

## Gilles Deleuze

### On Cinema: Truth and Time: The Falsifier, 1983-1984

#### Lecture 3, 29 November 1983 (Lecture 47)

Transcription : [La voix de Deleuze](#), Una Sabljakovic or Fofana Yaya, with revision and correction by Alice Haëck (Part 1); Marina Llecha Llop (Part 2); Abigail Heathcote (Part 3); supplementary revisions to the transcription and time stamp, Charles J. Stivale

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*[We note that the order of the three parts of this seminar, both at Paris 8 and WebDeleuze, is confused, because the transcription of Part 1 is missing (or rather is found under the heading 46-22/11/83-1, i.e., it is included in the preceding session) while Part 2 appears twice; with the help of Marc Haas, we have established the order corresponding to the recording]*

#### Part 1

This is very easy because I only have stories to tell you. But you must be kind enough to follow these stories, otherwise you will understand nothing afterwards. Okay. Now, we have two small acquisitions for the time being, namely: first acquisition, the hypothesis of a formation which we will call for the sake of convenience ‘crystalline formations’, and which would be defined by an indiscernibility, an indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary, of the physical and the mental, etc. *[Pause]*. These crystalline formations thus defined by indiscernibility are distinguished, are opposed to, on the one hand, the form of the true, the organic form of the true which, for its part, implies the possible distinction of the real and the imaginary, and on the other hand, are distinguished and opposed to the false as it is effectuated in error which, for its part, is defined by the confusion of the real and the imaginary. But we have already sufficiently insisted that when we were talking of an indiscernibility of the two, this was not at all a confusion.

Our second point is that, in the crystalline formation, in the crystal, there is something there. There is something which is visible, but this visibility in the crystalline formation does not refer to a simple vision and solicits another function in the eye that we provisionally called ‘clairvoyance’, the function of clairvoyance. And in this function of clairvoyance which thus grasped something in the crystal, in the crystal image, what was the ‘something’ that was grasped? It was a strange procession, like a kind of procession which would turn in the crystal, in the crystalline formation, and which appeared to us, still in terms of image, like the procession or series of falsifiers, that is to say, the power of the false such as it appears in the form of plurality, of the multiplicity of powers – power one, power two, power three. And still under this clairvoyance, our eye despite its hesitation said to itself: is there not in this series of falsifiers such as I see them, is there not, is there not even the truthful man too? Isn’t the truthful man himself one of them?

We therefore have two levels: the crystal-image, what can be seen in the crystal-image, and we had gone a little further, saying: wait, that could become interesting for us because at each level ... to the first level will correspond a whole art which is that of description. To the second level will correspond a whole art which is that of narration. Fine. But on one condition, on one very important condition for description, which is that I am able to

distinguish two forms of description, two types of description. And indeed, we have seen that there are in effect two types of description. There is a description which I call for convenience – all this can only be justified later – which I call for convenience ‘organic description’. And then there is another description which is ‘crystalline description’. Good.

Therefore, the crystalline formation refers to a description, to a type of description, the crystal description, crystalline description. This crystalline description is very different from organic descriptions, and it is distinguished from them in two aspects. I would say that organic description is first of all a description which ‘posits’. It is what will be called in philosophy a ‘thesis’ of description. It is a description which posits its object as independent of it, which specifically *posits* its object as independent of it for a simple reason – because it makes no difference if the object really is independent or not. Let’s take a novel, a novel by Balzac, where you find a description, a description of a milieu, a description of a place, a description of a house. It matters little whether this house exists, that is to say, that Balzac has relied on a particular model, or whether this house does not exist outside of Balzac’s novel. The description is itself an organic description to the extent that it *posits* its object as independent. It matters little whether this independence is effectuated or not effectuated. I would say of such a description which posits its object as independent, which supposes the independence of its object, I would call it organic description.

I say, on the contrary, that we will call crystalline a description which tends to replace its object, to substitute itself for its object, and we have seen this. Robbe-Grillet proposes to us a status for this new type of description through which he will define a whole element of the new novel. It is a description which, instead of referring to a supposedly independent object, that is to say, instead of positing its object as independent of the description itself, is a description which substitutes itself for its object, that is to say (he tells us), which simultaneously and in the same act, erases it and creates it, erases it, effaces it, effaces it and creates it. So that this description is literally an infinite description, since in so far as it erases the object, it will never stop recreating another one *ad infinitum*, in an operation in which I never efface the object without creating another object, or without making variations of the object, etc. So here we can see clearly that there are two very different types of description.

Second possibility, second distinction between the two types of description that we have come across. I would say that organic description – and this will come in useful later – is what distinguishes, it is what distinguishes the real and the imaginary under the following species: it distinguishes the real and the imaginary in the following fashion, namely that according to it, the real is what persists beyond the description or beyond consciousness. The real persists beyond the description or extends beyond consciousness, whilst the imaginary from the point of view of organic description – so you can see the step we are making – ... Organic description does not eliminate the imaginary. It distinguishes it from the real in so far as the real is supposed to continue outside consciousness, to be confirmed outside the description, while the imaginary is defined by its pure presence to consciousness.

And last time I commented on a text by Bergson in this (fundamental) regard, which was to serve us for the other type of description, the crystalline description. The crystalline description is, on the contrary, a description for which the imaginary does not prolong itself outside consciousness any more than the real itself. [*Pause*]. And the real is no less fully present to consciousness than the imaginary itself. [*Pause*] So much so that under all these aspects crystalline description presents itself as the circuit of the real and the imaginary, a circuit in which the real and the imaginary never stop reflecting each other and running after

each other. And its status is in fact outlined very well in some pages by [Jean] Ricardou, another proponent of the new novel, who I read to you [last time]<sup>1</sup>, in the form of how in the new novel, for example, a real scene can *project out* of an imaginary painting, or inversely, a real scene can suddenly *freeze* within an imaginary painting or what is taken as such. Good.

As for the other aspect – what we see in the crystalline formation, that is, the stage of crystalline description as distinguished from organic description – the other aspect: what we see in the crystal, this time, is the object of narration, no longer of description. And in the same way, we distinguish two types of narration: truthful narration, which is based on what? The ‘decidability’ of the true and the false. Just as organic description was the discernibility of the real and the imaginary, organic narration is the decidability of the true and the false. And one must above all not confuse the two. It is not at all the same. And what would we oppose to it? The ‘falsifying’ narration, ‘falsifying’ narration, which was defined, this time, by the indiscernibility of the true and the false. [Pause]

What is the criterion of this decidability or undecidability? We saw last time, it is ... there is decidability of the true and the false as long as a relation can be stated between the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement in a proposition. [Pause] Suppose that we are in the condition where there is no longer an assignable relation between the two. [Pause] There you have an undecidability, an undecidability that can be expressed in the most concrete form. At the same time, one no longer knows at all who is speaking. There is no longer someone, there is no longer someone who speaks – undecidability of the true and the false – there is no longer someone who speaks and one no longer knows what they are talking about. It is the collapse, the double collapse of the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement.

Good, well, all that works, I suppose it works. We find ourselves before an ensemble, and what interests us is this: how do crystalline descriptions finally undermine organic description, how does falsifying narration undermine truthful narration? And today what I have to tell you is a series of stories. This has all become rather familiar to us, which is to say that even if you ... I mean, it’s a matter of feeling, but we are quite spontaneously swimming in these relatively new narratives and descriptions. I mean, it’s become for us a kind of way ... [Deleuze does not finish the sentence].

I would like to give an example of that. A recent film. I will not give a value judgment. It’s *Faux-fuyants* [*Subterfuge*]<sup>2</sup> [1983] by [Alain] Bergala. I guess it doesn’t matter that some of you have seen it, and others haven’t seen it. I tell a story because I have need of it. And my question is: but why do we feel so at ease in this genre of stories? I take the example of a film which, whatever its qualities, cannot be wholly original, because we have been immersed in these kinds of narratives for quite a long time. There are certainly novel things in the film, but that is not what I take from it. I would say, it is precisely because it is an example which comes after so ... Why would that work today? Why is it ...? Well, here’s the story.

It is called *Faux-fuyants*. All right, that’s interesting to us. It participates in the cinema which invents the power of the false. However, it is not the first. And what does it tell us? Everything starts with a hit-and-run.<sup>3</sup> It all starts with a hit-and-run. Someone crushes another person and runs away. That’s what the image shows us, someone in a car knocks down another person and flees. I would like you to feel the difference between the organic world and the crystal world. Good. It could well be part of what one would call a realist narrative. Someone runs someone else over and flees. And then the film develops. The film develops

itself. In a word, the guy, the man who runs someone over, goes and finds out who his victim is. He learns that his victim has a daughter, a young daughter, and he becomes close to the girl. He frequents her, he revolves around her, but we don't know what he wants. It seems like he doesn't want anything. As [Jean] Narboni says in that regard when he reviews the film<sup>4</sup>, he says that it is very, very close to the atmosphere – for those who like this author – it is very close to the atmosphere of [Witold] Gombrowicz, in particular of *Pornografia* [1960]. One could say that he is fascinated by immaturity, as Gombrowicz said, eh? So, he hangs around this girl, he really clings to her, he is clingy, but he does not ask her for anything, no, nothing. He is there, he is there, as if he were looking; he prowls around, he sniffs around. Some images show him sniffing books. Yes. You know, these are characters which are familiar to us. Why is there so much talk about people like that all the time? It's very curious, all that.

But throughout the course of the film and all this prowling, I reckoned nevertheless that there are actually eight – this is how I see it, but one might see more – eight hit-and-runs that take place, and in more and more bizarre forms. So, there was a first hit-and-run, which appeared to be the first. And this almost participates, I would say, in description, truthful narration. Truthful narration would begin like this: there is a hit-and-run which is primary, a first event. But when the hit-and-run goes on to have all sorts of repercussions everywhere, the question arises in our minds: was it the first or not? What can be said to be 'first'? And for my part, yes, I count nine, yes, nine, nine. I don't know what you reckon. But for those who haven't seen the film, I don't want to go into it too much, because ... [*Deleuze does not finish the sentence*].

I'll highlight some of them: the first is when this character flees after knocking someone down in a hit-and-run. But then, attracted to the daughter of the victim, by this young girl around whom he prowls, he himself flees his marital home. So, he redoubles his hit-and-run. He does it again, second hit-and-run, [*Pause*] and all that, in order to install himself close to the girl, near to where the girl lives. Thirdly, the girl, she finds him rather likeable, she doesn't understand, but she doesn't really care to understand. He's there; she says, yes, he's quite nice. He proposes to her that they go away together. He proposes that they go on a little holiday, and then at the last moment, he backs out. Third hit-and-run. Of course, the 'hit' is not the same; he gives her a firm rendezvous and then he doesn't go. Third hit-and-run.

Fourth hit and run. The girl, she does baby-sitting to earn money, and she is babysitting a very sad little child who is going to commit suicide. He will run away from life by killing himself. Another hit-and-run. Once the child dies, the mother, who is mad with grief, begs the young girl who had looked after the child, who had watched over the child, she begs her to come and talk about the dead child, in order to talk with her about the dead child. And the young girl breaks down and runs away: fifth hit-and-run. Sixth: the father of the child cannot bear his wife screaming and the idea of the dead child and runs away from his own home. Sixth hit-and-run. Seventh: the young girl's boyfriend punches the main character in the mouth and leaves. And the other, whining, telephones the young girl, saying, "Your boyfriend punched me in the face and then fled." The dialogue insists strongly on this sixth hit-and-run ... No, on this seventh hit-and-run.

Eighth hit-and-run, we'll see, is the stepfather, the stepfather of the young girl – she has a stepfather – the stepfather of the young girl corners the weird main character and says to him: "I was with the victim, I saw you, and I saw you hit him, so you're going to get the hell out of here and leave the young girl alone, or else I'm going to tell the police". And the other

answers: “It was you who pushed him under the car” [*Laughter*]. The first one is really annoyed and says that it’s a lot of garbage. Maybe that’s true, but we don’t have to think about that, it’s not interesting. Because this would be another hit-and-run which now puts the first into question. What was the first hit and run? Was it the flight of the one who would have pushed the victim under the car, or is it the flight of the driver? But, anyway, that’s eight now.

