, is strictly invented, [with] understanding obviously taking on another meaning.

As a result, I can now summarize Spinoza's very project from the point of view of a possible language: to manage to extract our everyday language from its fundamental equivocity and to manage to form univocal expressions. And once again, this involves poetry, creation; this will be a poetry of light. This will be a creation of univocity.

But then, we are still getting nowhere because we had to make this long detour. Well, how are we going to get out of this domain of signs, since I remind you that these signs have three characteristics: variable, associative, and equivocal? At the same time as I say – I’ve stated the characteristics of the sign according to Spinoza, I realize that there is something that I did not say -- the characteristics, these are the characteristics of every sign; every sign is a bit of all that. It is variable, it is associated, and it is equivocal.

But what are the kinds of signs? Are there several kinds of signs? Yes, maybe there are several kinds of signs, that is, how to break with the sign? With the signs, we would have to see their genre, to see if we can break with them. It is not enough to group together their characteristics. And the kinds of signs -- I would just like to end there today, and not even, I just want to indicate them -- because the kinds of signs, it seems to me there as well, by grouping texts together, it's up to you to recreate it; if you come up with another result, that's fine. This is just the problem I’m asking myself here: is it possible to constitute a theory of the sign according to Spinoza? But it seems to me that indeed, apart from distinguishing, apart from having defined the characteristics of the sign, he distinguishes three kinds of signs. Each kind has the three preceding characteristics. These are not the same thing: the three kinds and the three characteristics. There we are.

I would say, what does he call a sign? A first kind of sign is the following situation: I say, the sun is rising, or the sun is a hundred feet away. Here, according to my perception, I attribute a movement to the sun, a size to the sun, a distance to the sun, from me to the sun, etc. Well, I must operate according to the signs. What is a sign? My perception is therefore a sign. What does that mean, my perceptions are signs? My perceptions are signs, what does it mean? In fact,

my perceptions, what are these? These are effects. How does Spinoza define ... It's imprints. He has an entire very simple theory of perception-imprint, namely: a perception, or -- as we saw the last time, I am not returning to this, I am just reminding you -- or an affection, an *affectio*, a perception or an affection, this is the same for him, it is the imprint of an external body on my body. That's a sign. The imprint of an external body on my body is a sign, in other words, a stamp mark in wax. This is a sign. Well, the bodies, the external bodies act on my body in this way. For example: The sun -- external body -- acts on my body under such conditions, that is, according to its imprint, under such conditions that I see it at a particular distance, with a particular size, etc. ...

So, I would say, the sign is the imprint of the external body on mine, that is, it is the effect of an external body, on my body. You notice that, how, what is the cause there? What makes the sun do this on my body? I do not know. I would have to know the sun for itself to know through what cause, and by virtue of what cause, it acts on me this way. But this knowledge, at the point we have reached, I absolutely do not have it. I simply get the visual image, the heat image, the thermal image, etc., of the sun. And I say oh! The sun is hot! And I say Ah! the sun is a round disk, etc., etc. All of this is the imprints of the sun on my body.

In short, in my situation, I only know effects. I only know of effects, and the effects of the imprints on my body which are detached from their cause. I only know of effects separated from their cause. There you have my situation. This is the situation of perception. It's through this, these effects which I perceive, I perceive the sun according to the effect of the sun on my body. I do not know the causes of this effect, that is, I do not know how this imprint is produced. I have the imprint, that's all. We will call this first kind of sign, these signs: imprint-signs.

Let's look for a complex word here, for if we were to make a sort of logical typology of signs, that would be linked with Peirce's [typology], precisely which has nothing to do with it, but it would be all the more interesting to see to what extent Spinoza endures the comparison. I would say, these are indicative signs. And why would I say indicative? Fortunately, because Spinoza uses the word. You will find it in book 2 of the Ethics, "*indicare*". In fact, he tells us, but careful, this is very important, he tells us: "when the sun acts on my body, the imprint it leaves on my body indicates more", not only, but "indicates more the nature of my body affected by the sun than the nature of the sun". It's in this way that the imprint is a sign, separate from its cause. The cause: it is the nature of the sun, but precisely the imprint does not tell me the nature of the cause of the sun; it tells me much more about the nature of the effect, that is, my body, notably, that it is reheatable by the sun.

Take the famous example by Kant in a completely different [text], "The sun melts... hardens the clay, and melts the wax." An admirable example, since you know that it is not an example... I have long believed, I am saying, you know, but no, I had an illumination one day, because I learned in a, in a, as we say, in a dictionary, that a method for making steel, a very old method, used both clay and wax. As a result, I understood Kant's example better -- I seem to be talking about something else but not at all -- Kant tells us, in an example he invokes for entirely other reasons, admire this, it's quite weird! "The sun hardens the clay and melts the wax." It's the living commentary of Spinoza's idea, namely, the imprint informs us much more about the nature of the affected body than about the nature of the affecting body, since in this case, the affecting

body is the sun , but it has two opposite effects depending on the nature of the affected bodies. The wax is constituted in such a way that it melts under the action of the sun while the clay dries and hardens. Fine, so the effect, Spinoza tells us, the imprint, the imprint-sign indicates more the nature of the affected body than the nature of the affecting body. I would say, this is the status of signs that we can call, that we should henceforth call "indicative" signs, indicative signs. Fine, here we have a first group of signs, imprint-signs.

A second group of signs. Understand: already, I am a sad creature. When he spoke of the world of signs that leaves us in the dark, that we don't even know how to live, that we are perpetually panicked, well, that now becomes a bit clearer. We are already influenced by all these things that occur to us. It is as if we were deaf, blind, etc. ... We are influenced by indicative signs, that is, they tell us much more about the states of our body than the nature of things. This is awful! But furthermore, in this state, then, we have effects, and we are separated from any understanding of the causes.

What is left for us to do, because we do not want to accept our misery. We always pretend to be clever, and we will say that we grasp everything anyway! We are going to say that the real reason for things is "the idea of the effect" and that it [the idea] is the one that contains all the secrets. Since we are so limited, since we have no idea of the causes, since we are reduced to the imprints of things on our body, we will brandish the idea of the imprint by saying that is what contains the secret of everything. That is, the sun is made to warm me, the sun is made to warm me, man's insane pride. [*Interruption of recording*] [2:06:11]

… At that point, when you erected this myth of final causes -- I am going quickly here because I am going to give you Spinoza's outline -- you have, you live in a world where you perpetually sense that not only things are created for you, but that someone commands them or they command you yourself as a function of a benefit (*bien*), that the sun says to me: warm yourself in my rays; that God tells me: warm yourself in the sun. In other words, the illusion of final causes introduces you directly into the imperative signs which are the second category of signs.

See how we go from indicative signs to imperative signs. It happens all by itself! And these imperative signs, we have analyzed them during all our previous sessions, this is what type? Adam does not know, he does not understand anything, he ignores the interplay of causes. He is reduced to the effect of the apple on his organism. What is the imprint of the apple on his body? It's because the apple is poisoning him. It breaks down his relations. He sees it as a final cause. He creates a final cause from the idea of effect, and he says: it is God's command, do not eat of the fruit! See, from the indicative sign, you pass to the imperative sign through the illusion of purpose (*finalité*). This is your way out, in this world of signs: Constructing purposes. But how are purposes dangerous? They distribute your commands and forms of obedience. In the world of purposes, you do not stop ordering, commanding or obeying, and both at the same time. And that's the poison of the world, you don't stop obeying, obeying, commanding, commanding, or both at the same time. [*Pause*]

A third and final point: in such a world, once it's said that these signs, each of them, the indicative signs and imperative signs, never cease entering into the regime of variability, into the regime of associativity, etc., this never stops precisely multiplying the meaning of words. So, the

sun, in what sense? It is: is this the fruit? In what sense? Is this in the sense of Adam's fruit? Is it in the sense of fruit, on the contrary, of paradise, of the good fruit? The bad fruit? Are things going to be distinguished by good and bad, by good and evil? etc., etc. What does all that mean? We find ourselves in a world where things and words are constantly and necessarily interpreted.

And interpretation becomes the fundamental activity of understanding precisely because understanding understands nothing about anything. It's a situation, if you will, that is tragic: you interpret when you understand nothing. What a lesson! There has never been such a beautiful critique of interpretation! You interpret; what does it mean to interpret? It basically means that the signs are equivocal. So, you have to interpret well since the signs are equivocal. Well then, we interpret. If you say, if you say the sea (*mer*), well, no, it can't be the sea! Here, well, it must be the mother (*mère*)! See? If you say just anything at all, well, you are interpreting. Why? Because the basis... it's the people of interpretation. It's very simple, you know. These are people who never experience things for their own sake. These are people who have memory, memory; they operate on memory. I mean, something always must remind them of something else.

And there, if there is a miserable life, this is it. This miserable life is really the guys who spend their time... They can't see anything without it reminding them of something. [*Laughter*] This is terrible! Each of us knows [people] like that. I know some. Whatever you say to someone, it reminds them of something. We want to tell him, spare me from your stupid memory (*ta mémoire de con*)!

It's not that I'm not making a case for the theme: everything is new! It's not that! I'm not saying that everything is new, I'm saying: the first lesson of wisdom is to consider something in itself for what it is. It's not whether it's new or not new. It's ... this thing, there, where does it stop? Where does it start? etc. ... But this kind of viscous filament there, through which one thing recalls another thing... You know, I don't know if that has the same effect on you; it makes me think of a catastrophe. There are people who today – well, today, during all eras -- write only like that. Obviously, that makes for a ready-made literature, because it is "associative" literature, once one says that when one thing can always bring up something else, what's left is to unwind the thing, and one quickly creates 500 pages! It's not complicated! At that point, it gets huge, but it's hard, it's hard. It's an odd sort of literature, this literature, yes, of... I don't know what; it is the literature of memory. Never, never has a writer of genius had the slightest memory. I say this even about those to whom we attribute it, I mean even Proust, and above all Proust has never worked on memory.

So, it's odd nonetheless, understand? It's all one: the associative chain and interpretation. You say a particular word. Ah! What other word does that remind you of? Oh! But we would like ... I don't know what you would like. It's not that, it's not that one has to deny that it reminds us of that! Well, obviously, that reminds us, if we place ourselves, if we put ourselves in these conditions, if we put ourselves in these conditions of associativity. Well yes, we can always put ourselves in the most stupid conditions possible! One can even wallow, one can show off the feebleness. You can make a measuring device out of it; that always works. Why wouldn't it work? These associations, they exist! It's a matter simply of knowing what you want. Do we want to escape from it, or do we want to live and die there? We will have time to live and die there because... and then we will die as even more of cretin than when we were born. Well, it's

all, uh ... fine... Breaking associations, that's always been like that, all the reasons for life, and all the reasons for art! And there, in this respect, art and life are strictly the same! If we do not break the associations, well, we grow senile in our corner, it's quite fine! You can grow senile like that for ten, twenty, forty years, as long as you hold on. It's not difficult. You understand?

So, at that point, it's better to jump completely to the end, jump completely to the end, that is, to do Beckett's stroke of genius. To say, okay, fine, but we're going to settle down at the end, that is, when the associations start when, they start to, [*Deleuze bursts out laughing*] they start to slog through one's noggin, so, then er, er, er ... Fine, there, it's very good because that is the final truth of the association. If you take this path, you end up with that, and at that point, Beckett can then give us his great lesson of life and joy, telling us: all that's quite funny! Obviously, but in the end, beware of all those things. I would say the third kind of sign is the "interpretative" signs.

Comtesse: One can [go back] to Rousseau's problem from the last meeting. If Rousseau had only a presentiment of the materialism of the sage, if he only had a presentiment of acquired selection and the composition in the acquired selection, that's perhaps because, and the *Confessions* may bear witness to this, he was precisely within the effectiveness of the traces in which everything reminded him of something else! But [he wasn't] in the selection. The object of present desire only reminds him of the trace object of an old desire, and that goes onward to infinity. The remarkable case is Mademoiselle de Lambercier, the virile instigator, where any woman reminds him of this trace. We can multiply the examples. There would be something between a disjunction between the effectiveness of the memory traces, and the active selection according to events.

Deleuze: Quite right, yeah, yeah, I would say just to qualify this, just from my point of view, you choose the most beautiful text, Rousseau's *Confessions*. From my point of view, it is fascinating, the Rousseau case, because he got away with it while young, and as long as he was young, and as long as he did not crack, it's a very, very impressive case, Rousseau. He escapes from it, because he plays, the associative chains, they play completely on him! But in a way, he dominates them precisely by an art of selection. He builds up situations, so that goes all the way to the buffoon, he is the buffoon. He is, he becomes a kind of buffoon character who is fantastic, who is almost Dostoevskian, all things considered, magnificent. And then that cracks, then that cracks, that cracks with the misfortunes that happen to him, that cracks, and I told you, what seems to me so moving in the *Confessions*, what makes it a great, great book, is the way in which something, I don't remember exactly, but let's admit the first five books, are a kind of hymn to joy, a kind of joy, a joy of living, a kind of enormous laugh in which Rousseau creates his character and shows us the secret of fabricating the Rousseau character in a kind of, not inauthentic, then in a kind of absolute authenticity.

And then, little by little, so it's then that a process of an entirely different kind begins. The associative channels no longer start playing at all, in an art specific to Rousseau who keeps the selection, but there is no longer any selection. And we are really witnessing the formation of a paranoid process which is triggered through all this. And it's like a change of color! From book to book, in the *Confessions*, it's like the shadows come, it gets dark, and it ends in absolute darkness. Here, in this regard, it's a book of, if we were talking about "colors" in the *Confessions*,

it's fantastic how, from a certain moment, everything becomes black, everything becomes... Fine, the rest for the next time. [*End of the session*] [2:17: 51]

Notes, 39-43: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 09, 3 February 1981

Transcription (for Paris 8): Parts 1-2-3, Jean-Charles Jarrell; Augmented Transcription by Charles J. Stivale

Translation by Charles J. Stivale

Part 1

[*Sounds from the room, for around thirty seconds*] Would you be so kind as to close the door there? There's a door open, a door open ... [*Pause*] Okay, so ... So, you see, we have a problem, because we're holding two pieces of... two ends of a chain. I mean, at one end of the chain, we have the world of signs. Now, this world of signs, I tried to show how, according to Spinoza, things are going quite badly. And this world of signs is really a state of affairs (*état de fait*). We are born into this world. You will notice that it's not clear why, finally, tradition calls a certain number of philosophers after Descartes, they are called Cartesians, in which Leibniz is Cartesian, in which Spinoza, even more strongly, is Cartesian. We look for [this reason] rather in vain, because the already obvious thing is that there is no possibility of a ... -- I say this for those who know Descartes a little -- there is no possibility of a cogito, in [Spinoza]. There is no possibility of grasping hold of a thinking being.

In fact, we are in a world of signs, and what does that mean? Well, that means, among other things, that I can only know myself through the affections that I experience, that is, by the imprint of the bodies on mine. It's a state of absolute confusion; there is no cogito, there is no extraction of thought or of a thinking substance. So I am, really, up to my neck in this night, in this night of signs. And, at the last meeting, I spent most of our time solely trying to define this world of signs, which is therefore a state of affairs, or if you prefer -- he will say as well, Spinoza – it's the state of nature. But the state of nature, there, this must be taken in a very broad sense; this is not the old state, the state of the ages, the state of a very long ago, of what once was. This is our state of affairs. In fact, we live among signs; we don't stop calling out for them; we don't stop sending them, and all this within a darkness and confusion that defines the fact, our state of affairs.

And this whole world of signs, with all the characteristics, at the same time, the characteristics proper to all the signs and the kinds of signs... I remind you: the characteristics proper to all the signs, these are: variability, associativity, equivocity. The kinds of signs are indications -- indicative signs, indications – imperatives, and interpretations. We live in a world of interpretations, imperatives and indicatives. [*Pause*] Fine.

At the other end of the chain, what do we have? We have in a way the goal, or the ideal, that Spinoza offers us, and such that... We cannot yet fully grasp it, but at least we grasp it, we are beginning to grasp it through one aspect, namely, arriving at a world of univocity, a world which would no longer be that of always equivocal signs, but a world of univocal expressions, where what is said, is said in one and the same sense for everything about which it's said.

In contrast to obscure and confused signs, I might as well call it the world of luminous expressions. We have seen the role of light in this, that language is light. We have seen the whole theme of the seventeenth [century] in this respect, this kind of optical world of light. Notice that already, when I say: "arriving at a language of univocity", I am posing a little bit more than a simple question because if that is what I am proposing, the question itself gives me certain rules. I mean, it's not about creating univocal expressions out of ones hadn't been so because things never work like that. There are signs or expressions that are fundamentally condemned to equivocity.

Let's take two examples. I am asking the question: "Does God have an understanding?" And I remain at the level of the question, of the analysis of the question; I do not pretend to answer. I can already specify, at the level of this question "Does God have an understanding?", I can already say: if it has an understanding, this is not in the same sense as man has one. Why? For the simple reason that if God has an understanding, this is an infinite understanding that differs in nature from ours. If God has an understanding, then I cannot escape the following consequence, namely, that the word "understanding" is expressed with two meanings, at least with two meanings. When this is said of God and when this is said of man, this is not expressed in the same sense. So, from the point of view of a Spinozist rule, the matter is already judged: God cannot have an understanding. If man has an understanding, God does not. Fine. You see that already, just the question, asking the question about univocity is already enough to eliminate a certain type of expression.

Second question: is God substance? Here it's more complicated. If I say: is God substance? ... -- I am still trying to develop the question, not to answer it, eh? without answering it. I am trying to develop the question -- If God is substance, it's one thing or another: either man also is substance, or else man will not be substance. I'm continuing to develop [this]. Suppose that God is substance, and man too. In that case, substance is an ambiguous word, since it cannot be with the same sense that God is substance and that man is substance. Why can't it be the same way? It cannot be with the same sense because God will be said to be substance as it is uncreated, as was said at that time, "insofar as it is the cause of itself", whereas man will be substance within his own status as a creature. So, substance will be expressed in two ways, of uncreated being and of the creature.

Moreover, this will be expressed in three senses, of the bodily creature and of the thinking creature. Henceforth, I can say -- you see, just by analyzing the question --, if God is substance, with my rule of univocity, with my rule of univocity, I must say: if God is substance ... -- I don't know anything yet, but we are assuming God is substance -- it will be necessary in that case, if there is univocity, it will be necessary in that case that the man is not so. So, just the question of univocity -- just the question insofar as being a question -- univocity allows me to set certain rules in advance. That does not prevent us from not being so greatly advanced since we are

holding on to the two ends [of the chain] once again: the world of signs, which defines our state of affairs -- obscure signs, our desire, and why this desire, where does this desire come from? -- our desire to accede to a world of luminous expressions, a world of univocity. But the more I turn toward signs, the less I see the possibility of getting away from them. How might one escape from this world of signs which defines confusion, which defines obscurity, or which defines the very original conception, there, that Spinoza creates of the inadequate, with his three very formidable capstones: the indicative, the imperative, the interpretative?

So, there, we are blocked; we are blocked. We cannot advance, so that in your reading of Spinoza, you have to say: well, then, how he can, how he can move forward? What means does he have? I mean, there are times when you don't have a choice. Once again, we are faced with something that's a dead end. We are locked into the world of signs. So, you see, you can say to yourself, there is always a way out. You can say to yourself, "Well, very well, you just have to get used to it. Let's stay in the world of signs!" But, once again, the entire seventeenth century provided a critique of the world of signs. Why did this century critique the world of signs? No doubt because the Middle Ages, and even the Renaissance, developed magnificent, not even theories, magnificent practical theories of signs, and the reaction, the reaction of the seventeenth century, was this critique of signs, to oppose it with the purely optical laws of the clear and distinct idea, of the luminous idea.

So fine, and Spinoza belongs to that. So how does he get out of this? So, I only see one way. We say to ourselves, well, there would only be one way -- it's if we had forgotten something -- in the world of signs. It would be necessary -- that's the ideal, you understand --, we would get out if ... -- under the conditions of this problem --, we would get out if we had forgotten a fourth type of sign, notably, if there were rather bizarre signs, in the world of signs, which give us not the certainty, but the possibility of getting out of signs. These would be some strange signs. [*Pause*] So if ... if we could play with these signs, of course, they would still be equivocal; these signs would be completely equivocal since, on the one hand, they would be fully part of the world of signs, but on the other hand, they would give us a kind of possibility to get out of the world of signs, if we knew how to use them, if we knew how to use them. Well then, I get the impression that constantly in Spinozism, in Spinoza, there is a kind of functionalism; what interests him is really the functions, how things can work. So, signs, which by their function, which by their nature would be signs, this would be quite paradoxical: by their nature, they would be signs, but by their function, they could bring us out of the world of signs.

And what did we forget then? Let's find out, if I tell myself that we forgot something. You sense that we have forgotten something, that this world of signs, in fact, it does not close on itself, as I presented it. Indeed, what did I say about these signs? Well, I said, there are three kinds. In fact, you sense that there are going to be four. Fortunately! Fortunately, otherwise, otherwise we would be condemned to the first kind of knowledge. What a drama, then.

This world of signs, I said: these are indications, on the one hand. What are the indications? You remember, there you just have to pay close attention; it's not difficult, all that, but we just need to pay attention. The indications are the effects of an external body on mine; it's the imprint of an external body on mine. It's the trace, it's the imprint. And that's what Spinoza calls affections,

affectio, or ideas, or perceptions. [*Pause*] These are perceptions, for example, the imprint of the sun on my body, when I say "oh, it's hot!" [*Pause*]

A second type of signs, the imperatives. We have seen how they emerge from perceptions, in the form of final causes. This time, the final causes are in the realm of the imagination. These are, as was said in the Middle Ages, creatures of imagination, or fictions. A second kind of signs are fictions, based on final causes.

A third type of signs: interpretations. This time, it's abstractions, interpretations. I abstract an idea of a mountain, and I say, "God is the highest of mountains, it is the mountain of mountains". It's a pure abstract. You see, perception, fiction, abstraction.

What have I forgotten? Perceptions, I said, these are -- if needs be, in the rigor of Spinozist terminology -- these are perceptions; it's the same as affections, *affectio*, or ideas. But you remember that there was something else, and that in the previous meetings, I indeed distinguished, in the very terms of Spinoza, *affectios* and *affectus*. *Affectio* is therefore the idea ... -- or perceptions, this is the same – it's the idea of the imprint of an external body on mine. At every instant, I have affections; only, as soon as I turn my head, my affection changes. So, affection is always the instantaneous cut.

And I said: there is affect, *affectus*, what is it? I can say of any affection, at a given moment -- the affections that I experience at a given moment, you remember, there, the terminology of Spinoza is very strict, but if you cannot recall it, you cannot understand -- at any moment, the affections that I experience at this time realize -- realize -- my power of action (*puissance*). My power of action is realized under and through the affections which I experience at one moment or another. That's a very clear proposition. But henceforth, that does not prevent any affection, at a given moment, if I introduce the dimension of duration, from realizing my power of action, but it does not realize my power of action without causing it to vary within certain bounds, specifically: my power of action is realized by affections anyway, as perfectly as it can be anyway, but in such a way that sometimes this power is diminished compared to the previous state, and sometimes this power is increased compared to the previous state.

And what Spinoza calls affect, in contrast with affection, is the increase or decrease, that is, the passage. Affect is the passage from one affection to another affection, but affect is not an *affectio*; it's not an affection. It is the passage from one affection to another, once it's said that this passage envelops, implies, either an increase in my power of action or a decrease in my power of action, which in any case is realized through affection, to a particular degree. This has to be very, very clear. If you understand that -- before being sure that it is clear, that is, that ... – I'll start over again if this is not very clear because, otherwise, you can no longer understand anything, I believe. I'll add this: henceforth, we've taken hold of our fourth kind of sign. We do not know what use it will be for us, but I can see that I had neglected a fourth type of sign.

Let's go back to my *affectios*. These are indicative signs. Let's try to clarify. Indicative signs, that means effects of a body on mine. It indicates, it indicates, in part, the nature of the external body, and in large part, the nature of my affected body. [*Pause*] Fine. Any affection is as perfect as it can be. In other words, what Spinoza... This perfection, what is it? It's the quantity of reality,

says Spinoza, the quantity of reality that it envelops. All affection envelops a quantity of reality. You see, it's true that the sun has such a particular effect on my body. So, it is certainly false when, from this effect, I draw conclusions about the nature of the sun, but on the other hand, it is true that it has such a particular effect on my body. This affection, insofar as being true, is defined by a quantity of reality. To use simple mathematical terms, one might say there that this is a scalar quantity. It's worth what it's worth, there you go. There are quantities of reality. An affection has more or less reality.

When I go on to the *affectus*, the passage, that is, increase in power of action or decrease in power of action, this is not at all a quantity of reality, there. What is this? It's much more what one could be called a vector quantity. Increase in power of action, decrease in power of action are two vectors. The rule of vector quantity is not at all the same as the rule of scalar quantity. So, we've gotten hold of something here. The fourth kind of sign, that I had neglected, is the vector signs. Increases in power of action or decreases in power of action, that is, *affectus*, affects, are signs. Signs of what? The *affectus* are signs of the increase or the decrease in power of action. What are the *affectus*? At least, the basic *affectus*, the basic affects, as we have seen, are joy and sadness; joy equals increase in power of action, sadness equals decrease in power of action, these are the two vectors. Well, I would say sadness and joy are the vector signs. Is this okay?

So, we have made a little progress, but it will be useful for us because we only have one question left; obviously it will be complicated. The question that remains to us is: well, fine, well, how can vector signs, assuming they can, allow us to get out of the world of signs? And in fact, I believe very strongly here that for Spinoza, if there were not this fourth type of sign, these increases and decreases in power of action, we would be condemned to the inadequate; we would be condemned there, you realize; we would be condemned to this dark world, this nocturnal world, there, of affections. And henceforth, imperatives, and... If it weren't for joy and sadness, it's strange: it's as if joy and sadness, increases and decreases in power of action -- maybe not the two ...--, but it's as if, in the dark world of signs, in the nocturnal world of signs, as if the affects were already like little glimmers of light, little lights like that, like kinds of glow worms. Fine.

This may be what will open us up to the optical world. Joy and sadness? Probably not, probably not both. No doubt there is a bad vector, there is a ... If these are vector signs, joy and sadness, there is a vector that pushes us back into the world of signs, it would be fine. And then a vector – it's a question of getting onto this vector, as we say, getting onto a vector -- there would be two vectors, so, you see: a vector, like this [*Deleuze makes a gesture in one direction*], and then a vector like that [*Deleuze makes a gesture in another direction*]. There is one that pushes us back into the world of signs, and there is one that makes us spurt forth -- or that can do so, it's not sure ...--, which contains a chance of getting us out of the world of signs. You feel in advance that this good vector is joy. There we are.

So, that's precisely where I am; we have made a bit of progress, nonetheless. That's precisely where I am: and how, how does this vector operate? So here, I am making a very solemn, very heartfelt appeal, because… I'll start all over again if this is not very, very clear. I mean, as everything else depends on this point, I don't want to move on if... I mean, here's exactly what must occur, that you have understood, that I stated very clearly the ways in which affects are a

fourth kind of sign. If you did not understand this, I'll start over again. [*Pause*] Is this okay? ... Yes? ... Yes? ... So, I'll continue. Fine… fine, fine, fine… And you do understand all that, right? [*Pause*] No, I'm not at all saying that in order... But I'm surprised because this seems very difficult to me. If you're okay with that, then it's fine... Good! Well there, I find that... So, [Spinoza] tells us, at this point, he tells us things that will become extremely simple. He says to us: here we are, you understand, in the life, well, what do you have to do? To this first... So, for the moment, this is exactly where I am: trying to sketch the steps of exiting from the world of signs. We're still in it, right? We haven't gotten out of it.

We have an idea: ah, yes, if I put myself on that vector, maybe I will get out, but how, and why? And how to get onto this vector? Well, suppose I do this by virtue of a particularly gifted nature. Suppose that... It's not that complicated from a certain point of view; you will even think, I hope, that these are things that a whole philosophical tradition has always said, for example, since Epicurus. It is indeed a fairly Epicurean tradition, but in a sense, in the true sense of Epicurus, which is not at all to say "go have fun", which is to say much more: to invite us toward a process of selection, which consists first of all of a kind of bias: "no, I will not be made to believe that there is something good in sadness! All sadness is bad!" So, you can tell me, okay, I'm not an idiot, that's something I can understand, that sadness is inevitable, just like death, like suffering, yes. But every time I see someone trying to persuade me that there is something good, useful or fruitful in sadness, I will smell an enemy in him, not just of myself, but of the human race. That is, I will smell a tyrant in him, or the tyrant's ally, because only the tyrant needs sadness to assert his power. Fine.

And, that was already it, Epicurus... I mean, that was already the denunciation of the tyrant for Epicurus, it was already Epicurus's denunciation of religion. Well here, Spinoza is very, very much the disciple of Epicurus, and this tradition, it had not stopped... There is a tradition that is quite disparaged in the history of philosophy, but which stands out by its great authors, which passes by Lucretius, finally which... So, fine.

So, this first step, what is it about? It is really a question of selection, of selecting joys as much as it is in me, as much as it is in me. What does this mean? This means, well yes, there are many inevitable kinds of sadness, but once again, I understand what an inevitable sadness means. Someone I love dies is sadness, inevitable sadness; it happens, I can't help it. On the other hand, there where I can, I cause -- how would I say this – I cause this sadness to swell up, to swell up to infinity, summing it up and then re-summing up the sadness, smearing myself with it, wallowing into it, that's something I can do, that I can do. It's even the vector of sadness that invites me to do that, to create this very bizarre kind of summation in which the more that goes badly, the more I experience, in the end, a strange joy. Hey, I've just said, the more I experience a strange joy… the more it goes badly, the more that I experience a strange joy; that means that it's not as simple as I was saying earlier, my selection.

And here, that's the whole of Book III of the *Ethics* which seems to me extraordinarily clever in this sense. If it were simply a matter of selecting joys, eliminating sadness as much as I can, it would already be something. But for Spinoza, this would not be, this would not be a true art of living. Why? Because there are not two pure lines, this is where it becomes important, and all of book III shows this very well. There are not two pure lines, a line of sadness and a line of joy.

There is not a line where sadness is linked with sadness, and a line where joy is linked with joy. Why? Because the lines of sadness are themselves punctuated by joys of a certain kind. The lines of joy are themselves punctuated by sadness of some kind. Only, what matters -- you see, we are almost comforted --, what matters is that the joys intervening on the lines of sadness are not at all of the same nature as the joys intervening on the lines of joy.

What is the difference? The line of sadness is basically a decrease in the power of acting,[44] and you can understand why; this is very, here, it's very mathematical, almost. This is really the geometric method in Spinoza. In fact, sadness is the decrease in the power of acting. When do I experience an affect reducing the power to act? When the affection that I feel on my body is the imprint of a body that does not suit mine. A body that is not suitable with mine diminishes my power of acting; I am affected by sadness, *affectus*; my affect is through sadness. Immediately, from this, we can conclude what hate is. Hatred is the effort that I make henceforth, by virtue of my power of action, to destroy the object that affects me with sadness. When you are affected by sadness, you seek to destroy the object that affects you in this way. You will say that you hate this object which does not suit you.

Suppose you manage to destroy this object; henceforth, to eliminate your sadness, well, from then on, you experience a joy. Spinoza goes so far as to create a theorem, thus titled: "He who imagines the cause of his sadness destroyed, rejoices", in the form "eh, well this one, I got it! " A joy! Notice then that there, on the line of sadness, you have a line of sadness: sadness, hatred, then many other things, there is a joy that intervenes: joy of imagining or of acting to have it destroyed, the object that causes sadness. But this is a very weird joy. It's a dirty little joy. [*Interruption of the recording*] [34:55]

Part 2

… namely, in fact, we are so complicated, we are composed in such a complex way that it may very well be that a joy affects me in certain parts of myself, but that the same object that gives joy in some parts of me gives me sadness in other parts. I would say that the joys which intervene on the lines of sadness are necessarily indirect joys, or partial joys.

On the other hand, the same demonstration for the line of joy, what is the line of joy? It's everything that interconnects starting from my encounter with a body that suits mine. Suppose the body that suits mine, so this body that suits mine, I love it. Just as hatred arose from sadness, so love arises from joy. [*Pause*] So you have a line of joy there: joy, love for the thing that gives you joy, etc. This time, what are these joys of a different nature than the joys that intervened on the lines of sadness? These are all the more joys as they will be direct and complete, as opposed to the compensatory joys, indirect and partial, which intervened on the line of hatred. They will be direct and complete, that is, you will experience joy for the thing itself. Your power of action will increase. You remember -- I won't go back over that -- what Spinoza means with the increase or decrease in power of action? Well, I'll go back over it very quickly, if you did not have it in mind: literally it's the increase and decrease in power of action, joy and sadness, since in one case, that of joy, the power of the external thing that suits you propels your power of action, that is, it increases, relatively, while in the other case, that of sadness, the encounter with the thing that does not agree with you will invest your power of action, which is entirely

immobilized to repel the thing, and this fixed, immobilized power of action is as if withdrawn from you, hence your power of action decreases. So, there you have the two vectors: increase, decrease.

So, you see that what Spinoza invites us into, as a disciple of Epicure, is really a selection of, the selection of the two lines. And, that there are inevitable sorrows, once again ... For example, something one loves dies, something one loves dies, oh well, it's sad... And it does not mean, Spinoza is not saying, "don't worry about it". No, but it must be taken as an inevitable sadness. The only kinds of sadness allowed or conserved on the lines of joy are the kinds of sadness that you experience as inevitable. Fine, so, there it is: this is what I called the first effort of reason before there was even reason. It's to get oneself aboard this vector of increased power of action How does one get onto this vector? We have an answer: by selecting joys, by selecting the lines of joys. And this is a very complicated art.

How does one make this selection? Spinoza gave us an answer, and I said that this answer foreshadows a theme that we will then find in Rousseau, namely, the first effort of reason as selective art, and which consists of a very simple practical rule: know what you are capable of, that is, avoid putting yourself in situations that will be poisonous for you. And I believe that when [Spinoza] says "what can a body do?", when he proposes this question, that means among other things that ... It doesn't mean that…, among other things, that means: But look at your life, you just don't stop, you don't stop putting yourself into situations that you, precisely and personally, cannot stand. And indeed, in this sense, you create them, your own sorrows. Well, not always, but you add to them, compared to the inevitable kinds of sadness of the world; you always add to them. That's what Spinoza's idea is: sadness, in the end, is inevitable. But that's not what humanity dies from. Starting from inevitable kinds of sadness, humanity dies from what is added onto them. This is a kind of fabrication of sadness, a fantastic factory of sadness, really. And there are institutions for generating sadness, TV, all that, right? ... Fine, there are [sadness] devices, and it requires that there be sadness devices. There are sadness devices because all power needs sadness. There is no joyful power.

Okay, [*Pause*] so, you see, fine, here we are. But where does this take us? How does that get us out of signs? Fine, I select my joys, okay, but I'm not getting away from signs. This is still a vector sign. I can just say that I accommodate it better. How is this a little glimmer of light breaking through the darkness of signs? There we have the second step of reason. So, on my selected line of joy -- and again, this is not a recipe, right, you have to find them; my own joys are not my neighbor's joys. Fine ... [You] have to find them. -- You will say to me: but your joys might annoy someone else. No! If you understood the first step, no. They can't annoy someone else, because my own joys that annoy someone else are the joys of lines of hate. Whereas if I have selected from my lines of joy, in the end, I succeed, but I don't bother anyone. I cannot. I mean, that's not my business, because bothering someone and the joy of bothering someone is very much related to lines of hate. Fine, but still, we are not moving fast enough. Okay, okay, let's say, let's suppose, okay...

So, where does it take me? This is the second aspect of reason. Suppose that ... Notice, right, I mean, I didn't cheat! I stayed absolutely within the data of the world of signs, namely: I only know a body through the effects it has on mine, I only know other bodies through the effects

they have on mine. So, I stay within the realm of *affectio*. As long as I only know bodies through the effects they have on mine, I stay within the realm of passive affections -- no, not ... that's idiotic! --, I remain within the domain of affections and the corresponding affects; whether it is a decrease in power of action but also an increase in power of action, the corresponding affects are passive. They are passions, in fact, since they refer to the external effects of an external body on mine. So, it's a passion. The joy I have just selected is no less a passion than the kinds of sadness. These are the two vectors of passion.

Well, then, I am saying: the second aspect of reason, suppose that ... -- but that assumes the first aspect --, suppose that you nevertheless succeeded relatively -- since you cannot absolutely succeed, there are inevitable sorrows --, suppose you have been relatively successful in selecting joys, that you have done well in creating your line of joy -- so, of course, it can always be broken, wham! illness, death, loss of the loved one, etc., the loved ones, well, all that. A line can always be completely interrupted, ravaged; it's a shame, it's a shame, but that's how it is, there we are ... -- And suppose that ... You see, it's not a straight line, it's a line entirely, really, it passes between things, right?... It goes along, it breaks, it continues, it resumes. But, like worms, you stubbornly seek your line of joy,[45] which means something other than seeking pleasure. What does that mean, after all? That means: you are seeking your encounter with bodies that suit you, be it the sun or the loved one… or stamp collections, anything whatsoever, if that's it, what matters to you. [*Laughter*] Okay, [*Pause*] then, so you don't stop increasing your power of action, but you stay within passion.

So, this is where there is a small leap and, no doubt, a variable threshold for each person. It's as if Spinoza said to us: Well, you see, think a little bit, because ... or rather, don't think; rediscover your life. For each of us, there is a moment when this accumulation of power of action -- it has increased, one's power of action, through a thousand detours, there, by selecting one's line of joy --, well, everything happens as if, at a certain level x, since it's variable for each person, in a certain way, we could say that this guy acquired and possesses his power, that is, it's been increased so well, he has so successfully increased the power of action -- the passive affect – that we might say that he comes into possession of this power of action. He has it, or is so close to having it, very close to having it, but he has it; we can say, basically, say that he has it.

What does all that mean? Here we have another point where you must pay close attention. It means that he gets out of the realm of passions. That means he gets out of the realm of passions, and what does that mean, getting out of the realm of passions? The realm of passions, you remember, must be defined exactly like this: there is passion, my affects are passions as long as my affections are mere perception... are, in the encounter I create with others body, are the simple perception of the effect of the external body on mine. [*Pause*] As long as I know bodies through the effect that the external body has on me, as long as I know the bodies in this way, I can say that my affections are inadequate, and that my affects are passions, whether joys or sorrows. So, when I say everything happens as if, at the end of the selection of this line of joy, I reached a point, a variable threshold for each of us, where I can say: Ah, that guy, he possesses it, his power of action, how do I recognize this, that someone possesses? By anything: his way of walking, his way of being gentle, his way of getting angry when he is... I don't know what... his charm... I don't know; these are not very reasonable things through which I recognize that; it's through some sort of agreement with himself. [*Pause*]

So, fine, what was I saying, yes... So, when I say: well there, now my power of action, I grasp it, that means -- if that means something -- that means that I no longer know bodies through the simple effect that an external body has on mine, since that was the domain of passion; that was the domain of joys and sorrows, all that. As long as I did not yet possess my power of action, my power of action simply increased or decreased, but I did not yet possess it. When I possess it, something must have changed. So, what has changed? And moreover, it's this something that has changed that will allow me to define this term more seriously: what does "possessing one's power of action" mean? What could have changed? So, we have to start again, there... I have as a reference point: well then, this is a state, this second state, it's a state in which I no longer know the external bodies simply through the effect that they have on my own body, through the imprint they have on mine. By what other means could I know them?

So, with this, we must all be experiencing an illumination. Yes indeed, we already know this! We already know this because we talked about it previously. What else do I have as a possibility? I no longer know bodies through the effect they have on my own, but, but, but, I know them as the relations that constitute them, insofar as these relations combine with the relations that constitute me. What I grasp hold of is no longer the effects of a body on mine; it's a composition of relations between a body and my own, a huge difference, an immense, immense difference.[46]

You will ask me, what is this knowledge? In reading Spinoza, one might think that this is very abstract. So, does that mean doing math? That could mean this: it may mean doing math, but this goes so much farther than math. I'll choose two examples: when can I say, "I know how to dance," or "I know how to swim"? These examples, they are not in the letter of the *Ethics*, they are not... but he could have used them, he could have indeed used them -- "I can swim in a Dutch canal", "I am swimming in Amsterdam", "I'm going to dance on Saturday evening in Amsterdam" -- fine, what does it mean, "I know how to swim, I know how to dance", if I know how to? What does it mean, say, what does it mean " I don't know how to swim", or "I don't know how very well"? "Ah, are you coming to swim?" "No, I don't know how to very well, I'm afraid of drowning ..."

Well, you understand, this is not math. Someone who doesn't know how to swim is someone who understands nothing about what? He understands nothing about the movement of a wave, he understands nothing about the movement of a wave. What does this mean? He understands nothing about the movement of the wave. He enters the water... First of all, he enters the water badly, eh? – I'm talking about this because I swim very, very badly, so… [*Laughter*] – "He enters the water badly", what does this mean? You understand, we are constantly reduced to what? To waiting, to waiting with... -- At the same moment, it rushes, in my mouth -- waiting with... If I am waiting, I'm sure to be sad! Oh, hold on, isn't waiting a basic motive of sadness? Each time I wait, I'm already done. I'm already done, I get sad, right? So fine, of course, never wait. You can wait within space. Why might waiting in space matter? You can be there like a statue (*borne*); one can always wait… But, in another sense, don't wait, no... Don't wait for anything, because ... Spinoza also says things... Have no hope...

And at the same time, for Spinoza, this is the opposite of a desperate world, but hope... This is completely the core. This is analysis of the core. You will always find in hope a core of sadness,

the conspiracy of sadness. The joy of hope is the conspiracy of sadness, that is, this is bad joy. Fine, but finally, I enter the water, so that gets me wet... Then, with that happening, I curl up. Wham! I get a wave in the face, well, oh there, I start to yell, I start choking... Another wave comes, good, right in the… It knocks me out, all that. [*Laughter*] I roll around -- grotesquely, as well -- then, there's the sadness of being ridiculous, added on top of that. [*Laughter*]

What have I done? I lived along a rhythm in which I was perpetually waiting for the effect of the external body on mine -- while calling the sea a "body", right? -- Fine, there we are, I was waiting for the effect. So, in fact, I could have joys there ... I had some small joys: "Oh that's so funny!" [*Laughter*] "Oh, did you see, did you see the beautiful wave, there?", I got it, I got it! This time, it didn't knock me out...". [*Laughter*] Very good. And we all go through that and learning anything at all is an analysis of what it means to learn. That's what learning is. But what is the process of learning (*apprentissage*)? [It's] when, little by little, you are going to make selections, selecting what? Well, knowing how to swim, what is it? It is knowing that a body has its aspects. This really is going to be organizing the encounter. Learning is always organizing the encounter. Specifically, there are never bad encounters; these are encounters at full force (*de plein fouet*). When you get into the water, you have to know, I guess... But still you have to... There are people who will never get there; but in their case, they simply have to keep from going to the beach. [*Laughter*] It's very simple. They have only to keep themselves from getting into an impossible situation. It's not bad not knowing how to swim; it's only bad on the beach. It's not bad not knowing how to dance, except in one place: at dance halls. If you put yourself in an impossible situation -- you can't dance, and at the same time, an obscure stubborn impulse makes you want to piss everyone off and go to the dance hall anyway -- [*Laughter*] this is a disaster! So in this, there is going to be a culture of sadness; you will make others pay for having accompanied them to the dance hall, and it will be revenge there and then, it will be the world of revenge, you will be behaving like a real bully, you will... [*Deleuze doesn't finish*]

There is an admirable, admirable short story by Chekhov. It's in a small Russian district -- I don't remember it; this just comes to my mind -- and there is a bitter little official, all that, quite bitter, and he goes to the ball given by the district general, and his wife made herself beautiful. And he already says to himself en route there, he says to himself: "Oh... she is beautiful ...", and he feels more and more shabby, more and more pathetic. And she is beautiful, she is beautiful anyway... But, far from that giving him a kind of pride, any joy, it fills him with hatred: "You are so beautiful, you bitch, you're so beautiful...". [*Laughter*] And he goes to the ball, and he realizes that his wife there is glowing. She is glowing not at all for bad or shameful or inexpressible reasons, but because she is happy, she is happy for one evening. So, he says to himself there in his corner: "You, I will not let you get away with this". [*Someone asks Deleuze to speak up; general laughter*] Yes, but a story like that, which is very intimate... [*Laughter*] So, there he says to himself: "You're going to see, you're going to see...". So, she has been transformed, she has been transformed. Then he says to her, "Come over here, I have something to say to you ...", which he says to her in a panic, him, all panicky, "This can't continue..." He says to her: "You flirted with the captain, there...", [*Laughter*] and she says: "No, no... ". She doesn't even know who the captain is, she has done nothing, done nothing at all. "Yes you did, yes you did!"... and he begins to raise his voice, and in her turn in a panic, she says to him: "No, no, no scene, don't make a scene". "Ah well", he says, "well, let's go now!" She said, "I'm begging you; I'm begging you, I never asked you anything in my life, let me stay another hour". So, he has her now, he has

her now, and he says: "No, no, no, I'm going to make a scene". [*Laughter*] She leaves, she leaves, and as she walks, he puts himself a little behind her, and she is crying. And he is a little bit behind, and he looks at her, and as she walks, her silhouette collapses, and he discovers joy, an intense joy: "I got her, I got her, I got her". So obviously, this is Chekhov's world, it's never very... He never misses, Chekhov. And, this is the same Chekhov... Anyway, never mind.

Fine, well, you see, you see, I was saying that about dancing, but to know how to do something is not knowing mathematics; I would say it is much more, it is living mathematics. To know how to swim is first to know how to present to the wave the aspect of one's body under which this body combines in its movement with the movement of the wave. You see? [*Pause*] For a magnificent writer, what does it mean to be a sea captain, a good captain? A good captain... -- I am thinking of such an admirable author, because I read some of his works again not long ago, Polish-English, who is [Joseph] Conrad. In Conrad's novels, you have all the storms possible, since he was a sailor by trade, and he draws his work from it. There are all the storms possible which, we learn from reading Conrad, that these are extraordinarily diverse. Depending on the nature of the storm, a good captain is one who, depending on the storm, places his boat at the best speed and in the best position vis-à-vis the wave so that the wave's movement and the boat's movement are composed with each other, instead of the wave's movement decomposing the boat's movement.

Knowing how to dance is the same thing. To know how to dance is precisely to present one's body following the aspect in which, in terms of dance, it composes itself with the body of the male or woman partner. This is usually what we call a rhythm. Fine, if this is a mathematics of rhythm, no one has anything against it; it's not doing math. So, it is really about grasping things no longer by the effect they have on my body, while waiting for this effect, but about seizing things within the compositions of relations between them and my body. When you reach this life skill (*savoir-vivre*), you can say: "I possess my power of action". Before, you could only say one thing: "I'm leaning towards increasing my power of action."

At that point, you no longer see so many things, so many objects. That was at the time of inadequate affections; that was at the first moment when you were seeing objects. In this second moment, you see nothing other than relations and compositions of relations to infinity; that is, a loved one, a woman or a man, you are no longer in the state in which you say to yourself… [*Deleuze does not finish*]. And in a way, the other thing can do nothing against you. In a certain way, you are invulnerable – taking into account what I said, that there are always inevitable sorrows – to some extent, you are invulnerable. Because even if you die, even if a very good swimmer dies, his or her death is not in the same way that a bad swimmer would die. He or she dies in a kind of, I guess, a kind of... well, that's where the expression, "Well yes, it was inevitable," takes on meaning. He or she dies in some sort of accord with him/herself. The life has not been a waste. This is important, after all.

So, it's always disturbing to die; sadness, it's sad, it's always sad. But there are many ways to die happy, without making others pay for it first. It's terrible, people who die while making others pay for it. So no; in this, no, no. Here it occurs much better, the swimmer who did not spot a particularly devious incoming wave arrive, and dies in a kind of -- I assume, I assume -- does he die, there in a kind of astonishment? "Oh, oh well, that's the one, then!" [*Laughter*] Okay, he

says to himself, "oh well yes". The captain who mistakes his storm, he has a kind of serenity which means that he remains the last on board, not out of duty, but better to look at this thing, as if it were a matter of ripping forth a final secret about the composition of the relations. This is no longer a man, it's no longer a woman; what is it? It is not that this has become impersonal; on the contrary, this remains extraordinarily personal; it's a personality that has completely changed its meaning.

I see someone walking in; I no longer see him as a delimited object. I see him as an aggregate of mobile relations, that is, Spinoza will say: "a proportion of rest and movement, of speed and slowness". And I recognize him by this proportion that I do not confuse with any other proportion. So, my favorite dancer, what is my favorite dancer? -- I say "my" to point out that this is an example, right, this is a very general example. -- What is the favorite dancer, if there is a favorite dancer, I don't know. If there is a favorite dancer, it is precisely the dancer whose relations of speed and slowness are composed most naturally, most directly, most immediately with mine, and I might have a favorite dancer perhaps, just as I have a favorite sea – s-e-a --, there where this is best composed.[47] And now we have the world turning into a composition of composition of composition of infinite relations. And now we have no individuality getting lost, since each relation, each proportion of movement and rest has its style, which makes me say, then: "Well yes, that's so-and-so", "that's *that* thing", "Ah yes, this is the Atlantic, it is not the Mediterranean", "Ah yes, it's this, it's not that". But you see, I am no longer waiting on the effect of a body on mine; I grasp hold of a body as an aggregate of relations, and I can only grasp hold of a body as an aggregate of relations when I am already able to compose my relations with that body's.

Why are we then holding onto something solid here? Why does this not occur with sadness? It can't work with sadness. If I limit myself to the lines of sadness, I will never pass into this second state of the composition of relations. Why? Here, for a childish reason, you see: there is sadness when I encounter a body which does not agree with mine; so, of course, there are always relations that get composed, but not with mine! Mine, on the contrary, is destroyed. So, starting from a sadness, I could never lift myself up. From a sadness-passion, I could never lift myself up to the notion of a composition of relations, except very abstractly, namely: that this body which does not suit me, that is, which destroys my own relations, is composed with other bodies. But it will not do so with mine. So, starting from a sadness, I cannot raise myself up to the idea of common relations between the external body and mine, since sadness is the effect of a body which, precisely, is not suitable with mine. Whereas, starting from the joys-passions, I can raise myself up because, precisely, the joys-passions increase my power of action. I can raise myself up through a kind of leap, a leap, to this understanding of something in common, which is a composed relation, between the external body and my own, and at that moment, when I raise myself up, everything changes: I possess my power of action. You understand? [*Pause*]

So, whatever you learn, that's it, I think... To learn is always to penetrate into the... There is only this: you never learn abstractly. So, in a sense, joy must win. In what sense? It has to win in propelling us to this level at which what I grasp hold of is no longer the effects of a body on mine, but the composed relations between a body and my own. You see that I am no longer in the realm of *affectio*. There we are; I had a first realm, *affectio*, as I defined it: the encounter of a

body, an effect of an external body on mine, from which affects flow -- *affectus* -- , which are passions. Now I'm on a whole new level: compositions of relations and composed relations.

What results from this? Well, it's enough to understand two more points. When I arrive at compositions of relations and composed relations, at that point, my ideas are necessarily adequate, are necessarily adequate: [that's the] first point to understand. Why? Second point to understand: ideas always result from affects, but this time, these affects are no longer passions, that is, increases or decreases in the power of acting. These affects are from actions. These are active affects. The affects that result from an adequate idea are active affects, action-affects, that is, expressions of my power of action, and no longer increases or decreases in this power of action. So, the second state of reason is this: conquest of relations and compositions of relations from which active affects result, which can only be joys from then on.

Uh… [Time for] a break! You think about this, because you will tell me if there are things that you do not understand. So, there are two problems here: why [are there] adequate ideas, and what is it ... yes, why is that the domain of the adequate? You sense that we have already entered a world of univocity. Okay, think about it; I'm going to go ask about next week, about what's going on. [*Interruption, short break in the session*] [1:12:07]

We were lost in signs. Earlier, in fact, we were given over to perceptions, in the sense of perception being the idea of the effect of an external body on mine. Now, where have we reached? Well, this is a completely different kind of idea. In a sense, it is no longer the domain of perceptions; it's a domain... and yet, it is not a domain of abstraction at all. We've now reached the idea of compositions of relations between the two bodies, one of which is mine, one of which is an external body, and the other of which is mine. And my question is: why is this idea clear and distinct, and necessarily adequate? If we indeed answer the question, we will make another leap forward. We keep leaping forward. These ideas about composition of relations which, therefore, differ completely from ideas of effect, why do they differ from the ideas of effect? Because they give us the cause of the effects. If a body has a particular effect on mine, it is indeed because, in its relations, it composes itself with mine, with my relations, or else decomposes my relations. If arsenic has a particular taste, and the apple has a particular taste, it's indeed because arsenic breaks down some of my relations. Fine, understand.

So, I possess the cause: the cause of the effects of a body on mine is the nature of the composition of the relations between two bodies, or of the act by which the external body breaks down my relations. This is the cause. If the inadequate idea was an idea of an effect separate from its cause, namely I receive the effect and I have no idea of the cause, we can see that this new type of idea is necessarily adequate. What is Spinoza going to call it? Once again, the other ideas are signs. What name, is there a name, in Spinoza, that allows us to recognize this? Yes! He gives a very interesting name; we will see why... He calls these ideas of compositions of relations, he calls them *common notions*.[48]

Common notions, you see, the term doesn't sound like much. On the one hand, it has a tradition in philosophy, but for other philosophers, it means something else. For example, it goes back to the Stoics. The Stoics were already talking about common notions. But generally, these were concepts common to all minds. In Spinoza, common notions will be very common to all minds --

and still, we will see with what nuances --, but that is not the essential meaning of the common notion. In fact, it is not initially common to everyone's mind; this is only so by means of consequence. But it is said to be common; why?

Let's take a common notion, so here let's return to a very specific example so that you understand that it's not just... It can be a matter of science, but it can also be a matter of practical life. In my examples, dancing, swimming, it was a very practical matter of life, and yet there was knowledge (*un savoir*) involved. This is a domain of knowledge, but knowledge that is united with life. Let's take a more scientific example. [*Pause*] There's a body I call chyle, c-h-y-l-e. This is a body that I call chyle. There is another body that I call lymph. There is a third body that I call blood. These are bodies, all these are bodies that are part of my composition, chyle, lymph, blood. I'm reminding you.[49] I have already said that in the seventeenth century, in the biology of the seventeenth, chyle and lymph do not correspond to what is called, today, chyle and lymph, but correspond much more to what are called white blood cells and red blood cells. That is, chyle and lymph are components of the blood.

Chyle is therefore defined by a certain relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness, likewise lymph. They compose their relations to form blood. Blood is the composed relation of, let's say, chyle and lymph. There are other relations, but it doesn't matter; let me stick to the simplest example. So, there is a composed relation. What is the composed relation common to? It is common to the components -- to the component parts --, and to the composed whole. There is a relation that causes chyle and the lymph to be parts of blood, and blood to be the whole of chyle and lymph. It's this same relation in which chyle and lymph are composed in order to form blood, and in which blood is decomposed in order yield chyle and lymph. I would say that this composed relation is literally common to the whole and to the parts. It is like a law of the composition of relations: there is a relation in a composition; there is a relation common to the whole, that is, to the blood, and to the parts, that is, to chyle and lymph. You see... Henceforth, the common notion is not simply common because [it's] common to all minds, I mean endowed with objectivity, invariability, etc. It is common, above all, because it is common to the part and to the whole. There, Spinoza completely transforms the traditional sense of common notion. It is common to the part and to the whole.

In other words, [concerning] the common notion, I would say that the two characteristics of the common notion are that it expresses the cause, first characteristic; second characteristic, it is common to the part and to the whole. Henceforth, it cannot be inadequate. There, this is mathematical: it cannot be inadequate, since an inadequate idea is the idea of an effect separate from its cause, on the one hand, and it is the idea of a part separate from the whole to which it belongs. Common notions... Just as the first kind of affections were necessarily inadequate ideas, common notions are necessarily adequate notions. Hence: the affects which result from common notions are affect-actions; these are active joys. As a result, to finish this point, I must make a kind of warning. The theory of common notions is introduced in the *Ethics* in Book II. And, in book II -- if you read book II, as you surely will --, you will be surprised; you will have the impression there of being a bit lost in relation to... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:21:45]

Part 3

... because that corresponds rather poorly to all that I have just told you. I mean in the presentation in book II of the *Ethics*, Spinoza begins with what he himself calls the most universal common notions, that is, the idea of that in which all bodies agree. All bodies agree in that they are in extension (*étendue*); in this, they agree that they have movement and rest. But if you continue... Why does he start there, I wonder? Well, in a way, it's almost... It's sad, but he can't do otherwise. I say "it's sad" because it makes things very abstract; one gets the impression that common notions, then, are very general considerations, very... entirely general. These are not precise relations at all, "all the bodies are in extension...", it isn't... He is forced to do it, because here he makes a kind of logical deduction of common notions.

So, by making his logical deduction from common notions, he is forced to start with the most universal ones, in which it is necessary to have patience, because if you go on to the next proposition, you see that it is a question of common notions, now no longer common to all bodies, but common to "at least two bodies". I would almost say: this is the one that counts. Do not rely on the order of the text; you have to start with something. He has important reasons that make him begin with the most universal common notions. But this is not where the common notions are operative. The most universal common notions leave us floating. What's interesting are the two-bodied common notions, that is, the least universal common notions, or the most precise common notions.

Why is that what's important? For example, between the body of the sea... Moreover, I'm clarifying: the two-bodied notion common, where one of them is mine – otherwise, I wouldn't form the common notion; I can only form the common notion because one of the bodies that comes under the common notion is my body; otherwise it would be absolutely abstract – so, in fact, the least universal common notions hold the secret of all common notions. As a result, he is right to start with this order. As he makes a deduction from common notions, he is right to start with the most universal, but the whole practical sense of common notions is in the reverse order, to start from the least universal. What is interesting in life is the common notions at the level of "another body and mine", because it's through those common notions that we can raise ourselves up little by little to the most universal common notions. You understand?

Confirmation of this would simply be required, that it's indeed the least universal common notions which are first of all more important. Well, if you go to book V [of the *Ethics*], you will see that in book V, Spinoza no longer chooses the deductive order of common notions but chooses the real order. We start by forming the least universal common notions, that is, those that suit a body and my own, and from there, we raise ourselves up toward more and more general and more and more universal common notions. So, fine, is that all? So, you see, this second effort of reason is common notions and active joys.

