Gilles Deleuze

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

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Part 1

… [come] hell or high water, we have to wrap up this first section. That would be nice, but if we don't manage to get to the end, we'll just call it quits. I'll cover as much as I can as quickly as I can, so that you get a better idea. I'll start with two short passages. A small excerpt from Nietzsche, from the end of a very well-known piece—a few lines from *Twilight of the Idols*, a quote I've already referenced before: "How the True[1] World Finally Became a Fable." He tells us a story—much like how, today, I want to tell you some stories. I don't have time to read you all of Nietzsche. "How did the true world" —or the truth-world— "become a fable?"[2]

He tells us a story, one broken into six parts or moments. It's not bad, not bad. I'll read the sixth moment—the final, shining moment. Nietzsche says: "The true world is gone: which world is left? The illusory one, perhaps?"—question mark—"But no!" He decides to put the rest in italics: "*We got rid of the illusory world along with the true [world]!"* [Or "truth world"]. "We got rid of the illusory world along with the true one!" (*Twilight,* p. 171)

And then in parentheses – meaning what's there must be important —he makes a comment we aren't meant to understand right away. In parenthesis, he says "noon." The sixth moment happens at noon. "Noon; moment of shortest shadow." Given this sixth moment, then, perhaps the other five—based on his account of them, we don't know about the other five, but it doesn't really matter, right?—shadows didn't come up before; but you know, in the end he specifically tells us it happens at "noon, moment of shortest shadow," and that means the other five moments took place when shadows were shrinking; at any rate, it implies a series of shadows. "Noon; moment of shortest shadow; end of the longest error"—the end of the longest error, the longest error obviously referring to that of the true world—"End of longest error; high point of humanity." Then he switches to Latin: "Incipit Zarathustra"—something like, "Zarathustra enters the scene / comes on stage." (*Twilight,* p. 171) Alright.

The other passage is from just before that, in *The Twilight of the Idols*; this time, he gives us four moments rather than six, and once again, it's the last one that interests me: "To divide the true world into a …" No, sorry… "To divide the world into a 'true' half and an 'illusory' one,

whether in the manner of Christianity or in the manner of Kant (an *underhanded* Christian, at the end of the day)." (*Twilight,* p. 170)

When it comes to the word, "underhanded," you have to understand—first of all, you'd need the German [*hinterlistigen,* or "insidious"]—but strictly speaking, Kant isn't a Christian in disguise, because he's famously, openly Christian. Then why does he nevertheless claim that Kant is hiding it? That's neither here nor there. "To divide the world into a 'true' half and an 'illusory' one, whether in the manner of Christianity or in the manner of Kant… is just a sign of decadence, —it is a symptom of life in decline… The fact that artists have valued appearance more highly than reality is not an objection to this proposition." (*Twilight*, p. 170)

That's interesting because I could just as well say, without changing anything, that to distinguish between the true world and the illusory world [*Pause*] isn't serious; it's unhealthy. It's rather unhealthy to distinguish between the true world and the illusory world; it's a sign of "decline," [*Pause*] either way, i.e., whether you believe that the true world is better than the illusory world—it doesn't matter what "better" means here—or whether you believe that appearances are infinitely richer than the true world. It's the very distinction that is pathological; what's unhealthy is the distinction itself.

However – however – Nietzsche says that artists are the ones that value appearances over reality. You might say that artists privilege appearance at the expense of the real world. To which Nietzsche responds: "The fact that artists have valued appearance more highly than reality is not an objection to this proposition." In other words, the distinction between real and apparent is an unhealthy distinction. "Because 'appearance' [for the artist] here means reality…because 'appearance' here means reality *once again*, only selected, strengthened, corrected."

Notice that what I'm getting at with both passages amounts to the same thing. Remember that wonderful quote I mentioned from *The Gay Science*—"Abolish your venerations"—"Abolish your venerations, or abolish yourselves!"[3] Here he says, abolish the true world. [*Pause*] But you can't abolish the real world without also abolishing the world of appearance.

The second passage: "Artists have valued appearance more highly than reality" – no, obviously not. The artist evolves in a context where the real world has disappeared, [but] once abolished, the world of appearances is also abolished. They're perfectly suited for this unfamiliar territory, we aren't acquainted with it yet – this sort of desert that results from this twofold destruction: both the real world and the world of appearance. [*Pause*]

And so, then, based on these two snippets, I'd like for us to try to put together a story of our own, based on what we've covered, we… Ultimately, the authors I've discussed thus far have all told a specific story, one which Nietzsche characterizes as "how the true world became a fable." That's what I'd like us to do on our own, with our own segmented account. And our multi-part story comes down to a confrontation… I wouldn't call it the story of "how the true world became a fable," but I'd argue, from what we've seen, that it gets at the same thing: how the organic form of what's true comes head-to-head with the powers of the false. It turns out to be a rather intriguing, exhilarating story. So, we shouldn't skip any chapters, any of its parts—how the organic true world comes head-to-head with the powers of the false. What ends up happening?

There are a few options: either a Nietzsche remake, or an English or American novel with headings and chapters, or a stage-play (where we'd need to divvy up roles). Let's go through the different roles, then.

What I'd like is for them to span five stages, recounting in sequence—the straight-shooter, or the truthful man,[4] as the first stage; then the original character[5] as the second stage; then the third stage would be the ordinary character; then odd characters for the fourth stage; and then last, and least, is the new character. Those are the fellows that make up our little puppet show. Is it a puppet show about us? No, not necessarily. Because with all this puppetry we get Plato and what happened with Platonism; [*Pause*] we get Nietzsche, both in relation to Plato and on his own; we get Herman Melville.

Why is that? Because in what we've seen thus far, these authors aren't very similar. So, the pitfall for today's discussion is—it would obviously be a colossal mistake to come away thinking, eh, Plato and Melville basically say the same thing. That's not the point. The point is for us to take what we need from each of them without confusing them, since all three do have at least one thing in common. What they have in common is that they all, in one way or another, experienced and sought after this confrontation between the form of what's true and the power of the what's false.

And that's what's fundamental—it's an unexpected development in Plato—but it's fundamentally what's at issue for Nietzsche and Melville, who are nevertheless quite different. What they share in common is their striving for a certain kind of book, something like the book of truth, even if that book turns out to be a book of falsity and of falsity's powers. [*Pause*] Both authors know it. I stress that it's constant in Melville's work, especially in one of his major novels, *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* [1852], which keeps circling around the question: is there such a thing as a book of truth, and what would such a book be? It's no exaggeration to say that *Thus spoke Zarathustra* poses the same question. Right. So, we'll try—all I'm suggesting is that you approach—not that you do a ton of reading, certainly—but that you really approach this as a story, with characters. More than anything, it's important that we not get our characters mixed up. What I claim is that everything comes back to the story of the truthful man. [*Pause*]

And the story of the truthful man is Plato's story, and just as Plato's story is recounted and revisited by Nietzsche, at the same time it's the story we get from some of [*Pause*] Melville's bizarre characters. [*Pause*] And [Plato] starts off saying something rather simple; to understand what a truthful man is for Plato, it's first and foremost someone who claims that "there is a true world." But we touched on that last time. The truthful man introduces himself by saying, "I presuppose a true world." And what is the true world, according to Plato? It's what Plato also calls the world of Ideas, "Ideas" with a capital *I*.

What can I say about Ideas? I won't get too far into it because that's not what I'm focusing on. Let's say that Ideas are like eternal forms. How are these eternal forms defined? Eternal forms, supra-organic forms. They're forms—like in a novel—marble-like forms, marble, time-defying forms. Why do I say that? Because at the beginning of *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities,* Melville describes a world of marble forms, starting with that of the father, Pierre's father depicted in

marble. Plato's father was Parmenides; he, too, was frozen in marble, having claimed that "Being is – Non-being is not." Anyway.

What makes these forms supra-organic? It isn't hard to imagine. You know what Plato is calling an Idea, it's exciting, not hard, [it's] the real world. Something that only is what it is—that's an Idea; that's what Ideas are. That doesn't seem like much, [but] there's no need—there's no need to wear yourself out trying to figure it out. That's it! Let's take the example of the small. The small. I say, "Aw, he's so small, the poor thing; he's so little." Only it's odd—Pierre *is* very small. He's small… but he's also big; he isn't *just* small. You can always find something that makes him bigger by comparison. Then I would say that Pierre is always something other than what he is. If I say that the number three is a small number—sure, but it's big compared to number one, [so] it's also a big number.

Let's think about it. Imagine something small which would only be small, no matter the comparison and in all regards. A small that is nothing but small in all respects—that's what Plato calls the Idea of small. Well, that's wonderful, but you can sense the Sophists coming along: Hold on, Socrates! That won't do! There is no such thing! But Plato isn't worried about that at the moment. So, there will be as many Ideas as there are things which only are what they are. If there is a large which is only large and nothing but large, we can talk about the Idea of largeness. It would be the Idea of Largeness. [*Pause*]

And some of the things Plato—Socrates—goes over are rather strange, like the Idea of beds, *b-e-d*; we'll have to go back over it in a second. Well, alright, how could a bed be an Idea? Reading philosophy is always complicated. Just when we think he's only talking abstractly, he brings up the Idea of beds. The Idea of beds—what could the Idea of a bed be? Not even the concept of a bed. The concept of a bed is the mental picture we have of beds, the mental notion of it. But the Idea—with a capital *I*—the Idea of a bed? What sort of nonsense… For Plato, it's quite simple—for Socrates, it's quite simple: the Idea of a bed is a bed which is nothing other than a bed. What does that mean? Out in the world—in the world we live in—you never run into pure beds. Any bed we can find is always something other than a bed. For example, it's wood [*Pause*] or metal. But we've never seen a bed which is nothing other than a bed. That requires your third eye; it requires your mind's eye.

Is there an idea… in a wonderful, well-known passage, Socrates asks: Is there an Idea of hair? Is there an Idea of mud? There is an Idea for anything where we can say it only is what it is. So along with mud and hair, let's take another example… Is there an idea of mother—*m-o-t-h-e-r*? It isn't difficult: is there a mother who is only a mother, that is, who isn't the daughter of another mother? If you form the concept of a mother who isn't another mother's daughter, a mother who is only a mother, you could say that she is a mother as such. In other words, she is the Idea. [*Pause*]

So, all I'm getting at, then, is in what sense the truthful man invokes a true world *qua* world of forms, of marble forms, i.e., where things are what they are and nothing besides what they are. [*Pause*] Be definition, it would be a world without perspective. [*Pause*] It would be a world lacking any point of view, since anything which is something other than what it is—for example, something small is large from another point of view—I mean, there are only points of view and

perspectives with things that only are what they are, in other words, things that are beyond perspective, which lack any perspective. The Idea is that which exists without perspective.

