

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Apparatuses of Capture and War Machines, 1979-1980

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Part 1

Good. We're in the more and more... severe series ..., more and more... abstract for our research. And, for the moment, therefore, we will soon be finished. We will soon be finished since I had planned a semester, that will make a little more than the semester, and then, afterwards, we'll see what we'll do ... something less severe.

So... you see: for the moment, we are considering something like two forms, two "State" forms, and these two "State" forms are... on the one hand, they do not evolve all that much, they can be placed into evolution... the second after the first. Good. But not necessarily either. And above all, they are not at all equal, they are not at all... There is one of them which is relatively well detailed (*découpée*), it is the State apparatus as overcoding, overcoding of already coded flows. This is what struck us as the archaic Empire. I won't go back over that. And then we saw a second form. It was no longer at all overcoding of already coded flows, or the archaic imperial machine, but it was something much vaguer, namely: it was everywhere ... everywhere, and in the most diverse forms, what we are trying to define as conjunctions, conjunctions that we called topical, topical or qualified conjunctions, between decoded flows. They were basically our two..., our two concepts that we had.

Topical or qualified conjunctions between decoded flows, this is very different from an imperial machine for overcoding already coded flows. At the last meeting, we tried to show how this second figure was as inscribed, or, at least, already outlined lightly (*tracée en pointillés*) within the first. But, above all, the second figure is a really clouded figure (*nébuleuse*), since the topical conjunctions between decoded flows come in the most diverse forms, namely: they correspond to all systems of relations of personal dependence. In fact, what we will call "topical conjunctions between decoded flows", it is also the relations of dependency instituted between qualified objects and determined subjects, for example, land and the private owner, or else the slave and the master, or else as well, relations instituted between subjects, in the plural, for example: the knight, in feudalism, the knight and the lord. Fine.

And there, it was so diverse... perhaps one can understand, for example, the extent to which certain historians, at a certain moment in history, gave to "feudalism" an extension in all senses. But historians very quickly revised... er... this point and denounced this use... er..., this

extensive use of the category of feudalism. In fact, we find ourselves here facing a whole variable, very, very variable set according to all kinds of historical figures, types of relations of personal dependence, and the relation of personal dependence, it seems to me that this is exactly the legal expression of a topical conjunction between flows which are decoded. Fine, but this is extraordinarily... this is very, very nebulous... ah... even in some cases, we tell ourselves: well no, there is no State in this, there is such a crumbling of relations. Nonetheless, even in cases of feudalism where the concept of the State no longer applies, this feudalism still relates to a State on the horizon, to a State apparatus on the horizon.

In any case, I'll leave it there; so we have these two concepts, these two huge concepts. Once again: the apparatus for overcoding coded flows, namely the imperial machine; on the other hand, the relations of personal dependence insofar as they express topical conjunctions between flows which are decoded or between decoded flows. I am insisting: these topical conjunctions are therefore expressed in relations of dependence either between a qualified object and a determined subject, or between subjects determined in relation to each other. You see? And... that's the point we reached, okay? And what is going on? You can correct me... while I am saying... whatever it might be. What happens after? No: put "after" in quotes. What happens "next", "next" in quotes, since it isn't necessarily evolution, it isn't necessarily something that comes after. ... I would also say: what is going on elsewhere? Or else: are there still other figures besides these two huge figures that we have? And you see the extent to which everything is varied since, the second figure, I can't even say that it has any real unity. So, what is going on? What is going on elsewhere?

I want to ask the question, there... like that, it's to provide us with a bit of exercise because everyone knows..., everyone basically knows what... er... what capitalism is, but it's a task of, of knowing, and then..., and then an entirely different exercise than the practical exercise which would consist in saying to oneself: well, let's look for a definition. What makes us say: well yes, at such and such a moment or at such and such a place, there is either a surge of capitalism, or there is something which, already, presents itself as capital that is emerging? My question is, then, you see right away: does capitalism represent yet another concept, besides our two previous concepts? So I would like, here, to be as clear as possible, and for you to intervene..., since... everything..., my whole conclusion is going to turn to issues of current policy, but not today.

I am saying: I, it seems to me, reading ... er ..., in reading Marx and, in particular, *Capital*, it seems to me that there are always two definitions, two definitions... er... of capital. And, these definitions are very strict, that is... [Pause] And why two definitions? Well, I'm thinking of a common distinction in logic, in classical logic. In classical logic, we distinguish nominal definitions and real definitions. It's not Marx saying all this; this is meant to try to make the question very concrete... what is the point in trying to define [capital]... [Brief interruption of the recording]

... triangle, the figure formed by three lines closing a space. I can still call it a "triangle"; it's quite independent of the question "are there triangles?", namely: this definition does not show the possibility of what's being defined. Can three lines enclose a space? I don't know in advance.

So, you see, we will call "nominal definition" a definition which tells us nothing about the very possibility of what's being defined. I can always define a square circle. Whether it is possible/impossible ... I can define an animal named "unicorn"; whether there are unicorns is a whole other question. So: a nominal definition is very simple. What logicians call a "real definition," you understand, is a definition that not only defines its object, but, at the same time, shows the possibility of what's being defined. [Pause] That is, it implies a rule of construction, for example, in mathematics. It involves either a rule of construction, a rule of production, or a rule of acquisition (*obtention*). How do I obtain this? For example: how does one obtain a closed figure, defined by three lines? If I state it, I am giving a real definition of the triangle and no longer a nominal one, you see. What I'm proposing to say -- that's why I was making this parenthesis -- is that it seems to me that ... we can proceed in this way for capital. What would be the nominal definition of capital? What would be the real definition of capital? [Pause]

Well, I'm starting from a text by Marx. I'm starting with this search for a nominal definition. And I'm slowly reading a text by Marx, eh, which seems quite interesting to me. "It was an immense advance", "It was an immense advance when Adam Smith discarded any definiteness of wealth-producing activity", "It was an immense advance when Adam Smith discarded any definiteness of wealth-producing activity – for him it was labour as such." In other words, he says, "neither manufacturing, nor mercantile, nor agricultural labour, but types of labour. The abstract universality..." -- here is the text which seems essential to me -- "The abstract universality of wealth-creating activity", "the abstract universality of wealth-creating activity [implies] also the universality of the object determined as wealth: product in general or once more labour in general, but as past, objectified labour." It matters little how complicated this is. What I glean from this: "The abstract universality of wealth-creating activity [implies] also the universality of the object determined as wealth".¹

What does that mean? In what way... it sounds very, very abstract, this... this sentence. In what way, can, can that that mean anything for us? Well, I am saying: when people tell us about capital, what does that immediately conjure up for us? Capital, of course, is wealth. But what kind of wealth? Well there it is, it's very odd. It is a wealth that is neither this nor that nor that. To speak like... like Marx, it's wealth itself. What does that mean? That means it's a wealth that is no longer qualified as land, nor monetarily, nor even commercially, nor even industrially.

The question of whether capital will be realized in industry rather than in commerce is quite different from what is the nature of this wealth which is called "capital". Our first answer, and you see that this is really a nominal definition, is precisely: there is capital when wealth is no longer determined as such or such, when it is no longer determined as land, as industrial, as a commercial, as an artisanal, as... like this or that as being determined... what? It is determined as a wealth-creating activity. Capital is the subjectivity of wealth. It is wealth insofar as universal subjectivity, that is, it is wealth which is no longer qualified or determined as such objectively, land wealth, monetary wealth, this wealth, that wealth, but which is wealth itself related to the wealth-creating activity, namely: capital. Capital is the subject of wealth-creating activity.

You will say to me: but then, this is very... well, if you consent to it, you would say to me: but this is very odd, because this has existed all along! No! Not at all. Our question becomes that surely it took a strange social formation for wealth no longer to be determined in one particular way or another, but to appear as wealth in itself, that is, to appear as pure and simple subjectivity. You see what I understand by wealth as subjectivity; by "wealth as subjectivity," I mean solely wealth related to an activity, that is, to capital. It is related to capital when it is no longer determined under the objective aspect of such or such a quality, land wealth, artisanal wealth, commercial wealth, monetary wealth. Maybe that will get clearer.