Have we exhausted everything? There we have gotten out of the world of signs. Why? This is almost the conclusion I wanted to reach today. Now, you understand, yes? I only have to draw some conclusions: a common notion is necessarily univocal. We are completely out of the equivocity of the sign. When you've reached the domain of compositions of relations, you have reached univocity. Why are these common notions necessarily univocal expressions? For a very

simple reason: once again, they are common because they are common to at least two bodies. Henceforth, being common to at least two bodies, they express themselves in one and the same sense of the other body and mine. They cannot express themselves in several senses. And the most universal common notions are expressed of all bodies, right, but they can only be expressed in one and the same sense. There cannot be equivocity at the level of common notions for a simple reason: it's that equivocity tells me that the same thing, the same term, the same notion is not expressed in the same sense for the part and for the whole, for this and for that. On the contrary, common notions can only have a single sense. [*Pause*]

So, this world we were looking for from the start, it almost seems... I'm going too fast in a way because this is a result of what we've said. There is no longer any problem at this level. We will see that there are other problems, but there is no problem [here]. If you have understood what a common concept is, for example, the movement of the wave and the movement of my body insofar as they compose each other, this is an absolutely univocal concept. Only the bad swimmer is equivocal; only the bad dancer is equivocal. The good dancer is a univocal expression. Necessarily so: this is the world of light. Is it only that? No! A final effort... What would a final effort be? We haven't reached everything yet. What else is there? You see, I already have two levels: the bodies envisioned within the effects they have on each other; that's what inadequate affection is. A second level: the bodies envisaged in the relations that are composed; that's what the common notion or the adequate idea is.

Have I said everything about what there is in the world? No, I haven't said… I haven't expressed a term that constantly occurs in Spinoza, namely: essences, bodies envisaged in their essences. Ah, that will be very important for our future. So, isn't the common notion the idea of an essence? No, it couldn't be! What is a common notion? There, you'll allow me a quick terminological parenthesis because, once again, I so fully believe that in philosophy, there is a very... very simple terminology, but that if you do not have it, you cannot understand. It is very unfortunate to confuse two things. It is very unfortunate to confuse terminologically what is called an abstract idea and what is called a general idea. The difference is very important.

The abstract idea is a funny thing, to the point that nobody knows if there is one. This is not in Spinoza here, but I need it for Spinoza; these are remarks on terminology. Nobody knows if that exists, something like an abstract idea. What would it be? If there is one, what would it be? I will give an example; let's consider some examples: you see, I have my glasses here on the sheet of paper. I ... I'm extracting ... -- they're on the sheet of paper, right? – I'm extracting my glasses from the sheet of paper. Is this an abstraction? [*Laughter*] You laugh, and you say to me: obviously not, it's not an abstraction. For even with your glasses sitting on the sheet of paper, there was a so-called "real" distinction between your glasses and the sheet of paper, and not a distinction through reason. So there, I'm not making an abstraction, I'm making a separation. Is this okay? Yes.

An upper level... [*noise from sheet of paper*] -- my glasses were separable from the sheet of paper. A second level: what could we call a selection? I am making a selection, and no longer a separation... [*noise from a sheet of paper*] There we have a sheet of paper; I take it for itself. You see? These are practical exercises in philosophy. I'd dream, and then we would have to... That's how they did it in the Middle Ages, you see. They did their courses like that, and then there

were... the students who spoke on very specific issues, it was great, so... There were the riots, there was all that... [*Laughter*]

So, here we have my sheet of paper; a sheet of paper has a front and a back, a frontside and a reverse side. I cannot separate them. I could separate my glasses and the sheet of paper; I cannot separate the front and back of the page. You follow me? On the other hand, I can select them. What does “selecting” mean? [It’s] placing myself in the optical state in which I strictly see only one side, like that. I’ll have selected either the back or the front. Ha, if I hold it like that... you see there... Well, yes, I haven’t selected! Might I say that such a selection... For there are a lot of authors -- it's funny, these things -- there are a lot of authors who do... -- it doesn't matter, huh – who create a pure misunderstanding out of abstraction. They understand abstraction as being a selection of the front and back. This is idiotic; that’s not an abstraction. Why? Because the front and back are given as inseparable within the thing, the sheet of paper, but in my representation, they can be given separately. My representation can give me the front and back distinctly, separately. I would say: there is no abstraction.

That gives us at least a very strict definition of abstraction: we can only use the word abstraction when we speak of an operation that consists of separating through thought what is inseparable in the representation. I don't see any other possible definition of abstraction. If you separate through thought what is inseparable in the representation itself, at that point, you make an abstraction. You follow me? So, when you selected the front, or the back, you did not make any abstraction since this is given separately in your representation, or it is separately presentable in your representation. When would you create an abstraction? Once again, we do not know if an abstraction exists, but in any case, I just know that if it exists, it must meet this criterion: you separate through thought what is given as inseparable or unseparated in the representation.

Oh well, this is difficult! I’m choosing an example. I say: "an extension without movement” ... It's suspicious, right? I'm not sure; is this an abstraction? An immobile extension... Can I really imagine an immobile extension, or else does the movement belong to extension? If movement and extension are inseparable in the representation, when I say, "an immobile extension", I am making an abstraction. Let's choose a safer example: "an extended color". I know that color implies extension, color implies extension. If I say, "a non-extended color", I am separating through thought something that is not separable in the representation. A non-extended color would be an abstraction, okay? Are there any non-extended colors? Perhaps, I don't know, I don't know; it's very complicated. In any case, that would be an abstraction. As a result, an abstraction, in the strict sense of the word, "to separate through thought what is given as one within representation", "to create two through thought what is given as one in representation", that kind of thing creates doubts, and more than doubts, for many philosophers.

As a result, you will hear many philosophers saying: "there is no abstract idea", "there is no abstract idea, and there cannot be any because an abstract idea is contradictory”. You see that this position of denying abstract ideas and the possibility of abstract ideas just consists in taking strictly the definition of abstraction. You will not be able to think as separate something that is not separable in representation. As a result, authors like Hume, like all that are called English empiricists, Berkeley, Hume, still others, and many moderns, completely deny the existence and the possibility of the existence of abstract ideas. So, what do they mean? Their thesis is

understandable only if they add: "Be careful, there are no abstract ideas, but there are general ideas". That's why these are very different, abstract and general.

Because a general idea, what is it? You'll see that it's completely different. "Abstract" meant the nature of certain assumed ideas; "general" doesn't refer to a kind of idea. It's a function; it's a function that some ideas, or all ideas, can take on. It's a function. What does that mean, a function? An abstraction, if it exists, is something, something abstract. What is a generality? It's not some thing; it's a relation, it's a relation that suits several things. A general idea is the idea of a relation that suits several things. We will understand the difference; there I... -- At least, let all that teach you something -- What would the abstract idea of a triangle be? The abstract idea of a triangle would be the idea of a triangle which is neither straight, nor, er... nor, er... I don't know what, I don't know what... you see... Or an angle that is neither straight, obtuse, nor acute. That would be the pure idea of an angle. As Berkeley already said, show me such an angle... So obviously, by saying "show it to me", he was not embarrassed since, by definition, it's not demonstrable, an abstract idea. But he meant "it makes absolutely no sense". When you talk about the idea of an angle, no sense! There is no angle that isn't straight, acute, or obtuse. So, [we have] negation of abstract ideas.

That doesn't prevent there being general ideas. What is the general idea? There is no abstract idea of the triangle. The triangle is always this or that, but a triangle, whatever it is, has its three angles: the sum of its three angles equal to two right angles. A + B + C = two right angles. What is that? It's not some thing; it's a relation. This relation is suitable for all triangles, whatever they might be. Spinoza would say: "This is the common notion of triangles; this is the relation common to all triangles; it is the composed relation of all triangles." It's a general idea; it's not an abstract idea. There is no abstract idea of a triangle; on the other hand, there is a general idea of the triangle, it is the composed relation that is suitable for all triangles: A + B + C = two right angles. And A + B + C = two right angles, it is not the idea of a triangle; it's the idea of a relation, you know, it's the idea of a relation realized through all the triangles.

In other words, there are no abstract ideas; there are only specific ideas that can have general functions. "General" is the function that a particular idea can assume when it consists in a composed relation common to several specific ideas. The composed relation common to several specific ideas is the general idea. It's general through its function, not through its nature. You understand?

Well, I would say about Spinoza's common notions, these are above all not abstract ideas, and in fact, in Spinoza, you find... -- He has this in common with the purest empiricists -- you find quite explicitly a radical critique of the abstract idea; this even gives him a laugh, the hypothesis of abstract ideas; he finds it grotesque! And you can perhaps see why: for him, he feels this quite deeply; for him, the abstract idea is a return to equivocal language. Equivocal language proceeds by abstraction, by pseudo abstraction, but in fact, there is no abstraction. So, here Spinoza can oppose quite explicitly, in Book II, common notions to what he calls transcendental terms, transcendental terms being precisely abstract ideas. So, fine. [*Pause*]

Why did I go through this parenthesis? Well, a common notion, as far as it goes, it does not yet give us an idea of the essence of bodies. In fact, what it gives us is a composed relation which is

suitable for a certain number of bodies, just as “A + B + C” is suitable for all triangular bodies. But in this way, and he says it formally in a demonstration in book II, the common notion does not state the essence of anything, since the essence of a thing is, on the contrary, the singular power of action of such thing, and not the common relation between two things.

So, this means that the third step is to raise oneself from common notions to the knowledge of the singular essences of everything. And by "singular essence" -- above all, there is no need to reintroduce an abstraction either -- that is why he says "singular". It’s in its individuality, in its singularity that each thing has an essence, and its essence is its degree of power of action taken within itself. It’s its power of action as such. And that goes beyond common notions, so as a result, we still need take another type of idea to grasp the essences. Quite simply, what Spinoza is going to strive to show is that, starting from common notions, common notions are springboards to reach knowledge of the essences. At that moment, I myself grasp, in my essence, external bodies in their essences, and substance -- that is, God -- in its essence. At that point, my knowledge no longer proceeds by common notions; it proceeds by singular essences.

And when you find in Spinoza's terminology the distinction of three kinds of knowledge, you see that it addresses some very precise things that we can summarize now, specifically:

The first kind -- if I group these -- the first kind of knowledge will be the aggregate of affections and affects-passions which result from it, that is, the world of signs.

The second kind of knowledge, called reason, will be the aggregate of univocal common notions and the active affects that result from them. How do we move from the first kind to the second? As we have seen, here I am only doing a recap; we saw it in great detail: it’s by getting oneself onto the joy vector, the increase in power of action.

Third, what Spinoza calls third kind of knowledge or intuition, this time, it’s the knowledge of essences. A subsidiary question: how do we move from common notions to essences? That’s what we will only be able to see at the very end. In any case, the second kind and the third kind are necessarily adequate, are adequate kinds of knowledge, in contrast to the first kind, and in this way, they constitute the world of univocity.

So, I will quickly finish on this: it is a very curious conception that we’ve reached. In book V, which is the most difficult one, and surely the most beautiful book, which indeed will float in the essences, will bob along in the realm of pure essences, in book V, Spinoza tells us some very strange things, in which there are -- I explained to you that, it seems to me, that this book changes rhythm, all that, has very curious speeds, accelerations, intuitions that proceed like bolts of lightning, a very different tone from other books -- well, he says... fairly constantly, he refers to his mysterious expression: "from now on, we are experiencing,… from now on, we are experiencing that we are eternal". And in commentaries on Spinoza, that has a lot... many [readers] have done extensive research on what this experience is, "from now on", that each person experiences in the second and third kind of knowledge, in which it would be eternal.

What is this eternity of Spinoza? I just want ... -- I can't go into the details right now --, I just want to refer to the theorems of book V, 38-40, I believe -- ah but, I don't have the reference --

yes, it’s 38-40, where he tells us something, well, which seems to me quite enjoyable for us, for each of our eternities. He says: you understand, here it is, it's about, it's about knowing what you're going to do, what you're doing in your life, he says. He says: there are people, ultimately, the great majority of them, who are occupied with affections and affects of the first kind. Oddly enough, he uses the term there: "pars minima", the smallest part, and "pars maxima", the largest part. So, it's like, there, a proportion he's trying to express. There are people, and well, most of them are occupied with affections of the first kind and affects of the first kind. He says: "well those people, obviously..."

What does he mean? That really proceeds at full speed! He says, "Well, those people, yes, they run little risk of feeling eternal…” But do they? [It’s] not sure, not entirely sure, that they do. And he adds this expression, which seems to me a mystery, but a very, very luminous mystery; he says: "on the other hand, the people who will have led their lives in such a way that they will have fulfilled the greatest part of themselves", "maxima pars", -- not all! -- Why not all? Not all, as we have seen, because there are inevitable sorrows, because everyone is mortal, all that... But they will have organized and composed their lives in such a way that they will have fulfilled the major part of themselves with common notions and ideas of essences, that is, affections of the second and third kind. These people are such, he says, that when they die, it’s very little of themselves that dies with them. Oh, how odd; this is splendid! Very, very beautiful! Beautiful! It is the smallest part of themselves that will die with them because they have fulfilled the greatest part of themselves with affections and affects that, precisely, escape death. What did he mean?

Of course, we are right to speak of a kind of mystical experience, a kind of non-religious experience, on which Book V ends. But it is a mystic, once again, it is a mystic of light. I mean, this story of an experimentation of eternity from now on consists in saying: but, from now on, you can act so that the greatest part of yourself is realized, so that the greatest part of your power of action is realized through common notions and ideas of essences. And at that point, well of course, you will die, you will die like everyone else, and even like everyone else, you will be very sad to die, but what will die from you and what will be sad in you about dying will ultimately be the smallest part of you.

Strange… We sense... Here, I don't even want to go any further because it's... There is nothing more to say. You have to see if this works for you, if this means something for you. If that doesn't mean anything, you can just drop it; all the rest of Spinozism is still valuable. But this is what he wants us to feel by [saying]: "we experience that we are eternal", that is, eternity is a matter of experimentation. I don’t think he means it’s about a given experience; he means, this is a matter of active experimentation. If you've reached the second kind of knowledge or the third kind, then you've built... you've built your own eternity, as a lived eternity. Okay, let's say...

But all this, where I want to conclude for the next time, is that henceforth, an individual, whatever it is, is composed of three levels, and this will then reinitiate all our problems concerning univocity, equivocity, and we will only have this to do in order finally to understand the relationships between ethics and ontology, which will bring us to the end. The three levels I see... I am saying: you or me, or the table -- since there are no abstract ideas -- the table is this table. For man, there is no abstract idea of man; it’s this one or that one. There are simply general ideas of man. What is a general idea of man? You see the difference.

The definition of man -- "man is a reasonable animal" – that's an abstract idea. Spinoza will never define man as a reasonable animal. How will he define man? By the composed relation likely to suit all men, in other words, by a collectivity. This is the way he gets into politics. He would say very well: there is no definition of man except political, since the relation to which all particular men as particular men, the relation as such that can suit all particular men as particular, that's the general idea of man. But if you are looking for an abstract essence, no. Essences are not abstract. Essence is the essence of Peter or of Paul, Spinoza repeats all the time. There is no abstract essence; there is no essence of man. On the other hand, there is a composition of relations of all men. This would be the ideal society. In fact, there aren't even any of them, since... why men? Because they were led away... If they were led away by the second and third kind [of knowledge], there would be a community of all men. There is no community of men, because we always have one foot in the first kind [of knowledge], and even worse, both feet, [*Laughter*] and then until then, within the first kind... So, there aren't any, there just aren't. That's why societies are needed. And societies are the means through which, one way or another, we manage within the first kind. Fine.

But you see, there are singular essences, you, me, this table, it has a singular essence, the little cat, the dog, anything has a singular essence, everything, everything. This is the deepest core of an individual. Second level: there are relations, relations of movement and rest, of speed and slowness. At the same time, these relations are constitutive sometimes of an individual, sometimes between two individuals. When they are between two individuals, it's not serious; they are always both at the same time, they are always both between individuals and constitutive of an individual. I mean: a relation will be constitutive of blood, and this same relation will be between chyle and lymph. As every individual is composed, is infinitely composed, it is the same thing to say: a relation is between two individuals, or to say, a relationship is constitutive of a third individual. So, the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness are the second dimension of every individual. So, you are not only a singular essence, you are an aggregate of relations of movement and rest, of different speed and slowness. You, Peter, there are different relations from those that compose Paul. Simply, Pierre and Paul can compose themselves between each other, compose their relations; at that point, they form a third individuality. Fine.

And what else? There are the affections, the passive affections that happen to me. They are inevitable. The first kind indeed has a domain, but this domain, to what dimension of the individual does it refer? To this, this time: that an individual has a very large number... -- he says it like that --, a very large number of parts, "plurime partes", *plurime partes*, word for word: a very large number of parts. Every individual is composed, that is, has a very large number of parts, which themselves constitute sub-individualities, etc., etc., ad infinitum. So, I have an infinity of parts that compose me, which enter into my composition.

What creates the unity of everything? I would say that the very large number of parts which constitute me, which belong to me, belong to me in such or such a relation -- the relations that compose me --, and the relation or the relations that compose me express my essence. But I can say that the individual has three dimensions in Spinoza: the extensive parts which belong to him or her - in parentheses, under a particular relation -- the second dimension: the relations that characterize him or her; third dimension: the singular essence that corresponds to him or her.

Well, this is where we are, and the problem, the problem for next time, will be exactly: what is this status of the three dimensions? What does that mean, these three dimensions that happen to us there? Well, I have parts; these parts enter into certain relations; these relations correspond to essences, to an essence. Fine, but what, then? What is the status of the extensive parts? The status of the relations, we have seen, right, but then again, the two ends... This time, it's the two ends of the chain that are missing. We have seen the status of the relations, the common notions. But the status of the parts that compose us? You understand, it's very strange; they are constantly renewed, they are never the same. I am saying "these are my parts" solely to the extent that they realize my relations. They only belong to me within a particular relation. So, if they change, other parts reach me, which is like saying: I am constantly renewing my cells, my molecules, etc. ... What defines them as mine are the relations that constitute me. As long as parts enter into those relations, they are "my" parts. But where do these parts come from? This is going to be a very curious problem.

This is why in book two of the *Ethics*, Spinoza feels the need to cut the order of his proofs to make a physico-biological presentation regarding his own doctrine of "what a body is," and what a body is as a function of the three dimensions: the parts that belong to it, the relations that compose it, the singular essence that will constitute its power of action.

Which we'll see next week since there's no vacation. [*Pause*] Well, thank you very much. [*Noises from students*] [*End of the session*] [2:02:45]

Notes, 44-49: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 10, 10 February 1981

Transcription (for Paris 8): Part 1, Yann Girard, Parts 2-3-4, Jean-Charles Jarrell; augmented transcription by Charles J. Stivale

Translation by Charles J. Stivale (duration: 2:21:22)

Part 1

... He deeply admires Rimbaud.[50] But philosophers, we tell ourselves [that] their activities consist in fleeing, that the activity of ... I don't know ... And yet, everything belies this because every time we open a great philosopher's work, we realize that the authors, first of all, speak very little about authors first, and then those of whom they speak, it's not entirely certain that they've read them; it is not the problem.

So, if you think about it, there is nothing more comical! In the end, this idea is preposterous, that one might borrow ideas from a book. Obviously, that's what creates the subject of theses. Otherwise, there would be no theses. A thesis is showing -- at the extreme, not always -- but basically, it consists in showing from which book a particular author borrowed ideas. That's great! For example, the idea of life in Bergson's works will become, for example, "Did Bergson borrow his idea of life from Schelling or someone else?" So, as soon as we get started on this aspect, it gets strange. We are entering an aspect that is completely inconsistent. You know, I believe that books are useful for everything except, precisely, for borrowing ideas from them. I don't know what that's for. But it surely serves a purpose. You can borrow anything you want from a book, including borrowing the book itself, but you can't borrow the slightest idea. That's just not okay. A book's relation to "the idea" is something entirely different.

So, in Spinoza's case, we can always find a tradition in Jewish philosophy, oh yes, well, "it continues and goes through Spinoza", all that. But, in a sense, he didn't borrow anything, nothing, nothing, nothing. Fine, even better, Bergson's idea: there is a philosopher, he has an intuition, and he never stops trying to express it, although... This is also true of music. [*Long pause*] All this is meant to tell you that you really must read, otherwise… -- I suddenly have a dreadful suspicion, if you don't read... [*Pause*]

I did not distribute a bibliography, obviously, because I don't believe that it's absolutely necessary, but if there is someone who has a good intentions and reads the *Ethics*, and feels a little lost in book I, you can always do this -- I don't think it's good, but if you feel it's necessary, you're the one who's right -- there is a classic book, called *Spinozism*, by a historian of philosophy named Victor Delbos, which is like a sort of very rigorous statement, a summary, a detailed summary on the *Ethics*.[51] Obviously it's annoying [consulting this], I think, but if you feel the need, that's what is best to use. [*Pause*]

Our essential point will be to try to draw conclusions concerning the relationships between an ethics and an ontology. This point that we are reaching is precisely the need from an ethical point of view to analyze the conception, in Spinozism, of the individual and of individuation. And you can see the point we've reached, [*Deleuze moves a sheet of notes*] where we are now: all that we said previously leads us to distinguish something like three layers (*épaisseurs*), three layers of life, as if the individual is developed, formed upon three dimensions.

A first dimension: [the individual] has a very large number of "parts".[52] We don't know anything more! An individual has a very large number of parts. What are these parts? There, these parts don't present many problems. However, Spinoza reserves a name for them: he calls them the simplest bodies. An individual is therefore made up of a large number of parts called the simplest bodies, *corpora simplicissima*. An immediate question: but then, these simplest bodies, each considered one by one, are they individuals or not? If an individual includes a very large number of very simple body parts, are simple bodies either individuals or are they not? We'll leave that aside. So, it seems to me -- here I'm taking... -- it seems to me that, for Spinoza, a simple body, a very simple body, is not strictly speaking an individual. But an individual, however small it may be, always has a very large number of very simple bodies that make up its parts. Fine, we'll see! We'll indeed see if that's how it is for Spinoza.

In the case of bodies, and even in all cases, these parts, therefore, are really extensive parts. What are extensive parts? These are parts subject to the law -- again to speak Latin -- *partes extra partes*, that is, parts external to each other. You will tell me: "That only applies to the body and extension". Yes and no. You may remember that extension is an attribute of substance. The attribute of substance is not divisible; extension is indivisible. Just like the other attributes: thought is indivisible.

But what's divisible are modes. The attribute is indivisible, but modes of the attribute are divisible. So, a body that is a mode of extension, while the extension is not divisible, a body that is a mode of extension is divisible. It is divisible into a very large number of parts. Any body is divisible into a very large number of parts. So, we will say the same thing about the soul: the soul is divisible into a very large number of parts. So, it's not specific to extension. Thought is indivisible, but extension also was indivisible. The soul, which is the mode of thought, is divisible into a very large number of parts, just like the body, which is the mode of extension. Fine. Here we have our first dimension of the individual, made up of a very large number of extensive parts, external to each other.

The second dimension of the individual, which answers the question: "How do the extensive parts belong to an individual?" In fact, the question arises because [if] you take any body whatsoever, you can always -- [*noise of Deleuze knocking on his table*] for example, a table -- you can remove a part and put another one back on, of the same dimension and the same shape (*figure*). For example, a table, you can remove one leg and then put back another leg. Is it the same? To what extent is it the same and to what extent would it not be the same? If you insert taller leg, it's not the same. If you insert a leg of the same length and different color, is it the

same? What does this question mean? It means: according to what reasons do any parts whatsoever belong to a given body?

This is the second dimension of the individual. The individual not only has a very large number of parts, but these parts must belong to him according to a reason. If the reason is missing, this is not among his parts; if the reason remains, these are his parts even if they change. It's that simple. Spinoza's answer: it's according to a certain relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness, that parts belong to an individual.[53] Fine, you see: the second dimension of the individual, the relation of movement and rest, the relation of speed and slowness, which characterizes this body in its difference from any other body. So, it's not the parts that define a body. It's the relation by which the parts belong to it. What does it mean, a relation of movement and rest, a relation of speed and slowness, which would characterize a body? So, each body would have a relation. A body? What is that? This is the second dimension.

Finally, the third dimension: the mode itself, the individual himself "is" a part. In fact, Spinoza says it all the time: "the essence of mode is a part of divine power (*puissance*), of the power of substance." This is curious since the power of the substance is indivisible, oh yes, but insofar as being the power of substance. But the mode is divisible. And henceforth, mode is part of the indivisible power. See, what is divided is always the mode. It's not substance. This does not prevent the mode, precisely to the extent that it is divided, from being a part of divine power. At that point, this third level, within this third dimension, I no longer say: mode has a very large number of parts. I say: a mode is "a" part. A part of what? Notice that the word "part" is obviously used in two senses: in sense 1, to have a very large number of parts; in sense 3, to be a part.[54] For in the end, I specified when I said a mode has a very large number of parts, it was indeed a matter of extensive parts, external to each other. When I say mode is a part, "part" obviously has a completely different meaning. In fact, it is a part of power. Part of "power" is not the same as an extensive part. What is a part of power exactly? An intensity. So, the third level consists in telling us: the essence of the individual is an intensity.

In what way is this interesting? No doubt, [it's] because this already eliminates two positions that had to be maintained in the history of thought, namely, it is an intensive conception of the individual which, from then on, is distinguished, on one hand, from an extensive conception, which would seek individuality in any extension whatsoever. And that is also opposed to a qualitative conception which would seek individuality, the secret of individuality, in a quality. Individuation for Spinoza is neither qualitative nor quantitative, in the sense of extensive quantity. It is intensive.

So if I try to group together the three dimensions of individuality within the same formulation, I would say: An individual is an intensive part, that is, a degree of power (*puissance*), point a; point b, insofar as this degree of power is expressed in a relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness; point c, a very large number of parts belonging to this individual, according to this relation, a very large number of extensive parts belonging to this individual, according to this relation.

Fine, you see, you, for example, each one of you, you are made up of a very large number of extensive mobile parts, in movement or in rest, for example, at a particular speed and a particular slowness, etc. What characterizes you is a set of relations of speed or rest... an aggregate of relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness, according to which these parts belong to you. Henceforth, they can change. So long as they still realize the same speed and slowness, they still belong to you. And finally, in your essence, you are an intensity. Good, this is an interesting vision.

Only, from there on, what can we say? Well, we already have a problem. I mean: every individual is composed of a very large number of parts, which are the simplest bodies. So there, immediately, we are invited to distinguish between composed bodies and simple bodies. Each body is a composed body. Okay, fine. Each body is a composed body. And from composition to composition – this is still Spinoza's idea that there is a composition of relations to infinity -- from composition to composition, we will arrive at the whole of nature. The whole of nature is an individual. The whole nature is even the individual of individuals. The whole of nature is the body composed of all bodies, themselves composed, to infinity. In fact, the whole of nature is the aggregate of all relations, of movement and rest, of speed and slowness. So, there is indeed an individual of individuals, or which is the body composed of all composed bodies.

And in fact, one can conceive of a composition step by step. If I take the Spinoza's example, the chyle and the lymph, each in their own relation, each according to its own relation composes blood. Blood, in turn, enters into composition with something else to form a larger whole. The larger whole enters into composition with something else to form an even larger whole, etc., all the way to infinity, the unity of all nature, the harmony of all nature, which is composed of all relations. Notice, then, I can go toward a body composed to infinity, a body composed of all composed bodies.

But what if I descend? What are the simplest bodies? And it's here that – to get a handle on this question, so what we must do today is almost a test (*épreuve*) -- so here in order to vary, I would like that... and of course, you have every right to leave if you find... But today, I would like us to have an extremely... a very, very technical, a very technical session today, because there is a problem here. I'd almost like to make this into a practical exercise. There is a problem that reignited things for me. But I have to take certain precautions for a thousand reasons that you will understand. And that's to say this is going to be very technical. So, if you have enough, just leave... There we are.

Things became reignited because -- I haven't talked about him yet -- but... a very great historian of philosophy, I believe, very... one of the greatest historians of philosophy, named Martial Gueroult, wrote a commentary, a very, very detailed commentary on the *Ethics*, published by Aubier.[55] There are three large volumes, only two of which appeared, and ... because, in the meantime, Martial Gueroult died. So uh ... well, then, Martial Gueroult was greatly important in the history of French philosophy, I already showed you that, since he started with studies on German philosophy, on post-Kantian philosophers, that completely renewed – notably, on Fichte -- that completely renewed the state of studies of German philosophy in France. And then he

turned to the Cartesians -- to Descartes, Malebranche -- and finally Spinoza, always by applying his same method, which was a structuralist method, even before structuralism was successful. He creates a philosophy uh ... a very, very curious history of structural philosophy starting from a very simple idea: it's that, for him, "philosophical systems" were structures, strictly speaking. But once again, he did all this well before the burst of linguistic structuralism.

However, in this book, *Spinoza*, he attaches great importance, necessarily, to the Spinozist conception of the individual. And he tries, in an area that commentators had hitherto rather left aside -- they had not much considered this question of the individual in Spinoza -- he tries to introduce rigor, a very great rigor, into this consideration. There we have the exact situation; I'll develop this so that you'll understand it when I then want to take precautions.

Well, I both have extreme admiration, especially for Gueroult's work that seems to me a very important thing. But here we are, regarding this precise point, what he says about the individual in Spinoza, there is no proposition in his commentary, however very, very precise, which doesn't seem to me to be false. And so then, something bothers me enormously, because Gueroult's knowledge (*savoir*), his erudition is an enormous thing; his thoroughness of commentary seems immense to me, all that. And at the extreme, I don't understand why I have the impression that ... that something is missing. This is not at all right. I've told you all this so that when... What I am calling a technical session, it's really in things at the level of almost physical laws, invoked by Gueroult, invoked perhaps by Spinoza himself, or those that I will invoke, mathematical and physical models that are invoked, such that if I allow myself to say all the time, for more rapidity, that Gueroult is wrong, you'll correct this yourself. That means that I'm getting confused (*je ne m'y reconnais pas*), I had another idea, a completely different idea. All that... for those who are really Spinozists, you'll consult Gueroult on this. [There is] no reason to take my word for it. You'll consult Gueroult's books, and then it will be up to you to choose, or even to find other solutions. So, that was a precautionary warning to state what I'm capable of saying.

There is a point on which Gueroult is obviously right, I mean, to give you a foretaste of the kind of technique I'm hoping for. Most commentators have always said -- the vast majority, almost all to my knowledge – they say that there was not so much of a problem with Spinozist physics, that it was completely Cartesian physics. Everyone recognizes that Leibniz completely challenged the principles of Cartesian physics, but it is agreed that Spinoza supposedly remained Cartesian. And this is frightening. So here, then, Gueroult is absolutely right. Gueroult is nonetheless the first -- that means something about the state of studies in the history of philosophy, when you don't pay very close attention -- Gueroult is the first to clarify a small, specific point.

Namely, it is well known that Descartes places great emphasis on the idea that something is preserved in nature, and in particular, something concerning "movement". So, considering the problems of communication of movement in the shock of bodies -- when bodies encounter each other -- Descartes insists -- and this is going to be the basis, or one of the bases of his physics -- on this: something is preserved in the communication of movement. And what is preserved in the communication of the movement? Descartes tells us: it's "mv", that is, what he calls the "quantity of movement". And the "quantity of movement" is the product of mass [multiplied] by

speed -- mv, small m, small v. In his theory of bodies in book II of the *Ethics*, Spinoza tells us, "what is preserved is a certain relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness."[56] A speedy reader will say: this is another way of expressing the amount of movement "mv". In fact, "m", mass, even for Descartes, implies a resting force, "v" implies a force in movement.

So, it seems that the passage flows quite naturally from the idea that “the quantity of movement is preserved" in the shock of the bodies, and that we pass quite naturally to the idea that “the relation of movement and rest is preserved". I mean, Gueroult's strength is nonetheless in being the first to say: but after all, do people read the texts or not? Because it’s obvious that this is not the same thing at all. In what way is this not at all the same thing? If I develop the Cartesian formulation, what is preserved in the shock of bodies is "mv". How is the formulation developed? I am calling two bodies that meet, a and b. -- You have to follow me closely; I’d put it on the board, but well, I don’t have the strength to write it there – so, let’s go on, I have my two bodies. I am calling "m", the mass of the first body; "m prime", the mass of the second body; "small v", the speed of the first body before the shock; "small v prime", the speed of the second body before the shock. I am calling "capital V", the speed of the first body after the shock; "capital V prime", the speed of the second body after the shock. Okay?

I would say the formulation, "what is preserved, it is mv", for Descartes yields the following development: mv + m prime v prime = mV + m prime V prime. You see, what is preserved between pre-shock and after-shock is "mv". In other words, what is preserved is a sum. In fact, Descartes will say it explicitly, what is preserved is a sum. And here, one doesn’t have to be knowledgeable (*fort*) when you deal with these questions to see that Leibniz's criticism of Descartes, the way Leibniz will undermine, will blow up Cartesian physics, is precisely on this point. It’s well known, it’s renowned that Leibniz will "substitute" -- as they say in the textbooks -- for the Cartesian formula another formula, namely, he will say: No, what is preserved, it is not "mv", it is "mv²". Only when we’ve said that, we’ve said absolutely nothing, because the interesting operation is Leibniz’s need to square "v". What does that mean, to consider the power, raised to the square ["v²"]? It's simple! It's not because of an experiment; an experience isn’t... physics doesn’t work like that. It’s not an experiment that forces him... We don’t discover v² in an experiment. That doesn't mean anything. In fact, he changes the nature of the quantities. For a simple reason, v² is always positive, already. In other words, we cannot get to v² if we have not substituted so-called "algebraic" quantities for so-called "scalar" quantities. So, this is a change in the register, in the quantitative coordinates themselves. This is a change of coordinates. Fine, we’ll stop with this.

I'm just saying... because it's Spinoza that interests me. Spinoza tells us: "what is preserved is a certain relation of movement and rest". Fine, admire this because it's still... What can it even mean that Spinoza remains Cartesian? That’s idiotic. Once again, Descartes -- here, I’m not transforming and with all the more reason, here, I’m saying something; Gueroult, this is even the only point that seems absolutely convincing in Gueroult’s commentary -- that means that if I develop everything when I have just tried to develop the Cartesian formulation, by saying: [in] the Cartesian formulation, what is preserved is mv, that comes down to saying that the formula of conservation is mv + m prime v prime = mV + m prime V prime, [and] it is therefore a sum

which is preserved. When someone tells me, on the contrary, "what is preserved is a relation of movement and rest", in what form can I develop it? That isn't difficult: mv / m prime v prime = mV / m prime V prime. You follow me? If you need to copy this, I don't mind; if it's not clear, I could go to the board. Would you like... wait! [*Pause*]

[*Deleuze is heard moving*] Ah ... Ah la la! ... there's no [chalk]! Damn! Nobody has a piece of chalk? Does anyone happen to have a piece of chalk in your pocket? [*Inaudible words; Deleuze has moved away from the microphone. Apparently, Georges Comtesse writes on the board, and Deleuze gives him details to enter the formulas*] No, no, no, it's before the shock, Georges… So mv + m prime v prime = mV + m prime V prime, that is, the quantity of movement before the shock = the quantity of movement after the shock. See, it's a sum. The Spinoza formulation, what is preserved, is a relation; it will be mv over m prime v prime.[57] [*Pause*] There you go. Thank you very much.

Well, there's no need to have done a lot of math to understand that you don't go from one formula to another. It's not the same! It's not the same! In other words, when Descartes says: "What is preserved is the quantity of movement", and when Spinoza says: "What is preserved is a certain relation of movement and rest", well, these are two formulas that… You will ask me: but then, where does the ambiguity come from? And the ambiguity would not be difficult to demonstrate. It's that in certain cases -- here I don't have time to develop everything -- in some special cases, you have equivalence, that is, you can switch from one [formula] to the other for certain cases, for certain exceptional cases.

Okay! At the extreme, let's admit this, just as Leibniz himself recognized that, in exceptional cases, $mv^2 = mv$. Okay, fine. And that's how Leibniz explained what he called "Descartes's errors". Descartes had chosen exceptional situations. It had prevented him from seeing v^2. In fact, that was not what prevented him from seeing v^2; it was because Descartes did not want to take algebraic quantities into account.

So, and Spinoza, it's also new! He is certainly not a great physicist that... but he is absolutely not Cartesian! So there, I think that is one of the points in which Gueroult is obviously right to say: no, we never... we have never even... we've understood nothing about what he tells us about the individual, because we haven't read him, ok? We don't read. This is a good example of not reading. You will say to me: "It does not matter; this does not change anything for the comprehension of Spinozism in general." Well, just see if it doesn't change anything. But when, in fact, when you read so quickly that you don't see the difference between quantity of movement and relation of movement and rest, it can ultimately be quite annoying when that occurs frequently. So here, it becomes very, very unfortunate. Fine.

This is to say that there are really problems here, that this story of the relation of movement and rest to define the individual is already a master stroke compared to Descartes since Descartes, in fact, defined the individual by mv, namely, he defined it by the mass. And understand that there, on the contrary, what is he going to do? This is very important to us since mass, a mass, even abstractly, it's a certain substantial determination when you define a body by a mass. What is a mass? A mass, in the 17th century, is very precise -- in Descartes, it is very precise – it's the permanence of a volume under various shapes, that is, the possibility that the volume remains

constant for varying shapes. So, the whole Cartesian conception of bodies relies on mass. And in the formula mv, it is precisely mass that is the fundamental factor, namely, movement will account for what? For the variety of shapes. But mass is supposed to account for the identity of the volume through the variation of the shapes. In other words, it is the substantial conception of the body, and bodies are substances, bodily substance defined by the permanence of mass.

And that's why -- so we are moving forward a little – upon reflection, Spinoza could not accept such a conception, of the massive individual. He could not do so precisely because, for him, bodies are not substances. So, it was as if required, he was therefore going to be forced to define individuals by relations, not as substance. He will define an individual in the order of the relation or the relation, and not in the order of substance. So, when he tells us: "what defines an individual is a certain relation of movement and rest", we must not stop there. If you stay on the surface of things, you will say to yourself in both cases, for Descartes as for Spinoza, [that] it is still mv. But that doesn't mean anything, "it's still mv". Of course, it's still mv, mass-speed. But that's never what defines the individual. What matters is the status of m and the status of v. And I can say that for Descartes, this is an additive status, not at all because of m + v, which would make no sense, but, moreover, because mv + m prime v prime, is a sum. The masses enter into additive relationships.

In Spinoza, individuals are relations, not substances. Henceforth, there will be no addition! There will be no sums! There will be composition of relations, or decomposition of relations. You will have mv over... And mv does not exist independently. Mv is the term, it is a "term" of a relation. A term of a relation does not exist independently of the relation. In other words, I can say that already in Leibniz -- or rather, as much as in Leibniz, in Spinoza as much as in Leibniz -- there is obviously an abandonment of scalar quantities. It's simply not going to be in the same way for Spinoza and Leibniz. There are as many criticisms of Descartes in Spinoza as in Leibniz, hence a very bizarre history. Because what is this history of Leibniz's somewhat mysterious visit to see Spinoza?

Now it happens that Spinoza, who went out very little, right, received Leibniz's visit. It's not clear what they said to each other. Their interview lasted… -- after all, this is as important as the meeting between two politicians; it's even more important for thought. -- What did Leibniz say to Spinoza? Well, I ask that because, realistically, I imagine [being] faced with Spinoza... He must not have spoken a lot. Someone would come to see him, he had to wait; careful as he was, he always said, "I better not get myself into this awful situation!" Leibniz, he wasn't all that reassuring with his mania of writing everywhere, so... [*Laughter*]

Imagine, you can imagine. There he enters Spinoza's shop, he sits down. Spinoza is very polite; he's very polite, Spinoza, "what does he want with me, this guy?". And Leibniz recounts his visit by saying..., he gave several versions; he was a huge liar, Leibniz, a hypocrite, right? [*Laughter*] A great philosopher, but very hypocritical, but always involved in some kind of scheme, he was always scheming. So, and then [his account] varied: when Spinoza... when there weren't too many political reactions, Leibniz said: "Ah, that Spinoza, he's good!". And when it was going badly for Spinoza, Leibniz said: "Did I see him? You're saying that I saw him? Oh, maybe, we crossed paths, by chance. [Don't] know him, no. You know that guy is an atheist!". It wasn't good to have Leibniz as a friend. Philosophers are like everyone else!

So, what could they have said to each other? In one of Leibniz's versions, Leibniz says: Well, I showed him that Descartes's laws concerning movement were false. Oh, there's one thing for certain: that Leibniz is indeed a much greater physicist than Spinoza. There is something else for certain as well: that before Leibniz's visit, there is no text by Spinoza that completely challenges Cartesian laws. It's also certain that, after Leibniz's visit, in a letter, Spinoza said: "All of Descartes's laws are false." He never said that before. He never said that before, in any case, with such violence. Before, he took issue with this or that law, saying: "It doesn't work, we have to correct it". He never said before, "They're all wrong." So, there is a problem.

I would rather think that... Yes, we could choose a temperate solution because, being much less a specialist on certain physics questions, in particular concerning movement, Spinoza was nevertheless very struck by the legitimate attack against Cartesianism, Leibniz's legitimate attack (*l'attaque en règle*), and that then gave him a reason to return to his conception of the relation. [*Pause*] On the relation, in what way is there something in common? v^2, that implies speed multiplied by itself. It also involves relations/ratios. To get [speed] squared, you must have relations. It's the relation that opens you to multiplication. So, Spinoza ultimately is much closer than he himself knows to Leibniz's kind of physics.

Okay, let's assume all of that. So, it's from this point on that I would really like to comment, starting with the simplest. So then, if it is true, if it is nonetheless relatively important things concerning the status of the bodies which occur at this level, if we must not speak nonsense, or go very fast, if we must, on the contrary, go very slowly, even if it bothers you on this point, well, we have to start all over again because we may be making discoveries as important, relatively important as... for the difference, Descartes, ... Once again, that comes down to simple discoveries: "a relation" is not the same thing as "sum". And you must think about this when you read a text.

Now we have to start from scratch: what is a simple body? A body has a very large number of bodies, of parts. A body has a very large number of parts which are called simple bodies. These simple bodies belong to the composed body, according to a certain relation. This is absolutely not Cartesian. Fine, we can now move on (*on peut s'en tirer*), and from this point, I can no longer follow, really, I can no longer follow Gueroult's commentary in the slightest. But once again, it seems very curious to me. I mean, it's almost up to you to [read it]. This is what I would like to tell you today. Why? Well, these simple bodies, in book II, Spinoza defines them, and he says this: "They are distinguished by movement and rest, by speed and slowness"; "These very simple bodies are distinguished by movement and rest, by speed and slowness".[58] Implied here is, "and even they are distinguished only in that way." The simplest bodies don't have between them ... [*Interruption of the session*] [46:43]

Part 2

... [the simplest bodies]. Spinoza tells us more, but that doesn't change anything. The distinction between simple bodies between them is: speed and slowness, movement and rest, full stop, that's it. It's even in this way that they are very simple. For how do you recognize composed bodies? It's that they are distinguished by and through other aspects. What are these other aspects? To

start with the simplest aspects, they are distinguished by shape (*figure*) and by magnitude (*grandeur*). The simplest bodies are distinguished only by movement and rest, slowness and speed. This is what I would like for us to reflect on. Because I am presenting -- there, it would perhaps be necessary to study cases; I would like to give you all the elements -- I am presenting Gueroult's comment.

Gueroult tells us, in volume II of his *Spinoza*, which is therefore literally a commentary on the *Ethics*, he tells us: "no doubt, they are only distinguished by movement and rest" -- there, he agrees since it is the letter of the text --, "that does not prevent them from having different shapes and magnitude". [*Pause*] Fine. Why does he say that? Because Spinoza doesn't say it; he does not say the opposite. Gueroult means, be careful, these very simple bodies are only distinguished by movement and rest, but that does not mean that they have the same shape and the same magnitude. This means at most that their differences in shape and magnitude are not useful, are not operative at the level of very simple bodies. They will only gain importance in relation to composed bodies. But they cannot, says Gueroult, they cannot have the same shape and the same magnitude.

And why, according to Gueroult, can they not have the same shape and the same magnitude? Here Gueroult's argument is very strange, because he tells us -- I am giving you Gueroult's reasoning before telling you everything that he already finds in this --, he tells us in fact, if they didn't have the same shape and same ... if they didn't ... -- no, sorry, uh -- if they didn't have different shapes and magnitudes, necessarily they would then have the same magnitude and even shape. If they did not have distinct shapes and magnitudes, they would therefore have the same shape and same magnitude, says Gueroult. You understand? Right away, something jumps in my head; I say to myself: but why does he say that? Isn't there a third possibility? If bodies are not distinguished by shape and magnitude, does that mean that they have the same shape and same magnitude from then on, or does that mean that they have neither l neither shape nor magnitude? Why eliminate this possibility? Why pretend that this possibility is impossible? For an obvious reason! Someone will tell me: a body which has neither shape nor magnitude is not a body. I really don't know.

Let's hold on. I'm just saying: there is a third possibility that Gueroult moves past completely, it seems to me. He considers, he believes completely certain – here, he is anticipating something in Spinoza -- that any body, whatever it is, whether simple or composed, necessarily has a shape and a magnitude, and at that point, in fact, if a body, whatever it is, even a simple body, has shape and magnitude, well, at that point, if it does not have shapes and magnitude distinct from the other, this is because all have the same magnitude and same shape. I am saying: no, that doesn't work, because so long as I haven't been shown that it's contradictory for a body to be without shape and without magnitude, there is another possibility, namely: that simple bodies, and only simple bodies, have neither magnitude nor shape. At that point, we must take literally the Spinozist idea "simple bodies are distinguished only by movement and rest, speed and slowness"; they are distinguished only in that way for a simple reason: that they have neither magnitude nor shape. But there's a difficulty for my side, if you will, specifically: what would bodies without magnitude or shape possibly be?

But finally, I seem to be treating Gueroult in my turn very badly, that is, as if he had not read the texts, because why does Gueroult tell us: "although the simplest bodies are not distinguished in that way, they nevertheless have distinct magnitude and shapes"? Well, he tells us this by invoking a Spinoza text. And you will see that, at this level, I am presenting this in detail because it is -- even if it takes time, but that does not matter -- it is... Here is the text: "Definition": -- I am reading slowly -- "When some bodies of the same magnitude or different magnitudes ... When some bodies of the same magnitude or different magnitudes are under pressure from other bodies which keeps them applied to each other," etc., etc., "When some bodies of the same magnitude or different magnitudes are under pressure from other bodies which keeps them applied to each other". Next axiom: "The larger or smaller are the surfaces, the areas according to which the parts of an individual or of a composed body are applied to each other..." See what Spinoza is telling us, I am holding onto this: the parts of a composed body apply to each other according to larger or smaller surfaces. And the parts of a composed body are simple bodies. So, simple bodies are applied to each other according to larger or smaller surfaces. I tell myself, this seems, in fact, to support Descartes, sorry, to support Gueroult. See, the parts of a composed body – [Spinoza] has said nothing; first, he dealt with simple bodies. He said, "they are distinguished only by speed and slowness, movement and rest." Fine.

Then, he studies composed bodies, and he tells us "the parts of composed bodies" -- that is, simple bodies -- "apply themselves to one another through larger or smaller surfaces", "The larger or smaller are the areas according to which the parts of an individual or of a composed body are applied [to each other]..." So how? [It's] at [this] point that there is a commentator, another commentator than Gueroult, who says that there is a small… -- he's English, so he uses an expression, one that's very pretty -- a little inconsistency, a little inconsistency in Spinoza. Gueroult answers: not at all, [no] inconsistency; [while] undoubtedly simple bodies are distinguished only by movement and rest, they have nonetheless distinct magnitudes and shapes, simply these separate magnitudes and shapes will develop their effect only at the level of composed bodies. You understand? Here we are, it's very odd that... So, we have the choice, how to get out of this? Either we say: no, we must respect the letter of the text, [that] simple bodies are distinguished only by movement and rest, that is, they have neither shape nor magnitude; and there would be a little inconsistency, as the other [commentator] said. Or else we must say, like Gueroult, "Ah well yes, simple bodies indeed have a distinct shape and magnitude, but ..."

Well, that's very weird. It's all the more bizarre since... Okay then, so, it seems to me that this is what we must be looking for. What is this? This status... Simple bodies... My question is exactly this: I am betting that [the text] must be taken literally, but that, furthermore, there is no inconsistency. That is, what I would like to show is how we must, at the same time, maintain that the simplest bodies have neither magnitude nor shape and that, nevertheless, they apply themselves onto each other, or to one another, through larger or smaller areas. Which means that these are obviously not their own areas; they don't have any. So, what would this be?

So then, I am almost going back to the starting point, when Spinoza tells us: a body has a very large number of parts, a composed body has a very large number of parts, "*plurime partes*"; what

does "a very large number" mean? I'll tell you my idea right away because it's childish in a way, but it seems to me that it changes everything. For me, if we take literally "*plurime partes*", "a very large number of parts", that already means that there is a formulation that is nonsensical. The nonsensical one is: *each* simple body; each simple body, I mean, "a very large number of parts," that means, in fact, that any assignable number is exceeded. This is the meaning of "*plurime*", "*plurime partes*". A very large number, in fact, means: "which exceeds any assignable number". By what right do I say that, without forcing [the text]? Because this is common in the seventeenth century. Namely, the seventeenth century is full of thinking about what? Magnitudes which cannot be expressed by numbers, namely, geometric magnitudes, geometric magnitudes which cannot be expressed by numbers.

Okay, what does that mean? I am saying, in other words, I am saying [that] simple bodies proceed by infinities. It's very simple; what I mean really is a very, very simple thing. Simple bodies proceed by infinities. But if that's true, think about the formulation... It seems to me that this will provide us with a solution. Simple bodies will ... -- [*Deleuze speaks a student*] You can ask this later, because if I lose my... -- Simple bodies proceed by infinities, that means: you cannot speak about "a simple body", except by abstraction, an abstraction devoid of all reason. The expression "a simple body" is meaningless. And it's by assuming the legitimacy of the expression "a simple body" that Gueroult concludes: if we can speak of a simple body, the simple body must indeed have shape and magnitude. "Simple bodies proceed by infinities" means sufficiently that we cannot speak of a simple body. You can never speak of anything but an infinity of simple bodies. As a result, what has shape and magnitude? It's not a particular simple body; it's a particular infinity of simple bodies. Yes, here, yes, okay. A particular infinity of simple bodies has a shape and a magnitude, [but] careful: more or less large... What does that mean? An infinity of simple bodies has a more or less large shape, what does that mean? But then, how is it more or less large? If it's still an infinity of simple bodies... But infinity is greater than any quantity, so how does this ... [*Deleuze does not finish*]

Well here we are, it's very simple: suddenly, we are in the process of, yes, making progress. Okay, an infinity is always greater than any number, but, Spinoza says, and it is undoubtedly the point in geometry to which he is most attached, it's geometry that teaches us that there are double infinities, triples infinities, etc., many, many others. In other words, it's geometry which imposes on us the idea of relation, of quantitative relation between infinities, to the point that we can speak of a double infinity of another, and of half an infinity of another. Any infinity is irreducible to numbers, that Spinoza will always maintain, [as] he is a geometrist. What does that mean? [It means] that for him, the reality of mathematics is within geometry, that arithmetic and algebra are only auxiliaries, [are] only means of expression, and indeed, these are extremely ambiguous means of expression.

In the history of mathematics, there has always been a geometrist current, against arithmetist currents, against algebrist currents. Furthermore, the whole history of mathematics is like philosophy: mathematics is very, very complicated in this history. There is as at the origin of mathematics, as far back as one can go, if one creates, when one creates the history of mathematics, one sees two currents very clearly. We see a current that we call, roughly, the

Greek current, and the Greek current has always been, so far as they go, however, into the development of the study of the number -- and you will see why they go quite far -- so far as the Greeks went in the development of the number, their conception of mathematics is fundamentally geometrist, specifically: number is subordinate. The number is subordinate to magnitude, and magnitude is geometric. And all Greek mathematics is based on this.

Far from stifling the number, this is very important; it directs the number towards what? What is the subordination of the number to geometric magnitude? This opens up a kind of fantastic horizon for mathematics, which is what? That numbers have no value in themselves; they have value in relation to one or another domain of magnitude. Finally, the domains of magnitude need, they are expressed through number systems, but there is no independence of the number system. It's not the number that determines magnitude; it is magnitude that determines the number. In other words, numbers are always local numbers. Numbers, number systems are always assigned to one or another type of magnitude. [This is] the primacy of magnitude over number. If you want to understand something, for example, in the problems of infinity in mathematics, you have to start from very, very simple things like that. The primacy of magnitude over number, henceforth the local character of the number -- I call "local character" the dependence of the number compared to a particular domain of magnitude -- is fundamental.

And in fact, think about what one can say, for example, about numbers in this regard -- I'm trying to inflate this thesis a little. Numbers... How do numbers develop? It's very interesting when you look at the history of numbers, and the multiplication, proliferation of number systems. When you look at this -- oh, not up close, eh? --, you see what? That the number has always grown in order to respond to problems posed to it -- not "always", I take back my "always" – [that] the number has often grown to respond to problems posed to it by heterogeneous magnitudes, to numbers. For example, how did the domain of fractional numbers manage to be formed, which is a domain of numbers? How did another number system manage to get developed, the system of irrationals, of irrational numbers? [It's] not complicated. Each time, we could say, that would be the geometrist law of the number, each time that geometry presented us, imposed on us a magnitude which could not be expressed in the previous number system.

And what are the last extraordinarily complex numbers of mathematics that are formed at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century? It is when mathematics collides with something very bizarre that belongs to the line, namely, what they will call, what mathematicians will call the power of the continuous. If you will, I mean a very simple thing so you might then understand: a fraction, what is it? It's not a number, a fraction; it's absurd, it's not a number. You write 1/3, a fraction; it's not a number, by definition. It will become a number when you have fractions. You put yourself in front of your series, there, of whole numbers, natural numbers, whatever you want, and you see a mathematician writing 1/3. It's ineptitude, it's a bit of nonsense, 1/3. 1/3 is not a number, and why? Well, in your head, write 1/3 = x. There is no number, there is no x which multiplied by 3 equals 1. 1/3 would be a number if you could write 1/3 = x. You cannot write 1/3 = x since there is no x, there is no number which multiplied by 3 equals 1. Do you follow me? So a fraction is obviously not a number; it's a complex of numbers

that you arbitrarily decide to treat as a number, that is, to which you arbitrarily decide to apply laws -- of associativity, etc. etc. -- of the number. It's not a number.

An irrational number is not a number either. So, I would say, all the developments of the number, and the number, would never have been developed except, I would say -- from a certain point of view --, I would say, that numbers and the number systems are never other than symbolic treatments, symbolic ways of dealing, of dealing with what? Of dealing with magnitudes irreducible to numbers. So there, you are constructing number complexes, but you see that number complexes -- or complex numbers, it comes down to the same thing -- number complexes are eminently relative to the types of magnitudes irreducible to numbers that geometry imposes on you. So, the primacy of magnitude over number is a fundamental element. In the 20th century, a great mathematician logician named [Louis] Couturat, in a book titled *De l'Infini mathématique* (1896), further developed this thesis, which he would come back to a few years later, because Couturat's story is very curious. And Couturat, in his book *De l'Infini mathématique*, based his entire thesis on precisely the primacy of magnitude over number. And, therefore, the infinite seemed to him geometric reality itself, and number is always subordinate to the discovery not only of magnitude, but of the infinite in magnitude. Fine. But there is another mathematical tradition.

Georges Comtesse: In Greek mathematics, on the point that you raise, perhaps in Greek mathematics, there was this problem of the subordination of the number to geometric magnitude which causes crises, for example, the impossibility of an exact measure of the diagonal of a perfect square [Deleuze: yes], the crisis caused by Philolaus in Pythagoras's school, for example. So there, at the level of mathematics, of mathematicians, there is effectively this subordination of the number to geometric magnitude and the crises that this can cause, the mutations that it can cause from there. Only, in Plato's philosophy, for example, there is a reversal of this position of the number which is subordinate to geometric magnitude, because Plato, when he says that... finally, when there is a crisis, there must necessarily be a square, and for there to be a square, there must necessarily be straight lines, and for there to be straight lines, there must be points, and how does one define a point except by the intersection of two lines, but how does one say that a point is the intersection of two lines if we do not already have the number 1? So, arithmetic must be first in relation to any geometric magnitude. This is a problem from Plato, and Plato adds another one concerning the language of mathematicians: why do you say 1, finally? Why 1, before saying a, a point; it goes even further. So, this is where he introduces the problem of the hypothetical, and the anhypothetical... [Deleuze: I'll tell you ...] Then, if it is true that in Greek mathematical discourse, there is this subordination, and again, we would have to ask the question about the curious number theory in Pythagoras, it's a very mysterious theory... Then, if there is, in Greek mathematics in any case, a subordination of arithmetic to geometrical magnitude, perhaps there is an aporia of Greek mathematics in Plato's philosophy at the level, precisely, not only of the reversal of this perspective, but the very aporia of thought that there would be a first number in a series, which will then be said to be natural, and which would be 1.

Deleuze: Yeah... It's related. [*Deleuze recognizes another student*] What do you have to say? Then go ahead…

Another student: It seems to me that Spinoza [was closer to Euclid] in contrast to Pythagorism. The great phrase from Pythagoras is “everything is number” whereas for Euclid, the mathematical elements are reasons, relations…

Deleuze: Yes, that’s absolutely right, that Spinoza is deeply Euclidean, and that we can define Euclid -- then here, Comtesse himself would agree, taking into account what he just said --, that Euclid could be defined by a subordination, not generally of number to magnitude once again, but of number systems -- for there are never only number systems from this point of view, number systems -- in the domains of magnitudes, where Spinoza has kept this absolute geometrism. So, in order to respond somewhat to these two remarks, I would say that, yes ... what's going on? In fact, when Comtesse says "be careful, there’s Plato..." But Plato, you understand...

The same student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yeah, yeah... I may have something else... But, in fact, what you said that’s important, it seems to me, is that this refers to one of Euclid’s points, not generally in Euclid, but what all Greek mathematicians have nonetheless considered to be Euclid’s high point, namely the theory of ratios (*relations*) and proportions. And it’s at the level of a geometric theory of proportions and ratios that this subordination of number is asserted. There, this would be a completely Spinozist point.

As for the question, then, of the infinite, we place it... We should first look at this very special status of the theory of ratios in Euclid. What I mean, here for the moment, concerns what Comtesse just said: "careful, there’s Plato; it's much more complicated in Greek history". It’s much more complicated, why? Because, as far as we can understand, I would say... This is a pole of geometry, and it was really the great tradition of Greek geometry, and I believe that... the Greeks won’t budge from this tradition.

But there is another tradition. To have not only short-distance communications, but also at very long distances, they didn’t have to wait on our era for there to be such communications. There is a tradition that is called, in the end, that historians of mathematics call, at the other pole of the Greek tradition, the Hindu-Arab tradition. And this Hindu-Arab tradition is no less fundamental. And it consists, which is its power move (*coup de force*) after its creation, not a power move, but that's how they did their work... Everything happens as if, if you will, there was this kind of differentiation: well, yes, in Greece, it moves this way; in India, it moves that way! On the contrary, it is the independence and the legislative character of the number in relation to magnitude. And the birth certificate of algebra, which precisely is like the expression of this conception of the number independent of the magnitude, in such a way that’s what will determine and regulate and dictate to the relation of magnitude, this will explain practically, for example, the role of Arab thought in the formation of algebra, and there you have an entire arithmetical-algebraic current.

And very quickly, in Greece itself, the so-called "oriental" currents, the so-called "Indian", "Hindu" currents, and the Greek geometric current confront each other. And precisely, and in this

way, Comtesse's comments are quite correct. Pythagorism, with its extremely mysterious character for us, -- because it's quite complicated, and many texts are missing --, Pythagorism indeed seems to be the kind of fundamental first encounter between an Indian conception and a Greek conception of mathematics. So here, then, a story plays out, a very, very lively story plays out which, nonetheless, I would say… I don't know, here, what you think about it, Comtesse, but I would still be more cautious that you, because what the Pythagoreans call number, even when it's reduced to a system of points, they call it number, and what is the exact relation between number and shape is something that's very... Or number and magnitude in Pythagoras, this would be, it seems to me... Then there... certainly, in any case, that really is way beyond me.

