

L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, avec Claire Parnet

Directed by Pierre-André Boutang (1996)

Translation & Notes: Charles J. Stivale

Credits (shown at the end of each tape):

Conversation:	Claire Parnet
Direction:	Pierre-André Boutang, Michel Pamart
Image:	Alain Thiollet
Sound:	Jean Maini
Editing:	Nedjma Scialom
Sound Mix:	Vianney Aubé, Rémi Stengel
Images from Vincennes:	Marielle Burkhalter

Prelude¹

A short description of the trailer and then of the interview "set" is quite useful: the black and white trailer over which the title, then the director's credit are shown, depicts Deleuze lecturing to a crowded, smoky seminar, his voice barely audible over the musical accompaniment. The subtitle, "Université de Vincennes, 1980," appears briefly at the lower right, and Deleuze's desk is packed with tape recorders. A second shot is a close-up of Deleuze chatting with the students seated closest to him. Then another shot shows students in the seminar listening intently, most of them (including a young Claire Parnet in profile) smoking cigarettes. The final shot again shows Deleuze lecturing from his desk at the front of the seminar room, gesticulating as he speaks. The final gesture shows him placing his hand over his chin in a freeze-frame, punctuating the point he has just made.

As for the setting in Deleuze's apartment during the interview, the viewer sees Deleuze seated in front of a sideboard over which hangs a mirror, and opposite him sits Parnet, smoking constantly throughout. On the dresser to the right of the mirror is his trademark hat perched on a hook. The camera is located behind Parnet's left shoulder so that, depending on the camera focus, she is partially visible from behind and with a wider focus, visible in the mirror as well, at least during the first day of shooting. The production quality is quite good, and in the three-cassette collection now commercially available, Boutang chose not to edit out the jumps between cassette changes. On occasion, these interruptions cause Deleuze to lose his train of thought, but usually he is able to pick up where he left off with a prompt from Parnet.

[Prior to starting to discuss the first "letter" of his ABC primer, "A as in Animal," Deleuze discusses his understanding of the working premises of this series of interviews]

Deleuze: You have selected a format as an ABC primer, you have indicated to me some themes, and in this, I do not know exactly what the questions will be, so that I have only been able to think a bit beforehand about the themes. For me, answering a question without having thought about it a bit is something inconceivable. What saves me in this is the particular condition (*la clause*): should any of this be at all useful, all of it will be used only after my death. So, you understand, I feel myself being reduced to the state of a pure archive for Pierre-André Boutang, to a sheet of paper [Parnet laughs in

the mirror reflection], so that lifts my spirits and comforts me immensely, and nearly in the state of pure spirit (*pur esprit*), I speak after my death, and we know well that a pure spirit finally can make tables turn. But we know as well that a pure spirit is not someone who gives answers that are either very profound or very intelligent. So anything goes in this, let's begin, A-B-C, whatever you want.

"A as in Animal"

Parnet: We begin with "A," and "A" is "Animal." We can cite, as if it were you saying it, a quote from W.C. Fields: "A man who doesn't like animals or children can't be all bad." [Deleuze chuckles] We'll leave aside the children for the moment, but domestic animals, I know that you don't care for them much. And in this, you don't even accept the distinction made by Baudelaire and Cocteau -- cats are not any better than dogs for you. On the other hand, throughout your work, there is a bestiary that is quite repugnant; that is, besides deers (*fauves*) that are noble animals, you talk copiously of ticks, of fleas, of a certain number of repugnant little animals of this kind. What I want to add is that animals have been very useful in your writings, starting with *Anti-Oedipus*, through a concept that has become quite important, the concept of "becoming-animal" (*devenir-animal*). So I would like to know a bit more clearly what is your relationship to animals.

[Throughout this question, Deleuze sits smiling, but moving uncomfortably in his seat as if he were undergoing some ordeal]

Deleuze: What you said there about my relation with domestic animals... It's not really domestic, or tamed, or wild animals that concern me, cats or dogs. . . . The problem, rather, is with animals that are both familiar and familial. Familiar or familial animals, tamed and domesticated, I don't care for them, whereas domesticated animals that are not familiar and familial, I like them fine because I am quite sensitive to something in these animals. What happened to me is what happens in lots of families, there is neither dog nor cat, and then one of our children, Fanny's and mine, came home with a tiny cat, no bigger than his little hand, that he found out in the country somewhere, in a basket or somewhere, and from that fatal moment onward, I have always had a cat around the house. What do I find unpleasant in this -- although that certainly was no major ordeal -- what do I find unpleasant? I don't like things that rub against me (*les frotteurs*) ... and a cat spends its time rubbing up against you. I don't like that, and with dogs, it's altogether different: what I fundamentally reproach them for is always barking. A bark really seems to me the stupidest cry... There are animal cries in nature, a variety of cries, and barking is truly the shame of the animal kingdom. Whereas I can stand much better (on the condition that it not be for too long a time) the howling at the moon, a dog howling at the moon...

Parnet : ... at death...

Deleuze: ... At death, who knows? I can stand this better than barking. And since I learned quite recently that cats and dogs were cheating the Social Security system, my antipathy has increased even more.

[Deleuze has a wry smile in saying this, at some private joke, that he may or may not share with Parnet and that remains unexplained]

Deleuze: What I mean is... What I am going to say is completely idiotic because people who really like cats and dogs obviously do have a relationship with them that is not *human*. For example, you

see that children do not have a human relationship with a cat, but rather an infantile relationship with animals. What is really important is for people to have an *animal* relationship with an animal. So what does it mean to have an animal relationship with an animal? It doesn't consist of talking to it... but in any case, I can't stand the *human* relationship with the animal. I know what I am saying because I live on a rather deserted street where people walk their dogs, and what I hear from my window is quite frightening, the way that people talk to their animals. Even psychoanalysis notices this! Psychoanalysis is so fixated on familiar or familial animals, on animals of the family, that any animal dream is interpreted by psychoanalysis as being an image of the father, mother, or child, that is, an animal as a family member. I find that odious, I can't stand it, and you only have to think of two paintings by the *Douanier* [Henri Julien Félix] Rousseau, the dog in the cart (*carriole*) who is truly the grandfather, the grandfather in a pure state, and the war horse (*le cheval de guerre*) who is a veritable beast (*bête*).² So the question is, what kind of relationship do you have with an animal? If you have a *human* relationship with an animal . . . [Deleuze shakes his head]³

But again, generally people who like animals don't have a human relationship with animals, they have an animal relationship with the animal, and that's quite beautiful. Even hunters – and I don't like hunters – but even hunters have an astonishing relationship with the animal... Yeh ... [Deleuze pauses]

And you asked me also ... Well, other animals, it's true that I am fascinated by animals (*bêtes*) like spiders, ticks, fleas ... They are as important as dogs and cats. [Parnet laughs] And there are relationships with animals there, someone who has ticks, who has fleas, what does that mean? These are relationships with some very active animals. So what fascinates me in animals? Because really, my hatred for certain animals is nourished by my fascination with many other animals. If I try to take stock vaguely of this, what is it that impresses me in an animal? The first thing that impresses me is the fact that every animal has a world, and it's curious because there are a lot of humans, a lot of people who do not have a world. They live the life of everybody, [Deleuze chuckles] that is, of just any one and any thing. Animals, they have worlds.

What is an animal world? It's sometimes extraordinarily limited, and that's what moves me. Finally, animals react to very few things... [To Parnet]: Cut me off if you see that ...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, cassette two"]

Deleuze: Yes, so, in this story of the first characteristic of the animal, it's really the existence of specific, special animal worlds. Perhaps it is sometimes the poverty of these worlds, the reduced character of these worlds, that impresses me so much. For example, oh, we were talking earlier about an animal like the tick. The tick responds, reacts to three things, three stimuli, period, that's it, in a natural world that is immense, three stimuli, that's it: that is, it tends toward the extremity of a tree branch, it's attracted by light, it can wait on top of this branch, it can wait for years without eating, without anything, in a completely amorphous state. It waits for a ruminant, an herbivore, an animal to pass under its branch, it lets itself fall... It's a kind of olfactory stimulus... the tick smells, it smells the animal that passes under its branch, that's the second stimulus: light first, then odor. Then, when it falls onto the back of the poor animal, it goes looking for the region that is the least covered with hair... So, there's a tactile stimulus, and it digs in under the skin. For everything else, if one can say this, for everything else, it does not give a damn (*elle s'en fout complètement*)... That is, in a nature teeming [with life], it extracts, selects three things.

Parnet: And is that your life's dream? [Parnet laughs, smiling at Deleuze] That's what attracts you to animals?

Deleuze: [He smiles, but continues] That's what constitutes a world, that's what constitutes a world.

Parnet: Hence, your animal-writing relationship, that is, the writer, for you, is also someone who has a world...

Deleuze: It's more compl... Yes, I don't know... because there are other aspects: it is not enough to have a world to be an animal. What fascinates me completely are territorial matters (*des affaires de territoire*). With Félix [Guattari], we really created a concept, nearly a philosophical concept, with the idea of territory. Animals with territory -- ok, there are animals without territory, fine -- but animals with territory, it's amazing because constituting a territory is, for me, nearly the birth of art. How an animal marks its territory, everyone knows, everyone always invokes stories of anal glands, of urine, of... with which it marks the borders of its territory. But it's a lot more than that: what intervenes in marking a territory is also a series of postures, for example, lowering oneself/lifting oneself up; a series of colors, baboons (*les drills*), for example, the color of buttocks of baboons that they display at the border of territories... Color, song (*chant*), posture: these are the three determinants of art: I mean, color and lines -- animal postures are sometimes veritable lines -- color, line, song -- that's art in its pure state.

And so, I tell myself that when they leave their territory or return to their territory, it's in the domain of property and ownership (*l'avoir*). It's very curious that it is in the domain of property and ownership, that is, "my properties," in the manner of Beckett or Michaux. Territory constitutes the properties of the animal, and leaving the territory, they risk it, and there are animals that recognize their partner, they recognize them in the territory, but not outside the territory. That's what I call a marvel...⁴

Parnet: Which one?

Deleuze: I don't recall which bird, you have to believe me on this...

So, with Félix -- I am leaving the animal subject, I pass on to a philosophical question because we can mix all kinds of things in the *Abécédaire*. I tell myself: philosophers sometimes get criticized for creating barbaric words (*mots barbares*). But, put yourself in my place: for certain reasons, I am interested in reflecting on this notion of territory, and I tell myself, territory has no term for the relation to a movement by which one leaves the territory. So, to address this, I need a word that is apparently "barbaric." Henceforth, with Félix, we constructed a concept that I like a lot, the concept of "deterritorialization." [Parnet speaks the word along with Deleuze]

We've been told that it's a hard word to pronounce, and then asked what it means, what its use is... So, this is a beautiful case of a philosophical concept that can only be designated by a word that does not yet exist, even if we find subsequently that there are equivalents in other languages. For example, I happened to notice that in Melville, there appears all the time "outlandish" -- I pronounce poorly, you can correct it yourself -- but "outlandish" is precisely the equivalent of "the deterritorialized," word for word.⁵ So, I tell myself that for philosophy -- before returning to animals -- for philosophy, it is quite striking: the invention of a barbaric word is sometimes necessary to take account of a notion with innovative pretensions: the notion with innovative pretensions is that there is no territory, territorialization without a vector of exiting the territory; there is no exiting the territory, that is, deterritorialization, without at the same time an effort of reterritorializing oneself elsewhere, which is something else.

All this functions with animals, and that's what fascinates me. What is fascinating generally is the whole domain of signs. Animals emit signs, they ceaselessly emit signs, they produce signs.

That is, in the double sense, they react to signs – for example, a spider, everything that touches its web, it reacts to anything, reacts to signs – and they produce signs – for example, the famous sign, is that a wolf sign, a wolf track or something else? I admire enormously people who know how to recognize [tracks], for example, hunters – real hunters, not hunt club hunters, but real hunters who can recognize the animal that has passed by. At that point, they are animal, they have with the animal an animal relationship. That’s what I mean by having an animal relationship with an animal. It’s really amazing.⁶

Parnet: And this emission of signs, this reception of signs, is there a connection with writing and the writer, and the animal?

Deleuze: Of course. If someone were to ask me what it means to be an animal, I would answer: it’s “l’être aux aguets”, the being on the lookout. It’s a being fundamentally on the lookout.

Parnet: Like the writer?

Deleuze: The writer, well, yes, on the lookout, the philosopher, on the lookout, obviously, we are on the lookout. For me, you see, the ears of the animal: it does nothing without being on the lookout, it’s never relaxed, an animal. It’s eating, [yet] has to be on the lookout to see if something is happening behind its back, on either side, etc. It’s terrible, this existence “aux aguets.”

So, you make the connection with the writer, what is the relation between the animal and the writer...?

Parnet: ... you made it before I did...

Deleuze: That’s true... One almost has to say that, at the limit... A writer, what is it? He writes, he writes “for” readers, of course, but what does “for” mean? It means “à l’intention de,” toward them, intended toward them, one writes “for” readers. But one has to say that the writer writes also for non-readers, that is, not intended for them\but “in their place.” So, it means two things: intended for them and in their place. Artaud wrote pages that nearly everyone knows, “I write for the illiterate, I write for idiots.” Faulkner writes for idiots. That doesn’t mean so that idiots would read, that the illiterate would read, it means “in the place of” the illiterate. I mean, I write “in the place of” barbarians (*les sauvages*), I write “in the place of” animals.⁷

And what does that mean? Why does one dare say something like that, I write in the place of idiots, the illiterate, animals? Because that is what one does, literally, when one writes. When one writes, one is not pursuing some private little affair. They really are stupid fools (*connards*); really, it’s the abomination of literary mediocrity, in every era, but particularly quite recently, that makes people believe that to create a novel, for example, it suffices to have some little private affair, some little personal affair – one’s grandmother who died of cancer, or someone’s personal love affair -- and there you go, you can write a novel based on this. It’s shameful to think things like that. Writing is not anyone’s private affair, but rather it means throwing oneself into a universal affair, be it a novel or philosophy. Now what does that mean?

