

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Leibniz: Philosophy and the Creation of Concepts

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Translation and supplementary additions from transcript completed from the YouTube audio,[\[1\]](#) Charles J. Stivale[\[2\]](#)

Part 1

So, as I told you, we are going to be involved for a short while in a series on Leibniz. And my goal is very simple: for those who don't know him very much at all, I want to try to present and to have you love this author, to inspire in you a sort of desire to read his works. For specific texts to read, I advised you to look at one of the three little pamphlets that I mentioned the last time.

Let me point out that there is a working instrument in order to start reading Leibniz, an incomparable research instrument. This is the life work, a very modest work, but a very profound one. It is by a woman philosopher named Madame [Lucy] Prenant, who had long ago published selected excerpts by Leibniz.[\[3\]](#) Usually a collection of excerpts is of doubtful value, but this one is a work of art, for a very simple reason: Leibniz had writing techniques which no doubt were rather frequent during his era, that is, the 18th century, the very start of 18th century, but that he pushed to an extraordinary extent. Of course, like all philosophers, he wrote huge books. But one might almost be tempted to say that these huge books did not constitute the essential part of his works, since what was essential was in the correspondence and in quite tiny memoirs. Leibniz's great texts often ran 4 or 5, 10 pages, or were in letters. He wrote to some extent in all languages and in some ways was the first great German philosopher. He constitutes the arrival in Europe of German philosophy. His influence was immediate on the German Romantic philosophers in the 19th century; moreover, it continued – and is still continuing now -- particularly with Nietzsche.

So, I am asking a very general question because, no doubt for me, Leibniz is a philosopher who best helps us understand a possible answer to this question: what is philosophy? Or rather, what does a philosopher do? What does philosophy grapple with? If you think that definitions like search for the true or search for wisdom are not adequate, is there a philosophical activity? I want to say very quickly how I recognize a philosopher in his activity. I would say that for a philosopher, one can only confront these activities as a function of what they create and of their mode of creation. One must ask, what does a woodworker create? What does a musician create? For me, a philosopher is someone very simple, someone who creates concepts. This obviously implies many things, namely that the concept is something to be created, that the concept is the product [*terme*] of a creation.

But I would say, at the extreme, if someone were to ask me what a scientist is, I see no possibility of defining science if we do not indicate something that is created by and in science. And, it happens that what is created by and in science, I'm not completely sure what it is, but not

concepts properly speaking. What is created in art, art, the domain that is most familiar to us because the concept of creation, correctly or incorrectly, has been much more linked to art than to science or to philosophy, -- perhaps there isn't so much reason for this -- if I am asked, "what does a painter create?" he creates lines and colors. That suggests that lines and colors are not givens but are the product [*terme*] of a creation. What is it that's a given? Let's assume, for example, that what is given, I'd say, at the extreme, could always be called a flow. Flows are what are givens, and creation consists in dividing [*découper*], organizing, connecting flows in such a way that a creation is drawn or made around certain singularities extracted from flows.

Well, I would say that a concept is not at all something that is a given. Moreover, a concept is not the same thing as thought: one can very well think without concepts, and even everyone who does not do philosophy still thinks, I believe, they think quite completely, but they do not think via concepts, if you accept the idea of a concept as the product [*terme*] of an activity or of an original creation.

I would say that the concept is a system of singularities appropriated [*prélevé*] from a thought flow. A philosopher is someone who invents concepts. Is he an intellectual? No, in my opinion. For a concept as system of singularities appropriated from a thought flow, a thought flow that can be thought of as continuous. I can speak of a thought flow since there has been a thought flow since, I don't know, since prehistoric man, the thinker, Rodin, and then the first tiny spark of thought, well, this is the start of a flow; just as there is a biological flow, there is a vital flow, there is a flow of thought. So the philosopher is the one who would know or who would propose to create concepts appropriated from the flow of universal thought. Imagine the universal thought flow as a kind of interior monologue, the interior monologue of everyone who thinks. Philosophy arises with the action that consists of creating concepts. For me, there are as many creations in the invention of a concept as in the creation by a great painter or musician. For a great musician, one can also conceive of a continuous acoustic flow -- perhaps that is only an idea, but it matters little if this idea is justified -- that traverses the world and that even encompasses silence. What is a musician? A musician is someone who creates, for example, and who appropriates something from this flow that we will call what? You already sense that there is creation. Can I say that he/she creates notes? Perhaps. But are notes really what music is involved in, or rather aggregates of notes? What will be all a sound, a musician's new sound? You indeed sense that it is not simply a question of the system of notes, do-re-mi-fa-sol. Well, I am saying it's the same thing for philosophy; it isn't simply about creating sounds; it is a matter of creating concepts.

And it is not a question of defining philosophy by some sort of search for the truth, for a very simple reason: this is that truth is always subordinate to the system of concepts of which one disposes. What is the importance of philosophers for non-philosophers? It is that although non-philosophers don't know it, or pretend not to be interested, whether they like it or not, they think through concepts which have proper names.

I recognize Kant's name not by his life, but by a certain type of concepts signed Kant, exactly as I recognize a great painter not by his life, but by a certain tonality, a certain line, that are signed by this proper name. Henceforth, one can very well conceive of being the disciple of a philosopher. If you are situated so that you say that such and such a philosopher signed the concepts for which you feel a need, then you become Kantian, Leibnizian, etc.

All this, I would just like to make you feel the stupidity of the ordinary remark which comes from the flow of non-philosophical thought according to which philosophy is a strange thing because the philosophers never agree with each other. And here the situation of philosophy is contrasted with the situation of science, which is at least twice as stupid since scientists do not agree with each other more and that does not at all mean that they are arguing. It is indeed inevitable that two great philosophers might not agree with each other to the extent that each creates a system of concepts that serves as his point of reference. Thus, that isn't the only thing to be judged. But I have just said that these disciples, wither globally or locally -- one can very well be a disciple only locally, only on one point or another, [for] philosophy is detachable; you can indeed select a particular point, if one has to -- so you can very well be a disciple of a philosopher to the extent that you consider that you personally need this type of concepts. Concepts are spiritual signatures, but that does not mean it's in one's head because concepts are also ways of living -- creating a concept is necessarily staking a position, and to do so is not through choice or reflections; the philosopher reflects no more than does the painter or musician. Reflection only occurs through [*inaudible word*]. Things are defined or activities are defined by a creative dimension and not by a reflexive dimension. So, to the question, "what does the philosopher create?", it's concepts, and concepts do not pre-exist.

Henceforth, what does it mean to say: to need this or that concept? I wonder... -- This is a kind of introduction; you are going to see why I feel the need to say all this in order to get to Leibniz -- in some ways, I tell myself that concepts are such living things, that they really are things with four paws, that move, really. It's like a color, like a sound, it's like... It's something else, but it's at the same level of creation. Well, I tell myself in this way, it seems to me that concepts really are such living things that they are not unrelated -- only, one would have to create a theory, that is, a concept in order to account for what identity is -- unrelated to something that would, however, appear the farthest from the concept, namely the scream [*le cri*].

In some ways, the philosopher is not someone who sings, but someone who screams. And what does he/she scream? Each time that you need to scream, -- this isn't always from pain; it could be from anger, it could be... -- I think that you are not far from a kind of call of philosophy. What would it mean for the concept to be a kind of scream or a kind of form of scream? That's what it means to need a concept; to need a concept means having something to scream! What can one have to scream? It could be many things, many things. So, what would the scream be?... You think, well, I'm not going there, it's just so that... One can scream, in fact; that can be "ou-you-you" [*Deleuze attempts to wail*]. There you don't have a concept. Precisely to find the concept of that scream, there you are perhaps doing philosophy. But so, fine, to cry, one can scream thousands of things. Imagine someone who screams: "Well really, all that must have some kind reason to be." It's a very simple scream. In my definition, the concept is the form of the scream, we immediately see a series of philosophers who would say, "yes, yes"! I am thinking of some philosophers, precisely, philosophers of passion, philosophers of pathos, in contrast from philosophers of logos. For example, Kierkegaard based his entire philosophy on some fundamental screams.

But Leibniz comes from the great rationalist tradition, and no doubt, no philosopher, even Hegel, has taken rationalism this far. What can the rationalist's scream be? I do not believe that the rationalist is someone seeking an ideal, nor an idealist, as they say. [The rationalist] is someone

who screams as much as others; just that his screams are not the same. What can a man who believes in reason scream? There is only one thing he can scream: No matter what happens or what he observes, it has to be for a reason. And it is very simple. [Pause] But that's the scream signed Leibniz; you will tell me, you don't have to be smart to say that. If we live at a certain level, to see why everything will depend on a crazy creation of concepts that will express this scream at all levels: there must be a reason for all of this, wars that occur, children who die, etc., etc. All of this has to have a reason. It's a scream as passionate as the scream that consists in saying, nothing has a reason, everything is absurd. That's another scream. It is as a function of your cries that you are a philosopher.

