

**Gilles Deleuze**

**Seminar on Foucault, 1985-1986**

**Part III: Power**

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**Transcribed by Annabelle Dufourcq**

**Translated by Christopher Penfield; additional revisions, Charles J. Stivale**

### **Part 1**

... We have come, then, to the very end of what we had to do regarding this analysis of the axis of power, which is to say, the second axis; and this end concerns the theme of the death of man in *The Order of Things*. It is a very delicate subject, obviously. It's the death of man. What I mean is that there will always be those who call it fascist. And in fact, this is what happened to Foucault, but he's not the first person to whom it's occurred. I mean that the death of man was announced by Nietzsche in conjunction with the concept of the overman, and the accusation of a real fascism in Nietzsche was frequent. As soon as *The Order of Things* came out, what people grasped onto was the theme of the death of man, together with the same accusation of fascism. One psychoanalyst at the time devoted a lengthy book to *The Order of Things*, where he analyzed for over a hundred pages what he took to be a striking resemblance between *The Order of Things* and *Mein Kampf*. Next, there were a great many critiques undertaken in the name, precisely, of the rights of man. What do the rights of man become when man dies? Recently, not long after Foucault's death, these critiques were taken up again with much virulence and led by a hypocritical question: how could Foucault have claimed to participate in political struggles when he had announced the death of man?<sup>1</sup>

Okay. The question is complicated because, from the beginning, one wonders (and this goes equally for Nietzsche): who dies, exactly? Or, to use a less tragic term, who disappears, if something disappears? Who disappears? If I think of the death of man and the overman in Nietzsche, there have been two major interpretations; we could call them the CB interpretation and the A interpretation. The CB interpretation is the comic book interpretation, namely, the overman as superman. It imagines that what disappears is existing man, in favor of a new existent. And for Nietzsche, this interpretation has often been given of the production of a new existent. The A interpretation would be the academic interpretation: what disappears at most is not existing man, but the concept of man. It would no longer be the existent, but the concept. At that point, it would be a gentler disappearance; and by what right – and this leads to new critiques – by what right does one speak of the death of man, since what has disappeared is only the concept of man?

I believe that neither for Nietzsche nor for Foucault do either of these two interpretations hold. It is neither existing man who disappears, nor the concept of man. So, then what is it? What enables one to speak in such dramatic terms of the death of man? It is through this question that

we return to our problem; it's almost like a summary, like a test of power-knowledge relations. What I mean is: we have previously seen that relations of forces were the place of perpetual mutations, of mutations that we could call "diagrammatic". Forces enter into mutation. We do not yet know very well what "mutation" means, but we just remember: yes, mutation is an adventure of forces. Forms are constantly changing, and according to our entire prior analysis of power/knowledge, we can say very quickly: yes, that works, the mutations of forces determine the changing of forms.

So, the death of man – we are advancing a little bit – concerns what? It concerns a form. This is why I can say: it is a question of neither the concept of man nor of existing man. It is a question of the "man" form. It is the man form that disappears in favor of something else. But what is the "man" form, since it can be reduced neither to existing man nor to the concept of man? Well, I do not yet know what the "man" form is. What I can say is that every form is composite, that there is no simple form. Why? And if every form is composite, what are the elements of the form? We have seen it. We have seen it, every form is a composite of forces. It is a curious conception of composition, for you see that composition implies that the component elements are neither of the same kind nor at the same level as the composite. To discover the elements of a composite form, you must jump outside the level of composition. To discover the component elements of a form, you must get to the informal elements, which are forces. Every form is a composite of forces.

There is an author in the history of philosophy who explained very well that when... – I am not saying that this idea has become established; on the contrary, I want to underscore that it is original – the components are never at the same level as the composite, are not on the same plane. It's Leibniz at the beginning of *The Monadology* who explains very well that if one remains on the plane and at the level of a composite form, one will discover nothing but composites to infinity. To discover the component elements, you must really situate yourself at another level. It is in this sense that we can say: every form is a composite of forces. You see, for example (I'm just trying to make this idea quite simple), in biology, I can say... I do not know if it's true, but I can say, and everyone understands what I mean: an organic form is a composite of forces. Thus, the man form would be a composite of forces, say. Let us try, anyway, to advance in this direction. I would say: there are component forces in man, which is to say, there are forces that are exercised in man. We will see what those might be. Here we..., for the moment, we will work in the abstract to try to understand a possibility. There are component forces in man.

Note that I say "in man"; I am not saying "there are component forces of man". If I said "there are component forces of man," I would have already prejudged the composite. "The component forces of man" would imply that what is composite is man. I know nothing about that. I cannot say that yet. I can say: "there are component forces in man." Which is to say, there are forces that are exercised in man. Good. The component forces in man: there you have the first proposition for trying to disentangle such a complicated problem. There are component forces in man. Second proposition: these component forces in man necessarily enter into relation with forces from the outside [*du dehors*]. You see that I very much need the notion of *outside*, such as we

analyzed it last time. These component forces in man necessarily enter into relation, if you like... these forces interior to man necessarily enter into relation with the forces of the outside.

In any case, my first two propositions are that in some sense, there are component forces in man, and in some way, these component forces enter into relation with the forces of the outside. That's good. I would like for you to understand, already at this point, a little something based on the third proposition, the third hypothesis. The third hypothesis that I am making is a question, namely: from what case is man derived as a composite? Which is to say: first proposition [*Deleuze writes on the board*], component forces in man. Second proposition... Clearly it is very abstract, what are the component forces? We don't yet know anything about it... Second proposition: these component forces in man necessarily enter into relation with other forces, forces from the outside in relation to man.

Third proposition: from the combination of component forces and forces of the outside, a composite is born; what is this composite? Is it necessarily man? No, not necessarily. The component forces in man can enter into relation with forces from the outside, such that the composite will not be man but something else. Well... something else?! But what? It can be man; everything depends on the forces of the outside. In any case, you will have component forces in man that enter into relation with forces from the outside. Okay, then, the composite can be man, but the composite can be something else entirely. It can be... some hypotheses... Could it not be God? But then, God is a composite? Of course, not God such as he exists, but the "God" form. The form itself is a composite. Not existing God. You have a "God" form, which will be a composite, and a composite of what? Well, evidently of component forces in man and forces from the outside. Not clear yet? Not clear.

But at any rate, the composite could be God and not man. Second case: component forces enter into relation with other forces of the outside, and there, the composite will be man. Still a struggle. Third case: component forces in man with still other forces from the outside, and the composite will no longer be man; it will be something else that we can call... again a new form... that we will call "overman". You will tell me: all that is unintelligible. Yes, for the moment. For the moment. In other words, what changes is the form, the composite form. It is not a matter of saying "man no longer exists". The death of man announces that man has ceased being the form composed by the present forces. [*Pause*] Right?

In other words, what changes is the form, and the form changes when there is a mutation of forces. When is there a mutation of forces? It is crazy what we are putting forward. There is a mutation of forces when, to be precise, the component forces in man enter into relation with new forces from the outside. This will be a mutation. In other words, the form changes, and we could define it as a function. This is why it is neither a concept nor an existent. The form that changes is the function. The composite form is the function. And the component elements, that is, the forces, are the variables. The function changes when the variables mutate. The mutation of variables would be the new forces of the outside. It is the arrival of new forces from the outside. New forces from the outside arrive, enter into relation with the component forces of man in such a way that the composite itself changes. So that we grasp... I mean, it doesn't seem like it because we grasp this abstractly, eh. There you are. Meditate. The ideal would be... the ideal

would be... you see: one would be pure intelligence, that would suffice, I would have finished. That would be good. All that, it's because we have a body that it's not finished. But I am speaking in the classical style [*comme un classique*]. We will see why I am speaking in the classical style.

Good, we're going to envisage three cases; after all, our story is short. We're going to imagine three cases. I define the first as the period when the component forces in man enter into relation with forces from the outside, such that what they compose is not yet man, but rather God. Let us call this period the classical period. And then we will envision a second case where the component forces in man enter into relation with new forces of the outside, in such a manner that the composite of these two kinds of force no longer composes God, but rather man. This will be the advent of the "man" form.