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: “Gilles Deleuze, cassette three”]

Parnet: So, this “writing for,” that is, “intended for” or “in the place of,” it’s a bit like what you said in *A Thousand Plateaus* about [Lord] Chandos by Hofmannsthal, in the very beautiful phrase: “the

writer is a sorcerer because he sees the animal as the only population before which he is responsible.”⁸

Deleuze: That’s it, absolutely right. And for a very simple reason, I think it’s quite simple... It’s not at all a literary declaration what you just read from Hofmannsthal, it’s something else. Writing means necessarily pushing language – and pushing syntax, since language is syntax – up to a certain limit (*limite*), a limit that can be expressed in several ways: it can be just as well the limit that separates language from silence, or the limit that separates language from music, or the limit that separates language from something that would be, what? Let’s say, the wailing, the painful wailing...

Parnet: But not the barking, surely!

Deleuze: Oh, no, not barking, although who knows? There might be a writer who is capable.... The painful wailing? Well, everyone says, why yes, it’s Kafka, it’s *Metamorphosis*, the manager who cries out, “Did you hear? It sounds like an animal,” the painful wailing of Gregor. Or else the mouse folk,

Parnet: “Josephine”.⁹

Deleuze: ... one writes for the mouse folk, the rat folk that are dying because, contrary to what is said, it’s not men who know how to die, but beasts (*bêtes*), and when men die, they die like animals. Here we return to cats, and I have a lot of respect... Among the many cats that lived here, there was that little cat who died rather quickly, that is, I saw what a lot of people have seen as well, how an animal seeks a corner to die in... There is a territory for death as well, a search for a territory of death, where one can die. We saw the little cat trying to slide itself right into a tight corner, an angle, as if it were the good spot for it to die in.

So, in a sense, if the writer is indeed one who pushes language to the limit, the limit that separates language from animality, that separates language from the cry, that separates language from the song/chant (*chant*), then one has to say, yes, the writer is responsible to animals who die, that is, he answers to animals who die, to write, literally, not "for" them – again, I don’t write “for” my dog or for my cat --, but writing “in the place of” animals who die, etc., carrying language to this limit. There is no literature that does not carry language and syntax to this limit that separates man from animal... One has to be on this limit.... That’s what I think...

Even when one does philosophy, that’s the case... One is on the limit that separates thought from non-thought. You always have to be at the limit that separates you from animality, but precisely in such a way that you are no longer separated from it. There is an inhumanity proper to the human body, and to the human mind, there are animal relations with the animal...

And if we were finished with “A”, that would be nice...

"B as in *Boire/Boisson* [Drink]"

Parnet: OK, then, we will pass on to “B”. “B” is a little bit special, it’s on drinking (*la boisson*).¹⁰ OK, so you used to drink, and then stopped drinking, [Deleuze smiles] and I would like to know what it was for you to drink when you used to drink... Was it for pleasure?

Deleuze: Yeh, I drank a lot... I drank a lot... So, I stopped, but I drank a lot... What was it? [Deleuze laughs] That’s not difficult, at least I think not... You should question other people who

drank a lot, you should question alcoholics. I believe that drinking is a matter of quantity. For that reason, there is no equivalent with food, even if there are people who eat copiously (*gros mangeurs*) -- that always disgusted me, so that's not relevant in my case. But drinking... I understand well that one doesn't drink just anything, that each drinker has a favorite drink, but it's because in that framework that one has to grasp the quantity.

What does this question of quantity mean? People make fun of addicts and alcoholics because they never stop saying, "Oh you know, I am in control, I can stop drinking whenever I want." People make fun of them because they don't understand what drinkers mean. I have some very clear memories of this, I think everyone who drank understands this. When you drink, what you want to reach is the last drink (*dernier verre*). Literally, drinking means doing everything in order to reach the final drink. That's what is interesting.

Parnet: That's always the limit (*limite*)?

Deleuze [laughs]: Well, what the limit is is very complicated, let me tell you... In other words, an alcoholic is someone who never ceases to stop drinking, I mean, who never stops having arrived at the last drink. So, what does that mean? It's like the expression by [Charles] Péguy that is so beautiful, "It's not the final water lily that repeats the first, it's the first water lily that repeats all the others and the final one." The first drink, it repeats the last one, it's the last one that counts.

So, what does that mean, the last drink, for an alcoholic? He gets up in the morning, if he's a morning alcoholic -- there are all the kinds that you might want --, if he's a morning alcoholic, he is entirely pointed toward the moment when he will reach the last drink. It's not the first, the second, the third that interests him... It's a lot more... He's clever, full of guile, an alcoholic... The last glass means this: he evaluates... there is an evaluation. He evaluates what he can hold, without collapsing... he evaluates... It varies considerably with each person. So, he evaluates the last drink, and all the others are going to be his way of passing, of reaching the last glass.

And what does "the last" mean? That means that he cannot stand to drink one more glass *that particular day*. It's the last one that will allow him to begin drinking the next day... because if he goes all the way to the last drink, on the contrary, that goes beyond his power/capacity (*pouvoir*), it's the last in his power. If he goes beyond the last one in his power in order to reach the last one beyond his power, then he collapses, then he's screwed (*foutu*), he has to go to the hospital, or he has to change his habits, he has to change assemblages. So that when he says, "the last drink," it's not the last one, it's the next-to-last one. He is searching for the next-to-last one. In other words, there is a term to say the next-to-last, it's penultimate... He does not seek the last drink, he seeks the penultimate one. Not the ultimate, because the ultimate [Deleuze gestures with his hands] would place him outside his arrangement. The penultimate is the last one... before beginning again the next day.

So I can say that the alcoholic is someone who says, and who never stops saying -- You hear it in the cafés, those groups of alcoholics are so joyful, one never gets tired of listening to them -- So the alcoholic is someone who never stops saying, "OK, it's the last one", and the last one varies from one person to another, but the last one is the next-to-last one.

Parnet: And he's also the one who says, "I'm stopping tomorrow."

Deleuze: "Stopping tomorrow"? No, he never says "I'm stopping tomorrow." He says, "I'm stopping today", to be able to start over again tomorrow.

Parnet: And since drinking means not stopping... means stopping drinking constantly, then how does one stop drinking completely, because you stopped drinking completely...?

Deleuze: It's too dangerous, if one goes too quickly. Michaux has said everything on that topic. In my opinion, drug problems and alcohol problems are not that separate. Michaux said everything on that topic...¹¹ A moment comes when it is too dangerous.

Here again, there is this ridge (*crête*)... when I was talking about this ridge between language and silence, or language and animality. This ridge is a thin division. One can very well drink or take drugs... One can always do whatever one wants if it doesn't prevent you from working. If it's a stimulus... It's even normal to offer something of one's body as a sacrifice. There is a whole sacred, sacrificial attitude in these activities, drinking, taking drugs, one offers one's body as a sacrifice... Why? No doubt because there is something entirely too strong that one could not stand without alcohol. It's not a question of being able to stand alcohol... That's perhaps what one believes, what one needs to believe, what one believes oneself to see, to feel, to think, with the result that one has the need in order to stand it, in order to master it, one needs assistance, from alcohol, drugs, etc.

[Change of cassette, Boutang: "Gilles Deleuze" (cassette 4), clap; the producer claps his hands]

Deleuze: So, the question of limits, it's quite simple... Drinking, taking drugs, these are almost supposed to make possible something that is too strong, even if one has to pay for it afterwards, that's well known. But it's connected to working, working. And it's obvious that when everything is reversed and drinking prevents one from working, when taking a drug becomes a way of not working, that's the absolute danger, it no longer has any interest. And at the same time, it's more and more obvious that although we used to think drinking was necessary, that taking drugs was necessary, they are not necessary... Perhaps one has to have gone through that experience to realize that everything one thought one did thanks to drugs or thanks to alcohol, one could do without them.

You see, I admire a lot the way that Michaux considers all this... He stops. So for me, there is less merit since I stopped drinking for reasons related to breathing, for health reasons. It is obvious that one has to stop or do without it. The only tiny justification possible would be if they did help one to work, even if one has to pay for it physically afterwards. But the more one continues, the more one realizes that it doesn't help one's work, so...

Parnet: But on one hand, Michaux must have drunk quite a lot and taken a lot of drugs in order to get to the point of doing without in such a state as he did...

Deleuze: Yeh, yeh...

Parnet: And on the other hand, you said that when you drink, it must not prevent you from working, but that you perceive something that drinking helps you to support, and this "something" is not life... so that raises the question about the writers you prefer...

Deleuze: On the contrary, it *is* life...

Parnet: It *is* life?

Deleuze: It's something too strong *in* life. It's not necessarily something that is terrifying, just something that is too strong, it's something too powerful in life. Some people believe a bit idiotically that drinking puts you on the level of this too-powerful-something. If you take the whole lineage of the Americans, the great American writers...

Parnet: From Fitzgerald to Lowry...

Deleuze: From Fitzgerald to the one I admire the most is Thomas Wolfe... all that is a series of alcoholics, at the same time, that's what allows them... no doubt, helps them to perceive this something-too-huge...

Parnet: Yes, but it's also because they themselves had perceived something powerful in life that not everyone could perceive, they felt something powerful in life...

Deleuze: That's right, that's right, obviously... It's not alcohol that is going to make you feel something.

Parnet: ... the power of life for them that they alone could perceive.

Deleuze: I completely agree ... I completely agree ...

Parnet: And the same for Lowry...

Deleuze: I completely agree ... Certainly... They created their works (*une oeuvre*), and what alcohol was for them, well, they took a risk, they took a chance on it because they thought, right or wrong, that alcohol would help them with it. I had the feeling that alcohol helped me create concepts... It's strange... philosophical concepts, yes, that it helped me, and then it wasn't helping me any more, it was getting dangerous for me, I no longer wanted to work. At that point, you just have to give it up, that's all...

Parnet: That's more like an American tradition, because we don't know of many French writers who have this penchant for alcohol, and still it's kind of hard to... There is something that separates their writing from the States and alcohol...

Deleuze: Well, yes, yes, but French writers, it's not the same vision of writing... I don't know... If I have been influenced so much by the Americans, it's because of this question of vision. They are "seers" (*des voyants*) ... If one believes that philosophy, writing, is a question, in a very modest fashion, a question of "seeing" something... seeing something that others don't see, then it's not exactly the French conception of literature. Although there are a lot of alcoholics in France...

Parnet: But the alcoholics in France, they stop writing. Blondin has a lot of problems, at least from what we can tell.¹² [Parnet laughs, Deleuze smiles] But we don't know of many philosophers either who have recounted their penchant for alcohol.

Deleuze: Verlaine lived on a street right nearby here, rue Nollel...

Parnet: Ah yes, with the exception of Rimbaud and Verlaine...

Deleuze: ... and it wrenches my heart because when I walk long rue Nolle, I think that it undoubtedly must have been the route that Verlaine took to go to a café to drink his absinthe... Apparently, he lived in a pitiful apartment, all that so...

Parnet: Well, yes, poets and alcohol...

Deleuze: ... One of France's greatest poets who used to shuffle down that street... It's marvelous... Yes, yes...

Parnet: To the bar, Le Bar des Amis.

Deleuze: Yes, no doubt! [Deleuze laughs]

Parnet: Yes, among poets, we know that there were more alcoholics ... Ok, well, we have finished with alcohol...

Deleuze: Yep, we've finished "B". My, my, we're speeding along...

"C as in Culture"

Parnet: ... so we pass on to "C", and "C" is vast...

Deleuze: What is it?

Parnet: "C as in Culture."

Deleuze: Sure, why not?

Parnet: OK, you are someone who describes himself as not "cultivated" (*pas cultivé*). That is, you say that you read, you go to movies, you observe things to gain particular knowledge, something that you need for a particular, ongoing project that you are in the process of developing. But, at the same time, [Deleuze listens very attentively] you are someone who, every Saturday, goes out to an art exhibit, goes out to a movie, in the broad cultural domain... One gets the impression that you have a kind of practice, a huge effort in culture, [Deleuze smiles, listens with evident fascination] that you systematize, and that you have a cultural practice, that is, you go out, you make an effort at a systematic cultural practice, you aim at developing yourself culturally (*te cultiver*). And yet, I repeat, you claim that you are not at all "cultivated," so how do you explain this little paradox?... You're not "cultivated"?

Deleuze: No, because... I would say that, in fact... When I tell you that, I don't see myself, really, I don't experience myself (*je ne me vis pas*) as an intellectual or experience myself as "cultivated" for a simple reason: when I see someone "cultivated," I am terrified, and not necessarily with admiration, although admiring them from certain perspectives, from others, not at all. But I am just terrified of a "cultivated person," and this is quite obvious to "cultivated people" (*gens cultivés*). It's a kind of knowledge, a frightening body of knowledge especially (*savoir effarant*) ... One sees that a lot with intellectuals, they know everything. Well, maybe not, but they are informed about everything – they know the history of Italy during the Renaissance, they know the geography of the

North Pole, they know... the whole list, they know everything, can talk about anything... It's abominable.

So, when I say that I am neither "cultivated," nor an intellectual, I mean something quite simple, that I have no "reserve knowledge" (*aucun savoir de réserve*), no... There's no problem, at my death, there's no point in looking for what I have left to publish... Nothing, nothing, because I have no reserves, I have no provisions, no provisional knowledge. And everything that I learn, I learn *for* a particular task, and once it's done, I immediately forget it, so that if ten years later, I have to – and this gives me great joy -- if I have to get involved with something close to or directly within the same subject, I would have to start again from zero, except in certain very rare cases, for example Spinoza, whom I don't forget, who is in my heart and in my mind. Otherwise... ¹³ So, why don't I admire this "frightening knowledge," these people who talk...?

Parnet: Is this knowledge a kind of erudition, or just an opinion on every subject?

Deleuze: No, it's not erudition. They know... they know how to talk about it. First, they've traveled a lot, traveled in geography, in history, but they know how to talk about everything. I've heard them on TV, it's frightening... I have heard... well, since I am full of admiration for him, I can even say it, people like Eco, Umberto Eco... It's amazing... There you go, it's like pushing on a button, and he knows all of it as well. I can't say that I envy that entirely, I'm just frightened by it, but I don't envy it at all.

