Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Cinema, Truth, and Time – The Falsifier, 1983-1984

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Part 1

Now I'm caught up in legal considerations: can a faculty room be considered a public place? Yes, because anyone can go on, but in some regards, no, it isn't. [*Pause*] Is it a public service? There's something to be said—is there a lawyer in the house? [*Laughter*] An argument could be made. It's not clear whether it is a public place. [*Pause*] There are public places where smoking is allowed, places with ventilation, but it's not ventilated here. [*Laughter*] [*Pause*] I mentioned this before and I'll ask again, since unfortunately I can no longer handle a lot of smoke, I'll ask anyone smoking to sit in the back half of the room. [*Pause*]

Several voices: [*Indistinct comments*]

Deleuze: I take issue with your argument about hygiene, because ultimately, if those with unhealthy life-choices endanger our well-being, it isn't the worst thing in the world.

A student: That's your opinion.

Deleuze: Yes, but my opinion is what matters. [*Laughter*] [*Pause*] How do we stop others from doing evil? [*Laughter*]

The student: You know, we could put them together. [*Pause*]

Deleuze: But then… Next it'll be: Why don't you move to a big lecture hall? [*Laughter*] So, it's a new year. [*Pause*] What time is it? [*Pause*] I'm wondering whether we should start now or wait ten minutes, in case people show up late. Then again, I don't know where we would fit them. [*Laughter*] [*Pause*] Well, perhaps we'll start because… [*Pause*] Usually I start class, you know, as soon as I can, between 10:00 and 10:15—not like last year, at 10:30. Anyway. [*Pause*]

Well, as for what I think we'll cover this year, if I were to give it a title, [*Pause*] it would be, it comes down specifically to—it would more or less come down to "Truth and Time" *colon,* right, *colon* ": the Falsifier." [2] Out the gate, we're already in the thick of it because—"Truth and Time: The Falsifier"—what place would "frauds" or "falsifiers" have in a consideration of truth and time? Thus, [*Pause*] this group of ideas is clearly intended to combine several different lines of

inquiry. And, contrary to years prior, where we would only gradually come upon different topics, here I'd prefer to point some of them out, for practical purposes.

Because what I have in mind is that whether you do it in groups or on your own—in a single group or in several [*pause*] independent groups—[I'd like for] you all to look into—not all of these topics, because that's not really what I'm going for, that would be too much—but afterwards, if you're interested in something, [I'd like for] you to come back to something you're interested in and explore that topic further. So, I'd love for you to decide, "Ah, well, I'll take that up on my own"—and because you'll do it on your own, you'll have that much more to bring to the table. I know no one asked, but to explain why I wouldn't want to move us to a bigger lecture hall, it's because I don't want anyone to ever hesitate to interrupt me if they have something to contribute, or whatnot, and that wouldn't be possible in a lecture hall setting.

So, I'll lay out research topics, in no particular order, that we'll look at this year—for the time being, don't worry if it isn't obvious how they're relevant; we'll get there, we'll work it out eventually—for anyone interested, I'd like… I plan on making a lot of use of a well-known American novelist, an American novelist named Herman Melville. So, for anyone interested in taking a closer look, I'd like for you to read or reread Melville—if possible, particularly his (unfortunately) least-known book, translated as *The Great Crook,* whose English title is—you know I'm going to butcher the pronunciation—*The Confidence Man* [1857]. [*Pause*] I don't know how you'd translate that; it's no accident that the French translator, who is very good, put it as "the great crook," since the words, "the great crook" actually do appear in the novel. But "confidence man"—all I can think of would be to translate it with a hyphen: *confidence-man*, because the character is obviously not a man you can trust or confide in… Unfortunately, the book is impossible to track down because it was never reprinted in French; those of you reading in English won't have any problem. You can only get a copy if you can borrow one from a friend—plenty of people still have it—either that or you can borrow it from the library. That's one research topic. Melville. I'll spend a lot of time on him this year.

Our second topic is Plato, but not just any Plato. Famously, there's a long, endless war between Plato and the so-called Sophists, which Plato waged throughout his career. I'll also point out that, as readers, we're very quick—being so very far removed from anything related to the Greeks—as readers we're very quick to refer to "the Sophists" on the one hand and Socrates and Plato on the other. Upon closer examination, it seems as though even serious Plato scholars lump all the Sophists in together. Note that Plato covers his problems with the Sophists and his battle against the Sophists primarily through five main texts. Three of them are named after the three greatest Sophists we know of, since not much about them has survived. One of them is named—one of Plato's dialogues is called *Protagoras,* and the other is called *Gorgias.* And the third, actually, there are two called "Hippias"—*Hippias Minor* and *Hippias Major.* There aren't two [Sophists named] Hippias, but there are two Platonic dialogues. So there are three Sophists: Protagoras, Gorgias, Hippias.

If you read carefully—and this might be your goal, for those of you who take this avenue—if you read Plato's dialogues carefully, you notice that Protagoras, Gorgias, and Hippias are by no means three versions of the same figure, that there are significant differences between them. It

gets harder to talk about "the" Sophist; we ought to say the *Sophists*. Is the plural important? Is it the same sort of plural as when I refer to Platonists? We'll have to look into the Sophists' own pluralities, then. A Belgian philosopher from the turn of the century, named Eugene Dupreel, is now virtually unknown; he wrote what I think is a bizarre, fascinating book—one of the best books on the Sophists, to my knowledge; he's the only one to have seriously considered the possibility of distinguishing Protagoras, Gorgias, and Hippias, without blurring them together under the empty moniker of "Sophist." [3]

Together with these three dialogues, perhaps taking some of our cues from Dupreel, we'll add two of Plato's other major dialogues, one titled *The Sophist,* specifically where the Sophist is presented as a protean master, and *The Statesman*. I assume that those of you taking this path, just like those who will throw themselves into Melville, will have at least something to bring us this year, reading or re-reading such a literary genius—but more than simply reading it, what I'm looking for is for you to do so specifically through the lens of our course: "Truth, Time: The Falsifier."

But for Plato, too, what approach should you take if you read Plato this year? What point of view? Obviously, the fraud's perspective, since the Sophists—in their very plurality, which makes us stumble over the "the," the article, "the"—are depicted as frauds, and it's for that reason they are not "one." But why can't there be one single fraud? Why can't there be one and only one fraud? We might have a problem on our hands already; we don't even know what it means.

Notice that I'm approaching it as… It's just a feeling; I'm only feeling things out at this stage. If I hear "truth teller," I more or less understand, ah yes, a truth teller! A truth teller, of course, there are lots of them. But each truth teller bears witness to a single form, the form of the One. How could a fraud represent the form of the One? Thus, maybe there are lots of truth tellers, but technically there is only one, whereas even if there is only one fraud, there are technically more than one of them, and these aren't simply inversions of the same proposition. It's that one and many clearly don't mean the same thing in both cases. Alright, so our second research topic is Plato.

Third would be Nietzsche. Again, the point isn't to read all of Nietzsche. It would mean focusing on two books in particular, plus anything else you care to add: *Twilight of the Idols* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. Why is that?

A student: [*Asks for clarification*]

Deleuze: *Twilight of the Idols* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. Necessary addendum for those who haven't done so. You should have already read it, in any case, since it's among the greatest books of all time: *Thus Spake Zarathustra. —* That being said, why these two books, *Twilight of the Idols* and *Beyond Good and Evil*? Because in both of these books, Nietzsche claims to have taken what he considers one of his most fundamental discoveries, the question of truth, and pushed it even further: "I am the first to have called truth into question." Why? In order to replace it with what will sometimes be called "the power of the false," and elsewhere "the will to power." [*Pause*]

The third topic, the third direction you might take — They aren't separate; we're not going to have one section on this, another section on that, etc. All of these paths will intermingle, but still, again, what I'm asking is for you to pick one that speaks to you or that lines up with your own work. — Our third research topic, in keeping with what we've done over the last two years, is about the strange relationship between the cinematic image, time, and the falsifier. [*Pause*] Why is the falsifier such a foundational character [*Pause*] from a film perspective? Probably because, in a way, they reflect the director themself. Alright, but, but what makes a director any more a fraud than a playwright or a literary author? Between film and the power of the false, is there… — *Cahiers du cinéma* recently devoted a few short but excellent pieces to the power of the false—is there some relationship, [*there's a voice in the back*] a particular relationship between…? – What's going on back there? [*A few respond*] … Who wants in? Asking for a lecture hall? – So, you see, why is that so interesting? I have a few authors in mind, here… [*Noise in the room*]

A student [*back of the room*]: Selfish! [*Laughter*]

Deleuze: What did he say?