In other words, in the classical period there is a concept of man – keep in mind that we are still in the process of freeing ourselves from all kinds of misconceptions, about Foucault as well as about Nietzsche, and even though what I am saying now is centered on Foucault and not Nietzsche, the same conclusions would hold for Nietzsche. ... For classical thought, clearly there is a concept of man, a concept of man as rational animal, whatever you want. Moreover: men exist. It would be meaningless to say: in the classical epoch, men do not exist; well, men exist, it goes without saying. That's not interesting at all. What is important is that there is not a man form that determinates a function. There is a God form that determines a function, and fundamentally, the function of knowledge.

The nineteenth century will be the second period when the component forces enter into relation with forces from the outside, such that the composite of forces is man and no longer God. Thus the nineteenth century will take the form: "God is dead". Which signifies less that God does not exist, and more that the concept of God does not. It is very meticulous. And then a third period that we can conceive. The component forces in man enter into relation with three kinds of forces from the outside. I am going back over this because this new formulation brings a good deal of clarity. Classical period: the component forces in man enter into relation with forces from the outside of the first kind. The composite has God as form, the "God" form. Secondly, the nineteenth century: the component forces in man enter into relation with forces of the outside of the second kind, and then in this case, but only in this case, the composite is man, the "man" form. And third: our modernity? I do not know, so we will put this in the conditional to be very prudent; we are not sure, we are sure of nothing. The component forces in man enter into relation with forces of the outside of a third kind. And the composite, let us call it the overman, even though this term is Nietzschean and has no place in Foucault. Let us understand at least negatively a form that would no longer be either the God form or the man form.

As Foucault says in a very interesting passage, which appears in the discussion following his conference on "What is an Author?", he says: oh, you know, the death of man, it's nothing to cry over. Then that, too, was taken badly because it was said: you see, not only does he want to kill man, but he doesn't even want to cry over man. He says: well yes, it is a change of form. That doesn't cause anyone to die, eh. Obviously not, the seventeenth century did without the man form, according to Foucault's interpretation, and that did not prevent men from existing.

So then, what is the interest? You will see all the same that this changes quite a lot. It did not prevent men from existing, but they existed in another way. The form does not concern existence, but the mode of existence; the form concerns neither the existence nor the forces, but radically concerns the ways of existing. So then, is it wrong to say that we do not exist in the classical mode, that we do not exist in the romantic mode, but that we exist in a different way today? Good, we have advanced a little bit. So, what disappears or does not disappear is the form, I said. From the form, we passed to the function; and from the function, we passed to the idea of the way of existing or mode of existence. I do not know if what I am saying is very interesting, but it goes without saying that everything else is idiotic, so we do not have a choice.

That is, to think that man begets an overman is effectively an idea suited for comic books, which is one domain, but it is not philosophy. Nor is it sufficient to say that it is the concept of man that changes. The comic book interpretation is excessive; the concept interpretation is insufficient; we have thus hit the truth, since we have reached the golden mean [*la juste moyenne*]. So here, I would like for you to have a kind of abstract intuition already of what is meant by the death of man. The forces in relation with one another no longer compose man or did not yet compose man. And at one point, they composed man.

In other words, there are component forces in man, and the component forces in man only become the component forces of man if they enter into relation with forces from the outside capable of producing the man composite. I will repeat this ten times in varied forms so that you familiarize yourselves with this idea, so that it becomes very simple for you as a point of method. It is, you see, our obligatory method. ...For highly pedagogical reasons, I am excluding giving you a summary of *The Order of Things*. It is up to you to read it..., or to reread it. I would like for my role to be ... uniquely this: to draw out some presuppositions that perhaps could enrich your reading; thus, I will not recount for you what Foucault says, but I will have you see it anew. What interests me are all the presuppositions that Foucault does not volunteer to say, since the presuppositions are by nature implicit, and they explain that he says what he says, so I will signal each time that I return to the literal text of Foucault, but I will return to it very little, since that is not what concerns me. The literal text must be something that you read.

You see that we thus have three great parts in this study of the death of man. The first part is the classical period: the component forces in man enter into relation with the forces from the outside of the first kind, in such a way that what is composed is not man but God. That is what we must render concrete. And well, if you consider the thought of the seventeenth century – here, for my part, I am providing a justification for what seems to me to be Foucault's point of departure, which he does not even feel the need to say – if you consider the thought of the seventeenth century, if you have read a little of the philosophers of the seventeenth century, not even that much, you ought to be convinced. Why?

Because how do you recognize thought from the seventeenth century? If we look for what is characteristic of this thought. We can provide several such characteristics, but it seems to me in any case that the primary one has been very well provided by [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty. There is a class of books that sometimes..., that one tends sometimes to disdain but which can sometimes be very rich. These are books that are a bit... books that are less... I don't know, I don't want to

... speak ill of... books for very bourgeois libraries, one places them there and never opens them ... In this series there is, for example, the complete edition of Nobel Prize speeches since the beginning of the Nobel Prize, bound luxuriously, which is nice! It is usually doctors in their waiting rooms who put them there. And well, in this series of books, there are often extraordinary things. Merleau-Ponty was charged with... just like that, he had accepted, it must have amused him, to make for Mazenod publishing, which made many books of this genre (M A Z E N O D, I believe), a giant book called the *Dictionnaire des philosophes célèbres* [Dictionary of Famous Philosophers] ... [Interruption of the recording] [32:49]

## Part 2

... a very beautiful book. Very remarkable. So much so that it is worth taking the trouble to open the book. And when it comes to classical thought, Merleau-Ponty gives an introduction, a few pages on classical thought; how does he characterize it? He says one thing that has always struck me. I have never forgotten this passage, which seems very beautiful to me. He says: you know, the classics can be recognized on the basis of an innocent way of thinking infinity. An innocent way of thinking infinity. I find that both very convincing and, in a certain way, too beautiful a formula, because I am not sure about “innocent”. I mean, it is surely false if “innocent” means “calm and tranquil,” for it is an uncommonly anguished way of thinking infinity; but the fact is that they did not stop thinking infinity, and that is what it is to be classical.

To be classical, which I am deriving from Merleau-Ponty: what is it to be classical? To be classical is to think infinity. Why is it anguishing to think of infinity? I would first like, what are the fundamental texts? Dated from the seventeenth century? It's the text on two infinities in Pascal's *Pensées*; it's Letter XII of Spinoza, the famous letter to Louis Meyer where Spinoza distinguishes four or five infinities.<sup>2</sup> I can thus make the amendment: perhaps it is innocent, but it's uncommonly anguished. Why? Because what classical thought discovers is the infinite universe. The infinite universe. Why, even if it is innocent, is this uncommonly anguished? It's quite simple: man lost his center. Man, you see. Man, well, he is no longer centered. There is no center in the infinite, or, as they say, the center is everywhere, and the circumference is nowhere, or vice versa.

Classical man is fundamentally decentered. He laments the good old days. What were the good old days, before classical man? When one inquired in order to know what revolved around what: whether it was the earth that revolved around the sun, or the sun around the earth. Why were these the good old days? They were the good old days because there had been a center, whatever it might be. One might have preferred that it be the sun which revolved around the earth and that the earth be the center; but in any case, even if the earth revolves around the sun, it is still a center, which is good. It's reassuring, comforting. Ah. But, you understand, if the universe is infinite, then that is the ruin of centers. There are nothing but localized centers.

We sometimes make Pascal out to be a precursor of modernity, it's... why not? But we invoke Pascalian anxiety in order to turn it into a kind of proto-existentialism. That's not true. The modernity of Pascal lies in the perfection with which he incarnates the classical age; for a very

simple reason, which is that all of Pascalian anxiety is an anxiety about the infinite, whereas existential anxiety is an anxiety about finitude. There is a radical conversion that makes Pascal not especially a precursor in this regard, but fully a man of the seventeenth century.