I am just pointing out that when, in the latter, in what is called the later philosophy by Plato, we are sure that, at the end of his life, Plato developed a theory that we know by the name, roughly, "ideal number theory". What are ideal numbers in Plato? We have no direct text. We know that this became increasingly important in the Platonic dialectic. There is no direct text on these ideal numbers, no text from Plato. We know this later theory by Plato through Aristotle. And for Plato, these ideal numbers are, according to Aristotle's testimony, complementary – so, in what order? in what sense? what is this? -- ideal shapes. In some ways, these are sort of meta-arithmetic numbers, beyond arithmetic, which do not have the same law of generation as arithmetic numbers, and in correlation with meta-geometric shapes, that is, the shapes which do not have, which are not justifiable, or which do not refer to the possibility of a drawing (*tracé*) in space.

So, at this level, where really, I suppose, the two main currents meet, the algebraic current and the geometrical current, what is the place of ideal numbers, ideal shapes, etc.? How precisely here did they move away, at that level, did they move away from mathematics properly speaking, since Plato makes it the object of his dialectic, his final dialectic, his dialectic in his later philosophy? And he completely distinguishes between the mathematical movement and the dialectical movement, so these higher numbers, which come from Indian tradition, cannot be defined simply arithmetically; they are defined dialectically, independently of an arithmetic genesis, but by a kind of dialectical mode of constitution.

So I am just making it clear with regard to Comtesse's intervention that quite evidently, it seems to me [that] it's true, it's true that, at the level of Greece, it's much more complicated than a simple geometrist current, but that the geometrist current and the algebrist current coming from India encounter each other on a level which, finally, moves beyond geometry, but also moves beyond arithmetic. I think that's going to be a very, very fundamental moment in the history of... [*Deleuze doesn't finish*]

But then, let's go back to the history of Euclidean geometry. For the moment, I have only reached… It's that Spinoza, on his own behalf, here, I believe, there is no problem with his works. He only retains, for questions – go ahead, try figuring out why exactly -- but it turns out that really, he is pure geometrist.

I was talking about Couturat; it's weird, you see that even these changes are changes that must be evaluated. So, a mathematician like Couturat, in my recall of *De l'infini mathématique*, it's a book that appeared around 1905 [*in fact, 1896*], and afterwards, he wrote *Les Principes des*

mathématiques around 1900 [*1905*], I don't know what, 1911 or 1912, I suppose, and there he changed completely. Under the influence of a... finally, an arithmetician, a logician, an algebraist, namely, under the influence of [Bertrand] Russell, he denounces his book on mathematical infinity, and he says that he renounces the principle of the primacy of magnitude over number. It's like he's going from pole to pole, and he renovates entirely his theory of mathematics. And I don't know, I'm not sure he was right; you can't necessarily say that he was right. I'm not sure that it wasn't the first book that went the furthest; we don't know, we don't know well.

In any case, what do I mean here? I mean, understand, between us, when Spinoza tells us, "Each composed body has a very large number of simple bodies as parts", I am saying: that means an infinity of parts. Why? Because simple bodies necessarily exist as infinities. Only, simple bodies, you remember, belong to a composed body only through a relation that expresses the composed body. They belong to a composed body only through a relation of movement and rest, which characterizes the composed body. Fine. Henceforth, you now possess everything. A relation of movement and rest, -- grant me this -- we do not yet understand clearly what this means, but it's not very complicated. It can be double that of another. [*Pause*] If double, or half, is the relation/ratio of movement and rest, [if] the relation/ratio of movement and rest that characterizes the body small a is double the ratio of movement and rest that characterizes the body small b, it's very simple; I can write: mv = 2 x m prime v prime. That means: the relation/ratio of movement and rest is double. Fine.

What would I say if I found myself faced with this simple case: the relation/ratio of movement and rest of one body is double that of another body? I would say: each of the two bodies has an infinity of parts, of simple bodies. But: the infinity of one is double the infinity of the other. It's very simple. In other words, it's an infinity of magnitude, not of number. It's an infinity of magnitude, not of number, what does that mean? Magnitude, however, is not infinite. The mv relation is not infinite. Hence, the importance of Spinoza's example in letter XII [to Louis Meyer].[59] You may remember, since we talked a little bit about that.

In letter XII, Spinoza considers two non-concentric circles, one inside the other and non-concentric. And he said, "Take the space between the two circles." We then take a simplified example, precisely the one that, that Spinoza did not want because, given the goal he had in this letter, he needed a more complex example. But I'm just saying: take a circle and consider the diameters. There is an infinity of diameters, since from any point on the circumference, you can develop a diameter, namely the line that unites the point of the circumference, a point of any circumference, in the center. A circle therefore has an infinity of diameters. If you take a semi-circle – Spinoza's example is as simple as that --, if you take a semi-circle, it has an infinity of diameters too, since you have an infinity of possible points on the half circumference as much as on the entire circumference. Henceforth, you will indeed speak of an infinity double that of another, since you will say that in a semicircle, there is an infinity of diameters as much as in the whole circle, but that this infinity is half that of the entire circle. In other words, here you have defined an infinity which is double or half, as a function of what? As a function of the space occupied by a shape, notably, the entire circumference or the half of that circumference. You

have only to transpose to the level of relations/ratios. You consider two bodies: one has a characteristic relation/ratio that is double the other, therefore both, like all bodies, all bodies have an infinity of parts. And in one case, it's an infinity which is double that of the other case. You understand what this means: "simple bodies necessarily proceed through infinities".

Henceforth, I have an answer, it seems to me, to my problem there concerning Gueroult. How can Spinoza say: "simple bodies apply themselves according to surfaces that are more or less large"? That doesn't mean at all that each surface has a magnitude since, once again, they have no magnitude. Why are simple bodies -- suddenly, now, I don't know, we're almost in a state, I hope, to understand everything --, why don't simple bodies have magnitude? Because when I was saying they proceed through infinities, what did that mean? It meant precisely: what is it that proceeds through infinity? It is not just anything that proceeds through infinity. I mean, what is it having such a nature that it can only proceed through infinity, if that exists? Well, of course, there is only one thing, that is, infinitely minute terms. Infinitely minute terms can only proceed through infinities. In other words, an infinitely minute [term], again, is a strictly meaningless formulation. [*Interruption of the recording*] [93: 38]

Part 3

It's like you say a square circle; there's a contradiction. You cannot extract an infinitely minute from the infinite set of which it is a part. In other words, and the 17th century understood that wonderfully, it seems to me, and that's where I would like to arrive; that's why I've gone through all these rather harsh detours. That's what the 17th century knew and that we -- I don't mean we're wrong -- that we don't know anymore and don't want anymore. Why do we no longer want that, we will have to ask ourselves. It's odd, but for the 17th century, all the stupidities mentioned about their conception of infinitesimal calculus would no longer be said if people were even sensitive to this very simple thing. They are accused of having believed in the infinitely minute. They didn't believe in the infinitely minute; that idiotic, that's completely idiotic. They didn't believe in the infinitely minute any more than something else. They believed that the infinitely minute proceeded by infinite sets, by infinite collections. That's the only way I can believe in the infinitely minute: if I believe in the infinitely minute, I necessarily believe in infinite collections.

We act as if they believed that infinite collections had an end (*terme*), which was infinitely minute. They never believed that; it's even contradictory. An infinitely minute is not an end since we can't get there, since there is no end. In infinity analysis, we pretend there is an end to infinity. But this is completely grotesque. In infinity analysis, there is no end to infinity since it's infinity. There are simply infinitely minute ones proceeding by infinite collections. If I say, "Ah, but, [I] must reach the infinitely minute," not at all; [I] must not reach the infinitely minute. I must reach the infinite set of infinitely minute. And the infinite set of infinitely minute is not at all infinitely minute. You will not extract the infinitely minute from their infinite set, to the point that for someone from the 17th century, or even already from the Renaissance, there is absolutely nothing bizarre about saying, "well yes, each thing is an infinite set of infinitely minute,

obviously...". This is a very odd way of thinking, I mean, "very odd", both, at the same time, which goes without saying.

Why is it very odd? I mean, here it is: Spinoza, I'm trying to seize what we can keep here for Spinoza directly. Spinoza tells us, "the simplest bodies have neither magnitude nor shape", obviously, since they are infinitely minute, and an infinitely minute has no magnitude or shape. If you give it a magnitude or a shape, you make it finite. You make it finite. An infinitely minute has neither magnitude nor shape, it goes without saying. An infinitely minute does not exist independently of the infinite collection of which it is a part. In other words, the infinitely minute are elements, they correspond to expression because it is the best, it seems to me, and the infinitely minute are non-formed elements. They have no form. These are informal elements, as we say today. They are distinguished by speed and slowness, and why? You must already be sensing this: because speed and slowness are differentials. And that can be said about the infinitely minute. But form and shape cannot be said about the infinitely minute without transforming them into something finite.

So fine, these are informal elements that proceed through infinite collections. It comes down to saying: you will not define them by shape and magnitude; you will define them by an infinite set. And good, but what infinite set? How does one define the infinite set? Here we fall back completely upon what [Spinoza] was saying earlier: an infinite set will not be defined by ends (*termes*); it will be defined by a relation. In fact, a relation, whatever it is, is justifiable from an infinity of ends. The relation is finite; a finite relation has an infinity of ends. If you say, "larger than...", let’s take the simplest example possible, if you say, "larger than...", there are endless possible ends. What cannot be "larger than..."? [Larger] than what? Well, it all depends: than what?

So, "larger than" subsumes an infinity of possible ends; it's obvious. So, an infinite set will be defined by a relation. Which relation? Spinoza's response: a relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness; this relation is itself finite, it has an infinity of ends. Final point: a relation defines an infinite set; henceforth, infinite sets can enter into quantitative relations, double, half, triple, etc. relations. In what sense? If a relation -- every relation defines an infinite set -- if a relation is the double of another relation, if I can say, "the relation twice as great as, once greater than, twice as great as" -- and I can, since the relations are finite, they correspond to infinite sets which are themselves double, halves, or more.

What does that mean, that? Oh, well, it's very simple, if you understand a little bit, it will launch us into the strangest proposition -- in my opinion, for us - of 17th century philosophy, namely: actual infinity (*l’infini actuel*) exists, actual infinity exists, and I believe that we can, we can really, yes -- I seem to be revealing something like a secret, but it seems to me, yes, it’s a kind of secret because it seems to me that this is the basic proposition, the basic implication of all 17th century philosophy -- there is actual infinity. What does this seemingly strange proposition mean, actual infinity? There is infinity in action. Well, this is opposed to two things: the infinite in action is what must be distinguished both from the finite and from the indefinite. The indefinite means that there is infinity, but only in power (*puissance*). We can't stop, there is no

final end (*dernier terme*). There is no final end; it's indefinite. What is finitism? There is a final end. There is a final end, and you can reach this final term, if only through thought.

And these are two relatively intelligible theses; in any case, we are used to them. Finitist theses and indefinitist theses, for us, are equally simple, one proposition as the other: there is a final end or there is no end. In one case, you will say: there is a final end, what is it? It is the position of a finite analysis; it's the point of view finite analysis. [In the other case, you will say]: there is no final end, you can go on and on, you can always split the final end you reached. So, this is the position of an infinity in power, only in power. We can always go further. This time, this is the position of an infinite synthesis. Infinite synthesis means: the power of the indefinite, pushing the analysis further and further.

And strangely, the 17th century, strangely, does not recognize itself in one point or the other. I would say that the theses of finitude are what? They are well known; these have always been what has been called atoms. You can go to the final end of the analysis. This is finite analysis. The great theorist of the atom, in Antiquity, was Epicurus, then it was Lucretius. However, Lucretius's reasoning is very strict. Lucretius says: the atom goes beyond sensitive perception (*la perception sensible*); it can only be thought. Fine. It can only be thought. But he marks as... -- not exactly by himself, but similarly -- there is a very odd reasoning from Lucretius, which consists in telling us: there is a sensible minimum (*minimum sensible*). The sensible minimum is what... You can experience it easily: you take a point of light, you focus on it, and this point of light is moved back, to the point at which it disappears from your sight. It doesn't matter whether you have good or bad eyesight, there will always be a point at which, there will always be a point when the light point disappears, can no longer be seen. Very good; let's call that the sensible minimum. It's the perceptible minimum, the sensible minimum; it may vary for everyone; for each person, there is a sensible minimum. Well, likewise, he says, to think of the atom -- since the atom is to thought what the sensible thing is to the senses --, if you think of the atom, you will come to an atom minimum. The atom minimum is the threshold beyond which you no longer think anything at all.

Just as there is a sensible threshold beyond which you no longer grasp anything, there is a thinking minimum beyond which you no longer think anything. There is therefore a thinkable minimum as much as a sensible minimum. At that point, the analysis has ended. And that's what Lucretius calls with a very, very bizarre expression, not just the atom, but "the apex of the atom". The apex of the atom is that minimum beyond which there is nothing left. This is the principle of a finite analysis. We all know what indefinite analysis is. What is indefinite analysis? Obviously, it is much more complicated than... Its formulation is very simple: as far as you go, you can always go further. That is, this is a point of view of synthesis since we call for a synthesis through which I can always continue my division, continue my analysis... This is the synthesis of the indefinite. [*Pause*] Good.

I'd like to read you a text after the 17th century, a very odd text. Listen to it carefully because you will see, I believe, that this text is very important. I'm not saying who [it's written by] yet; I would like you to guess for yourself who it is. [*Pause*] "In the concept of a circular line, in the

concept of a circular line", that is, in the concept of a circle, "we think of nothing more than this, notably: that all the straight lines drawn from this circle at a single point called the center are equal to each other ". In other words, the text tells us: in a circle, all diameters are equal, all diameters. And the text proposes to comment on what "all diameters" means. So, in a circle, all diameters are equal, okay.

The text continues, in fact, when I say that -- all diameters of the circle are equal -- "this is merely, this is merely a logical function of the universality of judgment", that gets complicated. -- Those who are a bit familiar will have already recognized the author; there is only one philosopher who speaks like that. -- "This is merely" -- when I say all diameters are equal -- "this is merely a logical function of the universality of judgment" -- the universality of judgment: all diameters. Universal judgment: all diameters of the circle -- "This is merely a logical function of the universality of judgment, in which" -- in which, logical function -- "the concept of a line constitutes the subject, and signifies only as much as '*any line*', not the *totality* of lines, that could be inscribed on a plane from a given point…" It becomes very, very... All that is very odd. Feel that something is happening. It's as if, starting from a very small example, this is a rather radical mutation of thought. It's from this point onward that the 17th century collapses, well, if I dare say. When I say all the diameters are equal, "this is merely a logical function of the universality of the judgment, in which the concept of a line constitutes the subject" -- the subject of judgment --, "and signifies only as much as '*any line*', not the *totality* of lines, that could be inscribed on a plane from a given point. Because otherwise" -- the reasoning continues --, "because otherwise, every line would, with equal justice, be an idea of the understanding" - that is, a whole --, "because otherwise, every line would, with equal justice, be an idea of the understanding for [the idea] includes all lines as parts that can be thought between two points (thinkable only in it) and whose number is also infinite." This is essential because this text is taken from a letter, a letter, alas, not translated into French; that's bizarre because it's a very important letter.

This is a letter from Kant, it is a letter from Kant in which Kant repudiates in advance – I'll state the reasons, the circumstances of the letter --, repudiates in advance his disciples who try to make a kind of reconciliation between his own philosophy and the philosophy of the 17th century. Fine, this concerns us closely. And Kant says that: those who try this operation which consists in making a kind of synthesis between my critical philosophy and the philosophy of infinity of the 17th century, these people are completely mistaken and ruin everything. This is important because he has some disciples, with his first post-late Kant disciple, named [Salomon] Maimon, but then this great attempt to make a synthesis between Kant's philosophy and the philosophy of infinity of 17th century was the business of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. And there is some kind of curse by Kant on such an attempt, and that curse consists in saying what exactly?

I'm coming back... You have a circle, and you say: all the diameters are equal. And I am saying: there are an infinity of diameters; a 17th century man would say that, there is an infinity of diameters, and all diameters -- the word "all" means "the infinite set", "all" commented by a 17th century man, it would be: all diameters = the infinite set of diameters traceable in the circle. It's an infinite set, an actual infinite. -- Kant arrives, and he says: not at all, this is a

misunderstanding. “All the diameters of the circle” is a proposition, again, empty of meaning. Why? By virtue of a very simple reason: diameters do not exist before the act through which I trace them; that is, diameters do not exist before the synthesis through which I produce them. And in fact, they never exist simultaneously because the synthesis through which I produce the diameters is a successive synthesis. Understand what he means; it becomes very strong: this is a synthesis of time. He means: the 17th century never understood what the synthesis of time was, and for a very simple reason: it was concerned with the problems of space, and the discovery of time was precisely at the end of the 17th century.

In fact, "all diameters" is an empty proposition; I cannot say "all diameters of the circle". I can only say "each diameter", "each" simply referring to what function? [To a] distributive function of judgment, a distributive function of judgment, namely, each diameter insofar as I draw it here now, each diameter insofar as I draw it here now, and then it will take me time to manage to reach the trace of the other diameter, this is a synthesis of time. It’s a synthesis, as Kant says, of succession within time. This is a synthesis of succession within time that goes on indefinitely, that is, it has no end, by virtue of what time is. I could, no matter how many diameters I have already drawn, I could always draw one more, and then one more, and then one more. It will never stop. This is a synthesis of the production of each diameter that I cannot confuse with an analysis. It is exactly: a synthesis of the production of each diameter in the succession of time, which I cannot confuse with an analysis of all the supposed diameters given simultaneously in the circle.

The error of the 17th century was to transform an indefinite series specific to the synthesis of time into an infinite set coexisting in extension. So, about this example, in fact, it is simply a question of something fundamental. See, Kant's power move will be to say: finally, there is no actual infinite; what you take for the actual infinite is simply... You say that there is an actual infinite because you have not seen, in fact, that the indefinite refers to a synthesis of succession in time, so when you gave yourself the indefinite in space, you have already transformed it into the actual infinite; but in fact, the indefinite is inseparable from the synthesis of succession in time, and at that point, it’s indefinite, it’s absolutely not the actual infinite. But what does the synthesis of succession over time refer to? It refers to an act of the self, an act of "I think"; it is insofar as "I think" that I trace a diameter of the circle, another diameter of the circle, etc.; in other words, it’s the "I think" itself, and this is going to be the Kantian revolution in relation to Descartes.

What is the "I think"? It is nothing other than the act of synthesis in the series of temporal succession. In other words, the "I think", the cogito, is directly placed in relation to time, whereas for Descartes, the cogito was immediately related to the extension. So, there it is, this is my question, it's almost... It is a bit like saying that, today, mathematicians are no longer talking about infinity. The way in which mathematics has expelled the infinite -- maybe we will see this next time if we have time -- how did that happen? Everywhere, this was done in the simplest way, and almost for arithmetical reasons. Starting from the moment they said: "but, an infinitely minute quantity", it begins, if you will, from the 18th century. Starting from the 18th century, there is an absolute rejection of so-called infinitist interpretations, and the whole attempt, from

the 18th century, of the mathematicians, starting with d'Alembert, and then Lagrange, and then all, all, in order to arrive at the beginning of the 20th century, where they decide that they have achieved everything, what is it? It's to show that infinitesimal calculus has no need of the infinitely minute hypothesis in order to be established.

What is more, there is a 19th century mathematician who employs a mode of thinking, a term which, it seems to me, accounts very well for the way of thinking of modern mathematicians. He says: the infinite interpretation of infinitesimal analysis is a Gothic hypothesis; or else they call it the "pre-mathematical" stage of infinitesimal calculus. And they simply show that in infinitesimal calculation, there are not at all quantities smaller than any given quantity; there are simply quantities that are left undetermined. In other words, the whole notion of axiom comes to replace the notion of the infinitely minute. You leave a quantity undetermined to make it -- this is therefore the notion of indeterminate which replaces the idea of infinity --, you leave a quantity undetermined to make it, at the moment you want, smaller than any specific given quantity. But there is not an infinitely minute within this at all. And the great mathematician who will give to infinitesimal calculus its definitive status at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th, that is, [Karl] Weierstrass, he will have succeeded in expelling from this everything that resembles any notion of infinity whatsoever.

So then, I would say, how are we taught? Well, I would say that we oscillate between a finitist point of view and an indefinitist point of view. If you will, we oscillate between -- and we understand these two points of view very well --, I mean, we are sometimes Lucretian, and sometimes we are Kantian. I mean, we understand relatively well the idea that things are subject to an indefinite analysis, and we understand very well that this indefinite analysis, which has no end, necessarily does not reach an end since it expresses a synthesis of succession within time. So, in this sense, we understand indefinite analysis insofar as based on a synthesis of succession within time even if we have not read Kant. And we see, we are entirely familiar with such a world. We also understand the other aspect, the finitist aspect, that is, the atomist aspect in the broad sense, namely: there would be a final end, and if it's not the atom, it will be a particle, it will be an atom minimum, or else an atom particle, anything. So, there is a final end.

What we no longer understand at all is that... unless... that there is... I would like this to have the same effect on you because, if not, that worries me. What, at first sight, we no longer understand is the kind of thought, the way in which, during the 17th century, they think of actual infinity, namely: they consider legitimate the transformation from an indefinite series to an infinite set. We no longer understand that at all.

I'm selecting a text -- and what I'm talking about are almost commonplaces of the 17th century -- I'm selecting a famous text by Leibniz, which has an admirable title: *Of the radical origin of things*. It's a little pamphlet. He begins with the exposition made a thousand times; it's not new for him, and he does not present it as new, the exposition of the so-called cosmological proof of the existence of God. And the so-called "cosmological proof" of the existence of God is very simple; it tells us this. It consists in telling us: Well, you see, a thing has a cause. Fine. This cause, in turn, is an effect, it has a cause, in its turn. The cause of the cause, it has a cause, etc.,

etc., to infinity, to infinity. You must reach a primary cause which itself does not refer to a cause, but which would be a cause in itself. This is the proof, you see: starting from the world, you conclude that there is a cause of the world. The world is the series of causes and effects; it is the series of effects and causes. We must reach a cause that is like the cause of all causes and effects. Needless to say, this proof never convinced anyone. But still, it has always been stated as being the cosmological proof of the existence of God. It has been debated; it has been contradicted in two ways. The finitists will tell us: well no, why? In the world itself, you will not reach final causes, that is, get to final ends. And then, the indefinitists tell us, well no, you will climb back up endlessly from effect to cause, and you will never reach a first term in the series. [*Interruption of the recording*] [2: 04: 48]

Part 4

... finite to an infinite set which itself demands a cause. It's only in this form that the cosmological proof would be conclusive. If I can -- the world is an indefinite series of causes, effects and causes -- if I can legitimately conclude from the indefinite series of effects and causes to a collection, to a set of causes and effects, that I will call the world, this set of causes and effects must itself have a cause. Fine. Kant will criticize the cosmological proof, saying: but after all, this is a pure logical error, this proof, it is a pure logical error because you can never consider an indefinite series as if it were a set -- a successive indefinite series --, as if it were an infinite set of coexistence. Fine. My question, then, you understand my question: we are convinced in advance, I suppose. We say: but it is obvious that I cannot. By what right, in fact, does it... If a series is independent -- you see the valorization of the time that this implies, this discovery of the indefinite -- because if the indefinite series of causes and effects cannot be assimilated to an infinite collection, it is only because the indefinite series is inseparable from the constitution of synthesis within time. It's because time is never given; it's because there is no collection of time, whereas there are spatial collections. It's because time does not create collections that the indefinite is irreducible to infinity. As a result, it is not surprising that this point of view of the indefinite, which seems very simple to us, implies, in fact, an astonishing valorization of the consciousness of time. It implies that philosophy has made this mutation that causes the whole cogito, that is, the "I think", to pass into a kind of "I think time" instead of "I think space".

And it is true that 17th century philosophy is an "I think space", and that it's in the name of space that they give themselves the right to consider that time, in the end, is very secondary and that, henceforth, I can constitute an indefinite series within time in a collection of simultaneities in space. In other words, they believe in infinite space. Henceforth, they think of the possibility of an actual infinity and, in a way, they are fighting on two fronts. You understand? They are fighting against finitism, hence all these authors, whether it is Descartes, whether it is Malebranche, whether it is Spinoza, whether it is Leibniz, will refuse here, will constantly refuse the atom hypothesis. That will be their enemy. They denounce that; there is not one of these authors who does not attack, [saying] "above all, do not believe that what I'm explaining to you is about atoms". Constantly, when Leibniz talks about the infinitely minute, he says: "the

infinitely minute, [that has] nothing to do with atoms". You see why. An atom is not an infinitely minute at all. And on the other hand, if you put yourself in their place, everything gets turned upside down for them, if we put ourselves in their place. That is, I mean... For them, Kant's argument is completely backbiting. Someone would say to a 17th century man: "But come on, you have no right to convert a succession within time into a simultaneity in space ...", well, this statement itself is empty, because it only takes on meaning -- this statement "I have no right to convert a succession within time into a coexistence in space, into a simultaneity in space" -- that only makes sense if I have, once again, identified a form of time which does not make up a set, an immediately and irreducibly serial form of time, a serial consciousness of time, such that the aggregate of time would be a meaningless notion. If I have identified a serial and irreducibly serial reality of time within a consciousness of time, then, in fact, I am in conditions such that I can no longer convert temporal series into aggregates or spatial sets.

Fine, isn't it the same thing, I mean, don't we find... – with that, we will be able to finish for today – I was saying, there are two branches of mathematics, the magnitudes greater than the numbers, and on the contrary, the independent number compared to the magnitudes, roughly, what I called the Greek theme and then the Indian theme, and there, now, I would say, on the side tending toward the number being deeper than magnitude and, finally, controlling magnitude, ultimately this independence of number can only be based on a consciousness of time, because in fact, what is the act of temporal synthesis or, even more, the act of the synthesis of time through which I produce an indefinite series? The act of the synthesis of time through which I produce an indefinite series is the number. This is the number with the simplest possibility -- it gets complicated hereafter -- but with the possibility of always adding a number to the previous number. It is the number which henceforth expresses the "I think" in a pure state, namely, the act of synthesis through which I produce the indefinite series within time.

On the other hand, the other branch is no doubt the most acute consciousness of space. This is undoubtedly the most acute consciousness of space that makes me say or that makes me live insofar as being a man existing in space, the one who is in space. At that point, -- and time strictly is only an auxiliary, as they all said at that time, an auxiliary for the measurement of space -- so there, that there was a mutation in thought, when thought was confronted no longer by its direct relationship with space, but with its direct relationship with time... And I mean that sometimes there are texts which seem to sit astride, but understand, in fact, this is very strange, these texts which seem to be straddling, because this depends a bit on our soul's nuances, whether a modern soul or not. I would point out to you that everything is currently changing because, in a way, I wonder if we haven't returned to a kind of 17th century, but via detours. I would almost say that if I then tried to situate [this], but really by undertaking a huge overview, the huge overview would be what? That was a period in which the main problem, how to say, putting aside every urgent matter, finally, putting aside the urgent matter, which what? It was my relation with time, and it's that which defined modern thought for a very long time, the discovery of time, that is, the discovery of the independence of time, that I was a temporal being and not just a spatial being. It's certain for the 17th century, I do not believe that I am basically a temporal being.

That implies choices; that implies, I don't know, all kinds of things, but, when I say that starting from the 18th century, what causes the break, what causes the reaction against classical philosophy, that's it. This is the discovery: I am a [temporal] being... [*Very brief side discussion, someone offers something to Deleuze, who thanks him*] You understand, this is where there are actions as important as what is happening in art, because the same thing is occurring in art. 17th century literature, even among the so-called memorialist authors, for example, I think of Saint-Simon, it's obviously not the problems of time that concern them. It's in the 18th, 19th century in which they confront time.

Take a famous text from Pascal, on the two infinities. Pascal explains that man is trapped between two infinities; this text seems very typical to me, because it passes for an extremely modern text, in a sense, like Pascal's first great existentialist text. Not at all. It does not strike us with this impact of very modern text – it's brilliant, this text, that is…, I don't want to say that it's not brilliant… -- but it only strikes us as a modern text because the reading is completely decentered. We spend our time -- and there's often nothing wrong here; we draw from a text the resonances it has with our own time --, but in fact, Pascal's is not at all a modern text, it is a pure 17th century text, with its brilliance added on. In fact, it is a text which tells us: man is spatially wedged between two infinities, the infinitely large, which you can represent vaguely by the sky, and the infinitely minute, which you can represent vaguely as soon as you are looking through a microscope. And he tells us: these are two actual infinities. This is a text signed 17th in a pure state, I would say: what is the representative text of the 17th [century]? Pascal's text on the two infinities.

And, as we say, there is a tragedy side of the text, but it's in the manner [of] how to orient yourself in all this? That is, this is a space problem. What will be the space of man between these two spatial infinities? And there is everything you want, despair, faith, creeping in there, but not at all modern. What would a modern text be? It would be a temporal text. It would be how to orient yourself in time. And how to orient yourself in time, that's the basis for all of Romanticism. And if Kant has something to do with the foundation of German Romanticism, it is because Kant was the first in philosophy to make this very, very strong kind of change in reference points, namely: making us pass from the space pole to the time pole, on the level of thought -- since it was a question of philosophy -- on the level of thought: the "I think" is no longer related to space, it is related to time. Fine.

And at that point, you can find despair, hope, for man, all the existential tones you want; it's not the same depending on whether they are spatial tones or temporal tones. I believe that if a Classic and a Romantic do not understand each other or cannot understand each other, it is obviously because the problems undergo an absolute mutation when you make this change of reference point, when you are situated onto the time pole and not on the space pole. And I am saying: it's the same in literature, in music, all that. Romanticism, was the discovery of time; at each time, it was the discovery of time as a force of art, or as a force of thought in the case of Kant, as a form of thought.

In music, whether it's already, I don't know... the first great one in order would be Beethoven, but then all Romanticism dealt with this kind of problem: how to make time sonorous. Time is not sonorous, so then, how does one make time sonorous? You cannot understand symphonic questions, you cannot even understand the question of melody in that way that Romanticism will reinterpret it, because melody, before, way back, was not at all about this problem of time. The melody in what we call a *lied*, for example, there you have the temporal problem in a pure state. And the spatial problem is closely subordinate to it, that is, it's time for travel. I'm leaving, I'm leaving my homeland, etc., and it's not at all thought of in terms of space; it's thought of in terms of time, and the melodic line is the line of time. Okay, but... [*Deleuze does not finish*]

And that's what literature will be -- the novel, the novel, you understand, the act of the novel starting from the 18th century onwards, the novel that one perceives is temporal. And to create a novel is precisely, not to recount something about time, but to situate everything, and it is art that situates things as a function of time. There is no other novel than that of time. A very good critic, a very good critic of 20th century literature, whom we unfortunately no longer read, but I strongly advise you to read him if you find second-hand books at the secondhand booksellers, named Albert Thibaudet, said this very well -- he was a disciple of Bergson, and he's very, very wonderful, he was a very great critic -- he says: well, yes, a novel, how should we define a novel? This isn't difficult; it's a novel from the moment something endures, as soon as there is duration, that something endures. A tragedy does not endure. He said a very simple thing: a tragedy is... But he said better than Bergson, [that] a tragedy always consists of peaks, critical moments, either in the depths, or up above, etc. But the art of duration, of something that endures and, at the extreme, that unravels, a duration that unravels; that's a novel. It's a novel as soon as you describe a duration that unravels. Finally, the author who above all creates a manifesto of the time linked to his work is Proust. Fine, that whole era... When I say, we would have to see if we don't have re-engagement with the 17th century...

Claire Parnet: I have a good example. There is an example in Debussy's *Préludes*, where he wrote at the very beginning: "Rhythm has the sound value of a sad and snowy landscape". There, really, it's an ethos. It's a place that...

Deleuze: Yes, yes, this is quite brilliant, the return to space, but, then, obviously which will not be a return to the 17th century.

But if you will, in every domain, the rediscovery, I believe -- I am using, I am saying that to connect things with what we will be doing later concerning painting [60]--, the birth of a new…, in art at the end of the 19th [century] and from the beginning of the 20th, the return to a kind of colorism, to extremely, then entirely new, formulations of colorism, but which break precisely, break with what had been explored for a rather long time concerning a painting of light. It seems to me that it's through color that, in painting, space has returned to painting. In the painting of light, there is always an odd phenomenon that is as if they were capturing time pictorially. Notice, it's no more difficult than capturing it musically. Time is not sonorous by itself; it is not visible either. In a certain way, the painting of light gives us as a pictorial equivalent of time, but the painting of color is something quite different, what we call colorism. What's called colorism,

that is, when the volumes are no longer created in chiaroscuro, but are made by color, that is, by pure relations of tonality between colors, there is a kind of reconquest of a space, of a direct pictorial space.

And I also believe that all the... all the movements known as "informal" and even abstract, these are a reconquest precisely of a pure pictorial space. Well, suppose, but think of, for example, the importance to us... I would say: who are the key [figures]? A guy like [Maurice] Blanchot... I think [that] one of the important things about Blanchot was to recreate a kind of conversion to space. Blanchot is very striking in that he thinks very little in terms of time. His problem is really a problem of thought in relation to space. Think of his book *The Space of Literature* [1955]. *The Space of Literature* is like a manifesto that is opposed to literary time. In music, in painting, all that, it seems to me that there is a return, precisely, a kind of... [*Deleuze does not finish*]

Just like in mathematics, a theory called "set theory" has been reconstituted, and at the level of set theory, they have rejected -- and this is what seems to me very, very striking --, the people who had succeeded in expelling infinity from everywhere in mathematics, it was at the level of the theory called "set theory" that they found an aporia, a difficulty relative to infinity. The infinite was reintroduced into mathematics through the angle (*biais*) -- in a very special sense -- through the angle of set theory. This is very, very curious. And there is also, in all disciplines, a kind of return to sets of coexistence, to sets of simultaneity.

So, I mean, these would perhaps be good conditions for us to feel precisely more familiar with this 17th century thought. These are people who think very spontaneously in terms of actual infinities. When they are presented with a finite thing, well, they immediately think that a finite thing is wedged between two actual infinities: the actual infinity of the infinitely large, and the actual infinity of the infinitely minute, and that a thing is only a bridge between these two infinities, if you will, a micro-infinity and a macro-infinity, and that the finite is precisely like the communication of these two infinities. Fine… And they think very spontaneously, I mean very naturally, such that objections like those of Kant, let's understand what they mean: they cannot even conceive of them given that Kant's objection only truly takes on meaning if all these coordinates of the 17th century world have already collapsed.

All that to make you feel that an objection, you cannot... You understand, an objection, in a sense, always comes from outside. Because people, they are not idiots; otherwise, they would have already made the objections to themselves. They always come from a point of view irreducible to the system of coordinates in which you exist. So, in fact, it's from an external point of view, namely the point of view of time, that Kant can say: "Ah no! Your actual infinity, not in the least..." But I cannot say that progress proves Kant right; there'd be absolutely no basis for that idea. Once again, the idea of infinite collections returns to us, not in the manner of the 17th century, but via immense detours. There we have the idea of infinite sets -- infinite sets endowed with variable powers, with one power or another -- returns to us all the more.

So, if we had to define the philosophers of the 17th century, I would say a very simple thing: these are people, these are men who think naturally, spontaneously, naturally, in the philosophical sense, in terms of actual infinity, that is, neither finitude, nor indefinite.

Well, well, we've had enough. There we are! So next time, anyway, [we will] have to... We'll see what emerges from this for Spinoza's theory of the individual. [*Noises in the room; we hear Deleuze say to someone*: Thank you, thank you, thank you very much ...] [*End of the session*] [2:28: 04]

Notes, 50-60: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 11, 17 February 1981

Transcription (for Paris 8): Part 1, Marielle Burkhalter, Part 2, Vanessa Soubiran; Part 3, Charles J. Stivale; augmented transcription by Charles J. Stivale

Translation (for Web Deleuze), Timothy S. Murphy; augmented translation by Charles J. Stivale

Part 1

Those of you who won't hear anything, you might as well leave because there's no point, as I'm quite ill, I have very little to say, so there it is. So, listen…

The last time, in an effort to [*Pause*] analyze the different dimensions of individuality, I had tried to develop this theme precisely of the presence of the infinite in the philosophy of the 17th century, and the form under which this infinite presented itself. And this theme is very fuzzy (*flou*), if you will, and it seems to me that this truly is valuable for the nature of this 17th century thought, and I would like to draw from it some themes, some relatively fuzzy themes, still concerning this conception of the individual. This is almost an attempt to add concrete comments so that you might feel this kind of infinitist conception of the individual. But, I am saying, particularly in Spinoza's case, but here perhaps precisely, what interests me today, is that Spinoza provides a perfect expression and one seemingly pushed to the extreme by themes scattered among other authors of the 17th century.

I am saying, in all its dimensions, the individual as Spinoza presents it, I would like to say three things about it. On the one hand, it is relation, on the other hand, it is power of action (*puissance*), and finally it is mode, but a very particular mode, a mode that one could call intrinsic mode, intrinsic mode.[61] And at least at the start today, that's what I would like to explain, these three themes. The individual -- to establish terms in Latin, these terms return frequently in the philosophies of the Middle Ages and Renaissance -- I would say that the individual insofar as being relation refers us to a whole plane that can be designated by the name composition (*compositio*), composition, as if, henceforth, all individuals being relations, there was a composition of individuals among themselves, and individuation is inseparable from this movement of composition.

Second point, [the individual] is power of action, that is (*potentia*). This is the second great concept of individuality, no longer *compositio* that refers to relations, but *potentia*. The third, being *potentia*, it is something quite special that will receive the name -- in fact among certain philosophers of the Middle Ages – that will receive the name, intrinsic mode, *modus intrinsecus*. *Modus intrinsecus* is found quite often in the Middle Ages, in certain traditions, under the name

gradus. This is degree, the intrinsic mode or degree.[62] So, it's to each of these three domains – relation and composition of relations, power of action, degree or intrinsic mode – that I would like to try to define a bit as concretely as possible.

I am first saying, you indeed see that there is something common to these three themes: it's through them and according to these three terms at once that the individual is not substance. If it's a relation, it's not substance because substance concerns an end (*terme*) and not a relation. As they said in the Middle Ages, -- here, Latin is very useful -- substance is *terminus*, it is an end (*term*). If it's power of action (*puissance*), it's not substance either because, fundamentally, whatever is substance is form. It's the form that is called substantial. And in the end, if it is degree, it's not substance either. Why? It's because, no doubt, every degree refers to a quality that it regulates (*graduer*); every degree is degree of a quality. And, what determines a substance is a quality, but the degree of a quality is not substance.

You see that all this revolves around the same intuition of the individual as not being substance. I begin with the first characteristic: the individual is relation. This is perhaps one of the first times in the history of philosophy that an attempt is being sketched to think of the relation in the pure state. But what does that mean, thinking of the relation in the pure state? Is it possible, in some way, to think of the relation independently of its terms? The relation in its pure state would be independent of its terms. What does a relation independent of its terms mean? There had already been a rather strong attempt at this by Nicholas of Cusa.[63] In many of his texts that I find very beautiful, he had an idea that will often be taken up again later. It seems to me that in his work, [this idea] appeared in a fundamental way, that is, every relation is measure, only that every measure, every relation, plunges into the infinite. He demonstrates this regarding analyses; the Cardinal of Cusa dealt often with issues concerning weighing, the measure of weight. He has some very strange pages on weighing, on the measure of weights, insofar as the relative measure of two weights refers to an absolute measure, and the absolute measure itself always brings the infinite into play. This is very bizarre, this theme, if you will; there is an immanence of pure relation and the infinite. By pure relation, one understands the relation separate from its terms. Thus, it's for this reason that it's so difficult to think of the relation independently of its terms. It's not because it's impossible, but because it puts into play a mutual immanence of the infinite and relation.

So, fine, what does that mean? It's as if, at that point, we could define intelligence, the intellect, as the faculty of setting out relations. But, precisely in activity called intellectual, there is a kind of infinite that is implicated (*impliqué*). It's at the level of relation that the implication of the infinite occurs through intellectual activity. What does that mean? Doubtless it will be necessary to wait until the 17th century to find a first status – I am not saying that we will limit ourselves to that – a first status of the relation independent of its terms. For this is what many philosophers had sought since the Renaissance, including those who made use of mathematical means. This will be brought to a first perfection in the 17th century thanks precisely to infinitesimal calculus.

This is where I'd like to say some very simple things that absolutely do not require that you be familiar with mathematics; that is, that even if you have no such familiarity, you should be able to understand this: infinitesimal calculus puts into play a certain type of relation. My question is: which kind of relation emerges with infinitesimal calculus, and which, no doubt, was foreseen by

so-called methods of exhaustion that were like a prefiguration of infinitesimal calculus? The relation to which infinitesimal calculus gave a solid status, or in any case apparently solid, is what is called a differential relation, and a differential relation is of the type dy/dx =… -- we'll see what it's equal to – dy/dx =… . Fine, how does one define this relation dy/dx = ? Once again, I am not calling on you for anything, no familiarity with math, so that everyone might understand.

That which is called dy is an infinitely minute quantity or, as this will be called, a disappearing (*évanouissante*) quantity, a quantity smaller than any given or givable quantity. Whatever the quantity you are given for dy, whatever the quantity of y you are given, that is, whatever the value considered is for y, dy will be smaller than this value, however far you go. So, I can say that dy, insofar as a vanishing quantity, is strictly equal to zero in relation to y. In the same way, dx is strictly equal to zero in relation to x. In fact, dy is the vanishing quantity of y, dx is the vanishing quantity of x. Thus, I can write, and mathematicians do write, dy/dx = 0/0. This is the differential relation. Are you following me? If I called y a quantity of the abscissa and x a quantity of the ordinate, I would say that dy = 0 in relation to the abscissa, dx = 0 in relation to the ordinate.

There we have the question. On this matter, you understand this, so good, fine; it’s not difficult, dy/dx = 0/0, ok? Is this equal to zero? Obviously not. dy is nothing in relation to y, dx is nothing in relation to x, but dy over dx does not cancel itself out. The relation subsists, and the differential relation will present itself as the subsistence of the relation when the terms vanish. They have found – now here, this is very, very important – they have found the mathematical tool, and even when they use it solely as a tool, as a convention, they have found the mathematical convention, the mathematical convention that allows them to treat relations independently of their terms. And what is this mathematical convention? -- I am summarizing -- It's the infinitely minute. Here is how I am able to say: the pure relation thus necessarily implies the infinite under the form of the infinitely minute since the pure relation will be the differential relation between infinitely minute quantities. It's at the level of the differential relation that the reciprocal immanence of the infinite and relation is expressed in the pure state. If you understand that, you have nearly understood everything. I am saying, dy/dx = 0/0, but 0/0 is not 0. In fact, what subsists when y and x cancel each other out under the form dy and dx, what subsists is the relation dy/dx itself, which is not nothing.

And what does this relation dy/dx designate? To what is it equal? To proceed very simply – and that’s precisely what I’ve been hoping for – let’s say that dy/dx equals z, that is, it does not involve y or x at all, since it's y and x under the form of vanishing quantities, fine, not involving y and x at all, but designating z. What do I mean by this? Here’s a very simple example: when you have a relation dy/dx derived from a circle, this relation dy/dx = 0/0 doesn't involve the circle at all but refers to what is called a trigonometric tangent. Fine, here, this matters little, but you don’t need to understand anything at all here. You can just understand that dy/dx = z, that is, the relation that is independent of its terms will designate a third term and will serve in the measurement and in the determination of a third term, the trigonometric tangent. In this sense, I can say that the infinite relation, that is, the relation between the infinitely minute elements, refers to something finite. The mutual immanence of the infinite and relation is in the finite. It is in the finite itself that there is immanence of the relation and the infinitely minute elements. In

order to gather together these three terms, pure relation, the infinite and the finite, what would I say? I would say that the differential relation dy/dx tends towards a limit, and this limit is z; it tends toward a limit, it tends toward the limit z, that is, the determination of the trigonometric tangent.

Is this ok? This really has to be very clear because, if you will, I believe that, if you accept… Here, I believe that we are really inside a nest, within a kind of extraordinarily rich knot of notions. When afterwards, the mathematicians will say "well no, it's barbaric to interpret infinitesimal calculus by the infinitely minute, that's not right, they've understood nothing," etc., of course, they're right, but from what point of view? I don't even know from what point of view, but this is to pose the problem poorly, it seems to me, extremely poorly. The fact is that the 17th century, through its interpretation of infinitesimal calculus, finds a means of fusing three concepts, three key concepts, for mathematics and philosophy at the same time.

These three key concepts are the concepts of the infinite, relation and limit. So, if I extract a formulation of the infinite from the 17th century, I would say that something finite includes an infinity under a certain relation. So, this formulation can appear totally dull: something finite includes the infinite under a certain relation; in fact, this is extraordinarily original. It precisely marks an equilibrium point for 17th century thought, between the infinite and the finite, through a new theory of relations. So, when these guys then consider it as going without saying that in the least finite dimension, there is the infinite, you understand, when thereafter they constantly speak of the existence of God -- but this is much more interesting than is believed – in the end, it doesn't involve God. It involves the richness of this implication of concepts: relation, infinity, limit. You see? I am letting you… This would be my first point: How is the individual a relation?

But, you see, the finite individual? Obviously, the finite individual, you will find that there is a limit at the level of the finite individual. This does not prevent there having been some infinite; this does not prevent there having been a relation, and this relation is composed, the relations of one individual are composed with another; and there is always a limit that marks the finitude of the individual, and there is always an infinity of a certain order that is involved by the relation. It's a funny vision of the world if you consider it to be a vision of the world, that is, if you agree to see that they didn't merely think like that, they *saw* like that. It was their very own taste, their manner of treating things. So, you understand why this was not through easy assimilation that when they see, that when the story of microscopes is revealed, they see a confirmation in this: the microscope is the instrument that gives us a sensible foreshadowing – in this, they are not fools – a sensible and confused foreshadowing of this activity of the infinite under any finite relation.

And Pascal's text on the infinities which is an extremely simple text – and here as well, he was a great mathematician -- but when he tries to let us know how he sees the world, they don't at all need all their mathematical knowledge (*savoir*). The two console each other, the two reinforce each other. So, Pascal can create his text on the two infinities without any reference to mathematics whatsoever. He could have created his text on the two infinities as a mathematician; he didn't need to because he says extremely simple, but extremely original things. And in fact, the originality lies in this manner of fusing three concepts which, at first glance, have a link that

doesn't go without saying, but then in the 17th century, there they want to show that the link is necessary. Once again, these are: relation, limit, infinite.

Good, time for a break… If you haven't understood this, I'll start over. This is essential, essential, essential. You have to grasp that, nonetheless, all this makes for a funny world. For us particularly, it's true, we no longer think like that. But what joy! I believe that we no longer think exactly like that. If you will, for us, it's thanks to knowing nothing about mathematics that what I am saying can be understood. For them, it was thanks to having knowledge of mathematics that they managed to understand all that. That doesn't mean that we're the ones that are correct. Obviously, what changed is a whole system of mathematics as conventions, but that changed only if you comprehend that modern mathematics also plots its concepts on sets of notions, on implications of notions of another, equally original type. So, there we are. Must I start over? Should I start over? Would it be good for me to start over? Do I have to… Yes?[64]

A student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze: That would be good. That would be illuminating. So, hold on, let me think about this. Can we say that the limit, that is, the finite, is the reason for knowledge (*raison de connaissance*) and the infinite is the reason for being (*raison d'être*) of the relation itself? Yes, this would be fine, this would be really fine, this would be very clear. You see, one could say that the limit towards which the relation tends is the reason for knowing (*connâitre*) the relation as independent of its terms, that is, of x and of y, and the infinite, the infinitely minute, is the reason for being (*raison d'être*) of the relation; in fact, it's the reason for being of dy/dx. Yes, we can absolutely say this. Did they say this? Wait; yes, they didn't say it as well, not as clearly. [That's] perfect. Yes, they necessarily said this since they said everything in the end, Descartes's formulation, the infinite conceived and not comprehended. That is, one does not comprehend the infinite because it is incomprehensible, but one conceives it. This is Descartes's great formulation: one can conceive it clearly and distinctly, but comprehending it is something else. So, one conceives it; there is a reason for knowledge (*connaissance*) of the infinite. So, there is a reason for knowing that is distinct from the reason for being. Comprehending would be grasping the reason for being, but we cannot grasp the reason for being of the infinite because, to do so, we would have to be adequate to God. And our understanding is merely finite. On the other hand, one can conceive the infinite, conceive it clearly and distinctly, thus one has a reason for knowing it. Yes, completely. Fine, I am saying, it's really necessary that you understand that, that this be crystal clear because my second point is so greatly going to depend on all that… [*Pause*] Is this ok?

So, let me insist once again that in the end, philosophy has to conquer its practical exercises. Practical exercises in philosophy would have to be thought experiments (*expériences*). The notion of thought experiments is a German notion; this literally means experiments that one can only do through thought. This doesn't mean interior experiences or psychological experiences. Practical exercises would really be curious. They would have the title of a practical exercise, practical exercise number 12, for example. So, this is how we could reestablish notes in philosophy; you would refer to your practical exercise number 12. So, there we are. So, this would be for the next time: construct a motif, not a shape (*figure*) because a shape is something felt (*quelque chose de sensible*); construct any motif whatsoever, your choice, that brings

together the three themes, and only them, of the infinity of the relation and of the limit, and if needed, make it into a drawing. This would be a thought experiment, you see?... No? You don't want to do that?

Claire Parnet: We don't have class next week.

Deleuze: Oh yes, we do, for next week, yes, yes, for next week. If you want this course credit, this will be for next week. There we are… -- Oh, let me mention that this week is the last week that I am still accepting the little forms for the course credit. – So, is all this truly ok? Truly? I don't need to go back over this? That's a shame.[65]

So, let's pass on, alas, to the second point. You see how it links up with the first point because I've had to invoke the notion of limit. In fact, in order to account for the immanence of the infinite in the relation, once again, it seems to me, the more I repeat this, it's odd, the more I tell myself this, but in fact, it's very important, the thesis according to which an immanence of the infinite exists within the relation. Notice, here we are, I'm pointing out that I am returning to the preceding point so that you will feel its importance.

So, I believe, as a matter of taste first of all, the logic of relations, of relations, is a fundamental thing for philosophy, and alas, French philosophy has never been very interested in this aspect. But the logic of relations has been one of the great creations of the English and the Americans. But there were two stages, I would say. There is a stage that is very well known which is precisely the stage, finally, let's say, that it is Anglo-Saxon, the logic of relations such as it was developed starting from [Bertrand] Russell, that is, such as it was developed at the end of the 19th century, start of the 20th. And this logic of relations claims to be founded on this: the independence of the relation in relation to its terms, but this independence of the relation in relation to its terms, this autonomy of the relation in relation to its terms, is founded on finite considerations. It is founded on a finitism. For example, Russell even has an atomist period in order to develop his logic of relations.

You see, what I mean is that this stage had been prepared by a very, very different stage. I would say that the great classical stage of the theory of relations is not at all like they say. They say that earlier, people confused the logic of relations and the logic of attribution. They confused two types of judgment: the judgment of relation (Pierre is smaller than Paul) and the judgment of attribution (Pierre is yellow or white or red), thus they had no consciousness of relations. It's not like that at all, it's not like that at all. In so-called classical thought, there is a great awareness, there is a fundamental realization of the independence of the relation in relation to relations, only this realization passes through the infinite. The thought of the relation as pure relation can only be made in reference to the infinite. Once again, this is one of the highly original moments of the 17th century.

Fine, so I am returning to my second theme. You recall, my second theme is that the individual is power of action (*puissance*). This I just mentioned very vaguely, giving the sense of the formulation: the individual is relation, the individual is not substance, it is relation. My second term, you recall, was that the individual is not form, it is power of action. Why does this follow? It's because what I just said about the differential relation 0/0, which is not equal to zero but

tends towards a limit, I immediately say: consider that when you say this, and when you propose the very special concept, here as well, subsequent mathematicians will denounce it. But if they were correct in denouncing it, doesn't it still remain as a fundamental philosophical concept? When 17th century philosophers propose this theme of tending toward a limit, the tension towards a limit, this whole idea of tendency in the 17th century, there you rediscover, for example, in Spinoza at the level of a Spinozist concept, that of *conatus* -- each thing tends to persevere in its being, each thing strives since, in Latin, "strive" is stated as "conor," *conatus*, the effort or tendency. Here is the notion of limit defined in terms of an effort, and what is power? That's exactly it; it's the tendency itself or the effort itself insofar as it tends towards a limit. There we find ourselves again facing a new concept. I would like for you to sense the extent to which all these concepts are linked from the point of view of a conceptual creation – tending toward a limit, that's what power of action is. Concretely, we will experience as power of action everything that is grasped under the aspect of tending toward a limit.

You see, I am saying that if the limit is grasped starting from a notion of power of action, specifically, tending toward a limit, in terms of the slightest, the most rudimentary infinitesimal calculus, in terms of vulgarization, well yes, the polygon that multiplies its sides tends towards a limit, which is the curved line. The limit is precisely the moment when the angular line, by dint of multiplying its sides – can we say "reconnect" (*rejoint*)? No, since it goes to infinity, but tension toward a limit is thus the tension toward a limit now implicating the infinite -- The polygon, insofar as it multiplies its sides to infinity, tends towards the circle.

I am saying and I would almost like to muse (*rêver*) in front of you exactly as I did for the preceding theme. What change does this bring about in the notion of limit, because the limit was a well-known notion? But one did not speak of tending towards a limit. The limit is a key philosophical concept. Again, in my efforts to make our work somewhat useful for you by seeing that it intervenes as creation in philosophy, I am taking this once again as a locus of the creation of concepts because, for example, there occurs a veritable mutation from the point of view of thought in the manner of thinking a concept. What was a limit? The Greeks have a word, -- and I am citing it at the same time as foreign words because it's sometimes very useful in a text; we see the word written in Greek, because it's very important in Greek philosophy -- it's "peras." [*Deleuze spells it out*]. *Peras,* in ancient Greek, this is limit. But, at the simplest level, what do they call limit? There are all sorts of theories of limit, and even Plato will create a great theory of the limit. Hey, Plato creates a great theory of the limit. That must be of interest for us.

You indeed see my purpose. So that you might follow this well, it concerns posing questions about this conception of limit before the 17th century that was clearly of an entirely different nature. And it's quite simple; I mean, however complicated Plato's theory itself might be, there is a point that everyone can understand: what did they call limits, the surveyors of that period? The limit is contours, it is contours, it is points, it is end points (*termes*), there we are. The limit is an end, a *terminus*. A volume has surfaces for its limit. For example, a cube is limited by four squares… Six! Six! [*Laughter*] Six squares… Something was bothering me there: six squares. There, whew! A line segment is limited by two endpoints. There we are, I'm not venturing any farther because… [*Laughter*] [*Pause*]

Plato, in a very beautiful work called the *Timaeus*, creates a great theory of shapes and their limits conceived as contours.[66] And why can this conception of the limit as contour be considered as the basis for what one could call a certain form of idealism? Follow me closely. Necessarily this is very well reconciled: the limit is the contour of the form, whether the form is purely thought or sensible. In any case, one will call "limit" the contour of the form, and this is very easily reconciled with an idealism because if the limit is the contour of the form, at the extreme, what does it matter to me what there is between the limits? If I were to put some sand, some bronze or some thought matter, some intelligible matter, between my limits, this will always be a cube or a circle. [*Pause*]

In other words, essence is the form itself related to its contour. I could speak of the pure circle because there is a pure contour of the circle. I could speak of a pure cube without specifying what it involves. And I would name these the idea of the circle, the idea of the cube. Hence the importance of the contour-"peras" in Plato's philosophy in which the idea will be very exactly – very exactly, not because this is so terribly complicated what I'm saying, I'm deriving from it some little thing – the idea will be the form related to its intelligible contour. You see? In other words, in the idea of the contour-limit, Greek philosophy finds a very fundamental confirmation for its own, I would say, its own abstraction. Not that it is more abstract than another philosophy, but it sees the justification of the abstraction, such as it conceives this, namely, the abstraction of ideas. [*Pause*]

Fine, here, I have just outlined the philosophical result of this contour-limit idea. Henceforth the individual will be the form related to its contour. If I look for something to which such a conception practically applies, I would say, in order to return a bit here to what we were discussing earlier regarding painting, for example, I would say that the form related to its contour is, par excellence, a sensible world of the a tactile-optical kind.[67] The optical form is related, if only through the eye, if only indirectly, to a tactile contour. So, that can be the finger of pure spirit; the contour inevitably has a kind of tactile reference, and if one speaks of the circle or the cube as a pure idea, to the extent that one defines it by its contour and one relates the intelligible form to its contour, there is a reference, however indirect it may be, to a tactile determination.

And here I once again find a confirmation: it's completely wrong, once again, to define the Greek world as the world of light; it's an optical world, of course, it's even in this that they discovered, that they brought forth into art, into philosophy, an optical world, but not at all a pure optical world. The optical world that the Greeks promote is already sufficiently confirmed by the word that they use to speak of the idea: *eidos*, *eidos* which is a term that refers to visuality, to the visible, to the sight of mind. But this sight of the mind is not purely optical. It is optical-tactile. Why? Because the visible form is related, however indirectly it may be, to the tactile outline.

And the practical experience then, it's not surprising that someone who reacts against Platonist idealism, in the name of a certain technological inspiration, is Aristotle. But if you consider Aristotle, there the tactile reference of the Greek optical world appears quite evidently in an extremely simple theory which consists in saying that substance, or rather sensible substances, are composites of form and matter, and it's the form that's essential. It's the form that is essential, and what is the form? Well, precisely, the form is related to its contour, and the experience constantly invoked by Aristotle is what? It's that of the sculptor, it's the sculptor, and that should

interest us greatly because Greek statuary has the greatest importance in this optical world; it's an optical world, but a world of sculpture, that is, one in which the form is determined according to a tactile contour, in which optical form is determined as a function, if only indirectly, of a tactile contour. Everything happens as if the visible form were unthinkable outside of a tactile mold. That is the Greek equilibrium. That is, it's very own equilibrium. It's a kind of equilibrium… [*Interruption of the recording*] [46:42]

Part 2

Georges Comtesse : …The very possibility of seeing the *eidos* as conditioned by the separation of soul and sensible body…

Deleuze: Yes, well, no, I was thinking that you had… It's perhaps because I went too fast. I mean, taken literally, you are completely correct. The *eidos* is grasped by the soul, and that tells us nothing yet. That is, the eidos, the pure idea is obviously graspable only by the pure soul. My question is entirely different, notably as pure soul, we can only speak of it, according to Plato himself, by analogy given that we only experience our soul insofar as it is bound to a body; we can only speak of it by analogy. So, from the point of view of analogy, I would always have said, okay, it's the pure soul that grasps the pure idea, and there's nothing corporeal in this. It's a purely intellectual or spiritual grasp. But does this pure soul that grasps the idea proceed in the manner of an eye, "in the manner of", or does it proceed rather in the manner of the sense of touch, touch which would then be purely spiritual, like the eye which would be purely spiritual? That is, this eye is the third eye, just as this touch would be the eleventh finger. This would be a "manner of speaking", but we definitely need the analogy. Just like Plato, we definitely need analogical reasoning.