So, we can say at the same time: but it always existed abstractly. Yes, but how is it that no social formation has even had the idea to identify such a notion, this concept of abstract and subjective wealth? Obviously because everything was against it. The abstract concept can arise only under the conditions of a concrete social formation, which is going to pose for us all kinds of problems.

Well, then, I would say: well, the nominal definition of capital is thus precisely this: ultimately what I am proposing is, wealth which is no longer qualified as one thing or another, thus wealth that has become subjective and, therefore, wealth in itself. It poses... capital poses universal subjectivity as the subject of any wealth whatsoever.

Well, you will tell me: this is all philosophy. Yes and no, it's not philosophy at all, because let's try to say it concretely. I am not exceeding my requirements of an entirely nominal definition, but ... how do we really recognize capitalism? Well, obviously with capitalism, there is a mutation of property (*propriété*) and the conception of property. Property is capitalist... when is property capitalist? These are ways of recognizing things. Well, I believe that property is capitalist precisely -- I am starting over again -- when it is no longer qualified as one thing or another, that is, when property has become the property of abstract rights. But abstract rights, what do they mean? Of course, these rights aren't an abstraction of capital.

So, to say "the ownership of capital is the ownership of abstract rights", that obviously means: of abstract rights which, as such, are convertible. Convertible into what? Into whatever you want, convertible into land, convertible into money, into currency, convertible into means of production. But this is a big mistake, and the... and economists always recall this, to identify... finally... in any case, Marxist economists constantly recall this, that it is a big mistake to identify capital with the means of production.

Furthermore even, one would not understand anything about capital... about the mechanisms of profit, I believe -- of profit which is essential to capitalism -- if we identified capital with the means of production. Why? Because we would not understand the essential mechanism by which an equalization of the rate of profit takes place, which supposes that capital traverses both the sectors of production and the most varied means of production. Capital is not the means of production or goods of equipment; it is -- how to put this? -- the substance, in both a philosophical and commercial sense, is the quantitative and homogeneous substance which is invested in the means of production.

In other words, capitalist property is the property of abstract rights convertible through all concrete determinations, and in particular and eminently, the means of production. Why do I say, "and in particular, and eminently"? Because, undoubtedly, in order to bring about the emergence of the autonomous sphere of the means of production, the property had to bear on convertible abstract rights.

So, that's an immediate confirmation; I mean: property in the capitalist form is no longer that of the land, of this, that, or something else; it is the property of abstract rights. It comes down to exactly the same thing as saying: wealth has ceased to be objectively determined in a particular form or another and instead is related to wealth-producing activity, namely: capital, wealth, any wealth whatsoever. And this is very curious ... I am saying: what would prove this? Two things would prove it... I'm trying to... make this concrete. Two things would prove it, I am quoting here... my authors for all those who find these points of interest.

When we reflect on so-called primitive accumulation of capital, that is, the way in which the first capitalists, even before the formation of a capitalist system, organized an accumulation of capital, the authors who study this historical question -- since, there, this is... this is a problem of history -- who closely study this historical question, show very well that what the capitalists gained... what the first capitalists gained mastery over and which allowed primitive accumulation was the property of abstract rights. This is not the ownership of land, for example; this is the ownership of abstract rights over land, to the extent that they bought the land at a moment when it was cheap -- it took all kinds of circumstances obviously -- at the end of feudalism; they buy the land at a time when, for reasons x, it come cheaply, they resell it [Deleuze coughs] at a time when it is expensive and convert their land rights into means of production. [Deleuze coughs] So the primitive accumulation, so-called "primitive", what is called the so-called "primitive" accumulation of capital would show very well that capitalist property was constituted by taking abstract rights for the object. Another point... Can't you hear well?

A student: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: Yeah, well, I'll try to speak louder. Second point. Oh! Second point. Second confirmation. ... This is the attitude of capitalism in relation, precisely, to a phenomenon which we have seen playing a very large role at the level of the archaic Empires and also at the level of the second form, the topical States, namely the attitude of the capitalist [Deleuze coughs, almost choking] with regard to land rent. [Deleuze coughs] That is, capitalism has always tended, other than in exceptional cases that ... which should be taken into account, but overall, we can say that a fundamental tendency of ... of capitalism is the inhibition or even the liquidation of land rent. You see how this is a confirmation, that is, it is the mark that wealth is no longer defined by a property of land or a property of this or that, but, precisely, property is itself the property of abstract rights [Deleuze coughs and finds it difficult to finish his sentence] and wealth arises as capital when wealth is no longer related to a particular quality or another. [Deleuze coughs] Land rent has always been a kind of weight for capitalism. - [Deleuze coughs several times] [Pause] When one has a coughing fit, if you're ... if you turn all red, that's fine; if you turn blue, that's very, very bad. What am I?

Several students: Red!

Deleuze: That's good. That's okay. *[Laughter]*

A student: Even scarlet, eh! *[Laughter]*

Deleuze: Ah! so, how... how do they... they get... this has a lot to do with the history of early capitalism, the way they are going to ward off land rent. There were two ways, and there, Marx explains it very well, very, very well, and then it was adopted by specialists on agricultural problems, as a basis of relations between capitalism [and] agriculture. ... They never liked the story of the landowner who, either in the public form of the despot or in the form of the private owner, received a share of the business profit and took that share in the form of rent from land, rent from... a land rent. They obviously don't like it. And how did they actually do it? There have been two approaches historically, at once the English approach, and there was the French approach. I mean: all of this is kind of getting us into more concrete political issues that... we'll look at... in a while. *[Deleuze coughs]*

The English approach was very odd. There was ... this is what is called, here, typically a class alliance, in fact, in both cases. There was a very curious class alliance between the English entrepreneurs, the English bourgeoisie, if you will, between the English bourgeoisie and American agricultural producers to bypass the English peasantry. And why? This is where... if I am developing this example, it's because... we really need it. Because the American wheat land did not include land rent. And why didn't that the American wheat fields not include ground rent? You will understand immediately, if you have grasped the path I tried to follow in the previous sessions regarding land rent: land rent precisely involves the comparison between simultaneously exploited territories, namely: the least bad territory garners a rent in relation to the worst territory, eh, which itself doesn't garner any.

But, on the topic of the constitution of American agriculture, with the displacement of borders, the occupation of wheat lands, the constitution of large wheat lands, etc., there is no land rent. But this is ... this is the ... famous American history that ... The US border is not like the European borders at all. European borders determine a whole. The American border each time marks the place to be moved beyond, to be displaced. So American wheat did not pay land rent. The English bourgeoisie made massive imports. It created a sort of alliance, American agricultural entrepreneurs [and] English bourgeoisie. The English peasant, there, he is... he is like squeezed. And the English owner -- that is, what the English called the landlord -- he is possessed; it is his responsibility for forming the English bourgeoisie capitalist alliance ... er ... [with] American agricultural entrepreneurs. You see that is one way of getting around the land rent.

In France, at the same time, it is the same problem for French capitalism. The solution is completely different. This is ... this is a case where, precisely, we see the variety of possible solutions. This is all about politics, it's also... it's not... not a matter of pure choice. France, on the contrary, chooses the peasant's small property lot. This is another way of liquidating the land rent. It favors the small property lot of the peasant operator. This implies that the small peasant operator is guaranteed, that, in particular, he has a standard of living higher than that of the

worker. It was true for a long time in France. So, in this case, I mean, in France, it was the alliance of the bourgeoisie with the small peasantry that was fundamental, which, throughout the French 19th century, was fundamental.