A student [*near Deleuze*]: "Selfish." [*Pause, laughter*]

A woman student [*responding to the first student*]: Jealous! [*Laughter*] [*Pause*]

Deleuze: Let him in! Clear the way. [*Pause*] Yes, suffice it to say… I don't know what I was getting at. It's an odd presence, regardless. Yes, I was saying, there's a piece, which isn't really a film, which probably shouldn't be regarded as foundational, there's a piece by [Jean-Luc] Godard, a sketch in a series of sketches, a series of sketches called *The World's Most Beautiful Swindlers*, one of which Godard has titled "The Great Crook." It, it, it… its structure is rather complicated. He doesn't hide the fact that, while it's not a one-for-one adaptation, Melville is his inspiration—Herman Melville. That is, he's drawing from the book translated as "The Great Crook" [*The Confidence Man*], and it's so well done. He may have changed a lot of it, but he's held on to certain particular aspects of it—in the final instance, if there is a final instance, it's noteworthy that Godard himself, as director, shows up wearing a fez.

I think that's still anecdotal because I can't say for sure, but what do we got? Take three famous directors: [Orson] Welles, [Alain] Resnais, [*Pause*] and—more as an aside, but there's nothing pejorative implied here—[Alain] Robbe-Grillet, the theme of the fraud; it wouldn't be all that interesting if the image's content had a straightforward theme.

The first student [*outside the room*]: Selfish [*égoista*]!

Deleuze: [*Groans*] There's no need to say that over and over again. Let him try to get in; maybe then he will stop. I don't know who he's calling "selfish." [*Pause, various noises around the room*] Is it someone blocking the door? Is it me? Is it all of us? First off, is "selfish" singular or plural? [*Different responses*] It's singular? Is it Italian or Spanish [*égoista vs. égoïste in French*]? It's Spanish—and feminine? It's feminine, so it's you [*laughter*] not me. If he keeps saying that, I'm going to lose my train of thought; I won't be "selfish"; I'll be "amnesiac."

It's interesting, because what's unusual about all three cases – we'll see – Welles, Resnais, Robbe-Grillet? Certainly compared to other directors, these three have most directly pursued a cinematic inquiry into time—that is, all three are creators of time-images. I claim that these three are instances where the time/image relationship is really, not theoretically, inverted—where the movement/time relationship is inverted, where movement, or what remains of it, becomes subordinate to time, rather than the other way around. In other words, all three directors construct time-images. Is it a coincidence that these three time-image makers—here's what is important for our purposes—are at the same time the three directors who have taken the theme of the fraud or falsifier the furthest both materially and formally? There's a link here that we don't yet understand, which speaks to my title: "Truth and Time: The Falsifier." [*Pause*]

What is it about time that makes it fundamentally linked to the character of the fraud? And is the fraud even a character? After all, I don't need to look at everything Robbe-Grillet's done and can just start with what's widely thought to be his best film, *The Man Who Lies* [1968]. [*Pause*] But Welles, in the context of our task at hand this year, with Welles it won't be hard to show, I believe, that for him the challenge with images consists in posing and answering the question as to whether the cinematic image can truly go through time, whether it can truly be expressed as a time-image. If that's a main concern for him, there's something that's even more pressing, which concerns the power of the false. And Welles's last film isn't called "T for Time," but *F for Fake* [*1973*]. But "fake" isn't simply false; "fake" implies trickery, disguise—which are things a fraud does. Falsifiers imply more than simply falsehood, and the whole film is spent—this might be important, we'll take a closer look—depicting a series of falsifications, as if there couldn't be just one falsification, as if one falsification necessarily requires that there be others. And I'd argue that Welles's reflection on time takes the humorist form of a reflection on frauds. How can that be, and why?

After Welles, I think the one who went the furthest with cinematic images as time-images is probably Resnais; it's unmistakable in a film which I think wasn't very successful. Why did he feel the need to make a film on *Stavisky* [1974], a well-known fraud? Why is Welles so tormented, so obsessed with the idea of the fraud—what is a fraud? How am I a fraud? How am I not a fraud? [*Pause*] Why is Robbe-Grillet obsessed with "the man who lies"? All that in conjunction with this turn, whereby the image is no longer about movement but time. So, that's another research topic for us to cover.

Finally, another topic for the course, to the extent they can be separated—at first glance, it seems irrelevant, it's up to you to see if you can connect the dots; these are fundamentally linked, as I see it—I'd like for some of you, especially if you have any sort of scientific background, to dig into crystallography. This time the reading list is straightforward; you can pick up any crystallography textbook. While you read, keep in mind the question of how to recreate it. Is it possible, and how is it possible, to form philosophical concepts based on scientific notions? Obviously, you have to be careful when doing so. It's not about forming philosophical concepts that have some bearing on crystallography; it's about testing whether there's some possible resonance between disciplines such that one has something to offer the other.

Our last research topic: when it comes to the false, to the power of the false, what does it affect? I think we'll end up with two concepts with a whole history in logic; this time the research topic is about logic. On the one hand, there's the idea of description—what is a description, and what counts as a description? And the idea of narration—what counts as narration? [*Pause*] These two themes—the reading list is huge because it's relatively trendy—I mean, for starters, the New Novel consists in a type of reflection that leans into description, and new possibilities concerning the function of description. Robbe-Grillet himself builds up an entire concept of description. And while the New Novel claimed to reinvent the nature of description, by no means did it leave narration, i.e., storytelling untouched—it also reinvented narration.

Only that means, I think, that it lines up with a very important tendency in logic, in modern logic. I'm not saying that it was inspired by it. But why wouldn't we bring them together if we manage to show that, at its root, modern logic faced a problem shared by new age novelists, a problem that forced them to distinguish between descriptions and propositions? Hence logical descriptions and propositions explicitly come on to the scene, making their appearance in modern logic. Of course, there was a precedent, with one of the greatest logicians, Bertrand Russell. For those of you who read in English—and it's a shame that it still hasn't been translated—you'll find Russell's theory of descriptions in a book titled *Principles of Mathematics* [1903]. But all of Russell's books involve his theory of descriptions in… [*Deleuze doesn't finish this sentence*] any modern logic textbook will refer to the theory of descriptions when it comes to modern logicians. Anyone who has even a small grasp, is even a little competent, the least bit familiar with logic today—I'd really appreciate it if you took a closer look at this topic, on description and narration, not just from the perspective of literary criticism or film criticism.

Why film criticism? We will have to consider what counts as description and what counts as narration in the context of cinematic images. After all, every filmmaker, every director does narration, but there are very few who have made narration a factor—how do I put this?—an independent variable, who have treated narration as one of the image's components, that is, who have, in terms of film, really posed narration as a problem for the image, with both sound images and visual images. Personally, I'd argue that the three greatest, in my opinion—but that's always what it is—the three who have done the best job at really taking narration and making it autonomous, making it an autonomous element in a film's visual and audio images, are [Joseph] Mankiewicz, [Éric] Rohmer, and [Pier Paolo] Pasolini. It goes without saying in both Rohmer and Pasolini, since both of them put some of their films in the form of tales. [*Pause*] In the case of Mankiewicz, it's evident in the way most of his films use flashbacks. As a device, a flashback is neutral; it's a purely formal sequence which has lost any vested interest, [it's] a second-hand experience; it doesn't define anything, and it certainly doesn't define the [film's] narration. However, it does act as a signpost, signaling infinitely deeper processes or concealing infinitely deeper processes, ones we should think of as narrative devices unique to film.