Then my whole response consists in saying that the pure soul no more has, in complete reality, an eye than it has a sense of touch; it is in relation with the ideas. You are completely correct, but this does not prevent the philosopher, in order to speak of this apprehension of the idea by the soul, from having to ask himself: what is the role of an *analogon* of the eye and an *analogon* of touch, an analogue of the eye and an analogue of touch in the grasping of the idea? To which I reply, there are indeed these two *analoga…* [*Laughter, and Deleuze laughs as well*] There are indeed two analogues since the idea is constantly said to be seen by the soul (although the soul is not God) but at the same time, this pure form-Idea is only seen by the soul to the extent that it refers also to a contour that is constituted, that is the constitutive element in the viewed form, and this contour refers to analogue of touch. Ok?... Not entirely?

Comtesse: … Because the limit for Plato is not just the contour of form…

Deleuze: Okay, okay…

Comtesse: … it's also the force that contains an infinite power of action. The infinite power of action that the limit contains insofar as being a force is what Plato senses literally as a demonic power…

Deleuze: There, well yes, there, we agree…

Comtesse: This is a terrifying power which has indeed brought about the deadly union of soul and body of which philosophy is the separation.

Deleuze: Yes, but then you go right past me by saying that I am more correct than I would have liked to have been because that amounts to saying: careful, Plato has a very strong presentiment of an entirely different conception of the limit which would no longer be the contour-limit, but precisely it appears more or less demonic because everything depends on the texts -- okay, okay -- and it is this world that we must at the same time, of course, contemplate, and conjure. You see, he will save himself through the contour, even if there are some of his texts that prepare a completely different conception of the limit. And there, I thought you were going into all that because it's very important. In fact, what you're saying is like these are little notations on... I mean, it's very subtle. You are correcting me... Comtesse there, he has just given me, it seems to me, an example in which he himself is correcting what I am saying. In fact, it's so much more complicated; there I agree. It's very complicated. That doesn't prevent... This is a direction. If you believe that I am stating an absolute truth, no, I am not stating an absolute truth. I am saying what seems to me a tendency of this Greek thought. But it's always more complicated than what is said, you see? [*Pause*] Okay, well, that's this conception of ... this first conception of the contour-limit.

And what happens several centuries later when, in order to create a completely different conception of the limit, the most varied signs come to us from it, and come at us from all sides? As a result, I am numbering my examples:

First example with the Stoics, first example. The Stoics lay into Plato quite violently, according to the texts from them that remain for us to consult. They lay into Plato violently, and I am asking you, in all the examples that I am going to provide, to keep in the back of your mind that this perhaps, in some ways, not exclusively, is going to culminate, all the examples that I provide, culminate with Spinoza.

So, a first example, the Stoics. The Stoics are not the Greeks; they are at the edge (*pourtour*) of the Greek world. At heart, we could always revise this and say that it's going to be very important. They are on the contours of the Greek world. And this Greek world has changed a lot; literally, it had so fully collapsed under the theme of rivalry of the determined cities as there had been in Alexander's dream. So, there had been the problem of the Greek world, how to develop the Greek world. Fine, this was something else for the Greeks than how to create Europe. You know, that involved so many things; you cannot understand Aristotle, or you cannot understand the Neo-Platonists if you don't have at least some vague ideas about everything going on historically at that time.

And here we have these Stoics who are hardly Greeks, who are half barbarian, half Greek, who are really strange people, that are attacking Plato, and starting from what? However, it's not that Plato was lacking for ideas that had already come from the Orient; these were not the same ones, we must believe, or else there is a new Oriental current. There's a great German author who wrote a book that was a marvel, named *La Grèce entre les bras de l'Orient* [Greece in the Arms of the Orient][68] to designate this era precisely, this era that begins with Stoicism, the ancient

Stoicism – this is a lovely title, *La Grèce entre les bras de l'Orient* – well, these non-Greek Greeks, these Stoics, what do they say?

They say: well, this is strange, this is very strange how… with Plato and his Ideas, these are not what we need, these are not what we need, this is an indefensible conception. They say, in the end, the contour of something, what is it? The contour of something, it's non-being. In fact, the contour of something is the spot where the thing ceases to be. The contour of the square is not at all the spot where the square is located. You see that it's very strong as an objection. Great objections are always very simple. They take literally this Platonism that I've sketched out quite summarily, namely that the intelligible form is the form related to a spiritual touch (*tact*), that is, it's the shape related to the contour. Or else, the sculptor's experience. They will say as well, against Aristotle, but the example of the sculptor is completely artificial, the sculptor's mold. It's not natural! Nature never proceeds by molding. These [objections] seem quite simple, but what's strong is when one manages to say about someone: well yes, he chooses examples, but these examples are not relevant. If you want to know, the Stoics say, if you want to understand something about the problems of limits, one cannot choose the case of the sculptor since the sculptor's problem is a problem of pure artifice, notably of molding something else. In what case does nature proceed by way of molds? Nature doesn't proceed by way of mold, or else it would be necessary to count them. It's certainly only in superficial phenomena that nature proceeds by way of molds. These are so-called superficial phenomena precisely because they affect surfaces, but nature, in the depths (*en profondeur*), does not proceed by way of molds.

For example, when I have the joy of having a child who resembles me, I have not sent out a mold. [*Laughter*] Notice that biologists, until the eighteenth century, grasped onto the idea of the mold; there are biologists, I think, into the 18th century who insisted on the spermatozoon analogous to a mold; this is not very rational. On that point, [the Count] Buffon had great ideas – hey, this is getting me off track, but that doesn't matter -- Buffon said that if one wants to comprehend something of the production of living things, it would be necessary to work one's way up to the idea of an internal mold. Magnificent! Buffon's concept of an "internal mold" could be useful to us. An internal mold means what? He says, obviously – here, I am citing Buffon nearly word for word, he had a great idea -- it's awkward because one could just as well speak of a massive surface. He says that the internal mold is a contradictory concept. There are cases in which one is obliged to think by means of a contradictory concept. The mold, by definition, is external. It concerns surfaces. One does not mold the interior. If you mold the interior, that means you have placed the interior outside.[69]

So, fine, then, this is to say that already for the living thing, the theme of the mold does not work. Nevertheless, there is a limit to the living thing. The Stoics are in the process of grasping onto something very strong: life does not proceed by molding. Aristotle chose artificial examples. And on Plato, they let loose even more brutally. The Stoics say, well, you understand, what is all this about the idea of the square, as if it were unimportant that the square was made of wood, or of marble, or of whatever you like? But this matters a lot. This just an awful thing, the Stoics say. When one defines a shape by its contours, at that very moment, everything that happens inside is just the same. This is how, the Stoics say, Plato was able to abstract the pure idea. They are denouncing a kind of sleight-of-hand (*tour de passe-passe*). So, this is quite unfair regarding Plato, obviously.

What interests me isn't whether this is or isn't fair to Plato; what interests me is: what do they have to say? And what the Stoics are saying stops being simple. Understand? They are in the process of creating for themselves a totally different image of the limit. And in fact, what is their example that they opposed to Aristotle's sculptor, that is, to the exterior mold, to the optical-tactile shape? They will oppose problems of vitality; what kinds of problems of vitality? Where does action stop? Hey, this isn't "where does the form stop?" Answer: At the contour. Fine, form stops at the contour. With this, there's no contradiction. But saying that holds no interest. It's of no interest because the question is not at all where a form stops, because this is already an abstract and artificial question. The true question is: where does an action stop? And there, you aren't going to be able to designate contours. What does that mean?

There's a very lovely text. Second practical exercise: Does everything have a contour? Bibliography for the practical exercise: a great contemporary American author named [Gregory] Bateson wrote a book in two volumes, recently translated into French, a book titled *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* in which there's an admirable text on the language of dolphins and all sorts of other things at once entertaining and instructive. Bateson, who is a genius, a very great man, has written a very amusing text that is called "Why do things have outlines?" He gives examples; he talks to his daughter who is not terribly clever. [*Laughter*] He says, well then yes, you see, we are speaking right at this moment, so does our conversation have an outline [contour]?

This is interesting because when your professor used to scold you, back when you still did your homework – but this will return! – when you did your homework, your essays, when a professor scolded you for getting off the topic – "off the topic" (*hors du sujet*), let's take the expression literally, "outside the subject" -- does that mean that the topic or subject has a contour? Perhaps. Otherwise would that mean "outside the limits"? Is this spatial? At first glance, it seems spatial. But is it the same space? Do "outside the limits" and "outside the contour" belong to the same space? Does the conversation have a contour? Does my course today have a contour? My reply is yes, it has a contour. One can touch it. Fine, we've gotten a bit into this problem: does every pictorial form have an outline? It's not certain.

So, let's return to these Stoics. I'm dropping Bateson; you see, it was a problem: what are the different senses of "outside the subject"? This is our second practical exercise. So, for next week, you must turn in two practical exercises. [*Laughter*] Don't forget! And draw the contour of a conversation. You'll see if you need a firm line or not. So, fine, what's their favorite example? It's how far does the action of a seed go? That's good, that's really good! A seed has a limit, but what is its limit? Still, no shape? Yes, a seed indeed has a contour, but that's not at all what's in question. No doubt, there would be two limits? I can certainly follow the seed's contour with my finger, but what will I have understood about the seed? When I then learn that a sunflower seed lost in a wall is capable of blowing out that wall, ah, the sunflower seed can make a wall explode, something having such a small contour. How far does the sunflower seed go, does that mean how far does its surface go? No, the Stoics say, the surface is where the seed ends. In their theory of the statement (*énoncé*), they will say that the surface states exactly what the seed is not, that is, where the seed is no longer, but about what the seed is, that tells us nothing.

So, they are very forceful as far as Plato is concerned. They show up and, about Plato, they say that, with his theory of ideas, he tells us very well what things are not, but he tells us nothing

about what things are. The Stoics cry out triumphantly: things are bodies, bodies and not ideas. Things are bodies, which means what? That means that things are actions, and the limit of something is the limit of its action, and not the contour of its shape.

An even simpler example: you are walking in the forest, eh? You're walking in the dense forest, in other words, in the powerful forest, and you're afraid, and at last, you move onward, and little by little the forest thins out. You are pleased, and you reach a spot, and you say, "whew, here's the edge." The edge of the forest is a limit. If that's a limit, then fine, ok. Does this mean that the forest is defined by its contour? It's a limit of what? Is it a limit to the form of the forest? One can say this. It's not that one cannot say it, one can say it, but that's a kind of limit that is poorly defined as limit of the form of the forest. In fact, what is it? It's a limit to the action of the forest, that is, the forest that had so much power of action reaches the limit of its power of action; it can no longer bite into the terrain, as it's thinning out. It's thinning out, and what reveals that this is not a contour is the fact that we cannot even specify the precise moment at which there is no more forest. Were you already inside the undergrowth? How did you pass from the forest into the undergrowth, and from the undergrowth into the thicket, all that? I mean, really, I don't need to force myself much to say: there was a tendency, and this time, the limit is not separable, a kind of tension towards the limit.

This is a dynamic limit that is opposed to a contour-limit. The thing has no other limit than the limit of its power of action or of its action. The thing is thus power of action and not form. The forest is not defined by a form; it is defined by a power of action: power of action to create the trees all the way to the moment when it can no longer do so. Hence, the question that I have for the forest is not: what is your shape and what are your contours? The only question that I have for the forest is: what is your power of action? That is, how far will you go?

That is what the Stoics discover and what authorizes them to say: everything is a body. Understand, when they say that everything is a body, they don't simply mean that all things are sensible, because they would not escape from the Platonist point of view. If they were to define the sensible thing by form and contour, that would hold no interest. But when they say that everything is a body, what do they mean? They mean something quite simple. A circle does not extend into space, does not extend, there's always tension. A circle does not extend in space if it's made of wood or of marble. A circle does not extend into space in the same way. Moreover, "everything is a body" will signify that a red circle and a blue circle do not extend into space in the same way, something that all painters and even more than painters know quite well.

So, this is tension, and then they are going to define – this is a stroke of genius – the ancient Stoics are going to define things in what way? When they say that all things are bodies, they mean that all things are defined not by form or contour, but in their language, through *tonos*, *tonos,* that is, the kind of contracted effort that defines the thing. If you don't find the contraction, the contracted force, the embryonic force that is in the thing, if you don't find the thing, you have no understanding (*ne connaissez pas*) of the thing, what Spinoza takes up again long after with the expression "what can a body do?" "What can a body do?" Here we have the first example, simply to have you sense that the notion of limit completely changes its meaning.

Second example. Here I've considered it, but it's still part of my concern for preparing us for the second semester in what we undertake on painting.[70] After the Stoics, at the beginning of Christianity, and yet not necessarily in Christian authors, toward the second or third century CE, a quite extraordinary type of philosophy develops, certainly extremely new, which is also in the new Greek world, called the Neo-Platonist school. The prefix "neo", of Neo-Platonist, is particularly well founded because, of course, it's by basing themselves on texts, and notably, I assume, texts to which Comtesse referred, it's by basing themselves on some extremely important texts by Plato that the Neo-Platonists will completely decenter all of Platonism. As a result, in a certain sense, one could say that all of it was already in Plato. Only it was as if taken into an aggregate that was not Plato's.

One of the greatest Platonists was Plotinus. And from Plotinus has been gathered a kind of great course-book, quite admirable, called and named *The Enneads.* So, I am advising you, for those that this might interest, to browse randomly, without knowing anything about Plotinus, this admirable text from the point of view that concerns us, which is *The Enneads* IV, book five, book five of the fourth *Ennead*. You will see a kind of prodigious course or discourse or poetic meditation on what? On light, on light, an admirable text, a prodigious text in which Plotinus will try to show that light can be comprehended neither as a function of the emitting body, nor as a function of the receiving body. And his problem is that light belongs to these odd things that, for Plotinus, are going to be the true ideal things. – Here there is a kind of very, very astonishing short-circuiting of Plato – Light belongs to these ideal things that are recognized in this way: one can no longer say that it begins here, and it ends there. Where does a light end? What a story! This is a prodigious text.

You'll ask me, why couldn't one create the same text three centuries earlier? Ah, we don't know anything about this; if we don't understand anything about these things, we still understand everything, I believe, about the thought and the movement of thought. Why did these meditations on pure light appear in the so-called Alexandrine world? I am saying that it's kind of a manifesto, we could call it a manifesto for a pure optical world. Light has no tactile limit, and nevertheless there is certainly a limit, a very special limit, but this is not at all a limit such that I could say it begins here and it ends there. No, I couldn't say that. In other words, light goes as far as its power of action goes.

In other words, Plotinus is at once hostile to the Stoics; he calls himself a Platonist. But sense the kind of reversal (*retournement*) of Platonism that he is in the process of creating. I believe that it's with Plotinus that a pure optical world begins in philosophy. Idealities will no longer be only optical, that is, they will be luminous, without any tactile reference. Henceforth, the optical limit is of a completely different nature. Light scours the shadows. Does shadow form part of light? Yes, it forms a part of light, and you will have a light-shadow gradation or a shadow-light gradation that will develop space. And what are they in the process of finding? That deeper than space, there is spatialization, that space is never… [*Deleuze does not finish this*] and that, Plato didn't know (*savait*).

On this point, when this idea imposes itself, of a spatialization deeper than space, we can always start to reread Plato and say, but yes, [*Deleuze laughs*] but yes, there are a thousand texts by Plato that prepared this. But this is where I always invoke the need for tact in philosophy. If you

say it's already in Plato, you deprive yourself of a lot of joy, and then you are led... one step further and you make huge mistakes. It's in Plato, but virtually. There are Plato texts on light, okay, okay. You find everything you want; it's up to you to possess a kind of art of nuances.

That still doesn't prevent then, if you read Plato's texts on light, for example, the end of book six of *The Republic*, and set it next to Plotinus 's texts that I cited for you, from the fourth *Ennead*, if you read them side by side, you see that, you immediately understand, you don't know why, but you immediately accept the idea that several centuries had to pass between one text and the other, that it's not the same world. You know it for certain before knowing why, that the manner in which Plotinus extracts the texts from Plato, and thus he develops for himself a theme of pure light, could not be Platonist because, once again, Plato's Greek world – here, I am saying this in order to summarize, to be more precise – was not a world that was optical, but a tactile-optical world, whereas the discovery of a pure light and of the sufficiency of light to constitute a world implies that, beneath space, one has discovered the phenomenon of spatialization. This is not a Platonist idea, spatialization of space, or one can find seeds of it in the *Timeus*, but you will see that it's not… No.

Space grasped as the product of an expansion, that is, space is second in relation to expansion and not first, space is the result of an expansion; that's a bizarre idea that, in my view, even one could say, for a classical Greek, would have been incomprehensible. What does an expansion mean, one that does not already presuppose a space? It's not easy as an idea. Lots of things would be necessary to be discovered, to occur, starting with a deepening of Pythagorism, with the idea of…, with all sorts of Oriental influences. It's an idea that comes from the Orient. I don't know why I say that; I am not risking much in being wrong. That just feels like the Orient, that light could be spatializing. It's not light that is in space, it's light that constitutes space. This is not a Greek idea. You know, everything starts… this, one feels that… They say, ah yes, well no, that's not an idea from around here; that thing comes from somewhere else. You have to read some philosophy; you have to be very sensitive to these kinds of things. Fine.

Here's a third example, after the Stoics and the Greeks, several centuries later. And there explodes – here I'm going quickly because it's like a confirmation – there explodes, what explodes? A tremendously important art form explodes, namely, art called Byzantine art. It's a problem for art critics to discover how Byzantine art remains linked to classical Greek art while at the same time, from another point of view, it breaks completely with classical Greek art. If I take the analyses of one of the best critics in this regard, an Austrian author, I believe, [Alois] Riegl, he says something extremely rigorous, as one of the best specialists on Byzantine art.

He says – but you understand, in Greek art, of course, it's already quite complicated, but in general, it's mostly in general that I am saying, it's in order to give you some reference points -- you have the primacy of the foreground (*avant-plan*). The great difference between Greek art and Egyptian art is that, in Greek art, the distinction is made between the foreground and the background (*arrière-plan*), while in Egyptian art, broadly speaking, the two planes are on the same plane, for example, all Egyptian bas-relief. – What I am saying is quite a summary, as I am summarizing from Riegl's viewpoint. – He says, fine, a shift occurs in Greek art: it's the Greek temple, it's the advent, says Riegl with a very enjoyable phrase, it's the advent of the cube. – It's the advent [*Deleuze hesitates, having trouble speaking*] It's just that I can't because my throat is

hoarse; alas, I just can't – It's the advent of the cube, the cube, six sides, whereas for the Egyptians, what was it? It was the pyramid, and the pyramid has plane surfaces, you see? Wherever you set yourself, you are always on a plane surface. It's disturbing. With the pyramid, it's diabolical because this is a way of hiding the volume. Very strange! Clearly, they cram the volume into a little cube which is the funerary chamber, and they set up plane surfaces, isosceles triangles, to hide the cube. The Egyptians are ashamed of the cube. The cube is the enemy, it's the dark, the obscure, it's the tactile. So, they do that; it's on the same plane.

The Greeks invent an amazing thing: they invent the cube. They aren't ashamed of the cube. They make cubical temples, that is, they displace the foreground and the background. But, Riegl says, fine, look closely at all Greek works: there is a primacy of the foreground, and the primacy of the foreground is linked to the form because it's the form that has contour. Fine, the primacy of the foreground, primacy of the form, the relation of form with contour, all this is unified. It's for this reason that he will define the Greek world as a tactile-optical world. [*Pause*] Do you follow?

So, here, with the Byzantines, it's quite odd. Look at the mosaics; they get nested (*nichent*), they're moved into niches; they get moved back. It's really funny! And space? As is said, there is no depth in Byzantine art, but why is there no depth in Byzantine art? For a very simple reason, it's that depth is between me and the image. One of the dramas of Byzantine art is a modern drama, specifically that because of the camera, yet again, everything comes from the misdeeds of the photo: the mosaics get photographed, that is, they are shot from only ten centimeters [four feet], and this is shameful! It's shameful! The photographers should be killed since, by definition, this is backwards, it's backward, since all of Byzantine depth is the space between the spectator and the mosaic. If you suppress this space, it's as if, I don't know, it's like you were to look at a painting outside of any condition of perception. It's hideous.

Fine, you understand, in other words, the Byzantines, seemingly innocent, unleash an enormous strongarm move, notably they privilege the background, and the entire shape will emerge from the background. The whole image will emerge from the background. But, at that very moment, as if by chance, the formula of the shape or the image is no longer form-contour. Form-contour was for Greek sculpture. It's no longer form-contour. And nevertheless, there is indeed a limit, and still, you will tell me, there are even contours, even in mosaics; these are very sharp contours, but this is not what acts, that's not what's interesting. The work no longer acts that way, whereas in Greek statuary, it's indeed the contour that acts, the contour insofar as it captures the light. But there, that's not at all what happens in Byzantine mosaic; it's no longer form-contour. What am I saying it is? It's light-color, that is, what defines, in the proper sense of "to define," notably, what marks the limits of something – to define is to mark limits; a definition is an indication of a limit – what defines the Byzantine shape is no longer form-contour, but rather the couple light-color, that is, that the shape continues all the way to where the light goes that it captures or emits, and all the way to where color goes, the color of which [the shape is] composed. Hence, in fact, the effect on the spectator is prodigious, namely, that a black eye goes exactly into where this blackness radiates. Hence the impression of these shapes in which the face is consumed by the eyes.

In other words, there is no longer a contour of the shape; there is an expansion of light-color, and the shape will go all the way to where it acts, through light and through color. I can say: it's the reversal of the Greek world. I can say both at the same time. But yes, that comes out of the Greek world. Only, what the Greeks weren't able to do, or what they hadn't even considered doing, was this liberation of light and color. It's with Byzantine art, as everyone says or as Riegl says, it's with Byzantine art that color and light are liberated in relation to space. Why? Because what they discover is that light and color are spatializing. Thus, art must not be an art of space, it must be an art of the spatialization of space. [*Pause*] So, I would say that, if you will, this is an idea that goes without saying: between Byzantine art from the point of view of mosaic painting, for example, and architecture as well, and the slightly earlier texts on light by Plotinus, there is an obvious resonance. What is affirmed is the same conception of the limit.

The final example that I would like to work through quickly. What does it mean, this story about… I mean, now, there are two sorts of limits. I could multiply my oppositions between limit-limit. [First] there is a contour-limit and there is a tension-limit; second, there is a space-limit, and there is a spatialization-limit; [*End of Web Deleuze transcript and translation*] there's a contour-limit, yes again, and a light-color limit; there is a state (*état*) limit, there is a *terminus* limit, a tension-limit. So, what interests me, in one sense, is not at all the comments by contemporary mathematicians, for example, about the mathematical nonsense that the expression "tending toward a limit" would represent today. The only thing that would interest me, rather, in modern mathematicians is what their own concepts are, what their positive concepts are. But regarding the past, what interests me is in what way the idea of tending toward a limit is truly founded on all sorts of experiences, experiences of thought, aesthetic experiences that completely changed [*End of Paris 8 transcript,* 93:05] both the conception of the individual and of form and light… and color, etc. etc.

And to state this even more briefly, I am selecting a last example here that I've used for other things, in other seminar years. I am saying, let's oppose, to be quite simple, yes, we have to… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:33:27]

Part 3

… How do men operate distributions? Men operate distributions by dividing a space. So, for example, in a large square, they make small squares; this is called the cadaster. This square is yours, this one is mine, etc. Okay, you see? We divide a space. I would say, it's a contour-limit conception. There is more: where my square ends, and where yours starts, we will put down a marker (*borne*). How does one say "marker" in Latin? It's obviously -- you can invent it yourself; you don't have to look it up in the dictionary – "marker" can only be said *terminus*. This is the conception of the contour-limit. [*Pause*]

But what do cows do in relation to space? They do much better than that. Notice, the two conceptions overlap. You take a meadow, eh? It doesn't matter if it's bounded or not. It can be bounded; in that case, it's closed off, contour-limit. But it can have, it can even have a limit of another type, that is, it is a clearing meadow (*prairie clairière*). It's not closed off, therefore, but the further we go, the more the forest begins. So, it's a meadow that tends towards the forest

limit, without us being able to say, oh well, it's forest or it's not anymore, it's the meadow. You see? This is a dynamic conception of the limit.

So, well, cows, how... Cows know, and so do farmers, that a meadow cannot feed just any number of cows whatsoever. This is even what we call natural selection. There are always animals that die if there are too many compared to the milieu. How are the animals, the cows going to manage? The cows don't create small squares in the meadow, saying this is my square, that one's yours. How do they manage? Instead of distributing space, they distribute themselves in space. What does this mean? It doesn't exclude hierarchical relations. Notice, there is the chief cow; there is the more prestigious cow, the one that [reserves] the best…, I can no longer say, square, the best zone, a cow zone.

What will the cow zone be? It's the point to which the cow can go in its daily appetite, that is, the grassy area that it can graze with its rough tongue, eh? I am fully within a Stoic example. This is a funny limit. There is no barrier there. The appetite limit of a cow, you cannot say that it starts with a particular blade of grass and ends with another particular blade of grass. It's a limit of power of action (*puissance*). And one way or another, the cows work it out. You know from empirical science that it takes so much land to feed a cow. So, if you are a good farmer, you are not going to put twenty cows on a plot of land that could only feed ten because there will be ten that are likely to die, especially the small calves which… -- But, at this idea, our hearts start aching, [*Laughter*] the little calves that are dying -- fine, so you're going to put ten cows more or less onto a terrain for ten cows, but you're not going to give each cow a square. It's not the contour-limit; it's the power of action limit. Cows will distribute themselves according to their relations, including their hierarchical relations, in such a way that, over a particular space of time, the whole of the meadow is grazed, in a dynamic way. And there will be territories, but territories that will not be marked by barriers.

What is an animal's territory? It is up to where its power of action reaches. And what is it that's called ethology, ethology, which is just a synonym for ethics? It's the science of powers of action and limits in this second sense. And what is the ethical cry? "What can a body do?" Always the same thing: what is it capable of doing? It's: what it is capable of, what is its power of action? How will we see its power of action? Through the limit, in the dynamic sense. However, once again, the contour-limit lets us completely escape the dynamic limit. The dynamic limit is spatializing whereas the contour-limit supposes a ready-made space, a measured space. You follow me?

So, finally, because we can't take it anymore, any questions on all this? It's very simple. I would like you to feel something that's happening, in short, something very important, when the limit was no longer conceived of, you understand, even politically, because it poses, in fact, political problems with the conception, at that time, of territories. Territories are dynamic expressions and no longer geometric contours. It is no longer the geometer or surveyor who becomes the master of things; the surveyor is no longer anything at all. It's no longer a question of surveying. No. Geometry must be surpassed by a much deeper dynamic. We're not far from the Renaissance world. Even the regime of violence changes completely because think of what the Greeks called violence. What the classical Greeks called violence is violating the limits. In what way, violating limits? Violating limits as they understand them, violating the contour-limits. They say it very

well: everyone has their share (*lot*). Whether he likes it or not, everyone has their share. If someone violate the limits of his share, that is, of his property, that's no longer permitted. This is where the gods will drive them crazy. But then, the conception changes singularly.

So, think about this. Well, you can do the practical exercises, I think, three practical exercises for next week: what is a border? [*Pause*] What is a border? Is this the limit in the sense of contour, or is it the dynamic limit? It depends on the times, it depends on the location, it depends on history, it depends on geography, it depends on a thousand things.

So, let's go back to Spinoza a little bit more strongly. Why does Spinoza... There are points on which -- I'm going quickly before finishing -- because there are points on which Spinoza, there is not even a problem, he inherits from all that. Spinoza has a lot to do with Stoicism instead... There is also an absolute criticism of Ideas, with a capital I, separate Ideas. There is a famous Spinoza expression that is always quoted, but very often it's quoted separated from its context. And it's a shame because when we see the context, we are completely interested. This is the formula, "all determination is negation"; in Latin, *omnis determinatio negatio est*, all determination is negation. But what does that mean? You find this text [in] letter 50, letter 50, to a gentleman named [Jarig] Jelles [*Deleuze spells it*], and Spinoza explains this very well. This concerns the contour of shapes, explicitly. He says, "the contour determines the shape," okay. Okay, the contour is the determination of the figure. But at the same time, the contour tells us what the shape is not because [the contour] designates the place where the shape is no longer. So, the contour is indeed determination, but it is a negative determination; all determination is a negation. It is about the contour-limit that, explicitly, Spinoza offers an expression that will be celebrated.

In other words, I can already conclude from this, if I am honest, by reading this text, that a problem remains: if there is a determination which is not a contour, is that one also a negation? If Spinoza doesn't want to call it determination, what will he call it? Okay, so there is a problem. So, when he tells us that, Spinoza tells us, all right, shapes are beings of reason, that is, shapes are abstracts. A shape is an abstraction, and he makes his great criticism of the geometric shape. And yet, he employs a geometric method. It's weird! Few authors have gone as far as he did in criticizing geometric shape, and yet he employs a geometric method. What is happening? In geometry, would there be anything other than shape and contour? Yes, Spinoza tells us, there is something else. As long as I consider shape and contour, I am within a pure and simple abstraction. And, he tells us, nothing in nature is created through shape and contour, exactly as I told you earlier, nothing is created by molding. He says, we've never seen, we've never seen a circle be created in nature geometrically. There are many things that become round, and that's what's interesting. They become round, but they do not become round with a compass.

So, what else is there? It is therefore a critique of any conception of the abstract idea. He tells us, well here, consider, there are two definitions of the circle. He invites us to ponder fully the difference between these two definitions. The definition of the circle is the locus of the points situated equidistant from the same point called the center. Immediately, you see, I define the circle by its contour; the locus of the points situated at equal distance from the same point called center, this is what I would call a circular contour. The shape is defined, the shape of the circle is defined by its contour. He told us, there is nothing to be gained from this definition, and when

the surveyors derive something from a definition of the circle, it's because they have given the circle, implicitly or not, another definition. What is this other definition? It is a produced shape, a produced shape, in other words, it's a definition by the reason of production, or what is called in geometry a "genetic definition". Think of the seed for the Stoics. The seed must be subject to a genetic definition.

The circle also must be subject to a genetic definition. We will define the circle as the shape produced by a line segment rotating around one of its extremities. In this way, you generate a circle, and it does not matter that nature does not generate circles in this way because at least you have linked the circle to a power of action which, in this case, is not that of nature but the power of action of your mind. You can produce a circle with this definition, while the other definition gives you no way to produce a circle, that is, how to maintain the locus, the locus common to the points. Only the other definition gives you a means of production, a rule for production. So, it gives you a genetic reason for the circle. This is a genetic definition. You will say that the circle has a power of action. The circle is no longer defined by a shape. It is defined as a power of action. The genetic rule is the power of action to produce a circle, and the circle will go where that power of action goes. The circle will be defined by an internal power of action, no longer by an external contour. At that point, and under this condition, the geometric method can tell us something real.

Well, then, I reconnect with what I just said: the paradoxical notion of differential relations, dy/dx equals 0/0, gave us the idea of a limit no longer in the sense of contour, but in the sense of what tends towards x and y when they disappear. 0/0 is not at all equal to zero because, in fact, it defines the limit towards which x and y tend when x becomes dx and y becomes dy, that is, when x and y become smaller, getting smaller than any assignable quantity. This is exactly the relation, at the level of the senses. This is exactly the forest-edge relation; this is exactly the light-spatialization relation. [*Pause*]

So, it is in this perspective that we find a confirmation of a kind of, in the 17th century, of return -- I am not at all saying that it was the same with the Alexandrians, with the Neo-Platonists -- but a return of an attempt for a pure optical space, a kind of thing with light, but there, precisely, light and power of action are so identified… Up to where does something's power of action reach? Up to where does something's light reach?

Good, at that point, you see that infinitesimal analysis as interpreted by the 17th century, once again, I would say, it should not even be privileged. That's why we don't care about knowing if, mathematically, it's entirely correct (*au point*) because the question makes no sense. The interpretation they give of infinitesimal analysis, this is to mathematics what the painting of the 17th [century] is to the painting of light, where contour no longer acts, is no longer present as a tactile contour of the thing, even virtual as tactile contour, virtual In Rembrandt, for example, in the Dutch [painters], this is not at all a tactile contour, even virtual. This is a limit in a whole different sense when you talk about the limit of shadows and lights. Okay, this is a zone and not a contour at all; it's an art of zone. It tends towards a limit; so, there is a tension-limit which is opposed point by point to the contour-limit. This is the world of the 17th century.

[It] would then remain for me to say finally one last point. I only commented today on how the individual is a relation and what kind of relation. It was the relation-infinity link, and second, how [the individual] is power of action, and that was the other link, power of action-[limit; *Deleuze coughs while saying this word*], and the two are absolutely related. If I take my first group of notions, relations and infinity, and my second group of notions, power of action-limit, notice that they are absolutely linked since, once again, the limit is limit of the relation. So, you go from one to the other continuously.

Finally, I have a third point; it is by virtue of this [*group 1*] that mode is relation and not end (*terme*), by virtue of that [*group 2*] that mode is power of action and not contour, the individual will be designated, in addition, intrinsic mode. Intrinsic mode, what does that mean? I would like you to think about it -- there, I am stopping -- I would like you to think about it from an example that, the next time, I will start with in order to comment on this notion of intrinsic mode. The author of this notion [is] a great theological philosopher whose name is Duns Scotus [*Deleuze spells it*]. A text by Duns Scotus says, here we are: "White light ... White light can be more or less intense, but more or less intense light does not mean more or less light. Light is light; only it is identically and similarly light, but it is so in many ways. These are the intrinsic modes of light." [*Pause*] Why do I want to start off from this text? Because there is a very curious text from Spinoza's youth in which Spinoza says: "If the wall is all white, what happens? If the wall is all white, what can we distinguish on it?" There are only two possible answers: either you can't distinguish anything, or you can distinguish something. Let's take the example, let's take the other case: the light is not only all white on the wall, but with charcoal, I've drawn a little guy, two little guys. I would say, the light is not only all white; I've added two drawings to it, I made two drawings on the wall; I distinguish one drawing from the other.

Let's not try to complicate it too much here; how do I distinguish them? By the contour. How would I call this distinction of the two drawings by the contour? I would say, it's an extrinsic distinction. One little guy is outside the other because, finally, if I have diabolically mixed the two men by hand, already I will have trouble: can I distinguish them? Can I not distinguish them? There we are. I have my two limit situations: my white wall, no drawings; my wall with two distinct little guys, extrinsic distinction. Can I introduce distinctions that would not be extrinsic onto the white wall? Fourth practical exercise, fifth… seventh practical exercise. So, we will go on from there next time. Here, I am stopping because we are all ill. [*End of the session*] [1: 58: 18]

Notes, 61-70: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 12, 10 March 1981

Transcription (for Paris 8): Part 1, Laurence Ponsard (duration = 31:11); Part 2 (duration 46:46), 3 (duration 46:53), 4 (15:16), Fatemeh Malekahmadi; Augmented Transcription by Charles J. Stivale (duration: 118:18)

Translated by Charles J. Stivale

Part 1

This week and next week, I'll still be speaking about Spinoza, and then it's done… Unless you have questions to ask, which I would greatly appreciate.[71]

So, here we are. My dream would be that this conception of individuality might be very clear to you, such as we have been attempting to distinguish it in Spinoza's philosophy. Because, in the end, it seems to me that this is one of the most novel elements of Spinozism. This is the way in which the individual as such is going to be brought, related, linked within Being. And, in order to try to render comprehensible this conception of individuality that seems to me so innovative in Spinoza, I always return to the theme: it's as if an individual, any individual at all, has three strata, as if it is composed of three strata. And I am saying that we've reached a point at least within the first dimension, within the individual's first stratum: we say, well yes, every individual has an infinity of extensible parts. That's the first point. An infinity of extensible parts, in other words, there is no individual other than composed.

A simple individual, I believe that for Spinoza, this is a meaningless notion. Each individual as such is made up of an infinity of parts. So, if I try to summarize very quickly, because this is, once again, where we had made a bit of progress, if I try to summarize very quickly: what does that mean, this idea that the individual is composed of an infinity of parts? What are these parts? Once again, this is what Spinoza calls the simplest bodies. Each body is composed of an infinity of very simple bodies. But what are very simple bodies? We had arrived at a fairly precise status: they are not atoms, that is, finite bodies, and they are not indefinites either. Then what is it? And here Spinoza belongs to the 17th century.

Once again, what seems really striking to me, in any case, what really strikes me about 17th century thought, is the impossibility of grasping this thought if one does not take into account of one of the richest notions at that time, which is a concept that's at once metaphysical, physical, mathematical etc., the notion of the actual infinite. However, the actual infinite is neither finite nor indefinite. The finite means, above all, if you will, it refers to, if I look for the formulation of the finite, it's this: there is a moment when you have to stop. That is, when you are analyzing

something, there will always be a moment when you will have to stop, but about which and for a long time, this moment of the finite, this fundamental moment of the finite which marks the need to stop at finite terms, that's all that inspired atomism ever since Epicurus, since Lucretius. Analysis encounters a limit; this limit is the atom. And the atom is subject to a finite analysis. The indefinite is as far as you go, you will not be able to stop. That is, no matter how far you carry the analysis, the term you arrive at can always be in turn divided and analyzed. So, there will never be a final term, the point of view of the actual infinite, it seems to me, for which we have completely lost the meaning.

And we lost the meaning, we lost that meaning, for a thousand reasons, I suppose, among others for scientific reasons, all that. But what matters to me is not why we lost this meaning; it's as if I were able to restore some of it in front of you so that you might understand the manner in which these thinkers were thinking. Because really, this is fundamental in their thinking. Once again, if I consider that Pascal writes some very representative texts of the 17th century, these are essentially the texts on man in relation to the infinite. These people are ones who really think naturally, philosophically, in terms of the actual infinite.

And this idea of an actual infinite, that is, neither finite nor indefinite, what does that come down to saying? It comes down to telling us: there are final terms, there are ultimate terms – see, that's counter to the indefinite – this isn't indefinite since there are ultimate terms, only these ultimate terms are endless (*à l'infini*). So, this is not an atom. It is neither the finite nor the indefinite. The infinite is actual; the infinite is in action (*en acte*). In fact, if you will, the indefinite is infinite but virtual, specifically you can always go further. Here, that's not it. They are telling us, there are final terms, the simplest bodies for Spinoza. These are indeed ultimate terms; these are indeed terms final, that you can no longer divide. Only these terms are infinitely minute. They are infinitely minute. That's what the actual infinite is.

Notice that this is a struggle against two fronts, both against finitism and against the indefinite. What does that mean? There are ultimate terms, but they are not atoms since they are infinitely minute, or as was said, or as Newton will say, they are vanishing (*évanouissants*), vanishing terms, in other words, smaller than any given quantity. What does that imply? But infinitely minute terms, you can't deal with them one by one. Here as well, this is nonsense. To speak of an infinitely minute term that I would consider singularly makes no sense. The infinitely minute can only be managed through infinite collection. So, there are infinite collections of the infinitely minute. Spinoza's simple bodies do not exist one by one. They exist collectively, not in distributed fashion. They exist by infinite sets, and I cannot speak of a simple body; I can only speak of an infinite set of simple bodies. As a result, an individual is not a simple body; an individual, whatever it is and however small it is, has an infinity of simple bodies. An individual has an infinite collection of infinitely minute [parts].

Fine, despite all the strength of [Martial] Gueroult's comment on Spinoza, that's why I cannot understand how Gueroult poses the question of knowing whether simple bodies in Spinoza would not have a shape (*figure*) and a magnitude (*grandeur*). It is obvious that if the simple bodies are infinitely minute, that is, so-called vanishing quantities, they have neither shape nor

magnitude for a simple reason: it's because that has no meaning. Something infinitely minute has neither shape nor magnitude; an atom, yes, has a shape and a magnitude. But an infinitely minute term by definition cannot have either shape or magnitude. It's smaller than any given magnitude.

So, what are shape and magnitude? What has shape and magnitude, and there, the answer becomes very simple. What has shape and magnitude is a collection; it's a collection, itself infinite, of things infinitely minute, yes indeed. The infinite collection of infinitely minute things has shape and magnitude. As a result, we come up against this problem: yes, but where does this shape and this magnitude come from? I mean, if the simple bodies are all infinitely minute, what makes it possible to distinguish certain infinite collections of infinitely minute things and certain other infinite collections of infinitely minute things? From the point of view of the actual infinite, how can we make distinctions through actual infinities? Or else, is there only one collection, a single collection of all possible infinities? Spinoza is very firm here; he tells us: to each individual corresponds an infinite collection of very simple bodies. Each individual is composed of an infinity of very simple bodies. So, I must have the means to recognize the collection of the infinitely minute things that corresponds to this particular individual and the one corresponding to that different individual. How will it occur?

Before we get to that question, let's try to see what these infinitely minute things are. They therefore enter into infinite collections, and I believe that, in this, the 17th century grasped something that mathematics, by entirely different means, different processes -- and I don't want to make arbitrary comparisons -- that modern mathematics will rediscover with quite different methods, namely a theory of infinite sets. The infinitely minute enter into infinite sets, and these infinite sets are not equal, that is, there are distinctions between infinite sets. And whether it's Leibniz, whether it's Spinoza, the whole second half of the 17th century is imbued with this idea of the actual infinite, the actual infinite that consists of these infinite sets of infinitely minute things. But then, these vanishing terms, these infinitely minute terms, what are their proofs? What are they like? What… let's try, I don't know, I would like for all this to acquire a somewhat concrete form.

Obviously, they have no interiority. Infinitely minute terms, so fine... I am trying to state first what they are not before I state what they are. I mean, they have no interiority. They enter into infinite sets; the infinite set can have an interiority, but these extreme terms, infinitely minute terms, vanishing terms, have no interiority. What are they going to constitute? They will constitute a real matter (*matière*) of exteriority. They have with each other, simple bodies have with each other only strictly extrinsic relations, relations of exteriority. They form a kind of matter that will be called, following Spinoza's terminology, a modal matter, a modal matter of pure exteriority, that is, they react on each other; they have no interiority, they have only external relations with one another. [*Pause*]

But then, I always come back to my question: fine, but if they only show relations of exteriority, what makes it possible to distinguish an infinite set from another? Once again, all individuals, each individual -- I can say each individual since the individual is not the very simple body -- each individual in distributed manner has an infinite set of infinitely minute parts. Fine, these parts are actually given. But what distinguishes the set, my infinite set, the infinite set that returns to me and the infinite set that returns to my neighbor?

Hence -- and already we are then considering the second layer of individuality -- that amounts to asking: based on what aspect does an infinite set of very simple bodies belong to one individual or another? Based on what aspect? Obviously, I have an infinite set of infinitely minute parts there. But based on what aspect does this infinite set belong to me? Notice that I just barely changed the question because when I ask, "based on what aspect does the infinite whole belong to me?", this is another way of asking: "what will allow me to distinguish a particular infinite set from another infinite set?" Once again, at first glance, in the infinite everything should merge; it should be dark night or white light. How is it that I can distinguish infinities from each other? So, based on what aspect is an infinite set said to belong to me or to someone else?

The answer, Spinoza's answer, seems to me to be [that] an infinite set of infinitely minute parts belongs to me and not to the other insofar as this infinite set realizes a certain relation (*rapport*).[72] It is always based on a relation that the parts belong to me, to the point that if the parts that compose me take on a different relation, at that point, they no longer belong to me. They belong to another individuality; they belong to another body.

Hence the question: what is this relation? According to what relation of infinitely minute elements can they be said to belong to something? And if I answer the question, here I truly have, I truly have the answer I was looking for. I mean, I will have shown how, under what condition, an infinite set can be said to belong to a finite individuality. According to what relation can infinitely minute things belong to a finite individuality?

Well, if I respect the letter of Spinoza's texts, Spinoza's response is that this occurs according to a certain relation of movement and rest. But we were already there: a relation of movement and rest, we know that this does not at all mean -- and so here, it would be wrong to read the text too quickly -- that does not at mean a sum, as with Descartes. We've already seen that. The relation of movement and rest cannot be the Cartesian formula mv, mass-speed. Otherwise it wouldn't constitute a "relation." So, what defines the individual is a relation of movement of and rest because it is based on this relation that an infinity of infinitely minute parts belong to the individual. As a result, what is this relation of movement and rest that Spinoza invokes so much?

And here, I reintroduce a confrontation with Gueroult's commentary.[73] Gueroult offers an extremely interesting hypothesis. But there too, I don't understand why, I don't understand why he creates this hypothesis, but it's very interesting. He says, in the end, the relation of movement and rest is a vibration. It must be said that this is an answer that at once seems very odd to me because obviously the answer must be very precise. It's a vibration. What does this mean? That would mean, what defines the individual, at the level of his second layer, namely the relation based on which the parts belong to him, that infinitely minute parts belong to him, is a way of vibrating. Each individual – hey, that would be good; we can say that here, it's becoming concrete -- what would define you, me, is that we would have a manner of vibrating. Why not? Why not? What does that mean? Either it's a metaphor, or it means something. What is a vibration? What does a vibration refer to in physics? It refers to the simplest, to the well-known phenomenon of pendulums.

Here, it seems, Gueroult's hypothesis takes on a rather interesting meaning because, in the 17th century, physics greatly advanced the study of rotating bodies and pendulums, and in particular, founded a distinction between simple pendulums and the compound pendulums. So fine, at that point, you see that Gueroult's hypothesis would become this: each simple body is a simple pendulum, and the individual who has an infinity of simple bodies, it is a compound pendulum. We would all be compound pendulums -- that's fine -- or spinning discs. It's an interesting conception from each of us. What does that mean?

Well, indeed, how is a simple pendulum defined? It is defined -- if you vaguely remember memories of physics, but of very simple physics -- it is defined in a certain way by a time, a vibration time, an oscillation time. There is the famous formula, for those who remember it, there is the formula small t = pi root of l over g; little t is the duration of the oscillation; l, this is the length of the wire on which the pendulum is suspended; g, this is what in the 17th century is called the intensity of gravity; no matter. Fine.

And what is important is that in the formula, you see that a pendulum, a simple pendulum, has an oscillation time which is independent of the amplitude of the oscillation, that is, the distance between the point of equilibrium and the point where you move the rod from the pendulum. So, completely independent of the amplitude of the oscillation, independent of the mass of the pendulum, this responds well to the situation of an infinitely minute body, and independent of the weight of the wire. Weight of the wire, mass of the pendulum will only come into play from the point of view of the compound pendulum.

So, it seems that in a thousand respects, Gueroult's hypothesis works. So fine, it should be said that we have an answer. That's fine, a very good answer. Individuals for Spinoza would be kinds of compound pendulums, that is, each composed of an infinity of simple pendulums. And what would define an individual is a vibration. Good. So, at the same time -- I am saying with great freedom, loosely; I am developing this for those who would be technically interested in Spinoza; the others, you can retain what you want – at the same time, this is odd because this hypothesis attracts me, yet I don't know why, I don't see why, there is one thing that bothers me. It is true that the whole history of pendulums and rotating discs in the 17th century is very advanced. But precisely, if that's what Spinoza had meant, why wouldn't he make any reference to these problems of vibrations, even in his letters? And above all, above all, the pendulum model does not at all account in the end for what seems to me the essential matter, namely this presence of the actual infinite and infinitely minute terms.

You see, Gueroult's answer, as he is commenting on Spinoza, is [that] the relation of movement and rest must be understood as the vibration of the simple pendulum. There we are. I'm not at all saying that I'm right, truly I'm not. I'm saying: if it is true that very simple bodies, that's why Gueroult needs, to affirm, that very simple bodies nevertheless have in Spinoza a shape and a magnitude. Suppose on the contrary -- and I am not saying, I am not at all saying with this that I am right -- suppose that very simple bodies are really infinitely minute, that is, that they have no neither shape nor magnitude. At this point, the simple pendulum model cannot work, and it cannot be a vibration, which defines the relation of movement and rest.

On the other hand, we have another path. And then maybe you can find others, surely you can find others. The other path would be this – once again, I come back to my question --: between supposedly infinitely minute terms, what types of relations can there be? The answer is very simple: between infinitely minute terms, if we understand what infinitely minute meant in the 17th century, that is, which has no distributive existence, but which necessarily enters into an infinite collection, between infinitely minute terms, there can only be one type of relation, differential relations. Why? Infinitely minute terms are vanishing terms, that is, the only relations that infinitely minute terms can have with each other are relations that endure when the terms vanish.

A very simple question: what are relations like those that exist when their terms vanish? Let's do very, very simple math here. If I stay with the 17th century, I see a certain state of mathematics and what I am saying is very rudimentary. I see that what is well known in the 17th century is three types of relations: I would say, there are fractional relations, which have been known for a very long time; there are algebraic relations which are known, finally, which were anticipated well before, it goes without saying, but which received a very firm status in the 16th and 17th centuries, in the 17th [century] with Descartes, that is, in the first half of the 17th century, algebraic relations; and finally differential relations which, at the time of Spinoza and Leibniz, are the great question of mathematics of this era.

I'll give some examples here; I really would like this to be clear for you. This is not even mathematics that I am doing here, not at all: an example of a fractional relation: two thirds; [*Pause*] an example of an algebraic relation: ax + by =, from which you can derive x over y =, x over y =; an example of a differential relation, we've seen this: dy over dx = say, z.[74] Good. What is the difference between these three types of relations?

I would say the fractional relation is already very interesting because, otherwise, we could proceed as if up a ladder. The fractional relation is irreducibly a relation. Why? If I say two thirds, two thirds once again is not a number. Why is two thirds not a number? That's because there is no assignable number which, multiplied by three, yields two, so it is not a number. A fraction is not a number; it is a complex of numbers that I decide by convention to treat as a number, that is, that I decide by convention to submit to the rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication, but a fraction is obviously not a number. Once I find the fractions, I can treat them like numbers -- no, wait, no, I speaking nonsense -- once I find the fraction, I can treat numbers like fractions, that is, once I have the fractional symbolism, I can treat a number, for example two, like a fraction, I can still write: 4 over 2; it's true, 4 over 2 = 2. [*Interruption of the recording*] [31:13]

Part 2

[But fractions, in their irreducibility to whole numbers, are not numbers; they are whole number complexes. These are whole number complexes. Fine.

So, already, the fraction brings out a kind of independence of the relation compared to its terms. In this very important question of a logic of relations, the whole point of][75] departure of a logic of relations is obviously: in what sense is there a consistency of the relation regardless of its

terms? The fractional number would already give me a kind of first approximation, but that does not prevent that in the fractional report, the terms must be still specified. The terms must be specified, that is, that you can still write, for example, 2 over 3, but the ratio is between two terms: 2 and 3. It is irreducible to these terms since it's not a number but a complex of numbers; but the terms must be specified, the terms must be given. In a fraction, the relation is independent of its terms, yes! But the terms must be given. [*Pause*]

Let's take another step. When I consider an algebraic relation of type x / y, this time I have no terms given, I have two variables. I have variables. You can see that everything happens as if the relation had acquired a higher degree of independence from its terms. I no longer need to assign a determined value. In a fractional relation, I cannot escape this: I must assign a determined value to the terms of the relation. In an algebraic relation, I no longer even need to assign a determined value to the terms of the relation. The terms of the relation are variables. But that does not prevent my variables from still having a determinable value. In other words, x and y can have all kinds of singular values, but they must have one.

You see, in the fractional relation, I can only have one singular value or equivalent singular values. In an algebraic relation, I no longer need a singular value; that does not prevent my terms from continuing to have a -- how would I say it --, specifiable value, and the relation is quite independent of any particular value of the variable, but it is not independent of a determinable value of the variable.

What is very new with the differential relation is that we are taking it as a third step. When I say dy / dx, you remember what we saw: dy with respect to y equals zero; it's an infinitely minute amount. Dx with respect to x equals zero; so, I can write, and they write constantly in the 17th century, in this form: dy / dx = 0 / 0. Now, the ratio 0 over 0 is not equal to 0. In other words, when the terms vanish, the relation remains. This time, the terms between which the relation is established are neither determined nor even determinable. Only the relation between its terms is determined.

This is where logic of relations will take a leap, but a fundamental leap. A domain is discovered, under this form of differential calculus, a domain is discovered in which relations no longer depend on their terms: the terms are reduced to vanishing terms, to vanishing quantities, and the relation between these vanishing quantities is not equal to 0, to the point that I would write -- here, I am summing up everything --: dy / dx = z. What does "= z" mean? That means, of course, that the differential relation dy / dx that occurs between vanishing quantities of y and vanishing quantities of x tells us absolutely nothing about x and y, but tells us something about z. For example, applied to the circle, the differential relation dy / dx tells us something about a tangent called "trigonometric tangent".

So, I can write, keeping things simple -- there is no need to understand anything -- dy / dx = z. What does that mean? You see that the relation, as it exists when its terms vanish, will refer to a third term, z. This is very interesting; anyway, it should be very interesting: it's starting from here that a logic of relations is possible. What does that mean? What will we say? What will we say about z? That it's the limit of the differential relation. In other words, the differential relation tends toward a limit. When the terms of the relation vanish, x and y, yes, when the terms of the

relation vanish, and become dy and dx, when the terms of the relation vanish, the relation subsists because it tends toward a limit : z. [*Pause*] When the relation is established between infinitely minute terms, it does not cancel itself at the same time as its terms; it tends towards a limit. This is the basis of differential calculus as it was understood or interpreted in the 17th century. Henceforth, you understand, of course, why this interpretation of differential calculus becomes unified with the understanding of an actual infinite, that is, with the idea of infinitely minute quantities of vanishing terms.

Henceforth, my answer to the question: what is it, exactly, that Spinoza is talking about when he talks about relations of movement and rest, proportions of movement and rest, and says: infinitely minute things, an infinite collection of infinitely minute things belongs to a particular individual under a particular relation of movement and rest; what is this relation? I could not say, like Gueroult, that this is a vibration which assimilates the individual to a pendulum; it's a differential relation. It is a differential relation as it's revealed in infinite sets, in infinite sets of infinitely minute things.

And in fact, if you consider Spinoza's letter that I've used a lot about blood and the two components of the blood, chyle and lymph, that amounts to telling us what?[76] It comes down to telling us that there are corpuscles of chyle, or moreover, chyle is an infinite set of very simple bodies. Another infinite set of very simple bodies is lymph. What distinguishes the two infinite sets? This is the differential relation. This time, you have a dy / dx which is: the infinitely minute parts of chyle on the infinitely minute parts of lymph, and this differential relation tends towards a limit, namely, blood, namely, chyle and lymph compose the blood.

Good; if that was it, we could ask why the infinite sets are distinguished. It's because the infinite sets of very simple bodies do not exist independently of the differential relations which they realize. So, it's through abstraction that I started by talking about them. But they necessarily exist, they exist, necessarily, in one a variable relation or another. They cannot exist independently of a relation, since the very notion of infinitely minute terms or vanishing quantities cannot be defined independently of a differential relation. Once again, dx has no meaning, with respect to x, and dy has no meaning with respect to y; only the relation dx / dy has meaning. In other words, the infinitely minute do not exist independently of the differential relation.

Fine. Henceforth, what allows me to distinguish an infinite set from another infinite set? I would say that infinite sets have different powers (*puissances*), and what appears to be evident, it seems to me, in this thought of the actual infinite, is the idea of the power of a set. So, I don't at all mean... Understand me, I don't mean at all, it would be abominable to want make me say that they anticipated things that very closely relate to set theory in early 20th century mathematics; I don't mean that at all.

I mean that in their conception -- which is absolutely opposed to modern mathematics, which is completely different, which has nothing to do with modern mathematics -- in their conception of the infinitely minute and of differential calculus interpreted within the perspective from the infinitely minute, they necessarily identify -- and this is not limited to Leibniz, it's also true of Spinoza, it's also true of Malebranche -- all of these philosophers of the second half of the 17th

century identify the idea of infinite sets which are distinguished, not by their numbers -- an infinite set by definition cannot be distinguished from another infinite set by the number of its parts, since any infinite set exceeds any assignable number of parts -- so, from the point of view of the number of parts, there cannot be one which has a greater number of parts than another. All these sets are not infinite.

So, under what aspect are they distinguished? Why can I say one particular infinite set and not this other one? I can say it; it's very simple: because infinite sets are defined as infinite in one differential relation or another. In other words, differential relations can be considered as the power of an infinite set. Henceforth, an infinite set can be at a higher power than another infinite set. It is not that there will be more parts, obviously not, [*Pause*] but the differential relation under which the infinite set of parts belongs to it will be of a higher power than the relation under which an infinite set belongs to another individual.

So, it seems to me that it's from the very point of view of a theory of infinity, this idea of the distinct power of infinite sets is fundamental. There is more: any idea of an actual infinite would make no sense if we removed that. This is why, with the reservations I said earlier, in my own view, the answer that I would give to "what is this relation of movement and rest that Spinoza invokes as a characteristic of the individual?", that is, as a definition of the second layer of the individual, I would say, no, it is not exactly a manner of vibrating -- although perhaps we could conjoin the two points of view, I don't know -- but, it's a differential relation, and it's the differential relation that defines the power (*puissance*).

Henceforth, you understand the situation, if ... You remember that the infinitely minute things constantly receive influences from outside; they spend their time being in exterior relation with the other collections of infinitely minute things. Suppose that a collection of infinitely minute things is determined to take on another relation, is determined from the outside to take on another relation than the one in which it belongs to me. What does this mean? It means: I'm dying. It means: I'm dying. In fact, the infinite set which belonged to me in a particular relation which characterizes me, in my characteristic relation, this infinite set will take on another relation under external causes, under the influence of external causes. Return again to the example of poison that decomposes blood:[77] under the action of arsenic, the infinitely minute particles that compose my blood, that compose my blood in this way, are going to be determined to enter into another relation. Henceforth, this infinite set will enter into the composition of another body; it will no longer be mine: I die. You understand? Good.

So, if all that was true, if it was true? We are still missing something because where does this relation come from, this relation? So, I'm saying... You see I've made progress, but I need my three layers. I can't manage to resolve this otherwise. I need my three layers because I start by saying: I am composed of an infinity of vanishing and infinitely minute parts. Fine. But careful, these parts belong to me; they compose me in a certain relation that characterizes me. But, this relation which characterizes me, this differential relation or even more, this summation, not an addition, but this kind of integration of differential relations, since in fact, there is an infinity of differential relations that compose me: my blood, my bones, my flesh, etc., all of that refers to all kinds of systems of differential relations. These differential relations that compose me, that is, that create the infinite collections that compose me, effectively belong to me and not to another,

for as long as it lasts, since it always risks not lasting. If my parts are determined to enter into other relations, they desert my relation. Ah, they desert my relation. Once again: I die! But this will involve a lot of things. What does it mean to die? At that point, it means that I no longer have any parts. It's annoying, no more parts. Fine.

But this relation that characterizes me and that results in the parts, which realize the relation, belonging to me as soon as they realize the relation. As long as they realize the differential relation, they belong to me. Is this differential relationship the final word of the individual? Obviously not, it must be accounted for in its turn. What is it going to express, what does it depend on? What makes that... It doesn't have its own reason, this differential relationship. What will explain that I am characterized by this relation or that set of relations?