Nine, last hit and run. In the tension between the character who revolves around the young girl and the stepfather, there is a strange skiing episode where the stepfather is diabetic, and he has a crisis; he gets his box of sugar out of his pocket, goes to take the sugar, he wants to eat it, etc. And then, the young girl – it’s her stepfather – there’s the young girl with a friend of the boyfriend, a young friend of the boyfriend who – here, the images are very beautiful – makes the box fall to the ground, and they start crushing it with their feet, scattering the sugar into the snow, thus condemning him to death; they then leave the scene. Last hit-and-run. And they go to telephone the weird main character: they have committed a hit-and-run that joins up with the first. But what was the first?

If it was just that, it would not interest me that much. We can say that it’s a good film, but we can’t say that this mode of storytelling doesn’t call to mind many other examples of modern narrative. It is a type of modern narrative. I am not saying at all that it copies Robbe-Grillet. I’m saying: Robbe-Grillet passed through the same thing; there was Robbe-Grillet, there was a certain cinema, that of Resnais; there were lots of things going on. There was the new wave. What I mean is that this is a post-new-wave film. Yes, okay. It is a film that we feel in certain respects is heir to the new wave. Fine, that’s fine. But it is curious that there are some episodes that induce a kind of reverie.

You see, what I’m going to call falsifying narration is – as opposed to a truthful narration – it’s these hit-and-runs which never stop backing each other up, and which are ultimately going to be so many powers of the false, revolving in the image, so many powers of the false, hence the title: *Faux-fuyants* – all is *faux-fuyant*. There is no hit-and-run which is the first. There is a series of flights which are connected to one another and which form, under the power of the false, the series of flights, that is to say, false flights. Good. Therefore, the opposite of a veridical narration is a falsifying narration.

But what interests me are the curious episodes that punctuate all these hits-and-runs that echo each other. Now the guy is bizarre, this Gombrowiczian hero. He seems to have a taste ... he’s so clingy that he telephones the girl all the time. He telephones all the time. Even when she is looking after the little kid, even when she does her baby-sitting, he telephones. He telephones her to say what? “Describe the apartment to me.” One even thinks it’s a little forced, eh? And the girl has the air of finding that absolutely normal. She says: “Well listen, I’ll try, you see, so you see [*tu vois*]” – she talks in the modern style, “*tu vois*.” And in fact she doesn’t have many words at her disposal. She’s truly a modern girl. [*Laughter*]. She doesn’t have many words. “*Tu vois*”, and here the image is cinematographically interesting because it is framed. We see a little bit of the apartment, with her on the telephone, stuck in a little corner. And as she describes what she sees, she passes out-of-field. One does not see her. She ... “*Tu vois*, there’s a kind of wall hanging here, a kind of wall hanging in red, is it velvet?” Maybe it is, we don’t know. She goes on describing. First case, first case.

Second example. There may be more that I haven’t noticed. The guy, the clingy guy, says one day to the young girl: “Listen, if you don’t mind, can you go to the cinema this evening?” –

it's a suburban cinema – “Go to the cinema this evening and you'll see. I will come with a woman.” She says: “Er, why would I go to see you at the cinema with a woman?” He says: “No reason, can you just do it?” She says: “Oh well, if you want.” And we see him arrive, queuing at the cinema with a woman he knows very little, who has no importance in the story. And she looks at him, and that's it. So, there you go. And she has understood something, because then she does the same thing to him. She says: “Hey, he likes that. Good, very good.” And she says: “Listen, walk up the street on such a day, and you'll see me passing by with one of my girlfriends.” He says: “Ah, yes, good, very good.” And he walks up the street on that day, and he sees her passing by with her friend.

So you can see, chopping up this series of falsifying narrations, all these powers of the hit-and-run echoing each other, you have three moments of description, descriptions which are literally descriptions that are only valid for themselves, what I called last year – but we will come back to this theme in another way – purely optical and sonorous descriptions that have no prolongation in action, which have no motor prolongation, which define no action: pure descriptions. So, you find a rhythm here, [with the narration punctuated by] descriptions for themselves, which in the end have no importance for the action, pure optical-circuit descriptions, [*Deleuze corrects himself*] – optical-sound, [*Pause*] which I could call crystalline descriptions which themselves constitute their own objects, which do not refer to a supposedly independent object. I would say that this is a case of that; I could just as well have been talking about a novel by Robbe-Grillet where you have the alternation and intertwining of crystalline descriptions and falsifying narrations.

Okay so now it's time to touch on the example, on the problem we ended on last time. It is that here, we encountered a raw problem, that is to say, I call a problem 'raw' when we come up against a problem that has not been prepared for beforehand. There are two cases of the problem ... [*Interruption of the recording*] [30:39]

... [the problem] not prepared for. Now the problem we weren't prepared for that we came up against at the end of our two last sessions is extremely simple. Supposing that this story of the powers of the false to which we have devoted two sessions, supposing that this story of the powers of the false works, I mean, that it is indeed like this: how does one explain that it is the same authors who develop the series of the powers of the false and who come up against, in the purest sense, the problem of time?

And I was saying, let's go back to the examples of cinema that we've commented on, to content ourselves for the moment with cinema, let's go back to the examples of Welles, Resnais, and I would say incidentally also Robbe-Grillet. How does it happen that these authors [*Pause*] posed in the same movement and in a fundamental sense both the problem of time in the image and the problem of the power of the false of the image? That cannot be all the same by chance. How to explain that the cinema of time in Resnais is inseparable from the powers of the false in the form of the hypnotist or in the form of the great swindler, Stavisky? How to explain that Welles who, once again – I will only be able to justify this later – seems to me to be the creator of an image which must be called the 'time-image in cinema' and to have been the first to make direct time-images, how to explain that Welles is at the same time the one who interrogates a relation that can be supposed to be fundamental between cinema and the powers of the false, between the image and the powers of the false? Is time here the development of series, of the series of the powers of the false? Is time *the* power of the false as such and what does that mean? What would that mean, something like

that? What relationship is there between the false as power and time? Good, well, we find ourselves coming up against that. What relation between the power of the false and time?

It is starting from there ... You see, we made some progress all the same in our two first sessions. We progressed; once again we were preparing a problem, and then we came up against another. Everything is going well for us. It's very good news because we were preparing one problem, then we came up against another, and it is perhaps stumbling against another which will allow us to resolve the other, to resolve the first. So today, once again ... [Pause] I'm going to do rapid return ... but don't worry. Today I have only stories, little stories to tell you. I have told one, but I've got some more to tell. So, for you, it may be quite relaxing, or it may be unbearable. That means, if you don't like stories ... [*Deleuze does not finish the sentence*].

We have talked a little about cinema, and we have talked a little about the novel in what went before; we talked a little about Melville. We will rediscover him, Melville, because I will rely on him a lot this year. I remind you that what I'm trying to do is to bring together the set of directions of research I've presented, that I've proposed to you ... Fine, but we have not talked much about philosophy. So, the time has come for a slightly more philosophical story, and I'm going to say something very simple. It is not complicated. If we were seeking a relation, why time is immediately related to and raises the very problem of the power of the false, the answer must be sought from philosophy. Only it can give an answer like that. Obviously, it is because time is most profoundly put into question in the concept of truth. And here, I'm really saying something quite infantile. Time ... Let us begin a philosophical story, it's still a little story. It is as delightful as the story of *Faux-fuyants*. It's obvious that time is the most profound putting in question of the concept of truth. Why?

I can at least say why not. You could say to me: oh, yes, I see what you mean. It means that over time, the truth varies. Over time, the truth varies. Yes, the truth varies in time, in space too, there is truth in one country, truth in another country ... Yes? No. Is that what is meant? Obviously not. That's of no interest. Why? Because it concerns the *content* of the truth. You can say to me, at such a place and at such a time, this was believed to be true, and then at another time and at some other place, something else is believed to be true. I say that that only concerns the content, it is a variability in the content of truth. No interest, nothing to draw from that, then. But it's obvious that ... What is important?

I would moreover say that one remains in the content of *truth*, one stays in a simple true-false relation. We do not raise ourselves to the problem of the power of the false. What counts, is what? It is the *form* of time, it is time as pure form, it is time as pure and empty form. It is not what happens *in* time; it is time as pure and empty form, which is the putting in question of the concept of truth. So, this has much more to do with philosophy. It is no longer a question of giving examples of how the truth would change in its content over time. It is a question of articulating the form of time as empty and pure time. Perhaps it does not exist, something like that. It is the form of time as empty and pure time that calls into question the concept of truth. In what form? [Pause] Well, in the simplest form of the line of time, of the pure line of time in so far as it involves a present, a past, and a future, whatever they be. I am no longer interested in the content at all.

In that case, the crisis of the concept of truth does not date from yesterday. It begins with philosophy itself. It begins with philosophy itself, why? Because everything goes well as long as the truth concerns what is called in philosophy 'the essences', that is to say, what is

subtracted from time. Truth will be defined as the universal and necessary. No problem. When does truth experience its fundamental crisis? When one claims to apply 'true' to the domain of the existent, that is to say, when one confronts the notion of truth with the form of time.<sup>5</sup>

This confrontation comes about very quickly in philosophy and gave rise to a problem from which philosophy has never emerged, which is quite essential to it and which it loves very much, and which has received the classical name of the problem of 'future contingents.' The problem of future contingents is the expression for the little story that marks the confrontation of the form of time and of the concept of truth, and the misfortunes that come out of it for the concept of truth. Indeed, in other words, what can it mean to say 'truth of existence'? Are there truths of existence? There's the nub of it.

And the story begins with the Greeks, with the old Greeks, the ancient Greeks. There will be a naval battle tomorrow.<sup>6</sup> This statement is in the mode of the possible. There may be a naval battle tomorrow. There may be no naval battle tomorrow. Good, you will tell me, so what? Well, this is what one calls a 'future contingent'. Will there be a naval battle tomorrow? Good, very good. Why do we already feel that the trouble is on the way, wholly philosophical troubles? Why do irritations break out for the philosopher? There is plenty of trouble in the air, because I can say: imagine everything that can happen. So, a philosopher turns up and says: "Ah, no, hang on. There is no question of applying the principle of contradiction to this kind of proposition." The principle of contradiction tells us of two contradictory propositions, one and only one of which is true, [*Pause*] what exists, that is to say, the future contingent.<sup>7</sup>

There will be a naval battle tomorrow, there will be no naval battle tomorrow. If I talk about what is necessary – if I can get away with talking about what is necessary – then it is the alternative [itself], it is the either/or. And we know, even if one doesn't know much about ancient philosophy, we know certain ancient philosophers, not least, for example, Aristotle, will be partisans of this solution. What is necessary is the alternative between the two propositions. [*Pause*]. That's it. That's all. It is either one or the other.<sup>8</sup> Both are possible. Only the alternative is necessary. Otherwise, it's a catastrophe. Why is it a catastrophe? Because it introduces a fantastic exception. It introduces a case where the principle of contradiction is not applicable, the principle of contradiction for which, of two contradictory propositions, one and one alone is true.

It's truly infantile, isn't it? But this is indeed philosophy, it's like that. It's annoying. From the moment that you apply truth to the existent, you are blocked from taking a further step; you find yourself already in a state of embarrassment and irritation. One can always say: the existent has no truth. Yes. This is all the same most irritating. We are very unhappy if the existent has no truth. And anyway, from the moment one makes a step into the existent, from the moment that I say "there will be a battle tomorrow", behold, the sky falls on my head. That is to say, I can no longer apply the principle of contradiction. Unless what? Unless I try to renounce the false solution, I renounce this species of hindsight that consists in saying only the alternative is true. I will try to maintain, as a Greek philosopher, I will try to maintain that the principle of contradiction is valid even for propositions of existence. Namely that of two propositions, one is necessarily true and one alone is necessarily true. What am I going to do? My other stories are going to be simpler. This one is the most difficult. But at the same time, it is not that difficult, just follow me closely.