To a certain extent, I ask: what does culture consist of? And I tell myself that it consists a lot in talking. I can't keep myself... Especially since I have stopped teaching, since I have retired, I realize that talking is a bit dirty, a bit dirty, whereas writing is clean. Writing is clean and talking is dirty. It's dirty because it means being seductive (*faire du charme*). I could never stand attending colloquia ever since I was in school, still quite young, I could never stand colloquia. I don't travel much, and why not? Intellectuals... I would gladly travel sometime if... Well, actually I wouldn't travel, my health prevents it, but intellectuals travelling is a joke (*une bouffonnerie*). They don't travel, they move about in order to go talk... They go from one place where they talk in order to go to another place where they are going to talk even during meals, they talk with the local intellectuals. They never stop talking, and I can't stand talking, talking, talking, I can't stand it. So, in my opinion, since culture is closely linked to speaking (*la parole*), in this sense, I hate culture (*je hais la culture*), I cannot stand it.

Parent: Well, we will come back to the separation between writing itself and dirty speech because, nonetheless, you are a very great professor and...

Deleuze: Well, that's different...

Parnet: ... and we will come back to it because the letter "P" is about your work as professor, and then we will be able to discuss "seduction"...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, cassette five"]

Parnet: I still want to come back to this subject that you kind of avoided, to this effort, discipline even, that you impose on yourself -- even if, in fact, you don't need to -- to see, well, for example, in the last two weeks, the [Sigmar] Polke exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. You go out rather frequently, not to say on a weekly basis, to see a major film or to see art exhibits. So, you say that

you are not erudite, not “cultivated,” you have no admiration for “cultivated people,” like you just said, so what does this practice, all this effort, correspond to for you? Is it a form of pleasure?

Deleuze: I think... Yes, certainly, it's a form of pleasure, although not always. But I see this as part of my investment in being "on the lookout" (*être aux aguets*) [see "A as in Animal"]. I don't believe in culture, to some extent, but rather I believe in encounters (*rencontres*). But these encounters don't occur with people. People always think that it's with people that encounters occur, which is why it's awful... Now, in this, that belongs to the domain of culture, intellectuals meeting one another, this disgusting practice of conferences (*cette saleté de colloque*), this infamy. So, encounters, it's not between people that they happen, but with things... So, I encounter a... painting, yes, or a piece of music, that's how I understand an encounter. When people want to connect encounters to themselves, with people, well, that doesn't work at all... That's not an encounter, and that's why encounters are so utterly, utterly disappointing. Encounters with people are always catastrophic.

So, as you said, when I go out on Saturdays and Sundays, to the movies, etc., I'm not certain to have an encounter... I go out, I am “on the lookout” for encounters, wondering if there might be material for an encounter, in a film, in a painting, so it's great. I'll give an example because, for me, whenever one does something, it is also a question of moving on from it, getting out of or beyond it (*d'en sortir*), simultaneously staying in it and getting out of it. So, staying in philosophy also means how to get out of philosophy. But getting out of philosophy doesn't mean doing something else. One has to get out while remaining within... It's not doing something else, not writing a novel. First off, I wouldn't be able to in any event, but even if I could, it would be completely useless. I want to get out of philosophy by means of philosophy. That's what interests me...

Parnet: That is...?

Deleuze: Here is an example. Since all this will be after my death, I can speak without modesty. I just wrote a book on a great philosopher called Leibniz in which I insisted on the notion that seemed important in his work, but that is very important for me, the notion of "the fold." So, I consider that it's a book of philosophy, on this bizarre little notion of the fold. What happens to me after that? I received a lot of letters, as always... There are letters that are insignificant even if they are charming and affectionate and move me deeply, others that talk about what I have done... letters from intellectuals who liked or didn't like the book...

Then I receive two other letters that make me rub my eyes in disbelief. A letter from people who tell me, “Your story of folds, that's us!” and I realize that it's from people who belong to an association that has 400 members in France currently, perhaps they now have more, an association of paper folders. They have a journal, and they send me the journal, and they say, “We agree completely, what you are doing is what we do.” So, I tell myself, that's quite something! Then I received another kind of letter, and they speak in exactly the same way, saying: “The fold is us!”

I find this marvelous, all the more so because it reminded me of a story in Plato, since great philosophers do not write in abstractions, but are great writers and authors of very concrete things. So, in Plato, there is a story that delights me, and it's no doubt linked to the beginning of philosophy, maybe we will come back to it... Plato's topic is... He gives a definition, for example, what is a politician? A politician is the pastor of men (*pasteur des hommes*). And with that definition, lots of people arrive to say: “Hey, you can see, *we* are politicians!” For example, the shepherd arrives, says “I dress people, so I am the true pastor of men”; the butcher arrives, “I feed people, so I am the true pastor of men.” So, these *rivals* arrive.

And I feel like I have been through this a bit: here come the paper folders who say, we are the fold! And the others who wrote and who sent me exactly the same thing, it's really great, they

were surfers who, it would seem, have no relation whatsoever with the paper folders. And the surfers say, “We understand, we agree completely because what do we do? We never stop inserting ourselves into the folds of nature. For us, nature is an aggregate of mobile folds, and we insert ourselves into the fold of the wave, live in the fold of the wave, that’s what our task is. Living in the fold of the wave.” And, in fact, they talk about this quite admirably. These people are quite... They think about what they do, not just surfing, but think about what they do, and maybe we will talk about it one day if we reach “Sports”, at “S”. [“T as in Tennis”]

Parnet: So, these belong to the “encounter” category, these encounters with surfers, with paper folders?

Deleuze: Yes, these are encounters. When I say “get out of philosophy through philosophy,” this happened to me all the time... I encountered the paper folders... I don’t have to go see them. No doubt, we’d be disappointed, I’d be disappointed, and they certainly would be even more disappointed, so no need to see them. I had an encounter with the surf, with the paper folders, literally, I went beyond philosophy by means of philosophy. That’s what an encounter is. So, I think, when I go out to an exhibit, I am “on the lookout,” searching for a painting that might touch me, that might affect me. [Same] when I go to the movies... I don’t go to the theater because theater is too long, too disciplined, it’s too... it’s too... it does not seem to be an art that... except in certain cases, except with Bob Wilson and Carmelo Bene, I don’t feel that theater is very much in touch with our era, except for these extreme cases.¹⁴ But to remain there for four hours in an uncomfortable seat, I can’t do it any more for health reasons, so that wipes theater out entirely for me. But at a painting exhibit or at the movies, I always have the impression that in the best circumstances, I risk having an encounter with an idea...

Parnet: Yes, but there is no... I mean, films only for entertainment (*distraction*) do not exist at all?

Deleuze: Well, they are not culture...

Parnet: They may not be culture, but there is no entertainment...

Deleuze: Well, entertainment (*la distraction*)...

Parnet: ... that is, everything is situated within your work?

Deleuze: No, it's not work, it's just that I am “on the lookout” for something that might “pass” (*quelque chose qui passe*), asking myself, does that disturb me (*est-ce que ça me trouble*)? Those [kinds of films]... they amuse me a lot, they are very funny.

Parnet: Well, it’s not Eddie Murphy who is going to disturb you!

Deleuze: It’s not...?

Parnet: Eddie Murphy, he’s a director... no, an American comedian and actor whose recent films are enormously successful with the public.

Deleuze: I don’t know him.

Parnet: No, I mean, you never watch... no, you only watch Benny Hill on television...

Deleuze [smiling]: Yes, well, I find Benny Hill interesting, that interests me. Well, it's certainly nothing that is necessarily really good or new, but there are reasons why it interests me.

Parnet: But when you go out, it's for an encounter.

Deleuze: When I go out ... if there is no idea to draw from it, if I don't say, "Yes, he had an idea"... What do great filmmakers do? This is valid for filmmakers too. What strikes me in the beauty of, for example, a great filmmaker like Minnelli, or like [Joseph] Losey, what affects me if not that they are overwhelmed by ideas, an idea...

Parnet [interrupting]: You're starting in on my [letter] "I"! Stop right away! You're starting in on my [letter] "I"!

Deleuze: Ok, let's stop on that, but that's what an encounter is for me, one has encounters with things and not with people...

Parnet: Do you have a lot of encounters, to talk about a particular cultural period like right now?

Deleuze: Well, yes, I just told you, with paper folders, with surfers... What could you ask for that's more beautiful?

Parnet: But...

Deleuze: But these are not encounters with intellectuals, I don't have any encounters with intellectuals...

Parnet: But do you...

Deleuze: ... or if I have an encounter with an intellectual, it's for other reasons, like I like him so I have a meeting with him, for what he is doing, for his ongoing work, his charm, all that... One has an encounter with those kinds of elements, the charm of people, with the work of people, but not with people in themselves. I don't have anything to do with people, nothing at all (*Je n'ai rien à foutre avec les gens, rien du tout*). [Deleuze pauses]

Parnet: Perhaps they rub up against you like cats.

Deleuze: Well yes, if that's how it was, if there's rubbing or barking, it's awful!

[Change of cassette (cassette 6); the producer claps his hand]

Parnet: Let's think about culturally rich and culturally poor periods. [Deleuze rubs his eyes as Parnet speaks] So what about now, do you think it's a period that's not too rich, because I often see you get very annoyed watching television, watching the literary shows that we won't name, although when this interview is shown, the names will have changed. [Parnet and Deleuze smile at some shared joke as she speaks] Do you find this to be a rich period or a particularly poor period that we are living through?

Deleuze: [Deleuze laughs, and Parnet along with him] Yes, it's poor, it's poor, but at the same time, it's not at all distressing (*angoissant*).

Parnet: You find it funny? (*Ça te fait rire?*)

Deleuze: Yes, I find it funny. I tell myself, at my age, this is not the first time that impoverished periods have occurred.¹⁵ I tell myself, what have I lived through since I was old enough to be somewhat enthusiastic? I lived through the Liberation and the aftermath. It was among the richest periods one could imagine, when we were discovering or rediscovering everything... The Liberation... The war had taken place and that was no piece of cake (*pas de la tarte*)... We were discovering everything, the American novel, Kafka, the domain of research... There was Sartre... You cannot imagine what it was like, I mean intellectually, what we were discovering or rediscovering in painting, etc. One has to understand... There was the huge polemic, "Must we burn Kafka?"¹⁶ It's unimaginable and seems a bit infantile today, but it was a very stimulating, creative atmosphere.

And I lived through the period before May '68 that was an extremely rich period all the way to shortly after May '68. And in the meantime, if there were impoverished periods, that's quite normal, but it's not the fact of poverty that I find disturbing, but rather the insolence or impudence of people who inhabit the impoverished periods. They are much more wicked than the inspired people who come to life during rich periods.

Parnet: Inspired or just well-meaning? Because you referred to the Kafka polemic at the time of the Liberation, and there was that Alexander What's-his-name who was very happy with the fact that he had never read Kafka, and he said it while laughing...

Deleuze: Well, yes, he was very happy... The stupider they are, the happier they are, since... Like those who think, and we come back to this, that literature is now a tiny little private affair... If one thinks that, then there's no need to read Kafka, no need to read very much, since if one has a pretty little pen, one is naturally Kafka's equal... There's no work involved there, no work at all...

I mean, how can I explain myself? Let's take something more serious on this [subject] than those young fools (*jeunes sots*). I recently went to the Cosmos to see a film...

Parnet: By Parajanov?

Deleuze: No, it wasn't Parajanov, although he's quite admirable. It was a very moving Russian film that was made about thirty years ago, but that has only been released very recently...

Parnet: *Le Commissaire* ?

Deleuze : *Le Commissaire*.¹⁷ In this, I found something that was very moving... The film was very, very good, couldn't have been better... perfect. But we noticed with a kind of terror, or a kind of compassion, that it was a film like the ones the Russians used to make before the war...

Parnet: In the time of Eisenstein...

Deleuze: ... in the time of Eisenstein, of Dovzhenko. Everything was there, parallel editing notably, parallel editing that was sublime, etc. It was as if nothing had happened since the war, as if nothing

had happened in cinema. And I told myself, it's inevitable, the film is good, sure, but it was very strange too, for that reason, and if it was not that good, it was for that reason. It was literally by someone who had been so isolated in his work that he created a film the way films were made 20 years ago... It wasn't all that bad, only that it was quite good, quite amazing for twenty years earlier. Everything that happened in the meantime, he never knew about it, I mean, since he had grown up in a desert. It's awful... Crossing a desert is nothing much, working in, passing through a desert period is not bad. What is awful is being born in this desert, and growing up in it... That's frightful, I imagine... One must have an impression of solitude...

Parnet: Like for young people who are 18-years old now, for example?

Deleuze: Right, especially when you understand that when things... This is what happens in impoverished periods. When things disappear, no one notices it for a simple reason: when something disappears, no one misses it. The Stalinian period caused Russian literature to disappear, and the Russians didn't notice, I mean, the majority of Russians, they just didn't notice, a literature that had been a turbulent literature throughout the nineteenth century, it just disappeared. I know that now people say there are the dissidents, etc., but on the level of a people, the Russian people, their literature disappeared, their painting disappeared, and nobody noticed.

Today, to account for what is happening today, obviously there are new young people who certainly have genius. Let us suppose, I don't like the expression, but let us suppose that there are new Becketts, the new Becketts of today...

Parnet: I thought you were going to say the "New Philosophers"!

Deleuze: [chortling] It's not about them because...¹⁸

But the new Becketts of today... Let us assume that they don't get published -- after all, Beckett almost did not get published -- it's obvious nothing would be missed. By definition, a great author or a genius is someone who brings forth something new. If this innovation does not appear, then that bothers no one, no one misses it since no one has the slightest idea about it. If Proust... if Kafka had never been published, no one could say that Kafka would be missed... If someone had burned all of Kafka's writings, no one could say, "Ah, we really miss that!" since no one would have any idea of what had disappeared. If the new Becketts of today are kept from publishing by the current system of publishing, one cannot say, "Oh, we really miss that!"

I heard a declaration, the most impudent declaration I have ever heard -- I don't dare say to whom it was attributed in some newspaper since these kinds of things are never certain -- someone in the publishing field who dared to say: "You know, today, we no longer risk making mistakes like Gallimard did when he initially refused to publish Proust since we have the means today..."

Parnet: The headhunters...

Deleuze: [laughing] ... You'd think you were dreaming, "but with the means we have today to locate and recognize new Prousts and new Becketts." That's like saying they have some sort of Geiger counter and that the new Beckett -- that is, someone who is completely unimaginable since [Deleuze laughs] we don't know what kind of innovation he would bring -- he would emit some kind of sound or emit some kind of glow if...

Parnet: ... if you passed it over his head...