The final layer of the individual, Spinoza's answer: it is that the characteristic relations which constitute me, that is, which result in the infinite sets verifying these relations, realizing these relations which belong to me, the characteristic relations express something. They express something which is my singular essence. There, Spinoza says it very firmly: the relations of movement and rest only express a singular essence. That means that none of us have the same relations, of course, but it is not the relation that has the final word. What is it that does?

So there, can we not come back to something from Gueroult's hypothesis? Last question: there is therefore a final layer of the individual, namely, the individual is a singular essence. You see henceforth what formulation I can give of the individual: each individual is a singular essence, this singular essence being expressed in characteristic relations of differential relations types, and under these differential relations, infinite collections of infinitely minute things belong to the individual.

Hence a final question: what is this singular essence? I mean, will we not be able to find, at this level -- such that we should just say that Gueroult, at the very least, got the level wrong -- at this level something equivalent to the idea of vibration? What is a singular essence? Careful, for you to understand the question, you almost have to agree to force the conditions of such a question. I am no longer within the realm of existence. What is existence? What does it mean for me to exist? We will see that it is quite complicated for Spinoza, because he gives a very rigorous determination of what he calls existence.

But if we start with the simplest, I would say: to exist is to have an infinity of extensive parts, of extrinsic parts, to have an infinity of infinitely minute extrinsic parts, which belong to me according to a certain relation. As long as I have, in fact, extensive parts which belong to me according to a certain relation, infinitely minute parts which belong to me, I can say: I exist. [*Pause*]

When I die -- once again, you have to situate the Spinozist concepts well -- when I die, what happens? Dying means that, exactly this, it means: the parts that belong to me cease to belong to me. Why? We have seen that they only belong to me insofar as they realize a relation, a relation that characterizes me. I die when the parts which belong to me or which belonged to me are determined to return under another relation which characterizes another body: I would feed the worms! "I would feed the worms", that means: the parts which compose me enter in another

relation: I am eaten by worms. My own corpuscles, which pass into the worms' relation, well, it can happen. Or else the corpuscles which compose me, precisely, they realize another relation conforming to the arsenic relation: I got poisoned! Ah? Fine.

Notice that in one way, this is very serious for Spinoza, but it is not very serious for Spinoza. Because, in the end, I can say that death concerns what? We can say in advance, before knowing what it is that he calls an essence: death essentially concerns a fundamental dimension of the individual, but only one dimension, namely the belonging of my parts to an essence. But it does not concern the relationship under which the parts belong to me, nor the essence. Why? You have seen that the characteristic relation, the differential relation, or the differential relations that characterize me, are independent in themselves. They are independent of the terms since the terms are infinitely minute, and the relation, on the contrary, has a finite value: dy / dx = z.

Okay, so, it's indeed true that my relation or my relations stop being realized when I die; there are no more parts that realize. Why? Because the parts have started realizing other relations. Fine. But, first, there is an eternal truth of the relation; in other words, there is consistency in the relation even when it is not realized by actual parts. There is an actuality of the relation, even when it ceases being realized. What disappears with death is the relation's realization, not the relation itself.

You will ask me: what is a non-realized relation? I am calling for this logic of the relation as it seems to me to be born in the seventeenth century, namely, it effectively showed the conditions in which a relation had a consistency whereas its terms were vanishing. There is a truth of the relation regardless of the reality of the terms that realize the relation, and on the other hand, there is a reality of essence that is expressed in this relation; there is a reality of essence regardless of knowing whether any actually given parts realize the relation in conformity with essence.

In other words, both the relation and essence will be said to be "eternal", or at least to have a kind of eternity -- but we will see, maybe we will see -- "kind of eternity" does not at all mean a metaphorical eternity. It's a very specific type of eternity, namely: a kind of eternity in Spinoza has always meant what is eternal by virtue of its cause and not by virtue of itself.

So singular essence and the characteristic relations in which this essence is expressed are eternal, whereas what is transitory and what defines my existence, is only the time during which infinitely minute extensive parts belong to me, that is, realize the relation. But, then, here we are, it must be said that my essence exists when I either do not exist yet or when I no longer exist. In other words, there is an existence of singular essence which is not to be confused with the existence of the individual whose essence is essence. There is an existence of the singular essence which is not to be confused with the existence of the individual whose essence is essence. [*Pause*]

This is very important because you see where Spinoza is going, and his whole system is based, above all, on this: it's a system in which everything that exists, is real. I mean, never, never has such a negation of the category of possibility been carried so far. Essences are not possible things (*des possibles*). There is nothing possible; everything that exists, is real. In other words, essences

do not define possibilities of existence; essences are themselves existences.

There, he goes much further than the others in the 17th century because I'm thinking of Leibniz. For Leibniz, you have an idea according to which essences are logical possibilities. For example, there is an essence of Adam, there is an essence of Peter, there is an essence of Paul, and these are possible things (*des possibles*). As long as Peter, Paul, etc., do not exist, you can only define essence as a possible, only as something possible. Simply, Leibniz will be forced, from then on, to account for this: how can the possible account for, integrate into itself the possibility of existing, as if the category of possible had to be encumbered with a kind of tendency toward existence?

And, in fact, Leibniz develops a very, very curious theory with a word which is common to Leibniz and to Spinoza, the word *conatus*, tendency, but which, precisely, will acquire two absolutely different meanings in Spinoza and in Leibniz. In Leibniz, singular essences are possibles, simply they are special possibles because they tend toward existence with all their strength. One must introduce a tendency toward existence into the logical category of possibility. Spinoza, it's your choice, I'm not saying it's better, it's your choice, it's really a hallmark of Spinoza's thinking. For him, it is the very notion of possible: he does not want to enrich the notion of possible by encumbering it with a tendency toward existence. What he wants is the radical destruction of the category of possible. The real is all there is.

In other words, essence is not a logical possibility; essence is a physical reality. It's a physical reality: what can it mean? In other words, the essence of Paul, once Paul is dead, well, it remains a physical reality. He is a real being. So, we would have to distinguish as two real beings the being of existence and the being of the essence of Paul. Moreover, one would have to distinguish as two existences Paul's existence and Paul's existence of essence. Paul's existence of essence is eternal while Paul's existence is transitory, mortal, etc. You see, at the point we've reached, if this is right, a very important theme from Spinoza, is: so, what is this physical reality of essence going to be?

Essences cannot be logical possibilities. If these were logical possibilities, they would be nothing. They must be physical realities. But beware, these physical realities are not to be confused with the physical reality of existence. What is the physical reality of essence? And Spinoza finds himself caught in a problem that seems very, very complicated, but so good there. I want this to be crystal clear; I don't know how to do it... What time is it? [*A student answers*: 11.35 am] 11.35; at noon, you signal me.

There we are, Spinoza tells us, imagine… Well, he gives us an example. He tells us -- I will say it later, when and where he tells us that -- he tells us, in a very lovely text he tells us: imagine a white wall, an entirely white wall. There's nothing on it. Then you arrive with a pencil, you draw a man, and then next to it, you draw another man. Now your two guys exist. They exist as what? Insofar as you drew them. Two shapes exist on the white wall. These two shapes, you can call them Peter and Paul. As long as nothing is traced on the white wall, is there something that is distinct from the white wall? Response from Spinoza, one that's very odd: No, strictly speaking, nothing exists! Nothing exists on the white wall as long as you haven't traced the shapes.

You will tell me that this isn't complicated, that. It's not complicated. It's a great example because I'll need it all next time. From now on, I just have to comment on this text by Spinoza. And where is this text? This text is found in Spinoza's early work, the work he did not write himself; these are auditor's notes, known as the *Short Treatise*, the *Short Treatise*.

You see why this example is important. The white wall is something equivalent to what Spinoza calls the attribute, the attribute, extension. The question amounts to saying: but what is there in extension? In the extension, there's extension; the white wall equals the white wall, extension equals extension! But you can say: bodies exist within extension. Yes, bodies exist within extension. Okay. What is the existence of bodies within extension? The existence of bodies within extension is when these bodies are effectively drawn. What does it mean, effectively drawn? We saw his answer, Spinoza's very strict answer: it's when an infinity of infinitely minute parts [is] determined to belong to the body. The body is drawn. There is a shape. What Spinoza will call mode of attribute is such a shape.

So, bodies are in extension exactly like the shapes drawn on the white wall, and I can distinguish a shape from another shape by saying precisely: particular parts belong to a particular shape. Be careful, with another particular part, there can be common areas, but what does this matter? It means that there will be a common relation between the two bodies; yes, that is possible, but I would distinguish the existent bodies. Other than that, can I distinguish something? It turns out that the text of the *Short Treatise*, from Spinoza's youth, seems to say: in the end, it is impossible to distinguish something outside of existent modes, outside of shapes. If you have not drawn a shape, you cannot distinguish something on the white wall. The white wall is uniformly white.

Pardon me for weighing this down; it's because, really, this is an essential moment in Spinoza's thought. And yet, already in the *Short Treatise*, he tells us: "The essences are singular," that is, there is an essence of Peter and of Paul which is not to be confused with existent Peter and existent Paul. And if the essences are singular, it is necessary to distinguish something on the white wall without shapes necessarily being drawn. Moreover, if I jump to his final work, the *Ethics*, I see that in book II, proposition 7, 8, etc., Spinoza raises this problem again. He says, very oddly: "modes exist in the attribute in two ways; they exist, on the one hand, insofar as they are understood or contained within the attribute and, on the other hand, insofar as they are said to endure." Two existences: lasting existence, immanent existence. There I consider the letter of the text. Modes exist in two ways, namely: existent modes exist insofar they are said to last, and the essences of modes exist insofar as they are contained within the attribute.

Fine. This gets complicated because essences of mode are -- once again, and here, it's confirmed by all the texts of the *Ethics* -- are singular essences, that is, that one is not to be confused with the essence of the other, one is not to be confused with the other, good, very good. But then, how are they distinguished from each other within the attribute? Spinoza says they are distinguished, and then he abandons us. Does he really abandon us? This is not possible! Something like that is unimaginable. He doesn't tell it to us, he doesn't tell it to us, okay. He gives us an example, he gives us a geometric example, precisely, which amounts to saying: does a shape have a certain mode of existence when it is not drawn? Does a shape exist in extension when it is not drawn in extension? The entire text seems to say: well yes, and the entire text seems to say: complete it yourself. And that's normal; maybe he gives us all the elements for an answer, to be completed

by ourselves. So, then, you have to! We don't have a choice! Or else you give up being a Spinozist. That's not bad either. Or else, you have to complete it yourself. How can we complete it ourselves? That's why I'm arguing as I've been saying since the start of the year, you complete it yourself, on the one hand, with your heart, and on the other hand, with what you know. Good.

The white wall, the white wall, why does he... Why is he talking about the white wall? What is this white wall story? And after all, examples in philosophy are a somewhat like winks. You will ask me: but then, what if we don't understand the wink? It's not serious, not serious at all! We miss a thousand things. We make do with what we have, we make do with what we know. White wall. But after all, I am trying to complete with my heart before completing with knowledge.

Let us appeal to our hearts. I have my white wall on one side and my drawings on the white wall on the other. I drew on the wall. And my question is this: can I distinguish things on the white wall apart from drawn shapes? Can I make distinctions that are not distinctions between shapes? There, it's like a practical exercise; there is no need to know anything.

I am simply saying: you will i read Spinoza well if you get to this problem or an equivalent problem, you have to read it sufficiently and literally in order to tell yourself: well, yes, that's the problem he poses for us, and his own task -- that's why he doesn't go any further -- is to pose the problem so precisely that -- it's even a gift that he gives us in a way from his infinite generosity – it's to pose the problem so well, it makes us pose it so precisely that we say to ourselves, obviously the answer is this, and we will have the impression of having found the answer. Only great writers give you that impression, you know. They stop just when it's all over; but no, there is a tiny bit that they did not say. We are forced to find it and we say to ourselves: I am so good, I am so strong, I found it! [*Laughter*] Because at the moment when I just asked the question like this, "can anything be distinguished on the white wall, independently of the drawn shapes?", obviously I have the answer already. And that we all answer in chorus, what do we all answer in chorus? We answer, well, yes, there is another mode of distinction. There is another mode of distinction, which is what? It's that white has degrees, white has degrees, and I can vary the degrees of white. And a degree of white is distinguished from another degree of white in a very different way than a shape on the white wall is distinguished from another shape on the white wall.

In other words, white has, one would say in Latin -- we are using all languages to try to understand better, even languages that we do not know! [*Laughter*] -- white has distinctions of *gradus*, there are degrees, and degrees are not to be confused with shapes. You will say: such a degree of white, in the sense of such a degree of light. A degree of light, a degree of white, is not a shape. And yet, two degrees are distinguished, two degrees are not distinguished as two shapes in space. I would say of shapes that they are distinguished extrinsically, given their common parts. I would say of degrees that it's an entirely different kind of distinction, that there's an intrinsic distinction. What is that? Suddenly, then… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:18:03]

[I don't even need it anymore. It's a coincidence. Everyone operates with what they know. I say to myself: ha, it's not so surprising that Spinoza, what is it, the wink from the point of view of knowledge?

We started with our chorus saying: yes, it can only be that. There is a distinction of degrees which is not to be confused with the distinction of shapes. Light has degrees],[78]

Part 3

… and the distinction of degrees of light is not to be confused with the distinction of shapes in light. You will tell me that all this is childish; but it's not childish when you try to make philosophical concepts of it. Yes, it's childish, and it isn't. It's good. So, what is this story, there are intrinsic distinctions?

Okay, let's try to move forward, from a terminological point of view. We must organize our terminology. My white wall, the white of the white wall, I will call it: quality. [*Pause*] The determination of shapes on the white wall, I will call it: magnitude or -- no, yes -- or length. I will say why I am using this seemingly bizarre word "length", magnitude or length or extensive quantity. Extensive quantity is, in fact, the quantity that is composed of parts. You remember the existent mode. Existent me is precisely defined by the infinity of parts that belong to me.

What is there other than quality, white, and extensive quantity, magnitude or length? There are degrees. What are degrees? They're generally what's called "intensive" quantities, but which, in fact, are as different from quality as from extensive quantity. These are degrees or intensities. [*Pause*]

And there is a philosopher of the Middle Ages who was quite brilliant – as I was saying, here's where I call on just a little bit of knowledge -- his name was Duns Scotus; as I was saying, he uses the white wall – it's the same example. Did Spinoza read Duns Scotus? [It's] of no interest because I'm not at all sure that it was Duns Scotus who invented this example. It's an example that recurs throughout the Middle Ages, in a whole group of theories during the Middle Ages. The white wall, yeah, he said: quality, white, has an infinity of intrinsic modes. He wrote in Latin: *modus intrinsecus*. And Duns Scotus innovates, invents a theory of intrinsic modes. A quality has an infinity of intrinsic modes. *Modus intrinsecus*, what is this?

And he said: white has an infinity of intrinsic modes; these are intensities of white. Understand: white equals light in the example, an infinity of luminous intensities. He added this, and notice that he was taking responsibility, because here it becomes new. You will say to me: "to say there is an intensity, there is an infinity of intensities of light, well, there is nothing." But what does he get out of it, and why does he say that? What accounts is he settling, and with whom? This becomes important. Understand that the example is typical because when he says white or quality, it also means shape. In other words, we are in the middle of a discussion of Aristotle's philosophy, and he tells us: a shape has intrinsic modes.

Ha! If he means: a shape has intrinsic modes, immediately, this is not obvious. Why? Because it goes without saying that all kinds of authors, all kinds of theologians, considered that a shape was invariable in itself, and that only existent ones varied in which the shape was realized. Here Duns Scotus tells us, where the others distinguished two terms, three must be distinguished.

Where shape gets realized are extrinsic modes. So, you have to distinguish shape, extrinsic modes, but there is something else. A shape also has a kind of, as they say at that time in the Middle Ages, has a kind of latitude – it's not invariable -- a latitude of the shape, it has degrees, intrinsic degrees of shape. Good. These are the intensities, therefore, intensive quantities. What sets them apart? -- What time is it? … Noon? [*A student answers*: No, no, you have four minutes] Four minutes? So, I just have time to ... –

What sets them apart? How does one degree differ from another degree? Here, I am insisting on this because the theory of intensive quantities is like the concept of differential calculus I am talking about; it was decisive throughout the Middle Ages. Moreover, it is linked to problems of theology; there is a whole theory of intensities on the theological level. If there is a unity of physics, metaphysics and theology in the Middle Ages, it is very centered [on the theory of intensities], a whole problem -- understand, that makes theology in the Middle Ages much more interesting -- a whole problem, like the trinity, namely, three people as a one and same substance, which encumbers the mystery of the trinity. We always say: that's how they fought; these are theological questions. It wasn't that way at all. These are not theological questions. They involve everything because at the same time as they are creating a physics of intensities, in the Middle Ages, they are developing an elucidation of theological mysteries, the holy trinity, and they are creating a metaphysics of shapes. All this goes far beyond the specificity of theology.

In what form are three entities distinguished in the Holy Trinity?[79] It is obvious that here there's a sort of problem of individuation which is very, very important. The three entities must be, in a way, not at all different substances; they have to be intrinsic modes. So how will they be distinguished? Aren't we thrust into a kind of theology of the intensity? When [Pierre] Klossowski, today, in his literature discovers a kind of very, very strange link between theological themes -- which makes us wonder where all this comes from -- and a very Nietzschean conception of intensities, I think we have to see, given that Klossowski is an extremely informed and erudite man, you have to see what connection he makes between these problems of the Middle Ages and current questions or Nietzschean questions. It's obvious that in the Middle Ages, the whole theory of intensities was simultaneously about physics, theology and metaphysics. In what form? Here again, there are distinctions of degrees which are intrinsic distinctions, internal to quality. [*Pause*] Do you understand?

So, what distinguishes intensive quantity and shape or extensive quantity? It's that an extensive quantity is composed of parts; it's composed of homogeneous parts. It responds fairly well to the formulation of the actual infinite, the first layer of individuality: to have an infinity, to have an infinite set, extensive parts. Whereas an intensity, what defines it? At that point, notice that for an extensive quantity -- here we already have an important point -- you can only think of it, in what form? You can only think of it, in extension, as according to a kind of duration. You can only think of an extensive quantity within space according to a kind of duration.

What does that mean? It means that extensive quantity is the result of a synthesis, and this synthesis is a synthesis of time. In fact, when I say a line, I locate according to duration a synthesis of the parts of the segments within which I constitute the line, if only within

perception. I look at the length of the table; I begin at one end, I move forward, and there is a moment when I stop. Extensive quantity is constituted by a synthesis of parts within time, of homogeneous parts within time. And it's because of and by virtue of this synthesis of time, of this synthesis within time that I can measure the extensive magnitude -- What? It's noon? - and say that it's so many meters long. [*Laughter*]

Whereas what is an intensive quantity? What can you say about an intensive quantity? You can say something about an intensive quantity and, there, it becomes very fascinating. It's not that it's missing something; we tend to interpret it as if it's missing something. Well, that's not at all right! Nothing is missing. You can say one intensive amount is greater than another, but you cannot say how much, you cannot say how much. You can say of heat that it's greater than another heat; you can say of heat that it's greater than something lukewarm, but by how much, you can't do so. Well of course, you can, with a special instrument which, in fact, is quite complex, a thermometer. As has been said a thousand times, a thermometer is for measuring an extensive quantity. And you can only say how much one heat element is greater than another if you have a system of extensive quantities corresponding to the intensive quantities. Otherwise, if you stick to intensive quantities, as Diderot said cleverly, by adding two segments, you make a line, but by adding two snowballs, you don't make any heat.

So, fine, in other words, these are non-additive magnitudes. What does non-additive magnitudes mean? It means that these are not composed of homogeneous parts. However, they are multiple. A heat is a multiplicity. Okay, it's a multiplicity. What type of multiplicity? It is a non-extensive multiplicity. What does that mean, a non-extensive multiplicity? That is, it's a multiplicity whose multiplicity is understood within the moment. It's within the moment that you grasp heat as heat. It's weird! [It's] a multiplicity about which you grasp the multiplicity within the moment. In other words, it's not a synthesis of time; it's a synthesis of the instant, it's a synthesis of the instant. Ah, this is a summary of the instant; what does that mean? That means intensive quantities are lengths, but they are not magnitudes, or if you prefer, they are quantities, but they are not lengths -- whatever the terminology may be.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the great logician of relations, as if by chance, [Bertrand] Russell, in a book which will remain a definitive book called *The Principles of Mathematics*, will create a whole theory to distinguish what he calls distances and lengths. Lengths are the status of extensive quantities, and distances are among other things, and not only, the status of intensive quantities. Distance is defined by what? By precisely its proximity or its distance from zero within the instant. See, this is no longer the synthesis of successions over time. It's a synthesis of instantaneity. For the moment, a synthesis is necessary, precisely, which is an intensive synthesis. Within the instant, you grasp heat as hot or heat as hotter than some other heat. Some heat can be hotter than another heat. You say, ah, that's even hotter, that's really hot. It is not that the lesser heat is part of a greater heat. You have two distances of which you can say one is larger than the other, but you cannot say by how much. Are you missing something? No, you are missing nothing, however. It will also be said, terminologically, that these are ordered magnitudes, but not measured. They are orderable magnitudes in the form of more and less, and not measurable, in measurable form, meaning constituted by extensive parts.

Well, what is a singular essence? So, can we not derive something from Gueroult's idea about vibration? What is a singular essence? A singular essence, in our answer in Spinoza, would be a degree, it would be a degree. It would be a degree of the attribute. The attribute is quality. Singular essence would be such a degree. So, there would be intensities. As the attribute is extension, there would be intensities of extension. What would that be? Degrees are powers (*puissances*). Extension under this particular power, extension under that other particular power, there would be a distinction of degrees, of intrinsic modes, distinctions internal to the attribute which is not reduced and which must be fully distinguished from the other distinction, the distinction between modes of existence.

So, the essence of Peter and the essence of Paul would be distinguished as two degrees, as two intensive quantities, as two powers (*puissances*), while the existence of Peter and the existence of Paul are distinguished, on the contrary, in an entirely different way, in the form of the extrinsic distinction between the parts which belong to one in a particular relation and the parts which belong to the other in a particular relation. Henceforth, everything becomes luminous because intensive quantities [are] indivisible distances, distances about which I can say one is greater, but I cannot say by how much, I can say one is more powerful than the other. These are relations of power. [*Pause*]

These intensive quantities are expressed, which are defined only by their distance from zero, you see? Instead of being in connection with extensive parts which form a synthesis of time, they are in instantaneous relation with the zero degree according to which one says this distance is greater than that other. And each is in relation with zero. It is not in relation with parts. And its multiplicity is its indivisible relation at zero. If it were so, if there are distances in this way, I can say each essence is a distance, that is, a power (*puissance*). And henceforth, it is completely normal that if the essences are intensive quantities, they are expressed in differential relations, since the intensive quantity is inseparable from a definition in relation to zero, and that the differential relation is precisely that. Everything becomes luminous, eh? -- I'm going to the main office. You think about all that; I would like you to read a little, that you take a look, think a bit, and then I'll return. [97: 40] [*Course interruption*]

Richard Pinhas: [*Partially recorded*]: ... and the pole or the eternal side of essence.

Deleuze: Yes, that's right, I haven't spoken about it yet. Yes, yes, that's the question of eternity. In what sense are we eternal? Yes, that, I would have to discuss it. Yes ... Ah, that's right, that -- All of a sudden, this point is fatiguing me! Eternity... Well, I'll discuss it.[80]

Okay, are there any comments? I'm sure there are some. I am certain. Yes?... Speak loudly! [*Inaudible comments; the students near Deleuze say*: We can't hear you!] … Or if you stand up, it's better because… If it bothers you, we will ... I would translate if I managed to hear, because in here, I don't know if you noticed, but the acoustics of this room are deplorable. They did it on purpose! [*Laughter*] Go ahead, yes [*Deleuze groans*: Ah, the door ... the door ...] …

A student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: ... like a pulse, yes, ... absolutely, yes, compared to ...? Yes, it's true. Yes, Yes…

The student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, that is, what he is saying, in fact, which may be of interest to those interested in all these problems, is that, on the state of equivalent questions, if you will, to what we talked about in Leibniz, in fact, the same Gueroult wrote a very, very precise book called *Dynamics and metaphysics in Leibniz* (1939), where you find a whole overview of these theories of force in the 17th century, in the second half of the 17th century.[81] Yes, absolutely, yes.

Richard Pinhas: [*Inaudible*] ...

Deleuze: ... like not being? As being reality ...

Richard Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, but thermodynamics, that, I don't know if we can introduce anything at all. What interests me, I'll say it like that, is that, in everything I have done, in all the allusions I've made either to physics, or geometry, or mathematics, I'm interested strictly in the state of physics and mathematics in the second half of the 17th century. [It's] impossible to introduce notions of thermodynamics here, even if they might be useful, because these are paths of science that have no correspondences, it seems to me, in the 17th century. But, in any case, the comparison with Leibniz, at the level of and thanks to Gueroult's book, yes, that is essential. Yes.

But, what I would like to know is if, roughly speaking, since I have almost finished, is this Spinozist conception of individuality -- you understand, we are reaching ..., in fact, I would have finished with that on ..., -- well, taking into account this conception of individuality, what is the relationship of the individual with unique substance in Spinoza? That's what's left for us to see. But I would like this conception of individuality to be for you, in the end, for those who are interested in all that, to be very concrete, that is ... In other words, that you might live like that, ok! [*Pause*] Because you are, we are all minute intensive quantities, intrinsic modes, small signals (*clignotements*), ok! Yes, are there any comments on this? Are there any comments?

A student: In regards to, in regards to the state of thinking on nature in the second half of the 17th century, I would like you to tell us something about the relationship between the state of thinking about generation and especially the requirement for the singularity of the essences. And I would like to put the problem in this context: the second half of the 17th century was the time when preformationist theories took off considerably in relation to epigenesis, compared to epigenetic theories. So, in these epigenetic theories, they imagined that man was constituted by addition of parts and, in preformationism, that man preexisted. So, in this, there were several ways to present preformation, and one of these types of preformation was the theory of the nesting (*emboîtement*) which claimed, which was supported until quite late, particularly by Malebranche, which claimed that the man, that is, whether in the egg or in the sperm of man, all men, until the end of time, were present since Adam. Have I been clear?

Deleuze: Very clear! Yes, very clear! [*Laughter, including Deleuze who coughs laughing*]

The student: I want to state my question and be very frank, ok? [*Pause*]

Deleuze: Yes, and what are you seeking? [*Laughter*]

The student: I would like to see the relation between this vision which was part of the sensibilities of the era and the requirement for the singularity of essence that you mentioned.

Deleuze: Yeah, yeah, yeah! [*Pause*] I'm looking for a linkage (*joint*), ok! [*Laughter*] [*Pause*] I'll tell you very quickly, well, this. It seems to me, in what is called pre ..., pre ..., [*The student helps him complete the word*] preformationism, there is a certain idea, as he just said, there is a certain idea of nesting, namely, that the living being is nested in the seed, right? Nested in what sense? It is like being enveloped in the seed, so that the seed gets developed. In other words, the living being is already there, and creates for itself a mechanism which is, literally, a mechanism of development or explication, the enveloped parts being unfolded. No, that's true, first, in that this formulation, this genesis, if you will, is unified with development. Genesis or evolution of a living being is unified with the development of something that is enveloped in the seed.

This can be imagined, first, on the level of the adult organism and that of the seed. The adult organism is enveloped in the seed, and evolution consists in the enveloped parts being developed. This implies something like a kind of development through placing into exteriority, namely parts which are enveloped within one another, developing somewhat, you see, like Japanese papers there, like the small gardens that one plunges into water and which expand. They unfold, evolution like unfolding, and when you propose such a theory, it is not a question of knowing whether it is true or false. Once again, this has no interest. It’s a question of evaluating this concept of envelopment, the envelopment of the living being.

So, when you propose such a concept, you must, obviously, you cannot maintain it at the level of the adult-seed organism. It must also be established at the species level. You can't stop it at the individual level. It must be valid at the level of the species. That is, the first is not only the fly’s seed which contains all the parts of the fly that will develop from the seed, but it’s the first fly which contains all flies. Ah? This is getting more interesting already. Here there is a vision of the evolution of the species such that the primitive fly contains all the flies to come. So, all evolution is conceived under the mode of envelopment-development or, in logical term, implication-explication, because explication is to develop, and implication, it is to envelop.[82]

So, at first glance, it seems very simple as an idea; it sounds weird. In fact, as he just said, there are texts by Malebranche, very beautiful, very... even very comical, very powerful, on this first fly which contains an infinity of flies. If I am insisting on this, it’s to what extent this is not a question of considering this theory in the light of current biology and of saying, "ah! well, no, this isn’t right!" It’s like in the textbooks, you see, they say, “back then, they believed in preformation. That’s what preformation is.” But, later, in the 18th century and then in the 19th century, a whole other concept was substituted for it: epigenesis. And epigenesis is, on the contrary, the idea that development operates by new formations, that development goes from an undifferentiated to differentiations, and that differentiations are not predetermined. Broadly speaking, this is the point of view of epigenesis, as opposed to the point of view of preformation.[83]

When we are limited to a kind of textbook that moves fast, we get the impression, really, that the people of the 17th century who believed in preformation were stupid. What is this story of the primitive fly that contains all the flies to come? What does that mean? To the point that this [view] is so stupid, the way it's presented to us, means that we have to trust them, that nonetheless, [preformation] had to mean something different for them. And maybe you might have the elements here. I wouldn't want and I haven't prepared this, it would require some very specific texts, so I'm sticking to some very simple things. But based on what we've said today, you might nonetheless possibly anticipate the seriousness, the true meaning of a preformationist point of view. Because it is obvious that it is inseparable from a conception of the actual infinite, here as well. When they say, when they speak about these infinities of flies that are contained in the original fly, it is obvious that this is understandable only based on an actual infinite applied to the living being.

Whereas obviously a theory like that of epigenesis cannot appear, if you will -- that's what interests me -- in science as well as in philosophy, one must not believe that a theory can appear at just any time. A theory can only appear, I would say almost as a general rule, a theory can only appear when there is already the symbolic system which makes it possible. If you ask me why differential calculus did not appear as such in Greek Antiquity, it is not because they lacked geniuses, obviously. It's not the lack of necessary brilliance. It was because mathematics did not have the symbolic systems that made possible the appearance and the exercise of differential calculus. And this is obvious for all sciences and for all discoveries in science that they only occur when they are possible, and it is not so difficult to determine within a discovery what makes it possible at such and such a moment. That doesn't mean it will emerge necessarily, but it's necessary for it to be possible. And I believe that what is necessary, precisely, to call a symbolic system in the field of science or in the field of philosophy is this set of conditions of linguistic possibilities. These are forms of expression which make possible the statement, this or that type of statement.

So, it goes without saying that epigenesis, I would say, namely, the idea that the evolution of the living being is not an explication, is not a development, but occurs through stages not encompassed in the previous step, that is, occurs through differentiation and not through development. I mean, with epigenesis, it is, literally, a negation of the concept of development; we substitute the concept, if you will, of formation, of differentiation for the concept of development. And to substitute a concept of differentiation for a concept of development on the level of the organism, the actual infinite had to collapse. The actual infinite was a symbolic system in the 17th century which made necessary and imposed the theory of preformation.

As a result, asking yourself, "Is preformation true or is it false?" seems to me to be a problem that makes absolutely no sense. A theory is true or false depending on this or that symbolic system. So, the question resounds: Is the symbolic system of the actual infinite true or false? The question makes no sense. What makes sense is: what led to that system being abandoned? What led to abandoning ...? And what led to giving this up was never negative reasons. It's never for reasons, for reasons specific to the system that you abandon a system! It's always for positive reasons, that is, through pressure, precipitation exerted by the nascent system, by the other system. The question cannot be asked at the level of the facts. Is the evolution of the living being comparable to development of something enveloped or to a differentiation? It is not at the level

of facts. It's obvious! It’s at the level of the symbolic system, and there is a symbolic system for the living being, just as there are symbolic systems in mathematics, namely, if you think of the living being in a context of the actual infinite -- which was absolutely the case, for both natural history and theology which made common cause in the 17th century -- at that time, the evolution of the living being is of the development-explication type, and the notions of epigenesis and of differentiation are strictly meaningless.

In order for a concept equivalent to that of differentiation to come to light, we need not only the work of the 17th century, which will not reach this, we also need very precisely the Romantic revolution, we need the Romantic revolution, namely, the emphasis on the synthesis of time and a synthesis of creative time. Then, a symbolic system in which time is creative, at that point, a concept like epigenesis, of ... the appearance of something new through differentiation becomes possible. You need a completely different conception, a new conception of time.

Conversely, when you think in terms of the actual infinite and you are in a preformationist point of view, that does not consist in simply telling us, there’s a big primitive fly which contains all the flies to come, for a very reason simple, which is, as I just said, the enveloped parts are infinitely minute parts. For them, the seed is, if you will, the summation of the organic parts of an animal, but in the state of vanishing quantities. You find exactly the theme of the actual infinite and of the infinitely minute.

As a result, they don't at all mean, even when they express themselves like that -- it's a joke that they express themselves like that -- they don't mean there’s a primitive fly, a big fly that contains all the flies to come. They even say exactly the opposite. They say: there is an infinitely minute fly. The infinitely minute fly is simply the set of differential relations between the vanishing parts, the infinitely minute parts of the fly. And the real flies are just the realization of these relations, obviously. It is no longer at all a metaphor of resemblance. You can't say there is a fly that contains all the flies. This is a theory of the actual infinite applied to living matter.

So, there it becomes very, very interesting! To the point that ... there has never been a two-by-two opposition to a theory. The so-called phenomena of differentiation will realize this quite well. They would say, but animal differentiation is very simple: it means that a same relation, a biological relation can be realized in different sets while remaining the same; there will be a differentiation from that point onward. So when scientific theories – this is what strikes me -- when scientific theories seem completely out of date, they only seem out of date insofar as we do not take into account the symbolic systems to which they refer, and if you don’t take the symbolic systems into account, in fact, they become completely childish.

Once again, preformationism, if I present it as they do in the textbooks of the history of biology, in the form of people who believed that the living adult was contained in the seed, well that does not make any sense, that doesn’t say anything! This is not what they mean. They are saying something else entirely. They are saying, exactly, if you will, if you arrive, if you reach the last corpuscles, well, these corpuscles, which you treated as infinitely minute quantities, that is, infinitely minute organic parts, these corpuscles have relations, relations of the differential type, and the living beings that you see are only the realization of these relations. This is

preformationism. At that point, it is irrefutable. It is irrefutable according to the symbolic system that it has available. Good, there we are, good… Yes?

Georges Comtesse: I have a question related to Spinoza's text... because Spinoza does not simply speak of an actual infinite, of a set of actual infinity of minute elements with relations. He poses a very curious identity. He poses the question, precisely, of the relationship between physics and metaphysics because he poses the identity of the infinitely minute element with the part. And, to pose such an identity is necessarily to pass from the notion of the set of infinite elements, to pass from the circle of the set of actual infinite elements to another circle which is the part of a totality, of a unity. So, in what way, precisely, is an element different or identical to the part, to the totality, to a unity? Likewise, Spinoza speaks of a singular essence of a finite mode insofar as being power (*puissance*) and why essence precedes existence. Why does he admit that this essence as a singular power is in another identity with the real being? Can we say that the being is real? Or else, if we admit these words of part, of unity, of totality, of being, aren't we already in a metaphysical language which prevents, precisely, affirming the pure real, the pure physical or the complete absence of a possible ideal?

Deleuze: I understand the question. So, I would answer, obviously, if you are asking it, it's because you have an answer for yourself. So, let's see if it's the same one we're talking about. I would say this: there is one thing that does not work for me in the way you ask your question because it seems to me that you are asking it as you are from the 19th century, and much more, from the 20th. For men like Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and particularly, I would say for Spinoza, there are surely distinctions between sciences, metaphysics, and much more, all kinds of fields: physics, biology, mathematics etc., there are distinctions. But once again, there is never a conflict. There are never any conflicts. These are like areas of being that relate to each other. The idea that there could be a conflict, for example, between science and metaphysics, all that, is an idea that seems to me to find, precisely, its intelligibility only in the undermining work of 18th century. And in the 17th, these are guys who are living, that's what I was trying to say, who are living in a balanced system. It's not even that they are mathematicians, metaphysicians, physicists at the same time, it's that ... Nor is it even that this is all the same thing. It's because this complements itself so much, by virtue, precisely, of their symbolic system.

So, if I take your terms in what sense I am trying to answer your question more directly, I would say unity, totality, part, everything for Spinoza, what is it that this ... [*Interruption of the recording*] [2:04:53]

Part 4

... I have a first [sense] for part. Parts equal the simplest bodies, extrinsic elements, that is, elements which receive their determination from outside, elements without interiority. A part will be an element without interiority, which receives its movement from the outside. So, there we have a complete sense of "part".

"Totality", what does that mean, on this same level? Totality will mean any infinite set composed of its parts. And, once again, these parts only exist through an infinite set. The word “totality” will itself have a precise meaning.

Unity, well then, will be the unity of an infinite set which, according to a certain relation, contains, encompasses all its parts. So, I would have a first sense of all these notions.

Now I move on to the essences, no longer to the extensive parts that compose my existence, but to the singular essences, you, me, etc. beyond existence, the pure essences. I see that the totality, the part, unit, etc., will take on a different meaning. What different meaning? And here, I’m not inventing. I mean that I'm referring to two texts by Spinoza. He tells us: "the simplest bodies are the parts of a composed body". And he tells us, on the other hand, second text, "each essence is a part of divine power (*puissance*)". Well, this is obvious! Before I even understand why, I realize that in the two texts, the word "part" does not at all have the same meaning. When Spinoza tells us "the simplest bodies are the parts of composed bodies," [*Pause*] when he tells us that, "part" means extensive part determined from outside, determined from outside what? Determined from the outside to enter under one relation or another corresponding to a particular essence.

These are extensive parts, and we saw their status. When he tells us, each essence is part of the power -- I have no need and I'm not forcing the text in any way -- what is power (*puissance*)? It’s not an extensive quantity; it’s an intensive quantity. “Part” will mean "intensive part"; an intensive part, that is, part will mean, here, a degree, degree of power. And the sentence becomes intelligible: each singular essence is a degree of power. It couldn't be stated more simply. Each singular essence is a degree of power. But the simple bodies, which are parts of the composed bodies, are not, at all, degrees of the composed body, these are the ultimate parts, that is, the infinitely minute elements which compose, in extension, a composed body.

So, I would not say that there is a sense, for example, if I take the terms part-totality, I would not say that there is a physical or scientific sense of part-totality and a metaphysical sense of part-totality. I believe that, in fact, we must place these concepts much more in series which are, each of which being irreducibly, physico-mathematical-metaphysical. Simply, there is the part in the sense of extensive part, and there is, at the same time, a physics, a mathematics and a metaphysics of extensive parts. And then, there is quite another meaning of the word "part", intensive part, which itself has a physics and a metaphysics of intensive parts. That is the direction in which I would answer your question, if I’ve answered it. And you?

Comtesse: I cannot recognize this language when he speaks to us of unity, totality, being. It’s something that I drop.

Deleuze: But, there, there, you are becoming dramatic! [*Laughter*] Because it's not to me that you're opposed, it's to Spinoza. It’s to Spinoza. It's Spinoza that you reject!... It's not my fault there!

Comtesse: [*Inaudible*]… So, there is in this sentence, there is this language there, again! There are necessarily intensities, there are intensities of the real which must necessarily be reduced. We have to find out which ones.

Deleuze: Yes, oh! I'm anticipating you. I'm anticipating you. Yes, but here, we indeed agree on this. You're telling me, this is why Spinoza doesn't suit me because, despite everything, he subordinates the whole field of intensities to a certain point of view of being and unity. And in this way, he loses intensities, I'm not sure which ones these are, but I'm sure he loses them. So, that, that is beyond me. I'm only here as a representative for Spinoza! So...

Comtesse: For example, in ... There were two books by, two books at least, by someone, a French philosopher who posed the problem directly and, of course, in a manner hardly developed in France, the relation, the relationships, the relation between terms and relationships, it's Jean Wahl, *Traité de métaphysique* [1953] and another book called *Vers la fin de l'ontologie* [1956]. Well, it seemed quite remarkable that in these two books, he sought through a whole analysis not only of Spinoza, but of the whole history of philosophy, to discover or affirm a reality that is, precisely, unburdened by all this metaphysical language ...

Deleuze: I wouldn't say that!

Comtesse: … He affirmed, each time, whatever the point where he was taking his thought (or the limit of his thought), there was something that preceded and went beyond the terms, relations and parts, and that, precisely …

Deleuze: yeah! yeah ...! yeah ..!

Comtesse: … he couldn't affirm here a physics, a real, or a real singular power (*puissance*) which is still captive to metaphysics, be it only with this language. This is the whole problem of relations between fragments, element and parts.

Deleuze: But, there, at the same time, you are ...

Comtesse: So, the problem of the relations between the fragments, the elements and the parts.

Deleuze: To that, I would like to say two things: it's that, obviously, you are sticking a dagger in my heart because everything comes down to saying: well, well, okay, but, Spinoza is not the last word on everything! Here, I agree with that. But to the extent that I was undertaking, with everyone's full agreement, a course on Spinoza rather than on something else, I was not dealing with other things! So, if, at the end, you arrive and you tell me: "Yes, but, come on! Spinoza isn't as great as all that; there are some better ones", I wouldn't ask questions like that. I wouldn't wonder if there's anything better.

And on the other hand, that's why I am correcting, I'm still correcting something in relation to what you said. It is very true what you just said about Jean Wahl, but, precisely, if my wish is to have brought you something this semester, it is -- I am not sure I am right -- it is, first, to have

straightened out a ready-made idea about the 17th century, because, including Wahl, thinking that a theory of relations independent of their terms is a rather belated achievement of philosophy, and in particular, he reproaches -- and I remember Wahl's texts being very, very formal -- all the philosophies of the 17th century for having remained at a so-called "substantialist" point of view in which relations are understood starting from their terms. As a result, for Wahl, and we understand this better, henceforth a logic of relations, as Wahl wishes it, a logic which he borrows from the English and the Americans, a logic of relations can only be created based on the destruction of the 17th century type of ontology.

What I tried myself to show was that surely, he was right; that's his point of view; that's very good, but that it was a little more complicated than that. Because if there is a first stage of a theory of relations independent of their terms, it is indeed in this second half of the 17th century, and that oddly, ontology for them, far from preventing them from identifying this field of relations, on the contrary, this is a very powerful lever and focus for arriving at a deeper conception of relations than the terms, and that it's not by chance that within the perspective of this ontology, we have arrived at an entire conception of the infinitely minute or the actual infinite.

So, if I had to take issue with a uniquely historical point from Wahl, it is that I do not believe that the theory of relations, in the sense that you demand it, has its starting point, if you will, with the criticism of ontology. I myself have the feeling that, for example in Spinoza, once again, for whom there is a conception of being which is irreducible, but really irreducible to all "be-ing", at once to substance and to mode, this kind of unfolding of being allows him precisely to do something very, really here, very, very fantastic which is the deployment of a system of relations that cannot at all be reduced to their terms.

But then, yes, but there, it's a little, if you will, about that, your requirement consists in saying, if I translate it as firmly and as modestly as I can, it's this: Fine, okay, but we would have to manage to create both a theory of relations and a theory of intensities which would not imply an ontology. Yes, so, you ask, what would it be, these liberated intensities, these intensities freed from any point of view of being? Yes, it almost amounts to saying that you want to go in that direction, but I mean, there, fine, fine, but there I see no reason to denounce any insufficiency whatsoever in Spinoza.

What would interest me more is -- regardless of the question: Do you feel yourself to be Spinozist or not? -- what effect does it have on you, a thought that has this mode in which... I mean ... I am seeking more your emotion than your relations with this thought.

In the end, I hope, what Comtesse has just said is that, thank God, Spinoza has certainly not said everything. Otherwise, this would just stop. There is only Hegel to believe to have said everything. [*Laughter*]. But, you understand, we know that one doesn't say everything when one's not, yes, well ... [*Laughter*]

So, Spinoza didn't say everything. Yes, but treat him like a work of art as long as you treat works of art as something vital. What is it, in fact? Well, how is this really a kind of thinking that, in my opinion ... I juxtaposed him closely to the others of the 17th century, but at the same time,

what I have left to say next time, what I have left to say next time is two things. It's to answer Richard's question about, well, eternity, how, already, Spinoza claims that it is experienced, and what is this point of view of being, that is, also to respond a bit to Comtesse, what is this point of view of being which Spinoza considers himself absolutely to need from one end to the other of his theory. Yes, that's it, and well, we'll see that next time. [*End of the session*] [2: 19: 04]

Notes, 71-83: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

Lecture 13, 17 March 1981

Transcriptions: Part 1, Yaëlle Tannau (duration 31 :13); Part 2 Cecile Lathuillère (duration = 46:50); Part 3, Suzanne Larrieu & Véronique Boudon (duration 46:55); Part 4 Guy Nicolas (duration 30:52); Augmented Transcription, Charles J. Stivale

Translated by Charles J. Stivale

Part 1

Won't you close the door? [*Pause*] Won't you close the windows, well, if you can't hear anything? [*Pause*; *various noises*] There we are... There we are, there we are... This ought to be our last session on Spinoza, unless you have questions. In any case, today whatever might cause you concern, if anything concerns you, you'll have to let me know, and you must intervene as much as possible.

And so, today I would like us to do two things: that we finish, not with the Spinozist conception of individuality, because there, it seems to me that we have stayed enough a long time on this conception, but that we draw conclusions from it concerning a point, a formulation, a rather famous formulation by Spinoza, which is the following: "We experience, we feel and we experience" -- he does not say: we think ; these are some very loaded words: feeling and experiencing -- "that we are eternal." What is this famous Spinozist eternity? Good.

And then finally, it is absolutely necessary for us to draw conclusions about what should have been the implicit theme of all these sessions, namely, well, what relationship ultimately [is there] between an ontology and an ethics, once it's said that this relationship interests philosophy for itself? But the fact is that this relationship was only founded and developed by Spinoza, to the point that someone who would come and tell us: "Well, my project would be to create a kind of ethics that would exist as the correlate of an ontology, that is, of a theory of being", well, we could stop him and say, "very good, we can say some very, very new things along this path, but this path is Spinozist; it's a path signed 'Spinoza'."

Good. You remember -- and I'm reminding you of this not at all to review these points, but to judge them as what we've acquired -- you remember the three dimensions of individuality. First dimension: I have an infinity of extensive parts -- moreover, if you remember more precisely -- I have an infinity of infinite sets of extensive parts external to each other. I'm composed to infinity. Second dimension: these infinite sets of extensive parts external to each other belong to me, but they belong to me according to characteristic relations, relations of movement and rest, about which I tried to state what their nature was the last time we met. Third dimension: these

characteristic relations only express a degree of power (*puissance*) which constitutes my essence, my very own essence, that is, a singular essence.

So, the three dimensions are the extensive parts external to each other that belong to me, the relations according to which these parts belong to me, and the essence as degree, *gradus* or *modus,* the singular essence which is expressed in these relations. And Spinoza never says it, because he doesn't have to say it. But we, his readers, are forced to notice a curious harmony between what and what? Between these three dimensions of individuality and what he calls, on a completely different occasion, the three kinds of knowledge. [*Pause*]

You remember the three kinds of knowledge, in fact, and you will see the strict parallelism between the three dimensions of individuality as such and the three kinds of knowledge. But that there is such a parallelism between the two must already leads us to certain conclusions. I mean, it's not a thing that he needs to say -- I insist on this because I would also like you to create some rules for reading any philosopher -- he's not going to say "look at this"; it's not up to him to explain. Once again, I insist on this greatly; you can't do two things at the same time. You cannot both say something and explain what you are saying. That's why things are so difficult. It's not up to Spinoza to explain what Spinoza said; Spinoza has better things to do, he has things to say. So, explaining what Spinoza says is not bad, but still it does not go far, it cannot go very far. That's why the history of philosophy has to be extremely modest. So, he's not going to tell us, "look at this", eh? "you can see that my three kinds of knowledge and then my three dimensions of the individual correspond with each other". It's not for him to say. But for us, in our modest task, it's up to us to say this.

And in fact, in what sense do they correspond? You remember that the first kind of knowledge is the set of inadequate ideas, that is, passive affections and passion affects that result from inadequate ideas. It's the set of signs, confused, inadequate ideas, and passions, affects that result from these affections. You have to remember all of that because this is what we've acquired in the last few meetings.[84] And under what conditions, what causes us, from the moment we exist, not only to be doomed to inadequate ideas and passions, but to be condemned and even, at first view, doomed to have only inadequate ideas and passive affects or passions? What creates our sad situation? [*Pause*] Understand that this is obvious; I don't want to go into too much detail here; I just want you to feel this, to sense this.

It is primarily insofar as we have extensive parts, insofar as we have extensive parts, [that] we are condemned to inadequate ideas. Why? Because what is the regime of extensive parts? Once again, they are external to each other. They pass through infinities, both at the same time. The simplest bodies, which are the ultimate parts, you remember, the simplest bodies, they have no interiority. They are always determined from the outside. What does that mean? Through shock, through shock from another part. In what forms do they encounter each other through shock? In the simplest form, namely that they constantly keep changing their relations since it is always in terms of a relation that the parts belong to me or don't belong to me. Parts of my body leave my body, there take another relation, the relation of arsenic, the relation of anything, the relation of the mosquito when it bites us, the relation... I do not stop integrating parts under my relations.

When I eat, for example, well, when I eat, there are extensive parts that I appropriate within myself.

What does that mean, appropriating parts within oneself? Appropriating parts within oneself means making them leave the previous relation they were realizing in order to take on a new relation, this new relation being one of my own relations, namely with meat, I make flesh within me. How awful! [*Laughter*] In the end, one has to live; it doesn't stop being like that, shocks and appropriations of parts, transformations of relations, compositions to infinity, etc. Good. And this regime of parts external to each other which never cease reacting, at the same time as the infinite sets into which they enter do not cease to vary. It is precisely this regime of the inadequate idea, of confused perceptions, and passive affects, and affect-passions that result from them.

In other words, it's because I am composed of an aggregate, an infinity of infinite sets of extensive parts, external to each other, that I do not cease having perceptions of external things, perceptions of myself, perceptions of myself in my relations with external things, perceptions of external things in relation to myself, and all of this is what constitutes the world of signs. When I say: ah this is good, ah that is bad, what are these signs of good and bad? These inadequate signs simply mean: ah well yes, I am encountering parts on the outside that agree with my own parts in their relations; [if] bad, I'm encountering, I'm encountering parts, on the outside as well, that do not suit me, in the relation through which they occur. So, you see that this whole domain of infinite sets of parts external to each other corresponds exactly to the first kind of knowledge. It is because I am composed of an infinity of extrinsic parts that I have inadequate perceptions. As a result, the first kind of knowledge corresponds to this first dimension of individuality. [*Pause*]

And we have seen precisely that the problem of kinds of knowledge was very well initiated by the Spinozist question, namely: well, in a sense, we might believe that we are condemned to the inadequate, to the first kind. Henceforth, how do we explain the possibility that we have to get out of this confused world, this inadequate world, this first kind of knowledge? In Spinoza's answer, it is that yes, there is a second kind of knowledge. But how does he define it, the second kind of knowledge? In the *Ethics*, it's very striking. Knowledge of the second kind is knowledge of relations, of their composition and their decomposition. One cannot say any better that the second kind of knowledge corresponds to the second dimension of individuality, since, in fact, extrinsic parts are not only extrinsic, each in relation to the others, but they are radically extrinsic, absolutely extrinsic.

So, what does it mean that extrinsic parts belong to me? We've seen it a thousand times. That only means one thing for Spinoza, namely that these parts are always determined from the outside to enter under one relation or another, according to one relation or another which characterizes me. And once again, what does it mean to die? To die only means one thing, that the parts which belonged to me according to one relation or another are determined from the outside to enter in another relation which does not characterize me, but which characterizes something else.

The first kind of knowledge is therefore the knowledge of the effects of encounters or the effects of actions and interactions, of the extrinsic parts on each other. Yes, we cannot define it better;

this is very clear here, very clear, eh? The effects defined by…, the effects caused through the shock or the encounter of the external parts upon each other define the entire first kind of knowledge. In fact, my natural perception is an effect of the shocks and collisions between external parts which compose me and external parts which compose other bodies.

But the second kind of knowledge is a completely different mode of knowledge. It is the knowledge of the relations that compose me and the relations that compose other things. You see, it is no longer the effects of encounters between parts, it's the knowledge of relations, namely the way in which my characteristic relations are composed with others and in which [*Pause*] my characteristic relations and other relations are decomposed. And here, this is adequate knowledge. And in fact, this knowledge can only be adequate, whereas the knowledge, which was satisfied with collecting why, since it's a knowledge which rises toward understanding causes… In fact, any relation whatsoever is a reason, any relation whatsoever is the reason through which an infinity of extensive parts belongs to one body rather than another.

Therefore, the second kind of knowledge – I'm simply emphasizing this -- is that it's not an abstract knowledge at all, as I have tried to say. If you create an abstract knowledge out of it, all of Spinoza collapses. So obviously, the mistake of commentaries is always seeking, always telling oneself, oh well yes, this is mathematics. But no, it's not math. It has nothing to do with math. Mathematics is simply a special case. Mathematics can indeed be defined as a theory of relations. So here, yes, math is a section of the second kind of knowledge. It is a theory of relations and proportions. See Euclid. Well, it's a theory of relations and proportions at that point, mathematics is part of the second kind. But to think that the second kind is a type of mathematical knowledge is an abominable stupidity because, at that point, all of Spinoza becomes abstract. We don't base our lives on mathematics, [we] must not exaggerate, whereas here, it's indeed a question of life problems.

That's why I remind you, I chose as an example -- because it seems infinitely more Spinozist to me than geometry or mathematics or even the Euclidean theory of proportions -- I chose as an example: well yes, what the adequate knowledge of the second kind means is at the level of learning to swim, "ah I know how to swim". No one can deny that knowing how to swim is a conquest of existence. This is fundamental; you understand, I conquer an element. An element, this doesn't go without saying, to conquer an element. I learn to swim, I learn to fly, all that is great. Okay, what does that mean? What does it mean? Well, it's very simple. Not knowing how to swim, what is that? It really means being at the mercy of encountering a wave. So you have the infinite set of water molecules that compose the wave, it composes a wave, and I am saying, it's a wave because these simplest bodies that I call molecules -- in fact, they're not the simplest – we would have to go even farther than water molecules. Water molecules already belong to a body, the aquatic body, the body of the ocean, the body etc., or the body of the pond, of a particular pond. [*Deleuze spells it out:* é-t-a-n-g] [*Laughter*][85]

Well then, what is knowledge of the first kind? Well, come on, I'm going, I'm starting, I'm within the first kind of knowledge. I'm starting, I'm dabbling (*je barbote*), as they say. What does it mean to dabble? Dabbling is very simple; the word dabble indeed indicates, as we indeed see, that it's extrinsic relations. Sometimes the wave buffets me, and sometimes it sweeps me

away. These are shock effects. These are shock effects, notably, I do not know anything about relations that are composed or decomposed. I receive the effects of extrinsic parts. The parts that belong to me are shaken, receive a shock effect from the parts that belong to the wave. And then sometimes I laugh and sometimes I whine, depending on whether the wave makes me laugh or clobbers me. [*Laughter*] I'm within the passion affects. "Ah mama, the wave clobbered me". Fine. "Ah mom, the wave clobbered me", a cry that we continuously repeat as long as we are in the first kind of knowledge, since we will not stop saying: "Ah, the table hurt me," and that is exactly the same as saying the other hurt me. [It's] not at all because the table is inanimate. Spinoza is so much smarter than anything they might have said afterwards. It's not because the table is inanimate that one shouldn't say that "it hurt me". It is as silly to say "Peter (*Pierre*) hurt me" as it is to say "a stone (*une pierre*) hurt me", or the wave hurt me. It's the same level, it's the first kind here. Fine. You follow me?

So, on the contrary, I learn to swim doesn't necessarily mean that I have a mathematical or physical, scientific knowledge of the movement of the wave. It means that I have a skill, an astonishing skill (*savoir-faire*), that is, I have a kind of sense of rhythm, a rhythmicity. What does rhythm mean? What does that mean, all of this? That means that I learn how to compose my characteristic relations directly with the relations of the wave. This doesn't occur any longer between the wave and me, that is, it doesn't happen between the extensive parts, the wet parts of the wave and the parts of my body. It occurs between relations, the relations that compose the wave, fine, the relations that compose my body and my ability, when I can swim, to present my body in relations that are made up directly with the relations of the wave. So, this means I dive at the right moment, I emerge at the right moment, I avoid the approaching wave or, on the contrary, I use it, etc., all of this art of composing relations.

And I was saying, it's the same thing, I'm looking for specific examples that are not mathematical, since, again, mathematics is just one area of that. We must say mathematics is the formal theory of the second kind of knowledge and not the second kind of knowledge. I am saying, it's the same with love. Yes, waves or love, it's the same. In a love of the first kind, well, you are perpetually in this regime of encounters between extrinsic parts. In what is called a "great love", "Camille" [*La Dame aux camélias*] -- how beautiful it is! [*Laughter*] -- well, there you have a composition of relations. Well, my example is serious because "Camille" is the first kind of knowledge, [*Laughter*][86] but in the second kind of knowledge, there you have a kind of composition of relations with each other. You are no longer in a regime of inadequate ideas, namely the effect of parts on my own, the effect of an external part or the effect of an external body on my own. There you reach a much deeper domain which is the composition of the characteristic relations of one body with the characteristic relations of another body, and that kind of flexibility or rhythm that results in your ability to present your body, and henceforth your soul as well, to present your soul or your body according to the relation that is most directly composed with the other's relation. You indeed sense that it's a strange happiness. Well there you have the second kind of knowledge.

And the third kind of knowledge, and why is there a third kind of knowledge? There is a third kind of knowledge because relations, well, these are not essences, Spinoza tells us. The third

kind of knowledge or intuitive knowledge, what is it? It goes beyond relations and their composition and decomposition. [*Pause*] This is the knowledge of essences. It goes further than relations, since it reaches the essence that is expressed in relations, the essence on which relations depend. In fact, if relations are my own, if relations characterize me, it's because they express my essence. What is my essence? It's a degree of power of action (*puissance*). Well, knowledge of the third kind is the knowledge that this degree of power of action takes from itself and takes from other degrees of power of action. This time, it is a knowledge of singular essences. [*Pause*] The second and, with all the more reason, the third kind of knowledge, are perfectly adequate.

So, you indeed see that there is a correspondence between kinds of knowledge and dimensions of individuality, which means what, ultimately, this coincidence? This means that the kinds of knowledge are more than kinds of knowledge; they are modes of existence. These are manners of living. But why are these manners of living? This becomes difficult because finally, every individual is made up of the three dimensions at the same time. This is where we will find something of a final problem.