Suppose a philosopher .... Let's see. Of two propositions – there will be a naval battle



tomorrow and there will not be a naval battle tomorrow – which is true? Well, for the moment, we do not know, and that’s a matter of a lack of knowledge in us. But that is not the important thing. We can wait, and say, we will learn whether or not there was a naval battle. And we can say: if there was a naval battle, and the time of tomorrow becomes today, the naval battle has taken place. I would then say: the proposition ‘there will be a naval battle tomorrow’ was true, and only this latter was true. This might well start to get tiresome. It is indeed that, but the Greek philosopher who launches into this has some surprises in store for us. He says to us, when the event has taken place, when the event ‘naval battle’ has taken place, it has definitively taken place where it has taken place. And when the event, the naval battle, has taken place, the proposition has become necessarily true, changing modality. We move to the past: there was a naval battle. But this is a necessarily true proposition. [Pause] It makes impossible, you understand, it makes impossible the other proposition, the contradictory proposition, that there was no naval battle. Good.

But it’s all still a bit irritating. Apparently, I have saved the principle of contradiction by saying that one of the two positions and only one is true, that which takes place, because when it takes place, it is necessarily true. Okay. But what do I have to sacrifice? At what price, at what price have I just saved the principle of non-contradiction? At a crazy price. [Pause] Because when I had my two possible propositions – there will be a naval battle tomorrow, there will not be a naval battle tomorrow – both were possible. But only one, one alone, is necessarily true. The one which says that there has been a naval battle. [But then] the other is necessarily false: that there was no naval battle. In other words, it is impossible. If it is necessarily false, it is impossible.

Catastrophe. From the possible has come the impossible. From the possible has come the impossible. I cannot apply, I cannot save the principle of contradiction by applying it to only one of the two propositions. The demand was to save the principle of non-contradiction. I cannot save the principle of non-contradiction without contradicting the principle of non-contradiction in another form: namely that from the possible, one cannot derive the impossible. From the possible the impossible is derived. If the principle of contradiction is applied to the truth of the existent, that is to say, to the form of time – the passage from the future to the past, this is the form of time – then from the possible, you will derive the impossible, it’s a catastrophe. You have saved the principle of non-contradiction with one hand, and you lose it with the other hand. Unless you make every effort to show that, yes, from the possible the impossible can follow. [Pause] But that will be difficult. How can the impossible come from the possible? It is contradictory. But it would be necessary to show that this is not contradictory.

And we know, as far as we can know anything in this domain, that an old philosopher, one of the first Stoics, maintained this paradoxical thesis, ‘from the possible comes the impossible’. And we know his name; we know that he was called Chrysippus. It was the great Chrysippus, only a few of whose books remain [in fragmentary form]; the contents of these books, however, are reported to us by others and most often by his enemies; some lines are reported to us by an enemy who is moreover from a much later period. Not only on the enemy side, but on a side that is far distant in time; we find reports in Cicero’s *On Fate*, in his book entitled *On Fate*, and also again from a member of the Stoic school, who is therefore quite sympathetic, but still from a much later period, Epictetus.

So, what could Chrysippus be saying when he maintains the paradoxical thesis ‘From the possible comes the impossible’? We have only one piece of information given by Cicero.

Chrysippus gave an example, an example of a sorcerer, that is to say, an example of a soothsayer. He said: well, yes, from the possible comes the impossible, and you can see this well. The soothsayer said: “one who is born at the rise of the Dog star” – very beautiful story – “one who is born at the rise of the Dog star will not die at sea.” That might not be very moving for us, but one feels that for the Greeks, it was very, very important to know who was going to die at sea. It continues the story of the naval battle. Chrysippus said, or would have said: “if someone is born at the rise of the Dog star” – possibility – “he will not die at sea” – impossibility. You see, from the possible comes the impossible. We say to ourselves: no, no. There is no need to analyse it much to say that we feel that something is wrong here. Something is wrong somewhere, why is he telling us this? With the absence of the text, the texts have all disappeared ... but Antiquity never stopped pursuing this question. And all the discussions turned around an argument or paradox that was well-known in Antiquity and which was called ‘the Dominator’ [or ‘Master Argument’]. The Dominator, why the Dominator? Not at all because it was more important than other ancient paradoxes, but because, you see, it posed the question of knowing whether acts performed or undergone tomorrow are dominated by the principle of contradiction, and therefore by necessity.

And a historian of philosophy, Pierre-Maxime Schuhl, has attempted to reconstruct, by way of the remaining testimonies, the reasonings of Antiquity in this regard, in a very curious little book called *The Dominator and the Possibles*. *The Dominator and the Possibles*, good. You feel that on the side of Chrysippus, there is all the same something that ... And we learn that another Stoic, also from the old Stoicism, from the first great generation of Stoics, another Stoic took up the problem from the other end, still with the aim of saving the principle of contradiction. See, you’ll follow.

First case: when the truth (taking this up again) ... when the truth confronts the existent, that is to say, the form of time, first possibility: it is forced to renounce the principle of non-contradiction by saying that only the alternative itself between the propositions, only the alternative itself between future propositions is necessary. This is very boring. There are serious drawbacks which, once again, limit the principle of contradiction, that is to say, ask for a trivalent logic. Logic will not be a bivalent true-false logic, but a trivalent logic true-false-possible. Probable, marked by verisimilitude. So that’s a bit worrying.

Second possibility: to save the principle of contradiction. By what trick? To say: the true proposition is the one whose event takes place, because the past is necessarily true. One has saved the principle of contradiction. [Pause] [But] catastrophe, we are faced with a paradox. It would be necessary that from the possible could come the impossible.

Then the third combination you can come up with yourselves. To save the principle of contradiction, but how? By denying that the past is necessarily true. And that is the position of a very great, I believe, a very great Stoic philosopher of whom alas we no longer have any texts because all that has disappeared, and who was called Cleanthes. No longer Chrysippus, but Cleanthes. It seems that in the Stoic school there was the Chrysippus tendency and the Cleanthes tendency. And this Cleanthes said to him [Chrysippus]: “No, no, no: from the possible never comes the impossible.” So he said Chrysippus was wrong. Which meant: me, I take the other path. Not that they argued. “I take the other path. What I am going to show you is that the past is not necessarily true.” And indeed, this was another way out. But how could the past not be necessarily true? According to what we’ve been told, Cleanthes managed to get away with it too, for better or worse, but in a very interesting way. He distinguished the necessary and the fatal... [Interruption of the recording] [59:28]

## Part 2

... He said: “Well, yes, the past” – what is past – “is fatal, but it is not for all that necessary.” In this, he was performing a task, a true philosopher’s task. He invented a curious distinction, a curious notion; he said: “Yes, everything is fatal, only that does not mean that everything is necessary.” What difference does this make? Go and follow it up. It is assumed, and it can indeed be assumed – by cross-checking with certain Stoic doctrines that are reported to us from right to left, through biases, all that – that this was an extremely profound doctrine. I feel very attracted to Cleanthes, much more than by Chrysippus, who botched his move here.

What they called necessary was the relations between bodies, the relations between bodies. The relations between bodies were governed by laws. Namely, a law was a relationship between an action and a passion, between an acting body and a suffering body. All the relations between bodies were governed by .... All the relations between the bodies were necessary. [*Pause*] In other words, the whole set of corporeal actions and passions was necessary, obeying laws.

But here it’s about whether there is a naval battle, or there was a naval battle, or there will be a naval battle, it doesn’t matter. A naval battle, of course, implies bodies; it implies a boat, bombshells, sailors, oars. All that is bodies, and it is governed by necessity: the body of the sailor agitates the oars in a certain manner, the oars are passions – that is to say, bodies which undergo – the body of the sailor is active – he makes the oars move; between the two, there is necessity. But no matter how much you add boats, bombs, sailors, oars, etc., that does not make a naval battle, because a naval battle is not simply a collection of bodies. It is what? It is something of another nature than bodies, or it implies – of course, there are bodies which intervene –, but it implies something very particular, which we will call ‘event’.

And an event, it is not a body. An event is an effect of the actions and reactions between bodies. So that at the limit, Cleanthes, this philosopher, proposed a distinction between two domains, with a common surface: actions and reactions between bodies, on the one hand, and events as effects of these actions and reactions, but effects of another nature. The naval battle was an event, in the sense that it was the effect of a set of actions and reactions between bodies. [*Pause*] Events had between them autonomous relations – an event could be linked to another event – even though they were all effects of the set of the actions and reactions between the bodies. Do you see? The relationships between events, or the event itself, were to be called ‘fatal’; the relations between bodies – actions and reactions –, were called ‘necessity’.

Therefore, the past event is not necessarily true, it is fatal. “And it is”, he said – he invented this beautiful notion –, “it is confatal” – confatality – “it is confatal with other events.” Good. Cleanthes, one feels here that he had a kind of genius, Cleanthes: he took the problem from the other end. In order to save the principle of contradiction at the level of the existent – that is to say, in order to reconcile truth and time – he had to deny that the past was necessarily true. In other words: he took the opposite way, that is to say, in relation to Chrysippus, he saved the principle of non-contradiction in another manner, and he put it in question in another manner. At the same time as saving it, he put it in question once more, for it was to put it in question to deny that a proposition bearing on the past was necessarily true.

Where does all this lead? Well! Could we not – but just casually, without trying to get anything major from it – add to our (currently) two definitions of the falsifier? Let's see where they take us, eh? Two blind definitions .... It is even better if you don't understand what they mean. But we have no choice! We say to ourselves: if there is a falsifier, it's that. I would say: the falsifier is the one which, from the possible, makes come the impossible. [Pause] And I would say: the falsifier is the one which, from the past, makes something which is not necessarily true. [Pause]

But wait ... My first falsifier, wouldn't he be a bit of a forger-conjuror? My second falsifier, isn't that a hypnotizing, magnetizing falsifier? After all, to leap across the centuries, doesn't *Mr. Arkadin* [1955, *Confidential Report*, film by Welles] have something to do with this story? I don't know, yes, maybe. In any case, marvel of marvels, let us praise ... let us praise the Greek gods, for here we are now with four definitions of the falsifier or the power of the false. It's more than we wanted, since we don't even understand them. [Laughter] But it's fine, we are forced ... – which proves that we cannot say 'false' here – we are forced to articulate propositions whose meaning we ourselves are ignorant of. I mean: ourselves – all of us.

I say: first definition of the falsifier: he is the one who constitutes crystalline formations, as opposed to the truthful man, who is the organic man of the true. The fabricator of the crystalline formations, here, is the falsifier, as opposed, once again, to the great creator of organic form. The great creator of organic form, everyone knows who it is, it is God. The fabricator of crystalline formations, everyone knows who it is, it's the Great Swindler [or Confidence Man]<sup>9</sup>, [Pause], to speak like Melville.

Second definition of the falsifier: he is the one who has passed into the crystal under the form of the series of the powers of the false. [Pause] That is to say, this time, it is no longer the man of crystalline description, it is the man of falsifying narration. In a narration, one no longer knows who it is who is speaking, nor of what he is speaking. There we find all the avatars of the Great Swindler. Unlike God, the devil must himself pass into his own creation. This is a condition, a condition of the power of the false.

Third definition of the falsifier: the one who makes it so that – I repeat – from the possible comes the impossible. Fourth definition: the one who says or makes as if the past is not necessarily true. [Pause] That means a lot to us! So that now I need to tell you three stories. Three stories! It will also be necessary for me to tell a further three stories – I assure you: we won't spend the whole year in stories – but here I need – today, and a little more next time – I have to go through my stories, because they are very important for me.

I'm going to tell three stories, this time, to be precise, taking one from classical philosophy, an admirable story by Leibniz – the great philosopher of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century, a very beautiful story by Leibniz; and a very beautiful story from a modern narrator who everyone knows, [Jorge Luis] Borges. Good. But you know – everyone knows – that Borges is a man who read a lot, and who read a lot of philosophy. He is very important for the problematics of modern narrative, but his philosophical culture is also very large. He is a great reader, is he not? And he's such a great reader that he knows Leibniz as if by heart. You see, I would like to try to shift between a narrative from Leibniz and a narrative from Borges in order to show you what happens between the two of them – granting that Borges does not need to say that he is inspired by Leibniz. And then between these two, to put something else, because although he is a philosopher, a novelist, a narrator, and very cultivated, very

cultured, he is not from the domain of the popular novel, Borges, so I would like to add a popular novelist, a popular novelist who wrote a novel so strange, so bizarre that it has been said ... (– but in the end, I don't want to say that he had already invented what Robbe-Grillet would go on to do – no, that's not my idea at all), the sort who wrote serial novels, and who is very well known, called Maurice Leblanc.