And I would like for you to understand that if there is an anxiety to classical thought, it's because ultimately not only does this thought think infinity, but it thinks a multiplicity of infinities. Not only would a single infinity suffice to make man lose his centers, but in fact, and strictly speaking, man never ceases being caught between orders of multiple infinities. Everything is infinite. There are orders of infinity, and I truly believe that one of the key thoughts of the whole seventeenth century is this idea of orders of infinity; it is not by accident that I cite two foundational texts, but I could have cited any number of them. I took as a seminal text the "two infinities" by Pascal, two orders of the infinite, the infinity of magnitude [*grandeur*] and the infinity of smallness; and man is caught between these two orders of infinity.

So here is the Pascalian problem in "the two infinities" text: how to ground [*fixer*] the finite, if it is true that, on the one hand, the finite is exceeded by the infinity of magnitude that appears in the universe (it is not even a question of God) and, on the other hand, plunges into the infinity of smallness, insofar as each atom itself contains an infinity in the sense of the infinitely small? How to ground the finite, if it is caught in the short circuit of two orders of infinity, the infinitely large and the infinitely small? Hence the idea of a kind of wandering of man in a world that has no center. In Spinoza's letter to Meyer, it is revealed that ultimately everything is infinite, which does not mean that everything becomes conflated since there are orders of infinity; but how can man, that finite creature, recognize himself? How can he recognize himself in these orders of infinity? And Spinoza tells us that there is a first infinity, the self-infinite, the infinite by itself, and he tells us: this is what God is.

But there is a second order of infinity, that which is infinite no longer by itself but by virtue of its cause, and this second order of infinity is the world. And then there is a third order of infinity, for in the infinity by virtue of its cause, that is, in the infinity of the second kind, you can always abstract a finite portion, only here is the thing: all these finite portions that you have separated in the infinite whole communicate with a third infinity, which is what? It is a very curious infinity, which cannot be equaled by any number even though it is included between two limits, and Leibniz, as mathematician, will congratulate Spinoza for having found the formula for this third infinity, saying "Ah that, Spinoza"... However, he was miserly in his praise for Spinoza, given his panicked fear of being compromised by frequenting Spinoza, with whom it was incriminating to associate. Yet Leibniz cannot hide his admiration here, and he says: yes, he was able to see that something that had a maximum and a minimum nevertheless presented a form of infinity, an order of infinity, namely, that which cannot be equaled by any number even though it is included between two limits. If you like, it is the equivalent of the infinitely small.

And moreover, at this level of the third infinity, the seventeenth century already completely handles paradoxes that will appear later, that will be taken up in modern thought with transfinite numbers, namely, the idea of an infinity that is the double of another infinity, only this third infinity is defined as magnitude that cannot be equaled by any number. And such magnitudes can be double or half those of another when the limits are half the limits of the other. Good, and well,

I would just like for you to keep in mind the variety of orders of infinity for seventeenth century thought.

Therefore, I will move on to another small point. What is the mode of thought – here, I have just tried to define the element of classical thought, the element of seventeenth century thought, as the thought of the infinite, and thus they are straightaway caught up in the fundamental problem of orders of infinity, which makes it unsurprising that in effect this was the century of infinitesimal calculus. So now I move on to another problem, which is no longer “what is the element of classical thought?”, but “how does classical thought proceed?”

Now, it seems to me that whatever the differences may be between the great thinkers of the seventeenth century, be it Pascal, Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, or Leibniz, there is something shared in common among them. There is a kind of universal method, which is what? It is this: every created thing is a mixture. A mixture of what? A mixture of reality and limitation. One principle of classical logic is that all reality is perfection. All reality is perfection. That comes by way of the logic of the Middle Ages, but they make use of it in a very specific way. It will become truly the method of classical thought. A thing being given, what in it is real? What is limitation? What is reality, what is limitation? For example: a body. What is the reality within it, in a body, and what is limitation? That which is reality is perfection, and that which is limitation is imperfection. It will be necessary to disentangle the one from the other, and that is the problem of the seventeenth century. In a body, what is reality, what is perfection?

And on the other hand, what is limitation, which is to say, imperfection? In a mind or in an idea, what is reality? What... They will forge the notion of quantity of reality or of perfection. What quantity of reality or perfection? A body is divisible, right? A body is divisible, and the divisibility is a limitation, an imperfection. So then, what is real in a divisible body? Well, perhaps it is force, Leibniz will say, because force is indivisible, and indivisibility is a perfection. At that point, we must go up from the body to force. The soul is indivisible, which means that it has more reality than the body, that it does not have the imperfection of the body.

I'm not going far, eh; I mean these are really things, if I dare say, that are quite silly from the seventeenth century, and it is a way of thinking that has become so foreign! But we can truly rediscover its novelty, we can even rediscover the eternity of this classical thought, if you not only attend to the major, very beautiful theses that they develop, but also to the kind of quotidian logic that these theses put in play. I believe that the very nerve of thought from the seventeenth century is this: to separate out that which is imperfection or limitation from that which is perfection or reality. [*Pause*]

The problem of extension can therefore be understood in the seventeenth century if you begin with these very simple things. They unearth a fantastic problem, which is: must we attribute extension to God or not? God thinks, that goes without saying, but is God extended? To attribute thought to him is no difficulty, eh. You will tell me: why attribute thought to him? Well, for them it goes without saying, it doesn't matter. But for extension, they unearth something. If... you see, see what this problem involves; you must be convinced that this is not, for you, a matter of indifference, or you must proceed as if it were not. You must proceed as if you were



tormented by the question of knowing whether you can attribute extension to God. I would even like for there to be some people here for whom this problem would remain urgent. You see, if the class were done well, someone would have stood up and said: for me, this is the only urgent problem. But nothing! Nothing!

Another time, perhaps... So then, what is involved in this? Extension is divisible; if I have reasons for attributing extension to God, it is because, within the extension of the visible world, I think I can conceive of at least one kernel, something indivisible, a matrix of extension that would not be divisible and that could be attributed to God. Or else I would have to say: that which is divisible is sensible extension, but beyond sensible extension, there is an intelligible extension. It is Malebranche who makes a whole theory of intelligible extension. Or else it is Spinoza who will consider that extension is an attribute of God, but that extension as attribute is indivisible and that only extension as mode of this attribute is divisible. Or else it will be Leibniz who will distinguish *extensio*, extension, and *spatium*, the extension that is divisible, but *spatium* being of a different nature. Good.

Does God have a body? The question is quite simple, meaning: is there something in the body that I can assign as reality or perfection, or else is the body inseparable from its imperfection or its limitation? Well, all we must do is draw the conclusions. What classical thought is seeking is to grasp something = x, whatever it may be, that can be raised to infinity. Is there something or nothing that can be raised to infinity in this thing here? In a body, is there something that can be raised to infinity? It doesn't matter what order of infinity, there will surely be degrees of perfection. But the real, which is to say, the perfect is that which can be raised to an order of infinity. That is what it means to be raisable to infinity.

And you will ask me: did the seventeenth century conflate the indefinite and the infinite? Clearly not. But this question is of no interest. The indefinite was a final order of infinity. It was an order of infinity. The indefinite – for example, the series of numbers, that is, the possibility of always adding a unity to a last number, however large it may be – this indefinite, which today we oppose to the infinite (though it will be precisely a problem of knowing how we have come to oppose the infinite and the indefinite), is for the seventeenth century just the reverse: the indefinite is included within the infinite and is nothing but the final order of infinity. What in a thing can be raised to infinity? If there is nothing, it is because this thing is indistinguishable from its proper limitation. If there is something that can be raised to infinity, then it must be, and subsequently the reality or perfection thereby extricated belongs to God. That which is raisable to infinity is relatable by nature to God. Eh? Good.