You can see why it will be difficult to determine whether there can be any relationships between these Ideas. Assuming there are Ideas, what relationships can be drawn between them—it will be a very special sort of relationship, [where] such a relationship would itself be an Idea, and not a perspective. And so Plato is confronted with a fundamental question of dialectics, dialectics meaning the forging of relationships between Ideas. But that's not what interests me. What I care about is that you all see how these supra-organic Ideas define—for the time being—how they define what's true. [*Pause*] Yeah, that's the marble truth. The truthful man is cast in marble.

Second point: what is our world made of, then? What is our world made of? It's not complicated. Our world isn't made up of Ideas; I've never seen an Idea. Every mother you meet was someone's daughter. You can talk about them as daughters who point back to other mothers; we've yet to find a mother who… even the Virgin Mother… the Virgin Mother is an edge case. I mean, in Christian Platonism, for Platonic Christianity, the Virgin Mother would be a problem because she herself has a mother. But on the other hand, there wasn't only… She is the only one exempt from original sin, the sin of reproduction itself. She had a mother; she is the daughter of a mother, but on the other hand, as the mother of Christ, she is removed from reproduction. Maybe the Virgin Mother gets us a step closer to the Idea of Mother. But these are such great mysteries that we dare not venture any further.

Then what is our world made of? Plato's answer comes down like a knife: it is made of "appearances," assuming we understand what he means by "appearance." By no means does it refer to that which isn't real; it refers to that which isn't true. Which is what we've seen: the true is reserved for the world of Ideas. What is our world made of? Well, let's cut to the chase: it's made of "copies." What we call real objects are copies of Ideas. Ideas are marble models—we're making a little progress, summarizing what we've done the last few times—Ideas are supra-organic models constituting the true world. Our world is made of copies, and these copies are absolutely real things. It's the reality of our world; the copies are organic realities that reproduce—at a lower level—that reproduce Ideas. They are organic realities. [*Pause*]

Why "organic"? Why "organic"? Well, because unlike Ideas, which are eternal, they necessarily imply "production." They are produced. And where does this production take place? This production takes place in nature, nature defined as… what the Greeks called *physis*—whence we get the word, "physics"—*physis* is the realm of production. But in one sense, human production [*Pause*] counts just as much as so-called natural production. A bed is a copy; a bed is an organic reality, if we define organic reality as an appearance, insofar as it refers to a process of production or manufacture. Our world is a world of copies both in terms of artificial, man-made objects and in terms of organic, naturally produced realities. Thus, all of it is comprised of organic realities. Then, in a Greek way, I could just as well talk about a bed's organic reality as I could an animal's organic reality—we'll use "organic reality" to refer to everything produced, modeled after an Idea, modeled after a supra-organic idea, whether it's produced by humans or by nature. [*Interruption of the recording*] [29:14]

… "copy" points to a thing's resemblance to an Idea. "Copy" doesn't refer to an extrinsic resemblance; "copy" represents or designates an intrinsic resemblance. [*Pause*]

It's worth noting that this world of copies, or of organic realities, is where perspective comes about. For all of this world's realities, be they artificial or natural, are subject to the law of perspective. They are appearances or apparitions, even though they are perfectly real—you see, they are appearances or apparitions so far as truth is concerned, but they are perfectly real when it comes to their consistency, depending on their internal resemblance. From there we get perspectives, points of view.

What makes it point of view? A carpenter makes a table. What difference is there between the table and the Idea of the table? A carpenter doesn't need to look over their neighbor's shoulder to make a good table. Otherwise that would go on *ad infinitum*, and we would get stuck in a loop. The carpenter does copy, but their model is the Idea; they copy the Idea of a table. What is the difference between a model and a copy? The Idea of a table has no perspective. It is a table which is nothing other than a table. To construct a table, the carpenter must make a table which is also something other than a table. Namely, it is wooden—it isn't only a table. It is a wooden table, right. [*Pause*] To construct something small, I'd say… to copy the Idea of the small, I must construct something small, but something which is small compared to me. And the table built by the carpenter, if he's done a good job of copying its Idea, if he clings to the Idea—it will be a table according to a set of perspectives. [*Pause*] A thing which is never what it is alone is precisely characterized by the multiplicity of perspectives on it. [*Pause*]

Then we come upon something other than manufacturing. Manufacturing, producing, is giving birth to an always perspectivist copy of a model, the ideal model; suddenly another side appears: the copy's resemblance to its model needs to be evaluated. There are more and less perfect beds, and so on. Who's to judge? Plato invariably answers—and this is one of the most interesting aspects of Platonism for me—invariably he says, it isn't the builder, the producer isn't who judges their product; it's the user—an example brilliantly laid out by Socrates. The judge of a good flute, i.e., whether it resembles the pure Idea of a flute—what is the pure Idea of a flute? No doubt it would be the absolutely pure sound that copies—it would have an audio model—copies or attempts to incarnate the entire series of flutes produced by flute-makers. But who decides whether a copy resembles its model? It isn't the flute-maker; it is the flutist, the user. Who judges whether a bed resembles the Idea of a bed? It is the user, the one lying down; it isn't the carpenter.

Well, crucially, you see, suffice it to say that there is a double movement. One movement is production, whereby the model is somehow passed onto the copy. The other movement is use, whereby the copy is tied to its model. The truthful man is someone who constantly refers copies back to their models. [*Pause*] Someone who is truthful, who is a truthful man, is someone who, as Socrates keeps saying, "knows how to use what they produce."[6] Real science is the science of use. [*Pause*] Perhaps, if you manage, manage to understand what *philos*, friend, means—the *philos*, or friend, is the user. [*Pause*] It's someone familiar with [something's] use. [*Pause*] And a philosopher is someone who constantly refers copies back to their models. [*Pause*] And it's in this sense that we can call them "truthful," whereby they can say, "I, being truthful, am nothing

without the true world; I assume that the world is true." The philosopher is an organic being that constantly refers back to supra-organic models.

Does that make sense? Maybe you think these stories aren't all that funny. Just you wait; it's a little novel. Everything would be fine—I'm hurrying, right—well, everything would be good and we'd be done if—if what? If it weren't for—if massive scandal didn't show up, a terrible scandal. There would be the truthful men and their true world, one under the other, the truthful men beneath the true world, the truthful men themselves an organic copy of a supra-organic model—all well and good so long as there is nothing in nature other than copies. [*Pause*] There aren't only organic realities in nature—notice we're coming to our theme from the start of the year—in nature itself, there aren't organic realities alone, and that's troubling. What then? What could have happened? Well. We get this development in *The Sophist, The Sophist* being a particularly important dialogue.

It is in *The Sophist* where we learn that organic realities aren't the only thing there is. What else is there? There aren't only real and produced things; [*Pause*] there's an entire realm of shadows and reflections. [*Pause*] And what is the status of these shadows and reflections? What exactly is it that, in our world, compromises organic reality—note that this isn't far off from our argument, but now we sort of have Plato's seal of approval, which we weren't even counting on—When we went out of our way before to say that, curiously, there are organic descriptions [on the one hand] and then something else [on the other]; there are organic forms, and then there are crystalline formations. Along comes Plato with his world of shadows and reflections, reflections in shadows, shadows cast by fire after nightfall—which are not organic realities. Thus, see, he's able to claim that there is something in our world, in our world of copies. Then, you think, well, that's easy: these are simply degraded copies! Copies of copies! Yeah, look, three beds; I have three beds. I have a Bed-Idea, a bed-copy made by a carpenter, and a bed-shadow or reflection. Right.

At the same time, can I just say that they're copies of copies? I only find these extremely bizarre crystalline appearances accompanying my organic realities. Especially since—it gets complicated because organic realities point back to the judgment of the truthful men, who are themselves organic insofar as they refer organic realities back to their models. Who is responsible for reflections? Who is responsible for shadows? [*Pause*] What a story! [*Pause*] The truthful man will say yes, of course! The truthful man is eager to say, "Even reflections, even shadows—I'll take it upon myself to hold them up against their marble forms." But shadows and reflections have a habit of escaping, gravitating toward another figure, a kind of jester [*Pause*] whom Socrates dismisses out of hand, someone who'll have been there the whole time in Plato's work—the Sophist! Well, well, well…

But then the Sophist is a fraud or falsifier.[7] [*Pause*] No, they say, shadows and reflections are not copies of copies. Shadows and reflections have a life of their own, an inorganic life, [*Pause*] and they go out of their way to ask—what is the model for a dancing shadow, or a rippling reflection in the water? You could argue that the model is the organic reality poised over and above the water, or the organic reality moving behind the fire. You might say that, sure, maybe…To that, as Nietzsche might say, the Sophist laughs. Why? Because the Sophist knows that there are things other than copies. [*Pause*]

Plato has a name for copies in *The Sophist*; he calls them "Icons." [*Pause*] The Icon, then, is an organic reality insofar as it is modeled after an Idea. [*Pause*] But there is something else. [*Pause*] There are copies which are marked by falsity, Socrates says, by a fundamental falsity. What? [*Pause*] There are formations whose resemblance depends on their inaccuracy. In other words, they are no longer copies of copies; they are fake copies. That already sounds like something other than a copy. Their resemblance depends on their inaccuracy. And he offers an example himself in *The Sophist.* He points to these buildings with huge dimensions—they'd have to be big—where inaccuracy is necessary. Why? Because the spectator's point of view is contained within the building itself, included within—look it up in the text—oddly, some things include their perspective.

These seem to be phenomena with internal perspectives—for example, his example refers to an immense temple, a column. He says: with a huge column, you are forced to make the top larger than the base, because otherwise it will feel like the column is not even, that its diameter isn't constant—it will feel like the top part is smaller. So, you have to make it larger in order to compensate for the distance. It's a rather straightforward case of something with internal perspective, something that accounts for its own perspective. If I look at a painting depicting a table—Heidegger has a great bit of commentary on Plato in this regard—he says, sure, the painting presents me with a table, right, it cannot help but depict the table for us from a certain vantage point. [*Pause*] The painting's table contains a perspective. It includes the perspective, it includes a point of view. You might think—Ah, what about cubism! Well… I don't think [cubism] would have worried Plato all that much. By no means is it the case that cubism denies perspective. [*Pause*]

Then how is that different from organic realities? We saw that organic realities were subject to the law of perspective. Perspective is born out of organic reality. But the carpenter's table? Of course I, a user, a philosopher, can only see it from one vantage point, from one angle or another, but those are all instances of extrinsic perspectives. I was only able to perceive it from one angle or another, but I knew how to use it. In terms of my perception, I perceive it from this angle or that, but as a philosopher, I know how to use it—no matter the angle. I'm able to home in on a thing's identity from just about any perspective.