Deleuze: ... if you passed it in his path. So, what defines the crisis today, with all these idiocies (*conneries*)? The crisis today I attribute to three things -- but it will pass, I still remain quite optimistic -- this is what defines a desert period: First, that journalists have conquered the book form. Journalists have always written [books], and I find it quite good that journalists write, but when journalists used to undertake a book, they used to believe that they were moving into a different form of writing, not the same thing as writing their newspaper articles.¹⁹

Parnet: One can recall that for a long time, there were writers who were also journalists... Mallarmé, they could do journalism, but the reverse didn't occur...

Deleuze: Now, it's the reverse... The journalist as journalist has conquered the book form, that is, he finds it quite normal to write, just like that, a book that would hardly require a newspaper article. And that's not good at all.

The second reason is that a generalized idea has spread that anyone can write since writing has become the tiny little affair of the individual, with family archives, either written archives or archives [Deleuze laughs]... in one's head. Everybody has had a love story, everybody has had a grandmother who was ill, a mother who was dying in awful conditions. They tell themselves, ok, I can write a novel about it. It's not at all a novel, I mean, really not at all. So...

Parnet: The third reason?

Deleuze: The third reason is that, you understand, the real customers have changed. One realizes... Of course, people are still there, still well informed (*au courant*), but the customers have changed. I mean, who are the television customers? It's not the people listening, but rather the announcers, they are the real customers. The listeners want what the announcers want.

Parnet: The television viewers (*les téléspectateurs*)...

Deleuze: Yes, the television viewers.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, seventh cassette"]

Parnet: And the third reason is what?

Deleuze: Like I was saying, the announcers are the real customers, and there is no longer... And I was saying that, in publishing, there is a risk that the real customers of editors are not the potential readers, but rather the distributors. When the distributors become the real customers of the editors, what will happen? What interests distributors is the rapid turnover, which results in mass market products, rapid turnover in the regime of the best seller, etc., which means that all literature, if I dare say it this way, all creative literature in the manner of Beckett (*à la Beckett*), will be crushed by it, naturally.²⁰

Parnet: Well, that exists already, they are pre-formed on the basis of the public's needs...

Deleuze: Right, which is what defines the period of drought: Bernard Pivot, literature as nullity, the disappearance of all literary criticism outside commercial promotion.²¹

Yet, when I say that it's not all that serious, it's obvious that there will always be either parallel circuits or a means of expression for a parallel black market, etc. It's not possible for us to live... The Russians lost their literature, but they will manage to win it back somehow. All that falls into place, rich periods following impoverished periods. Woe betide the poor! (*Malheur aux pauvres!*)

Parnet: Woe betide the poor. About this idea of parallel markets or black markets: for a long time [literary] topics have been pre-determined. That is, in a given year, one sees clearly on publication lists that it's war, in another year, it's the death of one's parents, another year, it's attachment to nature, that sort of thing, but nothing appearing to emerge anew. So, have you seen the resurgence of a rich period after an impoverished one, have you lived through that?

Deleuze: Well, yes, like I already said, [Deleuze appears a bit tired here with the question] after the Liberation, it wasn't very strong until May '68 occurred. Between the creative period of the Liberation and... when was the beginning of the "New Wave", it was 1960?

Parnet: 1960... even earlier...

Deleuze: Between 1960 and 1972, let's say, there was a new rich period. Certainly! It occurred... It's a little like Nietzsche said so well, someone launches an arrow into space. That's what... Or even a period, or a collectivity launches an arrow, and eventually it falls, and then someone comes along to pick it up and hurl it out elsewhere, so that's how creation happens, how literature happens, passing through desert periods.²²

"D as in Desire"

Parnet: On that hopeful note, we pass on to "D." So, for "D," I need to refer to this page since I am going to read what's in the *Larousse*... In the *Petit Larousse Illustré* [an important French dictionary with biographical references], "Deleuze, Gilles, French philosopher, born in Paris in 1927..." Uh, "1925," excuse me...

Deleuze: So they've put me in the *Larousse* now, eh? They change things every year, the *Larousse*...

Parnet: Well, this is [the] 1988 [edition]...

Deleuze: Ah, fine...

Parnet: "With Félix Guattari, they show the importance of desire and its revolutionary aspect confronting all institutions, even psychoanalytic." For the work demonstrating all this, they cite *Anti-Oedipus*, 1972. So precisely, since everyone wants you to pass for the philosopher of desire, I want you to talk about desire. What was desire exactly? No doubt the most scintillating question in the world regarding *Anti-Oedipus*...

Deleuze: It's not what they thought it was, in any case, not what they thought it was, even back then. Even, I mean, the most charming people who were... It was a big ambiguity, it was a big misunderstanding, or rather a little one, a little misunderstanding. I believe that we wanted to say something very simple. In fact, we had an enormous ambition, notably when one writes a book, we

thought that we would say something new, specifically that one way or another, people who wrote before us didn't understand what desire meant. That is, in undertaking our task as philosophers, we were hoping to propose a new concept of desire. But, regarding concepts, people who don't do philosophy mustn't think that they are so abstract... On the contrary, they refer to things that are extremely simple, extremely concrete, we'll see this later... There are no philosophical concepts that do not refer to non-philosophical coordinates. It's very simple, very concrete.

What we wanted to express was the simplest thing in the world. We wanted to say: up until now, you speak abstractly about desire because you extract an object that's presumed to be the object of your desire. So, one could say, I desire a woman, I desire to leave on a trip, I desire this, that. And we were saying something really very simple, simple, simple: You never desire someone or something, you always desire an aggregate (*ensemble*). It's not complicated. Our question was: what is the nature of relations between elements in order for there to be desire, for these elements to become desirable? I mean, I don't desire a woman -- I am ashamed to say things like that since Proust already said it, and it's beautiful in Proust: I don't desire a woman, I also desire a landscape (*paysage*) that is enveloped in this woman, a landscape that, if needs be -- I don't know -- but that I can feel. As long as I haven't yet unfolded (*déroulé*) the landscape that envelops her, I will not be happy, that is, my desire will not have been attained, my desire will remain unsatisfied.

I'm choosing an aggregate with two terms: woman/landscape, and it's something completely different. If a woman says, "I desire a dress," or "I desire (some) thing" or "(some) blouse," it's obvious that she does not desire this dress or that blouse in the abstract. She desires it in an entire context, a context of her own life that she is going to organize, the desire in relation not only with a landscape, but with people who are her friends, with people who are not her friends, with her profession, etc. I never desire some thing all by itself, I don't desire an aggregate either, I desire *from within* an aggregate.

So, we can return to something we were discussing earlier, about alcohol, drinking ["B as in *Boire*"]. Drinking never meant solely "I desire to drink" and that's it. It means, either I desire to drink all alone while working, or drink all alone while relaxing, or going out to find friends to have a drink, go to some little café. In other words, there is no desire that does not flow -- I mean this precisely -- *flow* within an assemblage (*agencement*). Such that desire has always been for me -- I am looking for the abstract term that corresponds to desire -- it has always been constructivism. To desire is to construct an assemblage, to construct an aggregate: the aggregate of a skirt, of a sun ray,

Parnet: ... of a woman ...

Deleuze: ... of a street, an assemblage of a woman, of a vista...

Parnet: ... of a color...

Deleuze: ...of a color, that's what desire is: constructing an assemblage, constructing a region, really, to assemble (*agencer*). Desire is a constructivism. So, I'm saying that we, in *Anti-Oedipus*, we were trying...

Parnet [interrupting]: Can I...?

Deleuze: Yes?

Parent: Is it because desire is an assemblage that you needed to be two in order to create it? In an aggregate, where Félix was necessary, who emerged then to help write?

Deleuze: Did it... well, perhaps that will be more connected to what we have to discuss about friendship, of the relationship between philosophy and something that concerns friendship... But certainly, with Félix, we created an assemblage, yes.... There are assemblages all alone, I repeat, and then there are assemblages with two people – Félix, everything I did with Félix was a shared assemblage (*agencement à deux*), in which something passed between both of us. That is, all of this concerns physical phenomena. In order for an event to occur, a difference of potential is necessary, and for there to be a difference of potential, two levels are required, so that something occurs, a flash occurs or a flash doesn't occur, or a little stream... And that's in the domain of desire. That's what a desire is, constructing. Every one of us spends his/her time constructing... When anyone says, every time anyone says, I desire this or that, that means that he/she is in the process of constructing an assemblage, and it's nothing else, desire *is nothing else*.²³

[Change of cassette (cassette 8); the producer claps his hand]

Parnet: So, precisely, is it just by chance that, since desire exists in an aggregate, in an assemblage, that *Anti-Oedipus*, where you talk about desire, where you start to talk about desire, is the first book you wrote with someone else... that is, with Félix Guattari?

Deleuze: Yes, you are quite right... No doubt, we had to enter into what was a new assemblage for us, to write as two (*à deux*), that each of us did not interpret or live in the same way, so that something might “pass” (*pour que quelque chose passe*). And if something “passed,” this was finally a fundamental reaction, hostility against the dominant conceptions of desire, the psychoanalytical conceptions. We had to be two, Félix who had been in psychoanalysis, myself interested in this subject, we needed all that so that we could say we had the possibility here of a constructive, constructivist concept of desire.

Parnet: Can you define better, maybe quickly, simply, how you see the difference between this constructivism and analytical interpretation? ... Are there any ...

Deleuze: It's quite simple, I think, it's quite simple, given our position regarding psychoanalysis... There are multiple facets, but in terms of the problem of desire, really psychoanalysts speak of desire exactly like priests talk about it – this is not the only comparison -- they are psychoanalyst-priests. And they talk about it under the guise of the great wailing about castration – castration, it's worse than original sin, castration is... It's a kind of enormous curse on desire that is quite precisely frightening.

What did we try to do in *Anti-Oedipus*? I think there are three main points directly opposed to psychoanalysis. These three points are -- well, for me and I think for Félix as well, we would change none of these points at all.²⁴ That's because we are persuaded that the unconscious is not a theater, not a place where Hamlet and Oedipus interminably play out their scenes. It's not a theater, but a factory, it's production... The unconscious produces there, incessantly produces... It functions like a factory, it's the very opposite of the psychoanalytical vision of the unconscious as a theater where it's always a question of Hamlet or Oedipus moving about constantly, infinitely...

The second theme is that delirium, which is very closely linked to desire – to desire is to become delirious (*délirer*) to some extent... If you look at delirium whatever it might be about, any delirium whatsoever, it is exactly the contrary of what psychoanalysis has latched onto about it, that is, we don't go into delirium about the father or mother. Rather, one “délire” about something

completely different; this is the great secret of delirium, we "délire" about the whole world. That is, one "délires" about history, geography, tribes, deserts, peoples . . .

Parnet: Climates...

Deleuze: ... races, climates, that's what we "délire" about. The world of delirium is, "I am an animal, a Negro", Rimbaud.²⁵ It's: where are my tribes, how are my tribes arranged, surviving in the desert, etc.? The desert... uh, delirium is geographical-political; psychoanalysis links it always to familial determinants. Even after so many years since *Anti-Oedipus*, I maintain that psychoanalysis never understood anything at all about a phenomenon of delirium. One "délires" the world and not one's little family. And all this intersects: when I referred to literature not being someone's little private affair, it comes down to the same thing: delirium as well is not a delirium focused on the father and mother.

3) The third point, it returns to desire: desire always established itself, always constructs assemblages there and establishes itself in an assemblage, always putting several factors into play, and psychoanalysis ceaselessly reduces us to a single factor, always the same, sometimes the father, sometimes the mother, sometimes the phallus, etc. It is completely ignorant of what the multiple is, completely ignorant of constructivism, that is, of assemblages.

I'll give some examples. We were talking about the animal earlier. For psychoanalysis, the animal is the image of the father, let's say, a horse is the image of the father. It's a fucking joke (*c'est se foutre du monde*). I think of the example of Little Hans, a child about whom Freud rendered an opinion... He witnesses a horse falling in the street and the wagon driver who beats the horse with a whip, and the horse is twitching all around, kicking out... Before cars, automobiles, this was a common spectacle in the streets, something quite impressive for a child. The first time a child sees a horse fall in the street and a half-drunk driver trying to revive it by whipping it, that must have caused such an emotion... It was something happening in the street, the event in the street, sometimes a very bloody event. Then you hear the psychoanalysts talking about the image of the father, etc., it's in their heads that things get confused. That desire might concern a horse fallen and beaten in the street, dying in the street, etc., well that's an assemblage, a fantastic assemblage for a child, it's disturbing to the very core.²⁶

Another example I could choose, another example: we were talking about the animal. What is an animal? There is no single animal that could be the image of the father. Animals usually group together in a pack, there are packs.²⁷ There is case that gives me a lot of pleasure, in a text that I adore by Jung, who broke off from Freud after a long collaboration. Jung told Freud that he had a dream about an ossuary, and Freud literally understood nothing.²⁸ He told Jung constantly, "if you dream about a bone, it means the death of someone." But Jung never stopped telling him, "I didn't tell you about a bone, I dreamt about an ossuary." Freud didn't get it. He couldn't distinguish between an ossuary and a bone, that is... An ossuary is one hundred bones, a thousand bones, ten thousand bones... That's what a multiplicity is, that's what an assemblage is. I am walking in an ossuary... What does that mean? Where does desire "pass"? In an assemblage, it's always a collective, a kind of constructivism, etc., that's what desire is. Where does my desire "pass" among these thousand cracks, these thousand bones? Where does my desire "pass" in the pack? What is my position in the pack? Am I outside the pack, alongside, inside, at the center? All these things are phenomena of desire. That's what desire is.

Parnet: This collective assemblage precisely... Since *Anti-Oedipus* is a book that was written in 1972, the collective assemblage came at an appropriate moment after May '68, that is, it was a reflection...

Deleuze: Exactly.

Parnet: ... of that particular period, and against psychoanalysis that maintained its little affair...?