What does all that mean? We take up our problem. What are the component forces in man? What are the component forces in man? Here again, behold a text by Spinoza such as *On the Improvement of the Understanding*. He explicitly asked this question: what are the component forces in man? Once again, this is not to be conflated with the component forces of man. I would say generally that the component forces in man, for nearly the entire seventeenth century, with some variations, will be said to be the understanding and the will. It is the understanding and the will. But precisely, human understanding is finite; we understand only a little bit about things. Finitude of the human understanding, the human understanding is limited. But there is a reality

in the understanding, which is that it nevertheless participates in an order of infinity. It may well be limited, but it participates in an order of infinity; otherwise, it would not have reality or perfection.

Which order of infinity? Compare it to the imagination. What difference is there between imagining a triangle and thinking a triangle, conceiving a triangle? It's not difficult: imagining a triangle is ultimately always setting your sights on a particular triangle. But when you say "the triangle has three angles equal to two right angles," you formulate a proposition of the understanding that holds for all possible triangles. You imagine always a particular triangle, but you conceive an infinity of triangles. The infinity of possible triangles. It's quite simple. The understanding participates in an order of infinity. In this way it can be raised to infinity, and the understanding of God is the infinite understanding. And the finite understanding is simply one part of the infinite understanding.

How does Leibniz – I am accumulating examples – how does Leibniz prove the existence of God? He says this: it does not suffice to define God as the infinitely perfect being. For I am not sure that such a notion doesn't entail a contradiction; and Leibniz says, in effect: there are notions that entail contradiction, for example, the greatest speed. The greatest speed entails contradiction, because if I define speed as affecting a moving body that travels across a circumference – he gives all the physical reasons for defining speed in this way – affecting a moving body that travels across a circumference, then there will not be a greatest speed, for I can always increase the radius of the circle, in which case I will have a moving body that goes even faster than the preceding one. In other words, the greatest speed can only be understood within the order of the indefinite, which is to say, the last order of infinity.

But he tells us: infinitely perfect isn't like that, it's very different. The most perfect being is very different than the greatest speed. Why? Because the most perfect being is the being that possesses all the perfections raised to infinity, without limitation; and he tells us that such a being cannot be contradictory, for contradiction is a limitation. Good. It doesn't much matter, all this. It is up to you to familiarize yourselves more and more with this form of thought. Therefore, I can draw a conclusion from it, the conclusion that matters to me, which is what? The component forces in man, for example, will and understanding, will enter into relation with forces from the outside of a certain kind; it is here that we have to be concrete.

What kind of force from the outside? A force that does not belong to man. A force that is not in man, which is the mystery of the seventeenth century: how is there in man something that does not belong to him? What is it? It is, I would say, the force of elevation to infinity. From whence does it come that our thought has the power to raise something to infinity? That is the problem of the seventeenth century, if we can summarize a period in one problem. From whence does it come that our thought has the power to raise to infinity? You see right away the answer: it is a proof that God exists. If God did not exist, we would not be able to raise something to infinity. Why? Because we, as men, are finite. It is a proof of the existence of God that is, in my opinion... this proof underlies all the explicit proofs that the seventeenth century develops. You see: the proof would be, exactly, that our thought has a power that does not belong to it, the power to raise something to infinity. This power does not belong to it, so it must depend on a

being that is itself infinite. A finite being cannot account for the power that it has to raise something to infinity. Good.

Alright then... here is my answer. In the classical period, the component forces in man enter into relation with forces from the outside that we can define as follows: forces to raise to infinity, which I can even say are plural, since there are several orders of infinitude. But in this way, the component forces in man are themselves raised to infinity. The finite understanding of man raised to infinity is the infinite understanding of God. In short, when the component forces in man encounter, as a force of the outside, the force to raise to infinity, they form a composite; taken as a whole – that is, the component forces in man, on the one hand, and on the other, the force of the outside, the force to raise to infinity – they form a composite, and this composite is God, the God form. In other words, the seventeenth century does not think man, it thinks God. And why does it not think man? It cannot think man, since the component forces in man enter into relation with forces such that the composite is not man but God. So that, of course, the seventeenth century speaks of man, but it does not make man the form that would derive from the composition of forces. The composite is God and all the orders of infinity that derive therefrom.

I come now to the text of Foucault. I return, then, to the letter of Foucault's text on the classical period in *The Order of Things*. What does he tell us? His literal thesis – but I would just like to have given you the conditions for better understanding it -- His literal thesis, it's ... it consists in telling us: you know, there is no precursor, there is no... for what happens in a given historical formation, do not look for precursors in the previous formation. For example: in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, you would search in vain for the equivalent of what appears obvious to us today, which we call "political economy". You would equally search in vain for the equivalent of what we call "linguistics" or even "philology". And you would search in vain for the equivalent of what we call "biology".

However, the thought of the seventeenth century speaks to us about, and presents us with, other formations. What are these other formations? They are the analysis of wealth, general grammar, and natural history. And Foucault tells us: do not think that natural history is preparatory for biology or that the analysis of wealth is preparatory for economics. It will take a real mutation to go from these formations of knowledge from the seventeenth century to the formations of knowledge of the nineteenth century, namely, economics, linguistics, and biology. In other words, political economy will be founded on the appearance of something that could not appear in the knowledge of the seventeenth century. So then, must we say that our biology is better? We don't know if it is better; to be better or not better, here, ... is of little interest, it's not very important. What does the seventeenth century tell us? Now you will be better situated perhaps to understand the literal analyses of Foucault.

He tells us first: what is the analysis of wealth in the seventeenth century? Well, it is either one of two things. Either it is the analysis of currency [*la monnaie*] as means of exchange, which is on the whole well known as the mercantilist thesis; or it is the analysis of agricultural labor as the foundation of wealth, which is very generally the pole of the physiocrats. And in effect, the analysis of wealth in the seventeenth century is divided according to these two main currents, the

mercantilist current and the physiocrat current. Now, I believe that there is something in common between the two. What is of interest... to the mercantilists about currency? The novelty of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from the point of view of currency, is to seek no longer to define currency by intrinsic qualities, but to understand currency as a function of exchange. It is exchange that explains currency. Currency as universal sign, as universal sign that constitutes the exchangeability of wealth. Or, if you prefer, currency makes wealth circulate and thereby augments it. Good, it is an order of infinity. It is an order of infinity. The thought of the Middle Ages, the thought of... -- this seems to me to be very important... one would have to develop it, in the end... right now we have lost the thread if I develop... -- You understand, if we take, in the little that I perceive in this domain, if we take the Middle Ages... The Renaissance, everything shifts at the moment of the Renaissance. But the majority of theories of currency attach themselves to the intrinsic qualities of currency. The true novelty of mercantilism is to have extricated from currency something that can be raised to infinity. Something that can be raised to infinity through exchange and circulation. No doubt it is a very low order of infinity, but once again, what counts is that it is an order of infinity.

From then on, they will be able to deploy a table of wealth – whence the surprising, enormous success of this notion in the seventeenth century of making the table of something – the table is precisely a deployment. And in Foucault's *The Order of Things*, you find all the time, with regard to the classical period, this notion – I will insist on this because for us, later on, it will be an essential notion of Foucault – of deploying. The analysis of wealth deploys, deploys a whole table, develops a whole table. The thought of the seventeenth century will be the thought of deployment, of development. Currency deploys wealth, currency develops wealth.

And the analysis of wealth will be precisely this operation by which exchange does not take place without a development or deployment of wealth by currency, which is to say, a potential elevation to infinity. In other words, mercantilism, in its own way, uses currency to raise wealth to infinity. You will tell me: of course, not in fact. No, but in principle. That the infinity of wealth is thinkable in principle, which is to say, that wealth is an increasing quantity. The table is the domain of an indefinite development, which is to say, in the sense of the seventeenth century, according to an order of infinity.