And then that... and then that's been over for a long time, that... I mean: some things still remain... some things still remain... in our provinces, it is... [Deleuze coughs] But finally, it's basically over. But what caused that to end? It seems to me that this is very interesting, the real reasons why that ended. It implied in particular this, this alliance ... bourgeoisie ... What do we include in the group? ... This bourgeoisie-peasantry alliance implied a protectionist politics. We have held onto a lot of protectionism; here, there is a kind of weight of history... the French agricultural problems and still currently, with... the problems with Europe... French protectionism is very, very... is in a situation... which, in fact, poses all kinds of political problems. [Deleuze coughs]

But I'm saying... : that does not keep this old peasantry / petite bourgeoisie alliance in France from having run its course a long while back, right? But it ran its course, under what kind of pressure? I think one of the main reasons was Algeria. It was Algeria because, then, we would find something that brought France closer to an English-type solution, [Deleuze coughs], but in a completely different form, namely: the Algerian vineyards did not pay rent, and the land was taken from its owner, so there was no land rent. [Deleuze coughs] This is dispossession, this is expropriation ...

A student: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: I can't avoid it; there's a draft, right?

Claire Parnet: Yes.

Deleuze: Ah. And since I am in the center of this draft, that's why I... [Deleuze coughs] -- You understand, there, that was... it was Algeria which made it possible, for France, thanks to a whole system of expropriation, to no longer go through the alliance with the small peasantry. There obviously had to be land expropriated.

Okay ... this is ... this example, so why did I just develop it? Solely to confirm an aspect of this nominal definition. I repeat: it's when there is capital; capital is not just any wealth whatsoever, even nominally; capital is not just any wealth. On the other hand, capital is not the same as the means of production or possession ... or ownership of the means of production. [Deleuze coughs] Capital is: abstract wealth, that is, wealth that has become subjective -- understand well, I am saying: "become subjective" to distinguish this wealth from a wealth that would be determined objectively as one thing or another, such as land wealth, monetary wealth, commercial wealth.

Ah no, as Marx said, it was ... "an immense progress when Adam Smith rejected any determination of wealth-creating activity. It was raised to abstract universality of wealth-creating activity." And, by that very fact, he had at the same time -- this is what becomes essential -- and by that very fact, he had at the same time the universality of the object insofar as being wealth, namely: labor which, for its part, was no longer determined as this or that, [Deleuze coughs] but

as unspecified labor. In other words, abstract subjectivity of wealth was immediately reflected in abstract labor. You see? You understand? That's why I insisted that capitalism brings a new mode of ownership, the ownership of abstract rights. [Deleuze coughs] Ah, my god, my god... What?

A student: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: Ah! It's not in *Capital*, that [quote]. This text is in *General Introduction* [Deleuze coughs] ... *General Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1857, in La Pléiade [Gallimard], volume I, page 258. [Deleuze coughs]

So, I am almost reaching a first result. I know this is boring, all of that, but hey, it doesn't matter. It does not matter. I am reaching a first result, I would say: the nominal definition of capital, is it -- you just need to understand better -- I would say, it is... capital, [Deleuze coughs] is the relation between a universal subject -- I like it because it seems not to ... not to mean anything strictly, and, at the same time, it seems to me extremely ... operational -- it is the relation between a subject posited as universal and an object posited as any object whatsoever. Fine. [Pause]

I mean, I think... so... to make it easy, I'm thinking of the expression *cogito*... I think, you see, of Kant's *cogito*... for those who... know that. The *cogito* in Kant is expressed like this: I think and, insofar as I think, I think of any object whatsoever, namely, what Kant names with a very beautiful word: the object = X. Good. I am saying, all things considered, well, in capitalism, there is something similar. There is: the relation between the wealth-creating activity without any other definiteness and any object whatsoever: abstract labor. It is therefore the relation between a subject posited as universal and an object posited as anything at all. If you grant me that...

But, once again, it's completely, it's ... it's ... it's very curious, this story, because how can it work? We will see how it can work. But notice I'm well within a nominal definition since, thank God, praise God, we are not going fast, ... nothing I just said shows the possibility of this thing that I am defining. I say: capital is this, no ... We say to ourselves ... we should say to ourselves: my God, how can such a thing exist? Nothing in my definition shows it. Fortunately! Since I wanted ... I wanted it to be that way. [Deleuze coughs]

Now ... I'm just coming to a first ... conclusion, and then afterwards, I would like us to take a break so that you might react to that first point. But we are going very gradually. Good. You must not raise any objections to me which would start into the second point. I am saying: if you follow that, the nominal definition of capital, this is a definition that almost seems like a definition taken, I don't know, from German romanticism, from German philosophy ... from the 19th century, ... the relation between a subject posited as universal and an object posited as anything whatsoever. And it is inevitable that, henceforth, capital is the operation through which the subject posited as universal, namely wealth itself, appropriates the object whatsoever, namely labor, since ownership as ownership of abstract rights will precisely enable this operation. So, you see, it's all right, it's really all right. But I come back, ah ... I repeat, it is ... it is the incantation: the relation between a universal subject and any object whatsoever. Fine.

Oh... well there you go. Here we are, I can already say: this is no longer a topical conjunction. There, we have a criterion. This is no longer the domain of topical conjunctions. You remember ... um ... what we called a topical conjunction: it was a relation between either a specific object and a qualified subject, or between specific subjects in relation to each other. That was the topical conjunction between the decoded flows. What do I find now? Now I find a completely different figure, in a startling sense. This is no longer a topical conjunction since, in fact, wealth has ended ... it is no longer ... it is no longer ... determined as one thing or another. The object of wealth, namely labor, is no longer determined, no longer qualified, unspecified labor and abstract wealth. So, what is this? This is no longer ... We have moved from the field of topical conjunctions; what have we entered? I'm looking for a word to for better... to... contrast fully. I would say: well, since this is another area, it is as if this is now a kind of big, there, an immense conjugation, a generalized conjugation of decoded flows. We have gone beyond topical and qualified conjunctions to enter a kind of conjugation... of flows... decoded flows as such. And so, let's choose the word... Let me introduce it right away so that... that you sense what is coming, let's risk it -- but... I'm not trying to justify it for the moment -- isn't that something like what is called an axiomatic? We have entered a whole new machine: an axiomatic defined as a generalized conjugation of decoded flows. So, you see that I am opposing the topical conjunction and the generalized conjugation.

I would say: well yes, it is an axiomatic of flows that is absolutely distinct from qualified conjunctions. Why? Why can I already say "axiomatic"? You sense it, no matter how little you know about it, because, precisely, one speaks about the axiomatic when one is situated before some bizarre systems that speak to us about the object whatsoever and which consider [that] the axiomatic is precisely the system of elements considered as unqualified elements. When you find yourself facing a treatment of elements presented as unqualified, that is, as being neither this nor that, as not being determined in a particular form or another, such a treatment, whatever it might be -- we will have to... to ask the question "what might such a treatment be?" -- but such a treatment has a precise name and constitutes an axiomatic. Whenever an element is determined or qualified, you know in advance that it is not axiomatic. It's whatever you want, but it's not axiomatic.

So, my term "axiomatic" is vaguely, I would say, with capitalism, indeed begins a new machinery, the axiomatic of decoded flows, which overflows on all sides the topical conjunctions that we had seen previously. And, in fact, there are no longer relations of... personal dependence; there is only a sole and universal subject -- what Marx sometimes calls in early texts "cosmopolitan energy" -- cosmopolitan energy, which attributes to itself any object whatsoever, namely abstract labor.²

There you go, that's my first point on the... nominal definition. Immediately emerges the, the following question: well, how is that possible? Does that exist? If you accept this definition of capital which consists above all in refusing to allow capital to be defined by the ownership of the means of production -- investment in the means of production follows from the definition of capital and not the other way around -- Well then... in second [comes] the question of the real definition, showing the possibility of such a thing. Good. A short pause, in case there were...

This has to be very, very clear, insofar as that... those who are interested in this, in any case, this first point has to be very, very clear. Yes?

Richard Pinhas: *[Inaudible words]* it seemed to me that intervened, so it goes completely in the direction of... what you are saying, but rather at the level of a conceptual or abstract realization of the event of the land rent and of the new determination of exchanges, it would be a modification at the level of the speed factor which materializes in an acceleration of the circulation...

Deleuze: mh!