You, me, anyone, any individual has all three dimensions at once. So, what can we do to get by? Every individual has all three dimensions at once, okay. This is exactly the problem: each individual has all three dimensions at the same time, and yet there are individuals who will never get out of the first kind of knowledge. They will not be able to rise to the second or third. They will never succeed in forming what Spinoza calls a "common notion", a common notion being precisely, I remind you, "the idea of a relation", the idea of a characteristic relation. With all the more reason, they will never have a knowledge of their singular essence, nor of other singular essences. How do you explain that? It's not at all automatic; each individual has the three dimensions. But careful, one doesn't have the three kinds of knowledge by that very fact; one may very well stay within the first. How do we explain this last point? [*Pause*]

Let's approach the question differently. When are there oppositions? For example, you can hate yourself; sometimes we hate each other. Hate [is] this kind of opposition of an existing mode from one individual to another individual; what is it? How do we explain hatred? Here we have a first text from Spinoza, book IV of the *Ethics*, the axiom which is at the beginning of book IV. [*Deleuze consults his copy*] This axiom is going to annoy us greatly, apparently, and Spinoza does not explain much about it.

Axiom: "There is no individual thing" -- that is, no individual -- "There is no individual thing in nature, than there is not another more powerful and strong." Up to that point, it's okay. There is no final power because the final power is all of nature. So, there is no final power in nature. A thing being given, it is defined by a degree of power (*puissance*). Well, there is always a higher degree of power. As powerful as I may be, there is always a degree of power... In fact, we have seen that there was an infinity of degrees of power. The infinite existing always in action, for Spinoza, is always given actually, is always given in action, a greater degree of power than the greatest degree of power that I can conceive. So, up to that point, this axiom would not be annoying.

But he adds: "There is no individual thing in nature, than there is not another more powerful and strong, but, whatsoever thing be given, there is something stronger whereby it can be destroyed." There this text ought to annoy us. Why? Because the second sentence provides unexpected precision. The first sentence tells us: A thing being given, it is defined by its power. But a degree of power being given, that is, something in its essence, the degree of power is the essence of a thing. Well, there is always a more powerful one. Okay, that's fine. We understand.

He adds a second sentence, careful: By the more powerful thing, the first thing can always be destroyed. This is really annoying. Why? Suddenly, we tell ourselves: Ah well, I didn't understand anything; what's going to happen? He seems to be telling us that an essence can be destroyed by the more powerful essence. So, at that point, there is no longer any third kind of knowledge. There is no longer even a second kind of knowledge because what is destruction? It's obviously the effect of one essence on another. If an essence can be destroyed by the more powerful essence, by the higher degree essence, this is a catastrophe, all Spinozism collapses. We are brought back to the effects; we are brought back to the first kind [of knowledge]. There can no longer be any knowledge of the essences. How would there be an adequate knowledge of the essences, if the essences are in relations such that one is destroying the other? [*Interruption of the recording*] [31:13]

Part 2

[A bit later, in book V],[87] there is a proposition thirty-seven, and the proposition thirty-seven includes, after its statement and after the demonstration of the proposition, includes an sidebar proposition under the title of "Scholia", and the Scholia tells us this: the axiom from the fourth part -- see? this is what I have just read -- the axiom from the fourth part concerns individual things insofar as we consider them in relation to a certain time and a certain place, which, I believe, no one doubts. Here, we have to laugh because nonetheless, if I insist on this "what nobody doubts", he waited so many pages, whereas he could have told us at the level [of book] IV; it would have helped us, and we would have been less annoyed. That's his business. Why does he only say it long after? He says it when he needs to say it.

What does this detail mean? He tells us: careful, the axiom of destruction, the axiom of opposition, one essence can oppose another to the point of destroying it, that is comprehensible only when we consider things in relation to a certain time and place. He doesn't tell us more. What does it mean to consider things in relation to a certain time and a certain place? That means considering them in their existence. What does it mean to consider them in their existence, considering them as they exist, as they have passed into existence, as they pass into existence? What does it mean? We've seen this.

What is it to pass into existence? It means this: we pass to existence, an essence passes into existence, when an infinity of extensive parts is determined, finds itself determined from outside to belong to it in a particular relation. I have an essence, me, me Pierre or Paul, I have an essence. I say that I pass into existence when an infinity of extensive parts is determined from outside, that is, through the shocks, which refers to other extensive parts, is determined from outside to enter into a relation that characterizes me. So before, I did not exist to the extent that I

did not have these extensive parts. That's what to be born is. I am born when an infinity of extensive parts is determined from the outside through the encounter with other parts to enter into a relation which is mine, that is, which characterizes me. See? At that point, at that point, I have a relation to a certain time and a certain place. What is this time and this place? The time of my birth and the place of my birth. It happened here. It's here.

Here and now, what is it? But this is the regime of extensive parts, the extensive parts. The sets of extensive parts always have a time and a place. Moreover, it will last what it will last. The extensive parts are determined from the outside to enter into a particular relation which characterizes us. But for how long? Until, until they are determined to enter into another relationship. At that point, they pass into another body. They no longer belong to me. It lasts a certain length of time. [*Pause*] Good. What does that mean then? How should this enlighten us? In fact, I can only speak of opposition between two individuals to the extent that these individuals are considered to exist, here and now. [That's] very important for the formation of relations of opposition. It is solely to the extent that individuals are considered to exist here and now that they can enter. This is not a question of kindness or wickedness. This is a question of logical possibility.

I can only have relations of opposition with another individual based on what? As a function of the extensive parts which compose us, which belong to us. That's the place, the milieu of the opposition. That's it. It's the extensive parts. And indeed, this is required; in the oppositions between individuals, what's this about? In the oppositions between individuals, it's always a question of knowing into what relation ultimately such infinite sets of extensive parts will enter. Imagine this sad situation: I am fighting with a dog to eat, to eat a kind of mash. [*Laughter*] Okay. [It's a] horrible sight. How to recount this, this spectacle? Well, well, [*Pause*] what is it? You have three terms: food, the dog and me. So, I bite the dog to grab his food. [*Laughter*] The dog, he swipes me with his paw.

Okay, what's going on? What is that? You have an infinite set of extensive parts in the meat relation. You have an infinite set of extensive parts in the dog relation. You have an infinite set of extensive parts in relation to me. And all of that swirls around, and all of that collides. Namely, me, I want to conquer the extensive parts of the meat to assimilate them to myself, that is, to impose my relation on them, to act so that they no longer realize the meat relation and so that they come to realize one of my own relations. The dog wants the same thing. I bite the dog, that is, I want to make him run off, etc., etc. ... Him, he bites me. Finally, we get stuck in this. This is the domain of oppositions. Opposition is effort. This is the respective effort of each existent [being] to appropriate the extensive parts. What does it mean to appropriate extensive parts, that is, to act so that they realize the relation that corresponds to a particular individual? Fine. [*Pause*]

In a way, I can always say: I am destroyed by what's stronger than I am. And indeed, as long as I exist, this is the risk of existence. [*Pause*] Fine. And this risk of existence is as one with what is called death since, once again, what is death? It is the fact that Spinoza will call necessary in the sense of inevitability, that the extensive parts, which belonged to me within one of my characteristic relations, cease to belong to me and pass under another relation which characterizes other bodies. This is inevitable by the very law of existence. An essence will

always encounter a stronger essence than its own within conditions of existence which means that, henceforth, the stronger essence destroys, destroys what? Literally, [it] destroys the belonging of the extensive parts to the first essence. [*Pause*] Okay, fine.

But I am saying, first -- even if it means correcting this later, and I am saying that it will indeed have to be corrected -- I am saying: suppose now that I am dead. I am dead. Okay, I'm dead. For Spinoza, this will take on an abstract air, but it's linked. It's up to you to make an effort. I'm going to try to say later why it doesn't seem abstract to me but make an effort. I am dead. Fine. What does it mean? Once again, if you accept these premises which are not at all, it seems to me, abstract theory, which are really a manner of living, if this is indeed death, it means that there are no more extensive parts. There is no longer any extrinsic set that belongs to me. I am dispossessed. Fine, I'm dispossessed. I have no more parts. That means: my characteristic relations stop being realized. It means all that, but not just that.

So, what doesn't death prevent? What, according to Spinoza, what that does not prevent is that: my relations stop being realized, fine, but there is an eternal truth in these relations. They are not realized, but we have seen that, for Spinoza, the relations were largely independent of their terms. Realizing a relation means: terms occur that realize the relation. A relation is realized through its terms. Here [in death], there are no more terms which realize it. But the relation is not reduced to the terms which realize it. So, the relation has an eternal truth insofar as being a relation, a truth independent of its terms. It is no longer realized, but it remains actual insofar as being a relation. It's not that it passes into the state of virtuality. There is an actuality of the unrealized relation.

And with all the more reason, there is an actuality of the essence which is expressed in the relation since the essence is not at all an extensive part. It's an intensive part. It's a degree of power (*puissance*). Well, this degree of power no longer corresponds to it at all -- this degree, fine, we saw it the last time -- this degree of intensity no longer corresponds to it in extension. There are no more extensive parts that correspond to the intensive part. Okay, good. But, the reality of the intensive part, insofar as being intensive, it remains. In other words, there is a double eternity, entirely correlative. There is a double eternity, the eternity of the relation or of relations which characterize it, and the eternity of the essence, of the individual essence which constitutes us, which, for its part, cannot be affected by death.

And moreover, at this level, as he says in Book V, from the text that I have just read, at this level, there can be no opposition. Why? Because all relations are composed to infinity according to the laws of relations. There are always relations that are composed, and, on the other hand, all the essences agree with all the essences. Each essence agrees with all the others insofar as being a pure degree of intensity. In other words, for Spinoza, to say that a degree of power, or a degree of intensity, destroys another degree of intensity, is a meaningless proposition. The phenomena of destruction can only exist on the level they have for status (*pour statut*). And they refer to the regimes of the extensive parts which belong provisionally to me. [*Pause*]

Henceforth, what does that mean? I feel, I experience that I am eternal. It's not, "I know it." What I would like to have you sense is the difference between the two propositions. "I know, I know, and I maintain that I am immortal". This is, if you will, the proposition; you could say it's a

proposition, I don't know, a theological proposition. "I know and I maintain that I am immortal". And, I feel and experience that I am eternal. And in fact, in Book V, Spinoza attacks any conception of immortality. He tells us: no, no. This is not a question of saying that everyone is immortal; it's about saying that everyone is eternal. And this is not at all the same. Why is it not at all the same? How is this presented by Spinoza? What is this experimentation? It's more than -- I think you have to take the word in the strongest sense -- it's not just: I experience, I have experience. Rather, it is: to experience in an active manner. I experience that I am eternal. What is this experiment?

Very curious, if you look in literature, it comes much later; it's in 19th century English literature that you will find a kind of Spinozism of this type, eternity, a kind of experimentation with eternity, and strangely, also linked to the idea of intensity, as if I could only experience eternity in an intensive form. And this is a frequent theme among authors who precisely do not seem to me so far from Spinoza, even if they do not know it, authors like [D.H.] Lawrence, to a lesser extent like [John Cowper] Powys, a kind of experience of eternity in the form of the intense. There we are.[88]

I'm trying to make this more concrete. As long as you exist, you exist, you oppose others. We all oppose each other. And Spinoza doesn't at all say that we should get out of this. He knows that this is absolutely necessary. It's a dimension. It's a dimension of existence, okay. But, he says, there you go, let's take two extreme cases. Take individual A, individual Pierre. Let's take Pierre, who spends most of it -- you will see how there, Spinoza becomes very nuanced and very concrete -- we can say of Pierre that he spent his life, roughly speaking, in the first kind of knowledge. Yes, this is even the case for most people, since according to Spinoza, a bit of philosophy is still necessary to get out of the first kind of knowledge. You have to ... Yes, fine. Take the case of someone who lives in the first kind of knowledge, the largest part. Why do I specify the largest part? In fact, you have to be very optimistic; this doesn't happen all the time.

This someone, anyway, will have understood a little something in his life, once, not for long. One day, one evening, one evening when he gets home, he will have understood a little something. He felt like he understood a little something. Maybe he will have really understood something, and then all his life, he will spend it trying to forget what he had understood because it was so striking. All of a sudden, he thought, "But what? What ... There's something wrong." Everyone, everyone, even the last of the wretches has had this experience. Even the last fool has brushed up against something that... where he said to himself, "But, wouldn't I be ... Wouldn't I have spent my whole life deceiving myself?" So, we always emerge a bit from the first kind of knowledge. That is, in Spinozist terms, he will have understood, even on a tiny point, he will have had an intuition of, either of something essential, or else he will have had a kind of, either the intuition of something essential, yes, or an understanding of a relation.

There are even -- so here, we can be very generous -- there are very few people who are totally stupid. There's always something they understand. I mean, we're all, we all have our little thing, for example, a sense... some have an amazing sense of a particular animal. It doesn't stop them from being mean, all that. But there they have, they have something. Ah, yes, there. Or else, the sense of wood. Ah, yes, that. This guy, this imbecile, this imbecile is so mean, [but] at least when he talks about trees, there is something, one feels that there is something. And then we spend our

time having these experiences. Ah, there, yes. The feeling that, if you will, it's over, that even the worst clown... There's a point at which, no, it's over being a clown. Finally, there is something. Okay, that's how it is.

You can tell yourself, well yes, nobody is condemned to the first kind of knowledge. There is always, always a little hope. Fine. Oh, that's very important. And, because once again, how we save ourselves is solely, and very strangely, in being unable even to talk about duration anymore, in being forced actually to talk about instants. There are always instants in which there is a glimmer in someone. Ah, he was less obnoxious than I thought. It was enough to locate this something. So, of course, sometimes we are so... We no longer want to discover. So, fine. And then, it quickly changes back. It quickly changes back. But I don't know, the worst police officer, the worst... I don't know, there is surely a little something about him, surely.

So, Spinoza is not at all calling for the Salvation Army, "you have to save everyone", no. [*Laughter*] He wants to tell us something else. He wants to tell us: there we are, there we are, you understand, it's very complicated because ultimately, your existence is a matter of proportions. What does this mean "a matter of proportions"? Well, okay: You have extensive parts that compose you. And, as long as you exist, there is no question of giving this up. That's completely stupid: what would it be to give up the extensive parts that compose you, that is, to give up all the combinations of existence, just like that, to withdraw from lived oppositions? I'm withdrawing from lived oppositions. Ah, good, well, I'm only eating grass, I'm living in a cave, etc. This is basically what's always been called asceticism.

That doesn't interest Spinoza at all. It even seems to him a very, very shady solution, very, very suspicious. He goes so far as to think that the ascetic is deeply wicked, and that the ascetic pursues an inexpiable hatred, an inexpiable hatred against the world, against nature, etc. So, that's not what Spinoza wants to tell us at all. He's telling us: be careful. In your existence, well, it's a matter of certain relative proportions, between what and what?

You'll grant me a... So, now, I have my three dimensions of the individual: my extensive parts; second, relations; third, the essence or the intensive part that constitutes us. I can express them in the following form:

The extensive parts that belong to me are just like the inadequate ideas that I have, they are necessarily inadequate. So, these are the inadequate ideas that I have, and the passions that arise from these inadequate ideas. The relations that characterize me when I reach their knowledge are common notions or adequate ideas. Essence as pure intensive part, as pure degree of power which constitutes us, it is still one and several adequate ideas. Spinoza tells us: in your existence, you yourself can have a vague idea of the proportion that there is between the inadequate ideas and passions, since the two are linked, the inadequate ideas and passion affects which fill your existence, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the adequate ideas and active affects to which you are striving.

I will remind you of the inadequate ideas. I'm going to finish quickly to see if... to ask you if you understood. Inadequate ideas and passions refer to the dimension of existence, to the first dimension: having extensive parts. The other two aspects, knowledge of relations and knowledge

of degrees of power, as intensive part, refer to the two other aspects: characteristic relations and essence as intensive part. Suppose that in my existence, I have relatively... It's not a question of renouncing the extensive parts; it would be killing oneself, and we have seen what Spinoza thought of suicide. Imagine that during my existence, I have relatively achieved -- and Spinoza says: the more it would be impossible since you have extensive parts and you are subject to the law of extensive parts -- no, but suppose you have attained, relatively frequently, adequate ideas and active affects. This is a case, a first case.

And the second case, imagine the other case. You have achieved it, very, very rarely, and not durably. Fine. Now, put yourself into the moment of your death. [This is] very concrete, all that. When you die, in the first case and in the second case, what happens? In the second case, when you die, that means, in any case, your extensive parts disappear, that is, they enter into other bodies, that is, they realize other relations than yours. And so, when you die, and when, in the second case, you have held in the majority of your existence inadequate ideas and passive affects, that means that what dies is relatively the largest part of yourself. It's proportionally the greatest part of yourself.

On the other hand, in the other case, it is curious, it is there that a kind of relative proportion comes in. I mean, that's what's important in book V. If you miss it in book V, at the same time he says it explicitly, I think you can't understand the movement of the book V. In the other case: suppose that, in your existence, you have, on the contrary, proportionately reached a relatively large number of adequate ideas and active affects. At that point, what dies from you is a relatively small, insignificant part.

So, it's very curious. It seems to me that there, the idea of existence as a test (*épreuve*) is reintroduced in Spinoza. But it's not a moral test at all. It's like a kind of physico-chemical test. I experience that I am eternal. Yes. What does this text mean? What does it mean? I'm experiencing it from now onward, on what condition? That's not at all the question "does the soul survive the body?", not at all the question. The question of immortality is: in what sense and in what form does the soul survive the body? As it has been posited by theology and philosophy, from -- if you will, there, it seems to me that whatever their differences which are great -- from Plato to Descartes.

From Plato to Descartes, what is posed is really the question of the immortality of the soul. And the immortality of the soul, at that point, it necessarily goes through the problem of a before and an after. Why? What determines the before and the after from the point of view of the immortality of the soul, namely, the moment of the union of the soul and the body, specifically, the before of the soul is before the incarnation, before the soul unites with a body? The after, the after of immortality is after... the soul, after death, that is, after [it has been joined to the body].

Hence the discomfort of all the authors who wanted to speak of an immortality of the soul. What is their discomfort? It's that the immortality of the soul can be grasped or can be conceived only through the still temporal kinds of a before and an after. And this is already the whole theme of the *Phaedo* which deals with the immortality of the soul, in Plato. The dialogue of Plato, *Phaedo*, proposes a great doctrine of the immortality of the soul, precisely in the form of the before and the after, before the union, after the union.

When Spinoza opposed eternity to immortality, you can see quite well what he means. From the standpoint of immortality, if you will, I can know that the soul is immortal. But what does immortality consist of? It consists of saying that I know, for example, I then know by what knowledge -- that's something else -- but I know that my soul does not die with my body. Even if I admit the Platonic idea that this is a kind of knowledge, I do not know in what form. And everyone says so. Why? Because immortality indeed seems to exclude the before and the after. Through this, it's already an eternity. But precisely it can only be learned or known in kinds of the before and the after. And Descartes will say it again. In what form? That the soul is immortal, this I can say, I am sure, according to Descartes. But, in what form? I do not know. I can at most affirm that, affirm that there is a before and that there is an after, that the soul is not born with the body and that it does not die with the body. I can affirm the "that"; I cannot assert the "what" or the "how". An intellectual intuition would be necessary, as they say... as they say. But we don't have intellectual intuition. Very well.

Spinoza doesn't pose the problem in that way because, for him, the problem is not at all a before and an after; it's an at the same time as. I mean, it's at the same time that I am mortal that I experience that I am eternal. To experience that I am eternal does not mean that there is a before, that there has been a before, and that there will be an after. It means that, from now forward, I'm experiencing something that cannot exist within the form of time.

And what is it if it cannot exist within the form of time? Namely, that there are two absolutely opposite meanings of the word "part", namely, there are parts that I have. These are the extensive parts, external to each other, and these, I have them in the time mode. Indeed, I have them temporarily, I have them within duration. I have them in time mode. These are parts external to each other, extensive parts that I have. Fine.

But when I say, "intensive part", I mean something completely different. The two meanings of the word "part" differ in nature. Because when I say, "intensive part equals essence", it is no longer a part that I have. These are no longer parts that I have. This is a part that I am. I am a degree of power; I am an intensive part. I am an intensive part, and the other essences are also intensive parts. Parts of what? Well, parts of the power of God, says Spinoza. Good. He talks like that, so fine.

To experience that I am eternal is to experience that "part", in the intensive sense, differs in nature, coexists and differs in nature from "part" in the extrinsic, extensive sense. I experience here and now that I am eternal, that is, that I am an intensive part or a degree of power irreducible to the extensive parts that I have, that I possess. As a result, when the extensive parts are torn from me, equaling death, that does not concern the intensive part that I am for all eternity. I experience that I am eternal, but once again, on one condition, provided that I am raised to ideas and to affects that give this intensive part an actuality. [*Pause*] It's in this sense that I experience that I am eternal.

So, this is an experiment (*expérimentation*) which means an eternity, but of "coexistence", not an "immortality" of succession. It is from now forward in my existence that I experience the irreducibility of the intensive part that I am for all eternity, that I am eternally with the extensive parts that I have within the form of duration. But, if I have not actualized my essence, or even my

relations, if I have remained within the law of the extensive parts which encounter each other from outside, at that point, I do not even have the idea to experience that I am eternal. At that point, when I die, yes, I lose the greatest part of myself. On the other hand, if I made my part intensive, "proportionally the largest", what does that mean? Here, obviously, there is indeed a small difficulty. Now it brings into play, if you will, in a kind of proportional calculation, the extensive parts that I have and the intensive part that I am.

It's difficult since there is no common nature between the two meanings of the word "part". So how can he say that one and the other are larger or smaller relative to each other? He tells us: when I die, sometimes what perishes, namely the extensive parts which go elsewhere, what perishes from me is in some cases the largest part, in the other case, on the contrary, a fairly insignificant, fairly small part. It would therefore be necessary that the intensive part and the extensive parts have some sort of common criterion in order to return to this rule of proportion, namely, of the two cases, of the two extreme cases in which sometimes the extensive parts that disappear constitute the largest part of myself, sometimes, on the contrary, they constitute only a small part of myself because it is the intensive part which took the largest part of myself.

Well, we cannot go any further, namely that perhaps it's up to us, in existence, to establish this kind of calculation of proportions or lived sense of proportion. It must be said that, yes, what is important in a life? Good. What is important? The criterion of importance. What are you going to give importance to? This is importance. It's... We must almost give importance to importance. This, it isn't important; that, it's important. We would almost have to make of it a criterion of existence. What do people judge as important in their lives? Is it... What's important, is it talking on the radio? Is it creating a stamp collection? Is it good health? Perhaps, all of this... Is it... What is a happy life in the sense that someone dies saying to himself: after all, I generally did what I wanted, I did pretty much what I wanted, or what I hoped for? Yes, that's good. What is this curious blessing that one can give to oneself and which is the opposite of a self-contentment?

What does that mean, this category, what's important? No, we agree, that's annoying, but it's not important. What is this calculation? Isn't that it? Isn't it the category of the remarkable or the important that would allow us to create proportions between the two irreducible meanings of the word "part", what depends on and what results from the intensive part of myself and what, on the contrary, refers to the extensive parts that I have?

So, and then obviously, there is always the problem: premature death. The singular essence passes into existence, good, and then... I'm a baby that gets crushed. Well. How far does the Spinozist rule apply, namely: but the time that I last does not matter in the end? Spinoza says it very firmly, and there, he has the right to say it since he did not die very old, but still, he was not a crushed baby. [*Laughter*] He had time to write the *Ethics*, so still, the babies who die, Spinoza's rule: but after all, when I die, it only means one thing, namely, I no longer have extensive parts.

Here, we are embarrassed when facing the case of premature deaths. Because a premature death ... Fine, we can always say: he has his eternal essence. But this eternal essence, once again, as we read in Spinoza, is not simply an essence like a mathematical figure. It's an essence which exists as an essence only to the extent that it has passed through existence, that is, in which it has

realized its degree, in which it has realized its degree for itself, that is, the intensive part that it was. It goes without saying that when I die prematurely, I did not realize the intensive part that I was. In other words, I have not at all expressed, I have not at all "caused to be" the intensity that I am. So, it's okay when you die, all the same, at a certain age, but all those who die before... I believe that there, in fact, you must not... You must rather... [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

If we imagine that a correspondent could have said that to Spinoza, to ask Spinoza that, what would Spinoza have answered? I don't think that he would have been clever at all with this. He wouldn't have at all... He would have said something like: well, yes, that it was part of the irreducible exteriority of nature. You see, it's like everything, the whole cohort of people who have existed, who will exist, who are poisoned, etc., that this whole problem of the extensive part of ourselves, was such that in some cases it could indeed make… I would say that, in Spinozist terms, we must almost say: the one who dies prematurely, well yes, this is a case where death is imposed in such a way that, it is imposed in such conditions that, at that time, it concerns the greatest part of the individual concerned.

But what we call a happy life means doing everything we can, and that, Spinoza says formally, doing everything we can precisely to ward off premature death, that is, to prevent premature deaths. What does that mean? Not at all preventing death, but acting so that death, when it does happen, ultimately only concerns the smallest part of me. There we are, I believe, as he saw it, experienced and felt things. Good. I mean, do you have any reactions, questions to ask?... Yes? But no theory, just feeling. [*Laughter*]

A student: I would like to emphasize the fact that in the *Ethics*, when Spinoza says, "I don't understand," *intelligo*, he said “I”. When he wants to cite an example, he says Paul or Peter. When he says: we feel and we experience, it is a “we” who matter. That means: it's all the aggregate. In the same way, when he talks about the intellectual love of God in book V, it is: *omnium*, it is all together. So maybe premature death can be corrected, in some way, through this alliance, basically, through this community.

Deleuze: Yes. What you say is quite deeply true because the "we", that means that, on the level of essences, there can be opposition, once again, only on the level of existences and extensive parts. So, the essences, they all agree with each other, insofar as being essences. So, to say, in fact, that these are the essences whose lives have been relatively successful, who can do, who can take care of these premature deaths, yes, that is fine. You are right. Yes, yes. No doubt, yes. Yes. [*Pause*] Did [Spinoza] have an untimely death? To his liking, surely. He didn't have an untimely death, however; he died before he finished a book he cared about, eh? But certainly, it's hard to say how someone died, but it's hard to imagine him dying other than ... really telling himself that he had done what he wanted. Because that's true, he did what he wanted.

The student: He has eternity because eternity… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:18:02]

Part 3

Deleuze: ... a consequence, yes.

The student: It makes it easier to distinguish the second kind and the third kind of knowledge, because at one point, basically, ... you stop differentiating.

Deleuze: Yes, that's because I didn't have time, yes, no, I'm not saying, there can be advantages. You are insisting on a community of essences, yes. Once again, for me, it's only a consequence; the community derives from the essences and is not consecutive to essences. It's true, it's true, a difference is indeed possible, in fact. One could conceive a completely different presentation, which emphasizes the suitability of the essences with each other, above all, yes. I'll tell you; I think they are only suitable to the extent that they have been successfully realized. So for me, the suitability is... [*Deleuze does not complete this*] So, we wouldn't be in disagreement, but again there too, it's a difference in emphasis; as I always tell you in a reading, you are forced to place your own accents. Good!... Yes?

Another student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: It's not what?

The student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: I can answer only on the following point: what does Spinoza tell us about this? Oh obviously, for him, facing death on one's own terms (*aller au-devant de la mort*) is the very type, it's almost the summit of the inadequate life, and we understand very well why: it's because he has an idea in which he believes, and I believe that he has an idea, one of the deepest ideas that we have had. He believes that by nature, death, whatever it is, comes only from outside, that death fundamentally is the law of the parts external to each other, and that otherwise, the very idea of death has no meaning, whereas death always comes from outside. Where Spinoza is very strong, in my opinion, is that he is the only one who completely reconciles the idea that death is inevitable, and that all death comes from the outside. It's generally when we say "death comes from outside", we receive as an objection: ah, but then, if death comes from outside, it has no necessity; after all, you might not die, this is stupid (*idiot*). Spinoza affirms at once the radical exteriority of death, all death is external, all death comes from outside. There is never a death that comes from within. Spinoza is among those for whom the very idea of a death drive is a grotesque, absolutely grotesque concept, that it really is... And... Yes?

Richard Pinhas: The writer Armand Farrachi has an intuition that is complementary to Spinoza's idea. Except for the possible scenarios of being crushed, the creative person possesses an idea that we find frequently, notably among musicians. It's a kind of intimate sense of duration related to the accident. A particular writer is going to devote his or her whole live – that is, 80 years – to develop his work, giving Victor Hugo as the example, and someone else will take two years, three years to do his work, here, like Rimbaud and Lautréamont, and indeed at twenty-five, they will be done, while others will have finished at eighty, and we find exactly the same cases in famous musicians such as Mozart for one case, and Bach for the other. And they say somehow equivalent things; it cannot be said that the work of Bach is more important than that of Mozart, or that the work of Hugo is more important than that of Rimbaud. So, everything happens as if there was a speed of unfolding, a kind of intimate perception of duration given for

the creation of a work and that, at the end, there is this accidental relationship which puts an end to this work, but in all these cases, the work will be completed.

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, yes... I even think that we should choose, in addition, some non-sublime examples, namely non-aesthetic, non-artistic ones. This kind of apprehension, of evaluation, of time that remains, is a feeling which then is, which is a very, very, deep feeling in existence, and to what extent? It occurs with what kind of quantity; how does it occur? When people feel like they don't have much time left... [they] start organizing, how to say it, tidying up their business, putting things in their place! Oh, that's interesting. Fine, so there are those assessments.

What is very important in what Richard says, it seems to me, is that it is not an overall assessment at all. It is not linked to age, it is not linked to an age, this feeling, in fact, which comes from the depths and which makes me say: oh, well, maybe I'm reaching the end, I'm reaching the end, and this is the opposite of panic; all that is the opposite of anxiety. How to explain it? I come back to this: "death always comes from outside"; yes okay, it always comes from outside. There is no accidental death. Old age also comes from outside; all that comes from outside. It is an attrition of the external parts.

So, what is very interesting is that, on the one hand, there are the general laws of the species. I know that the species implies a particular duration, roughly, a particular overall duration, so there are general determinations of the species, but ... What does it mean that a species lasts for so long? For example, a cat lives so many years, a man lives so many years on average. What do these life averages mean? It means that there are global durations, statistical durations which mark the time according to which extensive parts belong to a particular essence. A cat essence, how long does a cat live? Ten years, twelve years ... [*A student says*: Eighteen years!] Eighteen years? [*Laughter*] Monsters, right, normally? [*Laughter*] Okay, well, those are lucky cats, eh? Eighteen years for a cat, oh là là... What a disaster! Well! Well eighteen years, it's huge, no? I think that's an exceptional cat. [*Laughter*] Humans currently live, I don't know, what's the average length of time? [*Some suggestions*] The time during which, once again, the extensive parts belong to me, in relations that characterize me.

Fine! But what makes these extensive parts belong to me and cease belonging to me, all of that is in the realm of extrinsic accidents, just that extrinsic accidents have laws. It's obvious that they have laws. So, in this sense, death is absolutely necessary, it is absolutely inevitable, but it always responds to laws that regulate the relations between parts external to each other. It's in this sense that it always comes from outside. Simply, precisely, as Spinoza says all the time: "I am a part of nature", that is, I am open onto this entire world of exteriority. In this sense, death is inevitable; the more it comes from the outside, the more it is needed. There we are, there we are!

Georges Comtesse: There is a problem ... [*Inaudible*] ... Death comes from outside, if it comes from outside, there is, coming from outside, an affection, [*Pause*] a mortal affection which comes from outside and which passes into the interior. The problem arises or would arise if there is an adequate idea of affection, and if the affects of which Spinoza speaks can, above all joy or sadness, can bring about an adequate idea of mortal affection as coming... that would be a problem that would arise for Spinoza. We must not forget that there are certain texts by Spinoza in which he says: he is like a sick person, and a sick person who will die, who will sink if he

precisely does not find a path toward salvation. When Spinoza speaks like that in the first texts, it is not simply a death which comes from outside; it is the effect of an affection, or an impulse which causes a disease and, for this disease, a cure must be found. And the cure is a form of thought or precisely a form of knowledge, as he says. But one cannot simply say, without remaining at a very simple axiom: death simply comes from outside.

For example, for example, there are certain images which take part in affection; it's incomprehensible if one left the lethal affection within the axiom of the radical exteriority. For example, I think of a text by Henry Miller, for example, in *The World of Sex*. Henry Miller relates not an event; he is seeking, for example, as we said earlier, as some attempt to forget their whole existence, certain events, but he is speaking in *The World of Sex* of an almost unforgettable event, and that still affects him, and so he does not understand at all either what produces this affection in him, or what brings about this occurrence of affection when he thinks that it's the event, or he says when he saw the sex of a little girl for the first time, he immediately had a very strange impression that this little girl was splitting in two -- he was eight years old, he said -- this little girl was immediately splitting in two, and there arose a superimposed man with an iron mask, and this is a very strange experience. And so, well, the man in the iron mask said to him, there is a whole series starting from there, he speaks of an African mask and the same hallucination of the man in the iron mask, he says "that there must be a connection between excitement and so-called virile aggressiveness", and precisely this event there, he does not understand the connection. So here we have a type of even secondary affection which, for a writer, well, in his very experience of writing, he doesn't manage to express to himself. So, there are silent or unspeakable affections. And the problem that arises when we talk about, when we want to axiomatize death by saying that it is a death that comes from outside, it's the problem precisely both of unspeakable affection and of effects of affection that arise, and precisely series of events based on its effects.

Deleuze: Well, I admit that I understand everything you say. It may even seem very interesting, but I admit that, in my opinion, it's not at all Spinozist …

Comtesse: Ah, but I didn't say it was Spinozist!

Deleuze: Ah okay! Because Spinoza would not speak about death that comes from outside, he does not think that, henceforth, it necessarily passes within. Because if you have understood, there is no interiority at this level in Spinoza. Everything is exterior, and it remains exterior.

The only interiority as Spinoza conceives it is -- and he uses the word – is, instead of singular essence, he will speak of intimate essence. The singular essence is, in fact, defined by intimacy. What does that mean? It means that, insofar as it's an intensive part, it has an interiority, it has an interiority. What does its interiority consist of? Strangely enough, the interiority of a degree of power (*puissance*) is the manner in which it encompasses in itself the other degrees of power, and this is one of the great differences between extensive parts and intensive parts. Any intensive part whatsoever is a *pars intima*, that is, an intimate part. What does an intimate part mean? Once again, this is very specific; that means that a degree of power, as such, encompasses in itself -- and the lower degrees of power, they do not get mixed in -- but it encompasses in itself both the lower degrees of power and the higher degrees of power. It's in this way that all the essences

agree with each other by virtue of this intimacy of all the essences within each essence. What you said earlier, I could repeat at the level of the suitability of essences and of this intimacy of essences. So, there is an interiority at this level for Spinoza, and at the level of existence and extensive parts, there is only exteriority, there is no interiority.

So, the affects which depend on the extensive parts remain only affects of exteriority. As a result, I believe that Spinoza could not embrace the formulation that Comtesse just used, namely, "an affect from outside necessarily passes within". It cannot pass within since internal affect can only be an affect "of essence insofar as being essence", insofar as being an intensive part, insofar as being a degree of power. Whereas [for] the affects coming from outside, this can only be affects that depend on the interactions between parts external to each other. There is no communication between the two. I can go from the first kind to the second kind or to the third. An affect of the first kind, a passion affect does not pass into the interior, that is, does not become affect of essence.

So, your whole development is very interesting, with an example to raise goosebumps! You understand how Miller… Miller is a funny author in this regard, as far as what concerns us here, because there are really pages which are undoubtedly Spinozist in Miller, but he isn't a Spinoza commentator, so he is entirely within his rights. Sometimes he proceeds with the coherence of his own inspiration, [and] he has some very, very Spinozist elements of inspiration. This goes back to all of Henry Miller's pantheism, and then he has inspirations that come completely from elsewhere, if only a whole side that comes to him from Dostoevsky, and then the best, the most beautiful [is] what comes to him from within himself, namely what makes all his inspirations consistent with one another, agree with each other.

And to what extent, if you will, the whole element that you have developed is obviously non-Spinoza, it is not difficult if you remember Spinoza's ideal. Spinoza's ideal -- I did not bring it up again, but I take this opportunity to do so here -- is really that the world of inadequacy and passion is the world of equivocal signs; it's the world of obscure and equivocal signs. And what you have developed in a Miller-like style is the example of an obscure sign. And for Spinoza here, Spinoza is without any nuance: you drag yourself into the first kind of knowledge; you drag yourself through the worst existence as long as you stick to equivocal signs. Whether these signs are those of sexuality, or those of theology, or anything else, no matter where these signs come from, whether they are signs of the prophet, or signs of the lover, it's all the same. It's all the same. This is the world of equivocal signs. And, on the other hand, the entire ascent towards the second kind and the third kind of knowledge is to suppress to the maximum -- which is always to say "to the maximum" by virtue of the law of proportions; we are condemned, of course, there will always be equivocal signs, we will always be under their law, it's the same law as the law of death -- but the more you can substitute for equivocal signs, the domain of univocal expressions, and it's so ... [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

So, the problem of sex, *The World of Sex*, well obviously, Spinoza would not have written a book on the world of sex. Why wouldn't he write about the world of sex? Why is it that, for Spinoza, here, I don't need to replace him, it's obvious here that he tells us something about it, he would say to us: "Oh but it exists, it exists, sexuality exists. It's even whatever you want, whatever you want, but it's your business. Do you make it the main part of your existence or a

relatively secondary part?" Why for him, he would say on his own behalf, obviously this is also a question of temperament. By nature, I believe that Spinoza was basically someone chaste, like all philosophers first of all, and especially him. I say, why? Why? It's very ingrained, if you will, from a Spinozist perspective. For him, sexuality is inseparable from the obscurity of signs.

If there was unequivocal sexuality, ah, he would be completely in favor; it's not that he's against sexuality. If you could draw out and experience univocal expressions within sexuality, he would say to you: "Go ahead, go ahead, that's what you have to do." But now, it turns out, is he wrong or is he right? Are there unequivocal loves? It would seem, rather, and it seems that we have gone entirely in this direction, that far from discovering resources of univocity in sexuality, we have, on the contrary, juggled, caused the equivocity of the sexual to proliferate, and it has been one of the greatest successes of psychoanalysis to develop in every sense the extraordinary equivocity of the sexual. So, the Spinoza criteria here, it's not about... It's about first understanding them. Spinoza would say: "You understand, you mustn't blame me," but Spinoza would say, tell us, "That doesn't interest me very much" because he would say: "you privilege sexuality... [one musn't] privilege sexuality to this extent because if you stick to the equivocal signs, you find them everywhere. [You] shouldn't worry about it. You can be a prophet as well, you can be a prophet, you can be perverse, you can be a prophet, you don't have to go looking for stuff about... about bisexuality, for example, or about the mystery of sex, or about the mystery of birth. Signs, take them wherever you want, if you like equivocal signs."

But once it's said that Spinozism -- if it is true what I proposed to you, is almost the interpretation, the only point of interpretation to which I held since the beginning of these sessions on Spinoza -- if really Spinozism is a practical effort that tells us, for those who would agree with such a project, with such an attempt, it tells us something that you understand: what causes your sorrow, your anguish, is precisely that you live in a world of equivocal signs. And what I, Spinoza, am proposing to you, is a kind of concrete effort to replace this world of the obscure, this world of night, this world of the equivocal sign, with a world of another nature which you are going to extract from the first, you are not going to oppose from the outside, you are going to extract from the first with great care and which is a world of unequivocal expressions.

In this, Spinoza would be quite modern, quite like us. As for sexuality, he thinks that there is not, that there is no univocal expression of the sexual. So, in a way, okay, it comes from outside, it comes from outside. That is, go ahead, but don't make it the greatest part of yourself, because if it is the greatest part of yourself, at that point, when death arrives, or as well, when impotence arrives, the legitimate impotence of age, when all this comes, well, you will lose the greatest part of yourself. Yes, Spinoza's idea is very odd; it's that ultimately, "the biggest part of myself will be which I will have done during my existence as being the biggest part of myself." So, if I choose a mortal part, if I make a mortal part the greatest part of myself, well, at the extreme, I die entirely by dying and I die in despair...

A woman student: Yes but...

Deleuze: Yes?

The woman student: For me, I think, so if we hold onto the knowledge of the second kind as do most, because even about this condition of the third genre, we dare not speak of it, we don't talk about it, so if we limit ourselves to this condition of the second kind, what happens, what occurs?

Deleuze: Ah, that's fine, that works as well. One should say instead, "What are we missing if we stick to the third kind?"

The student: Why? It must give us something... [*Deleuze speaks at the same time*: Yes, yes, no, yes] It must give us something...

Deleuze: Yes, that's absolutely true. What is missing is that I believe here... it's that, in the knowledge of the second kind, we understand everything... [*Pause*] about what? We understand everything about relations, and there we can go no further than in the area of relations. What does that mean? That means that we understand the relation, the respective relations between three individuals. Why do I say between three individuals, and not between two or four? Because the relationship between three individuals is the privileged example, A, B, C. I call A, a first individual; I call B a second individual outside the first, and I call C the individual composed by A and B. See why, in this privileged example, I need three individuals. Two individuals who make up their relations necessarily form a third individual. Example: the chyle and the lymph to take Spinoza's example. The chyle and the lymph are parts of the blood; that means, there is an individual, chyle, an individual, lymph, insofar as each in a relation, insofar as their relations are composed, they compose blood, the third individual. So, the second kind of knowledge tells me everything about the relations that compose and decompose individuals.

What is it not telling me? Well, it does not inform me about the singular nature or the essence of each individual considered, namely it does not tell me what the essence of A is, what the essence of B is, let alone what the essence of C is. It tells me how C applies to A and B. You see, that's exactly it; it tells me how the nature of blood applies to the nature of chyle and the nature of lymph since chyle and lymph compose blood.

The previous student: So if I stick to the definition, something essential escapes me, that is, what the essence is, and consequently, at death, the greatest part ought to be saved; we remain [*Inaudible*], I believe.

Deleuze: Yes, we do, there we are, so there, you are asking, in fact, a very, very precise question, but that, I did not develop it, not because we cannot develop it, but because that it becomes fairly theoretical. I am saying this for those who are interested in this point; it's how does one, in fact, pass according to Spinoza from the second kind to the third kind: why don't we just stay within the second kind? There, the text for those who will go all the way to book V -- what I am hoping for all here; I am pointing out something which is, given the extraordinarily difficult character of this book V, I am saying why, that the speed of demonstrations, there is something fantastic at the same time, it is a text of beauty! I mean, it's thinking that has reached a level of flight speed, at full speed; it's very curious, this book V -- well, here, if I try to decompose: the second kind proceeds through common notions. Common notions are ideas of relation; once again, this is not at all general or abstract notions; these are the characteristic notions of relations, these are the compositions of relations, that's what the common notions are.

But these are the common notions which are composed relations, which are therefore the ideas of a composition of relations that always lead us -- this is the first moment of Spinozist reasoning -- are always linked to the idea of God. That's strange, and what does it mean? It means a very simple thing: that when we want to consider notions of compositions of relations in nature, you cannot get the proper idea of a composed relation without at the same time forming an idea of God as the basis of the relations which are composed. So, you normally and necessarily go from the common notion to the idea of God as the foundation of all relations. In fact, the idea of God, is defined at this level; at this level, it would be defined like this, "the foundation of all compositions of relations".

But then you see that the idea of God is very strange in Spinoza. I mean, on the one hand, it is necessarily linked to the common notion, to the idea of relations that are composed, but on the other hand, at the same time, it is not a common notion. It's more, it's something more. So, there the idea of God becomes very bizarre, indeed. It is not the idea of the relations which are composed; it is the idea of a veritable concrete foundation for all the compositions of relations. That's fine, it's the idea of an infinite being, as founding all of the relations that are composed. The idea of God is therefore more than a relation that's composed, and yet it is linked to the idea of relations that are composed.

So, I necessarily go from the common notion, that is, from the second kind of knowledge, to the idea of God. And there, the idea of God, therefore, is exactly, I do not see any other [means] to have you understand, it is as if the idea of God had two sides in Spinoza. On one side, it is turned towards the side of common notions. In fact, it is turned to the side of common concepts because it is the foundation of all relations that are composed, and that common notions are always the enunciation of this or that relation that is composed. So, here we have one side turned towards common notions. And, I necessarily go from the common notion to the idea of God.

But once I'm in the idea of God, I realize that there is something more in the idea of God than in common notions, such that it has a side turned to something else, which is what? Namely, God as "container", as itself being an essence which contains all the essences, namely all the singular essences are encompassed in the idea of God. All the singular essences are encompassed, contained in the idea of God, such that the idea of God is like the pivot which makes us pass necessarily from the second kind to the third kind.

Does that solve everything? Yes and no, because very oddly -- and I say that to finish because it is very important in book V, if you follow -- when you read book V well, you will see that God, in book V, is successively, at several propositions distance between them, is presented as, and under, two absolutely different portraits, to the point that some have said "but all that is not okay, it's not okay, we can't contradict each other to that extent, within just few pages distance", and Spinoza feels no need whatsoever to resolve the apparent contradictions, so precisely, I believe, they are apparent. If we follow the order of the text well, we are not bothered by this.

Because in a first series of texts, he explains that we love God, but that God does not return it to us; this is an impassive God. The idea of God gives us the idea of an impassive God, who composes all relations, but who is not affected; we love it, and it does not love us, if you will. It's like a resurrection of the old Epicurean God. You don't expect it to reciprocate; it doesn't matter.

And a few pages later, in the love that we have for God, the love of the third kind this time, in the love of the third kind that we have for God, it is God who itself, who loves itself, through our love for it, and it is God who loves us, through our love for it, where there we have a kind of identity of our love for God, of love of God for itself and love of God for us. What is that? This is the third kind of knowledge.

What does that mean? But the contradiction, I don't see it; it does not bother me at all in any case. I would say, the first kind of texts is the idea of God as it relates to the second kind of knowledge, and the second kind of texts is the idea of God related to the third kind of knowledge. As long as God is grasped only as the basis of relations which are composed, it is an impassive God, namely anything is composed very well, everything is good, etc. When one passes to the singular essences obviously, the idea of God changes its sense. From the second to the third kind, it cannot be the same idea of God, because this time, it is the idea of God as being an essence that contains all the essences. The absolutely infinite essence which contains all the degrees of power, the power, or as he says, "has absolutely infinite power which contains all the degrees of power". So, there is a very strong reason for God to have two successive portraits. But it's as if he made two successive pictures of a very Epicurean kind of impassive God and then, on the contrary, a mystical God, the mystical God of the third kind who, through the love we have for it, loves itself and loves us.

The previous student: And that doesn't return into this interiority of the degree of [*Inaudible*]…

Deleuze: Completely, it's the same thing; it’s exactly the same thing, there you have intimacy; there is only intimacy...

Richard Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: No, not really ... Yes, he calls that God, yes ...

Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Common notions, here, I’ll tell you, that’s a very good question because all of these are very practical questions. I am translating your question; I am translating it like this for my benefit: can one be a moderate Spinozist? [*Laughter*] I mean, a moderate Spinozist would be a Spinozist who would say, well yes, I'm going that far, but I can't, it seems, forgive me, but I can't go any further. So, Richard asks us, can we be a Spinozist who remains at the second kind of knowledge and who is content with it. I am very happy with this question.

Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Ah, didn’t I get that right?

Pinhas: In all the developments that you’ve presented, at no time does one feel the need for this foundation. So, my question is: when and why did Spinoza experience the need for a foundation? I'm trying to understand.

Deleuze: I would say, on two levels. He feels the need for a foundation because he has the intimate conviction -- since once again, we are not trying to understand theoretical reasons here -- he has the intimate conviction that the idea of God cannot be treated as a simple common notion, that the idea of God is necessarily the idea of a being both infinite and singular, that henceforth, an infinite being, common notions could give it to us, but a being at the same time infinite and singular, no. There is something in the idea of God, it's the idea of a being; it is not the idea of a relation. Common notions are ideas of relations, of rapports.

So nevertheless, I'm returning once again anyway, although I misunderstood your intervention, if I return to my question: is a mutilated, truncated Spinozism conceivable which would stop at the second kind of knowledge and which would say, "Well no, the rest, it's not okay, I'm not for the rest." I would feel very much in favor of a mutilated Spinozism. I find that at the level of common notions, it's perfect, it's fine, it's fine, for a simple reason. But at that point, there is a condition in order for there to be a truncated Spinozism. To be a mutilated Spinozism, you really have to believe that there is no essence, that there are only relations. If I believe that there are only relations and no essence, that goes without saying, the third kind of knowledge, I don't need it, not only I don't need it, but it loses all meaning. So, one has to see... You can be truncated Spinozism only if you think that, ultimately, there is no Being, there are only relations.

Okay, but if you think that there is Being, if you think that the word essence is not an empty word, then you cannot stop at common notions. You cannot say that there are relations, there must be a foundation for relations, that is, relations must be grounded in Being. This is how the idea of God is more than a common notion. A common notion is an idea of relations. Saying the idea of God is both linked to common notions, but it goes beyond, it goes beyond the common notion, you see what he means, it's very simple, he means relations must indeed surpass themselves towards something that exists. There must be a Being. [*Pause*]

Pinhas: Without being radical, I would give an example, I think... We say, "okay for relations", and yet I will tell you, for example, for me as a musician, I need essences. We had seen at a certain point, several years ago, that concerning a particular type of sound, but we can also find this in painting, we have wood essence, we have metal essence, we have, in short, something that objectively goes beyond simple relations. All that does not persuade me, the fact that I myself need, practically, these essences, that the painter needs these essences to express these lights, does not imply a principle of uniqueness which would be the essence that we understand as an essence. [Deleuze: Okay] Ultimately, this wouldn't even be entrusted to the level of relations.

Deleuze: No, you aren't doing a truncated Spinozism, but rather you're doing a mutant Spinozism. [*Laughter*] Your radical transformation, you say, "I will keep the essences", so this is not where I would distinguish myself. I would remain much more modest, but... Eh, you aren't keeping the essences, but you completely transform the Spinozist meaning of the word essence. So, in fact, what you yourself are calling "essence" is ultimately something which is on the order of "the event". It is "the event of wood", it is wood as an "event", and not as a thing, and Spinoza retains for the word "essence" the absolutely traditional meaning it has in philosophy, that is, "what the thing is", as opposed to the accident. On the other hand, you are making a revolution which supposes modern philosophy, namely "essence is the accident". [*Pinhas tries to interrupt*

and contradict Deleuze] Yes, yes, yes, it is, that's what you're doing ... [*Laughter*] Yes it, yes, yes, yes. You're not doing that? So, what are you doing?

Pinhas: Of course, when you state that wood as an event is going to be, metal as an event, it's going to be effectively a dominant factor… [*Inaudible*] that we are going beyond towards something, this "towards something", it's, it's something that is not at all the domain of the event, it would be, I can say that tautologies ...

Claire Parnet: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: [*to Parnet*] Ah, there you want a lot ...

Pinhas: … the idea, for example, the idea of pure metal, as opposed to the events that the metallic event can produce, [*Inaudible*]… the idea of pure metal, I can't describe it, but it's something that I can conceive of.

Deleuze: Obviously, you manage to conceive of it, obviously, but what is your idea of pure metal? There we could take, I see very well, we would ask Spinoza what a metal is for him. He would give a definition through essence, and I'm sure you could give one, but it would be a definition that implies a completely different sense of essence. For me, if someone asks me, "a pure metal today, what is it?", this is essentially what could be called an "operative essence". Essence designates what emerges, what emerges from things as a result of a certain type of operation. So, what operations introduce essence? There, you will have to ask yourself that. So, fine, even if I say that, I can't say it well. But if you will, essence in the sense which seems to me current is something which is inseparable from a certain type of operation, which one causes to occur, in which one causes the thing to occur, for example, the essence of a piece of wood, and there, we can see in what sense the essence is singular, the essence of a piece of wood. This can be seen on the wood plane – I'm saying on the wood plane, but the musician would say something else; a carpenter would say it shows by shaving [the wood] -- you don't even have two woods of the same kind, which... the wood fibers... And this relation... What?

Pinhas: You're reducing the idea of essence. I really meant essence in the strong sense…

Deleuze: But, so did I!

Pinhas: … that is, something that's not simply an operative essence. So, I'm choosing an example to try to explain because this is something quite important. Fine, when you say that a relation is eternal, that an essence is something eternal, well, I was thinking of a piece of music. A music piece does not exist until it's performed, indeed; a sound only exists as performed, but at the same time, we know very well that there is, for a completed musical form, which might be a piece that acts, a perfect piece, there is only one possible form, there is only one possible expression, that is, in fact that it be performed or not, happening…

Deleuze: I had an almost (*inaudible*) example…

Pinhas: … the perfect form of a melody occurs, whether it is performed or not; this concerns us, but it does not concern its essence. And we can say that a perfect melody has an essence, at least I hope in any case, and at that level, when I would say that a particular melody has a metallic essence, the fact that it occurs by metallic instruments or not is only a secondary matter. So that's why the essence of this melody will be a close essence, in any case, I'm thinking of the classical essence, at least, in the classical sense of its definition, but not at all an operative essence, [*Deleuze grunts, seeming to disagree*] effectively afterwards, we will find some operative relations.

Deleuze: It's you who don't understand because you despise carpenters. It's obvious in what you are saying.

Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: You're answering me... No, so here, be careful, here, this gets very interesting for me, because you're answering me, "we must not speak of an operative essence because the operative, it ultimately does not concern that the physical material (*matériau*)", and there, you substitute for my example of the carpenter, you substitute an example of musical piece, which is quite good, that you have explained quite well, your musical example. But I would say, if we place ourselves at the level of your musical example, it's quite obvious that [if] your melody is performed by a particular wood or rather than by a particular other one, this operational aspect is very, very secondary compared... [*Interruption of the session*] [2:04:57][89] [to essence. You are completely right to say that there is a melodic essence there; there is a melodic essence which is not at all confused with the materials proper to the performance of the melody. But that's at the level of your musical example. Now try to put yourself at the carpenter's level. When I say, there is the wood plane which operates on the wood, which brings out its essence,]

Part 4

…it's not at all because the carpenter is reduced to physical material; on the contrary, it's because at his level, the essence of the wood, the wood shaving operation on the level of carpentry, causes to emerge the equivalent of your melodic essence. It's in relation to music that you can reduce the wood shaving operation to an operation which bears only on the physical material. But if you consider this wood shaving operation in itself, it does not at all bear on a physical material.

Pinhas: I don't know if I'm going to be able to say, in the end, that the wood shaving operation on such a piece of wood is eternal. Or at some level of evidence, you can always tell me that the plane's relation to the piece of wood is eternal, that's true.

Deleuze: Exactly like a…

Pinhas: … like, like the act of creating.

Deleuze: No, it is not the relation [to creating], no more than in music, you would not accept to say: it's the relation of the bow on the strings. The bow's relation on the strings is realization

(*effectuation*), these are, these are coefficients of realization. The relation of the plane on the wood is also a certain sort of realization. But what is not at all a realization is that this operation brings out an essential difference from this particular piece of wood, even within the same kind, there are no two similar trees at this level, no two trees whose lines, fibers, have the same coefficients of resistance, the same degree of permeability, etc., etc. ... And at this level, it seems to me that there is an essence of wood, just as there was an essence of melody. But finally, we are getting bogged down in all this.

Pinhas: But fine.

Deleuze: Yes, I'm going back to your story.

Pinhas: Yes, the internal necessity at this level. I, I accept this idea, I, I accept it, I admit it, but I don't understand why ...

Deleuze: The why? Well, it's you who just said it, I don't understand, it's you who just demonstrated it masterfully…

Claire Parnet: Yes indeed ...

Deleuze: You just stated it in a music story, I have my three aspects. You are saying: in a melody, I do have [Parnet: if there is an essence ...] coefficients of performance (*effectuation*) which is equivalent, there, to extensive parts in the instruments with which I incarnate, I perform my melody. [There] is indeed the system of melodic relations, and then you say, there is something more, there is an essence... [Parnet: an essence].

Pinhas: But the essence is not a foundation (*fondement*).

Parnet: But, yes it is, because aren't you the one creating it?!

Deleuze: Isn't it indeed a foundation of relations, of melodic relations? You have the agents of the melody's performance, the melodic relations. And you are saying, there is an essence, this essence which has the disadvantage of being called foundation?

Pinhas: You understand, I am very perplexed (*ennuyé*) because I do see the need for a foundation in the sense of… behind a plane of proposition, in the most precise (*propre*) and most real sense possible, there is, there is a need for a plane of foundation. But what do I call the plane of foundation in this case? It means an articulated whole, in fact. Yes, I, I'm not sure that this, this, what I'm calling foundation in this case, this, this need for articulation, from which will emerge what is called a concept of "creation" between quotes, corresponds to the notion of foundation in, in Spinoza. I don't have that impression at all.

Deleuze: I don't understand Richard, because you seem to me to be going and you seem to be escaping in all directions.

Pinhas: But I'm looking...

Deleuze: When I propose, yes, you don't want one or the other. When I propose a modest Spinozism which would limit itself to the second kind of knowledge, you tell me: "oh well no, that's not what I want; it is necessary, I necessarily need to keep a sense of the essences". Well then, when I say to you: well, fine then, where is the problem? This is very good, then. At that point, let's maintain the integral Spinozism, and you answer me, "ah well no, I don't see how the essences are foundations." So, I start over again at that point, let's be content with a restricted Spinozism.

Parnet: That doesn't suit you.

Deleuze: And that doesn't suit you. In a way, it's very cheerful, it's what suits you; it's from yourself that you'll find it. [*Pinhas doesn't seem to agree*] You don't want to. No, but I mean, I don't get your attitude because, well then, if I tell you, okay...

Pinhas: Um, um, anyway, okay I, fine, the idea of God doesn't necessarily bother me, I'm saying, good.

Deleuze: I understand that, we don't care, everyone, that it's called that, "idea of God", that doesn't change anything. You can call it "being", you can call it "temple", you can call it whatever you want.

Pinhas: It may be me who's misunderstanding the notion of foundation in Spinoza. I must grasp this idea.

Deleuze: Foundation? [Parnet: It's easy] A foundation, it's is not difficult. There, foundation doesn't yield any particular meaning. He uses the word very rarely, eh, to my knowledge. Yes, once there is the word "foundation", in Latin; the foundation is the reason for something which differs in nature from the thing founded. This is the simplest meaning, namely, a foundation of the relation; it means: something that accounts for the relation and that is not a relation.

So why does Spinoza want a foundation for relations? Because, he thinks – and here, this is very much in line with the 17th century -- he thinks finally that relations cannot be thought on their own, that there has to be a purer, deeper Being than the relation. The relation must ultimately be internal to something. He does not want to think of relations that would be pure exteriorities. Okay, so you, if you say, do you agree with that… Do you agree with it or not?

Pinhas: Yes, yes.

Deleuze: If you as well don't want to think about relationships in a pure state, in fact, what you add as a foundation is something that can be called an essence. [*Pause*] No? You're going to think about it, OK?

Comtesse: We could even say, perhaps, to return to this question, that in Spinoza's discourse, perhaps the idea, the very idea of crossing over signs, equivocal signs towards univocal expressions or towards a one-way or towards a world of relations, this very idea, this very

crossing of signs necessarily supposes for its accomplishment, for Spinoza even to think even that it might be accomplished, there must necessarily be an idea of a truth…

Deleuze: That's for certain; there, you are right…

Comtesse: So the absolutely infinite being must necessarily be thought of as truth, and we must also think of truth as the immanent cause of all the powers (*puissances*) of Being ...

Deleuze: I completely agree there…

Comtesse: … without which, the crossing and the one-way are not comprehensible.