As for the Physiocrats, on the other hand, what is their objection to mercantilism? It is very interesting. One of the principal objections that the physiocrats make to the mercantilists is the following: but you do not see that exchange itself and commerce and the circulation of wealth is itself costly. You see, they say: it cannot be currency. It cannot be exchange. It cannot be commerce. Because all that is itself costly. It is precisely, if you take up the terms that I have used, I would say: between the mercantilists and the Physiocrats, there is a kind of polemic typical of the seventeenth century, and which extends throughout the entire eighteenth century, namely: what is real, that is, what is perfection and therefore raisable to infinity? The mercantilists answer by saying: it is currency; that is what raises wealth to infinity. Through exchange and through commerce. The Physiocrats say: no, commerce is still... and money... are still burdened by a radical imperfection; they are not what can be raised to infinity. But it is a

question in any case of making a table that rests on something raisable to infinity. The response of the Physiocrats is that, in effect, commerce is costly, industry itself is costly.

Thus, the order of infinity entailed by the analysis of wealth must be sought elsewhere. And where can one find it? Well, what really corresponds to an order of infinity is not commerce, money, or currency, but rather land [*la terre*]. Why? It's the properties of the earth – conditionally, of course, one can make all the restrictions that one likes, but that is what can be raised to infinity in principle. Of course, land exhausts itself, but it must be seen under what conditions. And then it must be seen at what point one can renew it with what precautions of agricultural labor etc. But it is land that is the real power [*puissance*] of raising to infinity; it is what commerce presupposes, what industry presupposes, and in other words, that which is first is... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:19:28]

... you see the table, the table of wealth, for example, is constitutive of the thought of the seventeenth century. And I will say: same thing for general grammar. What is it a question of? It is a question of arriving at..., for the grammarians of the seventeenth century, it is a question of arriving at ultimate elements which, if not infinite, would be at least universal. General grammar is inseparable from universal language, that is, making a table of ultimate elements. And what are the ultimate elements? They are whatever is infinite in concrete languages. What is infinite? Here, too, a power of raising to infinity works upon language according to the thought of the seventeenth century.

And what will be these ultimate characteristics that are infinite or indefinite in languages? They will be the roots. They will be the roots. [*Pause*] And general grammar will be an entire grammar of roots, a discovery of something not raisable to infinity, but uncovered when one raises to infinity; and general grammar will make the table of roots and will deploy, will develop... It's still a thought of development, of deployment – oh dear! ... This isn't your fault, it's mine... [*Laughter*] You see that in all that, I am forgetting one. -- What is natural history? Natural history is the development of a table of living beings that will propose to classify them according to the order of resemblances and differences, including infinitely small differences, which is to say, the order of resemblances and differences extending to infinity. Just as general grammar made use of roots, natural history will make use of characteristics.

Hence Foucault will be able to define the thought of the seventeenth century as a thought of order, but you see that by "order" he understands precisely what I am proposing to define as raising to infinity, which is to say, order appears when things are integrated in a table that extracts what can be raised to infinity or what is infinitely distributable. Therefore, I will try to conclude: it's never man that is thought. What is thought is never man. Man has his place in the table. Speaking man has his place. Living man has his place. The man of commerce or working the land has his place, that goes without saying, but the form through which one conceives of man is not man but God.

Why? Because the form that dominates in the seventeenth century is the form composed by component forces in man, on the one hand, and forces from the outside that can be raised to infinity, on the other. Well, that which is composed when the component forces in man enter into

relation with forces of the outside that can be raised to infinity is God, not man. So it is that God is infinitely wealthy; the voice of God, the logos, is infinitely expressive [*parlant*]; not the infinitely laboring, but the infinitely creating, producing, the infinitely generative [*produisant*]. So it is that the earth is but an order of infinity below the infinity of God... etc. etc. Good, hence the question: what happened?

What could have happened? In the middle of the eighteenth century, something shifts. Something in the middle of the eighteenth century, and which will explode open in the nineteenth century? An encounter. Perhaps you understand better. The component forces in man – clap of thunder! – will enter into relation with forces from the outside of an entirely other nature. Everything transpires as if the force of raising to infinity was finished [*fini*]. It dissipated, precisely like an atmospheric change. The force of raising to infinity deserted us. What could have happened? Like a changing sky, that's when other forces came upon us. The component forces proper to us, men, united with other forces, which are no longer forces of elevation to infinity, but nearly the opposite. From then on, it is no longer God that will be the composite of forces; it will be something quite different, and perhaps this other thing, then, this other composite form will merit the name of "man". But everything depends, you see, everything depends on what kind of forces are encountered by the component forces in man.

You want a short break. I would like for you to think this over, but take a good break, reflect and think! Come back in about 10 or 12 minutes. But think about this because, before going on to the next stage, I will continue with the first if you find it necessary... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:27:29]

### Part 3

... or do we take this point to be...? Okay, let me specify that this is really only an introduction to the reading of *The Order of Things*; it is up to you to see how he analyzes natural history, the analysis of wealth, general grammar... What I have said, I've barely delved into all this because the text is absolutely clear, thus there is... I have just claimed to try to recount the basic foundations of the text, but not at all the text itself. Alright, no questions, no problems?

So then, we are primed for the second age. And here we will see what is so important in the method that is a comparison of forces, for you will see how... I will try to explain the originality in Foucault... how he will appear to take up a well-known thesis but will put it to use in an entirely different way. And here, too, I need to disclose something, namely, that he does not feel the need to tell us that there is a well-known thesis and that he is using it in a different way. It is up to us, as readers, to recognize it.

For what is the well-known thesis? The well-known thesis is that at the end of the eighteenth century, a reversal took place. And a fundamental reversal at that, which is generally called the Kantian reversal or Copernican turn, since Kant declares that he is going to make a revolution in philosophy analogous to the one that Copernicus brought about in natural science. So, what does the Kantian revolution or new Copernican revolution consist in? There is a book by Jules

Vuillemin, a book that is very excellent for the history of modern philosophy, called *L'héritage kantien et la révolution copernicienne*,<sup>3</sup> and by way of the Neo-Kantians, he takes note of the fundamental revolution in philosophy brought about by Kantianism.

If I were to summarize this book in one phrase, but a phrase that can be elaborated upon, I would say the following: with Kant, finitude becomes constitutive. Finitude becomes constitutive. That is, it becomes foundational. Which, for the seventeenth century and the classical age, would be an absolutely unintelligible proposition. The finite, by nature, is constituted. What is constitutive is necessarily the infinite. And what's more, the orders of infinity constitute all that there is at each level of being. The idea that a finite being as such could be foundational, originary – until then, for all of the seventeenth century, by definition the finite is the derivative. Only the infinite is originary. That there is an originary finitude presupposes a reversal, a toppling of all the concepts. It is at this moment, notably, that the indefinite will be removed from the orders of the infinite, from the orders of infinity, and will become the reiteration of an action of the finite subject, the reiteration of the action of a finite self; and it is at this moment that the Kantian 'I think' will take on a foundational value. Now, what is the fundamental difference between the Kantian 'I think' and the Cartesian 'I think'? It's that the Cartesian 'I think' maintained the primacy of the infinite over the finite.

As Descartes says in the *Meditations*, the infinite is primary in relation to the finite. He says this in regard to the cogito and the 'I think' itself. The operation of the cogito is possible only on the basis of the infinite. The infinite is primary in relation to the finite. With Kant, the 'I think,' how to put this, envelops, falls back on [*se rabat*] – we will see that these words will be very important for Foucault – folds back on its proper finitude. And this is why the Kantian 'I think' is entirely different than the Cartesian 'I think,' as we saw in the first... quarter, when I tried to show that the Kantian 'I think' referred to the form of time. And precisely in referring to the form of time, it posits itself as the act of a finite self [*moi*].<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the promotion of finitude is the act of so-called modern thought at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Moreover, in detail you will see if you read Kant that the relation between infinite understanding and finite understanding is reversed, since finite understanding is no longer a derivative of infinite understanding, but rather just the inverse. It is infinite understanding that is a differential of finite understanding, a derivative of finite understanding. All this is of little importance. You thus see that in philosophy, I believe that this has often been said, although it was said in a particularly brilliant and convincing manner by Vuillemin, but it has often been said that modern thought, such as it takes form in the nineteenth century, is defined by this promotion of finitude to the point that finitude becomes constitutive. And it is true that the entire nineteenth century will begin to call the infinite into question, not only as regards God, but regarding all the orders of infinity, notably, toward the end of the nineteenth century, though this is prepared by the entire history of mathematics during the nineteenth century.