So, fine, imagine Leibniz. So, with all that is happening here, there is something frightening. He is the philosopher of order, and moreover, of order and policing, in the sense... in every sense of the word "policing." In the first sense of the word "policing" especially, namely, good organization, the regulated organization of the city. This is an philosophy of order. He only thinks in terms of order. In one sense, today we'd say that he is extremely reactionary, he's a friend of order. But very oddly in this taste for order and to establish this order, he yields to the most insane, the craziest creation of concepts that we have ever witnessed in philosophy. Disheveled concepts, the most exuberant concepts, the most disordered, the most complex in order to justify what is. Very strange. Each thing must have a reason. Fine.

In fact, there are two kinds of philosopher; if you accept this first definition by which philosophy is the activity consisting of creating concepts, there are all kinds of philosophers, but there are perhaps two poles: there are those who engage in a creation – and one has no advantage over the other – there are those who engage in a very sober creation of concepts; they create concepts on the level of a particular singularity well distinguished from another, and I dream finally of a kind of quantification of philosophers in which they would be quantified according to the number of concepts they have signed or invented. If I say: Descartes! That's the philosopher type with a very sober creation of concepts. The history of the cogito, historically one can always find an entire tradition, precursors, but that doesn't prevent there being something signed Descartes in the cogito concept, notably (a proposition can express a concept) the proposition: "I think therefore I am," to the extent that it has a very odd, very astonishing sense, it's a truly new concept. It's the discovery of subjectivity, of thinking subjectivity. It's signed Descartes.

So, we could always look in St. Augustine's works, if there were something that had prepared to so; of course, there is a history of concepts, but that doesn't prevent it from being signed Descartes. It's not that we've made rather quick work of Descartes, but that we could assign to him five or six concepts, an enormous feat to have invented six concepts, but it's a very sober creation. And then there are others like that, some sober philosophers, and then there are exasperated philosophers, and [*indistinct word*] philosophers. For them, each concept covers an aggregate of singularities, and then they always need to have others, always other concepts. One witnesses a mad creation of concepts. The typical example is Leibniz. He never finished creating something new. It's all this that I would like to explain to you.

And to explain him, I'll say quickly, just so you have some reference points, that he's a German philosopher. He is the first philosopher to reflect about this, about the possibilities, the power of the German language as regards the concept, as regards philosophy, how German is an eminently

conceptual language, and it's not by chance that it can also be a great language of the scream. Multiple activities, he attends to all, a very great mathematician, great physics scholar, very good jurist, many political activities, always in the service of order. He does not stop; he does not stop. He goes out to see people; he is very suspicious [*louche*]. If needed, he claims that he didn't go see them; there is a Leibniz-Spinoza visit (Spinoza being the anti-Leibniz); there is a famous visit by Leibniz to Spinoza during which Leibniz is made to read some manuscripts, and one imagines Spinoza very exasperated, wondering what this guy wants. [*Laughter*] Following that, when Spinoza is attacked, Leibniz said that he never went to see him, that it's not true; when it's proven that he indeed did go visit him, [Leibniz] says that it was to monitor [*surveiller*] him. [*Laughter*] Abominable, he is abominable. There we are; this isn't the only example. It's not because he is abominable that there is this crazy creation. His dates, nonetheless, his dates: 1646-1716. So, that's a long life, straddling plenty of things.

So, there we are; in the end, he had a kind of very strange humor. I see only Leibniz in this way, having this diabolical humor that consists in this, and that belongs to his style. I'll try to explain that his system is rather like a pyramid. Leibniz's great system has several levels. None of these levels is false, these levels symbolize with each other, and Leibniz is the first great philosopher to conceive of activity and thought as a vast symbolization.

So, all these levels symbolize, but they are all more or less close to what we could provisionally call the absolute. And that is part and parcel of his very body of work. I mean that, your recall that lots of things are in letters or, in that period, lots of things are directed in writing to one group or another. Depending on Leibniz's correspondent or on the public to which he addressed himself, he presented his whole system at a particular level. Imagine that his system is made of levels more or less tightened or more or less relaxed; in order to explain something to someone, he goes to situate himself on a particular level of his system. Let us assume that the someone in question was suspected by Leibniz of having a mediocre intelligence: very well, he is delighted, he situates himself on one of the lowest levels of his system, and if he addresses someone of higher intelligence, he jumps to a higher level. As these levels belong implicitly to Leibniz's own texts, that creates a great problem of commentary. In fact, it's a rather complicated case because, in my opinion, one can never rely on a Leibniz text if one has not first discerned the level of the system to which this text corresponds.

For example, there are texts in which Leibniz explains what, according to him, is the union of soul and body, fine, and it's to one particular correspondent; to another correspondent, he will explain that there is no problem in the union of soul and body since the real problem is that of the relation of souls to one another. The two things are not at all contradictory, it's two levels of the system. The result is that if one does not evaluate the level of a Leibniz text, then one will get the impression that he constantly contradicts himself, when in fact, he does not contradict himself at all.

So, I would already like to start with the most... with a madman's idea; since this is quite complicated, I would almost like to propose, Leibniz is a very difficult philosopher. I would like to give titles to each part of what I have to propose to you. So, the first part, my principal number 1, I would call "a strange kind of thought" [*une drôle de pensée*]. Why do I call it "a strange kind of thought"? Well, because among Leibniz's texts, there is a small one that Leibniz himself calls

“a strange kind of thought.” Thus, I am authorized by the author himself. And since Leibniz dreamed a lot about... he imagined, he has a whole science-fiction side that is absolutely amazing, all the time he imagined institutions. In this little “strange kind of thought” text, he invents a very disturbing institution – I find this to be a very charming text -- that would be as follows: an academy of games would be necessary. At that era, as well as with Pascal, certain other mathematicians, and Leibniz himself, there developed a great theory of games and probabilities. Leibniz is one of the great founders of game theory. He was impassioned by mathematical game problems; he must have been quite a games player himself. He imagined this academy of games as necessarily being at the same time – why at the same time? Recall this because we will have to come back to it -- depending on the point of view in which one is situated to see this institution, or to participate in it – this would be at the same time a section of the academy of sciences, a zoological and botanical garden, a universal exposition, a casino where one gambled, and an enterprise of police control. That’s not bad if he creates all that, a casino. So, he explains, he establishes this little institution; he calls that “a strange kind of thought.” A very lovely text.

Assume that I am relating a story to you. This story consists in taking up one of the central points of Leibniz’s philosophy, and I tell it to you as if it were the description of another world, and there I also number the principal propositions that go into forming a strange kind of thought. And I am saying, little a) – it’s very important for me to number this to make it very clear. So these are aspects of this “strange kind of thought” that I am going to relate to you now, at the center of Leibniz’s philosophy.

Little a) We all know that, up to here, Leibniz has created nothing. I would say he only contemplates the thought flow. The thought flow, eternally, carries forth, brings with it a famous principle that has a very special characteristic because it is one of the only principles about which one can be certain, and at the same time one can not see at all what it offers to us. It is certain, it is clear, but it is empty. This famous principle is the principle of identity. The principle of identity has a classical formula – indeed, it’s not Leibniz who invented it – there’s a classical formula: A is A . So, fine, that’s clear; that is certain. If I say blue is blue or God is God – with this, I am not saying that God exists – God, in parentheses (if it exists) is God, blues is blue, the triangle is a triangle, in one sense, I am within the sure, I am within certainty. Only there we are, what does that cause me to think? Am I thinking something when I say A is A , or am I not thinking? [Pause] Let us nonetheless try to say what results from A is A , this well-known principle, certainly, this principle of identity. [Pause]

How is it presented? It is presented in the form of a reciprocal proposition. A is A means: subject A , verb to be, A attribute or predicate. There is a reciprocity of subject and predicate. Blue is blue, a triangle is a triangle, or I could say: the triangle has three angles; three angles or triangle is the same thing. So, there we have some empty and certain propositions. Is that all? An identical proposition is a proposition such that the attribute or the predicate is the same as the subject and reciprocates with the subject. Is that all? This would still be weak in speaking about the principle of identity were we to leave it there.