Maurice Leblanc is the creator ... There are two men of genius in the 19<sup>th</sup> century popular novel: there is the great, immense Gaston Leroux, inventor of Chéri-Bibi and of Rouletabille, who has a great style and is one of the greatest authors of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And then there is Maurice Leblanc who is usually very inferior, except in one case, where it seems to me that he set himself, in fact, the task of something similar to Gaston Leroux. And this little book has been republished, it's a tiny little novel. He is the creator, Maurice Leblanc, he is the creator of Arsène Lupin. But in a little popular novel which has nothing to do with Arsène Lupin, which was republished in *Livre de poche* a few years ago, there are 150 pages which appear quite extraordinary to me, I will tell you why. This novel is called *The Extravagant Life of Balthazar* [*La vie extravagante de Balthazar* [1925]].<sup>10</sup> And if you agree not to carry out the exercise with the aim of pretending to conclude that the *nouveau roman* is already in there – an idea which would be stupid – [*Laughter*] if you find the right way to read it, you will be struck by a popular novelistic technique which all the same suggests that, if Robbe-Grillet recognized himself in certain precursors (for example, Raymond Roussel), he has just as many reasons to also recognize Maurice Leblanc as a precursor. Okay. So now I must tell you the three stories.

And the first is obviously, assuredly, the most beautiful (although all three are beautiful) – it's Leibniz's story of the wretched Sextus [Tarquinius], a figure from Roman history: Sextus [*Deleuze spells it out*]. It's in a great book by Leibniz, the *Theodicy*, Part Three.<sup>11</sup> And the story, we're going to have to ... It's very complicated, very complicated. Why does Leibniz feel the need to give it this complication? Why? It would be good to have a reason! We will start with the simplest thing: how do we define Sextus? Here, it is necessary that you follow closely. A great philosophical text! – My course has been, for ten years, a commentary on philosophical texts. I comment on texts of philosophy, that's it! – How do we define Sextus, the Roman? We define him in the following manner: he is the one who asked the Oracle of Apollo – it is our right, [*Pause*] to give a definition –, he is the one who asked the Oracle of Apollo what would happen if he goes to Rome. There, that's a definition of someone. It is what we would even call a nominal definition. And we would even say ... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:16:36]

... this text, his correspondence with [Antoine] Arnauld, another thinker of the period. Leibniz takes a related example which is more familiar to us, that of Adam.<sup>12</sup> And he says: how to define Adam? Adam. A purely nominal definition that does not tell us what he is, but which allows us to distinguish him from others. Here, I could proceed by the question-answer method. Here you must find, for Adam, you must find ... because, in this case – it is a very specific case – there is only one possible nominal definition of Adam which allows us to distinguish him from all other men without saying anything about what he is. It is enough for me to say: Adam, he is the first man. Here, I have the means to distinguish him from all the others. You see, I start from a nominal definition: Sextus went to ask Apollo what happens if he goes to Rome. You see, this is all of the order of time, isn't it? I am already right in the middle of my problem, and I continue to be in my problem of future contingents, that is to say, the confrontation of truth with the pure and empty order of time.

So, I have my definition of Sextus or of Adam. But then, Leibniz says, some things happen, and it is no longer a question of Apollo. Jupiter's daughter welcomes the high priest. Jupiter's daughter is Pallas. – We'll have to go back over all that, I'll repeat it in a moment, because it will add a peculiarity at the level of Leibniz's narrative. But he has calculated his effects well, for the great philosophers are very great writers. It's as sophisticated as a story by Robbe-Grillet, this story by Leibniz, I assure you. – So, it no longer concerns Sextus and Apollo. Strangely, at the end of the text, it is the high priest Theodorus who poses questions to the daughter of Jupiter, Pallas. *[Pause]* And Pallas says to him: come, I will take you to my father's marvelous palace ... if you don't sense Borges arriving at a gallop here ... *[Laughter]* – I'm going to take you to the marvelous palace of my father. Theodorus is an old man. He is the old soothsayer. Pallas says to him: come and look at my father's palace. I'm not following the order of the text, because the text is really quite difficult. So let me start with the easiest. *[Pause]*

The palace of the father, of Jupiter, has the form of a pyramid, and this pyramid is finite at the summit – it has a summit –, but infinite at the base. *[Pause]* It is open at the base. You have your pyramid. *[Pause]* And in this pyramid, there are all kinds of apartments, all kinds of apartments, into which one finds one can see. I conclude from this that these apartments are made of glass, and of the noblest glass, that is to say, are made of crystal. I conclude from this that these apartments are crystal-images. *[Pause]* And in each of these apartments, Theodorus, old Theodorus, sees through the glass a Sextus, a Sextus, but a different Sextus in each case. *[Pause]* He sees an infinity of Sextuses since the apartments have no end. There is indeed a summit of the pyramid, but there are an infinity of apartments descending below. And in each one a Sextus acts, but he acts differently. And Pallas says: "Look! Here is a Sextus who goes to Rome."

What do they have in common? You will say to me ... But let's go back to the essential point: what do they have in common? What makes me say: whatever the differences, it's always Sextus? Just like for Adam I would say: it is always Adam? If the character is conserved, it is still the first man. In each apartment, there is a sign: the first man. Or there is a sign in the case of Sextus: the one who went to ask Apollo what would happen if he went to Rome. And beyond that, in the apartments, you see lots of different Sextuses. In one case, we see one who has gone to Rome, who committed violence, who raped a woman, who was banished, who was hounded out of Rome, and who died in misery and shame. Well, that is precisely the Sextus who existed, it is the real Sextus. But we do not know why. It does not prevent that in another apartment, there is a wholly different Sextus. He went – it was indeed Sextus, I have the means to recognize him – it was indeed him who went to enquire at the oracle. Only, coming out of the Oracle of Apollo, he says to himself: no way, I'm definitely not going to go to Rome. I'm going to stay put. There he goes, then – you can see him through the skylight, one can see him doing everything: this is the crystal-image, is it not? It's fantastic. We can see him – Look, here he is going to a town – it's Pallas who is speaking – she says to Theodorus: See! Look! Here he is going to a town placed between two seas, resembling Corinth. He buys a little garden there. Cultivating it, he finds a treasure; he becomes a rich man, loved and considerate. He dies in old age, cherished by the whole town. Well, well.

Another case: now there's a third Sextus. He has passed – we're still with old Theodorus – he has passed into another apartment, "and lo! another world, another Sextus" who, once again issuing from the temple of Apollo, has remained composed, and who, leaving the temple of Apollo, "having resolved to obey Jupiter, goes to Thrace. There he marries the daughter of the king, who had no other children; he succeeds him. He is adored by his subjects. They

went into other rooms, and always they saw new scenes.”<sup>13</sup> You’ve got to admit that what delighted us so much about Borges’ earlier work is also being beautifully conveyed here by Leibniz. So, I’ve got an infinity of Sextuses, each in an apartment, each in a crystal-image. It is a Sextus.

For Adam, I would say, it is the same thing. Adam, first man. You have an apartment where he has succumbed to temptation. God told him – just as Apollo warned Sextus – God told him: you shall not eat of the fruit. I have a world, I have an apartment where Adam has not eaten the fruit: he is happy, he does not work, he has many very wise children, etc. [Laughter], and he has remained in full agreement with God. I have another apartment where he eats a piece of fruit, and he immediately spits it out. [Laughter] God said to him: oh no, but God forgave him. Half of his children were good and the other half less good. [Laughter] But it worked out in the end. This is a second apartment of Adam. Then a third apartment where he has eaten the fruit, where he has revolted against God and one of his children has murdered the other. And where he had to work. And where the assassin is pursued, embarking on a long, long, wandering. This is a third apartment of Adam. There are an infinity of possible Adams, just as there are an infinity of possible Sextuses. This is what Leibniz has thrown us into.

You feel that he is putting this whole scenario together – it’s a very funny thing, this whole play, this whole theatrical representation – because he needs it as machinery to take up the problem of future contingents once again, and in fact ... But, in fact, in fact, what is going to happen? This is where the text begins to be difficult. You see, I can say, my pyramid, well, at the top, there is only one apartment, right at the top, only one apartment that is itself pyramidal. Whether the pyramid is divided into an infinity or even into a honeycomb of cells, whatever you like, in every case it terminates in a point. The pyramid is wedded to its summit, the highest apartment. Now this is that of the real Sextus or Adam. Why? Why is the apartment of the real the highest? Ah! This is a problem that cannot yet be answered.

And then, below, there will be all the cells that you want, all the crystal-images, all the crystalline formations, *ad infinitum*, since there are an infinity of them, of possible Sextuses or of possible Adams, in addition to the real Adam and the real Sextus. Then, there is the passage, the difficult passage, in which Leibniz tells us: pay attention, in my story of the pyramid, you have to distinguish two points of view. [Pause] It is splendid, he says, my father, my father, that is to say, God, Jupiter – Pallas says – my father “comes sometimes to visit these places, to enjoy the pleasure of recapitulating things and of renewing its own choice.”<sup>14</sup> Observe this disquieting God here, who comes to look through all the formations, all the possible Adams, all the possible Sextuses. Let us go further: all of each of our possible selves, us too, we are also in the shot, we too have our infinity of rooms in which we agitate.

Leibniz says to us: there are two cases. [Pause] First case: you are given the nominal character of Adam or of Sextus, and then you determine a point, a consequent point. You determine a point which is a consequence, a possible consequence. This point that you determine is the case, if you like, of the determination of *one* single point, according to Leibniz.<sup>15</sup> You have determined one point and one alone. This point, let us say, is: Sextus, in spite of the announcement, in spite of the Oracle of Apollo, goes to Rome. You determine a single point. [Pause] Leibniz, who is a mathematician, says to us: but you know, it’s like in a function, you know very well that it is not enough to determine a point, and that there are an infinity of points which fall in the same place. There are an infinity of points which fall in the

same place in the geometrical sense. For example, in order to define a curve, an infinity of points fall in the same place.

In other words, you have taken a point: Sextus goes to Rome, he defies what Apollo tells him, and goes to Rome. But that only gives you a point of what? It only gives you one point of a world. There are also an infinity of other points, an infinity of other points which are surely linked with each other, but which are not given to you there. What can it be, the infinity of other points? Let's jump into the paragraph. I give myself ... Let's even give ourselves many points: he eats the apple, he listens to the serpent, he eats the apple, God is angry, condemns him to labor, he will have two sons, one of whom will assassinate the other, etc. You see, I can give myself many points. But there are plenty of points that I do not yet give myself, and which nevertheless fall in the same place, that is to say make up part of the same world, make up part of the same world, that is to say: are in the same formation, namely, that long after, Christ will be incarnated for our redemption, a theme fundamentally linked to original sin, and which belongs to the same world, which belongs to the same dwelling. If you want a more profane example, okay: Sextus goes to Rome, he commits his acts of violence, his abominations, he dies, unhappy, murdered, etc. But what will this be? It is notoriously the case that in the succession of the kings of Rome, this will be one of the conditions for a Roman Empire to rise, a Roman Empire which will make the law of the world, and which will ensure Roman peace, the universal *pax Romana*.<sup>16</sup> Are you following me? And that makes up part of the same world. Good. [Pause]

So, there I was like a simpleton looking at Sextus moaning in his apartment. What I didn't see was that it got more complicated in Leibniz's schema. Because there is a book.<sup>17</sup> It's splendid, this. There is not only Sextus, making his comedy there in his apartment, along with all the other Sextuses who make other comedies in their apartments, all at the same time. Rather, if I look more closely into the apartments, in each apartment, in each one, there is a book. And then there is a number written on Sextus' forehead, so that the conditions start to become enormously complicated. There is a number written on his forehead. I look at the number, I see for example 2430 on Sextus' forehead. And I refer myself to the book – but I've got to be careful and not mix them up – to the book, which is in this apartment, I don't take the book of the neighboring apartment. – What on earth would happen otherwise? Try to figure out already what would happen. That would no longer be Leibniz, it would be Borges. That would not be the same. And nevertheless, and nevertheless, would that change anything much? I'm not sure –.