Deleuze: One can only say: delirium “*délires*” races and tribes, it “*délires*” peoples, it “*délires*” history and geography -- all that seems to me to correspond precisely to May '68. That is, it seems to me, [May '68 was] an attempt to introduce a little bit of fresh air into the fetid, stifling atmosphere of familial deliriums. People saw quite clearly that this is what delirium was... If I am going to get delirious (*délirer*), it won't be about my childhood, about my little private affair. We “*délire*”... Delirium is cosmic, one “*délires*” about the ends of the world, about particles, about electrons, not about papa and mama, obviously.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: “Gilles Deleuze, cassette nine”]

Parnet: Well, precisely about this collective assemblage of desire, I recall several misunderstandings... I remember at Vincennes in the 1970s [where Deleuze taught], at the university, there were people who put into practice this “*desire*” that resulted instead in kinds of collective infatuations (*amours collectifs*), as if they never really understood very well. [Deleuze smiles] So I would like... Or more precisely, because there were a lot of “*crazies*” at Vincennes... Since you started from schizoanalysis to fight against psychoanalysis, everybody thought that it was quite fine to be crazy, to be schizo... So we saw some incredible things among the students, and I would like you to tell me some funny stories, or not so funny ones, about these misunderstandings regarding desire.

Deleuze: Well, the misunderstandings... I can perhaps consider the misunderstandings more abstractly. The misunderstandings generally were connected to two points, two cases, which were more or less the same: some people thought that desire was a form of spontaneity, so there were all sorts of movements of “*spontaneity*”...

Parnet: The “*Mao-Spontex*”, they're renowned!²⁹

Deleuze: ... and others thought desire was an occasion for partying (*la fête*). For us, it was neither one nor the other, but that had little importance since assemblages got created, even the crazies, the crazies, the crazies (*les fous*) – there were so many, all kinds, they were part of what was happening then at Vincennes. But the crazies, they had their own discipline, their own way of... they made their speeches, they made their interventions, and they also entered into an assemblage, they constructed their own assemblage, and they did very well in the assemblage. There was a kind of guile, comprehension, a general good will of the crazies.

But, if you prefer, on the level of theory, practically ... These were assemblages (*agencements*) that were established and that fell apart. Theoretically, the misunderstanding was to say: Ok, desire is spontaneity, hence the name they were called, the spontaneists; or it's *la fête*, and that's not what it was. The so-called philosophy of desire consisted only in telling people: don't get psychoanalyzed, never interpret, go experience/experiment with assemblages, search out the assemblages that suit you, let each person search...

So, what was an assemblage? For me, an assemblage --- for Félix, it's not that he thought something else, but it was perhaps... I don't know – but for me, I would maintain that there were

four components of an assemblage, if you wish... This said very very roughly, so I am not tied to it, maybe there are six...

1) An assemblage referred to "states of things", so that each of us might find the "state of things" that suits us. For example, earlier, for drinking, I like this café, I don't like that café, the people that are in a particular café, etc., that's a "state of things."

2) Another dimension of assemblages: "les énoncés", little statements, each person has a kind of style, his/her way of talking. So, it's between the two things (*à cheval*). In the café, for example, there are friends, and one has a certain way of talking with one's friends, so each café has its style – I say the café, but that applies to all kinds of other things.

Ok, so an assemblage encompasses "states of things" and then "statements," styles of enunciation ... Eh... it's really interesting... History in the space of five years can produce a new kind of statement... For example, in the Russian revolution, when did statements of a Leninist kind appear, how, in what form? In May '68, when did the first kinds of so-called '68 statements appear? It's very complex. In any case, every assemblage implies styles of enunciation.

3) An assemblage implies territories, each of us chooses or creates a territory, even just walking into a room, one chooses a territory. I walk into a room that I don't know, I look for a territory, that is, the spot where I feel the best in the room.

4) And then there are processes of what one has to call deterritorialization, that is, the way one leaves the territory.

I would say that an assemblage encompasses these four dimensions: states of things, enunciations, territories, movements of deterritorialization. It's within these [components] that desire flows. So... the crazies...

Parnet: Did you feel particularly responsible for people who took drugs, [Parnet laughs, apparently a bit embarrassed] who might have read *Anti-Oedipus* a bit too literally? Because, I mean, it was, it's not a problem, not like someone incites who young people to commit stupid acts (*conneries*). [Deleuze looks visibly uncomfortable with the subject]

Deleuze [speaking very softly and precisely]: One always feel quite responsible for anyone for whom things went badly (*tourmait mal*)...

Parnet: What were the effects of *Anti-Oedipus*?

Deleuze: ... and I always tried to do what I could so that things went well. In any case, I believe -- it's my point of honor -- I never tried being cagey about those things. I never told a student to go on, it's ok, go get stoned, but always tried to do all that I could to help people make it through. For I am entirely too aware of the *slightest* thing that might suddenly push someone over and reduce him/her to a pulp-like state (*état de loque*). If they drink, ok... I could never cast blame on anyone... Whatever they did, I just don't have the desire to cast blame... But I felt that one had watch for the moment when things were no longer acceptable. Let them drink, let them take drugs, let them do what they want. That is, we aren't cops, nor are we their fathers. I wasn't expected to prevent anything, but I tried nonetheless to keep them from being reduced to pulp (*état de loque*).

Whenever there is a risk, I can't stand it. I can stand a person taking drugs, but a person taking drugs to such an extent that he reaches, I don't know, a wild state (*un état sauvage*), that's it, I tell myself, he's going to crack up. I can't stand it, especially young people... You referred to young people, I can't stand a young person cracking up, it's just unbearable. An old man who cracks up, who commits suicide even, he at least has already lived his life, but a young person who cracks up, out of stupidity (*par connerie*), out of carelessness, because he drinks too much, because of, etc. ...

So I was always divided between the impossibility of finding fault with anyone (*donner tort à quelqu'un*) and the absolute desire, or rather the absolute refusal, that anyone might be reduced to pulp.

So, you know, it's a thin line. I cannot say that there are principles that apply, one just deals with each case, and it's true that the role of people in those moments is to try to save these young kids (*les petits gars*) as much as one can. And saving them doesn't mean making them walk the straight and narrow, it means preventing them from heading towards being reduced to pulp. That's all I can say.

Parnet: No, but it was about the effects of *Anti-Oedipus*, were there any?

Deleuze: That's it, that's it, prevent people from being reduced to pulp, from anyone at that time developing the early stages of schizophrenia, [prevent them] either from falling into a condition where they get thrown into a repressive hospital, or else doing everything to stop someone who couldn't stand being alcoholic from getting into trouble, to do everything so that he might stop, stop...

Parnet: Was it nonetheless a revolutionary book to the extent that it seemed for the enemies of this book, the psychoanalysts, to be an apology for permissivity and to say that everything you said...?

Deleuze: Surely not. The book never was ... I mean, when one reads this book, this book always marked out an extreme prudence. The book's lesson was: don't become a shredded rag (*loque*). We never stopped opposing the schizophrenic process to the repressive hospital type, and for us, the Terror was in producing a "hospital creature". Nothing else counts. And I would nearly say that promoting the kinds of values of the "trip," what the anti-psychiatrists called the "trip" of the schizophrenic process, was precisely the way to prevent and ward off the production of pulp-like hospital creatures (*loques d'hôpital*), that is, the production of schizophrenics, the fabrication of schizophrenics.³⁰

Parnet: Do you think, to finish with *Anti-Oedipus*, that this book still has effects today?

Deleuze: Yes, it's a beautiful book, it's a beautiful book, because it has a conception of the unconscious, in my opinion, the only case in which there was this kind of conception of the unconscious. I mean, with the two points, or the three points: 1) of multiplicities of the unconscious, 2) of delirium as world delirium, and not the family delirium, [but] the cosmic delirium, the delirium of races, the delirium of tribes, that's good; and 3) and the unconscious as a machine and a factory, not as a theater. I have nothing to change in these three points, and in my opinion, it remains absolutely new since all of psychoanalysis has been reconstituted. So, I believe, I hope that it's a book that will be rediscovered, perhaps, perhaps [Deleuze raises his hands together in the prayer gesture] I offer up a prayer for it to be rediscovered...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Gilles Deleuze, cassette ten." During this cassette change, the camera is closely focused on Parnet's reflection in the mirror, with Deleuze completely off camera. Parnet playfully makes a face at the camera, and when Boutang says, "Claire, whenever you like...", she begins, smiling as she sets up the next discussion topic.]

"E as in *Enfance* [Childhood]"

Deleuze: Ten...

Parnet: So, “E” is “*Enfance*” [Childhood]. You have always said that you began your life living on the avenue de Wagram, you were born in the 17th arrondissement, then you lived with your mother on rue Daubigny in the 17th arrondissement, and now you live near the place de Clichy, that is, a poor neighborhood in the 17th arrondissement on the rue de Bizerte. One can say it because you will be dead when people see this, so we can give your address. [Deleuze laughs] What I want to know, first, is if your family was *bourgeoise*, what was known as a bourgeois family on the right (*de droite*), I believe.

Deleuze: I say it, I always say it when my friends ask me. It’s true, it’s something of a descent (*chute*), I started at the high point of the 17th, a very beautiful part of the 17th, and then, during my childhood, I lived through the crisis before the war – I have some childhood memories of the crisis, I wasn’t very old, but one of these memories was the number of empty apartments.... People really had no more money, and there were these apartments for rent everywhere, everywhere. So, my parents had to abandon the beautiful apartment at the high spot of the 17th, near the Arc de Triomphe, and then they went down a level, but it still wasn’t bad, it wasn’t far from the boulevard Malesherbes, in a little street, the rue Daubigny, and then when I returned to Paris, having grown up, it was at the far border of the 17th, a 17th full of small shops, a bit proletarian (*prolo*), rue Nollet, not far away from Verlaine’s house, who was not rich. So, it’s a descent, and in a few years, I don’t know where I will be, but the outlook isn’t good. [Deleuze is smiling throughout this]

Parnet: In Saint-Ouen, I hope.

Deleuze: In Saint-Ouen, yes... As for my family, yes, they were a bourgeois family, on the right (*de droite*), no... well, on the right, yes, they certainly weren’t on the left. One has to return to the circumstances back then. I have few memories from my childhood because memory, it seems to me, is a faculty that should reject the past rather than recall it... Memory, one needs a lot of memory to reject it, precisely, because it’s not an archive. I have this memory... There were these iron railings where there were signs saying, “Apartment for rent”, and I lived through a lot.

Parnet: In what years was that?

Deleuze: Oh, I have no recollection of the years... It was, uh, 30-uh, between ‘35 and... I really don’t know...

Parnet: You were 10 years old.

Deleuze: People were without money... I was born in ‘25, yes, but I remember the money problems... That’s what kept me from going to study with the Jesuit priests (*chez les Jésuites*), my parents had no more money and I had been destined for the Jesuits, and then I went to the public high school (*lycée*) when the crisis came. Then, another aspect... I don’t recall... there was another aspect of the crisis I recalled... I forget, another aspect... Well, it doesn’t matter...

And then there was the war, and my father... Yes, it was a family, indeed, a family *de droite*, yes, because I recall this quite clearly -- nothing has changed, and it’s why I understand employers better, bosses now (*les patrons*), certain employers right now – the terror that they retained from the [Socialist] Popular Front is unbelievable, no doubt even employers who did not live through it, but

there are still many who did live through it, and for them, the Popular Front was the image of chaos worse than May '68. I remember nonetheless that all this bourgeoisie *de droite* were all anti-Semitic, and [Léon] Blum... It was something ghastly, the hatred directed toward [Pierre] Mendès-France.³¹ But that was nothing, *nothing*, compared to the hatred that Blum had to undergo because Blum was really the first... The paid vacation, the reaction to it was frightening.

Parnet: The July First of the Left...³²

Deleuze: Ahhh, really, Blum was.. was... -- I don't know how to say it -- he was for them worse than the devil. One cannot understand how Pétain could seize power without understanding the level of anti-Semitism in France at that period. The French bourgeoisie's [anti-Semitism] at that period, and the hatred against the social measures taken by Blum's government, it was ghastly. So, my father was a bit *Croix-de-feu*, yes... [Deleuze laughs]³³ Oh, it was very common at that period. So, it was a bourgeois family *de droite*... uncultivated... There was a cultivated bourgeoisie, but this was a completely uncultivated bourgeoisie.

But my father, he was a lovely man, very benevolent, very good, very charming, and what really seemed astonishing to me was this violence against... He had gone through the 14-18 War [World War I] which is a world that one can understand very well in general terms, but that one cannot know in fine detail. These veterans of the 14-18 War, at once the anti-Semitism, the regime of crisis, what this crisis was, these are all things about which no one had any clue... So, there you are...

Parnet: And what was his occupation?

Deleuze: He was an engineer, but a very special kind of engineer. I can recall two of his activities. He had invented -- did he invent it or not, or did he just develop it? -- a product with the function of making roofs watertight... the watertightness of roofs... But with the crisis, he ended up with only one worker, an Italian -- a foreigner as well, so that didn't work out too well. And then, this business collapsed, so he resituated himself in a more serious industry that made balloons, the kind of... dirigibles, you see? But at a certain moment, these were completely useless to the point where, in '39, there were a few high above Paris to stop German planes... I don't know why, but they really seemed like homing pigeons.

So when the Germans took over the factory where my father worked, they were more rational (*raisonnable*), and so they transformed everything for the production of rubber rafts. [Deleuze laughs] Rubber rafts were more useful, but they certainly did make balloons and zeppelins. And me, I saw this start of the war -- I *saw* it, I have lots of memories, I wasn't very old, still I was fourteen -- the way people knew quite well that they had gained a year with Munich, a year and a few months, until the war. So, all that was connected, the crisis, the war, all of that... It was an atmosphere, I don't know, it was very tense, when people older than me lived through some really awful moments.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: "Cassette eleven"]

Deleuze: When the Germans really arrived, coming down over Belgium and invading France, I was in Deauville because it was the place where my parents always spent summer vacations. They had already returned [to Paris], and they had left us, which was unimaginable since we had a mother who had never left us... But we found ourselves in a *pension*, they had entrusted us to an elderly woman

who ran a *pension*, so I had a year of schooling in Deauville, in a hotel that had been transformed into a *lycée*, and the Germans weren't far off...

Wait, I am confusing everything... That was during the "phony war" [1939-40], when I was in this *lycée*. So, Deauville had always been... When I was talking earlier about paid vacations, I recall all the more clearly the arrival of the first paid vacationers to the beaches in Deauville. That would have been something for a filmmaker, that would be... a master work, because when you saw these people who saw the sea for the first time, it was something astounding. I recall seeing someone who saw it for the first time, and even after, and it was splendid. It was a young girl from the Limousin province who was with us and who saw the sea for the first time. And it's true, if there is something that's unimaginable when you haven't ever seen it, it's the sea. One can tell oneself that it's something grandiose, something infinite, but a person is nothing next to it. When one sees the sea... And that little girl stayed standing there, I don't know, for four or five hours before the sea, completely dumbstruck as if she had been born an idiot, she just did not tire from standing before such a sublime, such a grandiose spectacle.