Whereas here in this other domain, where I find myself confronted with systems embedded within perspective, where I'm faced with intrinsic perspectives, perspectives inside of the system, I find something quite different. [*Pause*] I can no longer even say… I would say that they're fundamentally distorted [*faussées*], but distorted compared to what? To themselves! It's not about their being distortions or fake versions of the real deal, or their being downgraded copies. I can't even say that much anymore. They are inherently distorted by the perspective they harbor within.

I'll go over that again: [*Pause*] On the one hand he distinguishes—at one point in *The Sophist*—Plato distinguishes between organic realities, which are copies of what's true [*Pause*] and crystalline apparitions—"crystalline" in a very broad sense; it isn't the word he uses, unfortunately, maybe because it's fallen out of favor, you know, in these kinds of stories—anyway, these are reflections and copies… [*Pause*] On the other hand, at another point, he

distinguishes… [*Deleuze corrects the end of his previous sentence*] uh, reflections… What did I say? … [these are] shadows and *reflections*. And at another point, he distinguishes between icons, which are genuine copies, and these distorted [*faussées*] things characterized by the fact that they contain their own perspective, [*Pause*] which he calls—as opposed to icons, since icons are copies, organic realities—he calls them "phantasms."

See, at this point, we can tell what's going on right away. The true world and the truthful man are undermined [*Pause*] by phantasms, that is, by distortions and frauds or falsifiers. If you will, you end up with opposed—if I pair them up as opposites—first, organic and crystalline realities / shadows and reflections—that's our first doublet, our first pair—second, icons / phantasms; third, the truthful man, who presupposes and points back to the true world / the fraud or falsifier, referring to distortions, i.e., things that contain their own perspective.

And that's terrible! Because, I'm paraphrasing—wow, I've already gotten side-tracked, I'll make it quick—because what will come of this? You can already guess: tragedy. It will be a tragedy, a tragedy because the fraud or falsifier and their distortions will undermine the true world from within, to the point where [*Pause*] we can no longer tell which ones are bad copies! It only we could… but no! What they've done is cancel out or problematize the very distinction between model and copy. That's the fraud's doing. The fraud or falsifier isn't someone who makes copies; there's still something honest about someone who makes copies. [*Pause*] They're still truthful men, in a sense, but a fraud brings both model and copy into question.

Bringing it back to Nietzsche: "We got rid of the illusory world along with the true one."[8] To what end? For the sake of what now seems like a monstrous falsifier and their distortions. [*Pause*] In other words, again, the issue isn't about bad copies. The point is that there are no more models, no more copies. The ground has crumbled beneath us, such that it's the other way around: the truthful world… [*Deleuze corrects himself*] truthful man's existence depended on their saying: I assume, I presuppose that there is a true world. And now, it's the true world whose existence depends on the truthful man. And truthful man collapses under the falsifier's assault. *Where are your models now?* The falsifier laughs. They ask the truthful man: *What are you going to do? Your models are gone! If there are no models, there are no copies! What's left when there are no more models or copies? Me!* In other words, what remains is the fraud or falsifier and their distortions, distorted inasmuch as they contain their own perspective. We have gone from perspectives on what's true, from the truthful man's perspective—which permitted the thing's integrity to subsist—to internal perspective, operating within things and permitting neither model nor copy. The tragedy of the truthful man —the marble statues begin to crumble.

I sound like Nietzsche there, but it would take someone as brilliant as Nietzsche: no more marble statues, the statues crumble away. See Book I of Herman Melville's *Pierre; or The Ambiguities,* how Pierre reflects on the crumbling stone figures [of Palmyra]. And, of all the great writers that have come up, if anyone has written forty pages on the development of the truthful man —a brilliant account out of a famous book by Herman Melville; the book is called *Bartleby*.[9] And *Bartleby*—given my accent, I'd better spell it out, *b-a-r-t-l-e-b-y*, one word; it's a name, Bartleby—and it's such a wild story that words fail to describe it. Apologies for the platitude, but it's true. I think you'd be hard pressed to say whether it was written by Melville, or Kafka, or

Beckett. That's the sort of company it keeps. So, what happens in the story? I can't help but…I'll summarize *Bartleby* for those who haven't read it.

It's about a lawyer with three copyists in his employ—notice, three *copyists*—I'm not interested in offering you an interpretation; there are countless interpretations. I'm pointing out why *Bartleby* is relevant to what we're doing right now, today. I'm not offering an interpretation that I think is better than any other—Bartleby acts like… he's one of the three copyists; no one knows where he's from. Unlike the others, he never leaves the office. He simply does his copying, without saying a word. He doesn't say anything. He makes copies and is rather good at it. And our lawyer is a benevolent man; indeed, he is a friend—the lawyer is a friend of truth; he is an honest man, a friend, a friend to both people and to truth. He's a philosopher, then. Still, Bartleby presents a problem. Everything's going well, Bartleby is copying, so he thinks, well, since Bartleby is copying, doing his job, I have no right to bother him. He has him work behind a kind of screen because Bartleby doesn't like to be interrupted while making his copies; he mustn't be disturbed. Grumbling, he can hear muttering from behind the screen. No worries, that's still fine.

And then one day—one day, the lawyer says, "Bartleby, come help us compare." Oddly enough, up to that point he had always gotten out of comparing. What does the lawyer mean by comparing? He means comparing a copy to its original document… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:01:27]

Part 2

… and the lawyer explains how the process works: he has the original and the—what are they called, well, the, uh, the employees—the copyists have their copies, and they all read through them, in order to proofread them. The organic reality of the copy must be referred back against its model.

So now, since there are three copies, for once—before there were only two copies—before there were two, but now there are three—so the lawyer says, "Bartleby, come over and help us compare." From behind the screen, comes an extraordinary statement—whose French translation directly corresponds to the American text—"I would prefer not to." [*Laughter*] And the lawyer, the philosopher, thinks he's misheard: "What now? Bartleby, you heard what I said; come here." "I would prefer not to." "What do you mean you would prefer not to?"

And at the time, the lawyer thinks, *Oh, Bartleby is just in a mood. Let's leave him be, since something's really got…* Anyway. It happens again. One day Bartleby is expected to run an errand, but no, the cycle repeats, and the lawyer starts to get used to it. Bartleby is a very good copyist, he does his copying, but he doesn't want to compare his copies; he doesn't want to verify his copy's internal resemblance to its model. Strange, isn't it? Then the lawyer tells him, "Do the rounds while we compare our work." And we hear, "I would prefer not to." The lawyer shrugs and thinks, if he prefers not to, he prefers not to. Bizarrely, everyone starts expressing themselves in the terms, "I prefer" or "I prefer not to." [*Laughter*] The lawyer is beside himself, then, when the others say, "Oh, I prefer not to have lunch now." [*Laughter*] Everyone talks like that. Bartleby is causing things to unravel. Then one day, something awful happens: Bartleby

settles in behind his screen and no longer copies. An hour goes by, and the lawyer asks, "Bartleby, what are you doing? You're not copying!" And in response: "I would prefer not to."

Well, the lawyer doesn't dare kick Bartleby out since he's come to learn that Bartleby has been living in the office—he never leaves, not even to eat, he sleeps in the office, the only thing he eats are ginger-nuts, he's living in the office, right—horrified, as a truthful man, the only way the lawyer can get rid of Bartleby is to move offices. Bartleby stays put and the new owner has him kicked out by the police. See how this story is relevant; he gets kicked out by the police. He stays on the steps where they put him, they put him there; they don't know what to do with him. They put him in debtor's prison, in debtor's prison, but he has a special status, particularly because the lawyer is paying for him to be well taken care of. He's always standing, like this, a marble form. And then he lies down and dies; he's dead. What's going on here? He's the pure form of a copyist. It's the story of the straight-shooter or truthful man, from start to finish. *Bartleby* covers every stage of the truthful man. First the lawyer, [then] comparing *qua* the copy-model relationship, [*Pause*] finally, the self-destructing copy, and then there are no more copies. And what is the copyist?

Obviously, we can only understand it by comparing this sort of protagonist to some of Melville's other characters, who might give us a hint. At the very least, we can say that Bartleby possesses a truly fantastic power of the false that prevents us from mistaking falsity's power for being evil. That's an important point. Second, then, we can say that it's over, it's settled, truthful men are no more. Truthful men died along with Bartleby. The death of the truthful man—and it's not me, it's Nietzsche who's laughing; he thinks it's funny—I've lost my papers, but it's in another text, I think. No? Ah, yes—the "pandemonium of all free spirits." Yeah. Nietzsche writes: "The true world (the truth-world) – an idea that is of no further use, not even as an obligation, – now an obsolete, superfluous idea, *consequently* a refuted idea: let's get rid of it! (Bright day; breakfast; return of *bon sens* and cheerfulness; Plato blushes in shame," [*Deleuze repeats*] "Plato blushes in shame; pandemonium of all free spirits."

The second stage: the original character [*l'homme original*]. [*Pause*] What is an original character? He's nobility, [*Pause*] someone directly descendant from the gods. [*Pause*] There aren't many original characters. [*Pause*] He has a strange nobility; he lacks the truthful man's modesty. He is truly original. Why call him an "original character"? [*Pause*] It's because Melville devotes a few incredible passages in part of one of his other books, *The Confidence Man*, to three types of characters, what he calls original characters, odd characters [*hommes remarquables*], and common characters [*hommes ordinaires*].[10] He says, right, at the end of the day, it's not hard to be odd. You can do it. But it's difficult to be original, to reach that point—at most, there's only one per novel, [and only] when it's a really great novel. There might only be one. You might have a lot of odd characters, but you can't have two original characters together. He has highlighted something about original characters, then. He says that, honestly, because [original characters] tend to refract, to reflect people around them, other people reflect the original character. That's why there cannot be two in one novel.