[That] could be interesting in this regard since, if I say Mankiewicz, Pasolini, Rohmer – you're welcome to add others if you have them – I'm simply laying them out, I'm just trying to indicate this criterion, what's necessary for all three is that narration be an autonomous element of the image as such, of the visual and audio image. These three (plus others, eventually), would make

a good research topic because that's obviously one of the devices used in all three. At any rate, even if we leave it at these three, the narrative devices are completely different. There, that gives us three, six research topics—that's a lot. Choose whichever one you like; you're also free to choose none of them, i.e., to choose something else, but I'd appreciate it if you chose one of these. [*Pause*]

So, now that we've distributed the labor, [*Pause; noise in the room*] What's wrong? Is everything alright? No?

A student: [*Question about the Belgian author*]

Deleuze: Dupréel. D-u-p-r-e-e-l. Eugene. *The Sophists*, which must have come out through Vrin or PUF, or else, if it was published in Belgium, it's possible that it came out through Brussels, published by Brussels… [*A student says something*] What? … What else is there to say? I think it's out of print. It's out of print. [*Laughter*] No, no, we shouldn't laugh. You can find it in libraries; we're always working with books out-of-print, what can you do? But it's a great book. Dupréel is fascinating; he's a guy who really – he's one of those guys who had the most bizarre ideas. Since he was Belgian, no one took him seriously, [*laughter*] and he is – I think he was a tremendous philosopher. Some of the things he did were extraordinary; he was full of ideas. He came up with the idea of the inter-cal – there's the interval [and] the inter-cal [as in intercalary]. He said that life was made up of nothing but intervals, and that's all it was. It's true. He was very… It's a deep mine; it feels like – it comes across as very striking, yeah. And then he vanished. I don't even know if the Belgians still read him.

A student: They do!

Deleuze: Oh? Well, well, well. Have some of you read any Dupréel?

The student: Funny enough, he's read more in sociology than in philosophy.

Deleuze: Ah, well, that's no better, he's fallen as far as sociology… yes, he's become kind of conventional, in calling himself a sophist, he took on the legacy of the Sophists, you know.

Alright, so you see our task for the day; simply put, it's to offer a sort of introduction. Ideally, this introduction—without forcing things, without coming across as arbitrary, but naturally flowing from one thing to the next—would go through all these topics, revealing how all these topics are related. What does crystallography have to do with any of this? What do we mean by power of the false, by time? And so on.

As a result, I'm not worried about anything else in this introduction, so much so that in fact, we won't get started until after the introduction, during which I can't be expected to explain myself, since all I can do to back up what I have to say is to ask whether you're on the same wavelength. So my criterion is still: if you aren't feeling it after this introduction, if you don't get it, you're welcome to leave and not come back. I mean it—leave and don't come back, [because] that means that what we have in store for this year won't be to your liking. If it does pique your

interest, well, then stay. But I won't claim to justify what I'm about to say; all I'm trying to do is establish connections, relationships, to pose problems.

Now before I start laying them out, I'll first refer back to our title—the true and time, the true and time… no, "Truth and Time, the Falsifier." And well, what does "the true" mean, anyway? [4] We don't need… — Ah, well, before we get into it, right, I'm worried, despite appearances, that we're running out of space. You're all crammed in here, so there's no room, there's nowhere… we should make some room, there's some here… [*Pause*] There's no room for someone to squeeze in here? [*Pause; people are shuffling around*] — It's a fine question, but all we can say is that, at any rate, what's true isn't the same thing as what's real. And why isn't true the same as real? Because we could put it loosely: "true" is the distinction between what's real and what's imaginary; you could also call it—at this point it makes no difference—the distinction between essence and appearance. "True" is not the essence; it's the distinction between essence and appearance, the distinction between the real and the imaginary.

Well, that won't get us very far, will it? By that same token, what is the false? False isn't imaginary, it isn't apparent. "False" means confusing the imaginary and the real, appearance and essence, [*pause*] and the act of mixing these up is what we call an "error." [*Pause*] You might say, alright, we're not making much progress, we keep stopping and starting after every little step.

But then, [*pause*] the distinction… — [*someone knocks on the door*] We should say there's no one here, [*laughter*] they're gone… [*they knock again*] If he knocks like that, I won't be able to go on because… I'm starting to get scared… — See, the distinction between what's real and what's imaginary, between essence and appearance, lies within the image it's supposed to describe. In effect, we aren't able to get out of the image; thus, both the distinction as well as its confusion are within the image. [*Interruption of the recording*] [45:57]

… Ah, right, but if there's some distinction or confusion between real and imaginary, it lies within the image it's supposed to describe. Alright, but if both the distinction and the confusion between real and imaginary, essence and appearance, come from within the image [*recording cuts out*] one corresponding to the real and the other corresponding to the imaginary, what are these two aspects of the image? I'd claim that the part of the image corresponding to the real is its ability to represent something.

Now, as I say that, if you have any sort of background in philosophy, you immediately think: he's more or less describing what dominated so-called Classical philosophy, like what you find in the 17th century. [*Pause*] The part of the image corresponding to the real is its representative value, the possibility of its representing something. What about the imaginary? Imaginary isn't the same thing as image; yes, there's something about the image that corresponds to the imaginary, but what is it? It's not the image insofar as it's able to represent something; it's the image insofar as it expresses a modification of my body or my soul. [*Pause*]

For example, all throughout the 17th century you find these two poles—from Descartes to Malebranche—the explicit distinction between these two poles: representation and expression. Sensation, for example—it's complicated: in what ways is a sensation an image? A sensation is

perhaps an image because something is represented through it. But it also encapsulates a modification; it's in this sense that what's true isn't given. Taken separately in the image, that which refers to the representation of something, which we'll call the idea, or what have you, is the ideative aspect. And the part that merely expresses a modification of my soul or my body is the responsibility of truth-as-distinction. But notice the distinction at work in the image, between real and imaginary. There is an operative distinction between real and imaginary within the image even though neither the real nor the imaginary are a part of the image. What the image does have is these two sides: representation, modification. [*Pause*]. "Getting it wrong" is when I confuse the image's two aspects; "getting it right" means being able to distinguish the two aspects.

A truth-teller—what is a truth-teller?[5] The truth-teller is someone who distinguishes between the image's two aspects, the one who doesn't mistake emotional or bodily effects for representations of something. Take a desire, for example: you have a desire, alright, a desire is a modification, it's a change in your body or your soul. It doesn't represent anything. Which is the definition of "wishful thinking" [*lit.* "mistaking your desires for reality"]—wishful thinking is the mistake made by those who get it wrong. Right, wishful thinking means confusing modification with representation. That being said, with images it isn't easy to differentiate between modifications and representations. See, so far, so good.

How do we tell them apart, then? There's an expression that always comes up in the 17ᵗʰ century that sounds vague but is actually illuminating: "only what's true has a form." You find that line all over; you see it everywhere, again and again, throughout the Middle Ages. But in the more easily accessible texts, this line not only appears—it's even elevated to the level of a basic principle or major axiom. The major axiom of the theory of knowledge in the 17ᵗʰ century is that "the false has no form." There is only a form of the true.

Student: Is ignorance a part of falsehood?

Deleuze: What?

Student: Is ignorance a part of falsehood?

Deleuze: No, I was just saying that falsehood is the confusion between what's real and what's imaginary; ignorance, that is, not knowing… falsehood is embodied in error; ignorance, ignorance, if there's absolute ignorance, if you take, if you imagine pure ignorance, well, it's not going to get anything confused. There's nothing real or imaginary, [so] there's no falsity. No, no, you can't say that someone ignorant is wrong; you'd simply say—and Plato would—they're in non-being, they don't mistake non-being for being. Which is what happens with error, not with ignorance. However, there is no ignorance; there's never ignorance. It's only a limit case, there is never ignorance. For classical philosophers, there are people who make mistakes, that is, there is partial ignorance. There is never total ignorance; there is never total ignorance.