No, I see that there is a second case just a bit more complex, notably that the principle of identity can determine propositions which are not simply reciprocal propositions. There is no longer

simply reciprocity of the predicate with the subject and subject with the predicate. Suppose that I say: “The triangle has three sides,” this is not the same thing as saying, “The triangle has three angles.” “The triangle has three angles” is an identical proposition because it is reciprocal. “The triangle has three sides” is a little different, it is not a reciprocal proposition. There is no identity of subject and predicate. In fact, “three sides” is not the same thing as “three angles”. And nonetheless, there is a supposed logical necessity. This logical necessity is that you cannot conceptualize three angles composing a single figure without this figure also having three sides. I would say, there is no reciprocity; what is there? There is inclusion. Three sides are included in the triangle. Inherence or inclusion. – It’s words that constitute logic, vocabulary; as in all activities, there’s a terminology. If you haven’t familiarized yourself with this terminology, I think you cannot understand sufficiently. --

Likewise, if I say that matter is matter, matter is matter, this is an identical proposition in the form of a reciprocal proposition. The subject is identical to the predicate. If I say that matter is in extension [*étendue*], this is again an identical proposition. Why? Because I cannot think of the concept matter without already introducing an extension. Extension is in matter. This is not a reciprocal proposition; this is even less a reciprocal proposition since, inversely, perhaps, perhaps – this is not moving us forward – but perhaps, I really can think of extension without anything filling it in, that is, without matter. This is therefore not a reciprocal proposition, but it is a proposition of inclusion; when I say “matter is in extension,” this is an identical proposition by inclusion. Do you follow me? If you understand that, you’ve already understood a lot.

I would say therefore that there are two kinds of identical propositions: there are reciprocal propositions in which the subject and predicate are one and same, and propositions of inherence or inclusion in which the predicate is contained in the concept of the subject. Do you follow me? No, I am asking you a question to be certain that you’ve fully understood.

If I say, “this page has a front side and a back side,” -- ok let’s leave that, I withdraw my example...

A woman student: I have a question.

Deleuze: Already. Ah...

The woman student: [*Inaudible remarks; these concern the triangle example*]

Deleuze: If it [the figure] is open; obviously, if it’s open... So, you are adding “closed”. That’s not an objection.

The woman student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: No, I was hinting at the definition of the triangle and of three angles constituting a closed figure, with three sides. So, you are adding that; it’s not an objection. It complementary. Fine, do you see that?

Henceforth, if I am looking for a more interesting statement of the identity principle represented by A is A , it's an empty form. If I am looking for a statement of the principle of identity, I would say in Leibnizian fashion, the identity principle is stated as follows: every analytical proposition is true; every analytical proposition is true. [Pause] Every analytical proposition is true.

What does analytical mean? According to what we have just seen, here we have a very strict definition of "analytical"; according to the examples we have just seen, an analytical proposition is one in which either the predicate or the attribute is identical with the subject, for example, "the triangle is triangular," reciprocal proposition, or proposition of inclusion such as "the triangle has three sides." The predicate is contained in the subject to the point that when you have conceived of the subject, the predicate was already there. So, you need to have an analysis; it's enough for you to have an analysis in order to find the predicate in the subject. There we are, fine. Up to this point, Leibniz as original thinker has yet to emerge.

Little b) Leibniz emerges. [Laughter] He arises in the form, once again, of this very bizarre scream. This very bizarre scream, there I am going to give it a more complex expression than I did earlier. This very bizarre scream, it means that Leibniz – so, at the same time, if you will, what I am doing here is only pre-philosophy. One cannot say that there's any philosophy in all this. It's the ground on which an extremely prodigious philosophy will be constructed -- Leibniz arrives and says: Ok, the identity principle gives us a certain model. Why a certain model? We saw this. In its very statement [énoncé], an analytical proposition is true, if you attribute to a subject something that constitutes a unity [ne fait qu'un] with the subject itself, or that overlaps with or is already contained in the subject. You risk nothing in being wrong. Thus, every analytical proposition is true.

Leibniz's stroke of pre-philosophical genius is to say: well then, let's consider reciprocity! If any proposition – and here, something absolutely new and nonetheless very simple starts there -- this had to be thought. And what does it mean to say, "it had to be thought through"? It means that one absolutely needed it, it means it related to something quite urgent for him. What is the reciprocity of the identity principle in its complex statement, "every analytical proposition is true"? Reciprocity poses many more problems. Leibniz emerges and says: couldn't one also say, and inversely, every true proposition is analytical?

If it is true that the identity principle gives us a model of truth, why are we stumped by the following difficulty, specifically: it is true, but it doesn't cause us to think anything. The identity principle will force us to think something; it is going to be reversed, be turned around. You will tell me that turning A is A around yields A is A . Yes and no. That yields A is A in the formal formulation which prevents the reversal of the principle. But in the philosophical formulation, which still amounts to exactly the same thing, "every analytical proposition is a true proposition", if you reverse the principle: "every true proposition is necessarily analytical," what does that mean? Each time that you formulate a true proposition, it must be analytical -- and this is where there is the scream! – it has to be, whether you want it or not, and this is already the official seal, Leibniz's signature, it has to be, you'll have no choice, it has to be analytical, it has to be analytical, that is, several things: it has to be reducible to a proposition of attribution or of predication, S is T , subject is [unclear word], "the sky is blue," and not only does it have to be reducible to a judgment of predication or attribution, "the sky is blue", but it has to be analytical,

that is, the predicate must be either reciprocal with the subject or contained in the subject, contained in the concept of the subject. [Pause]

Does that go without saying? You sense already that he is getting himself into a strange undertaking [*drôle de truc*]; it's quite fine to say that, "it has to be", [but] he has to get himself out of this, and it is not by preference that he says that, rather he needs it. But he undertakes an impossible task; in fact, he needs some totally crazy concepts in order to complete this task that he is in the process of giving himself, a very simple task that consists in, and there, we don't... that consists in saying: fine, if every analytical proposition is true, well then, I'll select an expression: every true proposition certainly must be analytical. That is, in fact, I mean, this does not go without saying, this does not go without saying at all that every judgment is already reducible to a judgment of attribution. It's not going to be easy to show. Among his virtues, Leibniz is one of the greatest logicians; he throws himself into formal logic, into a combinatory, as he calls it himself, into a combinatory analysis that is fantastic. Fine.

Why doesn't it go without saying? Here we have some types of judgement. [Pause] "The box of matches is on the table," I'd say that this is a judgment, you know? "On the table" is what? It's a spatial determination. I could say that the matchbox is "here." "Here," what's that? I'd say that it's a judgment of localization. Again, I am repeating some very, very simple things, but they always have been fundamental problems in logic. It's only to suggest that in appearance, all judgments do not have as form predication or attribution. When I say, "the sky is blue," I have a subject, sky, and an attribute, blue. [Pause] When I say, "the sky is up there" or "I am here," is "here" – spatial localization – assimilable to a predicate? Can I formally link the judgment "I am here" to a judgment of the kind "I have brown hair" [*je suis brun*] or "I am blond" [*je suis blond*]? It's not certain that spatial localization is a quality, not certain at all. [Pause]

If I say, another example, if I say " $2 + 2 = 4$ ", it's a judgment that we ordinarily call a relational judgment. Or if I say, "Pierre is smaller than Paul," "Pierre is smaller than Paul," this is a relation between two terms, Pierre and Paul. No doubt I orient this relation onto Pierre: if I say, "Pierre is smaller than Paul," I can say "Paul is larger than Pierre." Fine. Where is the subject, where is the predicate? Can I treat – that's exactly the problem that has disturbed philosophy since its beginnings; here again, Leibniz's not the one who invented this; we'll see what he invents; but since the beginning, ever since there was logic, they have wondered to what extent the judgment of attribution could be considered as the universal form of any possible judgment, or rather one case of judgment among others -- "Pierre is smaller than Paul," can I treat "smaller than Paul" like an attribute of Pierre? It's not certain. So, I am saying nothing more because we'd get sidetracked. This is not at all obvious. Perhaps we have to distinguish very different types of judgment from each other, notably: relational judgment, judgment of spatio-temporal localization, judgment of attribution, and still many more. What other ones? For example, judgments of existence. If I say, "God exists," can I formally translate it in the form of "God is existent," existent [Interruption of the recording] [45:56] [The following text is provided by Web Deleuze: being an attribute? Can I say that God exists is a judgment of the same form as "God is all-powerful"? Undoubtedly not, since I can only say "God is all-powerful" by adding "yes, if he exists". Does God exist? Is existence an attribute? End of added text] Not certain.

Part 2

So you see that by proposing the idea that every true proposition must be in one way or another an analytical proposition, that is, identical, Leibniz already gives himself a very hard task; he commits himself to showing in what way all propositions can be linked to the judgment of attribution, notably propositions that state relations, that state existences, that state localizations, and that, at the outside, exist, are in relation with, can be translated as the equivalent of attribute of the subject. Fine. In your mind there must be arising the idea of an infinite task. Fine, so let's continue.

Here we are; let us assume that Leibniz achieves it: what world is going to emerge from it? What very bizarre world? What kind of world is it in which I can say "every true proposition is analytical"? You recall certainly – we can no longer understand anything without that -- that *analytical* is a proposition in which the predicate is identical to the subject or else is included in the subject. That kind of world is going to be pretty strange. For the moment, I am finishing this little b) by saying, well then, what is the reciprocity of the principle of identity?