Pinhas: so, this process, we can see it at the historical level, the way in which the cash circulates, the way in which new elements will arrive... And that makes me think of the fact that in the definition that you give of the axiomatic, in music there occurs more or less the same process, that is, there is an acceleration of the speed factor, and the rotation will be located at the level of circulation itself which in the music of an axiomatic type (roughly, digital music or what is currently being done at IRCAM), we're dealing with unqualified material, and it's on the speed of this material's circulation that we'll see a new type of music which will be of the axiomatic type, something that was absolutely unthinkable with the standard materials of instruments.

Deleuze: Completely, because, in fact, there is... but that... we agreed when we spoke about it... at other times... *[Deleuze coughs]* If there is a connection between music and capitalism -- not in the sense that all music is capitalism, but in the sense that... no, in a way... more... -- What is there that's...? It's that, at least, there is a large common area which is the processing of flows ... er ... the way in which music finds itself faced with a problem of sound flows and the way in which capitalism finds itself faced with flows, that can't be unrelated, right? So, what Pinhas says is quite correct; it's that, it seems to me, the history of Western music means that... there too, we could situate kinds of music... -- ... how to put this... -- operating through overcoding, kinds of music operating through conjunction, and then... from the end of the 19th century onward, it's obvious that there is a kind of generalized decoding of flows, of sound flows... in the form of... precisely, for both technological reasons, for... all kinds of reasons, and that, at that moment, kinds of music of an "axiomatic" type become possible.

Pinhas: So the second part, it has a lot more to do with the real definition than with what you said about the nominal definition, is that what I saw as the acceleration of circulation, therefore the speed factor, which seems to me, to be fundamental there, but which does not manage to be situated, do you consider it... let's say, at the level... -- ... as an example, although the example is badly chosen -- as being a result of... of the change in the status of land rent, for example, or as, on the contrary, being something that caused, in a general movement, the shift in the status of land rent?

Deleuze: No, I would say that for the phenomena of acceleration, this axiomatic is a dependence, yes, it follows from that; it must follow from that absolutely necessarily, but it involves quite other dimensions than we haven't yet seen, in my view.

Georges Comtesse: Can I ask a question? [*Inaudible sentence*] Before talking about the combination of flows, shouldn't we say that, at the level of the nominal definition, that two flows exist, flows of wealth and flows of labor, that are entirely heterogeneous and virtual, and that the idea of capital is, first of all, the idea of a differential relation between these two flows and, secondly, the idea of a conjugation. We cannot say that capital is conjugation. If we remain at the level of a nominal definition, we must say that this is the *idea* of a relation or the *idea* of a conjugation.

Deleuze: Well, without... restriction, yes! Yes! Absolutely. But, in my opinion, you just stated – that will let me go even faster -- you just stated what the real definition is. So, what you saw very well is that I was not already authorized to say "conjugation", since there was no conjugation at the level of the nominal definition. The conjugation would imply something that I had not yet stated and that you have stated.

Comtesse: [*Inaudible words*] Is a flow of wealth [like that] a flow of capital? Isn't it precisely in the idea of a differential relation or in the idea of a conjugation before their realization? Or rather, it's through this idea's realization of this idea that the flows of wealth and the monetary flows become capital.

Deleuze: Agreed, agreed, agreed. In any case, you are right to say: the nominal definition does not allow one to say -- ... I got ..., I considered this a little ... but that didn't matter, it was to prepare the passage ... -- The nominal definition can only be expressed in the following form: capital is the relation between the universal subject, that is, the activity, the wealth related to a pure activity and no longer qualified in a manner of this or that, on the one hand, and on the other hand, labor posed as abstract, no longer determined as this or that, now a pure relation. There, Comtesse is completely right, I can only offer a pure relation of appropriation and without at all showing, again, how it is possible.

But how is it possible if I switch to the real definition? Comtesse just said it. And we can immediately see that... capitalism, well it's true... I am, once again... I come back to this all the time, I find that historians are right, those who say, anyway, but, capitalism could have happened elsewhere, it could have happened before, it might not have happened at all. It took something very bizarre, on the order of an encounter, an encounter. There is a contingency, a fantastic contingency in the emergence of capitalism, a contingency in the double sense. Again, it might not have happened, it could have happened elsewhere. Why an encounter? Well, we will find the same data as in our nominal definition, but quite differently organized.

And, there too, Marx -- this time, on the one hand, in the *Grundrisse*, on the other hand, in *Capital* -- insists greatly on the following point, and... it seems to me, this is one of the strongest points in Marx's analysis. It's that precisely something like two series are required. You see my nominal definition: the relation between the pure subjective activity of wealth and labor as any labor whatsoever. Thus: the pure relationship between the universal subject and any object whatsoever. I was saying: it's already in this way that topical conjunctions become outdated. And how is that ... How is that possible? Marx shows us very well that historically, the conjunction of two heterogeneous series was required, as Comtesse has just said.

On the one hand, it took a real movement -- but here again, the word is required -- a movement of deterritorialization of labor. "Deterritorialization of labor" means the entire manner in which, in the current of feudalism and at the end of feudalism, the worker is torn from the land.

According to what factors? All kinds of factors, internal factors, external factors. External factors: the last major invasions. Internal factors: the changes in the economy... er... and the crisis in serfdom, whatever you want. In other words, [there's] a first series which, through many manifestations -- a series itself [being] very, very varied, not at all... er... monotonous -- a wildly varied series which ends up producing what Marx and others call "the naked worker", the naked worker or the free worker, that is, the worker who is no longer determined either as a slave or as a serf, neither like this, nor like that, but as the pure owner of a pure force of abstract labor. He is deterritorialized; he is no longer referred to a land. It is the production of the naked worker which will constitute the basis of the proletariat. For that, an historical series is required, to produce the naked worker, that is, the worker who is nothing more than the owner of his labor power. And once again, this series brings into play extremely varied causes and circumstances that run through all of feudalism and the end of feudalism.

But, on the other hand, that's not enough. As Marx says in a very beautiful text: it was not enough for the conditions to be met in order that a naked worker might be produced...

[Interruption of the recording] [54: 26]

Part 2

... artisanal and commercial wealth and become the ownership of abstract rights that can be invested in means of production. So, the two series are the production of independent wealth and the production of a naked worker. And, as Marx said, fine, one can conceive that one might occur and not the other; at that point, you never have capitalism. It's as if it were the encounter of two very, very different series.

You will tell me, if needs be, the same factors overlap, for example, the deterritorialization of the worker is accompanied by a transformation of wealth on the owner's side. This is obvious. So, there are resonances from one series to the other all the time, but it's not in the same way. There are indeed two kinds of wealth... There are indeed... sorry, two series, and it took this encounter between independent wealth and abstract labor or naked labor. And this is what made capitalism possible, and suddenly realized. *[Pause]*

So, at this level, I can in fact reintroduce, in accordance with Comtesse's remarks earlier, the idea that, in fact, it is the conjugation of two decoded flows at most, and I can add, there, like a kind of amendment, ah yes, the topical conjunctions that we saw previously, they were already related to decoded flows, but, in a certain way, they prevented them from being decoded further. They stopped... they stopped locally, they temporarily stopped the decoding. It's like another knot has been tied; it's as if another capture had occurred.

But at the level of generalized conjugation, it is necessary that... and the flow of work goes beyond all the topical conjunctions to lead into the formation of this kind of monster, really, the

naked worker; wealth, the flow of wealth, must overflow all topical conjunctions to result in the formation of this kind of monster: capital, and, at that moment, yes, there is the encounter. There is the encounter between this pro... this er... naked worker who only has his labor power, in the Marxist project, and this abstract owner who is the capitalist.

So, the real definition of capital will be: the encounter between the two heterogeneous series, one of which results in the production of the naked worker and the other results in ... eh ... has as result the formation of the independent capitalist. [Pause] So you see that this is literally a level of decoded flow that goes much further, that has spilled over even ... even topical conjunctions. And, ultimately, once again, there is only one subject: capital; one single object: labor. This, then, is called "the generalized conjugation of decoded flows". The universal subject is reflected in the object whatsoever, namely abstract labor is capitalism insofar as being axiomatic.