Good, in any case, I take the right book. I make no mistake. There was 2340 written on Sextus' forehead, and I look up page 2340 in the book. And I come upon the life of Sextus. But in the rest of the book, there is everything that is part of the same world, of this world where Sextus went to Rome despite Apollo's interdiction, despite the Oracle of Apollo, where he raped the woman, was banished, etc. There are other things besides: there is the formation of the Roman Empire, there is the birth of Christianity, there is ... everyone is in there, the whole world in there.

You will ask me: "but what are the relations between all those things?" Leibniz replies: Well, what defines a world – only you cannot know it, because you are weak human beings, and as weak human beings, we will see why we cannot know it – but, what defines a world, what is it? It is the continuity of the series which compose it. Or, to take a more technical term, since Leibniz is a mathematician, it is: the convergence of the series which compose it. And whether you understand it or not, it doesn't matter since we humans have only a finite



understanding, no matter. What constitutes the coherence of any world is the convergence of series which compose it. This is a mathematician's response. A world is made by a convergent series or by a set of convergent series. *[Pause]* But that can't be seen! Then, we ... Old Theodorus, let us suppose he says: "Well, this cannot be seen at all!" Well, no, but it is in the book. It is in the book, because in the book, you have taken Sextus as an example, you have asked to see Sextus in the apartment, with the number 2340 etc., but there was a number 1. If you had asked for number 1, you would have seen Adam, and he is part of the same world as that Sextus. And you would have seen everything in between, and you would have realized that this world was a convergent series. Ah, I say, that's good, it's made of convergent series, good, so if I had the great book, in each apartment, I would realize that each world, each apartment, each book, describes to me, details to me, narrates to me, this series, this set of convergent series. Good.

But after all, I say, that is not obvious. Why does God hide it from us? I live in a world that to me seems completely chaotic, where there are ruptures, etc., and the response of Leibniz's God, the response of Pallas, daughter of Jupiter, is very beautiful, it's very convincing: it's because if the series developed themselves and manifested themselves in their very convergence, it would be very monotonous. The world would not have a diversity capable of singing the glory of God. So that in order to make the world sing his glory, God breaks the series, he mixes one series with another, he plants one part of a series in another series, in the convergent series. Because the condition only operates with convergent series. But he places us in a labyrinth. He places us in a labyrinth, and to re-establish the labyrinth is to find ourselves again and reconstitute the convergence of the series. For example, says Leibniz, between one event and another, it might appear to us that there is a gap, something is missing. Well, it might take ten years for the event which would fill the gap to be produced. He fills it retroactively; this is the coquetry of God. He planted ... each world is composed of converging series, but God mixes them up so that we have impression of a discontinuity, which makes for the diversity of the world. That's one case, good. I would say: a world is defined by a set of convergent series, even if this convergence does not appear.

Second case, so that you can better understand the text. In the first case, I remained in a specific apartment, *[Pause]* and I simply said: in a specific apartment, there was not just Sextus having done this or that, there was the whole set of a world defined by a system of convergent series, simply convergent series whose continuity had broken apart; it was necessary to re-establish it, it was necessary to rediscover it. Second case: but why several apartments? Why so many apartments? Why several? Well, it's that I can very well take ... you remember, I am sticking with the same primary characteristic of Sextus or Adam. The primary characteristic is, for Adam, the first man. For Sextus: he went to ask the oracle what would happen if he went to Rome. That fits all the possible Adams and all the possible Sextuses. Yes. *[Pause]* But then I took a secondary characteristic that defines an apartment. Secondary characteristic: leaving the Oracle of Apollo, Sextus nevertheless goes to Rome. And I said, that defines not only a Sextus, but a whole world of which this Sextus is a part, a whole world constituted by convergent series, since the Roman Empire is going to converge with the royalty of Rome, etc., etc.

I go to the other apartment. It suffices for that that I take a secondary characteristic which is opposed to the first secondary characteristic of Sextus. If I take a secondary characteristic of Sextus which contradicts the secondary characteristic I have just considered, namely the secondary characteristic I considered of Sextus going to Rome, then instead, I consider: Sextus does not go to Rome. You will say to me that this is merely negative; he has to go

somewhere in particular. He goes to Corinth, or else he goes to Thrace. I have two other apartments. But the same rule holds. In these two other apartments, there are two books of the totality of what there is in the apartment. And what there is in the apartment, and what is marked in the book, is a world defined in its turn by other series submitted to the condition of convergence. They converge with each other. These are other worlds.

There is therefore an infinity of possible worlds. There are so many possible worlds where Adam does not sin, sins in another fashion, everything, everything you can conceive of, the whole of the imaginary, and there are an infinity of possible worlds where Sextus always only has in common to have gone to ask Apollo, but after that, in one he goes to Rome, in the other he goes to Corinth, or in the other he goes to Thrace; or he kills himself after leaving [the temple] ... anything you like. Simply put, each of these possible Sextuses makes up a part of a possible world subject to the law of the convergence of its own series. And mathematics, Leibniz being a great mathematician, mathematics helps us to understand. Just as the convergence of series can define a function, the convergence of series can define a world. So there you are. There is therefore an infinity of possible worlds.

Only here, only here, and you will sense why I need ... in this regard, Leibniz gives himself over to inventing the craziest concept, the strangest that philosophy has ever produced. Each of these worlds is possible, only these worlds are *impossible* with each other. These worlds are impossible, that is to say, each of these worlds is possible, that is to say, it is not contradictory. You see, he is in the process of saving the principle of contradiction at the level of future contingents. What will Sextus do, what will Adam do? But what an effort he had to make, and what a funny, totally quirky notion he is forced to invent: impossibility. An Adam, an Adam who would not sin, a Sextus who would not go to Rome, it's possible, that has nothing impossible about it. It is simply, you see, it is simply that it is *impossible* with the world, with the real world. It is impossible with the real world. So that is an advance for us: why? What will define impossibility? We already know. For my part, I find that the commentators on Leibniz – I have already said this once before, because we were occupied with Leibniz a few years ago<sup>18</sup> ... to define impossibility doesn't seem as complicated as the commentators say; it is very rigorous, this notion. It is not at all a mystery in the abyss of God. Impossibility for Leibniz means the divergence of series. Where series diverge, worlds cease to be compossible. That is to say, each remains possible in itself, but they cannot be possible with each other. The compossible is subject to the convergence of series, so a world, each world, is constituted of compossibilities. Two worlds are distinguished because each is possible in itself, but they are impossible with each other. Why? Because the series of one diverge with the series of the other.

I believe that the whole theory of the possible in Leibniz is subordinated to mathematical notions drawn from the theory of functions such as it is elaborated by Leibniz, the mathematical series of convergent series and divergent series. I mean: a technical argument that I would draw upon because as a mathematician, Leibniz pushes the furthest, for his time, the theory of series and their conditions of convergence and divergence. Nevertheless, alas, he does not apply it directly to the compossible, which is a shame. A shame, since it seems obvious to me that this is the compossible and the impossible.

Therefore, two worlds are impossible when the series diverge. So, an Adam who would not have sinned, it is possible, it is not at all contradictory, it is not like two and two make five, it is a truth of existence, that Adam sinned. The contradictory of a truth of existence is perfectly possible. [Pause] Everything is possible, it's just that not everything is compossible.

An Adam who would not have sinned, it is possible, but it is not compossible with our world. Then you will say to me, but why did God choose it all the same? Here Leibniz is waiting for us, as you might suspect. Leibniz is waiting for someone to ask him exactly that. Why did God do that then, and why is Leibniz laughing? Why did God choose the world in which, after all, Adam sinned, Sextus violated a woman and was expelled from Rome, all that, all those are miserable stories, aren't they?

And Leibniz lets fly his formula, so marvelous that I imagine it makes him laugh himself – we have to imagine Leibniz's laughter, and not to think he is some kind of idiot, eh? God chose the best of possible worlds. What does that mean? This is why he chose the highest apartment of the pyramid. [*Laughter*] But what is it, what determines the highest position of the pyramid? It is the world which, considered in its totality, contains the maximum quantity of reality. The greatest weight of reality, that is to say, the greatest weight of being, the greatest weight of being, of reality, the greatest quantity of reality, as it is imagined in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He chose the greatest quantity, the world that contains the greatest quantity of reality. Very good, very good.

But then, what does that mean? You can complete it yourself. Obviously, Adam sins, that's tough; afterwards, we are all under the influence of original sin. But the redemption, the redemption, that is not nothing. You cannot separate original sin from the redemption. You cannot separate Sextus and the abominations of Sextus, from the Roman Empire. You will point to the Roman Empire, and you can also point to the redemption, and say, you're just being tempted by the devil, that's all. [*Laughter*]. Or else, you will admit that the world is ..., that out of all the possible worlds, God chose the world which contained the greatest quantity of reality. The other worlds were possible, but they would have let through a lesser quantity of reality, a lesser weight of being.

What is Leibniz in the process of doing, if I summarize everything? I now join up with my story of the Stoics. It is not by chance that I needed to pass via the Stoics. You know, the 17<sup>th</sup> century, what one calls the classical age, is the opposite of a calm age. First, no one has been able to establish the slightest difference between the classical and the baroque. The classical is the baroque, and the baroque is the classical, so that, far from being a calm age, it is the age which encounters what? Which encounters infinite trouble as a result of the question: how to maintain the idea of a truthful God? And this is the great crisis. This is one of the great crises, if you like, an intellectual crisis, of the kind for which we have lost the taste, we have lost the secret. But they find themselves in a situation, and why do they find themselves in a situation? It is the great crisis of the idea of a truthful God. Everything collapses, everything collapses. It's beautiful to have Louis XIV, but all that collapses. How to maintain a truthful God? For those who have read a page of Pascal, you know what that means, in effect, along with the climate of anxiety, and why?<sup>19</sup>

It is not so much (because sometimes this is said) that the world shifts its center. It's not at all because we realize that the Earth turns around the sun and not the sun around the Earth, that's not it, it's much worse. Michel Serres has shown it very well:<sup>20</sup> it is because we enter into a world that has ceased to be centered, and because as much in science as in mathematics, as in geography, etc., the notion of center is everywhere being put into question. And because within that, the question of a firm point to be re-established, of a center of gravity, in the true sense of the word, of something to hold onto, the notion of center undergoes an absolute transmutation. I'll come back to this later on, this is what happens in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: it is

that the center ceases to be a center of gravity, in order to become nothing more than a center of perspective.

And one is obliged to find salvation in an elaboration of centers of perspective, and one will tremble at it, and the entire world will tremble at it. And mathematics will have to make a theory of the center of perspective under the name of ‘analysis situs’, and it is not by chance that Leibniz is the creator of an ‘analysis situs’. And in the mathematics of Pascal, the same thing, there will be a perspectivist mathematics, with the theory of conics and sections, of sections of the cone, of conic sections, which will launch the theory of perspectives and shadows, all that. The center can no longer be a center of gravity, one has to save oneself for better or worse through an ordination, an organization of centers of perspective. And you can see that the whole text of Leibniz we’re talking about is a perspectivist text, fundamentally perspectivist. You understand?<sup>21</sup>

And Leibniz’s solution, how to save ... Bear in mind that in the *Meditations*, Descartes will pass through two hypotheses, from the beginning of his text, but two hypotheses which are insane – I don’t know, let’s just say that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, they would have been seen as insane, and would have been filed straightaway in the history of sorcery: the hypothesis of an evil demon and the hypothesis of a deceiving God. Might there not be an evil demon who deceives us, and if that weren’t enough, might there not be a deceiving God? And we may come back to these two texts, because the evil demon and the deceiving God in Descartes are not the same thing but express well – they are not at all the same thing, there is a ratcheting up, the deceptive God is worse – they express well the same crisis of the idea of a truthful God.