The identity principle is thus, any true proposition is analytical; no, shit, the reverse, any analytical proposition is true. Leibniz says that another principle is necessary, another principle is necessary, it's reciprocity: every true proposition is necessarily analytical. He will give to it a very beautiful name – the expression already existed, but it was never used in this extension – he will call it the principle of sufficient reason. Why "of sufficient reason"? Why does he believe himself fully immersed in his very own scream? *Everything must surely have a reason*. It's because the principle of sufficient reason must be expressed or can be expressed as follows – this would be another formulation but it would be the same thing --: whatever happens to a subject, be it determinations of space and time, of relation, event, whatever happens to a subject, what happens, that is, what one says of it with truth, everything that is said of a subject must be contained in the notion of the subject. Everything that happens to a subject must already be contained in the notion of the subject.

Obviously, the notion of "notion" is going to be essential. It is necessary for "blue" to be contained in the notion of sky. Why is this the principle of sufficient reason? Because if it is this way, each thing has a reason, each thing has a reason, reason is precisely the very notion insofar as it contains all that happens to the corresponding subject. Henceforth, henceforth, everything has a reason. Reason equals the notion of the subject insofar as this notion contains everything said with truth about this subject. [*Pause*]

Here we have the principle of sufficient reason which is therefore just the reciprocal of the identity principle. Here we have my first question; I am not trying to work all that out; notice that he has tasks that he is facing, he has lots to do; he has to justify all that. He justifies precisely by creating his system. So, I am just asking, rather than looking for abstract justifications, what bizarre world is going to be born from all that? A very bizarre world, a world with very strange colors if I return to my metaphor of painting, which will result in a painting signed Leibniz. Every true proposition must be analytical, that is, once again, everything that you say with truth about a subject must be contained in the notion of the subject. You sense, you sense that this is already getting crazy; he's got a lifetime of work ahead of him because that implies a certain

theory of the notion. What does that mean, the notion of a subject? It's signed Leibniz, the notion of a subject. No one spoke of a notion of a subject. That's very, very odd as notions go. That implies a concept of a concept, a very special idea of the notion. Just as there is a Hegelian conception of the concept, there is a Leibnizian conception of the concept. Fine, let's wait.

[c)] Again, my problem is what world is going to emerge, and in this little c), I would like to begin to show that, from this point, Leibniz is going to create some hallucinatory concepts, truly hallucinatory. Indeed, this isn't wrong; this is truly a hallucinatory world. If you want to think about relations between philosophy and madness, for example, there are some very weak pages, it seems to me, some very weak pages by Freud on the intimate relation of metaphysics with delirium. This is a very interesting subject, but I believe that one can only grasp the positivity of these relations through a theory of the concept, and notably, the direction that I would like to take would be the relationship of the concept with the scream, well yes, I tell myself, there is indeed something there. I would like to make you feel this presence of a kind of conceptual madness in Leibniz's universe as we are going to see it be born. For this little c), fine, whether you like it or not, one has to... So, this is a gentle violence, let yourself go. It is not a question of arguing. Understand the stupidity of people who say "why is he saying all that because made a whole... a comment"; understand the stupidity of objections.

I will add a parenthesis to complicate things. If you are learned, you know that there is a philosopher after Leibniz who said that truth is one of synthetic judgments. It's Kant. He is opposed to Leibniz. Ok! How does that concern us? It's Kant. This is not to say that they do not agree with each other. When I say that, even if I don't explain myself, I credit Kant for having invented a new concept which is synthetic judgment. This concept had to be invented, and it was Kant who did so. To say, "he doesn't agree with Leibniz," philosophers contradict one another is a feeble statement; it's like saying that Velasquez did not agree with Giotto, right! It's a non-sense, not even true, it's nonsensical. It means nothing. So, let's return to this bizarre world that ought to commit [*inaudible words*].

Every true proposition must be analytical, that is, such that it attributes something to a subject and that the attribute must be contained in the notion of the subject. Let us consider an example. What does that mean? I am not asking myself if it is true, I ask myself: what does that mean? Let us take an example of a true proposition. A true proposition can be an elementary one concerning an event that took place. There, that's true. Let's take Leibniz's own examples; no matter if you believe in these things or not: "*Caesar crossed the Rubicon*", he crossed the Rubicon, Caesar. It's a proposition. It is true or we have strong reasons to assume it's true. Or else, "Adam sinned"; there we have a highly true proposition. "Adam sinned"; what do you mean by that? Well, yes, he sinned. [*Pause*] There we are. "Alexander did this or that."

You see that all these propositions chosen by Leibniz as fundamental examples are event related [*événementielles*] propositions, so he does not give himself an easy task. He is going to tell us this: since this proposition is true, it is necessary, whether you want it or not, the is still his scream, it is necessary that the predicate "crossed the Rubicon" – in parentheses, we immediately react; an objection arises, but we have to hold these objections in; we have to wait for the moment that he provides an answer to this objection; "crossing the Rubicon" is a predicate; we indeed see that in "the sky is blue", blue at the extreme is a predicate; fine, and yet we'll still

have to see, but it appears to be a predicate; but “crossing the Rubicon”, that’s a predicate; [whether] it’s an attribute of the same type as “the sky is blue”, that’s not certain. Fine, so we’re told – it is necessary for “crossing the Rubicon” to be an attribute or a predicate of the subject Caesar; this attribute must indeed be -- if the proposition is true, and it is true -- this predicate must be contained in the notion of Caesar, not in Caesar himself, but in the notion of Caesar, if in the proposition, it would not be true.

Good, we start off from there. This is a very simple idea. The notion of the subject contains everything that happens to a subject, that is, everything that is said about the subject with truth. So, “Adam sinned”, sinned at a particular moment belongs to the notion of Adam. That gives one pause, right? Crossing the Rubicon belongs to the notion of Caesar, very good. I would say that there, Leibniz proposes one of his first great concepts, the concept of inherence. Everything that is said with truth about something is inherent to the notion of this something. So, this is the first aspect of sufficient reason, it’s the development of sufficient reason. Fine. Only here we are, we can no longer stop, and when we say that, listen to me closely.

Little d), and I would precisely like these heading to be very, very simple so that you don’t lose the thread. You are indeed grasping the idea: the notion of Caesar must encompass, contain everything that happens to Caesar, that is, everything that you attribute to him with truth. Little d), Leibniz says, there we are, I’ve begun, I can no longer stop, and that is also a philosopher’s scream, don’t stop this. When one has started into the domain of the concept, we cannot stop, except for certain ones, except for the careful one, except for the sober philosophers.

In the domain of screams – I would like to create a painting of the cries of philosophy – in the domain of screams, there is a famous scream from Aristotle, the great Aristotle who, let us note, exerted an extremely strong influence over Leibniz, at one point proposed in the *Metaphysics* a very beautiful expression: “it is indeed necessary to stop”, it is indeed necessary to stop; it’s even more beautiful in Greek, so I’ll say it for those who have studied some Greek, *anankéstenai*, *anankéstenai*. This is a great scream. “It is indeed necessary to stop,” This is the philosopher facing the chasm of the interconnection of concepts, “it is indeed necessary to stop somewhere.” Leibniz could care less, he does not stop, he does not stop; that’s how it is; he feels the need. There are people who feel the need to stop who are no less brilliant. There are others who never stop. So, why can’t he stop? Because come back to the proposition little c), we have our little c) here; everything that you attribute to a subject must be contained in the notion of this subject. But what you attribute with truth to any subject whatsoever in the world, whether this be Caesar, any subject [*unclear words*], it suffices that you attribute to it a single thing with truth in order for you to notice with fright that, from that moment on, you are forced to cram into the notion of the subject not only the thing that you attribute to it with truth, but the totality of the world.

Why? By virtue of a principle that is not at all the same one, which is the well-known principle that is not at all the same – here, we will see that later -- as that of sufficient reason; by virtue of a much duller principle which is the simple principle of causality. For in the end, the causality principle stretches to infinity, that’s its very characteristic. And this is a very special infinity since, in fact, it stretches to the indefinite. Specifically, the causality principle states that every thing has a cause, which is very different from every thing has a reason. Reason and cause are not the same. If there are two words, that’s because these are not the same thing; a cause is not a

reason. [Pause] Every thing has a cause, fine, agreed. But the cause is a thing, and in its turn, it has a cause, etc. etc. I can do the same thing in the opposite direction, [Pause] namely every cause has an effect and then this effect is, in its turn, the cause of effects. This is therefore an indefinite series of causes and effects.

What difference is there between sufficient reason and cause? We understand very well. Cause is never sufficient. One must say that the causality principle poses a necessary cause, but never a sufficient one. We must distinguish between necessary cause and sufficient reason. What distinguishes them in all evidence is that the cause of a thing is always something else. [Pause] A thing's cause is always something else. The cause of A is B, the cause of B is C, etc..... An indefinite series of causes. Sufficient reason is not at all something else than the thing. The sufficient reason of a thing is not something else than the thing, we saw this; it's the notion of the thing. Thus, sufficient reason expresses the relation of the thing with its own notion whereas cause expresses the relations of the thing with something else. There we are, this is crystal clear... Yes?