So, there, I went much faster because ... It doesn't matter, it is not ... I am pointing out that [Deleuze coughs] ... to my knowledge, one of the texts in which this aspect of Marx on independence of the two series is best commented on, and in Althusser's book, *Reading Capital*, is [Etienne] Balibar's text. Balibar places enormous emphasis on the contingent aspect of the encounter between the two series.³ He shows, for example, how er... in Rome... -- and Marx... there are letters from Marx, in which Marx himself emphasized this point -- why capitalism did not happen, asked Marx, in the Empire, in... in... Rome, even before the Empire, where a kind of mass of naked labor meets, a kind of mass of guys who are completely... who are expropriated... small expropriated peasants, who are reconnected in the city and who have only their labor power. So, there is a series, almost from capitalism, which is available. The other series is not available. Confronted with this mass, ...of almost sub-proletarians, the plebs -- the plebs, former small expropriated landowners -- are not reconnected, do not constitute themselves as the other necessary term, namely: capital, independent capital. Wealth remains land-based, it remains monetary, in the form of usury; it remains commercial, etc. It does not become capital.

So, at that time, for other reasons, Marx refers to Byzantium as, there again, elements, all kinds of elements were available. For other reasons, historians refer to the Chinese Empire around the 12th century, all kinds of items were available for... all kinds of items, why? Always for this kind of decoding of flows which would result in this constitutive conjugation of capital. And, there too, there is a highly forceful imperial power which prevents... which remakes conjunctions, which will prevent this capitalist formation.

So... hence the double impression: it had to happen... ah.... Necessarily, something like that had to happen, but it almost didn't happen, or else it might have happened way before. That reintroduces many contingencies into history, that. All kinds of variables have to come into play. Okay, if you grant me all that, our question explodes. I mean: the question that concerns us in our work, namely, ... but, if you grant me this system, this, this new type of formation which no longer operates by overcoding of flows, which no longer operates by topical conjunction, but which operates by generalized conjugation of decoded flows, that is, through the axiomatic, well our immediate impression is that: what further need is there for State apparatuses?

At first glance, there is no longer any need. In the other cases, the answers were qualified. In the first case of our archaic Empire, there, the answer went without saying. There must be a State apparatus because that's all there is with an imperial apparatus capable of undertaking the overcoding. In the second case, we have seen [that] the State apparatus becomes extraordinarily vague, nebulous, for example, in feudalism. But however vague, however nebulous [this may be], the system of powers still refers to a virtual State apparatus on the horizon or elsewhere, or whatever you like. In any case, very precise apparatuses of power are required to operate the topical conjunctions. But there, at the point where we have reached, if this vagueness which would seem bit like in an axiomatic, everything occurs automatically. As Marx said wonderfully, why does Marx hate Proudhon's idea, "property is theft"? He thinks that this idea ... is stupid, he hates it, expressions like "property is theft", this ... he thinks it's ... how to say, that ... this is not a good order-word, ok? Property is absolutely not theft; how does it occur? It is not possible. For a simple reason, as he says... the worker, Marx says in texts which appear to me to be quite brilliant, he says:, of course the worker is exploited, he is extorted, but we should not take that for an extraction from his skin, because, okay, he is exploited, but within the framework of a system which produces him, which produces him at the same time as being that which is extorted and which produces the extortion. He does not precede.

In other words, and there Marx goes very far, I'm quoting... these are notes... it's Marx's notes very late in life which are notes on Alfred Wagner, who was an economist... er..., an economist of the contemporary right of... er... [Deleuze does not finish the sentence] In the notes on Wagner, Marx says very well: but capital is a right, and the capitalist extorts only what the right allows him to extort. We could not say it better; it seems to me that this is perfect. In fact, the ownership of capital is the ownership of abstract rights, and it is in the name of these abstract rights that the extortion of surplus value occurs, namely the relationship with labor. It's not a theft at all, obviously. So that goes without saying.

And I am saying, in such a system, it seems literally not even to be automatic; it's better, it's automation, namely... well, what a need is there of a State apparatus? Just for the record, I am pointing out that this problem concerns us immediately because ... er ... this is the subject of our research, these figures of the State apparatus. Well, I am just pointing out, just for the record, that there is a whole current of capitalism that says: yes, no need for a State, or the smaller the State and the less it reveals itself, the better that will be; let things happen spontaneously (*laissez faire les choses*). Capitalism has always included a grand critique of the State. In a way, it invents a machine that no longer passes through the State apparatus. So, here... we would collide here... so, suddenly, you would be entitled to tell me: fine, well then, why did you say all that if it has no connection with the State?

And yet ... And yet, several things immediately cause us to reflect, that is, are going to toss a problem our direction. Understand: if we find out... -- so that... you might see which direction... I would like to go -- if we find out that, by right, the capitalist formation has no need of a State apparatus in the sense that we have seen previously, if we see, however, that it can only function with State apparatuses, we cannot -- here, the conclusion is imposed by itself -- therefore with capitalism, there is... I would not say a mutation, but there is a change. There is a very profound

change in the role and functions of the State apparatus. What is it going to be, this new figure of the State? Where do I see this?

Well, I am accumulating there, in this way, remarks, from left and right. I am saying: it's obvious that when capitalism tells us -- at certain eras, still, not at all, right? -- when capitalism, at certain moments, tells us: but we have no need for a State, the less there will be, the better, it is not lying. It does not lie. Only, this is an extremely ambiguous proposition; why? Because it means ... it doesn't mean at all -- and here you have to weigh the words -- it doesn't mean at all "there should be no State at all"; on the contrary, it invokes human nature to say that there is always a need for a State. It says: we need a minimum State. Fine, I am returning to a topic that we started the last time and that we will only come back to when we talk about politics today to conclude all this ...

But the minimum state, I remind you, this is how I find this expression from [Paul] Virilio very good; what is it? Historically, this is what has been called the totalitarian State. The totalitarian State is not at all the State at its maximum; it is the minimum State. Namely, it is in fact the minimum State that allows decoded flow of capital and abstract labor to operate their conjugation as automatic. I mean ... I was considering this example: in order to establish the liberation of prices, that is, to let prices vary freely, you need a State apparatus, that is the minimum State. And that has always been one of the poles of the totalitarian state, ensuring the liberation of prices. So, while people often seem to slide from the expression "minimum State" to, ultimately, "no State at all", we on the contrary, it seems to me, we must establish the biggest difference between the expression "no State at all" – an expression which would be supported only by certain anarchists -- and the expression from capitalism in many cases, "the minimum State", namely, implying -- they do not say so -- namely, a totalitarian State.

So, capitalism's claim for a minimum State obviously does not mean that capitalism does not need, in its own way, a State apparatus. It just needs a very special kind of State, because, once again, at the point we've reached, it's out of the question for us to say that modern totalitarian States are like archaic States, like despotic States. No, that's quite another thing, unrelated! Moreover, there's no ... no reason to say that so-called socialist States are totalitarian states. No, it is it's ... it's not that this would be better, it's that it's something different. The totalitarian State means something very, very specific. Okay, let's assume this, that's my first point.

Second remark: therefore, in any case, there is indeed a State apparatus, and it is obvious ... it is obvious that the conjugation of the two flows which really defines capitalism, namely the flow of independent capital and the flow of unspecified labor, needs a State apparatus to function. In a way, it works well on its own, but it also occurs through force. It works through the force of the State apparatus. And, in fact, the expropriations which determine, which produce and which reproduce the naked worker, the accumulation which produces and which reproduces abstract wealth, necessarily occur through an apparatus of force, through an apparatus of violence. That's sort of a quick second point.