Now, this was the beach at Deauville that was a private beach, [Deleuze laughs] had been for a long time, for the bourgeois, it was their property. And here the paid vacationers arrive and people who no doubt had never seen the sea. That was grandiose! If class hatred means anything, it's in expressions like – alas, my mother, who was nonetheless the best of women, said, "The impossibility of frequenting beaches where there are people 'like that'." So, these were... very hard statements... I believe that the *bourgeois* never forgot... May '68 was nothing [Deleuze bursts out laughing] next to this...

Parnet: Talk a little about the fear that they had, that you referred to earlier.

Deleuze: Their fear? Well, there couldn't be any stop to that [process]. If they gave paid vacation to the workers, then it was all the bourgeois privileges that were disappearing... And the sites... it was also a question of territory. If the jack of all trades [Deleuze laughs] can come to the beaches in Deauville, it was, I don't know, as if suddenly the return to the age of dinosaurs... or, I don't know, it was an aggression, it was worse than the Germans, worse than the German tanks arriving on the beaches. It was... indescribable.

Parnet: People from another world!

Deleuze: Also, and this is a detail, but what was happening in the factories, the employers, I mean... They never forgot that, and I think they even developed an hereditary fear... I don't want to say that May '68 was nothing at all, '68 was something else, but they did not lose their memory of '68 either.

So, there I was in Deauville, without my parents and with my younger brother, when the Germans broke through. And yes, it was there that I ceased being an idiot. I have to say that I was a young person who was completely mediocre in my studies, with no interest whatsoever in anything at all, and I think my stamp collection was my greatest activity. I was completely nil in class. And it happened, something that occurred to a lot of people, I guess, people who are awoken, they are always awoken by someone in particular. And for me, in this hotel converted into a *lycée*, there was a guy, young, who seemed quite extraordinary to me because he spoke very well, and it was a total awakening for me, I had the fortune of coming upon a guy.

Later he was rather well known, first because he had a somewhat famous father, then because he was very active in the leftist movement (*dans le gauchisme*), but much later. His name was Halbwachs, Pierre Halbwachs, the son of the sociologist [Maurice Halbwachs].³⁴ At that time,

he was young, and he had an odd appearance (*drôle de tête*), he was very thin, very tall, or rather tall as I recall it, and he only had one eye, that is, one eye open and the other one closed, not naturally, but that's how he presented himself, kind of like a Cyclops, with very curly hair like a goat's... [Parnet laughs through this] no, more like a sheep's. When it got cold, he turned green or purple, with very fragile health, so he had been deferred from military duty. He completed his degree [*license*], and so he had been placed there as a professor during the war to fill in.

And for me, it was a kind of revelation. He was full of enthusiasm, and I can't even remember what year I was in, I don't know, in 8th or 9th grade (*quatrième ou troisième*), and he communicated to us, or communicated to me, something that, well, it was overwhelming for me. I was discovering all sorts of things... He spoke to us about Baudelaire, he read to us, he read extremely well. And we became close necessarily because he saw very well that he had impressed me enormously. And I remember, in winter on the beaches of Deauville, he took me for walks, I followed him. I realize that literally I was something like his disciple, I had found a master (*maître*). So, we sat down out there on the dunes, in the wind, next to the sea – it was great! -- and he read to me, I remember, he read to me [André Gide's] *Les Nourritures terrestres*. He screamed it out – there was no one on the beaches in winter – he screamed out *Les Nourritures terrestres*. I was seated next to him, and I was a little worried that if someone else came out there, obviously, they'd say, "That's pretty strange!" So, he read, and it was quite varied. He helped me discover Anatole France, Baudelaire, Gide, those were the principal ones, his great loves, and I was transformed, completely transformed.

As a result, rather quickly, people began talking about this guy and his strange appearance, his huge eye and all that, with this kid who followed him everywhere, going down to the beach together. And so the lady in whose pension I was staying (*ma logeuse*) quickly got worried and had me come talk to her, and said that she was responsible for me in the absence of my parents, she warned me against... she said it was a relationship... I couldn't understand anything, anything at all... If there ever had been a pure, indisputable, entirely frank relationship, it was that one.

And I only understood afterwards that people assumed that Pierre Halbwachs was a dangerous pederast. So, I said to him, "I am upset, and my *logeuse* told me that" – I used the *vous* [formal] form in addressing him, and he used the *tu* [familiar] form with me – "she said we musn't see each other," that it wasn't normal. So, he told me, "Don't worry about it. No lady, no elderly lady can resist me," he said, "I am going to explain it to her, I will go see her, and she will be reassured." And nonetheless, I was just smart enough, he had made me smart enough so that I had doubts, I was not at all calmed down by that because I could foresee that it was not at all certain that the elderly *logeuse* would be... And indeed, it was catastrophic: He went to see the elderly *logeuse* who immediately wrote to my parents that it was urgent for them to have me return, that he was an extremely suspicious individual... So, he completely blew the attempt.

But there we were, the Germans arrive – all this was during the "phony war" [1939-40] – the Germans arrive, no longer any questions about Pierre -- so my brother and I took off on our bicycles to meet our parents who had been taken to Rochefort – the factory was being moved to Rochefort, that is, to escape the Germans... So, we did that on our bikes, and I still recall having heard the speech made by Pétain, the famous and hideous speech, in some village inn, and there we were on our bikes! [Deleuze laughs] And at an intersection where we stopped, there was a car, something worthy of a cartoon, there was the elder Halbwachs, the young Halbwachs, an aesthetician called Meyer... And they were going not far from La Rochelle, it was predestined... [Deleuze laughs]

I tell you all that only in order to say... Years later, I met Halbwachs, I knew him, I knew him very well, I did not have the same admiration for him, it's true, but that taught me something at least, which is that when I was 13 or 14, at the moment that I admired him, I knew that I was completely right.

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand while the director announces: “Gilles Deleuze, Cassette twelve”]

Parnet: So, you return...

Boutang: Wait, wait.... Ok, go ahead...

Parnet: So, then you returned to Paris with a certain difficulty, to *lycée* Carnot, the “phony war” and the vacation were finished, and in *lycée* Carnot, you were in philosophy classes. I think at that time in *lycée* Carnot, [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty was a professor there, but strangely, you were in a philosophy class that wasn't Merleau-Ponty's, you were in the class of the other philosophy professor named Monsieur [Pierre] Vial. I seem to recall that you said that name...

Deleuze: Yes, Monsieur Vial, about whom I have a very, very fond memory. But it was completely by chance that I was assigned... So, I could have tried to have myself reassigned to Merleau-Ponty's class, but I didn't, I don't recall why. Vial was.... Indeed, Halbwachs had helped me learn something about what literature was, yet from my very first classes in philosophy, I knew this was what I would do...

I recall bits and pieces of things... For example, I remember quite well that I was in philosophy class when we learned about Ouradour... Ouradour had happened.³⁵ I have to admit that I was in a class that was slightly politicized, rather sensitized to questions about the Nazis, etc. I was in the class of Guy Moquet,³⁶ and there was a strange atmosphere in this class... In any case, the announcement about Ouradour, it was really very impressive for a class of boys at age seventeen or, I don't know how old one is when finishing the *bachot*,³⁷ seventeen-eighteen years...

Parnet: Eighteen is the normal age...

Deleuze: Yes, I recall that well. So, Vial, he was a professor who spoke very softly, he was old, he was... and I liked him enormously. Merleau-Ponty, I only recall his melancholy. At Carnot, it's a big *lycée* where there's a balustrade that goes all around the first floor, and there was the very melancholic gaze of Merleau-Ponty who looked at all the kids there, down below, playing, yelling, an enormous melancholy, it seemed like he was saying, “What in God's name am I doing here?” Whereas Vial, whom I liked so much, he was finishing his career, and so in this as well, I got very close to him, very close. Since we didn't live very far from one another, we used to walk back and forth to school together, and we never got tired of talking, of ... And there I knew, either I would do philosophy, or I would do nothing.

Parnet: Starting from your first courses?

Deleuze: Yes, yes. It was as if, if you like... When I learned of the existence, that there were such strange things called “concepts,” that had the same effect on me as, for some other people, the encounter with characters from a magnificent novel. God, I was excited to learn about...

Parnet: *The Count of Monte Cristo*, for example?

Deleuze: Oh, Monsieur de Charlus ... or a great literary character from a novel, I don't know, Vautrin, anything, Eugenie Grandet.³⁸ When I learned that, I don't know, even things like “What did

Plato call an ‘idea’?,” that seemed to me to be as lively, as animated, as... I knew that this was it for me.

Parnet: And immediately, you did very well, you were the best?

Deleuze: Ah, yes. Henceforth, I no longer had any scholastic problems. From Halbwachs onward, I did well, I did well in literature, even in Latin. Yes, I did well. I was a good student, and in philosophy, I became a very good student.

Parnet: I would like to go back a little... Weren’t the classes somewhat politicized at that period? You said that something special was happening in that class because Guy Moquet was in it.

Deleuze: Politicized? Well, that wasn’t possible during the war. We weren’t politicized. There certainly were guys who, at seventeen or eighteen, were already participating in the Resistance, but it wasn’t something public (*connu*). People who were in the Resistance didn’t talk about it unless they were cretins. So, we can’t talk in terms of politicization or not. There were people who were indifferent, there were supporters of the Vichy regime...

Parnet: *Action française*?³⁹

Deleuze: *Action française*? Ah, no, this was much worse. They were Vichy supporters... One could say... No, that has no comparison with the politicization during peacetime, because the active elements were the Resistance, the young Resistance participants, or young people in relations with the Resistance participants. It has nothing to do with politicization, it was much more secretive...

Parnet: So, in your class, for example, there were young people who were already sympathetic toward the Resistance and who talked about it?

Deleuze: Well yes, like I said, Guy Moquet, who would die... who was assassinated by the Nazis, a year later, I think...

Parnet: And you talked about it?

Deleuze: Well obviously. Just as I told you, the immediate news, the immediate communication about Ouradour was the theme, I think, a secret communiqué, the theme on the wireless [*T.S.F.*]... The news was known on that very day. All the Parisian *lycées* knew about it. For me, that was one of the most emotional things, to learn about Ouradour almost immediately.

Parnet: So, to finish with “Childhood,” if one is ever finished with it... Precisely it seems that, for you, your childhood really has little importance. That is, neither do you talk about, nor is it a reference point. You don’t seem to see childhood as having much importance.

Deleuze: Yes... yes... yes... [*Deleuze agrees as Parnet is asking the question, and a brief silence ensues as he thinks about the question*] Well, necessarily so since it’s almost part of all that we were talking about earlier. I consider, really, that the writing activity has nothing to do with one’s individual situation. That does not mean that one doesn’t put all of one’s soul into it. Literature and writing is profoundly connected to *life*. But life is something more than personal. Everything that brings into literature something that has a relation with the life of the person, the personal life of the

writer, is annoying (*fâcheux*) by its very nature, lamentable by its nature, since that prevents one from seeing, that prevents one... It makes one fall back, really, on one's tiny private affair.

That's never what my childhood was. It's not that it horrifies me. What would matter to me, strictly speaking, is this: just as there are becomings-animal (*devenirs-animaux*) that men envelop, [so] there are becomings-child. I believe that writing means always becoming-something, but it's for that reason that one doesn't write just to write either. I believe that one writes because there is something of life going through you, whatever it might be ... There are things that... One writes for life, that's it, and one becomes something. Writing is becoming, becoming anything that one wants except [a] writer, and it's doing everything one wants except [creating an] archive. As much as I respect the archive -- what we are doing [in the *Abécédaire*] is fine. We are creating the archive, but it's not... It has an interest only in relation to something else... If there is a reason to create an archive, it's because it has a relation with something else and that, through the archive, one will perhaps grasp a little bit of that something else. But the very idea, for example, of speaking about my childhood seems to me... It seems nothing, it has no interest, [Deleuze laughs] because it's, it's the opposite of all literature.

If you permit me, [Deleuze leans over, off camera, reaching for a book] I have read that a thousand times, everyone has said it, all the great writers have always said it. But I came upon this book that I didn't know -- everyone has his gaps -- a great Russian poet Mandelstam, that I was reading yesterday, as I told you...

Parnet: With the very beautiful first name, can you read it?

Deleuze: Osip... yes, Osip... He says in this sentence... He says -- there are these equivalencies, and this kind of sentence overwhelms me. And that's, the professor's role, that's what it is, to communicate a text, to have kids like a text. That's what Halbwachs did for me -- So he says: "There's something that I don't quite understand, I don't know exactly what it is." He says: "I never could understand people like Tolstoy," and even Tolstoy, eh? "in love with the family archives with their epic poems made of domestic memories." Here it starts to get serious: "I repeat: my memory is not of love, but of hostility, and it labors not at reproducing, but at distancing the past. For an intellectual of mediocre background," like him, "memory is useless, it would suffice for him to talk about the books he had read, and his biography would be complete," like me with Halbwachs. "There, where for fortunate generations, the epic poem was spoken in hexameters and in chronicles, for me, there stands a gaping sign, and between me and the century there lies an abyss, a ditch filled with time that murmurs (*du temps qui bruit*). What did my family wish to say? I do not know. It had been stuttering since birth, and yet it had something to say. This congenital stuttering weighs heavily on me and on many of my contemporaries. We were not taught to speak but to stammer -- and only by listening to the swelling noise of the century and being bleached by the foam on the crest of its wave did we acquire a language."⁴⁰

Now, I don't know, what that means for me, really... Yes, what that means is to write is to bear witness to life, bear witness *for* life, *for* in the sense we were saying earlier, *for* the animals who die. It's stammering in language (*bégayer dans la langue*). Doing literature by calling upon childhood, it's typically to make literature into one's tiny private affair, it's totally disgusting (*une dégoutation*), really K-mart literature (*littérature de Prisunic*), bazaar literature, it's bestsellers, truly shit. If you don't push language up to this point where it stammers --- it's not easy, it isn't enough to stammer, beh beh beh, like that... If you don't reach that point, well then... Perhaps in literature, just as, through pushing language to a limit, there is a becoming-animal of language itself and of the writer, there is also a becoming-child, but it's not *his* childhood. He becomes child, yes, but it's no longer his childhood, or anyone's childhood, it's the childhood of the world, the childhood of a

world. So those writers who are interested in their childhood, who open that up, and then they continue, well and good, they create the literature they deserve. If there was someone who was not interested in his childhood, it was Proust, for example...