A student: So, if I understood this, [inaudible question]

Deleuze: ... that the principle of identity is empty? Well yes, it's going to expand... Absolutely, this isn't over yet.

So, little d) [Deleuze's ordering; *il seems that he continues the same point here*] If you say that a particular event is encompassed in the notion of Caesar, "crossing the Rubicon" is encompassed in the notion of Caesar. You can't stop yourself in which sense? From cause to cause and effect to effect, it's at that moment the totality of the world that must be encompassed in the notion of a particular subject. That becomes very odd, there's the world passing by inside each subject, or each notion of subject. In fact, crossing the Rubicon has a cause; this cause itself has multiple causes, from cause to cause, into cause from cause and into cause from cause from cause. It's the whole series of the world that passes there, at least the antecedent series. And moreover, crossing the Rubicon has effects. If I limit myself to the largest ones, [there's] the commencement of a Roman empire. The Roman Empire in its turn has effects, we follow directly from the Roman Empire. In its turn, the Roman Empire has effects. We are directly answerable to these effects, we who are children of the Roman Empire. From cause to cause and effect to effect, you cannot say a particular event is encompassed in the notion of a particular subject without saying that, henceforth, the entire world is encompassed in the notion of a particular subject.

A student: Don't you get the impression that you are doing precisely the opposite of what Henri Bergson did, when he spoke about [inaudible], for example?

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes ... but you have to ask yourself ... Henri Bergson is not a philosopher the Leibniz's breadth, but one has to ask, on the other hand, when Henri Bergson does something, based on what system of concepts is he doing it? And he has a very simple system of concepts; he is one of the most succinct philosophers in the world. The conceptual framework scheme is very, very simple in Henri Bergson. You have to understand that he is not Leibnizien; he is not Leibnizien. But, there, I am speaking out of I don't know what hope that some of you will find yourself Leibnizien, well, [several indistinct words] from your own preference, from your own

preference [*à votre goût*]. But “your preference” does not mean tastes and colors like that; it's your scream, based on what you need. And here, there's a characteristic that's not eternal, but that's indeed a trans-historical characteristic of philosophy. Leibniz's concepts, quite certainly, it's necessary for there to be a contemporary Leibnizian. What does it mean to be Leibnizian in 1980? Well, there certainly are some; or rather, it's possible they exist. Well, I believe that it's impossible to find an answer [to] why and how someone today could be Leibnizian, in what manner of rebirth, etc.

So, little d), that's where we are. In conformity with the principle of sufficient reason, if you have stated that what happens to a particular subject and what personally concerns it, what you attribute for it with truth, having blue eyes, having blond hair, crossing the Rubicon, etc., belongs to the notion of the subject, that is, is encompassed in this notion of the subject; you cannot stop, one must say that this subject contains the whole world. It is no longer the concept of inherence or inclusion that corresponded to our little c); it's the concept of expression which, in Leibniz's work, is a fantastic concept and that he expresses in the form: the notion of the subject expresses the totality of the world; the notion of the subject expresses the totality of the world [*Pause*] because, finally, a bit more must be said about this.

This is beginning to get crazy because, at that point, “the notion of the subject expresses the totality of the world”, fine, agree, here we have Caesar expressing the totality of the world because, you see, his property, his very own “crossing the Rubicon” stretches to infinity backward and forward by the double interplay of causes and effects. But then, it is time to speak for ourselves, and it matters little what happens to us and the importance of what happens to us. We must say that each of us, or at least it is each notion of the subject that contains or expresses the totality of the world. That is, each of you, me, expresses or contains the totality of the world. Just like Caesar, no more, no less. That gets complicated; why does this get complicated? Because at that point, A great danger: if each individual notion, if each notion of the subject expresses the totality of the world, that means that there is only a single subject, a universal subject, and the you, me, Caesar, would only be appearances of this universal subject. It would be quite possible to say: there would be a single subject that would express the world.

Why would that be disastrous? Why couldn't Leibniz say that? Why is it that once one enters into concepts, you now, there are choices? There are moments of choices, and then there are moments when one has no choices, [so] he can't say that. He absolutely cannot say that. It would mean repudiating himself. Why? Because all that he had done before with the principle of sufficient reason, everything we have seen, all the preceding paragraphs, all these headings, a, b, c, d, in what direction were they going? They were going into an extraordinary thing if one were to be speaking abstractly. In my opinion, this was the first great reconciliation of the concept and the individual. Leibniz was in the process of constructing a concept of the concept such that the concept and the individual were finally becoming adequate to one another. [*Pause*]

You'll ask me why? That the concept might extend into the individual, why is this new? It's new because never had anyone dared that, or at least, it was done quite timidly when an author was risking that. Why? Because for everyone, what is the concept? It is defined by the order of generality. There is a concept when there is a representation which is applied to several things. But identifying the concept and the individual with each other, never had that been done, never.

Never had a voice reverberated in the domain of thought to say that the concept and the individual were the same thing. What had always been distinguished was an order of the concept that referred to a generality and an order of the individual that referred to a singularity.

Even more, it was always considered as going without saying that the individual as such was not comprehensible via the concept. It was always understood that the proper name was not a concept. Indeed, “dog” is certainly a concept, but “Fido” is not a concept. There is certainly a dogness about all dogs, as certain logicians say in a splendid language, but there is no Fido-ness about all Fidos. Leibniz is the first to say that concepts are proper names, that is, that concepts are individual notions. There is a concept of the individual as such.

So, you see that Leibniz cannot – [*Pause*] he cannot, he has no choice here – he cannot fall back on the solution: since every true proposition is analytical; the world is thus contained in a single and same subject which would be a universal subject. He cannot since his principle of sufficient reason implied that what was contained in a subject – thus what was true, what was attributable to a subject – was contained in a subject as an individual subject. [*Pause*] So, he cannot give himself a kind of universal mind. He has to remain fixed on the singularity, on the individual as such. And in fact, this will be one of the truly original points for Leibniz; this is the perpetual expression in his works: substance – for him, there’s no difference between substance and subject for him; for other philosophers, there is a difference, but for him, there is a difference, but for him there is none – substance is individual.

So, the question, the urgent question in my sub-category d) since he blocked the path for invoking a universal spirit/mind in which the world will be included ... other philosophers will invoke a universal mind. There is even a very short, very lovely text by Leibniz entitled “Considerations on universal mind,” in which he goes on to show in what way there is indeed a universal mind, God, but that does not prevent substance from being individual. Thus, irreducibility of individual substances.

So, what is it that distinguishes...? Since each substance expressed the world, or rather, as he says, each substantial notion, each notion of a subject – the notion of Caesar, the notion of etc. -- since each one expresses the world, you express the world, in all times, do you grasp this? We notice that this isn’t over; in fact, he has a lifetime of work because everyone objects to this. So what? So what? And the objection he encounters immediately is: but what about freedom? If everything that happens to Caesar is encompassed in the individual notion of Caesar, if the entire world is encompassed in the universal notion of Caesar, then Caesar crossing the Rubicon merely acts to unroll [*dérrouler*] – an odd word, which occurs all the time in Leibniz’s works; in Latin, it’s quite lovely: *devolvere*, unroll, or explicate, you see? These are very rich words; explicate, unrill, *devolvere*, *explicare*, what is this? Literally, this means to unfold [*déplier*]; *explicare*, that had always meant something very, very simple. It’s to unfold; you unfold a rug. A rug is rolled up, you unfold it; you explicate it. It’s the same thing: explicate, develop, unfold/unroll. So, crossing the Rubicon, the event of crossing the Rubicon, only acts to unroll something that was encompassed eternally in the notion of Caesar. You see that this is quite a real problem.

Caesar crossed the Rubicon in a particular year; so there, it's true, crossing in a particular year. But whether he crosses the Rubicon in a particular year, it was encompassed for all time in his individual notion. Fine, where is this individual notion? It is eternal. There is an eternal truth of dated events. So, how about freedom? What do you do with freedom? Everyone jumps on him. Freedom is very dangerous under a Christian regime. What do you do with freedom? So, Leibniz will write a little work, "On freedom," in which he explains what freedom is. Freedom is going to be a pretty funny thing for him. But we'll leave that aside for the moment.

What distinguishes one subject from another? That point, we can't leave aside for the moment; otherwise our current gets cut off. What is going to distinguish you from Caesar since each one of you expresses the totality of the world, present, past, and future? It's odd, this concept of expression. Well, there we are, it's there that he proposes a very rich notion.