Third remark: let's look at concrete cases or then.... You understand, in fact, there is a very, very odd thing about capitalism; it's ultimately why it has always been for people... for all people,

even... even revolutionaries, it's always been something quite fascinating. Everything is always fascinating, really, but we tell ourselves: but finally, what is it ... it's still amazing, that,... I mean... it's... it's... it's really a virus-like thing, really. It's something... what Pinhas was saying earlier about... er... the acceleration of circulation, all that... We have the impression of... [Deleuze does not complete this] And then, the swarming of virus, the capitalist virus which seizes, which ... which recedes, which advances, all that... It is not surprising... It is enough to read *Capital* to see how Marx is fascinated by this thing ... He wouldn't have been who he was if he hadn't been... fascinated by that thing. So...

But one gets the impression that, in capitalism, there is really a movement to push always further a kind of axiomatic of decoded flows. The more it is decoded, the more, in a sense, capitalism rejoices in itself. And, in that sense, there is indeed a capitalist inventiveness, there is an insane capitalist creativity; that is why they grasp hold so well. And so... that impression, what is it? We have... we have the impression at the extreme... I am selecting a contemporary example, because at the extreme, but that... they are capable, you understand, in... in the development of production or exploration, or information, they are capable of doing some completely insane things, really.

Okay, I'll take one case, transspatial exploration, an historical case. America -- but what does "America" mean? Does that mean capitalism? Does that mean the American State? -- in any case, enormous flows of capital are mobilized in the service of a very curious institution, and famous in America, which is called NASA, n-a-s-a. NASA is a distinctively American institution with both... mixed, what, both with State government interests, and... and private interests, and military interests, and the... eh... well. [He doesn't finish] And it's of the research unit kind (*bureau d'étude*), right? They created... they were essential.

In the early ... transspatial exploration projects, NASA played a fundamental role. And they undertook projects, so obviously, assuming huge, huge capital investments, in that exploration. And there you go... -- so that's it, you'll understand right away,... -- I'm outlining this by saying: well it's really as if the flows of capital, but... -- there, I'm using the words literally -- were going to the moon... they were going to the moon, fine. It is a mode of deterritorialization. Fine. This is what, for example, there is a banker... I... once again, bankers, I find they are the ones who speak best, eh, about what is happening today, a lot better than the industrialists who are either really morons, or else... liars, hypocrites. Bankers are much more... [Deleuze does not finish the sentence]

One of the guys who talks best about economics and money today... is a guy called, he's not... he.... He's not a revolutionary, he's a... he was a high-ranking functionary, but as he was thrown out, he retains a great bitterness about it, so that... that gives him a very great critical sense... his name is [Jean] Saint-Geours, and not long ago, last year, he published a very interesting book called *Pouvoir et finance* [Power and Finance], in which he then evokes ... he calls it "la stateless currency", "stateless currency".⁴ It's a little upsetting, but... and he evokes the mass, then, this flow of stateless money of which, he says -- and he explains very well by what mechanisms -- which passes through borders and over which the States have no control. So, this is somewhat

the case, but Eurodollars, petrodollars, etc., are just one case of this currency, right? It's very, very... [*He doesn't finish*] So that's why, when you say America, it's not the United States, it's... capitalism as well, fine.

But... this time, it was a case in which it was no longer stateless currency; it was really the flows of investment that... they were deterritorializing. Really it was going to the moon. It was... it was nonetheless... that was NASA's greatest moment. What happened? Why am I citing this example? Old Eisenhower, who was President of the United States at the time -- I'm outlining, right, because the story is so long -- cuts off some of the NASA funding. It was tough, it was a struggle, a struggle for influence was required... Fine. So here I have, I have my exemplary proposition, my typical example: the President of the United States is cutting off part of the funding of a cutting edge capitalist institute for transspatial exploration. Fine.

Let's try to translate this here, like that, to... if I may say so, not a lot, for fun, into our language. We would say: flows of capital, huge flows of capital tended to be decoded and de-territorialized more and more. Fine. At the same time, why is the President of the United States reacting? Because, of course, there were factors alongside. It was because the Russians, the USSR, from that point on, did not think of transspatial exploration in exactly the same way, and in the end, it won. For once, this was a victory for the Russian conception over the American conception, I believe.

With Russians, this was no more reassuring; it was even, in a sense, less reassuring; from the start, the Russians conceived of transspatial exploration as having... er... -- you'll forgive me for outlining a lot, but I think what I'm saying is not wrong, not completely wrong -- as having to make a sort of belt around the earth, that is, deterritorialization, yes, but the deterritorialization had to remain relative, that is, had to take the earth as an object. It was a question of making a kind of belt, I'm not just saying for surveillance, but it also implied surveillance, it implied communications, etc., but it was still a deterritorialization stretched out towards the earth as an object to be flown over and cinched up. So it was, in a sense, a much more reasonable conception. I say, the so-called socialist countries are much more..., we will see why... they are in a sense much more.... They don't have the virus aspect of... they proceed differently; it's not the virus, that, it's not... it's not viral invention, it's not creativity of a virus like in capitalism; it's something else.

So... well, finally, what the President of the United States does is say: okay, in fact, we are going to end up looking like morons, we... the Russians are going to make their barrier and go make their... transspatial belt around the earth, and we are going to send ourselves to the moon, but... and after? [*Laughter*]. And after? So, what does the President of the United States do? He reterritorializes capital flows to a minimum. He tells NASA: no, you are changing your program. You're changing your program. And NASA has to follow this order because the State is big enough that ... You see? It's really important.

There, I see in this a typical example of the role of the apparatus ... of a State apparatus in a formation, in a capitalist regime. We must prevent ... since, if you accept this definition of capitalism as a generalized conjunction of decoded flows, the flows have to be prevented from

being decoded ad infinitum. It's not possible that ... no, we can't go too fast, we must not, ... etc. There must be regulatory mechanisms.

And the State will be one of those fundamental regulatory mechanisms. The state will make the necessary reterritorializations to prevent capital flows from being decoded too quickly or too radically. All kinds of apparatuses of regulation in this system of automation will be required. So here, we can clearly see the need for a "State" form as well, to the point that I would say, yes, why is it that -- last remark, we have seen this so I will not go back over this -- why is it that capitalism did not pass... did not triumph through the intermediary of the town-form? We saw that it had triumphed through the intermediary of the "State" form. So ... this is ... there is indeed a reason. And we saw why. Obviously, it needs, much more capitalism and the capitalist formation has become one with the great formation of what is called this very particular figure of the State, namely the nation states.

And what are nation States? As we saw, there is all the music that would come back, the nation States, it takes place with music. And it is the superiority of music over painting... People march with music... and not at all because music is... it is... might be an ideology, but because music is much more from flows... and that works, that functions. I mean, in what way is the nation State music? Ah that's... that's always the question. The nation State is how to create a land and a people. How does one create a land and a people? Well, so it's done with blood, with... lashes from whips, right, with... with music, with whatever you want. *[Pause]* In Italy, that occurred with Verdi. Strangely, in Germany, that didn't happen with Wagner... And that matters... There are flows... Fine.

And what does "one people, one land" mean? It's that a people is always the product of a deterritorialization of a population. It's a decoded population. If a people still remains to be created, it is because that implies a population... decoded populations. By what means have nation States made peoples? With populations, that is, the nation State has been... it can only be defined by crushing what must be called... it would be necessary to find the word, there... of what Guattari calls, for example, nationalitarian phenomena. The nation has been defined by crushing nationalitarian phenomena. A people was created with populations. A land was created with territories. It implies both music and violence. But then, this land-people which defines a nation, what is its function? Well, that will tell us a little about the role of the State in a capitalist formation. It is precisely in the framework of a people-land, that is, a nation, that what? That the circulation of labor and capital is realized, or the homogeneity of capital without external obstacles in principle.

If you follow that definition, what ... what results from it? It's very simple. If you follow this last remark and all the very quick remarks I made, I would say: well yes, in capitalism, the State apparatus is absolutely, absolutely... necessary and ... accompanies capitalism at every moment, only the State has completely changed. What happened to it? This is where we come then to our real problem, I believe, namely: before, in a way, yeah ... no ... I am thinking of a term that we use constantly when we talk about axiomatics, only that's going to push us into some difficulties.

An axiomatic is inseparable from what are called models of realization. Fine, an axiomatic has models; it necessarily has models of realization.