Right, well, [*Pause*] only what's true has a form. What do you think of that? There is no form of the false. It's the simplest idea in the world. Clearly, we can't disagree with them on that point. How would we go against such great philosophers? Only what's true has form. Which means

that getting it wrong isn't at all a question of mixing up the two forms, confusing the form of the false for the form of what's true. It's when someone gives falsehood the form of truth, when someone attributes the form of truth to what isn't true—whereas only what's true has a form. Why?

If you understand what "form" means—and what does form mean? Ever since Aristotle, "form" has been straightforwardly understood to mean what's universal and what's necessary. [*Pause*] And from Aristotle to Kant, that doesn't change. Form is the universal and necessary. [*Pause*] And what exactly does that mean—"Form is the universal and necessary"? Does that mean there is only one form? No. If I say the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, alright, that's a triangle; it's not a circle. There are multiple forms. Then why should I nonetheless claim that form is the universal and necessary? It's not because form itself is universal and necessary; [*pause*] it's because I can only describe form in terms of what is universal and necessary. What does that mean? [*Pause*]

It's not about actual universality, because then there would only be one single form. It's not about actual necessity. [*Pause*] Yet, we can sort of understand it that way; we can say, well, okay, something is imaginary when it varies, bits and pieces are true or false, while what's really true, right, is when it's universal and necessary everywhere and all the time. Sure, but what do we mean by "everywhere and all the time"? A lot of folks get along just fine without ever thinking about triangles. So, what these philosophers are trying to tell us, they have something very simple in mind: a lot of people get along just fine without thinking about triangles. Even us—we aren't always thinking about triangles. [*Laughter*] Thus, the claim that the form of the triangle is universal and necessary doesn't mean that we think about it always and necessarily. They aren't idiots; they're well aware that we spend our time *not* thinking about triangles. However, they argue, if you do think about triangles, you cannot deny—here's their main idea—you cannot deny, if you think of a triangle, you cannot deny that a shape with three angles necessarily implies three intersecting lines. Right, and if you think about a triangle's three angles, you cannot deny that these angles are equal to two right angles. In other words, it's a universality and a necessity in thought, or what philosophy considers "a universality and necessity *de jure*." [*Pause*]

A form is a form insofar as it entails, not insofar as it is everywhere and always present, but insofar as it entails universality and necessity *de jure*, that is, if the judgments I make of it are themselves universal and necessary. Thus, universal and necessary [are] the criteria for form or for what's true, when it comes to adjudicating something about form. [*Pause*] I can say that man is a rational animal; that's the form of man. [*Pause*] It is universal and necessary that he be a rational animal, i.e., it necessarily pertains to man and applies to all men. That doesn't mean that there are men everywhere. So, you see the difference between universality and necessity *de jure*, and universality and necessity *de facto*. If you understand that much, you're already deep in the heart of pure philosophy. Well, I mean, they don't just say things—they have systematic definitions and extremely rigorous demonstrations. So, all that being said, it doesn't stop there; this is just a moment along the way.

Alright, so you understand what it means to say that the form of truth is what's universal and necessary. Then I have a way to distinguish between what's true and what's false. Falsehood has no form, or judgments; by definition, it has no form. If you understand what form means, it's obvious that falsehood has no form, and precisely because it has no form, my judgments of it lack all universality and necessity *de jure*. [*Pause*] Consequently, what is a truth-teller? Stripped of all *de jure* necessity and universality, what are they? Modifications, pure and simple modifications of images. Okay, a triangle! Well, I can draw it like this, I can draw it like that, I can draw it with red chalk, with white chalk—these are modifications, or if you prefer, they're appearances, or if you prefer, they're imaginary. [*Pause*]

What is a truth-teller, then? Because after all, truth isn't – it isn't – it isn't… I was trying to demonstrate that it doesn't simply exist; it has to be drawn out. The most classical philosophers always said: you have to uncover the truth; you don't get it… It isn't just there, waiting for you. If you don't separate it from the false, you're stuck in a world of images. You know they're a classical philosopher when they say we're lost in a world of images. It can even be a major source of anxiety, the anxiety of everything being swept up in a world of images. Classicism is nothing but anxieties, it's awful; our relationship with God is anguished, desperate, etc. Classical philosophers weren't exactly peaceful, eh? The classics are always baroque, and the baroques are always classic. But what do they mean? Well, what they're saying is: the hallmark of Classical philosophy is that, if you cannot see yourself in this world of images, philosophy offers us a way of finding ourselves, namely, well, yeah, you have to sift through these images—their two sides, representation and modification. One gives you what's real; the other makes you fall back into the imaginary. One will yield essences; the other will let you fall back into appearances. Of course, we shouldn't exaggerate; you can never completely escape appearances, since you have passions—even philosophers.

But, but, but, but, but, but, insofar as it is possible– as they like to say, in their lovely classical way – inasmuch as we have it in us, insofar as it is possible to say, what is a truth-teller? It is someone who does their best to only let themselves be modified by form, who subordinates the modifications of their body and soul to form, which is the form of what's true. [*Pause*] And what do we call it when one is modified by form? I might call it genuine information, the information of what's true, the information of my soul by what's true. The imprint of the truth on my soul – that's what information is, and I claim that the double activity of both the truth modifying my soul and my soul—which, as much as it can, only lets itself be modified by form, by the truth— makes up the organic activity of man and truth.

I might even argue that the true *is* form, and that it's organic form. But I wouldn't want to get hung up on that. I'm only asking that you… since I brought this up so often in years prior, it's not a big deal, and it's true both in philosophy and in art, I'll very quickly mention it and not say anymore, but for those who weren't here and want to brush up on this point, I'll refer you to a wonderful chapter by the German critic, [Wilhelm] Worringer, Worringer, I don't remember… in *Gothic Art* [1911], where he explains how representation in classical art might be called "organic representation." But it's not hard to see that what Worringer sees in art is exactly the same procedure as what philosophers are doing. The form of truth is fundamentally tied to organic representation, that is, to the in*form*ation of the heart by form. [6]

There, we've gotten the hard part out of the way. No more—that was just to present this history of the form of truth, but you can see how frustrating it is, right? Because from the start, if you've been following along, we've had an ulterior motive: that's all well and good, that's fine, right? But if this form of truth, defined as universal and the necessary, well, defined by *de jure* universality and necessity, this organic activity—what is it modeled after? Its model is the Eternal; fundamentally, it bears the seal of the Eternal. [*Pause*] And if you let go of time in that truth, what will become of that truth? Did they forget about time in their account of truth? How could they have overlooked that? Again, they're not idiots. Yes, they bracketed the question of time in their concept of truth; what happens when their understanding of truth doesn't account for time? Something's dropped on their heads, and they fall into a series of paradoxes that the Greeks already dealt with, which will have constant repercussions into the 18th century, no, the 17th century, or the 18th—anyway, we can't get into it now.

Moving onto my second comment. Very well, I'll boil down all of that—I needed all of it—but I'll boil it down to the following two points: in a so-called classical understanding of truth, what's important is being able to discern between what's real and what's imaginary; the danger resides with the false, such as it's taken up by the person who's mistaken, the false being the confusion between real and imaginary or between essence and appearance or between representation and modification. That's the perspective of truth's organic form. There, that's my take. [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:09:27]

Part 2

… I'll move on to another comment. Everyone, unless they're an idiot, is unbeatable in their own domain. And so talking about the so-called classical theory of "truth" is a bit of a silly situation that no longer makes sense. [*Pause*] There's no room for discussion; we have to change the scenery. The sacred principle: you're always right in your own domain. So, the question is how to form your own domain: it's not easy. You find yourself in a world with no footholds; everything is already taken. Like there's a snail in every hole. Sure, we could tear them out, but it would mean violence. No. We'll have to find our own foothold somewhere. Where's our little patch of land? Alright, so the false doesn't have a form. Whether the false has form isn't up for discussion. Of course, falsehood doesn't have a form! However, we could say, then, we might respectfully say, okay, alright, Descartes, Malebranche—the false doesn't have a form. What am I supposed to do with that? That's obvious! It's like two plus two is four. But is that our only criteria? Sure, the false has no form. But does it have power?[7]