So here, I must create a little e), a little e) since this is a new concept. So, he says, what distinguishes an individual substance from another is not very difficult. To some extent, it has to be irreducible. It's that each one, each subject, for each individual notion, each notion of subject has to encompass this totality of the world, has to express this total world, but from a certain point of view, and there begins a philosophy that we have to call by its name, "perspectivism". And it's not inconsiderable. You will tell me: what is more banal than the expression "a point of view", than "my point of view"? There you have it: creating philosophy, I believe, that's it. If philosophy means creating concepts, what does "create concepts" mean? Generally speaking, I believe that it's these banal formulations. Great philosophers each have banal formulations, or in relation to which they are winking. A wink from a philosopher is, at the extreme, means taking a banal formulation and having a ball [*se marrer*]; you have no idea what I'm going to put inside it. One hears that constantly; ah, you understand, from my point of view, from my point of view, well then, I'd do this. That doesn't go very far.

To create a theory of point of view, what does that imply? Could that be done at any time at all? Is it by chance that it's Leibniz who created the first great theory of point of view at a particular moment? At the moment in which the same Leibniz created a particularly fruitful geometry chapter, called projective geometry. Is it by chance that it's out of an era in which are elaborated, in architecture as in painting, all sorts of techniques of perspective, [*Pause*] and a thousand other things? But, we retain simply these two domains that symbolize with that: architecture-painting and perspective in painting on one hand, and on the other hand, projective geometry.

Understand what Leibniz wants to achieve with them. He is going to say that each individual notion expresses the totality of the world, yes, but from a certain point of view.

What does that mean? Philosophically, this is not just nothing; so much as it's of little import banally, pre-philosophically, it's simply impossible henceforth for him to stop. That commits him to showing that what constitutes the individual notion as individual is point of view. And that therefore, point of view is deeper than whoever places himself there. At the basis of each individual notion, there has to be a point of view that defines the individual notion. If you prefer, the subject is second in relation to the point of view. And after all, to say that is not a piece of cake, it's not inconsiderable.

He established a philosophy that will find its name in the works of another philosopher who stretches out his hand to Leibniz across the centuries, specifically Nietzsche, when Nietzsche will say: my philosophy is a perspectivism. So, you understand that this does not at all mean perspectivism; you already understand the extent to which that can become idiotic; it become idiotic or it becomes truly banal to whine oneself to death if that consists in saying, ah well, everything is relative to the subject. “Everything is relative to the subject,” well, no one needs a philosopher to say that; no, that’s just not right, saying everything is relative. Everyone says it; people can say it, why not? It belongs to propositions that hurt no one since it is meaningless. Fine, people can always say that, one has to, one has to talk, one has to say something, one has to engage in conversation. One can be led to say that everything is relative, that everything depends on a viewpoint. So long as I take the formulation as signifying everything depends on the subject, I’ve said nothing; I’ve chatted, as they say, I have answered; I have held up my end of the conversation.

If we are doing philosophy, there are always setbacks in philosophy. Where Leibniz finds himself, it’s not that point of view refers to the subject; it’s point of view that is defined by the deepest subject. So, we cannot define point of view by the subject. It’s the subject that must be defined in its irreducible character, that is, singular character, in its singularity, in its own individuality – it’s the subject that refers to a point of view. What creates me, making me = me, is a point of view on the world. Leibniz cannot stop. He has to go all the way to a theory of point of view such that the subject is constituted by the point of view and not the point of view constituted by the subject.

Consider that, at that point, we can make some comparisons with this, perhaps rather arbitrary, but still, I don’t really know. Several centuries later, well into the nineteenth century, one of the greatest famous American novelists, named Henry James, conceptualized the novel and renewed its techniques through a perspectivism, through a mobilization of points of view, there too in James’s works, it’s not points of view that are explained by the subjects, it’s the opposite, subjects that are explained through points of view.

An analysis of points of view as sufficient reason of subjects, that’s the sufficient reason of the subject. The individual notion is the point of view under which the individual expresses the world. It’s beautiful and it’s even poetic. Why is this poetic?

[Interruption, comments from a student about the merits of point of view in police novels]

Deleuze: Why not? Which police novels?

The student: I don’t know. *[Inaudible name]*, for example.

Deleuze: Yes, but it’s James who...

The student: Ah, yes, fine, *[Inaudible comments]* ... It’s connected to a point of view; everything is a technique of point of view.

Deleuze: Yes, agreed.

The student: You are saying, “yes, agree”, but [*Inaudible*].

Deleuze: But understand, there are quite a number of novels that have subsequently been created in the form of the point of view of several characters around the same event. This often leads to some extremely mediocre novels. What difference is there between these weak novels and a novel by James? I believe it has to do in part with this; it’s because James – and here, this is not at all abstract, Henry James has sufficient techniques in order for there to be no subject; what becomes one subject or another is the one who is determined to be in a particular point of view. It’s the point of view that explains the subject and not the opposite.

And why is this very poetic? Here’s what Leibniz tells us, [*Deleuze reads and comments while reading*] This is a beautiful text [*Discourse of Metaphysics*]: “Every substance” -- understand “Every individual substance”, since substance is individual for Leibniz – “Every substance” -- that is, Caesar, but you as well, each of you -- “Every substance is like an entire world” – in fact, it expresses the entire world; so, every substance contains it – “is like an entire world and like a mirror of God or of the whole universe” – each substance is a mirror of the entire universe – therefore, “each substance is like an entire world and like a mirror of God or of the entire world that [each substance] expresses in its own way” – you see the individuation, “in its own way”, “each one in its own way,”; so this is where occurs the very beautiful metaphor that will be such a success, that will have a great legacy – “kind of like a very city” – an architectural metaphor” – “kind of like a very city is diversely represented depending on the different situations of someone looking at it” – you see, it’s so much the point of view that creates the subject that one has to comment on Leibniz’s words literally; he shifts from the plural to the singular, “someone looking at it,” “someone looking at it” truly changes the subjectivity depending on the changes of point of view; it’s like a city that “is diversely represented depending on the different situations of someone looking at it”; so, in the flow of this, he continues splendidly – “In this way, the universe is seemingly multiplied as many times as there are substances” – in fact, if each one expresses a universe and from its points of view, there is, at the extreme, a multiplication of universes according to the aggregate of all points of view -- “In this way, the universe is seemingly multiplied as many times as there are substances, and the glory of God is redoubled equally by as many completely different representations of his/her/its image.” Here, he is speaking like a cardinal. It’s not a village priest who would say these kinds of things; it’s a cardinal -- “One can even say that every substance bears in some ways the characteristic of infinite wisdom and of all God’s power, and limits as much as it is able to.” Yes, this is quite evident. This is certain.

So, in all this little point e), I maintain that the new concept of point of view is deeper than even the concept of the individual and of individual substance. It is point of view which will define essence, individual essence. One must believe that to each individual notion corresponds a point of view. But understand, that gets complicated because this point of view would valid [*vaudrait*] from birth to death for an individual. What would define us is a certain point of view on the world. Fine.

I was saying that Nietzsche will return to this idea and will draw from what he himself called his “perspectivism,” and he stated that he is following Leibniz on this. He was very, very familiar with Leibniz. He didn’t like him, but that’s what grabbed him. So, he said he was following

Leibniz on this. Earlier, I pointed out that the metaphor of the city considered from several points of view is located, is a great idea from the Renaissance, the theory of point of view. Notably, we discover that there's a very, very interesting, very odd author, a cardinal, named cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, a very great Renaissance philosopher, and this philosopher created a theory -- Leibniz knew him very well; he had read [Nicholas of Cusa] extensively -- and in [Nicholas of Cusa's] works, he goes farther in this metaphor; he referred to a portrait, a Baroque, Mannerist portrait of a pope from that era. You know, the kind of portraits that changed according to the point of view, but this kind of portrait, I recall that during the era of Italian fascism, there were these all through Italy, there was a very odd portrait: there was a portrait that when looked at directly from the front -- here again, we still see these; they belong to gadgets -- looking at it directly, it represented Mussolini; from the right side, it represented his son-in-law, and if one stood to the left, it represented the king. You see? This is the method of points of view.[\[4\]](#)

The analysis of points of view in mathematics, also, this indicates the extent to which point of view is much more important than merely subjective; it's the sufficient reason of the subjective. *[Interruption of the recording]* [92:15]; *the following text is provided from Web Deleuze*: -- and it's again Leibniz who caused this chapter of mathematics to make considerable progress under the name of analysis situs [*aka topology*] (*end of the added text*) --,

Part 3

and it is evident that it is connected to projective geometry. Otherwise, this is not at all about saying that everything is subject, on the contrary. There is a kind of essentiality, of objectivity of the subject, and objectivity is the point of view.

Fine, given this, we haven't said what these points of view were. This is a review of a very, very bizarre world. And in the end, I have to take it in small [*indistinct word*, steps?] because the metaphor... ah, no, I'll continue anyway. My point of view, the point of view, we must nevertheless develop it exactly.

A student: [*He requests the reference of the Leibniz text Deleuze read*]

Deleuze: *Discourse of Metaphysics*, paragraph 7... no, not 7... ah, 9... All this is quite enjoyable.