Deleuze: Namely, and here to please you, you have to think of light.

Comtesse: One cannot ...

Deleuze: ... and I tried, the, it's a world, it's a world that is necessarily light.

Comtesse: One cannot think of crossing in the end without a third kind.

Deleuze: One cannot think of crossing without the third kind, okay. That, I would say – so be it, this bothers me -- let's even say, it's not certain, but let's say and in any case, we can't think of the third kind without, a reference to light, to pure light because it's light that is the opposite of equivocity. Univocal expressions, indeed, univocal expressions could be of the second kind, they are moving in any case towards an absolutely necessary medium which is the world of light where there is no more shadow. While the equivocal signs are really chiaroscuro, really the shadows, it's really all that we're saying, but a world of pure light, that's why it's Spinoza's only metaphor, perpetually light, light…. What time is it?

Claire Parnet: There's a boy over there…

A student: 12:30 p.m, 12:33.

Deleuze: Okay, ah, [*A student has a question that is hard to hear*] Yes, yes, yes, yes, try to speak as loud as you can.

Student 3: I wanted to talk to you about the distinction [*Inaudible*]…

Parnet: You need to speak louder.

Deleuze: I, I will repeat, if I can hear, I will repeat what he says.

Student 3: I'm saying that I would like to speak to you about the moral problem ... [*Inaudible*] ... You felt the need to introduce into this course the idea of a test on the scale of life by making the distinction without, without developing it, of the morality... And I'm asking to what extent there

can be in Spinoza a total distinction with morality if he defines life as progress or as actualization of the intensive parts, as the realization of essence…

Deleuze: I can answer that, because here, for me, it is relatively easy. I can answer before you're done, or else do I wait until you're done? [*Pause, negotiations between students*] So, I won't answer right away? Is there something else after that, what you have to say, or not? [*The student responds*] What?... So, go ahead, yes?

Student 3: I'm wondering precisely if, if we keep thinking in terms of essence like that, [and] if we don't have the dimension and specificity of the use of the word "essence" in Spinoza, I'm wondering if, as soon as we talk about essence, if we do not leave immanence, and we are necessarily led to, to judge life, to place it before a court, and [Deleuze: well ...] it is all, all the separation of dualism at the level of, of the world of equivocity, and is that pursuing the line in, in what I will call a meaningless tragic world? I wonder if there is a nuance there that could in Spinoza ... [*Inaudible because of various background noises and voices near the microphone*]

Deleuze: Those are good questions. Oh there, in my opinion, I'm answering because, in addition, these are questions for which the answer is relatively clear this time, it seems to me. I would say this: in my opinion, in my opinion, you can always say, after all, doesn't he reintroduce something like a morality? You defined morality very well. I believe that morality cannot be between, for me, it is essentially the system of judgment. It's the judgment system. There is no other sense of morality, namely, there is a morality when I am judged from one point of view or another, whatever it is; morality is the autonomy of judgment.

So, I'm not saying at all that it's wrong, but that's it, something, anything that's being judged, that's morality. The book, the only moral book, there is only one moral book in the world, that's the Apocalypse. And the Apocalypse is not the story of the end of the world; it's the story of the last judgment and the preparation, the preparations for the last judgment. The moralist is a man of judgment to the point that I would even say, all judgment is moral. Judgements exist only as moral. (*Il n'y a de jugements que moraux*)

So, the objection is to say, isn't there still something in the idea of a test (*épreuve*)? I am clarifying: for Spinoza, in my opinion, he himself tells us, "there is never any autonomy in judgment". He says that formally in his theory of knowledge. And what does he mean when he says, "there is never any autonomy of judgment"? He means, judgment is never just the consequence of an idea. There is not a faculty of judging whose ideas would be the object, but what we call a judgment is nothing other than the manner in which an idea is affirmed or is mutilated. This is important.

So, there is no judgment for him; it is the same thing to say, there is no judgment, there is no autonomy of judgment, or to say, judgment is only the consequence, is only the development of the idea. And, he never returns to it, there is no judgment. And yet, he tells us, in particular, he says explicitly in a letter, he talks about existence as a test.

I think he has a very, very good idea in this regard, quite practical. He means, you know, judgments, well, the way you are judged, all that, that's not what matters. Of course, there is a

system of judgment; for him, religion, morality, this is a system of judgment, and that's what he denounces. So, what does he mean when he denounces the system of judgment? He means ultimately, there is only one thing that matters, it is not the way you are judged, it is that ultimately, whatever you do, it is always you who judge yourself.

Notice what he means: but there is so much less of a problem with judgment since it's you who are judging yourself. What are you judged by? What you judge is not values that are external to you. It is the affects that come to fill up your mode of existence. You exist in this or that way. Well, this mode of existence is filled, it is realized by affects. What judges you is the nature of your kinds of sadness and joys. So, you judge yourself.

And there, Spinoza is merciless, right, because he has both extremely tender sides and then extremely hard sides; you can feel it through the texts. There are things he can't stand. He can't stand the man who causes his own suffering. He can't stand the whole race of masochists, depressive people; these he can't stand. You will say to me, [it is] easy not to stand for this. But, no, these are the questions of value attributed to this or that thing.

He thinks that this is misery, right, that it's the depths of misery, right, that the guy who fills up his existence with sad affects, well, he judges himself. In what sense? In the sense that he has created for himself the worst, the worst mode of existence. No doubt he could not have done otherwise. All that doesn't matter, but, and Spinoza goes very far; he tells us, these are people so contagious and that they want only for sadness to spread, so it's necessary to be without mercy. They are judging themselves.

In other words, there is no morality. Or I say the same thing in another way, he tells us about the test, but I made it clear in fact earlier, alas too quickly, that this is not a moral test. The moral test is the ordeal in a court. The ordeal in a court is that you are tried, you are sentenced. In the Apocalypse, this whole wonderful and horrible and, well, abject book, it's a fascinating book, so beautiful and so abominable, yes, it consists in telling us, careful, right, and then a whole system, there are secondary judgments, stays (*attentes*), it's a kind of incredible procedure which is set up in that book, the Apocalypse.

Well, that doesn't exist at all in Spinoza. The test that he talks about is something else entirely. He's talking about a test, I said, a physico-chemical test. What does this mean? There, it is not a judgment in the moral sense, that is, in a court; it's like a judgment, a self-experimentation. Self-experimentation is not even like testing a clay vase or a piece of gold. Imagine a gold piece that would test itself. When I talk about a fake coin, I'm choosing the example, you complete it, I won't develop the clay example, it's the same. Spinoza invokes the clay example.

There are many ways for a coin to be false, for a gold coin to be false. A first way to be false is it's not gold. A second way of being false, it has some gold, but not in the true proportion that defines the coin, the corresponding real coin; it has less gold than the true one. A third way of being false is the most interesting for counterfeiters, in the end, the least dangerous, because they are very difficult to prosecute in that case. The coin is correct in all respects; it has exactly the weight of gold, so what is false about it is that it was made outside the legal conditions.

Why is it interesting to make fake gold coins in this sense, in the third sense? It means that the rate is not the same, the rate for medals and the rate for coins. You see, you can therefore be a counterfeiter while still being true. You create gold coins with the same weight as the authentic coin, the same design; you are a forger precisely because you put the drawing on it. In other words, you create a medal, nobody can forbid you from making a medal; it's legal. What is not legal is that this medal has exactly the characteristics of the official piece, and you are playing on the difference in rates between the medal and the official coin. So, there are three ways for there to be a fake gold coin.

What does it mean, a piece of gold that would judge itself? It's according to the affects it has. Let's say the fake gold coin has silver affects. It is silver overlaid with a gold covering. It has silver affects. The gold piece in proportion, inaccurate, has affects of gold, but which don't complete most of it, you see? The complete piece of gold that has as much gold as the real piece has affects of gold and yet it's missing something.

Well, I would say there is a way in which each thing can be presented as judged by itself by creating the self-test. What is it to create the self-test? Well, for example, it's a sound. It's not a judgment. The potter has his clay vase, and he gives a tap. Or else the chemist puts a drop on the gold coin, right? It's a physico-chemical test. Tell me what you are made of, tell me a little. This is not a judgment; it is an experiment. Tell me a little what are you made up of, what your own sound is. So, for example, to return to the example, I tap you there, what sound does it make there? Oh, it's a funny sound, like a potter's vase, eh? So, we would see people who pass for being very elegant or very moral. If we hate them, then, of course, we pinch them.

Parnet: So, you want to pinch me?

Deleuze: No, no, no! We pinch them, and we realize that, well, we say to ourselves, it's curious, they make a funny noise, they are false, eh, they're false. And that shows in what, someone suddenly makes a gesture. Someone in a moralistic speech, someone betrays himself. That's what's so cool about judging yourself. It's, eh, when you betray yourself. Ah well, we see someone talking about pious, lofty things and then, suddenly, a boy or a girl passes by, he has a funny glance. [*Laughter*] No, I'm choosing crude examples so that everyone can understand. [*Laughter*] We say, ah, but what is this, what is this? He has this glance that suddenly is slightly veiled; he has a long sneaky glance, we say, "oh, oh, and what is that? what is it? what does that mean?" Or else Monsieur de Charlus in Proust, right, Monsieur de Charlus in Proust, all of a sudden, has a vocal shift, and we say to ourselves: "hey, what, what's wrong with him?"... That's the physico-chemical test.

So, this is not a moral judgment; moreover, we can even have surprises. A guy there who seems normal (*comme ça*), who even plays at being little working class and who really is working class, all that. Then, there is a vocal sound all of a sudden, and we say to ourselves, it is not that he isn't working class, but it's that he has a tremendous soul; for him to say what he has just said, he has to be something else as strong, or that he has to be a prodigious artist, even if he doesn't know it, something like that, something that betrays someone. I imagine, I imagine that for Spinoza, that's sort of what he's trying to tell us.

You know, you see people exist, people's motivations in their existence, well, there are certain ways in which existence judges itself. It's a bit like that as well in Nietzsche; I'm not saying it comes down to that. When Nietzsche says, don't judge life, don't dare to judge life. He says it's awful, who are all these guys who are judging life? What does that mean? By what right do you dare to judge life? So, it's like Spinoza. They question morality because they challenge any system of judgment; they challenge any court.

But, [Spinoza's][90] complementary idea is a very different meaning of the word "judgment", namely, if it is impossible to judge life, that's because ultimately life does not stop judging itself, and in a whole other sense of "judgment", namely, "you have the life you deserve, so don't complain, never complain". Do not complain, never complain, because ultimately the affects you have, whether they are unhappiness or joy, etc., you deserve them, not at all in the sense that you have done everything necessary for you to have them, but that's not even it. But it's in a cleverer sense, a much subtler sense, namely: "the affects that you experience refer to and suppose an immanent mode of existence". This is where the point of view of immanence is completely preserved. It is an immanent mode of existence that is assumed by the affects that you experience, and ultimately you always have the affects that you deserve by virtue of your mode of existence.

So, in that sense, ah, okay, if you, for example, the tragic ones, the cohort of depressed people I'm talking about, how do you want, it's not difficult, it's not difficult, what I'm saying is not meant badly. You cannot be depressed in the true, clinical sense of the word, even if despite yourself -- I mean despite you, because everything I am talking about, I know that it is not easy -- if despite yourself, you haven't attached a specific value to the values of the tragic and depression and collapse. If you live in a mode for which the idea of collapse has absolutely no meaning -- I'm not just saying no theoretical meaning, but no lived meaning -- you can experience affects of unhappiness, as they say, you will not make a drama of it. You can't put a load of anxiety on it.

And it's never at the level of suffering, either physical or moral, that you have, that things are decided. Things are decided in a mode of existence at the level of loads (*charges*) of anxiety that, despite yourself, you place on one thing or another, and here Spinoza would be very, very, he would be like everyone else, he knows them, these loads of anxiety. So, he tells himself that wisdom about the modes of existence is for each person to manage to clarify vis-à-vis oneself into what and onto what we put our loads of anxiety, and what our own vulnerable points are.

That's kind of like the potter's test. The load of anxiety is always there where I snap, where I break, where I crack. The potter's test is to look for points of crack-up, eh? If I don't know my crack-up points... And what is the best way not to know, what is he denouncing in the judgment and court system? It's a propagation of unhappiness that's created, the taste of unhappiness, the taste of anguish, etc., which is presented to us as a basic value, and that, Spinoza thinks that it belongs to every tribunal.

What he says there, the great Trinity, yes, the tyrant, the priest and what Spinoza calls the "priest", it's very simple, he's "the man of anguish", it is the man who says "you are wrong, you are a sinner, I will judge you". Just as Nietzsche much later will also call him, I am calling

"priest" the one, the man of the judgment system, the man of the court, eh, the tyrant, the priest and the man of misfortune, that is, the tyrant, the priest, the slave. For him, that's what bad clay or fake gold coins are.

So what he is talking about is this test, yes, it's at the level: yes, you understand, eh, it's not at all that I am a judge, if I even see my best friend and suddenly, I do this to him, like this, to see how he sounds, how he sounds, and I realize with dread that someone I had seen for twenty years, whom I had thought I knew, well no, there is something there, something that I had completely missed.

So, that can be a wonderful revelation, if it's beauty, if it's an abyss, do you realize? Do we tell ourselves, ah, well then, anyway, it's always quite cheerful, quite fascinating, these moments? It's the kind of self-betrayal, we keep betraying ourselves, right, for good or for ill. So that's good; I don't know if I answered everything, but anyway, I can't answer questions like that; they are too difficult, the answer is in your heart.[91]

Comtesse: In *The Twilight of the Gods*, Nietzsche rightly denounces, concerning the problem of judgment, what he calls, the, the, the error of freedom as the most infamous ideological trick of power (*pouvoir*). And, he says this, power needs to make people believe in individual freedom in order to make people believe that whether they have individual freedom or who believe it to be possible, that individual people are responsible. They need, it needs people to be responsible so that they feel guilty; it needs them to feel guilty in order to be able to operate both its judgment of condemnation and its punishment.

Deleuze: That's signed Spinoza; that's the point where Nietzsche really encounters Spinoza. That is, in Spinoza, you find exactly the same criticism of "freedom" as subject to the same use. Tell me, I'm very perplexed… [*Deleuze responds to another student*] Yes, right away, yes, yes, yes, yes?

A student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Okay, good. So, there's something rather perplexing. I expected to have finished this, but I haven't finished. Ah well, and I would like to move on…

Parnet: Us too…

Deleuze: … so, the time, the next session, I will do it there really, as a conclusion of conclusions, and then, I will do that, I will speak a little about that [the Spinoza phrase in which he says that all affection is an affection of essence] and about ontology, but, whatever happens, I have to finish next time, whatever happens! [*End of session*] [2:35:50]

Notes, 84-91: see p. 368-373

Gilles Deleuze

Spinoza, The Velocities of Thought

Session 14, 24 March 1981

Transcriptions: Part 1, Sandra Tomassi (duration 31 :20); Part 2, Madeleine Manifacier (duration 46 :56); Part 3, Sandra Tomassi (duration 43 :28) ; augmented transcription, Charles J. Stivale

Translation by Timothy S. Murphy (for Web Deleuze); translation augmented by Charles J. Stivale

Part 1

Whatever happens, this is the last time that we will speak of Spinoza. And I would like to begin with a question which is important and that was posed to me last time. Here's the question, and it's almost a question that places in question the entirety of what we've been saying; here it is: how can Spinoza say, at least in one text, but one text is enough, how can Spinoza say at least in one text that every affection, that any affection is an affection of essence?

What is this text? In fact, "affection of essence," -- you feel that it's a slightly odd expression -- I'm not saying that it's unexpected, but in any case, the fact is that, to my knowledge, it's the only case in which one finds this expression. Which case? A very precise text, which is a recapitulative text at the end of book III of the *Ethics*. Here Spinoza gives us a series of definitions in a supplement (*hors livre*). That is, he defines, or he again provides definitions which, until then, had either not been given or were scattered. He gives definitions of the affects, once it's understood that book III focused precisely on affects.

And you recall that the affects were a very particular kind of affection, notably this is what follows -- we often translate it by the word "feeling" (*sentiment*), but there is the French word "affect" which corresponds completely to the Latin word "affectus" – this is indeed what follows from the affections strictly speaking, the affections being perceptions or representations. And in definition one at the end of book III, we read this: "Desire is man's very essence, desire is man's very essence insofar as this essence, insofar as being this essence, is conceived to be determined, from any given affection of it, to do something." So, desire is man's essence insofar as this essence is conceived as determined to do something through an affection of itself, an affection of essence.

And this definition includes, in fact, quite a long explanation and, if one continues, one stumbles upon a sentence that also creates something of a problem: "For by affection of essence, for by affection of essence," – the formulation is there precisely -- "we understand any constitution of that essence, whether it is innate" in parentheses "(or acquired)." Why in parentheses? Because the Latin text seems truncated; it's strange. The Latin text merely presents "for by affection of man's essence, we understand any constitution of that essence, whether it is innate"; it's missing

something, and in the Dutch translation of the *Short Treatise*, there is, in fact, the complete sentence that we expect. Why do we expect this complement, "(or acquired)"? Because it's a very standard distinction in the 17th century between two types of ideas or affections: ideas that are called innate, and ideas that are called acquired and fortuitous (*adventices*). In Descartes, for example, you find the distinction innate ideas-fortuitous ideas.

But as a way of compounding our astonishment, if it's true that innate-fortuitous, innate-acquired is a duality, it's a quite standard pair of notions in the 17th century since Descartes but, on the other hand, the fact is that Spinoza has not used this terminology. It's only in this recapitulation that the words innate and acquired appear. All that is very odd. What is this text in which Spinoza employs terms that he hasn't employed up until now and, on the other hand, in which he introduces the formulation "affection of essence"? Where is the problem? If you think about everything we've said up until now, in fact, there is a small problem: how can Spinoza say, "all affections and all affects are affections of essence"?

So, that means that even a passion is an affection of essence. As a result of all our analyses, we've tended to conclude, well, that what truly belongs to essence are adequate ideas and active affects, notably, the ideas of the second kind and the ideas of the third kind [of knowledge]. These are what truly belong to essence. And Spinoza seems to say entirely the opposite: not only do all the passions belong to affections of essence, are affections of essence, but even among the passions, kinds of sadness, the worst passion. Every affect affects essence! You see the problem. [*Deleuze addresses one of the students*] This is indeed the question that you asked me? So, this is the question that I would like to answer almost by reorganizing somewhat what we've done, what I was suggesting. In any case, does everyone see where the problem comes from?

It's not a question of discussing one of Spinoza's texts; this isn't at all possible. So, we must take it literally. Fine. He teaches us that, be that as it may, every affection is affection of essence. So, passions belong to essence no less than actions; inadequate ideas belong to essence no less than the adequate ideas. And as he says, we cannot do otherwise. And nevertheless, there is necessarily a difference. I mean that, in all evidence, -- here we have no choice -- passions and inadequate ideas must not belong to essence in the same way that actions and adequate ideas belong to it.

How do we resolve this? I would almost say, "affection *of* essence" -- what interests me is the formula "of." In Latin the genitive is "affectio essentiae", "affection of essence", in French, the genitive is therefore indicated by the particle "of (*de*)," "affection of essence." Well then, well then, well then, alas, words fail me because I've forgotten… I think I recall that grammar distinguishes several senses of the genitive. For, after all, there is a whole variation. When you employ the locution "of" to indicate a genitive, this always means that something belongs to someone. If I make the genitive a locution of belonging, this doesn't prevent the belonging from having very different senses, notably the genitive can indicate that something comes from someone and belongs to her insofar as it "comes from someone", or else it can indicate that something belongs to someone insofar as this someone submits to the something. In other words, the genitive does not yet choose, the locution "of" does not choose the direction in which the arrow flies, if it's a genitive of passion or a genitive of action. Fine.

What does that mean? My question is this: I have an inadequate idea, I have a confused proposition out of which comes a passion-affect. In what sense does this belong to my essence? It seems to me that the answer is this, if you recall: in my natural condition, I am condemned to inadequate perceptions. What does this mean? This means precisely that I am composed of a very great number, of an infinity of extensive parts external to one another. These extensive parts belong to me according to a certain relation, but these extensive parts are perpetually subject to the influence of other parts which act upon them, and which don't belong to me. For example, I consider certain parts that belong to me and that make up part of my body, let's say my skin, corpuscles of skin that belong to me according to a particular relation: ah, it's my skin. They are perpetually subject to the action of other external parts, the aggregate of what acts on my skin, particles of air, particles of sun. I'm trying to explain at the level of a rudimentary example, the corpuscles of sun, the corpuscles of heat act on my skin. What does this mean? This means that they act according to a certain relation that is the relation of the sun. The corpuscles of my skin act according to a certain relation that is precisely characteristic of my body. But these particles that precisely have no other law than the law of external determinations act perpetually upon one another. I would say that the perception that I have of heat is a confused perception, and from it come affects which are themselves passions: I say, "I'm hot!" Do you follow me?

So, here you have… if I try to distribute on the level of the proposition "ah, I'm hot!", if I try to distribute the Spinozist categories, I would say: yes, an external body acts on mine. It's the sun, that is, it's that parts of the sun – it's not the totality of the sun, it's some parts – parts of the sun act on the parts of my body, all of that being pure external determinism. It's like shocks, the shocks of particles. There we are. I am calling "perception" when I perceive the heat that I experience, I am calling perception the idea of the effect of the sun on my body. It's an inadequate perception since it's an idea of an effect; I do not know the cause and from it follows a passive affect; either "oh, la, la, it's too hot", that is, I'm sad, or I feel good, and I say, "what happiness having the sun!" Understand well: in what sense is this an affection of essence? It's inevitably an affection of essence. You will tell me that, at first glance, it's an affection of the body. Yes, it's an affection of the body; it's an affection of the existing body, "I'm hot". Yes, it's an affection of the existing body.

But finally, there is only essence. The existing body is still a figure of essence. Why? The existing body is essence itself insofar as an infinity of extensive parts, according to a certain relation, belongs to it. So, "according to a certain relation", what does that mean, this relation of movement and rest? You recall, you have essence that is a degree of power of action (*puissance*). All that is delicate; it's not at all difficult, but it's very, very detailed, so you must be patient. You have essence that is a degree of power of action. To this essence corresponds a certain relation of movement and rest. As long as I exist, this relation of movement and rest is realized by the extensive parts that, from then on, belong to me according to this relation.

What does that mean? That means, in the *Ethics*, there is a quite curious slippage of notions, as if Spinoza had a double vocabulary there. And this is understandable, if only by virtue of the physics of that era, as if he sometimes had, sometimes passed quite agilely from one to the other, as if he sometimes had a kinetic vocabulary, you see, in terms of kinetic movement, and sometimes a dynamic vocabulary. In fact, it's very odd that when you'll read or have perhaps already been struck by this, that he considers the following two concepts as equivalents: relation

of movement and rest, and power (*pouvoir*) of being affected or aptitude to be affected. And yet, we must indeed situate, we must ask ourselves why he treats this kinetic proposition and this dynamic proposition as equivalents. Why is a relation of movement and rest that characterizes me at the same time a power of being affected that belongs to me?

And he will define the body in two ways; there are two definitions of the body for Spinoza, a kinetic definition and a dynamic definition. The kinetic definition will be this: if we derived it in its pure state, it's that "each body is defined by a relation of movement and rest." The dynamic definition is: "each body is defined by a certain power of being affected." It's important to consider here, on the level of great detail if you will, there are two ways of understanding. – It's not important if you are satisfied with just one. – There is a quick and vague manner of understanding. And again here, we must notice that if you are reading, you must be vaguely sensitive to this identity, and you must tell yourself: ah fine, there's a dual register, kinetic and dynamic. And then, if you happen to seek a more demanding reading, well then, you cannot be satisfied with a confused feeling. When we are searching, we always will discover. If you are searching, you're going to discover, you will in fact find a text – I'm not going to tell you where it is; in this way, you'll still have something to look for – a text in which Spinoza says that "a very large number of parts" – that is, an infinity, we've seen this and won't go back over it -- "a very large number of extensive parts belongs to me, a very large number of extensive parts belongs to me," [*Pause*] "henceforth, I am affected in an infinity of ways," "a very large number of extensive parts belongs to me, henceforth, I am affected in an infinity of ways."

For me, this text sets us on a path. Having an infinity of extensive parts according to a certain relation equals the power of being affected in an infinity of ways. Henceforth, everything becomes clear, why? There's not even any need to state it, in fact, it's so obvious. If you understood the law of extensive parts, they never cease to have causes, to be causes, and to undergo the effect upon each another. This is the world of causality or extrinsic, external determinism -- there is always a particle that strikes another particle, etc. -- In other words, you cannot think an infinite set of simple parts without thinking that they have, at each instant, an effect upon one another. What does one call affection? One calls affection the idea of an effect. You see, if you have understood what these extensive parts were that belong to me, you cannot conceive them as having no effect upon one another. They are inseparable from the effect that they have on one another. They never cease encountering each other, striking each other, colliding and bouncing off each other, massing together and then coming undone, etc. So, they're inseparable from the effect that they have on each other, and there is never an infinite set of extensive parts that would be isolated.

There is indeed an infinite set of extensive parts that is defined by this: this set belongs to me; it is defined by the relation of movement and rest according to which the set belongs to me. But this set is not separable from other sets, from the other equally infinite sets that act on it, that have influence on it, and which do not belong to me. In other words, the particles of my skin are obviously not separable from the particles of air that come to strike them, either in the form of a cold and biting, bitter air, or in the form of a bright and warm air, etc., fine. In other words, by virtue of the very law and the nature of extensive parts, extensive parts are such that they act perpetually on one another; they perpetually have an effect on one another. And, an affection is

nothing other than the idea of the effect, the confused idea, the necessarily confused idea since I have no idea what the cause is. It's the reception of the effect: I say, "I perceive".

This is how Spinoza can pass from the kinetic definition to the dynamic definition, notably the relation according to which an infinity of extensive parts belongs to me is equally a power of being affected. But then, what are my affections and my passions, my joys and my kinds of sadness? What are my affects? If I continue this parallelism between the kinetic element and the dynamic element, I will say that the extensive parts belong to me insofar as they realize a certain relation of movement and rest that characterizes me. The extensive parts belong to me insofar as they realize a certain rapport of movement and rest that characterizes me. I am almost underlining the "insofar as they realize". In fact, they realize a relation since they define the terms between which the relation interacts (*joue*).

If I speak now in dynamic terms, I would say, "the affections and the affects"; I would no longer say "extensive parts realize the relation of movement and rest." I would say, I'm seeking, if you will, the equivalent in dynamic terms. – Once again, you can search for it as well; that would make a nice contest (*concours*) – The complete formulation, you see, the primary kinetic formulation is: "I define myself through a relation of movement and rest." The dynamic formulation is: "I define myself through a power of being affected." Complete kinetic formulation: an infinity of extensive parts belongs to me "insofar as", insofar as they realize my relation of movement and rest. The complete dynamic formulation: Affections and affects belong to me insofar as they fulfill my power of being affected, and at each instant, my power of being affected is fulfilled. There is no moment in which my power of being affected is not fulfilled.

Compare these nonetheless completely different moments: instant A, you are out in the rain, you draw yourself within yourself. You have no shelter, and you are reduced to protecting your right side with your left side and vice versa. That's going to bring us into a strict Spinozism; you are sensitive to the beauty of this sentence – "you are reduced to protecting your right side with your left side and your left side with your right side" – here we have a very kinetic formula, that is, I am forced to make myself, to make half of myself into the shelter for the other half. Why can I say that this is a very beautiful formulation? Because it's a verse, one I cannot quote because it's in Italian; it's a lovely verse from Dante. That doesn't matter; I mean, we mustn't mix this with Spinoza. But, it's in one of the circles of Hell, not one of the awful ones, it's a circle of Hell in which there's a light rain, and the bodies are lying in a sort of mud. There's a light rain, and Dante tries to translate the sort of solitude of these bodies that have no other resource than that of turning over in the mud. That is, each time they try to protect one side of their body with the other side. In this formulation, there is a very great… One senses a body that is delivered to the elements, even if it's a light rain.

On the other hand, instant two, instant two: now you open up. Earlier, you were entirely contracted; you were truly a poor guy under a persistent rain. We truly see that all that is a matter of particles. The particles of rain were like little arrows, it was horrible; you were grotesque in your swimsuits, [*Laughter*] and the sun comes out, instant two. There, your whole body opens up; there you are now, it's no longer at all protecting the right side with the left. You would like your whole body to be capable of spreading out (*comme étalable*). You reach out toward the sun. Understand what Spinoza says on the beach. Don't be fooled; in both cases, your power of being

affected is fulfilled, it's necessarily fulfilled. Simply, you still have the affections and affects that you deserve according to the circumstances, including the external circumstances. But an affect belongs to you only to the extent that it actually contributes to fulfilling your power of being affected.

There you have what I'm trying to say. It's in this sense that every affection and every affect is affect of essence. Ultimately, the affections and the affects can only be affections and affects of essence. Why? Because they exist for you only insofar as they fulfill a power of being affected which is yours. The power of being affected is your essence's power of being affected. [*Interruption of the recording*] [31:18]

Part 2

And yet, Spinoza does not at all mean "everything is equal" (*tout se vaut*), [that] the rain equals the lovely sunshine. He does not mean that. What he means is that, in any case, nothing, nothing, nothing is ever expressed, or is ever founded to be expressed as something missing (*un manque*). In other words, it's the general formulation, "there is only Being". Fine, why then isn't everything equal? That's what we have to see last. But you understand? Every affection, every perception and every feeling, every passion is perception, affection and passion of essence.

It's simply not by chance that philosophy constantly employs a word for which it's been reproached, but what do you want, philosophy needs it: it's the kind of locution "insofar as" (*en tant que*). I believe that if it were necessary to define philosophy by a word, one could say that philosophy is the art of the "insofar as." In fact, that belongs to philosophy: if you see someone by chance happening to say, "insofar as," you can tell yourself that this is thought being born. The first man who thought said "insofar as."

Why? Because "insofar as" is the art of the concept. It's the concept. Is it by chance that Spinoza constantly employs the Latin equivalent of "insofar as"? And in fact, why do all thinkers happen to do the same? It's because the "insofar as" refers, I believe, to distinctions in the concept that are not perceptible in things themselves. When you work by way of distinctions in the concept and through the concept, you can say that "the thing, insofar as", that is, [it's] the conceptual aspect of the thing. So then, every affection is affection of essence, yes, but insofar as what? When it's a matter of inadequate perceptions and passions, we must add that, yes, these are affections of essence insofar as the essence has an infinity of extensive parts that belong to it according to such a relation.

Good, henceforth, I've almost finished. Here the power of being affected belongs to essence, simply it is necessarily fulfilled by affects that come from outside. These affects come from outside; they do not come from the essence. They are nevertheless affects of essence since they fulfill the power of being affected of essence. But remember well that they come from outside. In fact, the outside is the law to which the extensive parts acting upon one another are subject, are subject, the extensive parts acting on one another. Fine, you recall, when one rises – and in the previous meetings, I have tried to show this, so I won't return to it, how this was possible – when one rises, when one succeeds in rising to the second and third kinds of knowledge, what happens? Here, I have adequate perceptions and active affects. What does that mean? Well, it's

the affections of essence. I would even say, with all the more reason, what is the difference from the preceding case? This time, they do not come from outside, they come from inside. Why? We saw this. A common notion already, with all the more reason, an idea of the third kind, an idea of essence, why does this come from inside?

Let's go back to my formulation from earlier, and we will look for the equivalent formulation. I was saying that inadequate ideas and passive affects belong to me. They belong to my essence. So, these are affections of essence insofar as this essence actually possesses an infinity of extensive parts that belong to it according to a certain relation. Let's now try to find the common notions. A common notion is a perception, we've seen; it's a perception of a common relation, a relation common to me and to another body. Active affects result from this. Fine. These affections, perceptions and affects are also affections of essence that belong to essence. I would say it's the same thing, "affection of essence", but insofar as what? No longer insofar as essence is conceived as possessing an infinity of extensive parts that belong to it according to a certain relation, but insofar as essence is conceived as expressing itself in a relation.

Ah yes! Here, the extensive parts and the action of the extensive parts are cast off since I've been raised to the comprehension of relations that compose it. So, I've been raised to another aspect of essence. It's no longer essence insofar as it actually possesses an infinity of extensive parts; it's essence insofar as it expresses itself in a relation, and with all the more reason, if I am raised to ideas of the third kind. These ideas and the active affects that result from them belong to essence or to affections of essence, this time, insofar as essence is in self (*en soi*), is in itself (en elle-même) and for itself, is in self (*en soi*) and for self (*pour soi*) a degree of power of action (*puissance*). So, at the extreme, I would say broadly that every affection and every affect are affections of essence. Only there are two cases, the genitive has two senses? There are… Yes?

Anne Querrien: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, this would be the "ab", yes, yes, agreed. [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*] That wouldn't be the same, yes, except that it seems to me… [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*] … Yes, but I'm afraid Anne, that there are two uses of the genitive in Latin. Besides, it's better that the genitive… [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*] … Yes, yes. But, the "ab" then will be valid for external causality as well. In the extreme, I'd say ideas of the second kind and [those] of the third, you see? These are affections of essence, but it would have to be stated according to a word that will only appear really much later in philosophy, with the Germans, for example, these are auto-affections. Ultimately, throughout the common notions and the ideas of the third kind, it's essence that is affected by itself…. That doesn't appeal to you? And if he said it? [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*] You believe that you didn't have electricity in order to [*inaudible*] auto-affection? [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*] … Nonetheless, after all, Spinoza employs the term "active affect", active, and there is no great difference between auto-affection and active affect. [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*] You don't like that? Ok, well then, we'll just drop it.

Richard Pinhas: These are ideas of modern consciousness.

Anne Querrien: But not at all? [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*]

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, fine, so you see? In any case, there you have the sense in which we must say that, yes, all the affections are affections of essence. But be careful, affection of essence does not have one and only one sense. There we are! Fine, are there any… [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

There remains for me something obvious, today to draw some kinds of conclusions that between the relation, for the ethics-ontology relation. Why is there all that? That's my question. Why does all this constitute an ontology? And I'm going to tell you my idea. But here, my idea is rather suspicious. It's a passing idea (*une idée comme ça*), a feeling-idea (*idée de sentiment*). It seems to me, it seems to me – I'm knocking on wood here [*The sound of Deleuze rapping on the table*] -- that there has never been but a single ontology. There is only Spinoza who has managed to pull off an ontology. The others, they've done some lovely and different things, but it wasn't an ontology, if one takes ontology within an extremely rigorous sense. I see only one case in which a philosophy has realized itself as ontology, and that's Spinoza. But then why could this achievement only be realized once? Why was it by Spinoza? You see? These are almost very, very important legal questions. Fine, that's what I have left to say. But I'd like your reactions, if there were any other questions… Yes?

Richard Pinhas: According to what you said, we end up with two operating modes that you described as kinetic and the other as dynamic. In my perception of what you said, I could say that the kinetic functioning of affections and relations is of the external type, so, it's a mode of exteriority. I hesitate to say form of exteriority. This is the word that came to me ... In the dynamic case, we would have an equivalent -- the terms are bad -- which would be the form of interiority. In fact, what we end up with is self-affection, and here you just moved on as if ...

Deleuze: In what you are saying, I believe there's something quite dangerous, eh? It's above all that in my opinion, there is no more interiority on the dynamic level than on the kinetic level. For a very simple reason: it's when I say, "power of being affected" of an essence can just as well be realized by external affections as by internal affections. Above all, we must not think that power of being affected refers more to an interiority than the kinetic relation did. The affects can be absolutely external; this is the case of the passions. The passions are affects that fulfill the power of being affected and that come from outside.

Pinhas: There I completely agree… I would like to rephrase my question: my question, in fact, its focus is: we arrive at something new, compared to the history of philosophy, which is self-affection. Let's leave the term aside; we are faced with a very specific form of affection on which ...

Deleuze: Yes, obviously, if you are telling me… Yes, Anne?

Anne Querrien: [*Deleuze listens to the intervention*] … like Edith Piaf… on lack: no, I regret nothing, neither good nor bad, all that's quite the same. [*Laughter*]

Deleuze: It's true! Yes… [*to a different student*] You'd like to say something?

A woman student: I would like to say something about the question Richard asked last week, that is, about the need for foundation. If we take the example of wood, that is, you were talking about the essence of wood. I would rather say that wood is the thing that will invent the planer, and that the planer will become at a certain moment the tool that will tell us something about wood. That is, in the second degree of knowledge, the wood and the plane will say something about each other in this relation, wood, essence. In this relation, that they have with each other, but ... [*Anne Querrien's intervention, inaudible*] ... But my problem is the problem of the foundation. So, it may be ... Yes ... [*Anne Querrien's intervention, inaudible*] No, I don't think so, no.

Deleuze [to the interrupted student]: Wait, you speak first! [*To Anne Querrien*] You're going to become a Hegelian, you know! [*Laughter*]

The student: So, about the problem of essences, what is it ... Richard said that he indeed wanted essences to exist, but that he did not see why Spinoza needed a foundation. And what I would say is that if there is no foundation for essences, the essences become metaphors for God, that is, fine, as in Christian religion, in "God is everything", and from the moment when God is in everything, as soon as we have no chance of being able to achieve it, that is, if for us, in this work that there would have be needed in order to reach the third kind of knowledge, if that would be a way of achieving what is divine in us, these essences must have a foundation. That is, if God is the set of all the essences, in fact, God is not within the essences, he is withdrawn, but this is a kind of pantheism. He is withdrawn outside the essences. But it seems to me that if there is no foundation, each essence is only a metaphor of God, and therefore for us there is nothing more to do!

Anne Querrien: [*Inaudible*]

The student: Yes, yes, you're right, I think that you're correct within the Christian problematic, but that reverses Spinoza completely.

Anne Querrien*:* [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: I'm going take a look. I have an idea that reconciles each one in the end; it's…

Another woman student: [*Inaudible; concerns intuition, auto-affection on a reflection of divine light*]

Deleuze: I am adding in order to confirm this, in fact, in this regard, book V appears to me to found this notion of auto-affection. So, you take a text like this one, which finally is a text that has its equivalent in many mystic, or so-called mystic propositions, notably "the love by which I love God" (understood in the third kind, on the level of the third kind), "the love by which I love God is the love by which God loves itself and loves me myself." What does this mean? This means that at the level of the third kind, all the essences are internal to one another and internal to the power (*puissance*) called divine power. There is an interiority of essences. That does not mean that they merge. We reach a system of intrinsic distinction. This is no longer the system of exterior distinctions; this is a system of intrinsic distinction. From this point on, when an essence affects me – you understand? This is the definition of the third kind -- an essence affects my

essence, another essence affects my essence. But since all essences are internal to one another, an essence that affects me is a way in which my essence affects itself.

I'd like to make a final appeal, almost because I'd really like to select an example; I do feel that these examples are dangerous. I'm returning to my example of the sun because, fine, it's still a question of succeeding, not at all in knowing abstractly, but in understanding a bit concretely what we mean by "pantheism"? How do people who call themselves pantheists live and feel? I mentioned to you that, after all, there are some writers who are called – it's not only a matter for philosophers, all this – I am thinking precisely as a function of my tale of the sun earlier, of my sun example, I am thinking of a famous author who greatly constituted for himself a kind of English pantheism -- there are many Englishmen who are pantheists; there's a source, there's a very, very important pantheist inspiration in all of English literature, and which must come from their irremediably protestant character, but in the end, this goes beyond character. – Fine. So, I'm thinking of [D.H.] Lawrence. Lawrence, it's nonetheless odd all that he says about the sun. I'm finding this kind of cult of the sun. So, I'm not going to say that Spinoza engaged in a cult of the sun. Still, they have in common… They both end up with light and tuberculosis, right? These are the two points common to Lawrence and Spinoza, light and tuberculosis. So, fine, what is this about?

On the level of the sun, Lawrence has with the sun some relations; you'd find something – don't take this literally; take it as… I'm trying to make something resonate within you, if you… For the moment, I'm only speaking here for those who love the sun in a certain way, who feel that they have a concern, let's assume, a special concern with the sun. There are people who have this sensation. – Well, then, Lawrence tells us something like this, and that there are, generally speaking, three ways of being in relation to the sun. Here, in objecting to many people, he hates them, he is quite contemptuous. But Spinoza as well was suspicious. Lawrence couldn't stand a lot of people; he found them vulgar. So, he's not comfortable in his era. And yet, this matters little; those who know a bit about this author, you see what I mean…

Fine, he says, "there are people on the beach" – yes, there were fashionable people – on beaches, in the sun, etc. And he says, "They don't understand, they don't know what the sun is." It's not at all that he wants to protect all that for himself. He finds that these people live poorly. There you have his idea. It was also Spinoza's idea that people live poorly, and if they are wicked, it's because they live poorly; fine. They live poorly, they dump themselves onto the beach, and they understand nothing about the sun. If they were to understand something about the sun, after all, says Lawrence, they would come out of it more intelligent and improved. The proof: as soon as they put their clothes back on, they are as bitter (*teigneux*) as before. [*Laughter*] Here, it's yet another proof then; they lose nothing of their virtues and vices. If there were someone who arrived and hid the sun from them, they'd protest, they'd say, "What's this about?", etc. So, they're vulgar.

Fine, so what do they make of the sun, at this level? They really remain in the first kind [of knowledge]. They declare: "I love the sun", but "I love the sun" is a meaningless proposition. It's absolutely meaningless, "I love the sun." It's like the elderly lady who says, "ooh, I love heat!" What is this "I" in "I like heat"? In fact, that has no meaning. A mechanist, a physicist, or a structural biologist would say nothing at all; "I", "you don't like heat at all"! He's simply

saying: there is within you some phenomena of vasoconstriction and phenomena of vasodilation that result in you “objectively” needing heat. Good, fine. In other words, the "I" in "I like the heat" is an “I” that expresses what? That expresses relations of extensive parts of the vasoconstrictive and vasodilative type, and that are typically, and that express themselves directly, within an external determinism putting the extensive parts in play.

So, I can say, “I love the sun” in this sense. It’s therefore the sun particles that act on my particles. and the effect of one on the other is a pleasure or a joy. I’d say that’s the sun of the first kind, the sun of the first kind of knowledge that I translate with the naïve formulation, "oh the sun, I love that." In fact, these are extrinsic mechanisms of my body that are in play, you see, with both the relations between parts, parts of the sun, and parts of my body.

Second, this is still a bit different from someone who “is involved” (*a à faire*) with the sun. My question would almost be very Lawrencian: starting from when, in relation to the sun, can I begin authentically to say "I"? As long as the sun is warming me up, I have no reason to say, “I love the sun”: I’m in the first kind of knowledge. There is a second kind of knowledge. This time, I go beyond the zone of the effect of parts on one another. I’m no longer awaiting the effect of parts on one another. I have acquired some kind of knowledge of the sun, and after all, there are people who have such knowledge, and it’s not at all a theoretical knowledge. I’m not going to say I’m an astronomer. Not at all, since that would be a contradiction here. I have a kind of knowledge and a practical comprehension of the sun. I have a kind of knowledge and a practical knowledge even if I cannot express it about climate, rains, fogs. What does this practical comprehension mean?

I mean, surely, I’m getting ahead; I know what such a miniscule event linked to the sun means, such a furtive shadow at such a moment. I know what this announces. I’m no longer at the point of recording the effects of the sun on my body. I’m raising myself to a kind of practical comprehension of causes, at the same time as what? At the same time that I know how to compose the relations of my body with a particular relation of the sun.

A painter – so, I’m jumping ahead, it’s perfect – what does a painter do? What does it mean, to compose the relations of his body with relations of the sun? In what way is this different from being subject to effects? Let’s take the perception of a painter. How does a painter… Let’s imagine a 19th still life painter who goes out into nature. He has his easel; this is a certain relation. He has his canvas on the easel; this is another relation. There is the sun, and the sun does not remain immobile. Fine, so what is he going to do? What is it that I’m calling this knowledge of the second kind? He will completely change the position of his easel; that is, he is not going to have the same relation to his canvas depending on whether the sun is high, or the sun is about to set. Ah, wait! There’s an example like that. Van Gogh painted on his knees. In Van Gogh’s letters, he speaks at length of sunsets that forced him to paint almost lying down. Why? So that Van Gogh’s eye had the lowest horizon line possible.

At that moment, what does it mean to have an easel? It means nothing, nothing at all. Everything depends on what one does with the easel. And what if there’s a southern wind (*du Mistral*)? There are moving letters from Cézanne and from Van Gogh as well: “Today, I couldn’t go out; I got nothing done. Too much *Mistral*”. That means that the easel, well, would have blown away,

or else, he's have had to tie it down, or what? How to compose the canvas-easel relation with the relation of wind, and how to compose the relation of the easel with the setting sun, and how to end up in such a way that I might paint on the ground, that I might paint lying on the ground? That's not something I'd learn at school. It's not at the Academy that I would learn that. I'm composing relations, and in a certain way, I am raising myself to a certain comprehension of causes, and at that very moment, I can begin to say, "I love the sun."

"The sun, I love it!", you understand? And then, I no longer follow the effect of particles of sun on my body, I am in another domain, in compositions of relations. And at this very moment, you understand? I am not far from it. Everything has its danger. I'm not far from a proposition that appeared useless to us, that would have appeared to us mad in the first degree. I am not far from being able to say, "the sun, I possess (*j'en 'suis'*) something of it." I have a relation of affinity with the sun.

Fine, we'll stay there. This is the second kind of knowledge. No need to be a painter. Maybe that would inspire me to be a painter if I manage, if I reach this state in relation to the sun. But you sense that this is a completely different state from the one in which the elderly lady warms herself in the sun! Having said this, the lady warming herself in the sun might be a painter as well. But she won't be doing both at the same time because these two relations with the sun exclude each other. Here, at the second level, there is already a kind of communion with the sun. Peruse Van Gogh's letters; it's obvious that when he is painting these huge red suns, it's obvious that this is what he is. Not that the sun is brought down to him; it's he who begins to enter into a kind of communication with the sun.

Fine, and what about the third kind [of knowledge]? I chose as an example, and I was wrong to do so, I chose an example of a painter for the second kind, and I seem to have blocked him off at the second kind. Yes, perhaps next, it's no longer from the domain of painting. What would the third kind be? Here, Lawrence's texts abound. In texts like that, it's really, and I hope, excuse me, but I hope that what I've said earlier won't make him seem ridiculous for some of you. It's what might be called, generally, "ah well yes, it's something like that that we call in abstract terms a mystical union". What is this then? All kinds of religions have developed mystiques of the sun. This is a step further. And after all, my entire order is normal. What causes Van Gogh, in relation to his red sun that devours the entire canvas, with Van Gogh-like ripples, etc., to still have the impression that there is a beyond that he cannot manage to paint? What is this? It's still further, that he will not manage to render insofar as he is a painter. Is this it? So fine. Is that what the mystic connection is? The mystique: is that what it is, the metaphors of the sun for the mystics? But these are no longer metaphors if one comprehends it like that. These are absolutely not metaphors. They can say literally, "God is the sun". They can say literally, "I am God." Why? Not at all because there is an identification, not at all.

It's because, at the level of the third kind, one arrives at this mode of intrinsic distinction. And it's here, if you will, that there is something terribly mystical in Spinoza's third kind of knowledge. At the same time, the essences are distinct, only they distinguish themselves on the inside from one another. As a result, the rays by which the sun affects me are the rays by which I affect myself, and the rays by which I affect myself are the rays of the sun that affect me. It's solar auto-affection. Written out, this seems grotesque. Understand that at the level of modes of

life, as an author said, “well, you can always come across a mystic in the street.” A guy who has his experiences isn’t visible from outside. He’s not… He’s like you and me. He’s like you and me.

Fine, in Lawrence, I’m drawing your attention to this: in his final texts, precisely when Lawrence can no longer stand the sun due to his illness, when the sun is fatal for him, well, he develops his texts on this kind of identity that maintains the internal distinction between his own singular essence, the singular essence of the sun, and the essence of the world. [*Here ends the Web Deleuze transcript and translation*] And this kind of song that made Lawrence’s last works, this kind of song to the world on which he will die, but really, he will die without resentment. He is going to die truly, truly as a Spinozist: after a long walk, his last walk, there he collapses, and he dies. It’s at this moment that he reaches these texts on the sun. So, see if you can get hold of these. You always need, in order to understand a philosopher, I think, to accumulate a thousand other things as well that have value by themselves. But, if you read the texts, for example, by Lawrence on the sun, it can trigger an understanding of Spinoza that you would never have had if you had stayed solely with Spinoza. We always need everyone in order to understand, however little that might be. And that's why we spend our time making mistakes. At the same time, one must not mix things up, yes, of course! That's what I meant.

A student: [*Inaudible at the start*] … in relation to the solar relation, I was wondering if in [Michel] Tournier’s *Vendredi* [*Friday*], we don’t have in fact and literally a very lovely description of this itinerary of apprenticeship?

Deleuze: Yes, you are right, yes, yes! In the texts of ... Now we can judge. But, in fact, moreover, Tournier's obsession with that -- you have to talk about people personally; it's always interesting, as much as possible; you have to imagine Spinoza personally, though he doesn't talk about the sun except in examples, but Lawrence personally, yes? -- Tournier personally, in fact, has a relation with the sun. Yes indeed, it’s very important; it’s at this level, you know that you cannot write just anything. And if you write something that is not really at that very, very deeply experienced level, that gives you literature that’s just imitation. It yields literature without any interest. That’s something we feel.

A student: [*Inaudible at the start*] ... concept of beach, sun, one of the scales of the universe that occurs ... [Deleuze: I don't know.] [*Inaudible comments continue*]

Deleuze: What testifies to the authenticity of an experience, it always seems to me, I'm not saying that there is no other way, but what testifies as the first guarantee of the authenticity of an experience is the splendor of the pages, or of the works, however small they may be, that flows from them. I can say: Van Gogh has a personal, unique experience with the sun, this, yes. What proves it? His paintings, his paintings, that's all. On the other hand, when considering some very great painters who can paint suns, we know that this is not the strong part of the picture. It’s not with the sun that they are involved; they are involved with something else. Maybe they needed the sun. From Lawrence's pages, I know this man had a special involvement with the sun.

So, that's why, you understand that when we speak, -- and here, I’m opening a parenthesis, and it's just an appeal that I’m making to you -- when we speak, when one undertakes

psychoanalysis, when people talk about sexuality and all that, really it ends up being dirty and disgusting. It's dirty and disgusting because they don't seem to see that our real sexuality is with the sun. So, when we are told things like "the sun is the image of the father", then I weep. I weep. Indeed, I say to myself, so much trampled beauty, so many beautiful things diminished, it's odious, this thing is odious! Do you realize? Van Gogh's sun, is it castration, Van Gogh's sun? [*Laughter*] No, no! there's no need to speak... But, I mean, that's vulgarity, that's really vulgarity. Well, well, there you go -- I still have a lot to say, but what time is it?

A student: 11:40

Deleuze: So, I have time to speak, and on that, I will not continue. I'm going to end today just by trying to justify part of what I had left to do, namely how it seems to me that Spinoza undoubtedly succeeded philosophically [in creating] the only ontology that we can really name an ontology. Obviously, what I am going to say is hardly going to be convincing because what I'm not attempting would be to create a comparison with other philosophical traditions. Well, here, suddenly, I come back to book I of the *Ethics*, and I say: what is very curious in this book I, including why are there nine primary propositions that seem very bizarre?

When you read this book I, there are nine propositions on what Spinoza calls "substances with only one attribute". As everyone knows that for Spinoza, ultimately, there is only one substance, [that] there are no substances with only one attribute, these propositions are quite bizarre. We say to ourselves: "but, what is he aiming at?" And one realizes, in fact, that in proposition nine and ten, he arrives at a substance having all the attributes. Why did he go through the first nine propositions, where he considers attributes for themselves? This is curious, this whole passage. Because, at the same time, I'm asking myself, what is really new in Spinoza, from a theoretical point of view, that is, from the first book of the *Ethics*? What is really new, if I tried to express it? You understand? My concern is that really you might feel this just as much as about what I tried to say earlier, about the sun. And fine, there is a proposition which dominates philosophy... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:18:18]

Part 3

... by this formulation that surprises no one that it's Greek since, for Heidegger, philosophy is Greek. This formula is in Greek; it's very pretty in Greek, and then you have to imagine it in a song, you have to imagine it as being rhythmic, it's "en panta", [*Deleuze spells it out*] e-n and further, p-a-n-t-a. That would be the cry of philosophy because when I shout, "en panta", feel that it's a cry... "en panta", the dancers, the dancers, and the dancers are philosophers, the dancers shout while tapping rhythmically on tambourines: "en panta, en panta".

First, how to translate "en panta", which will, in fact, cross the whole of Greek philosophy? "en" is "the One". En means One, One; "panta": that means all things, it's a neutral plural nominative, all things. But is there any point translating "en panta"? If it's true that "en panta" is a cry, there's less purpose in translating; it's not a proposition, it's not a proposition. Once again, you have to imagine a rhythmic "en - pan - ta". But word for word, that means, we very often translate it by: "The One All"; "The One All" is a kind of magic, mystical formula, the One All. When the formula is spoken, something begins! The "One All", in fact, is not a good literal translation

since it does not take into account the plural, so we should say, we can risk saying: "the One All Things", "One All Things".

And from Plato to Neoplatonism and much more, not even Plato, from the philosophers we call the first philosophers, which are the pre-Socratics, Heraclitus, Parmenides, etc., passing through Plato and going to the Neoplatonists, that is, after Jesus Christ, the "en panta" resounds everywhere. "The One All" is like the philosopher's rallying cry. It's weird! You understand, I can at least conclude from this that philosophy has always had, I am not saying that it identifies itself with it, but it has always had a very particular relationship, a particular concern with what is called pantheism. For what do we call pantheism? What's known as pantheism is something that is called something even more scholarly: panentheism. And what is pantheism or panentheism? "Pan" which means all, this time in the singular, "Pan" all; "En", one; Theism, "Theos", God. Pantheism or panentheism is "The One All God" -- [*A student offers details on these terms*] Yes, yes ... -- So, "the One All, or One All Thing, that's what is God". In other words, pantheism means, or panentheism means "the All One thing, there we have God". Fine, we have to believe that if this Greek formula, "en panta", which, once again, haunts them all, is at the origin of philosophy, it's because it has something to do with the essence of philosophy, with what philosophy is at the deepest level.

Well then, what I just note, what interests me is that, it seems to me -- I would like to have been able to develop it, but I cannot -- that among the greatest philosophers, the recognition of the formula, or rather, the philosophical cry "en panta," has always been accompanied by a brilliant, grandiose attempt to ward off or not to fall -- and there, I'm being very careful -- not to fall completely into the pantheism that this formula implies. [*Pause*] And here, one has to be very nuanced, because to fall halfway, yes, but not quite, there is only one philosopher who, in my opinion, very calmly accepts the idea that philosophy henceforth merges with the purest pantheism, and that's Spinoza. Only, what does that mean? And after him, no, it will be over; after him, but in the end, he will have accomplished this move for all eternity! He's the only one who won't say, "Ah, but watch out. We have to make distinctions! There are other levels," or else "this is in a rather special sense"; he's the only one who will take literally, and who will push to its final consequences, the "en panta".

So how do we explain that? Immediately, if you open up the *Ethics*, what does he consider in this regard? One of the newest things in Spinoza, one of the newest things in Spinoza, seems to me to be the following statement: you have to know where this something new is located, because there's what results from the new thing, but if you start from what results, you cannot fully understand. I think what's new in all of Spinoza's theoretical apparatus is the statement that the same forms, or if you prefer, the same attributes -- taking attribute in the simplest sense, that which is attributed -- the same forms, the same attributes in the same form, are said of God and of things. Here's a proposition, I'm emphasizing it, which for the vast majority of other philosophers, in my opinion, is heresy, a fundamentally impious proposition and, moreover, nonsense.

And very quietly, Spinoza introduces this formulation. You have to see what he risks at his time, what did this entail? Why did Spinoza remain a model of something terrifying? All of this is not innocent. When we read this in passing at a time in which our problems are not exactly the same,

but you know, this continues to have impact on our problems, you just have to live it sufficiently. This proposition is very bizarre: "The same forms are claimed in the same sense, are attributed in the same form to God and to all things". Why is this proposal extraordinary? Because most philosophers were saying, what were they saying for "the One All"? Other philosophers, to better understand this enormous novelty of Spinoza, other philosophers were saying, "Watch out! you can attribute a same word to God and to all things, but not in the same sense, not in the same sense, obviously, not in the same sense!"

An example: you say, "God is just", and then you say "that man, Peter, is just", this is not in the same sense, for a simple reason: it's because, in one case, it is the finite justice of a man, and in the other case, it is the infinite justice of God. And it's not the same form, it's not the same form. Fine. So, there would be the same word that would have several forms; there would be several forms. In what relation? Is man's justice in the finite form with God's infinite justice in the infinite form? In what relation can a finite form be with the infinite form? A huge problem, an enormous problem that will animate all theology.

In any case, this is heresy, and moreover, it's blasphemy, to say that the same forms insofar as being the same – "insofar as", I need to say insofar as -- the same forms insofar as being the same belong to God and to man. Before, we would have been told the same names may belong, but not in the same form. [*Pause*] Okay. Spinoza then really proceeds without nuance. What does he mean? All the forms which can be attributed to God are forms also in the same form that are attributed to man, in the same form. What are the forms that can be attributed to God? That's not difficult, there, the criterion; Spinoza preserves it. He will say that the forms which can be attributed to God and being so, henceforth, are necessarily so, are what? These are all the forms that we can conceive as able to be raised to infinity.

Here, I'm moving along very quickly because it's very simple: take any form, shape or quality. Form equals quality. Take any quality and ask yourself, can I think of it as infinite? If you say yes, at that point, you attribute it to God; it's an attribute of God. The criterion is quite simple, it's not difficult. Example: red, can I imagine an infinite red? In this, I'm not trying to persuade you. In the Middle Ages, in the 16th or 17th centuries, they all agreed: there is no infinite red. To think of an infinite red is contradictory. Any color implies a figure. I don't know if they're right or wrong, we're not going to debate this with them, it doesn't change anything, the example! In any case, no! Henceforth, I cannot say "God is red", because red is a form, a form of color, but it is not able to be raised to infinity. So, I'm looking at random; "hot": can I speak of an infinite heat? No! They will say "heat is the domain of the indefinite, it is not the domain of the infinite"; they are very attached to this distinction. No matter, there, again, we are not debating that!

Spinoza finds two forms, and still not everyone would agree with him, but the fact is, it's not on this point that I'd like to direct our understanding. Spinoza arrives and says: "We men know of two forms which we can conceive as infinite without contradiction. These are thought and extension. " That's curious! And for the 17th century, they all agree infinite extension is not contradictory. This is their concern; for mathematical, logical reasons, they prove that very well, but it is not my purpose to develop this. We accept that; we are starting with Spinoza's premises.

Spinoza does not maintain any less that there's an infinity of infinite forms. Only here we are, the fact is that we only know of two. We humans only know two infinite forms. That doesn't mean there are only two. These are thought and extension. That doesn't mean there are only two. That means that we, humans, are made up in such a way, we're constituted such that we can only know these two. And why? Because, in fact, we are constituted by a soul and a body. And what is a soul? It's a way of thinking, it's a manner of thinking. A body is a mode of extension. Henceforth, as we are constituted by a body and a soul and nothing else, according to Spinoza; we can only know two infinite forms: the infinite form which corresponds to the body, which is extension, [and] the infinite form which corresponds to the soul, and that is thought. Fine. Up to here, there is nothing of interest for us.