So how is Leibniz going to extract himself from that? By creating his perspectivism of worlds, of worlds, all these worlds possible in themselves, but impossible with each other, such that God must place himself in a point of view, the point of view of the best of possible worlds, in order to allow to pass through that which has the greatest quantity of reality. God, as Leibniz will say in another text, has a cylindrical perspective. Formidable text. Whereas we have a conical perspective. So that here he cannot say it without getting embroiled, but in fact the pyramid is not a pyramid. His pyramid is a cylinder, right? It can only be a cylinder, but that doesn’t matter much. The cylindrical perspective is the infinite perspective, because God is not without perspective, he has a perspective, but a cylindrical perspective, as opposed to our conical perspective. Good: very good, very good.

But how will he save the truthful God? You see what he says here, I hope you understand. And you will understand, because of one word. Leibniz is no longer the one who says: I will show you how to derive the impossible from the possible. He knew how to invent ... because in that case, it is the truthful God which collapses. If from the possible comes the impossible, it’s all over. And his malice, his genial malice, is to have invented a concept such that he can say: no, from the possible does not come the impossible, but to make up for it, from the possible comes the *impossible*. From the possible comes the impossible, which will mean exactly: all those possible worlds that I showed you in the apartments, they are nothing other than cells in the brain of God, they are cells of the thought of God, and well, all those possible worlds are obviously *impossible* with each other: from the possible comes the impossible.

Why could a Greek not have given this answer, while the Stoics only arrived with great difficulty at the notion of confatality, which does not really have anything to do with it? The

answer is quite simple, it was necessary to wait for Leibniz. The notions of compossibility and impossibility can only be based on a mathematical and metaphysical conception of series, which the Greeks did not have. They were not in a position to invent this concept. But then Leibniz will say: take heed. Yes, the truth is still possible, the truthful man or the truthful God is still possible, [*Pause*] the truthful man is still possible in so far as from the possible does not come the impossible, but from the possible comes the impossible. Good. This is the story of the pyramid.

I would like you to read this long text in Part III [of the *Theodicy*], but I would like to specifically ask: why did Leibniz give himself such a complicated narrative? I've already noted what happens. First stage: Leibniz speaks in his own name in this text but announces that he is going to relate a dialogue between two characters. A philosopher of the Renaissance named Valla ... [*Interruption of the recording*]<sup>22</sup> [2:02:32]

### Part 3

... Second level: [*Pause*] Valla transforms his own dialogue with Antonio into an imaginary dialogue between Sextus and Apollo. [*Pause*] The theme of the narrative is exactly this, Apollo says to Sextus: I have foreknowledge. I can tell you what will happen if you go to Rome. It will not take away your freedom. Note the words of Apollo: it will take nothing away from your freedom; you can very well not go to Rome. If you go to Rome – possibility –, it will happen in this way. So, at this second stage, Apollo is content to say: my foreknowledge does not compromise your freedom.

Third stage, objection: okay, the foreknowledge of Apollo does not compromise freedom, but the providence of Jupiter, that is to say, the predestination of God, the providence of Jupiter brought into existence an Adam who falls into sin; he chose that Adam. There are indeed other possible Adams, okay; there are indeed other possible Sextuses, fine. But God chose that one, therefore excluding the others, therefore one is not free. At this third level, the philosopher Valla gives up, in Leibniz's text, and the fact that this same philosopher Valla, who summoned up a Sextus-Apollo dialogue, can go no further, means that the Sextus-Apollo dialogue ends there.<sup>23</sup> And in fact, Apollo refers us on – fourth level – to Jupiter, he says: for my part, I am only the representative of foreknowledge; for predestination, see Jupiter. Me, my foreknowledge, does not compromise your freedom. Don't ask me any more. If you want to know more, address yourself to Jupiter. So, it is no longer either Sextus nor the disciple of Valla who will get to see Jupiter ... No, Sextus gets to see Jupiter. But Sextus no longer understands anything, he has limitations in any case. Happily, there is the high priest Theodorus who is there and listening.

Fifth or sixth level: Jupiter does not answer and says: go and see my daughter, she will explain everything to you, go and see Pallas. And this is the Pallas-Theodorus dialogue. It is truly bizarre, this line of dialogues here, embedded in each other, each referring to the other. One feels that it touches on a limit. He has saved the truthful God but with his very, very strange story of pyramids where all the possible Adams act<sup>24</sup>, but does he not brush up against, does he not truly brush up against all the powers of the false? How does he extract himself from that? Admire it, it is not difficult. Why does he extract himself from it? He extracts himself from it, Leibniz extracts himself from it – but our admiration for him must not be diminished for this – he extracts himself – everything is unstoppable – through impossibility. You had better believe it; it is formidable as a concept; it is a marvelous concept: the mathematico-metaphysical is most beautiful thing in the world. Never say again

about existence: it is impossible. You have to say: it is impossible, right? [*Laughter*] It is the reconciliation of truth and the form of time. But here we are deep into our subject. How did he escape though? How could he restore at the last moment the truthful God? It's not difficult: it's because he has posited as a condition that divergent series could not belong to the same world. [*Pause*]

Obviously, if the divergent series cannot belong to the same world, if the fundamental bifurcations are made *between* the worlds and not in a single and same world, he is right, there is a truthful God. If the fundamental bifurcations and the divergent series diverge in the same world, what will allow me to say "in the same world", since it diverges? I don't know yet, one has to hold on, you have to cling on to what you've got. Suppose that the divergent series belong to and diverge in the same world, then at that moment the truthful God of Leibniz passes over to the side of the powers of the false. What an affair. Fortunately, we can say to ourselves: no, this is not possible, it is not possible for the divergent series to belong to the same world. [*Pause*] No ... yes ... yes ... no. Because, is it possible?

There is a word which has not been spoken. There is one word which has not been spoken. The Chinese philosopher ... Leibniz was well aware of the existence of the Chinese philosopher, he had deep knowledge of such matters. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there are many dialogues between ... there are titles of books like *Dialogue between the Christian philosopher and the Chinese philosopher*,<sup>25</sup> they loved all that. You mustn't believe that all this dates from us, eh? [*Pause*] To show you what he does I'll read a text: "Philosophical conjectures take up the greater part of his novel. I know that of all problems, none disquieted him more, and none concerned him more than the unfathomable problem of time. Now, this is the *only* problem that does not figure in the pages of the novel. He does not even use the word which means *time*. How can these voluntary omissions be explained?"<sup>26</sup> I don't know if it's true for the Chinese philosopher, we will have to look into that next time, but I know that that is indeed what happens in Leibniz. Not once does he use the word 'time'. Can we believe that this is a voluntary omission, when everything turns precisely on that? I mean: this is the problem of future contingents. Now, the problem of future contingents is the confrontation of the concept of truth with the form of time, as we have seen.<sup>27</sup>

Not once does he use the word 'time'. Well, yes, he has a reason, at the very least we can say that the reason Leibniz had to hide this word and not use it once is that if he uses it, there is danger. Perhaps it is that the form of time gives us the aspect, the perspective, under which divergent series belong to a single and same world. If the divergent series belong to a single and same world, we find ourselves, some centuries later, bang inside the narrative of Borges. What is the contribution of Borges in relation to Leibniz? To say the word 'time', and in the name of this word 'time', finally uttered, to bring it about that divergent series are constitutive of a single and same world.

And these are two of the principal short stories from Borges' earlier works: the short story that is so well-known I can deal with it quickly, from the work entitled *Fictions*, 'The Garden of Forking Paths', from which I draw ... Well, you can see the hallucinatory resemblance to Leibniz, and at the same time the fundamental point of rupture. "In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives, he chooses one at the expense of the others"<sup>28</sup> – Sextus goes to Rome or else he does not go to Rome. "In the almost unfathomable fiction of Ts'ui Pên" – the great Chinese philosopher-architect – "In the almost unfathomable fiction of Ts'ui Pên, he chooses – simultaneously – all of them."<sup>29</sup> "Simultaneously": you're going to say to me: that's not time. But yes, simultaneously, it is time. I mean: simultaneity is no less a part of time than

succession. “He thus *creates* various futures” – problem of future contingents – “various times which start others that will in their turn branch out and bifurcate in other times. This is the cause of the contradictions in the novel. Fang, let us say, has a secret. A stranger knocks at his door. Fang makes up his mind to kill him. Naturally there are various possible outcomes. Fang can kill the intruder, the intruder can kill Fang, both can be saved, both can die and so on and so on. In Ts’ui Pên’s work, all the possible solutions occur.”<sup>30</sup>

I’m sure you’ll agree that one could say that the work of Robbe-Grillet makes use of this type of narrative: “In Ts’ui Pên’s work, all the possible solutions occur, each one being the point of departure for other bifurcations. Sometimes the pathways of this labyrinth converge. For example, you come to this house; but in other possible pasts you are my enemy; in others my friend.” [*Deleuze whispers*:] In one you are my enemy, sometimes we converge; sometimes, there is divergence. [*Normal voice*] And he ends with: “Time is forever dividing itself towards innumerable futures and in one of them I am your enemy.”<sup>31</sup> And what will happen in the end? It’s the assassination by the spy – it’s a dialogue between a spy and the descendent of a Chinese sage – and the spy will assassinate the descendent of the Chinese sage:<sup>32</sup> substitution of the character of the falsifier, the spy, for the truthful God. The world – and the substitution rests solely on this – the world is constituted diabolically, that is to say, by the divergence of series.<sup>33</sup>

The other principal text, I believe, is ‘Death and the Compass’. ‘Death and the Compass’ is good for us because the word ‘crystalline’ is in it. [*Laughter*]. Hah, yes! Yes, I just saw that earlier ... “The tragic mystery seemed to him almost crystalline.”<sup>34</sup> You see, it’s a confirmation. As long as it’s like that in the original, but anyway ... It doesn’t matter ... Here, in ‘Death and the Compass’, Borges will go even further, since he gives himself a single world with four crimes: one in the North, one in the West, one in the East – which makes three crimes, an equilateral triangle, a kind of flattened pyramid, on a plane, an equilateral triangle – which leads the policeman says to himself: “There has to be a fourth crime in the South, exactly at this place.” And the policeman goes there, but it’s his own assassination that is going to happen [*Laughter*]. Good! But before dying the policeman says something to his assassin; he says to him: you have not gone far enough yet. Okay, okay, you did your four crimes, you’ve got me, etc. [*Pause*] – that is to say: the divergent series, you have brought them together in the same world, but that’s not enough. That is still not enough to isolate time. You must go still further.

“In your labyrinth, there are three lines too many ... I know of a Greek labyrinth which is a single straight line. Along this line so many philosophers have lost themselves that a mere detective might well do so too [...] When in some other incarnation you hunt me, [...] commit a crime at A, then a second crime at B, eight kilometers from A, then a third crime at C, four kilometers from A and B, half-way enroute between the two. Wait for me later at D, two kilometers ...”<sup>35</sup> – it’s no longer the figure of the lozenge<sup>36</sup>, it is the figure of a straight line. For the figure of a lozenge – or the figure of the pyramid, it doesn’t matter –, still subordinates time to the conditions of a world, while a labyrinth in a straight line is the pure form of time.

Okay, either you can’t do any more ... Perhaps you can’t take any more? I still have my third story ... oh well, I can do it next time ... I would like to know if ... [*A student close to Deleuze talks to him*]. What? You want it now? I don’t know, it’s up to you. If you can’t take any more ... It’s necessary, in fact, because we might as well finish with some buffooneries, because otherwise next time, that won’t seem very serious.

Now for the beautiful novel by Maurice Leblanc.<sup>37</sup> I will summarize it for you. In my opinion, it takes its place between the two, on the way from Leibniz to Borges. *The Extravagant Life of Balthazar* tells us the following story: Balthazar is a young man with a dubious occupation: he is a Professor of Everyday Philosophy at a boarding school for young girls. [Laughter] This is very important, I'm not trying to make you laugh, because we will need to keep this in mind. All these notions will be useful for us. He is Professor of Everyday Philosophy in boarding schools for young girls. What does this everyday philosophy consist of? To say something that is more bizarre than it seems: there is no adventure, there is never anything extraordinary. [Pause] We believe that there are extraordinary things, of course, we believe that. But if we know how to restore a little order into the series, we are able to perceive that all of that is very, very ordinary. If you don't feel a kind of vague echo of Leibniz here ... God mixes the series, and then we say that there are discontinuities, but otherwise, all of that is continuous, each world is defined by a convergence. Yes, nothing can be extraordinary. If I'm told that there's a fairy waiting for me at home to give me a lovely present, I'll go and see, but ... Sure, it's amazing, it seems astonishing, but let's wait for the explanation, let's know how to wait for it: all of that can be explained in a very ordinary way. This is the wisdom of young Balthazar, with which he wins over the young girls of the boarding school. Good.