Fine, so what does that mean concretely, everyone expresses the world, yes, but from his own point of view? This is becoming quite bizarre; Leibniz did not retreat from the strangest concepts. Because here we are, here is what that means, each subject expresses the world from a certain point of view. Understand, I can no longer even say "from his own point of view." If I said, "from his own point of view," I would make this depend on a pre-established point of view. And it's the opposite, it's the subject that depends on the point of view. So, I can say, each subject expresses the world from a point of view, from a determined point of view. But what determines this point of view?

And here we find how the great Leibniz is going to get himself out of this. He is going to tell us, understand, each of us, whether it's Caesar or you yourself, each of us expresses the totality of the world, only he expresses it obscurely and confusedly. [Pause] "Obscurely and confusedly" means what in Leibniz's vocabulary? That means that the totality of the work is really in the individual, but in the form of the concept that Leibniz creates, in the form of minute perceptions. And what are these minute perceptions? Here we have something very bizarre. I am continuing my analogies. Is it by chance that Leibniz is one of the inventors of so-called differential calculus? These are infinitely minute perceptions, in other words, unconscious perceptions. The totality of the world is in me in the guise of unconscious perceptions. Very, very strange. Fine. I express the entire world, but obscurely, confusedly, like a... -- he constantly appeals to this beautiful expression -- like a distant sound [*rumeur*], like a roar [*clameur*]. Right? So, fine. And then, what does that produce?

What is a point of view? We're not making progress. Yes, we are, we're making progress. Why I was referring to differential calculus, we'll see; later, we'll see in detail why this is linked to differential calculus, but notice that the little perceptions of the unconscious is like differentials of consciousness, it's minute perceptions without consciousness. For conscious perceptions, Leibniz uses another word: apperception. Apperception – [*Deleuze spells out l'apostrophe a*] – apperception, perceiving [*l'aperception, apercevoir*], is conscious perception, and minute perception is the differential of consciousness which is not given in consciousness. Fine. There we are. I express the totality of the world obscurely and confusedly, but this is true for all individuals. So, what distinguished a point of view from another point of view? On the other hand, there is a small portion of the world that I express clearly and distinctly, and each subject, each individual has his/her own minute portion, but "his/her own", in what sense? "His/her own", [It's] in this very precise sense: that this portion of the world that I express clearly and distinctly, all other subjects express it as well, but confusedly and obscurely.

What defines my point of view is like a kind of, how to say this? A projector it's a projector that, in the murmur of the obscure and confused world, carves out a limited zone of clear and distinct expression. However stupid you might be, however insignificant we all may be, we have our own little thing. Take the vilest vermin, it has its little world: it does not express much clearly and distinctly, but it has its little portion. So, if you allow me all the comparisons and even those that are the most arbitrary, well then, we see that Beckett's characters are individuals. There we are, everything is confused, everything is a murmur [*rumeurs*], they understand nothing, they are in tattered beings [*loques*]; fine, there is the great murmur [*rumeur*] of the world. That's all; no, it's not all. However pathetic they may be in their garbage can, they have their very own little zone. What the great Molloy calls "my properties", he has a little hook, this is Beckett nonetheless, he has a little hook, he is indeed unable to move, he no longer gets up, he has his little hook, and he draws in his tiny properties, four or five pieces, my properties. This is the clear and distinct zone that he expresses, that he expresses in the world. We are all the same. So, our zone has a greater or lesser size, and even then, it's not certain, it's not the same; it's never the same. What is it that determines the point of view? Now I can almost define point of view according to Leibniz. I would say it's the proportion of the region of the world expressed clearly and distinctly by an individual in relation to the totality of the world expressed obscurely and confusedly. This is perfect; he should have said this. That's what point of view is.

To make this comprehensible, I return to the metaphor of that thing – why are words constantly eluding me? – projectors, Leibniz’s projectors. Leibniz has a metaphor that he constantly returns to and that is quite beautiful. He says, there you are, you are very close to the sea, and you listen to the sound of the sea, and you hear the sound of a wave. I hear the sound of a wave, that is, I have an apperception: I distinguish a wave, the sound of a wave. And Leibniz says: you would not hear the wave if you did not have a minute unconscious perception of the sound of each drop of water that slides one over and through the other and that creates the object of minute perceptions. You see, how [*indistinct word*] this is. There is the murmur [*rumeur*] of all the drops of water, and you have your little zone of clarity, you clearly and distinctly grasp one partial result from this infinity of drops, one partial result of this infinity of drops, of this infinity of murmuring, and from it, you create your own little world; you create from this your very own property.

Beckett's hero in his garbage bin, what does the garbage bin delineate, where he lowers himself more and more until he puts [*indistinct word*] on his head and then, what do we have? He goes all the way; he would maintain all the way, but getting narrower and smaller, he will maintain his little area of clear and distinct expression. He cannot do otherwise. He moans; he would like to be done with this. So, on the contrary, a hero of progress, you understand, heroes of progress never stop expanding their area of clear and distinct expression. And I can say at least what this point of view is. Fine.

A student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: You'll see how that occurs... you'll see. It's more and more beautiful. So, each one, well, like that, understand? Yes, you are points of view, I am a point of view, all that. Each one has his/her own little zone. So, what happens, in fact, when ... to conceive of that, already you have to conceive of that full of ... it has to elicit all kinds of your own circumstances [*présentations*]. For example, I have my little zone of expression area that is clear and distinct. There are, for example, people who don't understand anything about what I'm saying, right? [*Laughter*] Fine. And conversely, me too, there are people who can talk to me, they can tell me things, and for me, what are they saying, what ...? Nothing, I understand nothing in what they're saying. I say, it's nice outside, it's nice today. He says, what? What is happening? On the other hand, people, each of us is like that; there is a number of friends who have a common language. Fine, it's marvelous [*c'est la fete*] when there's someone with whom we share a common language. When you are choosing courses, when you take courses, what does that mean? That means something very simple: it means that there is a minimum of at least virtual language in common with the guy you are going to listen to. Otherwise, you'll go look for another, and you'll have no peace until you find him. What does that mean? Well, it's not complicated.

Each individual notion has its point of view, that is, from this point of view, it extracts from the aggregate of the world that it expresses a determined portion of clear and distinct expression. Given two individual substances, given two individuals, you have two cases: either their zones do not communicate in the least, and create no symbols with one another – there aren't merely direction communications, one can conceive of there being analogies, -- and in that moment, they have nothing to say to each other; or it's like two circles that overlap: there is a little common zone; so, there one can do something together. Yes, yes, there are large expanses [*pans*]

that are not at all shared. You see, these are therefore all kinds of circles; they are clear and distinct zones of expression for which some intersect, and others remain outside one another.

As a result, in fact, Leibniz thus can say quite forcefully that there are not two identical individual substances, because there are no... there are no two individual substances that have the same point of view or exactly the same clear and distinct zone of expression. And finally, Leibniz's stroke of genius to complete this conception of point of view: what is it that will define the clear and distinct zone of expression that I have? I express the totality of the world, but I only express clearly and distinctly a reduced portion of it, a finite portion. What I express clearly and distinctly, and here, this is like a deduction of the notion, what I express clearly and distinctly, Leibniz tells us, is what relates to [*qui a trait à*] my body. This is the first time that the body notion intervenes. We will see why; we will see how; we will see what this body means, but what relates to my body, what I express clearly and distinctly is that which concerns my body, that which affects my body.

So, it's inevitable that I do not express clearly and distinctly the crossing of the Rubicon -- that concerned Caesar's body. That doesn't concern my body. So, out of devotion, I can go place my feet into Caesar's feet, that is, cross the Rubicon, but in the end, my crossing the Rubicon won't create the Roman Empire. [*Laughter*] That would be a way of... That would be if I were to paint Caesar in the act of crossing the Rubicon. It's in the domain of images. But, on the other hand, there is something that concerns my body and that only I express clearly and distinctly, against the backdrop of the murmur that covers the entire universe. This is beautiful, right? -- Are you completely worn out? --

Little f) and we'll stop there; little f) this is going to be the final great concept of this strange world. It's that... [*Interruption in the classroom; Deleuze says: No, no, no*] It's that, it's that... understand --

[*Deleuze speaks in a low voice to someone nearby him, then says:*] What time is it?... One twenty-five?

A woman student: Twelve twenty-five. [*Laughter*]

Deleuze: So, understand, in this tale of the city, there is still a problem because, in the end -- this is just a final effort -- because the city is seen from different points of view, fine. The stroller traverses the city and sees it from different points of view. Very good. These points of view preexist the subject who is placed there; that's very well, in a pinch. At that point, the secret of the point of view is mathematical; it's geometric. This is a geometrical aspect [*un géométral*], and it's not a psychological aspect [*un psychologique*], or obviously, at least, it's a psycho-geometrical aspect. [*Pause*] Leibniz is a man of notions, not a man of psychology, but that doesn't prevent that, in a certain way, I can say, and even everything urges me to say that the city exists outside points of view. But in my story of the expressed world, in the way we started off, there was a problem from which we started off: the world has no existence outside the points of view that express it -- that express it [*Deleuze emphasizes the direct object "it", 1 apostrophe*] -- the world does not exist in itself. The world is uniquely the expressed -- here is what one must say, and Leibniz says it often -- the world is the expressed common for all individual substances,

but the expressed does not exist outside that which expresses it, outside *that which* expresses it, outside that which expresses [*apostrophe l*] it. [*Pause*] So, these are other things than gazes onto the city.