What is an axiomatic's model of realization? This is an area in which axiomatics are concretely realized. A domain where an axiomatic is concretely realized is a domain of ... is a domain of realization (*effectuation*) or a model of realization. It goes without saying that an axiomatic always has simultaneously, at least by right, several models of realization. Notice the sense in which "model" is being taken. "Model of realization" is the field of realization of an axiomatic. We'll see, I'll try to give examples later, ok? I almost want to say, here, what is the State apparatus now? It is ... the State apparatus ... the State apparatuses are the models of realization of this axiomatic which was defined as the generalized conjugation of decoded flows.

States will define... nation States will be exactly the models -- including their lyrical values, their musical values, their sentimental values -- will be the fields of realization (*effectuation*) or the models of realization of the axiomatic of capital, which does not mean not to say that this is appearances. The models of realization are absolutely not appearances. I am insisting on the real character of the nation State. A people, a land, they are really created, but what are they created like? As models of the realization of the axiomatic itself, so quite varied ... Models of realization are quite varied from one another. It is understandable that there are completely different types of State, since the same axiomatic refers by nature to completely heterogeneous models of realization, heterogeneous. There is even necessarily heterogeneity of models of realization where a given axiomatic is realized (*s'effectue*).

And how is this a completely different function of the State? This is a completely different function of the State because ... because ... I am returning to the imperial State. ... I'm going back to the imperial State... -- [*Brief inaudible discussion between a student and Deleuze*] -- Because I'm going back to the archaic State, I could say: it is a model. But in what sense a "model"? It was model to be realized... It was... as the apparatus of overcoding. Overcoding had to take place. It was a model in the sense of a transcendent model. It was what had to be reproduced, what had to be put together and put back together. But now the same word "model" has completely changed its meaning. It is no longer the model in the sense of "transcendent model"; it is, on the contrary, a model in the immanent sense of model of realization in relation to an axiomatic, which axiomatic is alone and took over the role of... from the old-fashioned model.

You understand? Normally you should not really... understand because... because we haven't said what an axiomatic is. As a result, our task now would be twofold. It would be double, understand. Here is the task which remains for us, I believe, it would be threefold ... no ... yes, I do not know. First task: what does this comparison between the economic political situation of the world and a very precise mathematical notion like that of the axiomatic mean?

There we have my first question against myself. I mean, what does that mean?... Is that a metaphor ... What's its purpose? This is... what am I trying to do? What does it mean? This is ... this is ... Seemingly, it's silly. It's silly. Well, it's not smart, really. It's easy, first of all, it's... hence the need to... [*He does not finish his sentence*] There we are, even if it means taking a detour, we have time; what is this, what is it exactly in mathematics that's an axiomatic? And,

henceforth, can this notion be used to qualify the modern international situation other than metaphorically? There we are. You can sense my ... my tendency to hope for an answer: this is something quite different from a metaphor. Capitalism is truly an axiomatic, given what mathematicians call an axiomatic, and it is more than a metaphor. But still, it would be necessary to justify it. Second question: henceforth, if the term "axiomatic" can be transported, transferred to the world economic and political situation, how does this situation appear? And what is the role of the State in this situation? There you have it, those are my two problems.

If I answer those two questions, we'd basically be done... with this State apparatus series. So, there we are. So you have to agree that we will go through a rather long ... not very long, but a little bit, where we will forget everything, that is, we will ask ourselves: what is precisely an axiomatic in mathematics? Especially since it's very funny, it's very ... very recreational ... And that's within this that we will find our political problems. What time is it?

A student: Quarter past twelve.

A student: quarter past twelve twenty.

Deleuze: Ahhh. Twelve twenty? So, we can start, if you are... or take a break, or you have had enough, you tell me... Or else, we talk about something different, or I can start to outline a little what an axiomatic is. Because I can do it, yes, fairly quickly, in order for you to be able to think about it. Because ... And after the holidays ... that you might bring me some things ... Are you tired or are we going to continue?

A student: [Inaudible] very funny!

Deleuze: Everything is fine. You?

The student: Very funny, exciting!

Claire Pernet: Let's continue!

Deleuze: So, listen, not for long, because... I'm feeling tired, anyway. Here I am asking questions... I am making an appeal, as I have done several times, and sometimes it worked, sometimes it doesn't very much. I am making an appeal for some of you, for example, those who have done a little mathematics, to take over with some things that you know, eh, about... about the axiomatic and that... when we come back from vacation, we'll expand all that.

Well, I am starting with two basic, very, very simple things, since I am also thinking of those people who have not done math at all. There is a very good classic book by a ... by a French logician called Robert Blanché published in the Presses Universitaires de France, you know in higher education collections, but Blanché was a very good logician, b-l-a-n-c-h-é, a book called *The Axiomatic*.⁵ For those who don't know anything at all, if there are any... you'd already have an idea, ok?

And, on the other hand, for those who know a little more, I remind you that there is in France... - I'm not saying that this is not outdated, I don't know, besides, but things change so much in the field of axiomatics as in all fields of mathematics -- there was a series of authoritative volumes in

France, under the name ... published under the name of Bourbaki. I am saying "published under the name of Bourbaki" since "Bourbaki" designated a circle of mathematicians that also included, it must be said, the best mathematicians, among the best French mathematicians, and who have made a very, very vast axiomatic which was published by Hermann.⁶ Now this axiomatic from Bourbaki, which is outdated, which is classic under the name of... of Bourbaki, this axiomatic from Bourbaki... -- it is rather several axiomatics, it is an axiomatization of all mathematics --... this axiomatic includes... introductory considerations, or else in appendices in which Bourbaki... tries to explain a bit. And I would greatly like to simplify an example he gives, ah, like that, citing my sources, and there we are. I am asking: what would ... what would that be? This is my first comment.

Bourbaki tells us, well, roughly, roughly, he says: there you are, there is an axiomatic every time you find yourself faced with ..., or every time you build relations ... every time you determine relations between unspecified elements. Between unspecified elements: that is, these relations, they will be established ... These relations, let us symbolize them by: capital (R) in parentheses. You see, if I write on the board, I will make a capital (R) in parentheses. Whenever you have a system of relations between unspecified elements, you are in the domain of an axiomatic.

We understand, but we tell ourselves, but what is this? What is he talking about now? I am proposing, because it's going... it's going to be very useful to me for... er... afterwards, relations between unspecified elements, and I tell myself: we need a special name. I propose like that, for me, for convenience, the term "functional relation". And I will distinguish, at that moment, functional relations and formal relations, formal relations being relations between specific, specifiable elements and functional relations being relations between non-specifiable elements. So, I would say: fine, there is an axiomatic when we are faced with a set of functional relations between unspecified elements.

Symbols for this relation: x, small x, capital R, y [xRy]. I would say, ... there's... I'm reading this... -- ... you see, this symbolism, it's not Bourbaki's, eh, I'm simplifying it myself, a lot... for my use and for yours -- I read this formula, arbitrarily I have the right: there is a functional relation between xy as any elements whatsoever. [Pause] There you go. And suppose I define three R's, three capital R.'s. For anyone having an interest in this, I'm almost asking you to think about it a little bit... you have to note it down or you won't remember it. Those who don't care, you won't take notes ... it doesn't matter. But that's the advantage of bringing together, it seems to me... an audience... whose concerns are very different. You choose yourselves.

I say: first relation... I am going to define, here -- understand what I am doing -- I will define an axiomatic with three relations, three capital Rs. I say: first relation, with two any elements whatsoever x, y, a third, z, necessarily correspond, to any two any elements whatsoever x, y, a third necessarily corresponds, a third, z, necessarily corresponds. This is my first capital R, my first relation.

Second relation: there is a small element e... there is a small element e such that, for any element x, we have xRe = eRx = x. I recognize a second axiom here. I'll read it again: there is a small element e such that, for any element x, we have xRe = eRx = x.