See, in the dialogues, you can always—when you read Plato—Socrates' interlocutors always say, "Indeed, Socrates, it is so." Imagine Socrates says, "The false has no form." The other one says, "I don't know what you're talking about, Socrates." [*Laughter*] Socrates has to go back to the drawing board: "Well, consider the example of something fake: a chimera." "Okay," the other one says, "I'm thinking of a chimera." Socrates: "Alright, what form does a chimera have?" The other one answers, "The form of a chimera." Socrates cuts in—I'm riffing, just to give you a sense for the tone, for those of you who haven't read Plato—Socrates responds: "Yes, but you claim that the chimera has wings, and hooves, and big teeth, but then it turns out to not have teeth at all, and then it doesn't have wings, but fins." The other one says, "Ah, yes,

Socrates. You're right, it's true. I see what you mean." Then Socrates says, "So, does the chimera have two forms?" The other one says, "Sure, it has two forms." "Ah, but I've seen another form of chimera. Does that mean then that it has an infinite number of forms?" "Yes," his disciple says. Socrates goes on: "But if it has infinite forms, can it be said to have *a* form?" Then the other one gets frustrated; he says, "By Zeus!"—It's always by Zeus. [*Laughter*] "No, we can't say that something has one form if it has an infinite number of forms." Socrates says, "That's no good, then. You've contradicted yourself." Then the other says, "I'm done talking to you." [*Laughter*] Then someone else takes the baton. It's great.

So, there's no space for… but some have more of a backbone than others. Let's imagine one of Plato's interlocutors: this time, they say "Alright, the false doesn't have a form. However, Socrates, I argue that it *does* have a power[8] or capability." Socrates isn't thrilled about it, because all of a sudden, he has to prove that there's no capacity without form, which is trickier – it's a little more complicated. He may or may not end up getting out of it. We don't know if he's going to get out of it. That's what's so funny about Plato's dialogues. You can't assume that Socrates will always come out on top. What's more, a lot of the time Socrates ends up agreeing with his interlocutor's original position, who he's been treating like an idiot, and it doesn't bother him. He'll say, well, see, we've seen the issue from all sides. [*Laughter*]

I think that the false might have power. What does that mean? What could that possibly mean? The power of the false. What is it? What I can say is that, if the idea of the power of the false means anything, it has nothing to do with form, otherwise I'd be going back on what we've already established. Neither does it have anything to do with confusing the real and the imaginary, or essence and appearance, or representation and modification. Do you see why? — We're packing a lot in, so pay attention, we don't have a lot of time, and it's the first day— I can't help it! There's no avoiding it. If you've followed thus far, the confusion between real and imaginary, essence and appearance, representation and modification—that's what the false is. [*Pause*] It's the false in the sense of "making a mistake" or a misjudgment—that's what the false is!

When I say that "the false has no form," that it might have power, right, the false can't be the power of the false. Moreover, right… no, that's enough. I can't define… if there is a power of the false, I already know that I won't be able to define it as the mere confusion between real and imaginary, representation and modification, otherwise my whole thing will cave in, and we're already done. That won't do! So that's out, and I'll have to find something else. I'd like… In philosophy, you can do that, and it should be true of all disciplines, you know, where all you do is lay down constraints and requirements. It's sometimes said that philosophers overcomplicate things for the fun of it; there's nothing fun about overcomplicating things. Either they stop because they can't go any further, or they keep pushing because they can't avoid it. Personally, I think… personally, I'd much prefer to just say alright, the power of the false is the confusion between real and imaginary, and leave it at that. But it so happens that I cannot. No way, since that's how I defined the false itself. So the power of the false cannot be the false itself.

What could it be, then, if it's not the confusion between real and imaginary, essence and appearance? What could it be? Phew—I see a way out, an emergency exit. I'd argue that it's

undecidability. Well, we could also say… for now, there's no reason to actually distinguish them; [we could also say] indiscernibility. [*Pause*] The power of the false is the indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary. The undecidability between real and imaginary. Which isn't the same as "confusing between real and imaginary." Not at all. [9]

Now we're cooking! Only, it's still a bit worrisome because what is that? What exactly does that mean? I need a domain, I need a context where the real and the imaginary are indiscernible, undecidable, where I can no longer say which is which. [*Pause*] According to Nietzsche, a key line in his work is: "If I've abolished the world of essences, I've also abolished the world of appearances." That is, there is no more… Under the power of the false, there is no more essence than there is appearance. The power of the false doesn't mean that everything is appearance. Appearances are shot, no less than essences. There's an indiscernibility between essence and appearance; there's an undecidability between real and imaginary. [10]

But where? Where does that happen? Where does the real and imaginary become indiscernible? Where does representation and modification become indiscernible? [*Pause*] Your first thought might be, well, in your head. It happens in your mind. We ought to give it some thought, since it's been put out there. It's in your head that the real and imaginary can be indiscernible, can enter into a relationship of indiscernibility. That itself is a curious turn of phrase. We'll have to explain it. "A relationship of indiscernibility." How can we describe indiscernibility as a relationship? At any rate, it's completely different from confusion. [*Pause*] When I say that I've confused one for the other, that still implies an inherent distinction. When I say that the two are indiscernible, I deny any inherent distinction.

It's in your mind that the real and imaginary become indiscernible—of course not, we know it's not in our heads. Why? Because we never mix them up in our head. We never… Sorry, [I meant to say] indiscernibility — we *do* often mix them up, we get it wrong. But it never reaches the point of indiscernibility. The dreamer never finds the real and the imaginary indiscernible. To put it more simply, he is cut off from the real by the real… sorry, he's cut off from the real by sleep; he's detached from what's real and ushered into the imaginary bound hand and foot. I can in no way claim that a dreamer "confuses" [*Pause*] the real and the imaginary. He doesn't even confuse them. Much less does he find the two indiscernible; his slumber preserves them. Someone hallucinating — for the longest time it's been said, described, demonstrated that someone hallucinating, for example, hears voices. But only in their head; they don't think that other people can hear these voices. [*Pause*] No one who hallucinates thinks that other people can hear the voices they do. I wake up in the morning and I hear: "Shit! You bastard!" [*Laughter*] But I don't ask if anyone else heard it. I know very well that they don't; I know they can't hear it. I know that what's haunting me is all the more dangerous because no one can hear it. Right. That won't do! It's not in our head, then.

Why am I belaboring this point? There's a book we'll take a closer look at later on. Robbe-Grillet's work, both his novels and his films, relies—I think—fundamentally hinges on an indiscernibility between real and imaginary. An indiscernibility. [*Pause*] And he constantly tells us — the proof that his work hinges on such an indiscernibility is that he constantly says, in *Last Year at Marienbad*, for example: don't bother asking whether something's real or imaginary; it's

a meaningless question! He says, right, you're free to say what you like. Some will say this is real, others will say no, *this* is what's real, *that's* only imaginary. You're always free to divvy it up, but the question isn't pertinent, you don't see what's really at issue; that's not what matters. Thus, he explicitly requires an indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary. [*Pause*]

And he comments—I'm not saying that this is his final thought on the matter; rather, I'm trying to steer us away from any pitfalls. A text always lays out traps for us, especially in Robbe-Grillet's case, who delighted in doing so. "It is at this point, of course, that matters become complicated"—when it comes to figuring out what this indiscernibility is all about—"It can here be a question only of a subjective, mental, personal occurrence," he writes, concerning *Last Year at Marienbad*. "These things must be happening in someone's mind." These things must be happening in someone's mind. [11]

Well, no! No, we can already tell—no! At most, what happens in someone's head is a limited and temporary confusion between what's imaginary and what's real, [*pause*] but never indiscernibility. "These things must be happening in someone's mind. But whose? The narrator-hero's"—question mark, the man from *Last Year at Marienbad*—"Or the hypnotized heroine's?"—the woman from *Last Year at Marienbad*. He says it "must be happening in someone's mind." The man's mind? No. The woman's mind? No. "Or else, by a constant exchange of images between them, in the minds of both, together?" That's an improvement, because if it's between the two, it isn't in anyone's mind; it would be in their back-and-forth, which is better. But ultimately, he says that isn't it, either. "It would be better to admit a solution of another order"—Is that so? It would be better to have it so that it's we who exist in indiscernibility. There can be a confusion—confusion between the real and the imaginary, etc., between representation and modification, such confusion can take place in someone's mind, but what can't take place in someone's mind is the *indiscernibility* between what's real and what's imaginary.