In fact, the entire world is contained, the entire world is contained in each individual notion, but it exists only in this inclusion. It has no existence outside. It's in this sense that Leibniz will be, and not incorrectly, placed alongside the idealists: there is no world in itself, the world exists only in the individual substances that express it. It's the expressed common to all individual substances. This is going to be a tough problem. It's the expressed of all individual substances, but the expressed does not exist outside the substances that express it. You see? What distinguishes these substances? It's that they all express the same world, but they don't express the same clear and distinct portion. That's how it works out; it's like a chess game. – Leibniz never stops comparing the world to a chess game; this belongs to his game theory. – Fine, so the world does not exist. Understand, this is an expression such that what it expresses does not exist outside what expresses it. This is the complication of the concept of expression for Leibniz.

Fine, so, what will be the outcome of this final difficulty? [*Pause*] See, it is still necessary for all individual notions to express the same world. Fine; this world does not exist outside the individual notions that express it. Fine, but they do not express different worlds. They express clearly and distinctly different portions of the world, but they express the same world. So, it's odd, it's odd because by virtue of the principle of identity – through this, we find our start – by virtue of the principle of identity, I could say that [*Pause*] the principle of identity allows me to determine what is contradictory, that is, what is impossible, what is impossible once we state that the principle of identity is A is A ; what is impossible is A is not A . That's contradictory. Example: the squared circle. A squared circle is a circle that is not a circle. The principle of identity reminds me that a circle is a circle. [*Pause*]

So, starting from the principle of identity, I can have a criterion of contradiction. [*Pause*] $2 + 2$ equals 5; I can demonstrate according to Leibniz – there are many other authors that think the this isn't the domain of demonstration – but according to Leibniz, I can demonstrate that $2 + 2$ cannot make 5; I can demonstrate that a circle cannot be squared. Whereas, on the level of sufficient reason, such as we have just followed it through all sorts of levels, it's much more complicated. Why? Because Adam non-sinner, Caesar not crossing the Rubicon, is not like the squared circle. Adam non-sinner is not contradictory. Caesar not crossing the Rubicon is not contradictory. Feel how he's going to try to save freedom, once he has placed himself in a bad situation in order to save it. This is not at all contradictory; this is not at all impossible: Adam could have not sinned; Caesar could have not crossed the Rubicon, whereas a circle cannot be squared; in this, there is no freedom.

Fine, again he's stuck; again Leibniz has to find another concept and, of all his crazy concepts, this will undoubtedly be the craziest. Adam could have not sinned, so in other words, the truths administered [*régies*] by the principle of sufficient reason are not the same type as the truths administered by the principle of identity; why? Because the truths administered by the principle of identity are such that their contradictory status [*leur contradictoire*] is impossible, whereas the truths administered by the principle of sufficient reason have a possible contradictory status: Adam non-sinner is possible.

It's even all that distinguishes, according to Leibniz, the truths called truths of essence and truths of existence. The truths called of existence are such that their contradictory status is possible. So, how is Leibniz going to get out of this new and final difficulty? Adam could have not sinned, so how is he going to be able to maintain at once that all that Adam did, sinning, or Caesar, crossing the Rubicon, all that Adam did, namely sinning, is contained forever in his individual notion, and nonetheless Adam non-sinner was possible? He seems stuck; once again, these are delicious, these moments in a system because here, from this perspective, philosophers are somewhat like cats: it's in the moments when they are stuck that they free themselves, or like fish, conceptually these are strange things: it's the concept becoming a fish. Well, yes.

He is going to tell us, he's going to recount the following thing: that Adam non-sinner is perfectly possible in itself, like Caesar not having crossed the Rubicon, or else like you, finally, choose, for each thing, all that is possible, but there we are, what is not contradictory, what is it? Why didn't that happen? That did not happen because it's possible in itself, but it's impossible. That is when he created the very strange logical concept of compossibility. On the level of existences, it is not enough for a thing to be possible in order to exist; one must also know with what it is compossible. Compossible means "being possible with," compossibility.

Compossible, in other words, with what isn't Adam non-sinner compossible, whereas he is possible in himself? He is impossible with the world that exists. In other words, Adam could have not sinned, yes, provided that there was another world. You see that [with] the inclusion of the world in the individual notion, and the fact that something else is possible, he reconciles the world with the notion of compossibility, Adam non-sinner belongs to another world. This other world could have been possible. That's not the one which was chosen. Adam non-sinner could have been possible, but this world was not chosen. It is impossible with the existing world. It is only impossible with other possible worlds that have not passed into existence.

That's odd. So, you see that gets complicated in the end. And so, the world that passes into existence, what is it? Why is it that world rather than another one? Leibniz explains what is, as he would have it, the creation of worlds by God, and we see well how this is a theory of games: God, in his understanding [*entendement*], conceives an infinity of possible worlds, only these possible worlds are not compossible with each other, and necessarily so since it's God who chooses the best. He chooses the best of possible worlds. And it happens that the best of possible worlds implicates Adam as sinner. Why? Why? That's going to be awful [*affreux*]. What is interesting logically is the creation of a proper concept of compossibility to designate a more limited logical sphere than that of logical possibility. In order to exist, it is not enough for something to be possible, this thing must also be compossible with others that constitute the real world.

So, on that level, there is almost a mystery in remaining on... but you must understand it with everything that precedes. In a famous expression from *Monadology*, Leibniz says that individual notions have neither doors nor windows; this is a beautiful expression, with neither doors nor windows. That comes to correct the metaphor of the city and of the point of view onto the city. No doors or windows means that they are closed, that there is no opening. Why? Because there is no exterior. The world that individual notions express is interior, it is included in individual notions. So, individual notions have no doors or windows, everything is contained in each one,

and yet there is a world common to all, [Pause] there is a world common to all individual notions: it's what each individual notion includes, to wit the totality of the world, the notion includes it necessarily as a form in which what it expresses is compossible with what the others express.

As a result, this is a marvel, this strange world. It's a world in which there is no direct communication between subjects. Between Caesar and you, between you and me, between me and you, there is no direct communication, and as we'd say today, each individual notion is programmed in such a way that what it expresses forms a common world with what the other expresses. It's one of the last concepts from Leibniz, one of the strangest, that he will call pre-established harmony. Pre-established, it's absolutely a programmed harmony. This is the idea, another very beautiful metaphor that we find again in another context in Spinoza, the spiritual automaton, and at the same time, it's the grand age of automatons at this end of the seventeenth century. Each individual notion is like a spiritual automaton, that is, what it expresses is interior to it, it's without doors or windows; it is programmed in such a way that, quite simply, what it expresses is in compossibility with what the other expresses. So, there are indeed other possible worlds, only they are impossible with our own.

So here I am summing up: it's uniquely this that I have done today; it was uniquely a description of the world of Leibniz, and even only one part of this world. Thus, the following notions have been successively laid out: first, sufficient reason, a properly Leibnizian concept; second, inherence and inclusion, or inclusion; third, expression or point of view; [Pause] and fourth, I don't know what any more,... finally, impossibility. So, we will continue the next time, but above all, the next time, try to see if there are things that we have to go back over, you will let me know.^[5]

[End of the session] [2 :03 :37]

Notes

[1] Cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGSYIqypxs8>

[2] We have to indicate that this translation is based on a transcript that we have completely transformed from the text that has been available for some twenty years on Web Deleuze, since we have scrupulously followed here, without edits or unforeseen omissions, the audio recording available on several platforms (YouTube, Web Deleuze, Paris 8, and here on The Deleuze Seminars). We have therefore expanded the text of this first session on Leibniz by approximately *forty minutes*, that is, in addition to the approximate equivalent of about eighty minutes contained on the earlier transcript. We have benefitted, however, from Web Deleuze's alternate transcription in order to fill in two specific gaps that occurred when the recording was interrupted for cassette changes, at the end of parts 1 and 2.

[3] Lucy Prenant, ed. *G.W. Leibniz, Oeuvres choisies* (Paris : Garnier, 1940).

[4] Deleuze will return to the general topic of point of view and to this specific example in the longer Leibniz seminar, in the session of 18 November 1986.

[5] Deleuze will develop these concepts in chapter 2 (inherence, inclusion, point of view), chapter 4 (sufficient reason) and chapter 5 (impossibility) of *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque (Le Pli)*.