I will cite what is only a very typical case of wresting infinitesimal calculus, so-called infinitesimal, of wresting differential calculus from any hypothesis of infinity and turning it into a method of finitude. All the notions of..., all the notions that are current in the mathematics of

the seventeenth century, “tending towards,” “tending towards... infinity,” “approaching a limit,” “tending towards,” “limit,” “infinitely small” are banished, and moreover, a mathematician of the nineteenth century will call this the Gothic hypothesis. He will call it “the Gothic hypothesis of the infinitely small”.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, there is a finitist reinterpretation of infinitesimal calculus. Okay, that is one example among others. But it is a kind of conversion of the finite, for it is the finite that is constitutive. It is the finite self that is constitutive. This is a fundamental change. Good. Thus, the ordinary interpretation consists in telling us: man becomes conscious of his proper finitude. Man becomes conscious of his own finitude, and of course, there are reasons for why it is at this moment that he becomes conscious of his proper finitude. But you sense, of course, that this means what? Is it that before he believed himself to be infinite? No, as we have seen. But he thought on the basis of God, which is to say, he thought on the basis of the infinite. Now, does Foucault take up this interpretation? He takes up the result. Substitution of the finite point of view for the order of the infinite. He takes up the result. What interests me is the great originality, if we consider the detail of what he says in *The Order of Things*, for he does not at all say: in the nineteenth century, man becomes conscious of his finitude.

What does he tell us? He tells us: in the nineteenth century... I would like for you to have the impression that this is a very small difference and that, at the same time, it is a decisive difference and that, moreover, it involves his entire method, for reasons that we will see. What does he say? Thus, here, I am speaking of what *The Order of Things* says by the letter. He says the following: in the nineteenth century, man – understood as the component forces in man – enters into relation with forces that are not his, enters into relation with forces of the outside, which, instead of being the elevation to infinity, are forces of finitude. The component forces in man enter into relation with external forces of finitude.

This is the second kind of force from the outside. You see, he does not say, once again, man becomes conscious in himself of forces that would be the forces of finitude and of his proper finitude. He says: the forces in man encounter forces of finitude. And it is during a second moment – there are thus two moments – it is during a second moment that man appropriates for himself these forces of finitude and discovers them as his proper finitude. That is, he decomposes the original thesis into two moments. And this strikes me as typical of the manner in which he proceeds. We will see why. But first we must see this point: all the originality of *The Order of Things*, on this point, the difference between the classical period and the nineteenth century, hinges on the two moments that Foucault distinguishes.

First moment: the forces in man enter into relation with external forces of finitude that are not his own. Second moment: he makes these forces his own. You see the two moments? Here, it is necessary, because the text is..., there is a formal passage... That his analysis of the nineteenth century distinguishes two moments, that is no problem, there are two moments that are perpetually distinguished. But at the end when he gathers his analysis, when he summarizes his analysis, on pages 401ff: “We suppose” – I will read slowly and comment at the same time -- “We suppose that the historicity discovered within man was extended to the objects he had made, the language he spoke, and – even further still – to life.” You see, here he explicitly goes after



the common interpretation: that man would become conscious of his finitude and would extend it, applying it to language, life, and production. “We suppose that the historicity [first] discovered within man was extended to the objects he had made, the language he spoke, and – even further still – to life. According to this point of view, the study of economies, the history of literatures and grammars, and even the evolution of living beings are merely the effects of diffusion, over increasingly more distant areas of knowledge, of a historicity first revealed in man.”

There you have the common interpretation. And here he makes his turn, he does his about-face as he loves so much to do: “In reality, it was the opposite that happened,” which is the point that is very interesting in *The Order of Things*. “In reality, it was the opposite that happened. Things first of all received a historicity proper to them, which freed them from the continuous space that imposed the same chronology upon them as upon men.” The continuous space, which is ultimately what we are calling the elevation to infinity. Things first of all received a historicity proper to them, which freed them from the continuous space of the seventeenth century, which is to say, from this serial space. “So that man found himself dispossessed,” by which he means: history did not arrive by way of man, but first came about with things. The things produced by man, the words pronounced by man, life, all this is what was historical before man discovers himself as historical. If the nineteenth century is the discovery of history, history was first discovered outside of man before being within man.

And after that? But then man, in this first moment, discovers history as the history of things, as the history of life, as the history of language; but in that case, Foucault says, “in that case, man is not himself historical: since time comes to him from somewhere other than himself, since time comes to him from somewhere other than himself” – time comes to him from somewhere other than himself -- “he constitutes himself as a subject of history only by the superimposition of the history of living beings, the history of things, and the history of words. He is subjected to the pure events those histories contain. But immediately...” -- this is where the second moment begins -- “but this relation of simple passivity is immediately reversed; for what speaks in language, what works and consumes in economics, what lives in human life, is man himself; and, this being so, he too has a right to a development [*devenir*] quite as positive as that of beings and things, one no less autonomous – and perhaps even more fundamental: is it not a historicity proper to man, one inscribed in the very depths of his being, that enables him to adapt himself like any living being,” etc. etc.?

In other words, you see there that the two moments are marked explicitly. First moment: man enters into relation, that is, the forces in man enter into relation with forces that affect not man himself, but that affect things, words, living beings, thus with forces from the outside. Second moment: man appropriates for himself, man appropriates for himself this finitude. First moment: man enters into relation with external forces of finitude. Second moment: man appropriates this finitude for himself. So then, why this detour? What is the interest of this detour? We will see that this detour will be essential. I am leaving to the side the question: “is this true historically?”, or else we must not leave it aside, I don’t know.

Let us then summarize Foucault's thesis. What are these forces of finitude? What are these forces of finitude? Foucault tells us: they are life, labor, language. These, then, are the forces, which, in order to better understand, perhaps, we might say are the three forces that will dethrone the infinite. Triple root of finitude. The triple root: it is not man who is the root of finitude, but the forces that he confronts and that he encounters. Forces of life, forces of language and of labor: these are what will dethrone the orders of infinity.

And why was there no biology in the seventeenth century? Because the seventeenth century could not recognize life, since life is a finite force. Thus, it did not enter into the "reality = perfection" schema. It is all the more real, and all its power [*puissance*] comes from its finitude, as Bergson will say much later: vital impulse is finite. Finitude of vital force. Finitude of the power of life. Finitude of language. Finitude of labor. So it is that labor is not at all considered at this level as a power of man; rather, it is a force with which man is confronted, precisely as when the physicist speaks of work, the work or labor of a force. It is thus in encountering the three figures of finitude, the three forces of finitude, that everything will change, which is to say, will undergo mutation. What will be reversed is the force of raising to infinity.

What will the two moments be? Well, we see it clearly: biology replaces natural history, what does this mean? It means that for the indefinite series of living beings, what will be substituted in its place? The idea that life is a finite force proceeding by a kind of production that is comparable but non-linear [*non-alignable*]: what does this mean? It would be like planes, yes, planes of organization of life. For example, arthropods and vertebrates no longer enter into a linear series or, at the limit, one could pass through resemblance and difference from one end to the other. But arthropods imply a kind of plane of life that would be irreducible and heterogeneous to the plane of life that produces the vertebrate. There will thus be so many heterogeneous planifications, irreducible to one another, that will mark each time life thrusts forth in this or that direction. This is what the biology of the nineteenth century, and already at the end of the eighteenth century, will bring out by the name of branches [*embranchements*]. And there will be branches that are irreducible to one another. Hence the discovery of a force of finitude of life that can be neither totalized nor aligned in an indefinite series.