Fine, so, the task of the writer is not to go digging through the family archives, it's not interesting oneself in one's childhood, no one is interested... No one worthy of anything whatsoever (*personne de digne de quoi que ce soit*) is interested in his/her childhood. Our task is to become child through writing, reach a childhood of the world, restore a childhood of the world. That's the task of literature.

Parnet: A Nietzschean child?

Deleuze: Nietzsche, among others, understood... Mandelstam as well. All writers know it... It's becoming, I could not find any other expression than that. Writing means becoming, but it means becoming neither writer, nor one's own memorialist. And it's not because I had a love story that I am going to go write a novel all of a sudden, it's vile (*immonde*) to think things like that. It's not just mediocre, it's vile.

Parnet: Well, an exception to the rule is that Nathalie Sarraute, who is a great writer, just wrote a book entitled *Enfance*. Is this a little bit of a weakness?

Deleuze: Not at all, not at all. I agree with you, Nathalie Sarraute is an immensely important writer. *Enfance* is not at all a book about her childhood, it's a book that typically bears witness...

Parnet: I was playing the devil's advocate role ...

Deleuze: I well understood that you are playing the devil's advocate role, but it's a very dangerous role, you understand? ... She invents a child of the world. What interests Nathalie Sarraute finally in her childhood? It's a certain number of stereotyped formulae from which she derives marvelous effects. That could just as well be what she already did with the final words of... the final words of who there?

Parnet: Of [Anton] Chekhov?

Deleuze: Chekhov... She is going to draw from... she is going to draw from ... a little girl, who heard someone say, "How are you?" (*Comment vas-tu?*), what is this "how are you? how are...?" etc., and from that, she is going to draw out a world of language, going to cause language to proliferate from itself. So, come on, as if she were interested in her childhood...⁴¹

Parnet: Well, all that is well and good, but still...

Deleuze [laughing]: Claude Sarraute [a French cultural commentator] would be interested in her childhood, but not Nathalie Sarraute!

Parnet: Well yes, Clo-Clo, yes, Clo-Clo, so Clo-Clo...⁴² So I find all that well and good, but still, at the same time... First, it was a very early training that pushed you toward literature. That is, you repressed your childhood, you rejected it like an enemy and as something hostile, first, starting at what age, was this a training? And on the other hand, childhood returns nonetheless in bursts, even if

they are disgusting bursts, childhood still returns. So, is it necessary to have a nearly daily training or a daily form of discipline?

Deleuze [laughing]: That happens all by itself, I imagine, because... Childhood, childhood, childhood... You know, it's like everything, one has to distinguish a bad childhood from a good childhood. I call...

What is interesting there [in childhood]? Well, besides the relations with the father, the mother, and childhood memories in the direction of my father and mother, that doesn't seem really interesting to me. It seems very interesting and quite rich for oneself, but not really interesting to write about. There are other aspects of childhood... I was talking about it earlier, a horse dies in the street before automobiles were around... It's a way to rediscover the child emotion (*émotion d'enfant*)... It's *a* child, in fact... One ought to say, "The child I once was is nothing, but I am not merely the child I have been, I was *a* child among others, I was a child just like any other (*un enfant quelconque*)." And it's always under the heading of any child whatsoever that I have seen what was interesting, not under the heading, I was this particular child.... Ok, "I saw a horse die in the street before there were automobiles," not for me, but for those who saw this. Well, yes, very good, very good, perfect, perfect... It's a task of becoming writer, perhaps a factor that resulted in Dostoyevsky seeing it -- there is a wonderful page by Dostoyevsky, I think, in *Crime and Punishment*, about the horse dying in the street -- Nijinski the dancer saw it, Nietzsche saw it.... He was old already when Nietzsche saw it, a horse dying like that... Well, that's fine...

Parnet: And in your case, you saw the demonstrations of the Popular Front! There you go!

Deleuze: Yes, I saw demonstrations of the Popular Front, yes, I saw my father struggling between his honesty and his anti-Semitism... Yes, indeed... I have been *a* child... I have always pleaded, that is, in the sense that people don't understand the importance of the indefinite article.... *A* child is beaten, *a* horse is whipped, etc.... That doesn't mean, that doesn't mean, me, me... The indefinite article has an extreme richness (*l'article indéfini est d'une richesse extrême*).⁴³

Parnet: It's the multiplicity, we will return to that.

Deleuze: It's the multiplicity, yes... yes.

Parnet: Good... We are going to pass on to "F"

Deleuze: Let's pass on to "F", yes...

"F as in Fidelity"

Parnet: I chose the word "fidelity" (*la fidélité*), fidelity in order to speak of friendship (*l'amitié*) since you have been friends for thirty years with Jean-Pierre Bamberger, a day doesn't go by without you calling one another or seeing each other, it's like a couple... In any case, you are faithful in friendship, faithful to Félix Guattari, Jérôme Lindon... I can name others: with Elie [Sambar], Jean-Paul Manganaro, Pierre Chevalier -- Your friends are very important for you -- François Châtelet, Michel Foucault, who were your friends, you paid homage to them as your friends with a very great fidelity.⁴⁴

So, I would like to ask you if this impression is correct, that fidelity is necessarily linked to friendship for you, or the reverse?

Deleuze: There is no fidelity... Yes, it's because we are in "F"...

Parnet: Yes, and the "A" was already taken, so we've not gotten quite arbitrary...

Deleuze: ... but it's something other than fidelity, friendship [is]... In order to be the friend of someone, it's a matter of perception. It's the fact that... It's not that one has shared ideas, but what does it mean to have something in common with someone? I am speaking banalities here... You understand each other without needing to explain yourselves. It's not... It's not talking on the basis of ideas in common, but you have a language in common, or a pre-language in common. There are people, I cannot understand a thing they say, even if they say things quite simple, even if they say, "Pass me the salt," I still have to ask myself, "What are they saying?" On the other hand, there are others who may speak to me about an extremely abstract subject, and I may not agree with them, yet I understand everything, I understand everything they say... Ok, that means that I have something to say to them and they have something to say to me, and it is not at all the community of ideas which... In this, there is a mystery, this kind of indeterminate basis that results in...

[Change of cassette; the producer claps his hand and announces: "Cassette fourteen"]

Parnet: Whose turn is it? Is it still your turn?

Deleuze: Ah, yes?... So, it's true, there is a huge mystery there, the fact of having something to say to someone, getting along so well, without ideas in common, without being able to attribute that to... I have a hypothesis, that each of us is apt to seize a certain type – no one is ever able to seize all the types at once – a certain type of charm, a perception of charm. And what do I call "charm"? It's not at all that I am trying to reduce friendship to homosexuality, not at all, but rather a gesture someone makes, a thought someone has, even before the thought is meaningful (*signifiante*), or someone's gesture, someone's modesty. It's these kinds of charm that extend all the way into life, into its vital roots, and this is how someone becomes the friend of another.

If you take a person's statements... There are statements that can be spoken only if the person saying them is vulgar, or disgusting, a kind of statement... We'd have to look for examples, and we don't have the time, but everyone can find plenty of examples. For each of us, there are statements, if you hear that statement, you say, "My God, what am I hearing? Who is this disgusting person?" One mustn't think that one can make a statement like that at random and then take it back. There are statements that can't be...

And inversely, for charm, there are insignificant statements that possess such a charm, that demonstrate such a delicacy, that you say immediately, "That person, he's mine," not in the sense of property, but he is of my own kind (*mien*), and I hope to be able to be of his own kind (*sien*). From there, friendship is born, can be born. So, there is indeed a question of perception, perceiving something that suits you or that teaches you something, that opens you, that reveals something to you.

Parnet: Always deciphering signs.

Deleuze: Yes, that's it, that's it. You describe it quite well. That's all there is, that's all there is, someone who emits signs, we receive them or we don't. All friendships are on this basis. To become sensitive to the signs emitted by a person, that's what I think explains... So, in this way, one can

spend hours with someone without saying a word, or preferably, saying things that are, well, not completely meaningless, but saying things generally ... It's comical, friendship is comic art.

Parnet: There you are, you really like the comedy of couples, likes [Flaubert's] *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, or Beckett, *Mercier et Camier* ...

Deleuze: Well, you know, with Jean-Pierre, I tell myself that we are the pale reproduction of Mercier and Camier, yes, yes, indeed... Jean-Pierre and I, we are tired out all the time, I have fragile health, Jean-Pierre is a hypochondriac, and our conversations really are like the kinds in *Mercier et Camier*... One says to the other, "how are you doing?" The other answers, "I'm pumped, but not to the max" (*Je suis gonflé, mais pas à bloc* [the translation lacks the cleverness and inherent ambiguity of the French idiom]). Now that's such a charming reply that you have to love someone who says that... "How are you doing?" "Like a cork buffeted by the sea" (*comme un bouchon ballotté par la mer*). So, these are excellent phrases.

With Félix, it's different... With Félix, we wouldn't be Mercier and Camier, we'd be, I don't know, Bouvard and Pécuchet, having thrown ourselves into all our work together, we threw ourselves into our encyclopedic endeavor, really... It's the kind, "Hey, we have the same hat brand, yes," and then the attempt, the encyclopedic attempt to construct a book that touches on all fields of knowledge... With someone else, we'd exchange dialogue like Laurel and Hardy. I don't mean that one has to imitate these grand couples, but that's what friendship is. Great friends are Bouvard and Pécuchet, they're Camier and Mercier, they're Laurel and Hardy, even if they had a fight and broke up, that makes no difference.

Obviously, in the question of friendship, there is a kind of mystery... I mean that it's closely connected to philosophy.⁴⁵ It's philosophy, as everyone has noted, that introduced this word. I mean that the philosopher is not a wise man (*un sage*), first because that would make everyone laugh. He presents himself, at the limit, as a friend of wisdom, a friend. What the Greeks invented is not wisdom, but the very strange idea, "friend of wisdom." What could "friend of wisdom" possibly mean? And that's the problem of "what is philosophy?": what does "friend of wisdom" mean? It means that he is not wise, this friend of wisdom. So, obviously, there is an easy interpretation, that he tends toward wisdom, but that doesn't work.

What is it that inscribes friendship into philosophy, and what kind of friendship? Do we have to... Is it in relation to a friend? What did the Greeks think about this? What does it mean, the friend of... I say it again, if one interprets the friend to be someone who "tends toward...", this is someone who lays claim to (*prétend à*) wisdom without being a wise man. And what does "lay claim to wisdom" mean? It means there is another who lays claims since there is never only one claimant. If there is a suitor for a girl, it means there is more than one suitor, the girl has several suitors.

Parnet: Above all, you're not promised wisdom...

Deleuze: You're not promised wisdom...

Parnet: ... you're only a claimant to wisdom.

Deleuze: ... you're a claimant to wisdom.⁴⁶ So, there are a number of claimants to wisdom, and the Greeks, what did they invent? In my opinion, it's the invention of the Greeks: in their civilization, they invented the phenomenon of claimants. That is, it's huge, what they invented is the idea that there is a rivalry of free men in all domains. Elsewhere that did not exist, the idea of the rivalry of free men, but in Greece, yes: eloquence... which is why they are so litigious (*procéduriers*), it's the

rivalry of free men, free men, friends sue each other, fine... And the young boy or the woman has suitors (*prétendants*), Penelope's suitors, ok... there are several suitors. It's the Greek phenomenon *par excellence*... For me, it's not the miracle, the Greek phenomenon is the rivalry of free men.

That explains the friend: Philosophy lays claim, there is a rivalry toward something. Toward what? So, one can interpret... If you consider the history of philosophy, there are a number of people for whom philosophy is linked to this mystery of friendship... There are some for whom it is linked to the mystery of "engagement" (*fiançailles*) -- which perhaps isn't too distant -- Kierkegaard, the "broken engagement" (*fiançailles rompues*). There would be no philosophy without the broken engagement, his first love.

Parnet: Régine.⁴⁷

Deleuze: But as we said earlier, it's perhaps the rehearsal (*répétition*) of the final one, so it's perhaps the final love.

So in philosophy, perhaps the couple is important for philosophy. It's strange. I believe that we cannot know what philosophy is until we have dealt with these questions: about the fiancé(e), about the friend, about what the friend is. That's what is very interesting, it seems to me... Well, rather interesting ...

Parnet: And Blanchot, in *L'Amitié (Friendship)*, he had an idea...

Deleuze: Ah, well, Blanchot, that belongs... Blanchot and [Dionys] Mascolo are typical, they are the two contemporary writers who, in relation to philosophy or even in relation to thought, give the importance to friendship, but in a very special sense. They don't tell us, you have to have a friend in order to be a philosopher or to think. They maintain that friendship is a category or a condition of the exercise of thought. That's what is important. It's not the actual friend (*l'ami de fait*), it's that friendship as a category is a condition for thinking, hence the relationship Mascolo-Antelme, for example, hence their relationship,⁴⁸ hence Blanchot's declarations about friendship. It matters little if ... So, I had the idea, rather, that I adore distrusting the friend...

Parnet: It's the litigious tendency of the Greeks...

Deleuze: For me the friend is... friendship is distrust. There is an hour... There's a poem that I like very much by a German poet... "Between dog and wolf, the hour in which one must distrust even the friend." There is an hour in which one must even distrust the friend. I distrust my Jean-Pierre like the plague, I distrust my friends, but I distrust them with such gaiety that they do no harm because whatever they might do to me, I find it quite funny, all right, very... And there is such a conversation and such a community between friends, or with the fiancé(e), or with... But, if you will, one cannot believe that all of these are events of little private affairs. When one says "friendship," when one says, "the lost fiancé(e)," etc., it is a question of knowing under what conditions thought can occur (*s'exercer*). For example, Proust judges that friendship is zero, not just for him personally, but for thought, that there is no thought in friendship. On the other hand, there is a thought of jealous love, as the condition of thought.