And I argue that, [*Pause*] there has been one original character in the history of philosophy. If it's true that Plato is our truthful man or straight-shooter, there has been one original character. This original character came before Plato and was among the Pre-Socratics, coming from a

divine family—an *agonal* family, as the Greeks say—in other words, he descended from gods, not from humans but from gods. This divine descendent was the great philosopher—but we can drop the "philosopher"—Empedocles. [*Pause*] And clearly, any philosophy—and here we'll make more sense of what I muddled through last time, all this business with concepts, affects, and percepts in philosophy—ultimately, what I was getting at was this, that, uh… When you read philosophy as something dead, you might as well not read it. It ought to be read like anything else, a great novel, a great poem, a great comedy, a great… because ultimately, there are three ways to read philosophy, three readings that coexist, as I see it, and you have to—the bad news is that you have to do all three.

There's what we might call the scholastic reading. [*Pause*] What is that? Well, it requires that you account for doctrine. When taking doctrine into account, I'd tell you, look, all you need is a dictionary for Empedocles or a book about the history of philosophy. It might be a bad account or it might be a good account, but it will still be a matter of what's truthful or accurate [*véridique*]; it comes down to what's true—you know, is it or is it not a true account? Or is it plausible? There are a few writings from Empedocles, but not many, eh? We don't really know what he said. So we try to recount it; with this first reading, then, I'd say sure, right, Empedocles was a philosopher who thought the world was a perpetual struggle, a confrontation between love and hate, and that the world goes through cycles—first [*Pause*] love is dominant, since love brings things together, and then hate takes over, since hate separates. [*Pause*] You might say, okay, that's interesting. If it's a good history book, you get a lot of details; if it's the *Petit Larousse*, you don't get a lot of detail.

With the second possible reading, you're not trying to intervene… you're trying to—trying to bring it to life. Right. [*Pause*] Because it's alive. So far as that goes, I suppose, you aren't even acting as a professional philosopher. You're better off not being a professional philosopher. Let's say, for example, your name is Romain Rolland, and you write a little book—you're so taken with Empedocles that it leads you to write a book titled *The Fire of Empedocles*[11] since everyone knows that he ended up hurling himself into a volcano. Then that leads… [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:15:10]

… "are shunned. Forbidden friendship forms the outer bounds of the chaos it encircles. But lo, long ago, a crack in the sealed vessel of the world which filled with Hatred. It drips out, slowly, slowly leaking"—hatred drips, a crack emerges in the world's vessel, and hatred starts to leak out—"It drips out, slowly, slowly leaking, and as the level drops, in rushes as its replacement the beneficent flow of immaculate love. Along the way, separated elements come together and intermingle. A furrow of life is carved out beneath the plowshare. The reciprocal pressure of these two rival forces"—love and hate—"whirl into motion amidst the inert chaos. First, Love goes straight to the center of the world, whence Hate withdraws; and from this primitive nucleus, this focal point, it gradually recovers, stone by stone, the rest of its empire."[12]

Can I just say? This sure sounds like a poet. Has he poeticized the text? No—he's done better; he's energized it from within. In place of two abstract terms—separate, unite—he describes violent dynamic relationships, centripetal motion, centrifugal motion, cracks in the vase, etc. In my opinion, there's something else he's already helped us understand. But maybe it's predicated on us having done the first reading, who can say?

And then I just want to add: there is a third reading. Poetry is still not enough. We also need philosophy. It would be too easy to simply sprinkle a bit of poetry into the history of philosophy. That's not enough. You need philosophy. But what does philosophy consist in? Well, it consists in asking—not *Is any of this true?*—but *Why are they saying this?* Fundamentally, the question is: why this rather than something else? [*Pause*] Moreover, what makes us Empedocleans? If we understand why he makes his claims the way he does… It's not that we'll say, no, he's wrong! As such a noble and original character, what absolute necessity drove Empedocles to say what he said? What's going on here, with this cycle of love and hate? It's that Empedocles, of course, this is before Plato, so—I'm treading carefully because I'm trying not to make some catastrophic blunder—it has to do with Parmenides—goodness, actually, does anyone remember their alleged time periods, what centuries?[13] [*muffled comment*], anyway, it has to do with Parmenides. I hope he comes after. Yes. You can always look it up in your handy *Larousse*. Anyway, it doesn't matter. It has to do with Parmenides. For Parmenides, it was really about the formation of the true world and the truthful man or straight-shooter, which Plato later took back up.

But Empedocles' point is simple as it is beautiful: get rid of your models. As someone with divine ancestry, I'm telling you to abolish your venerations. [*Pause*] And, precisely because he's a philosopher, Nietzsche indeed paints a rather grand portrait of Empedocles; Nietzsche instructs us that, given his divine background, we cannot think of Empedocles as an atheist. What was Nietzsche getting at? It's not too far—§139[14] … He was reproached for his impiety. It's a wonderful passage; Nietzsche begins, Empedocles "comes from an *agonal* family, and he made a huge splash in Olympia. He wore purple robes, a golden belt, bronze sandals, and a Delphic crown upon his head. He wore his hair long and had a permanently dark countenance…"[15]— well, hold on, it's later on, where does it say… where does it say that he wasn't… that he was accused of impiety? Anyway. [*Pause*] Well, I'll have to track it down; I'm not sure. Anyway, what was I saying? Right—

Empedocles' claim is that there is no model. There is no "real deal." Stop thinking in terms of models and copies. But then what is there? The only thing that matters [*Pause*] is not—the organic is not a copy of a supra-organic model—there is no being or reality apart from the organic. All of reality, the whole of being, is organic. [*Pause*] Parmenides began with "being is." Empedocles has one simple addendum: "*organic* being is." "*Living* being is." In other words, what Empedocles, being of noble birth, desperately wants is the unity of all living things. His ideas aren't all that philosophical, they aren't all that, they aren't all that new, or what have you. Try—try to listen for what's new about this way of speaking. What does it mean to say that there is a unity in all living things? It means there is no longer a difference between models and copies; there is no longer a difference between essence and appearance. There are essences, but what is an essence? Essence is appearance insofar as it is unified by the living—put another way, what is the unifying force? Essence is appearance insofar as it is united in love. Appearance unified by love—that's what essence, or being, is. [*Pause*]

Afterwards, the word *philos* radically changes; I'd describe it as a huge, a huge upheaval. From that moment, *philos* designates the aftermath. *Philias* is love or friendship, either one—it is love-friendship, you can no longer tell which. In everything we encountered before from Plato, it's no accident that philosophy is called "philosophy," because a philosophy is "only" a philosopher,

and the Greeks distinguished between what had long been known as *sophos*—sages, *sophois*—and what were later called *philosophois, philosophois.* A philosopher is very different from a *sophos*. Parmenides is a sage who deals in immutable forms, in marble forms. [*Pause*] But Plato is not a sage; Socrates is not a sage. They are philosophers, that is, they copy after models, only they draw their copies from within. We've seen that they are truthful men. Notice that *philos*, in this interpretation, is a derivation; it is a copy derived from a model. The philosopher only loves wisdom [*sagesse*]; he is not a wiseman [*sage*]. Alright.

So, it's significant that *philos* is derivative. What does Empedocles do? Well, he's the first to make love-friendship into the original. [*Pause*] The original replaces the model, the original designates something very different from a model. The original is appearance unified by love. Love is what is constitutive. Love is no longer derivative; it has become constitutive. It is no longer a question of being a philosopher, strictly speaking; it's about being a philanthropist. In the broad sense of *anthropos*, man—it means man, right—we ought to render it as "friend to everything living, the unity of all living things." The philanthropist purports to love all living things.

And indeed, we know—fortunately, it was time—we know from what little that remains of Empedocles' writing that he was very much inspired by the Pythagoreans, and that he longed for a well-known Pythagorean sort of society—I say well-known because we don't know much about it—the so-called "society of friends," the society of friends. That already sounds like a novel, almost like a detective novel: the society of true friends, which clearly sounds like some sort of secret society. So, Empedocles was looking for a society of friends. Immediately, he stops being—see, we're really dealing with a second age—he's no longer a philosopher; he's become a philanthropist. This passage from philosophy to philanthropy is rather intriguing. You can sense that it won't last long. Again, this philanthropy simply consisted in grasping essence or being as identical to the whole of appearance united in love. That's what the original character was. The original character. [*Pause*]

Someone who says that—who makes those sorts of claims—is someone who turns love around. Love is no longer a by-productive but is constitutive of the exchange. Love is what is promised. He completely inverted philosophy. Supposedly, with philosophy, there is first wisdom and then love. Philosophers are lovers. Love comes from *sophia*. Empedocles turns it around: it is the *sophia* that derives from love. You might think, sure, but so what? Well, it's fantastic, this sort of reversal is the mark of a great philosopher. We can comfortably say, however little we might have left of Empedocles' work, Plato didn't understand it at all. Plato says it's… either that, no, either that or he understood all too well—no, I take it back, forgive me, let me back up—or Plato strived to be a fantastic counter-Empedocles, completely reaffirming love's submission to wisdom—anti-Empedocles at its purest. Alright, what then? The plot is thickening. Our puppet show, we're well into our second puppet show. Now essence, being, is organic being. There is no being other than organic being, organic being *qua* appearance united in love. What sort of world am I wading through? What is this abominable world? Why isn't our world united in love? It's a real problem, right?

See, I've already answered the question why—if only because it leads us to ask how—why, why does Empedocles tell us this whole story? He tells it to us because his main idea involves turning

love around. As we just saw. But what's going on? How do we explain that being is appearance united by love, then? If so, that means our world is lacking in love. That's not it at all, you understand, it takes on a completely different form when it's put that way, the way Nietzsche presents it in his account of Empedocles. It's no longer an abstract question of how Empedocles theorizes a single world with two cycles, that the world passes through two cycles. No, there is a cycle consisting in a period of love, then a period of hate, and then it starts over, and so on. And in a way, we know that intuitively, and you think, well, very good, that's lovely, that's all well and good—these Greeks, what was going through their heads? It's not like that anymore. Both terms, love and hate, have very different meanings for Empedocles; they're not even in the same ballpark. Bear in mind that, once he's carried out his reversal, once he's defined being as appearance united by love, he's left with the question: but how come appearance isn't united by love? Where is the love? It's gone! It's gone. What sort of world is this?