In other words, there are no longer general sciences; it is the epoch of comparative sciences. For example, for language at the same time, there will be planes of organization of language that, each time, actualize a finite force, which is that of language, and mark such and such type of language or some other type of language as planes of organization. What does this imply? That the root, such as it had been studied in the seventeenth century, has been substituted out by the study of inflections. And philology will present itself as the study of inflections, and the roots themselves will be subordinated to inflections.

So, too, with the founding concept: if the founding concept of philology is inflection, the founding concept of biology is organization, planes of organization. And finally, with labor, which will found political economy, does this mean that labor had been ignored by the analysis of wealth in the seventeenth century? Of course not. Labor had not been ignored, but it had not been considered as an irreducible unit of measurement. The treatment of labor as irreducible unit of measurement will be the creative act of political economy. And here Foucault, no doubt, joins

up with the famous and very beautiful texts of Marx, when Marx poses the question: when does political economy begin? And he says: let us suppose that it begins with Adam Smith.

Why does it begin with Adam Smith? Because Adam Smith discovers a labor that is no longer characterized or qualified as such or such, but rather labor in general [*quelconque*], abstract labor as the unit of measurement of all production. And he can quite readily say: you see the physiocrats in the eighteenth century, they already bring out a very firm, very certain concept of labor, but it is still a labor qualified as such or such, namely, as agricultural labor. But pure labor, abstract labor as irreducible unit of measurement of production, is the basic activity of classical political economy, which made Engels say: Adam Smith is the Luther of political economy, for just as Luther went beyond external religion toward religiosity, which is to say, toward subjective religion, as Marx says, so too Adam Smith went beyond external wealth toward subjective labor, pure labor that is no longer even qualified as such or such in relation to its object. Abstract labor. Good.

So, in all of these analyses by Foucault, it will be a matter of showing – here, I will no longer go back over this... – how biology<sup>6</sup> comes to depose and replace the analysis of wealth, how philology comes to depose and replace general grammar... and so on, which you can fill in for yourselves.

Hidenobu Suzuki: Philology.

Deleuze: That's right. And so, the two moments are always as follows: the force of finitude is first encountered by man outside of man (first moment). Second moment: man appropriates for himself, interiorizes this force of finitude and thereby constitutes his proper history. What is important for us? If you like, yes, in this way I am trying to give a schema, you see... That's what I would say, simplifying greatly. Take natural history: there is always the constitution of a table, that is, of a series that I am saying can nearly be raised to infinity, that is, can in principle be continued to infinity, by means of which living beings are situated according to resemblance and difference. Good, you have a kind of linear schema of the series.

By contrast, the finitude of life in the nineteenth century engenders a figure of differentiation: starting from the nucleus or the finite impulse [*élan*] of life, there will be a differentiation between heterogeneous lines. For each line... Four great lines, since there are four great branches, according to Cuvier and then according to his successor, according to Von Baer, four branches in which, from one branch to another, there will be analogies but no continuity, instead there will be rupture, as if life embarked on one path, and another path, and another path. And you understand, for example, what something like embryology, notably under the form of a comparative embryology, what it was from the beginning with Von Baer. He translated into embryology Cuvier's great ideas on the branches, ... which consists in showing what? That embryology, the development of the embryo will take place, according to the species and the genus to which it belongs, will take place alone the path of this or that branch. Four principal branches that will be like four planes of life, and you cannot align living beings in a linear series, in a linear series that you can continue to infinity.

So, then you see where I am going here, but I am tired, so I don't know, I have the impression that all this has not become very clear. You tell me. If I go immediately to the solution before I lose all my ideas, you see the answer: the component forces in man, in the historical formation of the nineteenth century, no longer enter into relation with the forces of elevation to infinity, but with the triple force or three forces of finitude. Life, labor in the physical sense, abstract labor... Life, labor, language.

Subsequently, these component forces in man enter into relation with forces of finitude; what will they compose? At that moment they compose man, they compose the "man" form. And the nineteenth century is precisely the age of this form, which is to say, it is in the nineteenth century that the "man" form is composed. Yes, I have the impression that... -- I cannot do it anymore. Is this a little bit clear or not at all? I cannot do it... Okay. Perhaps I will take this up again next time. --

So, let's finish, let's try to go a little further because what comes next is quite simple. Who says that the component forces in man... You must accept this way of posing the problem. This is why I insisted so much at the beginning on my abstract exposition: if you do not give yourselves the idea of component forces in man that enter into relation with forces from outside, all of this loses its meaning.

I am just saying: who says that the component forces in man must remain component forces in man? Do they enter into relation with new forces or not? The history of man consists in the fact that the component forces in man enter into relation with forces that always vary. Are we in the age when the component forces in man are confronting and entering into relation and intertwining with forces from the outside of a new kind? Good, I am going to say something very simple. For example, when the forces of man confront and intertwine with finite forces of life... what are the finite forces of life? We can say it or try to say it scientifically: it is principally, among other things, the force of carbon. The success of life is the success of carbon and of carbon compounds.

Why has carbon had so much success in the universe? Why was life made with carbon? Here it takes on a concrete role, yes, it takes a very concrete direction. Man married carbon. You will tell me: no, because if there had been no carbon, then there would have been no life, and there would have been no man. It's not that. It's not that. You see, man qua composite form is related to a force of finitude: carbon. What new force... -- I am saying whatever comes to mind, eh? -- What new -- given my state -- What new force does man confront? It is well known, it is well known, as soon as you touch a computer...

Let's talk about computers, since everyone talks about them, why wouldn't we talk about them? Well yes, when you touch a computer, the component forces in you enter into relation with... you don't need to know it, with a completely new kind of force. It's not carbon but silicon. You will tell me: so what? Well, yes. It is silicon that replaces carbon, with the machines that are called... Well look at that, marvelous! With machines of the so-called "third kind" [*troisième espèce*]. Because the machines of the first kind refer to the classical age, the pulley type etc., horology, horological mechanisms; the machines of the second kind, so-called "energetics"

[*énergétiques*] machines, refer to the nineteenth century, the steam engine. And today we are told that it is the age of the third machines, machines of the third type, information technology, for calculating... etc. etc. [*Interruption of the recording*] [2:06:00]

#### Part 4

... the component forces in man always enter into relation with a new type of force, what will be composed? It will no longer be God, and it will no longer be man. It's not our fault, there is nothing wrong with saying that. It is the death of man. Obviously, it is the death of man in favor of another composite. There is a changing of form. And today, even the books that are the most... what does one talk about? No longer about man as subject; rather, the subject or composite is the so-called "man-machine" system. The man-machine system, well, that's something different. The man-machine form is something different. The energetics machine did not form a man-machine system with man. That which forms a man-machine system with man is a machine of the third kind, our machines, the machines of our age, the age of silicon. Good.

Okay then, what does this mean? You understand, no one gets indignant at the proposition "God is dead". No one gets indignant because everyone is over it; one can very well even save God by saying that the fact that death is in God is precisely the reason why God surpasses his own death. All that is very simple. No one is outraged. God is dead, God died, what does it mean? It means: man took the place of God. This is very well known, a celebrated story. It was carried out from the perspective of thought by Feuerbach, who puts man in the place of God and says: it's not God who is originary and man who is derivative; it's man who is originary and God who is derivative. God is an inversion of man. To say "God is dead" and to put man in God's place is the inversion of the inversion. Look at an admirable book by Feuerbach called *The Essence of Christianity*. Feuerbach is a Left Hegelian, as they were called, one of the greatest philosophers of the Hegelian Left. Good.

Thus, the replacement of God by man is ... it really has become ... how to put it ... you see, it's something that goes without saying. And it often happens that one gives either credit or blame to Nietzsche, saying: Nietzsche? Oh yes, he is the thinker of the death of God! Not at all! You know: not at all! For a very simple reason, namely, that at the moment when Nietzsche is writing, the death of God is already a kind of truism [*Lapalissade*] that is everywhere in the background [*ça traîne partout*]. So then, you think that a thinker like Nietzsche would have gone back over something that would have already been said countless times... There is no need even to write it, Feuerbach had stated it, had restated it, all that. Nietzsche ... but strictly speaking, if you want to have some understanding of Nietzsche, it is clear in Nietzsche's texts that the death of God is absolutely not his concern. It's not his concern, and in all of Nietzsche's passages where he speaks frequently of the death of God, he does so in finding it extremely funny. There are great comic passages in Nietzsche, who has enormous comedic force [*puissance*]. It makes him laugh! And it makes him laugh only... not at all because God dies, which is a very sad thing, but it makes him laugh because it is something that was so often said in his day that if he felt the need to restate it, it is, as he says himself, in order to add several new versions.