"It would be better to admit a solution of another order: just as the only time which matters is that of the film itself"—hang on, he mentioned time; that's promising—"just as the only time which matters is that of the film itself, the only important 'character' is the spectator"—Holy smokes!—"*in his mind*"—italicized—"*in his mind* unfolds the whole story, which is precisely *imagined* by him." [12] Just when you think he's veering off, he comes right back. The question was whether it took place in the minds of the characters. The answer: no. What a relief. He quickly mentions time and then *bang!* He comes back to… No, it's not in the minds of the characters, nor does it exist between their minds—it's in the mind of the viewer.

So, things might get complicated as we build on Robbe-Grillet, as he's playing a dirty trick on us. It feels like we're being set up. Alright, if you say so, but what viewer? Which viewer? [*Pause*] A real viewer, someone like you and me, watching *Last Year at Marienbad?* If that's what he means, there's no way. It's impossible, there's no way, because with us, the real and the imaginary might get confused in our heads, but there isn't an indiscernibility; the same for anyone else. Or maybe he's referring to more of an "ideal" viewer, one that doesn't apply to you and me. But who, then? And what characteristics does this ideal viewer have? What of its nature? It doesn't really have a mind. We won't find an indiscernibility between real and imaginary in the mind of this ideal spectator. Maybe this ideal spectator "constructs" the

indiscernibility. If it doesn't happen in their mind, then it will need to be produced. And what do we call someone who creates an indiscernibility between what's real and what's imaginary? What can we do but give them the name they deserve? They hold the power of the false; they are a "falsifier." Whereas someone who's mistaken, someone who lies—whereas someone who's mistaken has confused the real with the imaginary, someone who is a falsifier, who lies, constructs… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:31:57]

… via any indiscernibility between real and imaginary. The power of the false is defined by the indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary and not by their confusion. Proposition one. Proposition two: in that regard, it refers to the fraud and not the fraudulent [Translator: the faker and not the fake, the falsifier and not the false]. And that's okay since all I needed was for the power of the false to be defined by something other than the false itself. So that's progress! Yes! A big improvement. — You all aren't tired? Everything alright? Because I'm moving on, I wouldn't want for you all to get overwhelmed at the start, especially since I need to get a few things pinned down so that you can start your own research. — So, we'll dwell a bit more on this second item, we'll dig a bit further into it. I'm claiming that the indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:33:02]

… in people's heads, we already know that won't be good enough—not wrong, but insufficient. Then what is it that… How to put this? These… I'm looking for the right word…Concretions, or coalescences. These concretions or coal… Or, to borrow a word that Dupreel loved, "consolidations." These concretions, these coalescences, these consolidations of the real and imaginary, where it's undecidable what's real and what's imaginary. Picture it as a circuit, right? — Now, don't press me on anything I'm about to lay out, because we'll be able to fix it later on as we go… we'll be able to look back and say, sheesh, we were really spouting a lot of nonsense the other day, but we should keep in mind that such nonsense might be useful.—

A circuit. Let's imagine an "electric" circuit, or even better, a bit more in line with what we've already covered, an "electro-magnetic" circuit. What does a circuit imply? It means that something chases after something else. But in certain conditions, you can't really say which is in front and which is behind, right? Which one is first in the Six-day race? You have to be a regular to know, to know the number of rounds ahead, otherwise you can't tell; if I don't know the number of rounds, I don't know. Both things are chasing each other around along an electric or electromagnetic circuit in such a way that I don't know not only which is first and which is second, but also which is this and which is that. In other words, the real and the imaginary, representation and modification, chase each other around such that I don't know, and I cannot know—undecidability—I cannot know what is real and what is imaginary, I cannot know what is representation and what is modification. What I'm looking for is this kind of concretion between real and imaginary—Yes, just a moment, one second, I'm wrapping up—

Right away, if you want an example, we have a famous example. It's no coincidence that it comes from Welles. The big scene at the climax of *The Lady from Shanghai* [1947]: [*Pause*] I find myself in a state where it's not that I'm confusing the real and the imaginary; it's that, chasing after each other, the two have become indiscernible. Which one is the real person? Which one is the mirror image? I don't know. Not just me, which wouldn't be so bad—the

lawyer doesn't know. Hence the famous shootout, and how does that turn out? The glass shatters, as does this game of mirrors. The glass, the mirrors, is about much more than… What is it? What I'm saying is that these mirrors offer us a veritable electric or electromagnetic circuit, where the real and the imaginary chase after each other, to the point where they lose all possible discernibility, up until the glass breaks.

Ah, but if only! We'll have to see whether… Whether this is just speculation. But what if we're right? Aren't we onto something crucial? Where is the line between the real person and the mirror image? Between representation and modification? Between real and imaginary? They've become indiscernible but not just under any circumstances — in the context of this hall of mirrors.

Right. What's going on? What would this zone of indiscernibility between the real and imaginary be? It'd need to be a kind of formation where one side is the real and the other side is the imaginary. You might think, hold on, that's exactly the same as the form of the true. Indeed! But this time I don't need a form: *a formation*, I said, a formation where the side facing the real and the side facing the imaginary start to circulate such that it's objectively indiscernible which is real and which is imaginary. It's no longer an organic form, no longer the organic form of the true. [*Pause*] Both of this formation's sides—or its n sides, since of course it seems like it will have n sides—not only do they run after each other, are each reflected in each other, to the point that [*pause*] I no longer know and can no longer know, as an objective principle of indetermination, a principle of indiscernibility, which is real and which is imaginary.

My name for this, as opposed to the organic form of the truth, my name for this would be a "crystalline formation" – I'll explain my word choice later on – "a crystalline formation." I'd argue that the crystalline formation refers back to the power of the false, just as organic forms refer us to the form of the true. And then I'd define, like, like… I'd claim that yes, there are crystals or crystal-images, and these crystal-images are coalescences of the real and imaginary such that one can no longer objectively distinguish which is real and which is imaginary, [*pause*] almost, you could almost say, with all that about mirrors, that what we were looking at was a crystal.

Then to rephrase that in terms of images, it's as if from an optical perspective—and crystals are relevant for talking about optics—as if, from an optical perspective, you had a system of mirrors or what in optics they call "the actual image" and "the virtual image," circling around in a way such that you can't tell, even theoretically, which is which. Alright. We could just as easily say that a crystalline formation is the coalescence of an actual image and its virtual image. [*Pause*] Alright. Anyway, I'd say that this is the principle of indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary.

Alright, we can move on now that I have a definition for the power of the false, which, see, no longer consists in confusing the real and the imaginary. The power of the false or the falsifier is now defined as what constructs crystalline formations. If God is a fraud or falsifier— an idea which certain philosophers didn't shy away from — if God is a falsifier, it's because he makes crystalline formations. If God is truthful, it's insofar as he makes organic forms. [*Pause*] Not

sure, but… The devil is the one who makes crystalline formations, that must be it! [*Laughter*] That's all I got. But we're not done, not just yet.