[Change of cassette (cassette 15)]

Parnet: I would like to ask the final little question about friends: it seems that with Foucault... Châtelet is yet another case, since you were friends with him at the Liberation and you did all your

studies together.⁴⁹ But with Foucault, you had a friendship that was not a friendship of a couple, was not a friendship like you have with Jean-Pierre or with Félix or with Elie [Sambar] or with Jérôme [Lindon] since we are talking again like in a Claude Sautet film, "... and others".⁵⁰ But your friendship with Foucault was very profound, but still rather distant... It had some quality that was much more formal for someone looking from outside. So, what was this friendship?

Deleuze: Yes, Foucault was someone who was very mysterious for me. Perhaps we met each other too late in life, perhaps.... Foucault, for me, was a great regret for me, and since I had enormous respect for him, I did not try to... To say precisely how I perceived him, he was the rare case of a man who entered a room, and it changed, it changed the atmosphere. Foucault is not simply a person... Besides, none of us is simply a person. It was really as if an air, like another gust of air, as if he were a special gust of air, and things changed... There were no... It really was atmospheric, there was a kind of an emanation, there was a Foucault emanation like someone who has a glow.

So, having said this, Foucault corresponds to what I mentioned earlier, that is, there was no need to speak with him, we never talked about the things that we found funny. Having a friend is nearly saying, or rather not saying what we find funny today, finally, what do we find funny in all these catastrophes. But for me, Foucault is the memory of someone.... Oh yeh, when I talk about a person's charm, a person's gestures, Foucault's gestures were astonishing... They were a bit like gestures of metal, of dry wood, strange gestures, fascinating gestures, very beautiful. Well... that's enough.⁵¹

Finally, that people only have charm through their *folie* [madness], that's what is difficult to understand. It's the side... The real charm of people is the side of someone that shows that they're a bit unhinged (*où ils perdent un peu les pédales*), the side of them where they don't really know too well where they are at (*où ils en sont*). That doesn't mean they fall apart, on the contrary, these are people who don't fall apart. But if you can't grasp the small root or the small seed of madness in someone, you can't like them, you can't like them. It's really the side where they are completely somewhere -- where we all are, we all are -- a bit crazy (*dément*). But if you don't grasp someone's small point of insanity (*démence*), the point where I am afraid or on the contrary, I am quite happy, the point of madness is the very source of their charm ... Yes...

[Freeze frame of Deleuze, end of Part 1, credits roll in the commercial version]

Notes

¹ The following translation presents the verbatim text of the eight-hour series of interviews between Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet that were filmed by Pierre-André Boutang in 1988-89. Destined to be broadcast only after Deleuze's death, these interviews were shown with his permission on the Arte channel between November 1994 and spring 1995, i.e., a year (or less) prior to his death in November 1995. I have aimed to provide a faithful translation into English, even to include numerous pauses and asides that frequently punctuate the interviews. Moreover, the initial version used by MIT/Semiotext(e) for the subtitles in the "Gilles Deleuze, A to Z" dvd has been updated (August-September 2022).

I adopt the following conventions throughout the transcription to facilitate reading: I indicate the breaks in the video created by the frequent and successive changes of cassettes by Boutang since these breaks have a direct impact on Deleuze's development of responses to Parnet's questions. Also, on occasion, when spelling or pronunciation of a word or expression remain unclear, I indicate this by a bracketed indication. Moreover, I provide French terms in parentheses in italics to specify particular translated words or expressions, and I insert editorial clarifications (e.g. eli,ded words, first names, brief explanations) in brackets.

Intertextual references for the readers' further consultation – to several texts by Deleuze and Deleuze/Guattari, but not to primary texts to which Deleuze and Parnet refer in the course of the interview – are provided in the endnotes, with complete references in the bibliography. The one important title to which I do not refer in endnotes (for the sake of economy) is Deleuze and Parnet's 1977 interview book, *Dialogues* (1987). The *Abécédaire* picks up and extends many themes already introduced a decade earlier, most notably (and alphabetically): assemblages (51-54, 62-74, 132-134), critical and clinical (119-123), desire and *Anti-Oedipus* (89-91), desire and Freud (77-82), desire and hecceities (91-103), desire and semiotic regimes (103-119), friendship (8-11, 16-18), history of philosophy (13-16), joy-sadness (59-62), ideas and "schools" of thought (23-28), literature (36-76), psychoanalysis (77-89), speeds (30-33), territories and the State (135-147), writing (43-51, 74-76), and zigzag (6-7).

² Deleuze refers to two paintings by Henri Julien Félix Rousseau, called the Douanier: the family portrait, *La carriole du père Juniet* (Father Juniet's Cart), in which a small dog is included within the family group in the cart, and *La guerre* (War) which an enormous, dark horse-like form stretches across the entire painting. See Dora Vallier, *Toute l'oeuvre peinte de Henri Rousseau* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970), plates 16-17, 48-49.

³ On Deleuze and Guattari's typology of animals, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 240-241.

⁴ On baboons and their colors, see the Painting seminar, session 7, 26 May 1981; on "properties" in Beckett (specifically, *Molloy*), see the Leibniz and the Baroque seminar, session 8, 27 January 1987.

⁵ On Melville and "outlandish," see Deleuze, "'Bartleby' or, the Formula," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 72.

⁶ On animals, art, and territory, see Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 183-186.

⁷ On "writing for," see Deleuze, "Literature and Life," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 4.

⁸ See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 240.

⁹ The reference is to Kafka's final story, "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk", included in his collection *The Hunger Artist*, published posthumously. See *A Thousand Plateaus*, 243-244.

¹⁰ Deleuze reflects on assemblages and limits of drinking for alcoholics in the seminar on the State Apparatus and the War Machine, session 4, 27 November 1979, and in the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque, session 10, 24 February 1987.

¹¹ Regarding drugs and deterritorialization, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 283-286; on Michaux's views on drugs and "speeds," Deleuze and Guattari refer to his *Miserable Miracle: Mescaline* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) and *Les Grandes épreuves de l'esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966) in *A Thousand Plateaus* 543, footnotes 70 & 73. See also several references to these works in the Foucault seminar, sessions 23, 24, and 26, 13 and 20 May and 3 June 1986.

¹² This is a reference to the contemporary writer Antoine Blondin, a right-wing writer following World War II, then a sports journalist as well as writing several novels in which he celebrates his inebriation.

¹³ On intellectuals as "cultivated people" as well as Deleuze's lack of reserves, see *Negotiations* 137.

¹⁴ On how Wilson and Bene develop creative stammering of language in their theater, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 98. See also Bene and Deleuze's *Superpositions*, and the essay "One Manifesto Less," from *Superpositions*, in *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

¹⁵ On culturally rich and poor periods, see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 26-27.

¹⁶ This is a reference to a debate generated in 1946 by a Communist newspaper, *Action*, that undertook an investigation and sought responses from a range of intellectuals.

¹⁷ The first reference is the Soviet filmmaker, Sergei Parajanov. The second is the Russian film, *Commisar*, by Aleksandr Askoldov, from 1967, only allowed be released in 1986.

¹⁸ See Deleuze's essay against the French *nouveaux philosophes*, "A propos des nouveaux philosophes et d'un problème plus général" (1977), collected in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 139-147. Deleuze comments briefly on the "new philosophers" (among whom are Bernard-Henri Lévy and André Glucksmann) in a 1988 interview, contemporary with the *Abécédaire*, reprinted in *Negotiations*: "If *Anti-Oedipus* seeks to criticize psychoanalysis, it's in terms of a conception of the unconscious that, whether right or wrong, is set out in the book. Whereas the new philosophers, denouncing Marx, don't begin to present any new analysis of capital, which mysteriously drops out of consideration in their work; they just denounce the Stalinist political and ethical consequences they take to follow from Marx. They're more like the people who attributed immoral consequences to Freud's work: it's nothing to do with philosophy" (145).

¹⁹ On journalists' responsibility for the crisis of literature, see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 130-131

²⁰ On this "system of bestsellers," see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 128-129.

²¹ In *Negotiations*, Deleuze criticizes Pivot in the "Letter to Serge Daney" 75, and in "Mediators" 128-129. In a footnote (199, n.3), Martin Joughin describes *Apostrophes* as "a very influential Friday-evening book program on French TV, hosted by the literary journalist Bernard Pivot from 1975 to 1990 (it was voted 'best cultural program' in 1985)." Pivot went on to host another, broader based cultural program, *Bouillon de culture* (Culture Medium), a title that is a play on words with the biological experimental term.

²² This image from Nietzsche occurs often in Deleuze; see especially *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 106 and 201, note 31, and also the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque, 28 April 1987.

²³ On Deleuze's collaboration with Guattari from this perspective, see *Negotiations* 14 & 125-126; on their goals in *Anti-Oedipus*, see 13-24 et 144-145.

²⁴ On these points, see also Deleuze, *Negotiations* 15-24.

²⁵ This is reference from Rimbaud's "Mauvais Sang", *Une Saison en enfer*, frequently cited by Deleuze and Guattari; see *Anti-Oedipus* 277 (where they cite Rimbaud's words without direct attribution) and *A Thousand Plateaus* 379.

²⁶ On the Hans story, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 259-260, and Deleuze, "What Children Say," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 61-67.

²⁷ On animals and packs, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 240-243.

²⁸ On this Freud-Jung anecdote, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 29-30.

²⁹ This term refers to a Leftist current of the 60s-70s corresponding to a mix of Marxism and Libertarianism, also constituting a pun on the Spontex brand (sponges and textile products). The mix of a kind of Westernized Maoism arose from the May '68 struggles, particularly for those protesters who witnessed how certain striking workers were brutalized. See <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao-spontex>.

³⁰ In *Dialogues*, Deleuze makes a particular, parenthetical intervention on this point: distinguishing lines of rigid segmentarity (e.g., psychoanalysis) from supple, molecular lines, Deleuze and Parnet say: "Some have said that we see the schizophrenic as the true revolutionary. We believe, rather, that schizophrenia is the descent of the molecular process into a black hole. Marginals have always inspired fear in us, and a slight horror. They are not clandestine enough." Then, in a note bearing the initials G.D., Deleuze adds: "In any case, they scare me. There is a molecular speech of madness, or of the drug addict or the delinquent *in vivo* which is no more valid than the great discourses of a psychiatrist *in vitro*. There is as much self-assurance on the former's part as certainty on the latter's part. It is not the marginals who create the lines; they install themselves on these lines and make them their property, and this is fine when they have that strange modesty of men of the line [*hommes de ligne*], the prudence of the experimenter, but it is a disaster when they slip into a black hole from which they no longer utter anything but the micro-fascist speech of their dependency and their giddiness: 'We are the avant-garde', 'We are the marginals'", 139.

³¹ Léon Blum was the Socialist leader of the Popular Front government as well as Jewish. Pierre Mendès-France, also Jewish, was the Socialist minister under Blum.

³² The traditional date of the mass departures on vacation, at least when paid vacations were initiated.

³³ The *Croix de feu* reference is to a proto-fascist French "league" of the 1920s and 1930s.

³⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, according to Wikipedia, was "a French philosopher and sociologist known for developing the concept of collective memory", died in 1945 at the Buchenwald concentration camp.

³⁵ Ouradour-sur-Glane was a small farming village of around 350 inhabitants, located near Clermont-Ferrand, some 15 miles west-north-west of Limoges. During World War II, it was located in the German-occupied zone of France. On June 10, 1944, troops of the 2nd Waffen-SS Panzer Division (armored division), Das Reich, massacred 642 people, almost the entire population, and then destroyed the village.

³⁶ Guy Moquet, a year older than Deleuze and who dies on 22 October 1941, was a young French Communist militant. During the German occupation of France, he was taken hostage by the Nazis and executed by firing squad in Châteaubriant in retaliation for attacks on Germans by the French Resistance. Moquet went down in history as one of its symbols. The farewell letter he wrote to his family at age 17 is now a mandatory reading in all French high schools.

³⁷ The *baccalauréat*, French examination for completing high school.

³⁸ While the latter two are characters from novels by Balzac, Charlus is a character in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

³⁹ Parnet refers to a pre-World War II ultra-right political group.

⁴⁰ Osip Mandelstam, *The Noise of Time: The Prose of Osip Mandelstam* (translation modified), cited in Deleuze, "Begaya-t-il," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 108.

⁴¹ Deleuze refers to Natalie Sarraute's 1983 text, *Enfance* (Childhood).

⁴² Claude Sarraute was a French journalist and social commentator and daughter of Nathalie Sarraute. "Clo-Clo" is a familiar form of Claude in French; Parnet's repetition of it, while peculiar, is probably meant to convey her familiarity with the writer.

⁴³ On the indefinite article, see Deleuze, *Negotiations* 144, and Deleuze, "What Children Say," *Essays Critical and Clinical* 64-65.

⁴⁴ See Deleuze's homage to Foucault and Châtelet, respectively, in *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 1986) and *Périckès et Verdi* (Paris: Minuit, 1988).

⁴⁵ What follows suggests that Deleuze is fully engaged in developing his final collaboration with Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* given that the juxtaposition of philosophy and friendship is part of the book's introduction, 2-6.

⁴⁶ On the claimant in Greek philosophy, see *What Is Philosophy?* 9. See also in the Foucault seminar, session 22, 6 May 1986.

⁴⁷ On the "broken engagement" in Kierkegaard, see *What Is Philosophy?* 70-71. The reference to Régine Olsen is to Kierkegaard's fiancée.

⁴⁸ See Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 4-5 and 219, note 5, notably Maurice Blanchot's *L'Amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) and Dionys Mascolo's *Autour d'un effort de mémoire* (Paris: Nadeau, 1987). See also Deleuze's *Two Regimes of Madness and Other Texts* for his correspondence with Mascolo (327-332), and also the notation: "This brief exchange followed the publication of Dionys Mascolo's *Autour d'un effort de mémoire*. The work opens with a letter from Robert Antelme to Mascolo, the first text he had the strength to write after his return from the Nazi camps" (408).

⁴⁹ On Deleuze's friendship with Châtelet, see his comments in *Negotiations* 162-163.

⁵⁰ This may be a clever reference to Claude Sautet's "Vincent, François, Paul et les autres" (names + "the others").

⁵¹ In *Negotiations*, Deleuze provides three of his interviews on Foucault, including one with Parnet, "A Portrait of Foucault" 102-118, from 1986; see also 150-151 in the same volume. Also, in the YouTube video, there is a ten-second audio drop, with Deleuze listening to something from Parnet, and then his final response comes back in; in the commercial dvd, there is a visible edit of the ten seconds.