We find an incredible passage in Nietzsche. Here what he's really trying to do is give us a feel for the life, the life within a philosopher's way of thinking. "What he tried to impress upon us, more than anything, was the unity of all living things, how eating meat was like eating oneself"—like many Pythagoreans, he was a vegetarian—"the murder of our next of kin. What he wanted for humanity was a monumental cleansing. […] The entirety of his *pathos* rests on the idea that all *living things are one,* gods, humans, and beasts."[16] "The unity of all life is"—this translation isn't clear, so pay attention—"the unity of all life is an infinitely more productive version of Parmenides' notion of the unity of being."[17]

Do you understand? Parmenides conceived of the unity of being, but Empedocles puts it in terms of the unity of living things, which is much more productive than Parmenides: that's what this bad Nietzsche translation is getting at. "What's been added is that all nature has a deep sympathy, an overflowing feeling of compassion. The purpose of his existence"—Empedocles' existence—"appeared to be making amends for the evils caused by hatred, spreading the idea of unity in love throughout a world of hatred and strife, and lending his support wherever he finds suffering, the product of hatred. He trudges through this world of torment and contradiction."[18] Where is love? That's what haunts Empedocles. Divinely handsome, being himself of divine descent, trudging along, asking: Where is love? In Nietzsche's own writing, Zarathustra wanders around in a similar fashion, suffice it to say. And Zarathustra will also be Empedoclean, in the sense that he turns love and wisdom around, such that love no longer comes from wisdom; wisdom comes from love.

Well, let's see, [*Pause*] what could have prevented such unification, Empedocles wonders. Here we come back to hatred. Hate must have taken hold of appearance. In order for appearance to not be united in love, in other words, if we want for the unity of all living things, appearance must have been taken over by hatred. In other words, behind appearances lies an evil will. [*Pause*] Behind appearances lies an evil, obtuse will, which prevents their being unified by love. We have to track this obtuse will down; we must fight off this evil will behind appearances. We are no longer… behind appearances; on the other side there are essences, there are models. Now we aren't on the other side! Hatred is at work behind appearances, preventing love from unifying all of appearance. And I, Empedocles, will take up my spear and sword, and I will strike out behind appearances at this stubborn, evil will, which we call hatred.

Feel the drama. — Some of you have been quick to put another name alongside Empedocles', several other names even—And I'll take up my spear to root out… — I'm not quoting anything. We're just playing around. It's in your… in… — And I will take my spear and track down the stubborn will behind appearances which prevents appearance from being united in love. See, it's getting… It might strike you as a totally crazy idea; it's not what you could call run of the mill. Working out a history of philosophy, you go, alright, there's Empedocles, and then there's so-and-so, and you make a list. There's Parmenides, there's Empedocles, there's Heraclitus, and so on. It's the same thing here; we have to go through the same task with them all: discover the why and how behind their thought. What matters isn't what someone says; it's why they say it, how they say it, what leads them to say it, what it has to do with them. If you don't understand why it matters to them, not as an individual, but what's going on at a deeper level—the problem that's killing them, the problem they live for, the problem that's killing them—you haven't understood anything; most of all, you've failed to understand your own problems.

Right, well, I claim—there's one passage I just have to mention. You'll recognize it [*It's from Moby Dick*]—"Hark ye yet again—the little lower layer. All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks."—"All visible objects…"—perhaps better described as appearances, [since] all visible objects are appearances—"All visible objects […] are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed…"—according to this passage, these are synonyms for masks, they're nothing but pasteboard masks; all visible objects are pasteboard masks, and so too are living acts and undoubted deeds. "In the living act, the undoubted deed […] there, some unknown but still reasoning thing"—some unknown but reasoning thing appears—"some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the moldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask."

Translating that: everything is a mask, everything is appearance. However, notice that I wanted to unify appearances with love, and this isn't unified by love. It is separated, it is fragmented by something fundamentally evil: hatred. Behind the mask, there is something rational. "If man will strike"—if the original character, if I, original character, will strike, if man will strike—"strike through the mask!" What a sublime sentence, everything in this book is incredible. Behind visible objects, the pasteboard masks, there is an unknown but still reasoning thing behind the masks. If man should strike, let him strike through the mask.

It goes on: "How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall"—you'll recognize it right away—"To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond." Sometimes I think there's nothing beyond appearance. "But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him"—that is, within him, behind him—"outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealousy presiding over all creations."

I'll stop there because I end up sounding like Empedocles verbatim. The battle of hatred presides over all creation. And you can see why it presides over all creation. It's a famous passage; it's Captain Ahab's famous speech in *Moby Dick*. Where Ahab says no, I'm not looking for revenge

against Moby Dick. I'd argue that Ahab here is Empedocles. As I see it, Empedocles had three lives; yes, that will do, three lives—especially since Empedocles believed in reincarnation… in one life he wore the guise of Don Quixote, and then in the next, he came back as Captain Ahab.

Why Don Quixote? It's certainly not because he's a guy who gets things wrong. It's certainly not because he has hallucinations; I mean, he does have hallucinations, but he is a great seer, a visionary. Which isn't to say he's not hilarious, right? It's pretty funny. I don't know what your sense of humor is like, but it's extremely funny. A visionary. Yes, obviously, he's a crackpot. If you see—if you see what lies behind things, you're a crackpot. The problem with such people, with original characters, isn't that they see what's above; that's a good thing for Plato, that's… [*Laughter*] That's fine, that's how we get Platonist Christianity, whereas there can't be an Empedoclean Christianity, you know. For Empedocles, there is nothing over and above things! Christians and Platonists can work together because… there are "Ideas," but you can sneak God in there along with Ideas. But… It doesn't even occur to Empedocles that something should exist overhead! The sky! The sky belongs to the living; gods are of the living no less than beasts, as someone like Nietzsche might put it. He could have added the sky, beasts, gods, and so on, to the unity of living things. The unity of living things that only love ensures.

But our world is one of division. We ought to have Being—that is, not something other than appearance, not something from up high. We ought to have Being down here. Empedocles says it is here. And Being down here is appearance united in love. That's all we require. Which implies turning love around, turning the concept of love around such that… We don't have it. Because behind appearances there lies something which prevents love's unification. That something is hate. Well, we'll have to track down this will to hate, this hateful will. The original, uh, the original character will need to take up his spear and strike behind appearances, the pasteboard masks, to strike behind the pasteboard masks, which we hope and pray would take on a life of their own, once unified by love—as soon as they can be unified by love, they will cease to be pasteboard masks.

But what prevents these pasteboard masks from coming to life is that behind them resides a devious will, for which they are either agent or principal.[19] What does it matter? There is hatred. Alright, we have to take up our swords against this hatred, we have to overcome this hatred, and Don Quixote charges behind the pasteboard masks to get at something behind them, and Captain Ahab launches his ship which perishes just as Don Quixote will end; Captain Ahab will perish in his endeavor to reach what he will eventually call the Leviathan, behind the pasteboard masks. However, you can sense the drama, the tragedy. Where is the drama? The original character, having begun as a philanthropist, a lover, revolutionizing love. Where does he end up? He finds himself face to face with hate, falling victim to hate. He's gone over to the other side; he's been drawn in behind the pasteboard mask. And he winds up with hate against hate. [*Pause*] He awakens hatred and returns it.

And Empedocles despises it. Not just the world, but those who detract from its unification in love. He's overcome by what Nietzsche calls the "great disgust." He ceases to be a philanthropist and becomes what, in *The Confidence-Man*, Melville calls a "surly philanthropist," a surly philanthropist. Not quite the same thing as a misanthrope, but he sort of winds up being a misanthrope. In fact, the surly philanthropist is someone who says: there is nothing but

pasteboard masks. And behind them, an obtuse will. He's gone to the other side. Which brings us back to something we've been toying with since the start of the year. It's not enough to define crystal formations; there is something inside them. He's gone over. It's true of Captain Ahab, and it's true of Empedocles—Empedocles hurls himself into a volcano. And it was true of Don Quixote; it's the tragedy of what's true [*le drama du vrai*], and it continues to be, as we've just seen, when it comes to the original character.

Alright, are you all still with me? Well, I'm going to move rather quickly; I'm just giving you an outline. We'd have to work out a lot of the details, right?

The third stage. Alright. Where does that leave us? I was saying, with the first stage, the truthful man fell apart. He's shattered to pieces. The marble has crumbled away, right. And that's Bartleby. It all ends with Bartleby. That's what happens with the straight-shooter or truthful man. Then we have the original character, who did not collapse. He didn't fall apart, but he went over to the other side, right? He was lured over, right? He was dragged down by his harpoon, right? He's gone over to the other side of the pasteboard mask. In other words, he's gone over to hatred. What worse could have happened to him? He raised philosophy to the level of philanthropy, and then became a "surly philanthropist." His last resort is to throw himself into a volcano or to throw himself into mortal combat. Captain Ahab. End of Act II.

But in the end, he's moved on to the other side, and we shouldn't forget that, eh? Because it'll come back. Act III: all levity. It will be a ballet. We should make it into a ballet. We'd have everything we need to turn it into a ballet. I'll stop there, I'll leave it at that, because in the next trimester we'll perform a ballet with… [*Laughter*] We'll have costumes, and so on. Everything we need. You can already imagine the costume for the original character. [*Laughter*] It's a little tricky, eh, with the marble man, or what have you. The marble man. We'll have to ask [Patrice] Chéreau, which is perfect because he has everything, right? We'll have a costuming workshop. Everything we need, right? Yeah, that's what we'll do. Costuming, playwriting, everything. The whole shebang.

So, Act III. The whole thing is in… it's all in—how do I put this? Everything is in repose. There are strange voices—strange, soothing voices saying, *Come now, let's not exaggerate. What is it? What's wrong, huh? It's not that bad! What's gotten into you? Listen. No, look. People aren't so bad. Of course not. True, we don't have truth, but we're getting closer. We can get closer to it if we try; it takes effort to realize that humanity is good. And anyway, there are laws. Humanity might be evil if it weren't for laws, but there* are *laws.* What's going on? All of these calming voices we so desperately need? I might argue that they emanate from ordinary characters, or that they bear upon ordinary characters.

We're told: Nonsense—what are you talking about? All this about love and hate. Now you're Don Quixote! You're the real Don Quixote! No need for that! It's not that bad! In other words, it's the small voice of fat Sancho speaking, or else it's the voice of Captain Ahab's officers saying: Moby Dick might be more terrifying, but he is still a whale like any other! Let's hunt a different one! Stick to ordinary whales. Either that or it's what, in a splendid passage from *Moby Dick*, Melville calls an "easy sort of despair." But we get a term in *The Confidence-Man* that

works just as well: “the genial misanthrope.” See, it’s only natural that the “genial misanthrope” comes after the “surly philanthropist.”