So, he will invent different versions, providing seven or eight versions... If we finish what I would like to say about Foucault in time, ... we will take a closer look this year at the possible convergences of Foucault with Nietzsche, and then we will consider this question of the death of God in Nietzsche, where he provides or invents different versions. It's great: God dies, but how does God die? So, he will say: this version here, another version there, another version... all of the versions that Nietzsche proposes are perfect. Thus, we can say that he provides new comic versions. It makes you laugh, and Nietzsche is not at all the one who announces the death of God – it had already been announced, it's very old news, you know, very old news ... He is the one who infinitely varies the versions of the death of God. Okay, but what is thus very important in Nietzsche is that before him, the death of God was the announcement that man had taken the place of God. That is what Nietzsche reverses. What interests Nietzsche is not the death of God, but the death of his successor, the death of man.

Why? Because Nietzsche's idea, which was developed admirably well by [Pierre] Klossowski in his book on *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*,<sup>7</sup> is that God is the guarantor of identity; and if God is dead, then there is no longer a guarantor of identity, that is, man can no longer be identified. Thus, the death of God contains already, in advance, the death of his successor, the death of man. And what makes Nietzsche novel here is, if you like, precisely akin to what happens in history, in the discipline in history, when it comes to Marx. It was the bourgeois historians of the nineteenth century who invent the notion of class, but bizarrely, they bring classes to a halt at a certain moment. The entire history of the nineteenth century is built on the struggle between two classes, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. According to authors who are not at all revolutionary, like [François] Guizot. Guizot writes a whole history of class struggle. When it is said also that class struggle is a Marxist idea, that is absolutely false. It is an idea of the bourgeois historians of the nineteenth century. The whole French Revolution is interpreted in the nineteenth century as the victory of the bourgeois class over the aristocratic class. Only, when they get to the bourgeois class, they consider it to be universal, the universal class.

It is the class of the rights of man, thus it is the class of the universal, thus there is no other class, thus they find themselves... the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois find themselves confronted by these bizarre beings who say: "we are a class, we take up a class position," namely, the proletariats. And the great debates, the important debates of the nineteenth century, concerned whether one can consider the workers to be a class. Guizot wants for the bourgeoisie to be a class and for there to be a class struggle by which the bourgeoisie triumphs over the aristocracy, but he does not want for there to be a working class. And you see why he blocks it off: it's not only as a function of his own interests that he blocks off the classes there; he blocks off the classes there because the bourgeoisie is the bearer of the universal. How would there be a class after or beyond or below? Good.

And what is it that not only Marx but the entire socialist movement of the nineteenth century does? They show that the class struggle does not end with the bourgeoisie, that there is a third class. That the proletariat is a class. And moreover, that it is this class – and here the same story begins again – that in a certain manner it is this class, the working class or the proletariat, that bears the universal. It goes so far that in the texts of the romantic Marx, the texts from the

romantic period in Marx, you have the perpetual theme: who is man, and nothing but man? And Marx answers that it is necessarily the proletariat because he has neither family nor country, he is alienated, etc. etc. He thus has no quality; he is subjected to abstract labor, to the law of abstract labor; he is man and nothing but man. In this way he is the bearer of the universal. You see: the whole problem is that after the bourgeoisie, a third subject is indicated, a third-class position. I would say: it is the same thing in history: the death of God / the death of man. For Feuerbach, the changing of forms ends with man; man is the bearer of the universal. Thus, in a struggle which is that of history itself, man replaces God.

And there we are, in Nietzsche, you have the protest, an equivalent of the Marxist protest, but in a completely different sense – I do not at all mean that it is the same thing. Nietzsche says: but not at all! Moreover: the death of God is not a very big deal because..., it's not very important because, when man takes the place of God, it ultimately amounts to the same thing, and in fact, the death of God already contains the death of man because there is no longer any possible identity or identification when God is dead.

So, what happens? Well, toward a new age, the age of the overman, what does that mean? It does not mean anything extraordinary. It means: the component forces in man confront or will confront forces from the outside of a different nature. And this confrontation, this clash will compose a new form that will no longer be that of God, nor that of man. So, what will it be? What happens at this third level? What are these forces? We have seen that for the classical age, there were the forces of infinity. For the nineteenth century, the forces of finitude. What is there besides the infinite and the finite? One has the impression of having exhausted the options here, as with the aristocracy-bourgeoisie, and that there is nothing else... After man ... either there is nothingness or man must endure. Nietzsche... there is a kind of wager in Nietzsche. No, he thinks that there can be other forms.

So, will he tell us something about these other forms, about what the overman is? "Overman" is, for the moment, an empty name to designate the other form. What are these forces that are neither those of elevation to infinity nor those of finitude? What are they? What would exceed these forces, no longer answering to the finite-infinite duality? We could no longer even say if they are finite or infinite, because they would be of yet another nature. Appreciate that physics too has not ceased searching on this side of things, when earlier I invoked silicon. It is very curious how this reverberates with the evolution of the sciences, eh, all the attempts to constitute a kind of limitless finite [*fini illimité*]. I'm mixing everything together: the eternal return, what is that in Nietzsche? It is a way of expressing something that is no longer either finite or infinite.

Okay, this third form would thus be "overman". What would that mean? I return to Foucault: the component forces in man join together with forces from the outside of a new type, of a third type. I can state it better now: the forces of the classical age were infinitely cumulative forces, raisable to infinity, infinitely cumulative forces. The forces of the nineteenth century are essentially forces of diffraction, forces of differentiation; differentiation of the branches of life, differentiation of the families of languages, which is why science became a comparative science; differentiation of modes of production. Good, the forces of finitude – I believe it would be easy to develop this – the forces of finitude are forces of diffraction, forces of divergence, of

differentiation; the forces of the infinite are forces of accumulation and seriation, of serialization. What are the new forces? And how, with the component forces in man, would they constitute something other than man?

Good, listen, we will stop there because I have the impression that this isn't working any more, since the break... [*End of the session*] [2:21:09]

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The appendix to Deleuze's Foucault (pp. 124-132), titled "On the Death of Man and Superman", corresponds to much of what Deleuze develops, notably the passage from the Classical Age to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, towards "a formation of the future".

<sup>2</sup> On the letter to Meyer, see session 7 of the Spinoza seminar, 20 January 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Jules Vuillemin, *L'Héritage kantienne et la Révolution copernicienne* (Paris : PUF, 1954) [*The Kantian Legacy and the Copernican Revolution*].

<sup>4</sup> See session 7 of the Foucault seminar, November 26, 1985.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding this vague reference to a 19<sup>th</sup> century mathematician, Deleuze refers to "a mathematician from the 19<sup>th</sup> century" who considers differential analysis as "a Gothic hypothesis" on two other occasions in the seminars: in Leibniz and the Creation of Concepts, session 3, 29 April 1980, and in Spinoza and the Velocity of Thought, session 10, 10 February 1981. For a possible identity of this mathematician, see the Spinoza reference: given the flow and substance of the paragraph in which this reference arises -- where Deleuze discusses how mathematicians came to assert that the founding of infinitesimal calculus need not depend on an hypothesis of the infinitely small -- this eminent "mathematician from the 19<sup>th</sup> century" who provides infinitesimal calculus with "its definitive status" may well be none other than Karl Weierstrass whom Deleuze identifies at the end of this very paragraph.

<sup>6</sup> Deleuze misspeaks here, saying "biology" rather than "political economy".

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Athlone Press, 1997; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).