But then something happens to Balthazar. What happens to him? Well, he goes to see a clairvoyant – the first thing that happens to him is that he goes to see a clairvoyant – who says to him – he is a foundling, Balthazar –, the clairvoyant says to him: I see your father. He says: Oh that's good, I would indeed like to find my father. I don't have a father, but I'm quite convinced that this is absolutely ordinary, that it's very easily explained, that my father lost me. But now you tell you me that I'm going to have ... [Unfinished sentence]. So this character goes to see a clairvoyant too, it's still the same story, it is still future contingents. The clairvoyant says to him: yes, you do have a father, but he has no head. So I would define Balthazar as: the foundling with the headless father. [Laughter] That's a nominal definition. So, there's that, but there also two rather curious things. One is not curious: he has fingerprints like everyone else, but what distinguishes him is that he has fingerprints along with a rarer thing, he has a big tattoo on his chest formed of three letters: M.T.S. No: M.T.P. sorry, M.T.P.<sup>38</sup> First step, Balthazar has three characteristics: he is told that he has a father with no head; he has a tattoo; he has fingerprints.

And well, with that, the novel begins. He receives a letter from a notary who says to him: you are the son of the Count of Coucy-Vendôme, recently assassinated. So that's the first level: you are the son of the Count of Coucy-Vendôme, recently assassinated. He goes straightaway to see the notary, saying "Finally a father! I have found a father!" And he asks: "By the way, how was he assassinated, my poor father?" And the notary says to him: "How? You don't read the newspapers? He was found ... Terrible ... with his head cut off." [Balthazar] says: "That's exactly what the clairvoyant said!" The notary replies: "What?" [Laughter] So this starts to come together. And the father has left a note saying: "My son lives under the name of Balthazar. I bequeath to him all my fortune. Please find him, you can find him in two ways, you can recognize him because of the following two things: he has a tattoo that reads 'M.T.P.', and here is a copy of his fingerprints." Balthazar opens up his shirt. The notary says: "You are indeed the son of the Count of Coucy."

On the same day, he goes back home and finds a letter. He says: "Wait! This is another letter from my father. However, it does not seem to be in the same writing." Second level: this



letter says to him: “Go and look in the hollow of a tree, you’ll find there a significant sum there, it’s for you, my son.” And, it’s signed, this letter, Gourneuve. Gourneuve is a disturbing individual who has made some visits to Balthazar before. And Gourneuve is the leader of a band of criminals. And Gourneuve tells him in his letter: “You are my son, the proof is that you have [the tattoo] and the fingerprints. He says: okay, I now seem to have two fathers. And he hurries to the café below, asking: “Does anyone know what’s happened to the great bandit, Gourneuve?” He is told: “He was beheaded yesterday.” [*Laughter*] He says: “But why?” “Because he assassinated the Count of Coucy-Vendôme.” [*Laughter*] And so he goes: aaargh! Two fathers, one of whom has killed the other, and who have in common that they are headless. [*Laughter*]

Third level: he will take the money; he takes the money, but he does not know from whom, in the end, it seems to be the money of the first father, the Count, which has been stolen by the bandit, by Gourneuve. He says: “Who is my father? Whose son am I?” He does not have long to reflect on it, because he is kidnapped by an Englishman. He is then in turn taken back by the French, the police, and delivered by the French police, after a very long voyage, into the hands of the terrible Revad Pasha. Parenthesis: Gourneuve had formed the band of MasTroPieds, the terrible band of MasTroPieds, a criminal gang whose name you will notice includes: ‘M.T.P.’ Gourneuve uses this sign to say to Balthazar: you see that you are my son. Okay, so Balthazar is delivered over to Revad Pasha in distant lands. And Revad Pasha has a wife, Catarina, the matron. [*Laughter*] But Revad Pasha and Catarina are at war with each other, they are terrible, they are possessed with such cruelty! It is a very, very cruel war. And Balthazar loves his father very much<sup>39</sup>, he loves all his fathers, [*Laughter*], and he continues to say: “But everything will have a very simple explanation, everything will be explained quite straightforwardly, it is enough to wait a little.” He holds very firmly to his everyday philosophy. Well, then he is taken prisoner by his mother Catarina, whose first gesture is to decapitate – that keeps happening – Revad. But his name over there is Mustapha: M.T.P. Mus-ta-pha. And it’s said that this is proof that he is the son of Revad. So the fingerprints, all that, everything is there, which gives him a third father. But this time, it is not the other father who kills the previous one; that happens between the father and mother, at this third level.

Fourth level: he is about to be beheaded in turn by his mother, Catarina the matron, when he is saved by a poet, the great poet Beaumesnil, who says to him: “You are my son.” Fourth father. “You are my son, and the proof is that you have a tattoo, ‘M.T.P.’, and that I have your fingerprints. So that’s that. He’s starting to have had enough, Balthazar, [*Laughter*] and he says: “I’m going to end up having to love more and more of them. I’ve already loved three fathers, I can’t do any more, I’m going to crack ...” [*Laughter*] Then he starts to have his first suspicions: isn’t the true word of wisdom of everyday philosophy that the Oedipus complex does not matter? [*Laughter*] All of that, father or no father, has strictly no importance: absolutely none whatsoever! Which might be an elegant way of suppressing it, but in the end, it turns out that ‘everyday philosophy’ is another way of thinking the young girl; one of the greatest philosophies in the world.

But, but ... the poet Beaumesnil is now revealed to be a very bad father: he wants to steal his money. He is indeed a father, but he wants to steal his money, he is truly the bad father. And what is more, he goes around declaiming poetry all the time, he is completely crazy. And so Balthazar realizes this, and says: he’s crazy. Look, he is crazy, he is mad. He’s off his head. He has lost his head. Ah! This one, there is no need to behead him, he has already lost his head. [*Laughter*] Good. Only, it’s extremely annoying because he flees, stealing the money and mortally wounding an innocent neighbour, an innocent neighbour of Balthazar, in the

process: the tramp, Monsieur Vaillant du Four, the good tramp Monsieur Vaillant du Four who, to be sure, was an alcoholic, drunk out of his skull all day, but who was after all a good friend of Balthazar.

And before dying ... so there are four fathers, all of whom have proofs, and who have proofs independently of each other, it's perfect as a novelistic structure, perfect. And they kill each other, the second kills the first, the third, he is killed, and the fourth, he is also killed. And the latter kills the other one, poor Vaillant du Four, who is what? Here, we will see, we are going to find our schema again, we will find our whole schema. For Vaillant du Four, just before dying, sobbing and plastered with drink, tells Balthazar in a flood of tears: "You must know, Balthazar, I am ignoble, because the truth is it's me, I am your father. This is what I did: with your ... with my wife, a long time ago – I was not always a tramp – I set up a little boarding school for rich children, rich children whose parents wanted to unburden themselves of them. And I had four; four rich children came to stay with me. [*Pause*]

Then, one day, there was a flood, and the four children were washed away, and you were left."<sup>40</sup> Then [Vaillant du Four] changes his mind, starting to weep again. He says: "You know, I was already drinking quite a bit back then. I'm not absolutely sure it was you that was left, [*Laughter*] or that you are my son! All I can say is that of the five, there was only one left." Then he starts whimpering again and says: "I had this abominable idea, forgive me, an idea for a swindle but it was dreadful, and I'm ashamed of myself! I took fingerprints from the survivor and I sent them to the four fathers, saying: *your child has survived, and you will recognize him by this: that he goes by the name of Balthazar, that he has these fingerprints, and that he has a tattoo of the letters M.T.P.* The letters M.T.P. which I tattooed, engraved, on you one day when I was completely drunk"<sup>41</sup>, they are ... I am sure you are not unaware of the famous formula of the Book of Daniel, of the sacred book that one cannot read without trembling: *Mane, thecel, phares*.<sup>42</sup> "Mane, thecel, phares", which signifies – you all know it, it's part of basic culture: "to count, to weigh, and to divide", that is to say, which corresponds exactly to our "*enlever, c'est peser*" [to remove is to weigh].<sup>43</sup> "Mane, thecel, phares". "Mane, thecel, phares" is what the hand, the superhuman hand, writes on the wall, when the king of Babylon, Balthazar [Belshazzar], gives himself over to an orgy in which he uses sacred vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem and worships idols. He gets Daniel to come in order to ask him: What does this writing mean, what do these words that I do not understand mean, 'Manes, thecel, phares'? And Daniel says to him: it is a Scripture, O King, which you do not know, O King Balthazar, but which signifies that for you the end is nigh, verily I say unto you [*indistinct phrase*], you will die and your kingdom will be divided. Balthazar will die. But Daniel has a Babylonian name; the name of the king of Babylon, Balthazar [Belshazzar], is very close to Daniel's Babylonian name Belshazzar [Belteshazzar]<sup>44</sup> ... So ... what's all that about?

The old tramp has brought it off, everything is explained. It's a victory, as everything can now be explained in an ordinary way. Everything was quite ordinary, it was all quite normal, all that ... nothing extraordinary there: he carried out a deceit with the M.T.P., and all the fathers believed it, etc. But: what has happened all the same? Well, Vaillant, who gets blind drunk every day, Vaillant du Four, is a father, he is a father, although not necessarily the true father, since he did not know who had survived. He is one father more, the fifth, and he too has lost his head, he lives as a drunkard from morning to night; and moreover, he is dying. We should also add that at one point he also lost the child.<sup>45</sup> But when each of the fathers lays claim [to Balthazar] independently of the others, each having received the letter that came from him, he finally lays claim to the child as his own. That's very important, because it

means that everything is explained at the end. Everything is ordinary. In all of that, there was absolutely nothing out of the ordinary. Everything is ordinary; and that can be reduced to what?

Admire this, if you will: to the fraudulent operation of a poor tramp. The God of Leibniz with these four worlds: there are four possible worlds: the world of the Count, the world of Gourneuve the assassin, the world of Revad Pasha, the world of the poet Beaumesnil. These four possible worlds dissolve, are not only parts of the same world, but dissolve into what is most ordinary, that is to say, into the ordinary continuation of a pure straight line. At that moment, what happens? It is no longer the truthful God which evolves before us as in Leibniz, it is the power of the false of the poor swindler. It is the power of the false of the poor drunken swindler. And it *was necessary* – marvellous confirmation for us – these stories should bring us confirmations. Admire how we had a just and certain presentiment, when we said: the maker of crystal-images must himself pass into the crystal in the form of power, or of one of the powers of the false. Admire how Vaillant du Four fabricated the swindle that he dressed up in crystal-images, and had to pass through it himself as a father among the others.

And in all that then, we find ourselves faced with the ordinary series of time, pure and empty time, and the crisis of truth. Once again, it is the form of the true which is put into question by the power of time. Why? Because the power of time seems, for reasons still mysterious to us for the moment, to be one with the series of the powers of false, with the series of powers of the false itself. And what will have happened in this whole story, and throughout this very ordinary, quite ordinary life? In the course of this very ordinary life, one thing alone happens to Balthazar: he discovers that all the time he has loved a young girl by the name of Coloquinte, who has been living by his side in a modest manner and who he did not ... and who he didn't even glance at. He discovers his love for the young girl. And at the end of this whole series, which has been reduced and brought back to the ordinary, there is the production of what? As he says at the end: at least it will have been useful for something. "I realised the only thing there was that was new in the world: to have a love."<sup>46</sup> Good: he perceives the production of the new as an effect of the series of this ordinary, absolutely ordinary, time. Well, that takes us a long way.