What is interesting is that Spinoza is going to develop a whole doctrine according to which these same forms, thought and extension that we attribute to God, these same forms of infinity also belong, to what? To finite things, no doubt, but they do not belong in the same way: it's not in the same way that thought and extension belong to God and belong to you or me. But it is in the same form that they belong to one and the other. Understand, it gets pretty complicated, and at the same time, it's entirely clear. The idea is that forms are equal, attributes are equal. These are the same attributes that will be claimed of God and of finite beings. Fine. "The same" does not mean that God and finite beings are "the same".

In other words, they are equal forms that are stated "in relation" and that are stated of terms that are unequal, that are not equal. There are forms common to God and the creature. What did the others say? To my knowledge, they said, "either there are no common forms properly speaking", or else they said, "there are analogous forms, there are analogous forms [*Pause*] between God and creatures", that is, what the infinite form is to God, the finite form is to the creature. So, we were told: either the forms are not the same, or else, we were told, there is analogy of forms. Spinoza is the only one to tell us: there is a community of forms. These are the same forms that are claimed of God and that are claimed of finite beings. So, God and finite beings are not the same, but the forms that are claimed of one and the other are the same. Understand, this is the theoretical formulation of pantheism. If these are the same forms, the formula "hen panta", "the One All" or the "One All Things", these are the same forms that are claimed of the One and that are claimed of things. Henceforth, things are within "the One", and "the One is within things". They are not the same, but they have the same forms.

What does that mean, that? Why is this practically important, this formulation? And in what way is this ontology, Being? I'm going to tell you a story, and again, I want you to feel the extent to which this is a matter -- how to put it? -- that it's also a question of the problem of what it is to create in philosophy. Up to a certain author, I believe, thought worked -- I will not say which one yet -- thought worked in terms of alternative, disjunction. It was stated: it's this or it's that. We can always recount things like that. For a long time, well yes, thought found no need to question this principle. So, "you mean, this or that? It's one or the other?" I'm thinking of a very simple thing. Is it finite or is it infinite? And so, answer! And if I answer, it's indefinite? Ah no, no, no! If it is indefinite, it is only a consequence of the finite! Well, "it's finite or it's infinite, or else it's universal or it's singular?" And somehow, it has to be one or the other.

An example: "animal", I say "animal"; this is a great mystery that I reveal to you here, so feel it. I'm saying "animal" to you, all innocent. Fine, you have the right to tell me, but what, "animal", in what sense? Why is it that, at first glance, there are two meanings? "Animal" can be a genus, the animal genus. Where does the animal genus exist? Is it what we will call "a universal", where it exists as a universal? It doesn't exist in things; you've never seen an animal, full stop. It's not possible to see an animal, full stop! If there were one, what would it be? How many legs would it have, an animal full stop? It's not possible! So "animal" full stop exists only in the mind. The mode of existence of the genus "animal" is a mode of existence in the mind. The universal exists in the mind, we are told. And in things, what is there? It's a particular "animal", the singular animal. Ah yes, there are singular animals. A huge problem, what connection is there between singular animals and the universal animal in the mind? Hence an entire opposition between *in re* and *in mente*, "in things" and "in mind". For that, there are all kinds of philosophies which are all built on such disjunctions. Fine.

Along comes a philosopher -- and to my knowledge, and that's what troubles me, I believe, and according to the scholars, because here, it is necessary to question the specialists, he's a very special philosopher – along comes an Arab philosopher in the 11th century, an Iranian Arab. He writes sometimes in Arabic, sometimes in Iranian. His name is Avicenna. [*Deleuze spells it out*] He's a very, very great philosopher. -- This is always part of the shame within the history of philosophy in France that we always make this short-cut around the Middle Ages, about what happened, etc. Avicenna, I know Avicenna very poorly, so I don't pretend that this is ... I know him very poorly -- I just know that there is a thesis which appears in Avicenna and which is very, very unusual. He says: "so there you are, there are essences", "there are essences". Up to there, nothing new. Philosophers talked a lot about essences. "There are essences". He says, for example, "the animal is an essence". And he says, "Is it possible to think of a pure essence?" says Avicenna the Arab. He says, "Yes, yes. Only you have to see what that commits you to." The animal essence -- a philosophical discovery, which sounds like nothing, you understand; I like that a lot -- he introduces a formulation that's also like a kind of cry, a watchword (*mot d'ordre*): "animal tantum". It sounds like nothing much; he says, casually, "animal tantum" in a text; I'm talking about the translation, it was very quickly translated into Latin; "animal tantum", which means what? It means "animal only", "animal only". And what does "animal only" mean? Understand, this is very important.

He tells us, if you want to think of pure essence, it's "animal insofar as being animal", that is, neither universal, nor singular. And he himself will say in other texts about other examples, "neither infinite, nor finite". [*Pause*] Hey! He recognizes perfectly, he agrees that there are two great modes of existence: the universal in the mind and the singular in things. But precisely, if there weren't two -- if there weren't a "third state" (*tiers état*); that's to please Anne [Querrien] -- we need a third state. If there were only two, we wouldn't even understand that there could be two. For if there were the universal in the mind, at that point, there would be no singular animals. And if there were singular animals, there would be no universal animal in the mind. It can be one and the other only because there is a third party (*tiers*). What is the third party? It is the animal essence, and animal essence is neither universal, nor singular. It's outside these criteria.

Anne Querrien: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: Do you think he's fighting for Joseph?

Anne Querrien: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: So, understand, that seems completely insignificant. Imagine the others, there, and this becomes interesting: someone arrives and says to you, "Listen; in my view, it is necessary to create the concept which would be a concept of essence, and such a concept which is neither universal nor singular. No, it is neither infinite nor finite. The essence is not subject to these criteria." Take a philosopher of the era, he can say: “but what are you talking about? That’s nonsense, it’s pure nonsense, that story: what is this essence that is neither singular nor universal? Even Plato, what would Plato have said about something like that?” In my opinion, he would have said, "This is a Sophist's idea," Plato would have said. "No, it's not right!" So, there are those who say it's nonsense; there are those who can be imagined being much more suspicious who say: "Why does he say that? What will he bring us back to? How will he develop his story?" One senses that there are already things that are already involved here. What will change, including in theology, if I introduce this third state of essence, neither universal, nor singular, neither finite, nor infinite? Isn't that already the path along which things flee from God? What is that? Well, we can see how that will be developed by Avicenna, but that would be too complicated.

Some time later, what emerges from another philosopher? Well, the average of philosophers -- I regret saying this so vaguely – they spoke to us up to then about Being and the problem of Being. They said, "You see, there is God, the infinite Being, then there are the finite beings.” Very well, but a Being is either finite or infinite; a Being is either finite or infinite. Once again, are these the same forms that we attribute to an infinite Being and to finite beings? No, at best, these are analogous forms. Namely, the infinite justice of God is analogous, or rather the finite justice of men is an analogous to the infinite justice of God. That is, it is to finite things what infinite justice is to infinite Being. And in particular, there was a philosopher who had greatly advanced the theory of these analogous relations, it was Saint Thomas. Saint Thomas is even famous for a theory called the theory of the analogy of Being. Namely, Being is an analogous concept, that is, that it is stated regarding God and regarding creatures in an analogous way. The infinite Being is stated regarding God, the finite being is stated regarding men.

It so happens that after Saint Thomas, comes a strange, strange philosopher named Duns Scotus, [*Deleuze spells it out*] who will be named -- because they gave themselves some kind of nicknames in the Middle Ages -- who will be named by his disciples "Subtle Doctor", and says: "Well, no, that's not it!", and this will then unleash struggles, even knife fights, between the Thomists and the Scotists, struggles that are not over today. So, this concerns something, but what? What is this about? And what does he say, Duns Scotus? He says, "Well, there you are, of course" -- you have to understand how subtle he is -- "Of course, when you relate Being to God and creatures, you can only relate it analogically.” Why? Because God and creatures are not "the same". He thought he was protecting himself against pantheism by saying that. But, glorious and unfortunate, because what will happen to him? He adds, "Okay, God and creatures are not the same, so Being is not related to them in one and the same way; it is related to them in an analogous way. But, on the other hand, this Being which is related in an analogous way only to God and to creatures is, in itself, strictly univocal: there is only one and the same Being."

Ah, understand, what do you want to answer to that? Only this, "Ah yes, that's true", and it should be added, "if that exists, if there is Being, there is only one and the same Being." What is not the same is what I relate to -- I am being very indulgent, and I'm agreeing on everything -- You tell me that God and creatures, you tell me that there is God, okay, I'm not saying the opposite; you tell me there are creatures, okay, there are creatures, whatever you want, and you add that God and creatures are not the same at all, and I say okay. You add that I relate Being to God, when I say, "God is", to creatures when I say, "creatures are". I'm relating to Being. You add: it is not in the same relation that I relate Being to God and to creatures. Obviously, it's not in the same relation, and you therefore conclude that the Being is analogical. And there I say: "Not at all", "no", "you can't [say that]".

You cannot. Why can't you? Because it is true that Being is analogical when you relate it to God and creatures, but when you think of it insofar as Being without relating it to anything, what is it? A splendid answer: "There is a concept of Being which is absolutely indifferent to the finite, to the infinite". Being insofar as Being, it is no more infinite than finite. From then on, it's the same. This concept of Being which is neither finite nor infinite, and which is Being insofar as Being, it is strictly the same, although it ceases to be the same when you do not relate it to the same things. Okay, but in itself, it is the same. So, there is a Being that is neither finite nor infinite. You see that it is exactly the same move on the level of Being as Avicenna's move on the level of Essence, which Duns Scotus does against Saint Thomas, namely, "Being is univocal". There is only one and the same sense of the word Being: neither finite nor infinite, although Being relates to things which do not have the same sense: God and creatures. Imagine the state of a Thomist faced with that! I mean, how might we speak of intellectual hatred? It's not the fault of philosophy, you know. You understand objections, objections, these are always passions. Objections never matter; they are counterattacks in war, an objection. What do you want to say to this Duns Scotus thesis? If you are a Thomist, your reason falters! You say, you say, "not at all, Being insofar as Being, that's not what you are saying"! If you are a Thomist, you are condemned, in my case, to assert this: "This Being insofar as Being is abominable nonsense. This is heresy, it is contrary to Revelation, it's against reason." So, a Being that is neither finite, infinite, universal, nor singular, a Being that is -- as Duns Scotus said, and there the word is great for us -- "neuter", that is, "neutral", what is neutral? What does it mean in Latin? It means "neither one nor the other".

Anne Querrien: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: Not in the Middle Ages, not for Duns Scotus after Spinoza, but he will not say "neutral" precisely.

Querrien: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: So, fine! Maybe you understand, I don't know; it doesn't take a lot of knowledge (*savoir*), you understand, to assess what's new in a thought. This is not about the level of discussion. At this level of discussion, what do you want? I'm insisting greatly on this is not being a matter of argumentation. Here is a guy who has just discovered a new domain, it's really like a new territory: the territory of Being. It does not tell us much, at first glance, it is simple, it is not difficult: it is neither infinite, nor finite, nor singular, nor universal. But, does he need to

say so much more, since each of his propositions is a huge paradox compared to the thought of the time and, even more, compared to today since we tend to say, "But something has to be this or that!"? Well then, no!

Only you see where that leaves Duns Scotus – here, I'm obviously going way to fast -- : he discovers a sphere which is made of Being insofar as Being, only he neutralizes it, that is, a purely logical concept. As a result, there can be, at the extreme, an agreement between Thomists and Scotists. They will say yes, "Being insofar as Being is logically univocal, but it is physically analogous." In other words, there is a Being who is the same, but at the same time, as soon as you relate it to be-ings (*étants*), it ceases to be the same, if you relate it to the Be-ing "infinite God" or if you relate it to singular be-ings, "things". There would be a little arrangement, but arrangements never occur like that. The Thomists will not cease to go after the Scotists, and the Scotists will not cease to provoke the Thomists.

Okay, so imagine one more step, and this is where I would like to finish because you can't take it any more: just imagine one more step, imagine that someone finds the means to liberate, to release this unique Being, this Being insofar Being from its neutrality. That is, he affirms this Being, he says, that is the real. This Being insofar as Being, which is the same for all and for everything, this unique Being, this univocal Being, it is not only thought in a logical concept, it is physical reality in itself, it is Nature. [*Pause*]

In other words, it's the same forms that are said of God and of creatures, it's the same Being that is said of all be-ings of God and of the creature. Henceforth, creatures are in God, God is in creatures. However, is it the same "be-ing"? No, God and men are not the same thing. But the same forms are said of God and are said of men, in what sense? In this sense, that the same forms constitute the essence of God and include or contain the essences of men. So, there is no equality of essence, but there is equality of Being for unequal essences. At that point, an ontology becomes possible; at that point, the ontology begins and, at that point, the ontology ends. Yes, starts and ends, there we are, good, [*Pause*] it's over ... [*Pause*]

Listen, I feel like I should have developed, I don't know ... Even if those who didn't understand this, it doesn't matter, you delete all that, [*Laughter*] and keep what you understood the other times. Those who have understood something, that's good. Next time, therefore, I will start another completely different course on painting, but we can have at the start of the session some questions if there happen to be any questions. But I will not speak on Spinoza anymore. There we are! [*End of the session*] [2:01:44]

Gilles Deleuze

Spinoza, The Velocities of Thought

Session 15, 31 March 1981

Transcriptions: Part 1, Cécile Lathuillère (duration 46 :52); Part 2, Eva Szarzynski (duration 46:47); Parts 3 & 4, Lucie Marchadié (duration 46 :55 + 11 :36); augmented transcription, Charles J. Stivale

Translation by Charles J. Stivale

Part 1

Deleuze: So, what's the question? [*Pause*] You are out of batteries? So, someone will lend you some… There, take some of them. [*Pause*] So, no questions on Spinoza?

Claire Parnet: No.

Deleuze: I'd really like you not to give up on your reading.

Claire Parnet : No, we've started it.

Deleuze: Ok, good.

A student: I've recently been looking through a book by Hölderlin, and in a letter from Hölderlin's book, there is an expression from Spinoza. I don't know if Spinoza read him or not, but there's a statement emphasizing the connection between Leibniz and Spinoza. We've seen Spinoza and Descartes, Spinoza and Freud, Spinoza and Hegel. We took a look at Leibniz last year. They're somewhat contemporaries of each other, right?

Deleuze: There's a book called *Leibniz and Spinoza*; they're contemporaries. They knew each other.

The student: Ah, they knew each other. No doubt, they were connected to one another.

Deleuze: Leibniz visited Spinoza. Yes, they met.

The student: Ah, they met.

Deleuze: We don't really know what they said to each other, but… Yes, there are even similarities.

The student: Oh, yes, I think so too.

Deleuze: So, after this question…

Richard Pinhas: There's mine!

Deleuze: Yes, there's still another question?

Pinhas: This is quite democratic; we have thirty of us asking it, and I'm the spokesperson.

Deleuze: So, there are thirty of you asking it? You, you, and you…

Pinhas: If that doesn't bother you?

Deleuze: It does.

Pinhas: Really? It does?

Deleuze: No, no.

Pinhas: We'd like to develop this point a bit. In my own case, I'd like to know if, when a composer – or when it's a painter, the question is the same, or a philosopher; this is, in fact, why I am asking it, or a writer – creates something, then (still in quotes) "perceives" something that doesn't yet belong beforehand to the outer world, although it's in an immediate relationship with the outer world, so with the world of relations; or from the moment that Mozart has the perception of a sudden instant in which he is going to develop a whole piece of music; [or] when a writer has a perception of something that moves into his body or his "soul" (in quotes), he is about to develop a text; or when a philosopher like Bergson is going to discover what he calls intuition; [or] when a musician says "there we are, what I am creating" – he doesn't say it like that, it's from the cosmos – but I sense it within me and so what emerges is within me, full stop, could that belong, in [light of] the analysis that you did of auto-affections in Spinoza, to the third kind of knowledge (*connaissance*) or be a step toward the third kind of knowledge? In that case, what would be the direct relation between this perception? Is there something that occurs within and that is already of a somewhat elevated order, on the creative level, as much in the painter as in the musician, the philosopher, or writer, indeed in other people, the relation between that perception, this internal perception and the other perception, even if the term "perception" is not quite right? It's not necessarily perception. So, that's it.

Deleuze: Yeh… That's two questions, yes?

Pinhas: Yes, but together that let's me reach the same thing. [*Pause*]

Deleuze: I'll quickly start with the second one because it's obviously the most interesting, and the most… well, the most difficult, but to which we can only answer generally. So, you are asking both about the nature of certain states, states for which the most striking examples belong no doubt, in fact, to art. What does it mean when an artist – but this must be valid as well for things other than art – when an artist begins to take hold of a kind of certainty? A kind of certainty about what? So, already, to define this kind of certainty… At a [particular] moment…

at a somewhat specific moment, it's perhaps also the moment in which he is the most -- this gets difficult -- he is the most fragile in his certainty and is also the most invulnerable. He reaches a kind of certainty regarding what? Regarding what he wants to do, regarding what he is able to do, all that… So, Richard's question is: if you see these states, in fact, that… which are not at all givens (*donnés*), even for artists. These things are not givens. A date can almost be assigned when someone starts having a – yes – I am not managing to find any other term that this kind of "certainty".

Oh yes, and yet he couldn't say… He couldn't yet say, and there's no grounds for saying what he wants to do, even if it's a writer, even if it's a philosopher. But there's this "certainty". And this certainty isn't at all a vanity because, on the contrary, it's a kind of immense modesty. So, if you see these states just a little – indeed, we are going to speak of this regarding painting because that, to me, it's striking that in the case of great painters, one can almost assign dates in which they enter into this element of certainty. Richard's question is: could we say – of course, he is the first to know that his question is a bit strained; Spinoza does not speak of this directly – but, can we assimilate that into something like the third type of knowledge, these states of certainty?

At first glance, I'd say: yes, because if I try to define the states of the third kind, well, what is it? There is a certainty. It's a very special mode of certainty that Spinoza expresses even with the rather strange term "conscius", consciousness (*conscience*), it's a consciousness. It's a kind of consciousness, but that's raised up to a power of action (*puissance*). I'd almost say that it's the final power of action of consciousness. And what is this? How do we define this consciousness? It's… I'd say, it's the internal consciousness of something; specifically, it's a "self-consciousness," but this [is] self-consciousness insofar as it apprehends a power of action. So, this self consciousness is raised up, has become a consciousness of power of action, with the result that what this consciousness grasps, it grasps within the self. And yet, what it grasps in this way within the self is an exterior power of action. So, this is indeed how Spinoza tries to define the third kind. In the end, you attain a third kind, this almost mystic kind, this intuition of the third kind; one could practically say how to recognize it. It's really when you confront an exterior power of action – one must maintain both of them – and when this exterior power of action is within you as you confront it. You grasp it within you.

This is why Spinoza says, in the end, the third kind [of knowledge] is when "being conscious of one's self, being conscious of God, and being conscious of the word, are but one." I believe that it is important here, that we have to take him literally, Spinoza's expressions. In the third kind of knowledge, "I am indissolubly conscious of myself, of others or of the world, and of God." So, that means, in fact, if you will, that this kind of knowledge of self is at the same time knowledge of power of action, knowledge of power of action that is at the same time knowledge of self.

So, in the end, I'd say yes. Why are we at once safe and yet quite vulnerable in this? Well, we're quite vulnerable because all that is ever needed is a minuscule point in order for this power of action to sweep us away. It overwhelms us so much that, at that moment, everything occurs such that we are battered by the enormity of this power of action. And at the same time, we are safe. We are safe because it's precisely within me that I grasp the object of this knowledge that's so exterior insofar as it is power of action. As a result, Spinoza insists emphatically on the following point: for happiness of this third kind, he reserves the name "beatitude." This beatitude, well… in

the end, it's a strange kind of happiness. That is, it's a happiness that only depends on me. Are there forms of happiness that only depend on me? Spinoza would say: to ask if any of these exist is a false question since it's truly the product of a victory (*conquête*). The victory of the third kind is quite precisely to attain these states of happiness in which simultaneously there is a certainty that, whatever happens, to a great extent no one can take them from me. Anything can occur. The idea… You know, we sometimes go through states like that, also, ones that don't last. Whatever occurs, well yes… perhaps I could die, yes, fine. But there's still something that cannot be taken from me, literally, this strange happiness. And there, in book V [of *The Ethics*], I believe that Spinoza describes it very, very admirably.

Hence, I return more toward the first question which is more… Yes, I don't know if I answered, but so I'll say, yes, it's what we called the last time, what I called auto-affection: it's precisely this knowledge of power of action that has become knowledge of self. So, perhaps it's art that presents these forms of knowledge, especially in a particularly sharpened form. The impression of becoming invulnerable, well there, I cannot manage to state the extraordinary modesty that accompanies this certainty. It's a kind of self-confidence that basks in modesty; that is, it's like a relation with power of action. Fine.

But then, to get back to the simpler of Richard's questions, so these auto-affections that define the third kind and that already define the second kind [of knowledge], I insist simply on undertaking some review so that… I believe that it's very important for how the *Ethics* unfolds. You see, I really believe that Spinoza starts from a plane, a plane of existence in which he shows us, for all manner of reasons, how and why we've been condemned to inadequate ideas and to passions. And once again, the problem of the *Ethics* is indeed: but how can one get beyond inadequate ideas and passions? So, he gathered up all the arguments to show us that, at the extreme and at first glance, we cannot get beyond them. That is, Spinoza gathered all the arguments to show us that, apparently, we are condemned to the first kind of knowledge.

I'll give a single example: we aren't free. Fine. We aren't free -- [there's] Spinoza's hatred for this concept, that seems to him to be a very bad concept of freedom. -- We aren't free because we always endure actions -- his idea is very simple – yes, indeed, we always endure the effects of exterior bodies. What does freedom mean? It's even a true idea that we don't grasp. If we take seriously Spinoza's description of the first kind of knowledge, we cannot even see how it might be a question of getting beyond it. We endure the effects of other bodies; there is no clear and distinct idea; there is no true idea. We are condemned to inadequate ideas; we are condemned to passions. And yet, the entire *Ethics* goes on to trace the path, and it's on this that I am insisting: it's a path that does not pre-exist. It's truly the *Ethics* that, in the most closed off world of the first kind of knowledge, goes on to trace the path making possible an exit from the first kind.

So, if I try to summarize this procedure, because that seems to me truly to be the *Ethics'*s procedure, how does one get beyond, once again, this world of the inadequate and of passion? Well, what's fundamental are the steps of this exit. If I summarize completely, I'd say that this is the first step: one realizes that there are two kinds of passion. We remain within passion, within the first kind. But, there we have, and this is going to be decisive, there's a distinction between two kinds of passion. There are passions that increase my power of acting (*puissance d'agir*), passions of joy. There are passions that reduce my power of action, passions of sadness. Each of

these is a [kind of] passion. Why? Each is a passion since I do not possess my power of acting. Even when it increases, I don't possess it. Fine.

Thus, I am still fully within the first kind of knowledge. You see, this is the first step, the distinction of joyful passions and sad passions. I have both; why? Because sad passions are the effect on me due to my encounter with bodies that do not agree with me, that is, that do not directly compose themselves to my relation. And joyful passions are the effect on me due to my encounter with bodies that agree with me, that is, that compose their relation onto my own. Fine. [*Pause*]

Second step: when I feel joyful passions – you see, joyful passions are always within the first kind of knowledge – but when I feel joyful passions, [there's] an encounter effect with bodies that agree with mine; when I feel joyful passions, these joyful passions increase my power of acting. What does that mean? It means that they lead me – they don't force me – they lead me, they give me the opportunity. They give me the opportunity; they lead me toward forming a common notion. A notion common to what? A notion common to both bodies, the body affecting me and my body. You see, that's a second step.

First step: joyful passions are distinguished from sad passions because joyful passions increase my power of action, whereas sad passions reduce them.

Second step: these same joyful passions lead me toward forming a common notion, common to the body that affects me and my own body.

There's a subordinate question for this step: and why don't sad passions lead me toward forming common notions? Spinoza is very impressive; he can prove it mathematically: because when two bodies disagree, when bodies don't agree, if they don't agree, it's never due to something that they have in common. If two bodies don't agree, it's due to their differences, or their oppositions, and not due to something that they'd have in common. In other words, sad passions – think about this well because it's very… here, there's a theoretical passage to understand, but in fact, it's very practical – sad passions are the effect on my body by a body that doesn't agree with mine, that is, that doesn't compose its relation with my own relation.

Henceforth, sad passion is the effect of my body by a body that is grasped from a viewpoint of having nothing in common with mine. This same body, if you manage to grasp it from a viewpoint of having nothing in common with yours, at that point, it no longer affects you with a sad passion. As long as it affects you with a sad passion, it's because you are grasping this other body as incompatible with yours. [*Pause*] So, Spinoza can very well say: only joyful passions, and not sad ones, lead me toward forming a common notion. You recall that common notions are not at all theoretical matters. These are extremely practical notions. These are practico-ethical notions. One must not at all make of it… We cannot understand anything if we make mathematical ideas of them. Thus, the fact is that the joyful passion, which is the effect on me of a body agreeing with mine, leads me toward forming the common notion between two bodies. [*Pause*] I'd say, literally, that in order to account for this second step, joyful passions overlap common notions. [*Pause*] So, common notions are necessarily adequate. We've seen this; I won't go back over it.

So, you see what the pathway is, whereas we were tending to say, we never could get beyond the first kind of knowledge. There's a pathway, but it's a very broken line. If I became aware of the difference of nature between joyful passions and sad passions, I realize that joyful passions give me the means to go beyond the domain of passions. It's not that the passions are suppressed. They are there; they will remain. Spinoza's problem is not to cause passions to disappear. As he himself says, it's so that in the end, they only occupy my smallest part. Well fine, what does it mean for them only to occupy my smallest part? That's not so easy to do either! It's up to me to create my own parts that are not subject to passions. Nothing is given! Nothing is given up front.

So how do I create my own parts that would not be subject to passions? Look at Spinoza's answer: I am making the difference between sad passions [and] joyful passions. So yes, I have sad passions. "To the extent that it's within me", as he says according to his formulation, I attempt to feel the most joyful passions possible and the fewest sad passions possible. Fine. I do what I can. All of this is quite practical. I do what I can. You'll tell me: that goes without saying; it happens quite naturally. No. Because, as Spinoza insists, we never stop… People never stop poisoning life. They never stop wallowing in sadness. They never stop; they never stop. Fine. The whole art of impossible situations that we discussed, they deliver themselves to impossible situations. All of this, fine… A wisdom is already needed to select passions of joy, to try to have as many of them as possible. Fine. And about this, passions of joy remain, survive as passions. But they lead me toward forming common notions, that is, practical ideas of what there is in common between the body that affects me with joy and my body.

The common notions are adequate ideas and they alone. Between a body that does not agree with mine, between a body that destroys me and my body, there are no common notions. For the viewpoint from which a body does not agree with me is incompatible with the common notion. In fact, if a body does not agree with me, it's from the viewpoint in which it has nothing in common with me. From the viewpoint in which there's something in common with me, it agrees with me. That's obvious; that's for certain.

So, you see, at the point I've reached, the second step, I've formed common notion. But these common notions, if you take them practically, if you don't make abstract ideas out of them… The idea of a common relation, that is,… And at the same time, I construct it. A common relation between the body that agrees with me and my body, what does that come down to saying? That comes down to saying: the formation of a third body of which we – the other body and mine – are parts. That doesn't pre-exist either. This third body will have a composed relation which will be located both within the exterior body and within my body. That's what it means to be the object of a common notion.

Thus, from common notions will result… From common notions that are adequate ideas will result affects, feelings. Above all, don't confuse – here's what I wanted to say – above all, don't confuse affects that are *at the origin* of common notions, and affects that *result from* common notions. This confusion would be a serious misunderstanding; that is, at that point, the *Ethics* could no longer function, just to tell you that this is serious.

What differences are there between two sorts of affects? The affects at the origin of common notions – I just tried to state what these are – are joyful passions. Joyful passions – again I am

repeating so that, I hope, this will be clear – as the effect on me of a body agreeing with my body, joyful passions lead me toward forming the common notion, that is, an idea of what there is in common between two bodies. And the idea of what there is in common between the two bodies is the idea of a third body of which the external body and mine are parts. Thus, you see that the feelings that lead me, leading me toward forming a common notion, are passions of joy. They're passions of joy. We saw that passions of sadness didn't lead us toward forming common notions, whereas feelings that result from common notions are no longer passions of joy. [*Pause*] These are active affects.

Since common notions are adequate ideas, from this result affects that are not satisfied with increasing my power of action, like joyful passions. The affects resulting from this, on the contrary, depend on my power of action. Be very careful about Spinoza's terminology and make no mistake since he never confuses these two expressions: that which increased my power of action and that which results from my power of action.

That which increases my power of action is necessarily a passion since, in order for my power of action to increase, we must indeed assume that I have not yet taken it into my possession. My power of action increases to the point that I tend toward possessing this power, but I haven't done so. That's the effect of joyful passions. As a result, under the action of joyful passions, I form a common notion. At that point, I possess my power of action because the common notion is explained through my power; it's explained through my power. At that point, therefore, I enter into possession of my power. Within formal possession, I possess my power formally. From this this formal possession of my power of action through the common notion, active affects result.

As a result, if I try to summarize all these moments, I'd say: the active affects that themselves result from common notion are the third step. I'd say that we have here the three steps: first step, you select joyful passions as much as you can; second step, you form common notions – these are formulas (*recettes*), eh! – you form common notions that overlap the joyful passions. They do not suppress them; they overlap the joyful passions; third step, from the common notion overlapping the joyful passions, active affects result and overlap the joyful passions anew.

At the extreme, passions and inadequate ideas no longer concern… no longer concern – but I couldn't say this earlier; we had to develop this – no longer concern anything but the smallest proportional part of yourself. And the greatest part of yourself is concerned with adequate ideas and active affects.

The final step: in fact, common notions and active affects that result from common notions are themselves going to be overlaid with new ideas and new states, or with new affects, the ideas and the affects of the third kind, that is, these auto-affections that remain for us a bit mysterious, [*Pause*] and that will define the third kind [of knowledge] whereas common notions only defined the second kind. You see?

So, there is a thing that fascinates me, to conclude all of this. The thing that fascinates me is this: it's why doesn't Spinoza say this? The answer obviously must be complex. In fact, if he didn't say this, it means that all I am saying would be false. He has to say this. And he did say it. So then, my question is transformed: if he said this, why didn't he say this very clearly? Well, then,

here I think it's simple. He couldn't do otherwise. Where does he say this? He says this and he has this very curious order: [first step] inadequate ideas and joyful passions, selection of joyful passions; second step: formation of common notions and active affects resulting from common notions; third step, third kind of knowledge: ideas of essences, no longer common notions, but ideas of singular essences, and active affects resulting from them.

These three steps, they… He presents them as three successive steps, but in the fifth book. And the fifth book is not an easy book, as we saw, since it's a book in great acceleration (*à toute vitesse*) and, once again, not because it's poorly or quickly completed. For, in the third kind of knowledge, we reach a kind of speed of thought that Spinoza follows and results, in the *Ethics*, and gives to the *Ethics* this admirable ending, like a kind of accelerated ending (*terminaison à toute allure*), a kind of lightening ending. Fine.

So, he says it in the fifth book, it seems to me. I draw your attention notably toward a theorem, a proposition. At the start of the fifth book, Spinoza says: [*Proposition XXXVIII Proof; also Prop. X and Proof*] "the greater will be the part not touched by… the greater will be the part not touched by emotions that are contrary to our nature" (*"tant que nous ne sommes pas tourmentés par des sentiments contraires à notre nature, nous pouvons"*). For me, this text is fundamental since this cannot be stated more clearly: what are emotions that are contrary to your nature? You will look at the context. These are the aggregate of passions of sadness. How are passions of sadness or emotions of sadness contrary to our nature? Literally, by virtue of their very definition, to wit: these are effects of the encounter of my body with bodies that do not agree with my nature. Therefore, these are literally emotions contrary to my nature.

So then, "so long as we are not touched by emotions", that is, "to the extent" that we are touched by such emotions, that we experience a sadness, feel a sadness, there's no question of forming a common notion relative to this sadness. I can only form a common notion when joys are accessible. That's it, passive joys. Only when I have formed a common notion, when a passion of joy is available, at that moment, my passion of joy is overlaid with adequate ideas, common notions of the second kind and ideas of essences of the third kind, and again overlaid with active affects, active affects of the second kind and active affects of the third kind. [*Pause*]

So, what is happening? And at the same time, there really is no need [for this]. I insist on this to conclude. But what's bothering me is that, obviously, joyful passions are leading me to form [common notions]. That's like a good use of joy. But at the extreme, I imagine someone who might feel joyful passions through… Chance would be good, fate would favor this, he'd be greatly filled with joy. And there wouldn't be… He wouldn't form any common notion. He would remain completely within the first kind of knowledge. So there, it's obvious that this isn't a necessity. Joyful passions do not force me into forming the common notion. They give me the opportunity. It's there that, between the first and second kinds of knowledge, there is something like a gap. So, do I jump across it or not?

If freedom is decided at a given moment, for Spinoza, that's it. It seems to me that's it. In fact, I could stay, even while feeling joyful passions, I could remain eternally within the first knowledge. In that case, I'd be making a very bad use of joy. However strongly I might be led toward forming common notions, I am not, properly speaking, bound to do so. [*Pause*] There we

are. In any case, it seems to me that it's a kind of very solid succession, both logical and chronological in the history of modes of existence or of the three kinds of knowledge.

I am insisting on this idea of doubling or overlapping. In the beginning, I am filled with inadequate ideas or passive affects. And little by little, I manage to produce things that are going to overlap my inadequate ideas and passive affects, to overlay them with ideas that themselves are adequate and with affects that themselves are active. As a result, at the extreme, if I succeed… if I succeed, I will always have inadequate ideas and passive affects since they are linked to my condition as long as I exist. But these inadequate ideas and these passive affects will, relatively speaking, only occupy the smallest of part of me. I will have hollowed out within me – literally, that's what it is – I will have hollowed out within me some parts that are concerned with adequate ideas and active affects or auto-affections. There we are. … Yes?

A student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: [*Pause*] I am thinking, ok? I'm thinking. [*Pause*] They both are not necessarily opposed to one another. [*Another student briefly answers here, comments inaudible*] Yes, agreed. [*Pause*] They are not necessarily in opposition. In any case, I'd answer that it's not a question of… [*Deleuze does not complete the thought*] because quite often, there's a tendency to interpret Spinoza that way, and that really make him very ordinary, I believe. It's not a question of a science. Once again, that's why I am insisting: common notions, of course, have a viewpoint. If you will, I believe… I'd say rather, for example, that geometric ideas… doing geometry is very important for Spinoza, for life itself, really, within life. But geometric ideas are not what define common notions; geometric ideas are simply a certain way, a certain possibility for managing common notions. Geometric ideas, we could say, [or] geometry, this is the science of common notions. And common notions are not in themselves a science; they are a certain kind of knowing (*un certain savoir*). But it's almost a skill (*savoir-faire*).

So, concerning your precise question, I'd say, Anne [Querrien] stated it well: there are, in fact, three things in the terms you are using. I'd say: common notions are not at all opposed to the idea of a game. There is a veritable game, in the wide sense, of common notions since it's a play of composition. There is a common notion once there's a composition of relations. So, I can always try to compose. That's certainly opposed to improvisation since it implies and assumes, first, the long, selective procedure in which I have separated my joys from my forms of sadness.

Anne Querrien: [*Barely audible comment; she addresses several aspects of improvisation*]

Deleuze: If you think about improvisation defined, in fact, as feeling, then a kind of lived feeling of the composition of relations, for example, in fact, in the example of jazz, one can take in everything, but… Well, in the jazz example, for example, the trumpet enters in at a particular moment. I believe that this is exactly what the English word "timing" expresses, "timing", that is, timing… There are words… Here, French doesn't have these words. The Greeks had a very interesting word that corresponds exactly to American "timing": it's *kaïros*. *Kaïros* is a notion entirely… The Greeks make extensive use of it. *Kaïros* is precisely the correct moment, not missing the correct moment. It's also, it's translated… but French doesn't have as strong a word… There was a god; there was a kind of divine power of *kaïros* among the Greeks. The

favorable occasion, the opportunity, the spot: so, well yes, it's the moment when the trumpet can take things over there.

Anne Querrien: [*Barely audible comments; she compares the concept of improvisation with collective assemblages*]

Claire Parnet: In fact, the collective assemblage is constructed as soon as each person understands what the relations are that constitute it. In the end, there nothing else that can permit it, really.

Anne Querrien: [*Inaudible comments*]

Claire Parnet: Well, of course.

Anne Querrien: [*The inaudible answer continues*]

Claire Parnet: But that's not an improvisation; it's an understanding of the relations that constitute you.

Anne Querrien: [*Barely audible response*; *she refers to the experience of jazz musician friends and how their interplay might correspond to a collective assemblage*]

Deleuze: The notion of collective assemblage is difficult because it cannot contribute much to our understanding of Spinoza, especially since Spinoza uses his own term that mostly replaces that one. When he says, "common notion", once again, that means something quite precise. I even think that, in the end, it's impossible for him, as he sees it, that I, me, a living individual, would form – I tried expressing this earlier, understand – I cannot form – it's a notion that is hardly intellectual, common notion, but it's so vital – I cannot form a common notion, that is, the idea of something common between my body and an exterior body without, once again, a third body coming into existence, into which the exterior body and my own are only parts. If I form the common notion of my body and the body of the sea, of the wave, returning to my example: through learning to swim, I form the common notion of my body and the wave. At that point, I am forming a third body in which the wave and I are parts.

And with all the more reason, this is why Spinoza tells us: "But it's obvious between men that common notions…" [*citation left incomplete*]. Here we see quite well what he has in mind and the extent to which it's not at all like… like people sometimes say about notions. Once again, they're treated… It's a catastrophe when they… In my view, the catastrophe preventing us from understanding all that [Spinoza] means is when common notions are treated like abstract things. And in this, it's his own fault, but he had his reasons. It's his fault because the first time that he introduces common notions, he does so in this way: "the most universal common notions; example: all bodies are within extension", extension as common notion. [*Interruption of the recording*] [46:50]

Part 2

… That's what bothers the reader. So, he has a reason, and this reason doesn't help us. So, when he tells us, on the contrary, but in the end, privileged common notions are notions that are shared by several men, that is, this is the human community. That's what it is! That's the site of the common notion. In other words, here, notions emerge as essentially political, to wit: the common notion is the construction of a community.

Here we see quite well the point at which this overlaps, and greatly so, the physico-mathematical notions that he nonetheless demanded in Book II [*of the* Ethics]. In Book II, as he wants to start by explaining the most universal common notions, there they really seem to be abstract things, to be things like kinds of science. All bodies are in extension, speed and movement as a notion common to all bodies, etc. So, if we don't pay attention at this particular moment, I believe we lose all the concrete richness of common notions.

You understand, the common notion is when, fine… It's which third body you create with someone you love or really like, how… what rhythm… Yes, here are examples. Here, the example provides the rhythm, in fact. Rhythm is a common notion with at least two bodies. Rhythm is fundamentally common on at least two bodies. There is no rhythm of the violin; there's the rhythm of the violin that responds to the piano and the rhythm of the piano that responds to the violin. There we find a common notion in this case. It's the notion common to two bodies, the body of the piano and the body of the violin, from the viewpoint, from one viewpoint or another, that is, from the viewpoint of the relation… of the relation that will constitute a particular musical work and that forms the third body. You see, it's very concrete.

So, I'd say, yes, everything is possible, yes, in this question. It's not just any kind of knowledge; it's not just any kind of game since it's a game or play of composition, of combinations with an understanding of relations. So, the expression "game" (*jeu*) is obviously very ambiguous because I conceive of games that would consist, for example, uniquely of games of chance, if we don't go seeking a martingale strategy. As soon as we go looking for a martingale – however, these are abominable examples in Spinoza's case – you can play in a way that you simply accept the results. And it's quite funny! You accept the results. For example, you are playing a game of roulette, and you accept the results. With Russian roulette, you turn roulette in to a mortuary practice, and that could happen. So fine, these are passions of sadness. You are playing, you win or lose; if you lose, you're sad, unless you happen to be especially strange; if you win, you're happy. But it's a passion. What does it mean to go looking for a martingale or roulette? Fine, you find people who seek out a martingale [scheme] as a kind of job. It's not a kind of science, but it is work. So, what does that mean? In this, they raise themselves, they are trying. Now, they might be completely wrong; I do know that Spinoza would obviously say that this is not material for common notions as this game, precisely, is condemned to the first kind of knowledge.

But let's imagine a Spinozist gambler. He'd say that, in the attempt to elaborate a martingale strategy, there already is a search for common relations, research into a kind of relation and law for the relation. Fine, we cannot say that this is scientific research, [but] it's research into forms of knowledge (*savoirs*), it's an entire craft, it's an entire… What is it? Do we arrive at a common notion that would be an adequate idea? There is a small treatise; nonetheless, he had great

interest in these questions since he participated – as did the entire 17th century, a century of gambler, you know, the 17th – he participated in this, and in Dutch, he wrote a very small treatise, of a few pages, titled "Calculation of chance" (*Calcul des chances*). Like everyone, he was reflecting on games with dice, the dice throw. All this is the birth of the calculation of probabilities. It's not just Pascal, it's… All mathematicians of the era were enormously interested in probabilities, and Spinoza produces a little treatise, it's…

Anne Querrien: [*Comments inaudible*]

Deleuze: That gets interesting, but in the end, it's not Spinozist joy, it's not Spinozist joy! [*Laughter*] [*Pause*] So there you are, I leave it to you to follow up on all this, but above all, follow up with the *Ethics,* with your readings.

Richard Pinhas: The rare discussions that I've been able to have with some remarkable musicians have given me the intuition that from the moment that one is overtaken by [*inaudible;* inspiration?] -- because in fact it's not something that is deliberately accessible – so from the moment that there's this encounter, it is completely impossible to avoid it, that is, there's a characteristic of necessity, of inevitability unless one were to destroy all relations. [*Subsequent comments are inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes! And at the same time, I firmly believe that even at this level, Spinoza doesn't express it that way, so in fact, we are no longer speaking of Spinoza. I have the impression that at the same time, however strong the certainty of the third kind [of knowledge] might be, everything can still be ruined. Life is so amazing in this way because -- and through this, we are introduced to what we will now be undertaking – there isn't any moment, however strong my certainty might be – it could be huge --, in which everything might not be ruined. That's very strange. Everything could collapse. Why then… And well, I can be swept away by that power of action instead of harnessing it; I can be swept away. A kind of exasperation can always arise, exasperation. Exasperation is when suddenly, fine, I have a power of action, but in the end, I have no more words. In short, I collapse (*je craque, quoi*).

[*Here begins the new seminar, on painting; see sessions 1, Painting seminar, 31 March 1981*]

Notes

1-

[1] Despite the session starting in mid-sentence, this is the first complete session transcript based on the Suzuki recording and corresponding translation for this seminar. However, see note 6 regarding internal references to previous sessions for which no recordings exist.

[2] The corresponding Gutenberg Project text reads somewhat differently: "This is an observation which should be made at the outset, in order that we may arrive at the knowledge of such a being more quickly."

[3] Again, the Gutenberg Project text from paragraph 75 varies significantly from this, omitting Deleuze's key phrase: "However, if we proceed with as little abstraction as possible, and begin from primary elements -- that is, from the source and origin of nature." Deleuze seems to attribute this phrase, "as quickly as possible" to paragraph 75, whereas it's located in paragraph 49.

[4] On the cry, see especially the Leibniz session 4 (May 6, 1980).

[5] This reference to previous sessions obviously suggests that at least two meetings took place before the 2 December 1980 session, one for which we have at least a partial transcript (25 November), the other for which neither a recording nor a transcript exists in the archives.
[6] Deleuze employs the title *Le traité des passions* (*The Treatise on Passions*).

2-
[7] I should note that the transcription on which this translation is based has several sources, notably the principal transcript created by members of the Paris 8 team, and two incomplete transcripts available at Web Deleuze – one found there under the impossible date 21 December 1980 (impossible since the university schedule excludes a course not only on Sunday but also within Christmas break) which, in fact, is a segment of the 9 December sessions first part; and the other one found there under the actual course date which is a segment of the session's second part. The BNF recording allows me to fill in gaps in the French transcripts from both sources with hopes of producing then as faithful a translation as possible. Given the numerous gaps in the French transcript from Web Deleuze for part 1 (on which the Web Deleuze translation is based), I rely solely on the Paris 8 transcript, duly revised from the recording, for a new translation of the first part (approximately 45 minutes).
[8] From this point forward, the Paris 8 French transcript is missing about 15 minutes of Deleuze's presentation, and then the transcript picks up again without indicating any loss of the entire discussion on terminology. In contrast, the Web Deleuze French transcript will begin in a short while (as will be noted) with the discussion of problems of terminology.
[9] It is here that the Web Deleuze text begins, and the translation provided by Simon Duffy offers a guide for much of the following text.
[10] Starting from here, the Paris 8 transcript by Christina Roski resumes, overlapping generally with the Web Deleuze transcript, which stops abruptly before the end of the session. For reasons of commodity, I follow one transcript or the other depending on which best conforms to the actual recording.
[11] The intervention by Georges Comtesse seems to have occurred during the break, and as Deleuze will recall this at the start of the next session, Comtesse raises the term "conatus", employed by Spinoza, that Deleuze addresses briefly here and at greater length in the next session.
[12] Here ends the Web Deleuze transcript based on a rather limited recording. The concluding fifteen minutes of transcript are based on the Paris 8 transcript compared to the actual recording.

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[13] This is no doubt a reference to the so-called "New Philosophers" against whom Deleuze wrote an article in 1977, republished in *Two Regimes of Madness* (MIT/Semiotext(e), 2007), pp. 139-147. He also speaks about this topic in *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* (Gilles Deleuze, From A to Z) in "G as in *Gauche* [Left]".
[14] Here we have a five-minute gap in the Web Deleuze transcript and translation.
[15] Here ends the Web Deleuze transcription and translation, after the 55" marker, out of 124" total.
[16] This explanation is considered in detail in chapter III of *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* [City Lights, 1988], devoted to the Blyenbergh correspondence. This first citation is on p. 30 in this edition (p. 45 in *Spinoza, Philosophie pratique,* Minuit, 1981), from letter XIX.
[17] Rantanplan is the name of a fictional dog appearing for the first time in the comic book, *Lucky Luck*, and having as principal trait to be completely stupid, but occasionally managed involuntarily to help other characters in the stories.
[18] Deleuze mistakenly says "Wolmar".
[19] The translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley reads: "As for myself, I abstain from those things, or try to, because they are explicitly contrary to my singular nature" (p. 31, note 1). I provide terms that correspond to Deleuze's French rendering.
[20] Hurley's translation is slightly different: "You omit the things I call vice because they are contrary to your singular nature, but not because they contain vice themselves. You omit doing them as we omit eating food that our nature finds disgusting," (p. 31)

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[21] This comment may have followed Deleuze opening request for any questions or problems that student may have had.

[22] Deleuze refers implicitly here to the earlier sessions of the Spinoza seminar, notably to material developed on November 25, December 2, and December 9, 1980 (and possibly earlier; no earlier lectures are available). This reference also corresponds to his discussion in chapter 2 of *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy,* titled "On the Difference between the *Ethics* and a Morality."

[23] In contrast to the translation of *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate "ensemble" with *aggregate* rather than *set*, unless the specific context calls for the latter term.

[24] Deleuze discusses this letter and consideration of the part of blood in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 32-33 (*Spinoza: Philosophie pratique,* pp. 46-48).

[25] The shift of topics returns to the discussion in the previous session (16 December 1980) about the question of evil in the correspondence with Blyenbergh. Chapter 3 of *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* also addresses this correspondence and these questions.

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[26] The second seminar, starting in late March, will be on painting, with the 31 March 1981 seminar providing an overlapping session, concluding discussion with students on Spinoza and then continuing onto the introduction of the painting seminar. The comments that Deleuze makes here about the theme of the accident in Dutch painting connect directly to the opening theme introduced at the 31 March 1981 session.

[27] The fragmentary nature of the translation available on Web Deleuze, by Timothy Murphy, is due to the corresponding fragmentary original transcription also available there. Specifically, the opening 16 minutes and the final 40 minutes are omitted entirely, and within the remaining 70 minutes, the omissions correspond to about one-half of the session. Hence, the translation presented here is the full session available in English for the first time, and the augmented transcription, based on the excellent original work by Vanessa Duvois and Carmela Chergui (at Paris 8), is also a newly updated French version.

[28] In concert with the translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate Deleuze's "rapport" as *relation*, since Deleuze is gradually developing an argument, from one lecture to the next, of the importance of differential relations in both philosophical and mathematical terms.

[29] Deleuze examines these two texts in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 35-40; French ed., pp. 50-53.

[30] While there are brief references to theology in the earliest session for the 1980-81, 25 November 1980, there are none to negative theology, which argues for the existence of one or several earlier sessions for which we do not have any recordings.

[31] The rest of the session will consist of Deleuze's attempt to respond to this disgruntled participant. This is the same participant who earlier asked the brief question about "this is a model of an absolute physical" aspect that would "cancel the symbolic dimension."

[32] Regarding the time markers (in the French transcript) for this session, Frédéric Astier, in his masterful summary of the Deleuze seminars (*Les Cours enregistrés de Gilles Deleuze, 1979-1987* [Sils Maria, 2006], p. 26), seminars offers two distinct groups of time lengths for this session's recording, one group that clearly corresponds to the session above, and a second group that has no reasonable connection to this session unless the session were one lasting more that four hours, which obviously is not the case.

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[33] In concert with the translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate Deleuze's "rapport" as *relation*, since Deleuze is gradually developing an argument, from one lecture to the next, of the importance of differential relations in both philosophical and mathematical terms.

[34] See the references to Nero and to Clytemnestra, in fact, combine two separate examples of crimes, by Nero and by Orestes, presented in detail in the 13 January 1980 session.

[35] In order to distinguish clearly between the two terms used for power, *pouvoir* and *puissance*, I translate the latter as "power of action," which Deleuze will himself emphasize later in the session by using *puissance d'agir*, power of acting.

[36] The Web Deleuze transcript notes here: "Gilles Deleuze looks extremely nauseated."

[37] Although Deleuze says “concentric circles”, he comments on this letter in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, under the alphabetical entry “Infinite” (p.78; French edition, p. 112), where “nonconcentric” is clearly stated.
[38] There is a gap in the Web Deleuze French transcript, hence in the translation, corresponding to 30 minutes of the session (approximately from minutes 101 to 131).

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[39] In concert with the translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate Deleuze’s “rapport” as *relation*, since Deleuze is gradually developing an argument, from one lecture to the next, of the importance of differential relations in both philosophical and mathematical terms.
[40] The onomatopoeia to which Deleuze refers is the close resemblance between the word for “bull”, *boeuf*, and “bellow”, *beugle*. While a “cow”, *vache*, may also “bellow”, *beugle*, the onomatopoeia is gone.
[41] Deleuze’s reference is certainly to Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, to whom Deleuze refers in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation,* trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 190 note 7, and elsewhere.
[42] On grayness in Cézanne, see the final Spinoza session which is also the introduction to the seminar on painting, 31 March 1981.
[43] *See Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 79; *Spinoza: Philosophie pratique* p. 89.

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[44] Deleuze employs the terms *puissance* and *puissance d’agir*, that I translate respectively as “power of action” and “power of acting,” as synonymous. With reference to Spinoza, these terms stand in contrast to *pouvoir*, power.
[45] The word for “worms”, “vers”, can also mean “lines of verse”, and although Deleuze probably means “worms,” since he earlier used the words “vers luisants”, or “glowworms”, the ambiguity is nonetheless of interest, especially in the context of discussion of equivocity and univocity.
[46] In concert with the translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate Deleuze’s “rapport” as *relation*, since Deleuze is gradually developing an argument, from one lecture to the next, of the importance of differential relations in both philosophical and mathematical terms.
[47] Deleuze spells *mer*, sea, in order to avoid confusion with the homophone *mère*, mother.
[48] On common notions, see *Spinoza: Practical philosophy*, pp. 126-132.
[49] For these terms, see the session on Spinoza of January 6, 1981.

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[50] Even from the context of what follows, it is unclear to whom this initial reference is.
[51] Victor Delbos, *Spinozism: course taught at the Sorbonne in 1912-1913*, (1916); Vrin (2005). However, in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze states that Delbos’s *Le Problème moral dans la philosophie de Spinoza et dans l’histoire du spinozisme* (Paris: Alcan, 1893) "is a much more important book than the academic work by the same author, *Le Spinozisme*”, i.e. the title provided in this session.
[52] On the individual, see *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 76-78.
[53] In concert with the translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate Deleuze’s “rapport” as *relation*, since Deleuze is gradually developing an argument, from one lecture to the next, of the importance of differential relations in both philosophical and mathematical terms.
[54] This apparent slip, from sense 1 to sense 3, while inexplicable, has been verified on the recording.
[55] Martial Gueroult, *Spinoza, Dieu (Ethique, I),* and *Spinoza, L’Âme (Éthique, II*) (Paris : Aubier, 1968).
[56] This reference is supplied by the Paris 8 transcriber, Yann Girard, not by Deleuze: “L. II, Prop. XIII, Ax.I, II, Lem. I”.
[57] For consistency, I continue to translate “rapport” as relation, but in the mathematical context, this could also be read as ratio.
[58] See note 4.
[59] On this letter, see the session on Spinoza of 20 Jan 1981; see also *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy,* pp. 78-79.

[60] The spring 1981 seminar continues, from 31 March onward, on the topic of painting and the question of concepts.

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[61] In concert with the translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate Deleuze's "rapport" as *relation*, since Deleuze is gradually developing an argument, from one lecture to the next, of the importance of differential relations in both philosophical and mathematical terms. Also, Deleuze employs the terms *puissance* that I translate as "power of action". With reference to Spinoza, this term stands in contrast to *pouvoir*, power.
[62] Deleuze discusses these "modal essences" in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone, 1992), pp. 191-192.
[63] See the discussion of Nicholas of Cusa in the Spinoza lectures, 2 and 9 December 1981.
[64] This sequence of questions is Deleuze's way of trying to cajole the students to ask him some questions, using three verb tenses of the verb *devoir – dois-je recommencer? Devais-je recommencer? Devrais-je recommencer? –* followed by the strong *faut-il* (do I have to…) which he does not complete since someone asks a question.
[65] This reference to the thought experiment will become a running joke throughout this session since, in fact, there is no class held the following week. However, Deleuze's reaction here, "that's a shame," suggests that he really expected to receive more questions about the preceding point. This implication is confirmed in the following paragraph where Deleuze insists on going back over his first point before proceeding.
[66] See the discussion of the *Timaeus* in the Leibniz session 12**,** 17 March 1987.
[67] See the discussion of the tactile-optical in the Spinoza seminar on 27 January 1981.
[68] See Josef Strzygowski, *La Grèce dans les bras de l'Orient* [Hellas in der Orients Umarmung (Munich, 1902).
[69] On Buffon and questions of modulation, see *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation,* trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 192, note 20.
[70] The final Spinoza session, on 31 March 1981, will also be the introductory session for the seminar on Painting and the Question of Concepts, that continues to June.

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[71] In fact, Deleuze will continue with Spinoza into the 31 March session in which the first half is devoted to questions related to the Spinoza seminar and the second half devoted to introducing the seminar on painting.
[72] In concert with the translation in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* by Robert Hurley, I have chosen to translate Deleuze's "rapport" as *relation*, since Deleuze is gradually developing an argument, from one lecture to the next, of the importance of differential relations in both philosophical and mathematical terms.
[73] Deleuze discusses Gueroult's commentary in previous Spinoza sessions, notably on 3 and 10 February 1981.
[74] See the discussion of the differential relation in the Spinoza session on 17 February 1981.
[75] The segment in brackets is not in the BNF recording to which I had access, but apparently this segment existed in the recording used by the Paris 8 team.
[76] See the discussion of these components in the Spinoza sessions on 6 January and 3 and 10 February 1981.
[77] See the discussion of arsenic and poison in the Spinoza sessions on 6, 13, and 20 January 1981.
[78] The segment in brackets, while not in the BNF recording to which I had access, apparently existed at some point on the recording used by the Paris 8 team as well as by WebDeleuze, despite the existence of a gap in all extant recordings.
[79] For discussion of the Holy Trinity within a cinema context, see the seminar session on 1 June 1982, and within the Leibnizian context, see the session on 20 January 1987.
[80] In fact, the next session, on 17 March 1981, will be devoted to this theme, as was also produced by Claire Parnet and Richard Pinhas as a 2-disc cd titled *Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza: Immortality and Eternity,* published by Gallimard.
[81] Deleuze's reference is to the 5-part Leibniz seminar in spring 1980, from 15 April to 20 May.
[82] See above all the opening sessions in the Leibniz seminar, notably on 28 October and 4 November 1986, where Deleuze presents the Baroque precisely in terms of explication-development and implication-envelopment, a definition that constitutes the true basis for the entire seminar and for Deleuze's book, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*.
[83] See the session on Leibniz of 6 January 1987 for a discussion of the opposition between preformation and epigenesis.

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[84] See the successive review of the Spinozist theory of individuation, linked to the individual's dimensions and to the individual's movements toward the second and third kinds of knowledge in the sessions on 3, 10, and 17 February and 10 March 1981.

[85] The laughter is due to Deleuze's attempt to distinguish two homophones, *étang* or pond, and *étant* or being, a term introduced frequently in earlier sessions.

[86] *La Dame aux camélias* is an 1848 novel by Alexandre Dumas fils adapted in 1852 as a vaudeville play. The students' laughter comes, in all likelihood, from the incongruity of the topic under discussion and the example drawn from the nineteenth-century French literary canon. As Deleuze insists in "L as in Literature" in *Gilles Deleuze, From A to Z*, he takes very seriously literary works that some might characterize as being of secondary importance within the canon.

[87] This small reference, omitted in the BNF recording, is furnished thanks to access to the recording produced by Claire Parnet and Richard Pinhas for Gallimard editions, a double cd entitled *Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza: Immortality and Eternity* (2001).

[88] The identity of "Lawrence", from the Deleuzian perspective, is D.H. Lawrence in all likelihood, but there is also T.E. Lawrence in whom Deleuze shows great interest, notably in a chapter of *Essays Critical and Clinical.* Meanwhile, identifying the other author was rendered difficult by Deleuze's pronunciation of this name. The Paris 8 transcriber of this section, Cécile Lathullère, rendered this as "Powice." Fortunately, the transcription in *Sur Spinoza* (ed. David Lapoujade, Paris: Minuit, 2024) has yielded the British author and philosopher, John Cowper Powys (1872-1863).

[89] The following sentences in brackets are absent from the BNF recording and have been furnished thanks to the alternate recording occurring at this session and published by Gallimard in the double CD (in section 8 of CD 2).

[90] Deleuze mistakenly says "Nietzsche".

[91] Although I have limited notes on the Gallimard CDs editing to the augmented French transcription, I should note that the Gallimard recording ends right here, rather than about a minute later following the final comments.