So, the genial misanthrope is someone who says, alright. It’s fine, that’s… people aren’t worth much. You don’t have to make a big production out of it. It’s nothing out of the ordinary. But, hearing that—“It’s nothing out of the ordinary”—if you recall, this might be an opportunity to go back to the novel I mentioned earlier, a series I love, written by Maurice Leblanc, where the protagonist, Balthazar, is a professor of everyday philosophy at a girls boarding school.[20] Professor Balthazar’s everyday philosophy entailed that any adventure that may befall you actually has a simple explanation. Hold on, you see, it’s totally normal. And he falls… And as Balthazar runs into all sorts of strange, absurd disasters—he also has a bit of Empedocles, but really there’s a bit of everything thrown in—this professor of everyday philosophy counts as an ordinary character.

And then, since I’m always circling back to this great, bizarre novel by Melville, *The Confidence-Man*; is it a coincidence that *The Confidence-Man* is broken down into three levels? A type of speech uniformly shared by a series of characters we can’t yet pin down, a strangely comfortable, philanthropic kind of speech—distinct from Empedocles—a philanthropic form of speech along the lines of the genial misanthrope. Where things aren’t so serious, and there’s this whole series of characters throughout *The Confidence-Man* linked together as parts of a general discourse of “No, it’s not as bad as you think.” Ordinary speech directed at misanthropes, against misanthropes. It explicitly says as much in the text, right? It’s speech “against” misanthropy, “against” surly philanthropists. [*Pause*] And this kind of speech directed against misanthropy or surly philanthropy is the speech of genial philanthropists, of the people—it’s ordinary speech. What sort of people use it? That’s a question for later. Anyway.

You might be wondering: what is it? In a way, this speech—what would ordinary speech be? It’s a form of speech we might think of as “legal discourse.” [*Pause*] Ordinary characters talk in terms of law. But we need to understand: What is the law? It is the arrangement of perspectives. Law is the combination of perspectives such that perspectives no longer collide. [*Pause*] There is an art to composing perspectives so that people can work together. It’s the art of using a particular relation to distinguish between other relations. It is a discursive art; discourse is what makes law. This is why ordinary characters express themselves according to the discourse, the speech of ordinary life. Law is supposed to arrange perspectives, to put perspectives together—I’m moving quickly because I’m running out of time; we would need examples to examine these…—In other words, it imposes common perspectives. Like what? It’s intriguing to think about common perspectives. It gives us a new type of perspective, a third major type of perspective, right: common perspectives. We ought to consider how they’re related to particular perspectives. Not just any perspective will do. [Only some] are combinable perspectives, right. That is how the law operates. Alright.

But what about the Greeks; how did the Greeks do it? For them, it was very simple: their speech was built around *nomos*; it was *nomos,* which is usually roughly translated as “law.” And the Greeks opposed—or at some point, they begin to oppose *nomos* to *physis*. [*Pause*] And then, based on what we know, one of the greatest Sophists, it seems—I even made sure to double check in the *Larousse*—the earliest who claimed to be the philosopher of *nomos*, and his speech

was—his name was Protagoras—and his discourse went along the lines of: well, listen, from the point of view… from nature's point of view, things are going rather poorly, eh, there is neither true nor false; ultimately, there is nothing at all, the perfect expression of what Nietzsche would later call "nihilism." There are just perceptions, but these perceptions differ, i.e., it's a matter of appearance. There are appearances, and everyone perceives things in their own way. There is no… Everyone has their own way of looking at things. But that's fine, really, everything's okay—it all works out because, listen—I, Protagoras, I claim that it'll work out once we compose our perspectives. We will simply put them together: it may be that all perceptions are equally true or false; nevertheless, they aren't equal. They have different values. [*Interruption of the recording*] [2:01:07]

Part 3

… we end up with a composition of perspectives, and that's what we call *nomos*. And there is no…there is no…there is no being, there is no nature, there is no *physis*; there is only *nomos*. And that's how Protagoras proceeds.

This is what Melville—I haven't had time to read it for you yet—what he so neatly calls the genial misanthrope, you know, we're all surrounded by genial misanthropes. We meet them all the time, it's amazing—it's a sort of discourse that blends a sort of cynical attitude with extreme platitudes. You know, the sort who think it's worth pointing out that people inherently fear the police, who think that idea is at all meaningful—it's a very peculiar way of talking. People have come back from it, right, they've… *It hasn't happened to me. No, it's not so bad. It hasn't happened to me; it can't be as bad as you say*. [*Laughter*] Melville has done a wonderful job of depicting it. In *Moby Dick*, in *The Confidence-Man*, you get excellent descriptions of this manner of speech. But in *Moby Dick* there is what he calls an "easy sort of despair," this time on a boat, where it really is the discourse held by ordinary characters. It's a poor sailor, so it's a multi-faceted form of speech. It's Protagoras aboard a ship, getting seasick.

"When a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than suspects that the joke is at nobody's expense but his own. However, nothing dispirits, and nothing seems worthwhile disputing. He bolts down all events, all creeds, and beliefs, and persuasions, all hard things visible and invisible, never mind how knobby; as an ostrich of potent digestion gobbles down bullets and gun flints. And as for small difficulties and worryings, prospects of sudden disaster, peril of life and limb; all these, and death itself, seem to him only sly, good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed by the unseen and unaccountable old joker."[21]

You know how when you get up in the morning, ordinarily speaking, and then you receive a huge blow on the head, and you're laid out, bleeding. And then you think, *well, my day's off to a good start.* That's what Melville is talking about. "And death itself [seems] to him only sly, good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed by the unseen and unaccountable old joker." "That odd sort of wayward mood I am speaking of, comes over a man only in some time of extreme tribulation; it comes in the very midst of his earnestness, so that what just before might have seemed to him a thing most momentous, now seems but a part of the general joke."

We thought we were Empedocles, through and through—and then all of a sudden, we think, *What am I doing here?* Don Quixote snaps out of it—what am I doing here? It's part of the farce. "There is nothing like the…"—here's where Moby Dick comes in—"There is nothing like the perils of whaling to breed this free and easy sort of genial, desperado philosophy; and with it I now regarded this whole voyage of the *Pequod*, and the great White Whale its object." Easy and genial despair, nothing matters—it can't be that bad. That's what's happening. All I'm saying is that, if he were to fit in the Sophist Protagoras, this might be where he'd do it, when it comes to *nomos* and the composition of perspectives.

Fourth—I'm really going to pick up the pace because I've had enough, and I sense that you have asl well. What, you don't… you're fine? We'll wrap it up then, okay? But anyway, fourth, I have to go back—I have to double back to the original character. The original character reaches behind the mask. That was fine when it was Empedocles, or when it was Don Quixote. But he had already turned into a surly philanthropist—more or less a misanthropist, frighteningly misanthropic. He might have hated hatred, [but] he hated hatred so much that all he had was hate, nothing but hatred. He became a hateful man. Empedocles killed himself before—we can probably assume that Empedocles killed himself—threw himself into a volcano so as to not become hateful. Ahab remains a great philanthropist, i.e., someone with a sense for the unity of all living things. But at what cost? He goes behind the mask. He moves on to the other side. However, he gets killed by the white whale. Then… we won't get into Don Quixote. His purity protects him. But the others, the ones who went on, former Empedocles, perhaps—they are men of hate, or seem like it.

And indeed, [*Pause*] as radically evil men, they fundamentally renounce the love that unifies all living things. They've entered into the service of hatred, which kills everything mortal and for which death never comes soon enough. Their perspective is depraved. They are the kind of person whom Plato insightfully called "depraved according to nature." And it so happens that, centuries later, Herman Melville writes a wonderful novella, *Billy Budd*, where the protagonist [is]… [*Pause*] to quote Melville himself, someone "depraved according to nature": the ship's chief engineer, who goes by the name Mac Claggart. And Melville specifically says—I don't have time to read it, but it's another one of Melville's short masterpieces—Melville explains that he is depraved according to nature. He says you need clerical training to detect it, even if you have worldly experience. You might be a very skilled psychologist, but you will still fail to spot depravity according to nature. Because someone depraved according to nature is sick; they'll fool you. It takes a clerical background—and what does that mean? You need eyes like Empedocles. It would take someone like Empedocles. That's what Empedocles diagnosed as what's behind the mask. That's what he was diagnosing. [*Pause*]

There's a lengthy passage describing Mac Claggart's eyes and eye color. Particularly when he's scheming something. Claggart is already handsome, right, but he gets even more handsome when he's plotting something. His eyes, see, becomes "strangely suffused," in some of Melville's finest descriptions of eyes. There is, well, only one American and one Englishman have been able to capture eyes in writing. [Algernon Charles] Swinburne, near the start of his major novel[22] and possibly Melville in *Billy Budd*, in this fantastic description of Mac Claggart's eyes when he's plotting.[23]

Right. That's a depraved perspective. That's a depraved perspective. Only, it turns out that they aren't unique; their uniqueness has much deeper roots. They are degenerate descendants of Empedocles; they are deteriorated descendants of an original character. I say "depraved perspective" as it's commonly used in art or aesthetics. It's a very particular sort of perspective; see a writer whose work has been reprinted, [Jurgis] Baltrusaitis, who described "depraved perspective" in painting. It's fascinating; it's about anamorphosis.

But to cut a long story short: their uniqueness is only apparent. Mac Claggart—that's not, that's not really how it is. In fact, in fact, such characters form a sort of chain. They form a kind of chain, I think, where each one waits his turn. Why did we have to go through the ordinary character earlier? Because for an ordinary character, the discourse of *nomos*, [*Pause*] or even reasonable discourse, the discourse of reason, works just fine. They use reason, as is duly noted by… [*Deleuze doesn't finish his sentence*] And Melville offers an apt, psychiatric label for these depraved perspectives, these corrupted, evil figures. He refers to "monomania."[24] Indeed it's what they called "monomania" in the 19th century. In the 19th century, monomania referred to delusional actions rather than delusional ideas, that is, it referred to people who—you might live with them for years; they're fine, totally reasonable. Then, all of a sudden—as I was saying, for the longest time, they lead normal lives; there's nothing delusional about their way of thinking—and then all of a sudden, they do something explosive, they kill someone where… it doesn't make any sense—why did they do it? Why murder? Why? Or they start a fire.

So, monomania is a major theme in the 19th century. It plagued the 19th century—terrorizing both city and countryside alike. Because it was the lower classes, the working class, who had monomania. Obviously delusional ideas were off limits; they wouldn't dare say anything. Delusional ideas were reserved for the rich, the bourgeoisie; commoners only ever had monomania… i.e., delusional acts. They set fires in the countryside, they burned those, oh, you know… What? [*Pause*] What are they called? [*Pause*] You know, the wheat…

A Student: Bales?

Deleuze: That's not it…

A Student: Haystacks? Barns?