As for my third comment: it's that, right, so we've defined the crystal-image [*pause*] as the indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary. [*Pause*] Women in the 19th and into the 20th century, women had these albums where they'd get others to sign and leave a note, typically something sentimental—young girls, but sometimes even married women. And so men competed to write in these sorts of guestbooks. Great poets never passed on the opportunity. Whenever they went out—the poets who didn't go out, obviously… But Mallarmé himself loved it; he has some splendid verses that were written in notebooks, so much so that I'm certain some of Mallarmé's poems will never see the light of day, tucked away in the notebooks of young women. Which is a shame, because it was a lot like jazz, you really, you really had to know—it was improvisation at its purest—you had to know the right thing to say for the occasion; it was terrific, an incredible act of poetry. [13]

But Victor Hugo did that a lot, and it was beautiful, really beautiful. All of the ones I've read were splendid; he was really inspired. And so a lady, a lady asked him to write a few lines of verse in her—Valéry also did this a lot; it was a great time to be a poet—look it up in the Pleiade, there are some—in the collection the Pleiade put out—there are some wonderful examples of poetry of circumstance from Mallarmé. There are these women attending a ball, women dancing or who've come there to dance… wonderful. And Victor Hugo wrote, for one of the women who asked him, Victor Hugo wrote in her album. And I was really struck by it, I don't know why, I think it has such a beautiful rhythm, it really left an impression on me when I read it, I have a vague memory of it, I read it when I was around 17 years old – and I have a lot of trouble reciting poetry by heart – this one has stuck with me; I've never had to look back at it; maybe if I do, I'll find out that I'm getting it all wrong! [*Laughter*] And I don't remember where I found it, but I swear, I promise… It's real! [*Laughter*]

You know, in Orson Welles's film, *F for Fake*, the conceit is that, for one hour, no lying, no telling tales. The viewer thinks, *phew!* And then these huge lies start to appear, Orson Welles takes out his watch and says, "It's been an hour and twenty minutes since I said…" It's been twenty minutes; the viewer didn't realize that the lying started back twenty minutes ago. But since the period of truth was no less deceptive, it tracks.

So what he said, what Victor Hugo said to this woman, was: "the emerald in its facets"—the emerald in its facets—"hides a bright-eyed mermaid, the viscountess of Cette"—the woman's name was *c-e-t-t-e*—"the viscountess of Cette, had sea-green eyes." [14] It's a blue-green color. In Homer, famously, Athena had sea-green eyes. I don't know if this pattern, which is actually… It's a very clever format; I can't even call it a song, I thought it was an incredible format, which doesn't obviously come down to the number of syllables. "The emerald in its facets / Hides a bright-eyed mermaid / The Viscountess of Cette / had sea-green eyes." She must have been pleased to get such a great poem. [15]

And well, I'm latching on to the first two lines; I bring it up because I need the two first lines: "the emerald in its facets hides a bright-eyed mermaid." What is a crystalline formation good for

if not hiding something within? There's obviously something inside. That goes without saying. You cannot have a crystal-image without "something" within, which we can see inside. It's defined by the coalescence of the real and the imaginary. But what do we see in the crystal? That necessarily leads to the question: what is it that we see in the crystal? [*Pause*]

And well, in providing for the coalescence of the real and the imaginary, it has suppressed both the real and the imaginary, there is no longer a real or imaginary; they're indiscernible. What can we see? We can no longer see anything but a series of modifications which are just as much representations of each other. We can no longer see anything but a series, a series of modifications which are at the same time mutual representations, alright then! We need to dig deeper; that's not good enough! Well, one attempt: the crystalline formation refers not to the false, but to the power of the false.

But what exactly does "the power of the false" mean? There is no "power of the false." There might be truth, [but] there is no "power of the false." Power as such only exists as a series of powers: [*pause*] the first power, the second power, the third power, the n-th power. Potentialization only exists as a series of powers. It's not that there's power one, and then power two, and then power three. That's not what we're dealing with. Moreover, it points us to differential calculus, even from a strictly mathematical point of view. There are more complicated definitions, but one simple definition for differential calculus would be: it's what allows an absolutely necessary comparison between different quantities of power. The notion of power is inseparable from that of differences in power. [*Pause*] Okay.

My response, see, I'll provide a few responses in a row, each with its own payoff. What do I see in a crystalline formation? What do I see in the emerald? I see the bright-eyed mermaid, Viscountess de Cette. Well, okay, I see it, but the Viscountess, the mermaid—what is the mermaid? Uh, the mermaid is metamorphosis; it's a perpetual state of metamorphosis. Hold on! As is often noted, the yacht in *The Lady from Shanghai* is named *Circe*, famous in Homer for her metamorphoses. This is what we see on the boat. Hold on, does that mean the boat in *Lady from Shanghai* is a crystalline formation? Ah, maybe, I'm bringing everything together to… if anyone knew how to demonstrate that a boat, if anyone saw boats, despite appearances, as disturbing crystalline formations—it was Herman Melville. Okay, let's not get ahead of ourselves. [16] [*Laughter*]

In a crystalline formation, I see a series of modifications where each one is the representation of the next. There's an indiscernibility between representation and modification. I see something real in each, I see a reality in one, and the unreal of the next. In other words, I can only see it as a series. Let's take it further. Which of the crystalline formation's series refers back to the power of the false? The series that I see in the crystal can only be a series of powers. It's like mathematics.

A third point—and this is minor. If the power of the false appears in crystalline formations in the form of a sequence of powers—the first power, the second power… up to the nth power—then the fraud or falsifier comes through in the crystal. The falsifier appears in the crystal, yeah, it must be. Besides, they wouldn't be a falsifier if they—who made the crystal—if they didn't

appear in the crystal. Obviously, they show up in the crystal. But the form in which they appear in the crystal isn't the same as when they made it, when they constructed it. What form do they take when they appear? As the *"n*-th" power? We have no idea. There is a lot we need to go through before we'll be in a position to say. What's more, wouldn't it be surprising to find a truth-teller in this sequence of powers? Meaning, wow, that the truth-teller is nothing but a power of the false. Now that would be a treat!

And isn't it something along those lines… — this is pretty far removed from Nietzsche, but then again, we're building a sort of hodgepodge, a collage—isn't this somewhat similar to one of Nietzsche's best lines: "the truth-teller"—that is, the truthful man—"always ends up discovering that he's only ever lied." Doesn't that mean that he always ends up seeing himself in the crystal, what he had taken to be an organic formation? And he, the truth-teller, he belongs as part of the sequence of powers that appear in the crystalline formation. Right! And the falsifier, too. Which means: falsifiers only exist as series. [17]

We'll have to come back to this, only next time I'll be able to move more quickly. We've gotten a rough and ready understanding, at least. To quickly explain why falsifiers can only exist in sequence: it's because, when it comes to "the" character of "the" falsifier, the only way I can think to define them would be as whoever makes crystalline formations coalesce. Because with crystalline formations, the falsifier ought to show up in the series of powers that appear within, which I see in the crystal; the power of the false consists in a sequence of falsifiers, then. Where I wouldn't even be able to tell which one is the falsifier—In what way? How do I mean?

This is where Orson Welles shines, and no doubt one of the most brilliant moments in *F for Fake* is when he gives us three frauds—the biggest fraud being the one we think is the most honest, someone truthful—he presents us with: the American billionaire, the journalist who wrote fake memoirs, and the art forger. And it seems that the one who's got everyone is obviously the billionaire, and for good reason, he's a famous billionaire who's had impersonators, who no one's seen for fifty years, and in the end, maybe the poor journalist wasn't the one who faked the memoirs; maybe the real billionaire gave him false information, or maybe it was someone impersonating the billionaire... and so on. This series of modifications, where each is the representation of another modification, is the series of powers of the false, which raises the question: which one is the highest power? Let's call the last power—if it exists—the Great Swindler. Right, the great swindler. "The metaphysical scumbag," alright, the metaphysical scumbag. [18] [*Laughter*]

But is there one? I said that we can conceive of *a* truth-teller, a single truth-teller, but what about a falsifier? Oh no, falsifiers can only exist in a sequence. I couldn't say that everyone is a fraud. I can claim that everyone is wrong, strictly speaking. That's part of the classical understanding of truth. I can no longer even say "everyone"—here I'm dealing with a series of powers. I can compare them thanks to differential calculus, if necessary. There are series of powers of the false. I can't even say "all"; I can't say that "all" falsifiers only exist sequentially. They don't exist as a group; there isn't a set of all falsifiers. There is a series of falsifiers. A series is irreducible to a set. I can't talk about the last false; what I can do is use a little "n" [x^n], the *n*-th power, and call the *n*-th power the Great Swindler. But where is this Great Swindler?