So, all we can say here is that now we are dealing with several levels of this same problem, that is to say the encounter, the encounter with a power of time and of a power that is too much, to the point that we have the right to say to ourselves: in what way is it one and the same power? What is ... The putting in question of the truth can only be done at the same time as a pure line of time emerges. It is time formally speaking which puts in question the form of truth. So that is what follows. That's it; that works, that comes together. [*End of session*] [2:40:53]

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Lecture 2, Session of 22 November 1983.

<sup>2</sup> *Faux-fuyants* is known as *Subterfuge* in English. The term '*faux-fuyants*' is not directly translatable into English and literally means 'false fleeings'. It could be translated as 'red herrings'. See the references to this film in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 135, 198, and 316 n. 12.

<sup>3</sup> The French term for 'hit-and-run' is *délit de fuite*, which might be translated literally as 'offence of flight'. Both *fuite* and *fuyant* derive from *fuir*, to flee.

<sup>4</sup> *Cahiers du cinéma* 353, November 1983; cf. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, p. 316 n. 12.

<sup>5</sup> On the crisis of truth along with other themes from this session, see *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, pp. 130-135.

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, IX, 18b24ff.

<sup>7</sup> Deleuze's argument in what follows turns around the ancient discussion of the so-called 'Master' or 'Dominator' argument (*kyrieion logos*) ascribed to the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC Megarian philosopher Diodorus Cronus. The primary document for this now lost argument is found in a passage of Epictetus' *Discourses*: "The 'Master argument' appears to have been propounded on the strength of some such principles as the following. Since there is a general contradiction with one another between these three propositions, to wit : (1) Everything true as an event in the past is necessary, and (2) An impossible does not follow a possible, and (3) What is not true now and never will be, is nevertheless possible, Diodorus, realizing this contradiction, used the plausibility of the first two propositions to establish the principle, Nothing is possible which is neither true now nor ever will be." (*Discourses*, II, 19.1-4, Loeb translation). Historians of logic commonly express perplexity at Epictetus's account; for instance, William and Martha Kneale say: "It is difficult to understand either why the first statement should have been found generally acceptable or why the first two should have been held to entail the denial of the third" (*The Development of Logic*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1962, p. 119); nor is it settled why the argument is known as the *kyrieion*. As will become clear shortly, Deleuze's own account here relies heavily on Pierre-Maxime Schuhl's 1960 volume *Le Dominateur et les possibles* [*The Dominator and the Possibles*] (Paris: PUF, 1960), which is an attempt to reconstruct the ancient discussion around the 'Dominator', with detailed discussions of the widely differing Aristotelian, Megarian, Epicurean, Stoic and Academic perspectives on the argument. (Incidentally, Schuhl thanks Deleuze for proof-reading his text in the Acknowledgements to *Le Dominateur*). Schuhl starts his account with a reference to a landmark 1882 essay by Eduard Zeller, which concluded from the discussion by Epictetus that the Dominator involved "a hypothetical reasoning in *modus tollens*" of the following type: "If something was possible which is not nor will be, an impossible would result from a possible. Now an impossible cannot result from a possible. Therefore nothing is possible which neither is nor will be." Zeller maintains that the minor proposition of this deduction is given as self-evident. "The major hypothetical proposition, on the contrary, has need of a proof: this is found in the proposition which states the necessity of the past. For, if of two facts which exclude each other, one comes about, then the possibility of the other is suppressed: what has happened cannot in fact be changed. The second fact is therefore now impossible: if it had been possible previously, an impossible would come about, according to Diodorus, from a possible" (Schuhl, *Le Dominateur*, # 3, p. 11). Schuhl brings out the significance of Diodorus's argument as follows: "The event that I will accomplish tomorrow appears to me today as possible, in the sense that its non-realization is equally possible. But after tomorrow, it will be an immutable element of my past, a necessary fact whose non-accomplishment will be to my eyes an impossibility. But if it is inconceivable that a possibility is transformed in this way from one moment to the other into an impossibility, it is necessary obviously, if one wants to conserve the word *possible*, "to designate by that either what is, or what is not" yet, but which will be. Thus, my presence at Corinth is possible if I am there, or if must go there; otherwise, it is impossible. It is possible that the child becomes a grammarian if he must become one. [...] The truth of the future is as immobile as that of the past. This immutability is no less real for not being apparent. Cicero had already signaled the correlation which exists between the Diodorean conception of the possible, which the Dominator establishes, and the thesis of the predetermination of futures (Cicero, *De Fato*, 9.7)" (Schuhl, # 4, p. 12-13). Aristotle had dealt with future contingents by limiting the scope of the principle of non-contradiction so that all that can be said in propositions about future events such as tomorrow's possible sea battle is that it either will or not take place; Epicurus went further in limiting the scope of the principle of non-contradiction: one can neither say there will be nor won't be a sea battle. The Stoics rejected the use of Aristotelian and Epicurean counterarguments against the Dominator, wishing to uphold the full scope of the principle of contradiction (Schuhl, # 9, p. 22, # 32-36, 59-64). They defended the idea of providence and the practice of divination, but introduced fine distinctions between fate and necessity in order to make sense of future contingents. With regard to the key passage from Epictetus in the *Discourses*, their response to Diodorus was either to deny Proposition 1 (that the past is necessary) and affirm the others – Cleanthes' approach; or to deny Proposition 2 (that from the possible cannot come the impossible) – Chrysippus' approach and affirm the others (see Schuhl, # 10, p. 23-24). Deleuze discusses these two Stoic counterarguments to the Dominator in what follows.

<sup>8</sup> Deleuze actually says "It is neither one nor the other", but the Aristotelian position is that one or the other of the alternatives will be confirmed. The position that neither one nor the other can be said to be true will be taken by Epicurus. See footnote 7 above.

<sup>9</sup> See session 1 of this seminar, 8 November 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Maurice Leblanc, *La Vie extravagante de Balthazar* (Paris: Le Livre de poche, 1979). First published in serial form in *Le Journal*, 1924-25. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leblanc\\_-\\_La\\_Vie\\_extravagante\\_de\\_Balthazar,\\_paru\\_dans\\_Le\\_Journal,\\_1924-1925.djvu](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leblanc_-_La_Vie_extravagante_de_Balthazar,_paru_dans_Le_Journal,_1924-1925.djvu)

<sup>11</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy*, translated by E.M. Huggard (La Salle: Illinois, 1985 [1710]). The narrative on Sextus begins at # 409. The whole narrative is at the very end of the third Essay and runs from # 405-417.

- <sup>12</sup> Cf. Leibniz, 'From the Letters to Arnauld', *Philosophical Writings* (ed. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), p. 69-90.
- <sup>13</sup> Direct quotation from *Theodicy*, # 415; translation slightly modified.
- <sup>14</sup> Direct quotation from *Theodicy*, # 414.
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. *Theodicy*, # 414.
- <sup>16</sup> *Theodicy*, # 416.
- <sup>17</sup> *Theodicy*, # 415.
- <sup>18</sup> Deleuze refers to the five sessions of the Leibniz seminar, Spring 1980.
- <sup>19</sup> On the Classical Age, the Baroque and Leibniz, cf. the two seminars on Leibniz, especially that of 1986-87, and also *The Time-Image*, p. 143.
- <sup>20</sup> *Le Système de Leibniz* [*The System of Leibniz*], Paris: PUF 1968.
- <sup>21</sup> On the theory of conics and these propositions, see sessions 19 and 21 of Cinema seminar II (3 May 1983 and 24 May 1983), and session 3 of the seminar on 'Leibniz and the Baroque', 18 November 1986.
- <sup>22</sup> The first part of the dialogue (# 405-412) at the end of Leibniz's *Theodicy* is a condensed quotation of a dialogue from the fifth book of Lorenzo Valla's *Dialogue on Free Will*, a riposte to Boethius's ideas about providence in *The Consolations of Philosophy*. The conversation is between Valla himself and a Spaniard called Antonio Glarea. The story of Sextus and the Delphic Oracle is told in this section. But then in # 413, Leibniz announces he will "carry the little fable still further" and goes on to tell a story of Sextus's visit to the Oracle at Dodona. The dialogue here is between Sextus and Jupiter. Deleuze omits to mention that here Sextus pays a second visit to an oracle, this time that of Jupiter himself at Dodona, and he doesn't mention that it is Jupiter, not Apollo, who explicitly says "If you go to Rome, you are lost." (# 413). Finally, there is the third dialogue between Theodorus, the high priest, "who had been present at the dialogue between God and Sextus" (# 413), and Pallas Athene, Jupiter's daughter. There is a brief overview of the Valla-Antonio dialogue in Lecture 8 of the Seminar on 'Leibniz and the Baroque' (27 January 1987). There, Deleuze comments that at the first level, what is involved is a "dialogue between Valla and Antonio on the theme 'Is God responsible for evil?'" And in this dialogue a Roman character is invoked, Sextus, the last king of Rome, who demonstrated bad passions, and in particular who raped Lucretia ... And the question is: is this God's fault? Is God responsible for evil? Inside this first narrative, the dialogue Valla-Antonio, inside this first narrative is contained a second narrative [...]."
- <sup>23</sup> *Theodicy*, # 411.
- <sup>24</sup> Or 'Sextuses'.
- <sup>25</sup> Nicolas Malebranche wrote a *Dialogue between a Christian Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher* (1708); Leibniz is known to have possessed a copy.
- <sup>26</sup> Jorge-Luis Borges, 'The Garden of Forking Paths', translated by Helen Temple and Ruthven Todd, in *Fictions*, ed. Anthony Kerrigan (London: John Calder, 1985), p. 90-91; translation modified. In the story, this passage is part of a deposition written by the protagonist Yu Tsun (who has become a German spy in the First World War) about Ts'ui Pên, his great grandfather, Governor of Yunnan province, who retreated from public life to write a novel and build a labyrinth (Yu Tsun learns in the story that the novel is in fact the labyrinth).
- <sup>27</sup> On Leibniz's reference to the innovations of the Chinese, see sessions 5 and 11 of the seminar on 'Leibniz and the Baroque', 6 January and 3 March 1987.
- <sup>28</sup> Borges, 'The Garden of Forking Paths', p. 89.
- <sup>29</sup> Borges, p. 89, translation modified.
- <sup>30</sup> Borges, p. 89.
- <sup>31</sup> Borges, p. 92.
- <sup>32</sup> Deleuze's sentence about the conclusion to the story here is erroneous. The spy (Yu Tsun) is himself the descendent of the Chinese sage (Ts'ui Pên), and he speaks with and then assassinates the eminent English scholar of the works of Ts'ui Pên, Stephen Albert, in order to send a message to the Germans about a secret British deployment of artillery to a French town called Albert.
- <sup>33</sup> Deleuze returns to this story in session 8 of the seminar on 'Leibniz and the Baroque', 27 January 1987.
- <sup>34</sup> The English translation reads: "The mystery seemed to him almost crystalline now". Borges, 'Death and the Compass', *Fictions*, p. 124.
- <sup>35</sup> Borges, 'Death and the Compass', 128-129. Deleuze omits the last part of the sentence: "from A and C, half-way, once again, between both."
- <sup>36</sup> The figure of the lozenge is a recurrent image in the story, appearing at the various crime scenes.
- <sup>37</sup> Cf. Deleuze's published discussions of Leblanc's novel in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, pp. 14-15 and *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 62-3, 81.
- <sup>38</sup> In the novel, the notary needs a magnifying glass to examine the tattoo (*La Vie extravagante de Balthazar*, p. 28).

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<sup>39</sup> Deleuze hasn't made clear that Revad Pasha also claims Balthazar as his son (p. 88).

<sup>40</sup> Deleuze has omitted that Balthazar was being brought up by Vaillant du Four and his wife after having been handed over to them by Gourneuve. Balthazar attends the school along with the four other children (p. 135-136).

<sup>41</sup> In the novel, it is a drunken Basque sailor who tattoos the young Balthazar (p. 136, 139).

<sup>42</sup> Or *Mene Tekel Uparshin*. Cf. Daniel 5: 25-28: *This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and the Persians.*

<sup>43</sup> Perhaps an allusion to Daniel 5:27: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting".

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Daniel 1:7, 4:19.

<sup>45</sup> *La Vie extravagante de Balthazar*, p. 136-137.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *La Vie extravagante*, p. 152-153.