Deleuze: Ah, yes, that is it. There we go. I was sort of thinking about how they burned hay bales. And in the city, there were murders, murders committed by maids. So, between peasants starting fires—between simple peasants setting hay bales on fire and maids killing their bosses, psychiatrists had a problem on their hands, and a big one. Whereas, when it came to the bourgeoisie, I was really struck reading 19th century psychiatry. I have never—I don't think I've ever found an instance of bourgeois monomania. It always refers to common people. Always. Obviously, there *were* bourgeois monomaniacs, but that doesn't matter; it corresponded… With the bourgeoisie, you had to… there were monomaniacs, but back then they let it slide, I think, they left them alone. We let them go, we slapped them on the wrist, and we may have kept our eye on them, but they never show up in any textbooks. They had the right to their big delusional ideas, eh? But anyway, where was I going with that? Ah, yes, that's how I would describe these characters; they come in series. And this is—it must be said—coming back around, they might

well be devolutions of the original character, but they're the ones we ought to call "odd characters" [*hommes remarquables*].

Why "odd character"? Because… And why do they come fourth, after the third one? Since the third traded in the discourse of ordinary life and ordinary time. — I didn't bring up time before because we're running long; it will always be up to you to bring things back to time— It's the discourse of ordinary life. And they are defined because they expect horror. Mac Claggart waits a very long time for his chance to corner the handsome Billy Budd. [*Pause*] Right, but then, if they're biding their time, indeed, even when they're all the Mac Claggart type, technically speaking they are not alone. There's still a series of odd characters. There is a series of odd characters, a whole series of odd characters; each has his hour and waits for his time to come, huddled in a corner in the ordinary flow of time and life. [*Pause*]

Hence [*Pause*] I point to three, to three things. In Melville's novel, *The Confidence-Man*, who uses a philanthropic discourse about ordinary life, e.g., "Oh, it's not so bad"? [*Pause*] I've mentioned this whole series of bizarre figures. Remember, we start with a mute albino writing on a placard, followed by a crippled black man, who is seized upon by misanthropes claiming, "You're putting us on!" Perennial themes in Melville's work. "You're faking." And he says, "No, someone will vouch for me," and then there are his intercessors, so, there's the albino, the black man, and then—I can't remember what order they're in, but I've been over this, and you can check for yourself—the man with the hat… the man with the gray tie, the man… etc., forming a series of odd characters who all use the same ordinary speech—"It's not so serious!"—each waiting for his chance to carry out a sequence and do something which we can assume is a scam. Either that, or [if not a scam] something quite different, affirming their power, throughout this whole series of odd characters.[25]

So, you see, I can now finally tie off something we left hanging earlier: ordinary speech, the discourse of the ordinary character, [*Pause*] is opposed to the discourse of misanthropes, i.e., truthful men, or what will become truthful men. Their opposition takes the form of "Come on, don't be like that; it's not that serious," but they get caught up in a chain of odd characters who benefit from this "everything is ordinary" discourse, each one jumping, pouncing when the time is right, striking while the iron is hot, and basing their power on a sequence from ordinary life, turning it to their advantage.

Then what can we glean from the little we know about the Sophists? Recalling my suggestion at the very start of the year: it's all too easy to Plato and the Sophists against each other, [but] that's not how it is, as [Eugène] Dupréel's book makes clear.[26] We find another major Sophist who went even further into nihilism than Protagoras—his name was Gorgias, and he seems to have gone very far with nihilism, and just as there is a Platonic dialogue, *Gorgias*… [I mean] *Protagoras*, Plato also has a dialogue titled *The Gorgias*.

Based on what we know, what does *The Gorgias* say? What interested him—something he shared in common with Protagoras was that he did not believe in *physis*, much less in pure Ideas. But contrary to Protagoras—he was quite different, he wasn't really appealing to *nomos*—He did invoke a concept dear to the Greeks. Again, it would take hours to get into it, because it's such a strange notion, very… After the break, if someone is able to speak more on it, who knows, who

knows—[it's] *kairos*, what the Greeks called *kairos*: *k-a-i-r-o-s*. [*Pause*] *Kairos* is the right time, the opportune moment. All I can think of is something from music, right. Something American—my pronunciation always irks me—I think, I forget whether it's always used in the same sense, but in jazz it's called "timing." "Timing" is not—it isn't tempo. It means the right moment for one of the improvisers to intervene, the right time, for example, to bring in a trumpet solo. "Timing" is really about the right time, the opportune moment, right. I don't know if it's always used that way. When to hop in or out. Some people don't have timing, always starting or stopping when they shouldn't. [*Laughter*] But some people have it… it's…[27]

But Gorgias was moralizing; understand, I don't want to cast Gorgias in a bad light. What we do know is that he attributed a fundamental importance to *kairos* because, for him, that was the true object of science, of discourse. Thus, it's quite different from Protagoras. It's not that discourse is meant to establish law by way of a composition or a hierarchy of perspectives. According to Gorgias, the true object of discourse, of rhetoric, is intervening at the right moment. Learning to wait as long as it takes. Intervening at the right moment, seizing your opportunity, to be a man [sic] of *kairos*. And that's why… that's how he defines what he calls "just." What is justice? Justice means intervening at the right moment. Wisdom means intervening at the right moment. At the end of the day, some of what you find in Socrates and Plato is most directly addressed to Gorgias' thesis, which is rather interesting.

And what's particularly interesting is how Gorgias takes turns in Plato's dialogue. Gorgias gets fed up arguing with Socrates, right, and he hands off to another Sophist named Polus, then ultimately to a young, great Sophist—so, there are three of them—the spectacular young Callicles, who treats Socrates in a way Socrates has never been before. See, I find this interesting because each of them intervenes at a propitious moment, down the line of all three Sophists in *The Gorgias*; I find that really fascinating.

So, what does that mean, then? See, it goes without saying that, well, you should read it, of course. There's another great text… If you're looking at a series of odd characters, yeah, if you've been following along, I could argue that you find a rising series of powers. It's the series of higher and higher powers we're always talking about, ever since the beginning of this year's endeavor—what happens in the crystal-image, what happens in crystalline formations. I told you that you always get a series of frauds or falsifiers. And here it is again: our line of frauds or falsifiers—a series of frauds, each intervening in turn.

And it is a rising series of powers, since in Melville, the chain of falsifiers, the chain of crooks, evidently turn out to be one and the same group, one and the same character, one and the same event, one and the same society—I don't know—this whole chain ends in the most spectacular of them all, known as "the cosmopolitan." So, we go from the albino mute to the talkative cosmopolitan, the cosmopolitan master of discourse, comprising this whole series of frauds or falsifies, the escalating power of the false.

I'd argue that the main text bringing all our authors together is—it isn't the last book of *Zarathustra,* since *Zarathustra* doesn't have a final book; it was never completed—it's the last published book of *Zarathustra*, the fourth and final part; we find it in the fourth and final part—and that's what you should read if you read nothing else. Remember our goal; obviously, you

might not read everything I reference, but of the things I cite, try to read something you haven't read yet. If that's Melville, great. But if some of you haven't read *Zarathustra*, even if you've never even opened the book, it doesn't matter—Start with the fourth book. Go straight to the fourth part; you don't need to read anything before that. —

Here's what happens in the fourth book: Zarathustra hears a cry, a multiple cry. [*Pause*] Yes, it's a cry, a multiple cry. Then in a long procession, he meets everyone behind said cry. We go through a list, a parade of scoundrels, frauds or falsifiers, each more powerful than the last, all calling themselves—no, I believe it's Nietzsche who calls them this—"higher men." Whatever you do, don't mistake these "higher men" for the übermensch. These "higher men" are wild scoundrels, frauds or falsifiers, yeah, all of them are frauds or falsifiers. So, it's fascinating because Nietzsche's list is quite beautiful; it's a sublimely poetic, philosophical passage.[28]

I'll list them in order. First, there's the soothsayer, and the soothsayer isn't the sort to hide. He ends up telling Zarathustra: I've still got you, eh? Everyone tells him… And at times, Zarathustra replies—He admires them. Zarathustra's response is rather ambiguous; he despises them, but he also admires them quite a bit. As to why he admires them, we would need—we would need to take a closer look at Nietzsche to see why he admires them, be we don't have time. Let's just say that he admires them—well, he runs into them; there's this soothsayer, weariness, fatigue, he can't even lift his arm, every effort is in vain, futile. It's the discourse of great weariness. There's nothing to be done; it's all in vain. [*Pause*]

Second, there are [*Pause*] two kings, two kings pulling along an ass. [*Pause*] This time, it's not about a great weariness; it's a question of morality. They bring up morality, especially on the subject of good manners. One of the kings represents the process of such education, while the other represents the supposed completion of such an education. And both are disgusted, saying, "The people are all gone." It's no longer about fatigue with the two kings; it's about morality. [*Pause*]

Third is the man with the leech, a marvel, a marvel, the man with the leech. He's a man half-stuck in a swamp, and he pulls out a bloody arm with a leech attached. From his speech, we learn that he's the man of knowledge. Science is his concern, right. It is science, and he claims that it's better to thoroughly understand one little than to understand the whole world halfway. Thus, he says, "I will understand the leech." We've met people like that; they might even specialize in just part of the leech because the subject of leeches as such seems much too broad. And it's useful; it's no laughing matter since it makes invaluable contributions to scientific progress. So, evidently, he determined that he had to experience leeches in order to understand leeches. And experiencing leeches meant living with leeches. We've all seen it. Every physicist thinks they need to live alongside their particles. So, he lives there with his leech, and he realizes that only the leech knows what leeches are. It troubles him because, well, it troubles him [because] he's a scientific fraud, or rather, [because] science has become a power of the false.

And then, after the leech man, he meets the magician, and doesn't the magician seem like the biggest scoundrel of the lot? You're free to form your own opinion, but to me, he's the worst, the worst, most repugnant fraud. Shimmying about, he's a repulsive, drooling, wiggling old man who delivers a great poem about pity. This poem on pity is written by Nietzsche, titled,

"Ariadne's Lament," "Ariadne's Lament," addressed to Dionysus. Ariadne's Lament is one of the most beautiful poems, and it starts like this:

"Who will warm me, who loves me still? / Give me hot hands! Give me braziers for my heart! / Laid out, shuddering, / Like something half-dead whose feet one warms— / Racked, oh! by unknown fevers, / Shivering from pointy icy arrows of frost, / Hunted by you, thought! / Unnamable! Disguised! Horrendous one! / You hunter behind clouds!" Etc., etc. "Struck / By you, cruelest hunter, / You unknown – god!" That's "Ariadne's Lament" to Dionysus. Evidently, it's a *lied*. One the one hand, Nietzsche did write *lieds, lieders.* On the other hand, on the other hand, he wrote poems which very easily took the form of a *lied*. It's actually a sung poem; it's so gorgeous. And now the magician takes Ariadne's song and puts his own grotesque spin on it. It's like if a disgusting old man put on a girl's mask and waddled around like a young girl singing "Ariadne's Lament," and he's a horrible, unbearable singer.