That all sounds pretty bleak, but it comes with a major consolation. It's that these frauds aren't all equal; not all frauds are equal, and once again, we come back to a bit of Nietzsche. Nietzsche never thought that anything and everything was the same. No, things aren't equal. It's not the same. "Fake" obviously isn't used in the same way in the case of a poor journalist writing fake memoirs for a fake man—we don't even know whether he met with an imposter or with the real deal—and what Welles is signaling when he titles his work *F for Fake*. He quotes Picasso: "I'm perfectly capable of painting fake Picassos." Obviously, a fake Picasso made by Picasso is different from when someone else makes a fake Picasso. What's more, Picasso copies. What do I mean by copy? Velázquez. Bacon copies—what does it mean to say that he copies Velázquez? I could always say… Does that make them all falsifiers? No, not at all, it's clear that the power of the false, to the extent that it develops in series, will lead us to powerful figures who are far removed from the baser powers of the false.

When Nietzsche discovers the power of the false, or the will to power, he observes that there are lower degrees of the will to power. For example, for Nietzsche, wanting power [*pouvoir*] is an instance of the will to power [*puissance*]. But it's actually the weakest [form of the] will to power. Right. Thus, the will to power has different degrees or levels. Someone copying something already made, that might not be the power of the false, or it's one aspect of the power of the false, of course. There's a series of falsifiers. There is a series of falsifiers to varying degrees. What happens when we introduce the idea of value into that of crystalline formations? I mean in the sense of a, a to the first power, a^2, a^3 … we'll have to see. Nietzsche will be a big help; hence why, right, I bring it up today. We'll leave it at that for now because we're already running late, and we just started, and I want to check whether you've followed me thus far, if you understand.

I will say that at this point, I'm getting a little ahead of myself because I haven't demonstrated it yet, but to just give you a general idea, I want to say, see: what you see in the crystal, this power of the false—what is it, ultimately? What I'll try to show—I definitely haven't demonstrated it yet, so for now it sounds arbitrary. But to give you an impression of what our work this year will be like—what I'll try to show is that these powers of the false, strictly speaking, are accents or aspects, granted that we have to justify these two terms—accent and aspect—accents and aspects of time. What we see, what we see in the crystal, are aspects or accents of time. [*Pause*]

Hence there's a fundamental relationship between time and this series of powers of the false. [*Pause*] Let's suppose—but it'll be a long time before we get there, I'm just trying to give you a birds-eye view, again, of what we have ahead of us—if that's all fine, if I was able to demonstrate that, [let's suppose] that what we see in the crystal is much like what someone famous said, a famous writer: "a bit of time in its pure state."[19] "A bit of time in its pure state"— you can only see it in the emerald, in the crystal. You have to make yourself your crystal. Which doesn't mean blocking out the world, oh no, not at all. Because you'll also need to shatter your crystal; the crystal will need to be broken down, and thank God, God saw us coming, he's subjected crystals to extremely interesting processes of decomposition, hence why it's so important for you all to bury your noses in a crystallography textbook.

Well, if that's the case, if what I see in the crystal is time, like some sorcerer—a sorcerer is just another fraud. What makes them a fraud? We'll see whether they're a fraud. A fraud doesn't just mean someone who fools you, oh no. There are those who—some frauds do try to fool you, but other frauds do something very different. Right, so with Orson Welles's frauds, okay then. If he said it, he said it, that's not why he gets mixed up with… He has a clear understanding of his own genius. Alright, then, what was I saying? If that's the case, if it comes down to accents of time, aspects of time, it's only ever a sliver of time in its pure state, since I can never get a hold of the entirety of time in its pure state. In its pure state, I can only ever ask for a bit of time, and then a bit more, and a bit more…

I could describe crystals sort of like seeds. Whatever crystallography textbook you choose will also cover so-called "seed crystals" [*germe cristallin*] and how they're different from "organic seeds" [*germe organique*]. They're seeds of time, or put more simply, to borrow a phrase used by Guattari (though in a different sense): these crystals, these crystalline formations, are "crystals of time." I'd call them crystals of time—these coalescences where the real and the imaginary are indiscernible are what I'd label "crystals of time." Why "crystals of time"? Because what we find in this formation is a bit of time in its pure state, in the form of a series of powers. Alright. Okay? Good. [20]

That's where we are so far. It's gotten a little abstract. We need it to be a bit more concrete. Next time, I'll go over some stories, starting with the most beautiful: the one Melville tells in *The Confidence Man*, on the condition that, obviously, on the condition that, at the very least, it supports our framework. I'll gloss over any passages that don't back us up, [*Laughter*] if it does back us up, I'll cover it in class.

Any comments? Any questions or concerns? None? Thank you so much… Yes! You had something?

A student: Huh?

Deleuze: You should have… [*End of the session*] [2:09:26]

Notes

[1] We should point out that the session listed on Web Deleuze as the seminar's first session on Cinema III (dated November 2, 1983) corresponds to the first session of the *previous* seminar, Cinema II, on November 2, 1982. The second session listed on Web Deleuze corresponds to the first session of the third seminar.

[2] *Faussaire* could also be "fraud," "forger" (as in Tomlinson and Galeta's translation of *The Time-Image*), "deceiver," "conman," etc. "Forger" and "falsifier" do a good job of describing someone who tries to pass off a "fake" as "the real thing," with "fraud" additionally accounting for someone who tries to pass *themselves* off as being "the real deal." Both "fraud" and "falsifier" will be employed in these sessions.

[3] See *La légende socratique et les sources de Platon* (Bruxelles: Fondation universitaire de Belgique, 1922).

[4] "The true" is an admittedly awkward turn of phrase in English. An English-speaker might distinguish between a "real" versus a fake designer bag, a "true" hero as opposed to an imposter. The following discussion about the true and the form of the true should be read in that context.

[5] We try to avoid any gendered language in translating *l'homme véridique* (and "truthful person" felt unnatural). A "truth-teller" or "straightshooter" is contrasted with a fraud, imposter, or forger.

[6] On Worringer, see session 3 of the seminar on Painting (April 28, 1981), session 3 of the seminar on Cinema I (November 24, 1981), and session 14 of the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque (April 7, 1987).

[7] Part of this discussion—especially what follows—roughly corresponds to Chapter 6 of *The Time-Image,* "The Powers of the False".

[8] *Translator's note:* For clarity's sake: in all that follows, "power" should be read primarily in terms of "capacity," "ability," "capability," and *not* as a synonym for "strength." The "power of the false" implies that, even if a fake lacks a true form, it can still *do* something or has an *effect* (not that the false is "powerful" as one might normally say in English).

[9] Starting with the first chapter of *The Time-Image*, Deleuze elaborates on indiscernibility in several places. For the power of the false, see Chapter 6.

[10] Deleuze offers another version of this Nietzsche quote (without citing his sources) in *The Time-Image*, p. 139: "with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world."

[11] Alain Robbe-Grillet, *For A New Novel: Essays on Fiction,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove), p. 153.

[12] Robbe-Grillet, *For A New Novel: Essays on Fiction,* p. 153.

[13] On Mallarmé and the poetry of circumstance, see sessions 9 and 11 of the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque, February 3 and March 3, 1987.

[14] *Pers* is an archaic French term for a blue-green color.

[15] Both quotes of Hugo's poem, "What Gemma thinks of Emma" (in the posthumous collection *The Whole Lyre* [1889]) are a little off: the second line ends "bright-faced mermaid," and line four: "had sea-green eyes."

[16] On the crystal-image in *Lady in Shanghai*, see *The Time-Image*, pp. 73-74.

[17] On "the truthful man" [here: "truth-teller"] in Welles, see *The Time-Image*, pp. 137-138. As for the Nietzsche quote, although Deleuze alludes to *Beyond Good and Evil* in this context in *The Time-Image*, the former does not contain this exact quote.

[18] For the series of falsifiers in *F for Fake,* see *The Time-Image*, p. 145.

[19] Proust in *Time Regained.*

[20] In *The Time-Image*, p. 295 no. 25, Deleuze credits Guattari for this term, citing *The Machinic Unconscious.*