Then, after the magician we get the last Pope. The last of the Popes, how wonderful. I've served my entire life, and now I have no master, says the last Pope, and this time, it isn't—notice the order: morality with the two kings, knowledge with… Well, there's nothing with the soothsayer, morality with the two kings, knowledge with the leech man, then religion with the last Pope. He served God—I served God to the bitter end. He's even lost an eye, he's blind in one eye—make of that what you will—why is he missing an eye? "I am without a master," the last Pope says. "I am without a master, and yet I am not free, so I can never be joyful again, except in my memories."

Then, after religion and the last Pope, we find the ugliest human being. The ugliest human being—notice what makes them all frauds or falsifiers. The Pope made out as an old lackey who's lost his master, as well as his eye… The magician signing a song he's stolen from a girl. The ugliest human being is the one who killed God—so, it's not in chronological order—he's the one who killed God. And this is what I want to highlight, and I'll tell you why I take it so seriously: Don't make the mistake of believing… it's no secret that the death of God is a significant theme in Nietzsche's work. God is dead. But don't be fooled into thinking that Nietzsche had any hand in this idea. He does say it. He brings it up all the time, but contrary to what you find all over Nietzsche scholarship, the idea that "God is dead" is a very old one, reignited by German Romanticism. Far from being the mastermind behind "God is dead"—something you find in Hegel's work, something you find everywhere, something already quite meaningful—Nietzsche is professing the impotence of this formula. Whatever you do, don't lump Nietzsche or his thought in with this "God is dead" business. God might be dead, but—pardon my vulgarity—Nietzsche is the first one to give a shit.

The very sentence fills him with such joy that he makes additions, always poking fun at it. God is dead, sure, but he died in a dozen ways, and here are all twelve, and all twelve of them are pretty funny. [*Pause*] God is dead, okay, sure. Who killed him? Yeah, he died laughing. God is dead, sure, he died laughing when he heard that there was only one God. Ultimately, he offers a thousand versions of God's death, all of them jokes. And he doesn't attach any importance to it, which is why he is so critical of the idea that "God is dead."

Nietzsche's claim is that God's being dead changes nothing, strictly speaking. That's his contribution. That's his innovation, what makes him the perfect counter to Feuerbach. Since, for [Ludwig] Feuerbach, for example, "God is dead" means that man must take God's place. Nietzsche is the first to say, *but so long as the place remains, does it matter whether it's occupied by man or by God?* So, it makes no difference; it doesn't matter if God is dead—and that brings him great joy. People who take the sentence, "God is dead," so seriously never fail to strike Nietzsche as hilarious. Because for him, he, on the one hand, he presents us with funny versions of God's death, and on the other hand, he'll claim: alright, sure, that doesn't do anything for you, it doesn't gain you anything. Which is why God's killer is described as "the ugliest human being," the ugliest human being. "I could no longer bear God's pity," the ugliest human being says. They had to take God's place. And for Zarathustra—of everyone Zarathustra meets, he finds the ugliest the most distasteful. For me, it would be the magician, but again, there's no accounting for taste.

What else is there after the ugliest human being? After that, we find the voluntary beggar. Things feel like they're coming to a close with the voluntary beggar; he sums everything up. He seeks the truth. He's looking everywhere for the truth. Is it in religion? Is it in morality? Is it in science? No—truth resides with the cows. [*Laughter*] That's what we learn from the voluntary beggar in a striking passage—yes, because cows know how to ruminate. Yeah, so the cows—where is the kingdom of God? Neither in morality, nor in science, nor in religion. The kingdom of God is among the cows. Nietzsche had a lot of respect for these animals: cows represent the unity of all living things.

And then, finally: the shadow. The shadow. And what's the deal with the shadow? It gets smaller and smaller, smaller and smaller. You've lost your purpose and your domain; it no longer knows. You have to imagine that this shadow is running scared. The shadow has lost everything; it's lost its model, its purpose, its place, and so on. All it has left to do is get smaller and smaller. Why? Because noon is coming. *Incipit Zarathustra*, the two passages overlap; now it's up to Zarathustra to come on stage. What did he say? Here's your series of frauds or falsifiers. And as you read this fourth book, really, I'm asking you to consider what makes each character a fraud? See for yourself how they are all powers of the false, rising up until the final one, the shadow. Bear in mind that Nietzsche titled a part of *Zarathustra*, "The Wanderer and His Shadow." Shadows are fundamentally linked to the theme of travel in German Romanticism.

There are these increasingly odd characters [*montée d'hommes vraiment remarquables*]; a series of odd characters, of higher men, the series of odd characters, each a fraud or falsifier, each a greater power of falsity. And just like in Melville's case, they require ordinary speech. Returning like a leitmotiv: everything is plebeian today, everything is vulgar, everything is ordinary.

So, what's left? Well, we're left with what we announced last time. We still have our fifth step, namely: why is time and the discourse of ordinary life so important? It's because, through [time], the line of frauds rises up, raising from one power to the next every time. [*Pause*] And it's against the backdrop of this, literally, "ordinarity" [*Pause*] that we finally get to the higher form of the question of falsity's power: how to produce something new?

At that point we don't have it yet; how will the ordinary, sustained by its chain of frauds, reach a power of the false that results in novelty? At that point, we'll have recovered truth. But it won't be a closed circle. We'll once again be able to say, "We're truthful men, but in a different way, since being true now means being new." The creation of something new, the emergence of novelty within ordinary time at the end of this whole escalating series—the power of the false. [*Pause*]

And that's what Nietzsche is getting at when, once he's reached the end of these powers of the false, he announces the appearance of something radically new, what he calls the *Übermensch*. It's what Melville is getting at in *Pierre; or, the Ambiguities*, when the protagonist, Pierre, endeavors to produce a book where one is written as an ordinary book, but the other is anything but ordinary, the emergence of something new. And thus, I read Nietzsche, Melville, and thus, as I argued, this is the aim of modern philosophy, as opposed to ancient philosophy.[29]

A reversal which leads Nietzsche to repeat, we, the seekers of truth—far from going back to Platonism and reintroducing the word… [*Deleuze doesn't finish his sentence*] But the idea of the truthful man has changed completely. The truthful man is no longer someone who copies preexisting forms, nor someone who finds such forms in marble. The truthful man or straight-shooter is someone who invents a new material, who invents something new. That is, they are creative: what's true cannot be copied for one simple reason, for one reason alone—because it waits for us to create it.

There, we've gone over everything, all the different levels and stages. We'll move on to the next part after the holiday. [*End of the session*] [2:46:38]

Notes

[1] "Truth," "the true," and "what's true" here all translate *le vrai,* which is the "true" in a "true friend" (as opposed to a "false" one), the "real deal" as opposed to a phony, a "real" designer back rather than a fake.
[2] The Judith Norman's translation is followed for Friedrich Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols" in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings,* eds. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (New York: Cambridge, 2005), p 171.
[3] *The Gay Science,* §346.
[4] While I wish to make every effort to minimize gendered language, *homme véridique* is best rendered as the "truthful man." Contrary to a fraud or falsifier [*faussaire*], this sort of person "tells it like it is," "gives it to you straight," offers an honest or accurate account, hence the use of "straight-shooter" to emphasize the lack of distortion or false pretense that highlights its contrast with the fraud or falsifier.
[5] The French language uses gendered language; Deleuze may have been inspired by Nietzsche's cast of characters (described below). To avoid this, terms are adopted from the end of Melville's *The Confidence-Man*—original, odd [*remarquable*s], and ordinary characters.
[6] The French language refers to someone who "*a la science de l'usage,*" someone equipped with the knowledge of use. The expression may refer to one of Plato's dialogues on Sophism, *The Euthydemus*. Here a turn of phrase is borrowed from Benjamin Jowett's translation—see the collection of dialogues available at https://standardebooks.org/plato/dialogues/benjamin-jowett .
[7] The term "fraud" may be more comfortable and accessible than "falsifier," but both options are available in the translation of *faussaire* to help the reader track the term as it appears throughout the seminar.
[8] "Twilight of the Idols," §6.
[9] *Bartleby, the Scrivener; A Story of Wall Street,* 1853.

[10] Chapter 44 of *The Confidence Man.* There Melville might *imply* the third sort of character, but this short chapter is primarily concerned with the first sort, with original characters—including how merely odd characters are sometimes mistaken for them.
[11] Rolland's writings include *Empedocles d'Agrigente, ou L'Age de la Haine* (Paris: Maison francaise d'art et d'edition, 1918).
[12] Rolland, *Empedocles*… p.26.
[13] Empedocles: 490-435 BCE. Parmenides: 510-450 BCE.
[14] Referring to *The Gay Science*, but the following does not appear there.
[15] The passage that Deleuze reads may not appear in *The Gay Science*, but it does appear in Nietzsche's unpublished account of the Pre-Socratics. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Die vorplatonischen Philosophen," (abbreviated DVP) in *Philologica III*, Editors, Otto Crusius and Wilhelmina Nestle (Leipzig: Kröner, 1913), pp. 125-234. From page 189.
[16] DVP, 190f.
[17] DVP, 191.
[18] DVP, 191.
[19] Deleuze's language has occasionally been adapted to conform to Melville's.
[20] See this seminar's session 3 for "The Extravagant Life of Balthazar".
[21] *Moby Dick*, Chapter 49.
[22] Swinburne's posthumous work, *Lesbia Brandon* (1952).
[23] See *Billy Budd,* Chapter 17, Paragraph 2.
[24] See *Billy Budd,* Chapter 17, last paragraph.
[25] For this "series of strange creatures," see this seminar's session 2, November 22, 1983, as well as *The Time-Image,* p. 134.
[26] *The Sophists* (Neufchâtel: Griffon, 1948).
[27] Deleuze refers to *kairos* in Session 15 on Spinoza, which is also Session 1 of the seminar on Painting, March 31, 1981.
[28] On the "multiple cry" and these frauds or falsifiers, see *The Time-Image,* p. 134.
[29] On "the new" in Melville and Nietzsche, see *The Time-Image*, pp. 145-147.