Third, eh, third and last -- there are many more, but I am selecting three, I am selecting an axiomatic with three axioms -- for any element x , for any element x , there is an element x prime, such that $xRx' = x'Rx = e$. You will understand everything, I assure you; you will understand everything. [Laughter]

I'll end with... just a first remark. First remark. If you find yourself... something... you have to play around a lot... since we don't know anything, we, eh, you have to trust a little... I don't know what anticipation... if I find myself facing something like that, I say to myself: hey, this is not the same as formalization. In other words, I... I don't know why yet, but I can feel it. So... it happens that things we feel are wrong, of course, but I tell myself: this is not formalization; we should be able, starting from there, to be able, even better than logicians have managed, to distinguish logical formalization and axiomatization. I'm not saying this is new; there are a lot of people who have tried to distinguish formalization and axiomatization, but... you ought to feel that this is a process which is not formalization, that it's of a different nature. These functional relations between any objects whatsoever, there is no hint of object specification in there.

[*Interruption of the recording*] [1: 40: 43]

Part 3

... two models of realization. The two models of realization that this axiomatic with three axioms comprises are already ... – don't make me say stupid things, eh? I am not saying "these are the only ones"; I'm picking two of the simplest ones -- the addition of the real numbers -- we will verify this, right away here; it's going to be easy – the addition of real numbers -- real numbers, you know, positive, negative, or zero numbers – the addition of real numbers: the first model of realization. The second model of realization: the composition of displacements in three-dimensional Euclidean space, the composition of displacements, a very simple operation, the composition of displacements in the Euclidean space. [Pause] Good. These two models of realization are absolutely independent of each other. That's a remark, too, that I will very much need. They are absolutely heterogeneous. They are independent.

Let's try: what does it look like? You retain: the addition of real numbers and the composition of displacements. My first axiom: to two elements, x, y , a third z necessarily corresponds under the clause of the capital R , that is, of the relation. In the case of real numbers, the relation is addition. This is the model of realization, this is the addition. Well, in fact, to any two real numbers whatsoever, x, y , a third [corresponds under the rule of addition]. You see that I am specifying my elements... with respect to and in the domain of realization. In the axiomatic, I didn't need to specify them. So, there is no contradiction. If now I am specifying them, that's because I am looking precisely for the models of realization.

So, to two elements, to any two real numbers, x and y , a third necessarily corresponds under the rule of addition. Notice that this axiom is verified by addition. But this would also be true of multiplication. So, an axiom is obviously not enough to define my... my axiomatic. I'm just saying: if you give me two real numbers, fine, then, under the rule of addition, they are addable,

and that yields a third. It yields z . Likewise, two displacements in Euclidean space are composable, R designating at that time compositability just as R earlier defined addability.

Second axiom. So, there... -- we're having a competition, eh? for those who are interested, of course; you will find it right away, in both cases, and that will be very, very, very, very, very, very enjoyable -- you remember: there is an element e such that for any element x , we have -- you put yourself in the situation of real numbers, of the addition of real numbers -- so, if I translate my axiom, that yields: there is an element e such that for any element x , that is, for any real number, we have: $e + x = x + e = x$...

A woman student: It's zero.

Deleuze: *[He applauds]* *[Laughter]* Awesome, awesome, that's zero, eh. It's zero. Or, in the composition of displacements, there is a very special concept which is what is called identical displacement, identical displacement, which leaves every point in space fixed. So, see, according to the... according... -- and that has no relation, zero and the identical displacement, they are two completely heterogeneous notions -- according to the model of realization, my axiom is realized with zero ... my second axiom is realized with zero or with identical displacement.

Third: for any element x ... -- you think in terms of adding real numbers -- for any element x , there exists x' such that $x + x' = x' + x = e$, that is, zero. Well, relative to x , it's $-x$, it's the negative number. This is the negative number. For the displacements, this is called, in this model of realization, inverse displacement. *[Pause]*

I am saying, therefore... Ah... I can now complete my definition and say: we call "axiomatic" a set of functional relations between unspecified elements which are embodied or which are realized in formal relations and qualified or specified elements, specific to each of these fields of realization, of these models of realization. I confirm my impression that this is completely different from a process of logical formalization. Why? Because, in an axiomatic, you have a set of functional relations between unspecified elements that immanently wash over (*baignent*) *[Pause]* the models of realization at the same time that the models of realization directly realize, each on their own, directly realize, each in its heterogeneity, each in its... for its own account, the relations of the axiomatic. *[Pause]* So, how is that different from ...? *[Deleuze does not finish this phrase]*

On this point, if you ... you will think about it. It is quite obvious that a process of axiomatization encounters enormous problems.⁷ What are these problems? I'll quickly try to categorize them so that you might think about them and, if necessary, so that you find others. I would say: the first problem is one concerning models of realization. The models of realization of a same axiom are heterogeneous with respect to each other; however, they realize the same axiomatic, hence the properly axiomatic notion of "isomorphy". *[While]* it might be suggested that they can be heterogeneous, they are no less isomorphic with respect to ... they are not homogeneous, but isomorphic with respect to the axiomatic.

So, a fundamental question: to what extent are and can the models of a same axiomatic be both heterogeneous and yet isomorphic? Are there not cases even where one must conceive of a

heteromorphy of models which, however, refer to a same axiomatic? What am I thinking about? You can only understand this if the idea is confirmed that this is not a simple metaphor, the comparison of the global situation to an axiomatic; we will be faced with the problem ... the types of State today ... if we accept our hypothesis that State apparatuses are models of realization of the axiomatic, fine, to what extent is there a homogeneity of all types of State apparatuses? But even if they are not at all homogeneous, they can nonetheless be isomorphic in relation to the axiomatic. At that point, we should speak of an isomorphy of the most diverse States, of the type ... perhaps even that the axiomatic supports and implies a true polymorphy or heteromorphy; in any case, we cannot confuse heterogeneity, isomorphy, heteromorphy, etc.

A second problem: each axiom -- you can easily see it in my previous example -- is independent of the others. This is even why it is not a theorem. A theorem is the proposition that depends on other propositions. An axiom is a proposition that does not depend on a previous proposition. If I can generate one of my axioms from other axioms, it's not an axiom; it's a theorem.

So then, so then ... axioms are independent, and yet they form a set, and this set has, by right, a limit. What is this limit? What is the limit of an axiomatic? The limit of an axiomatic is easy to define: it is the point at which one cannot add an additional axiom -- the axioms being independent, one can add some; I could have been satisfied with two axioms in the example which I gave you, but I added a third; Bourbaki, he inserts a lot of others -- well ... er ... the limit of an axiomatic is the point at which you cannot add a new axiom without the system becoming contradictory. We say, at that point, that the axiomatic being considered, that this axiomatic is saturated. This is the problem of saturation or limit, of the limits of an axiomatic, a saturated system, when one can no longer add an axiom without making the set contradictory. Fine.

Here too, I am saying, we will find ourselves facing the problem, there is a famous problem: the problem of the relation of capitalism with the limits of capitalism, and what does "the limits" mean? And what is meant by the way capitalism, as Marx says, ceaselessly pushes, shifts its own limits? Might we speak of a saturation of capitalism? We indeed see that there is a similar problem currently. When there are people who say: the end of resources, the end of resources, well, okay, so does that mean the system is saturated? And what does it mean that the system is saturated? Here I mean, I get the impression that it's not entirely a metaphor anymore; this topic of saturation is found throughout the entire global political situation. ... fine, there are thresholds of saturation. There is an urban crisis, we are told; there is a crisis in the flow of raw materials. There is a crisis of this, of that. Well, that means saturation. We are told that in cities, electricity, fine ... it's at the point of saturation. Is it by chance that we come across this notion? There we have the second problem that we will have to consider: what do limits or saturation of an axiomatic mean?

Third problem: [Pause] one of the great moments of axiomatics was the discovery by ... by ... by a famous axiomatician, of the following phenomenon. It is that -- here, I am summarizing it enormously, eh, because we have only just to grasp its spirit, ok? ... -- one could state it thus: it is that in any slightly complex axiomatic, comprising a large number of axioms, this axiomatic necessarily includes a model of realization in so-called natural numbers -- you will look this up

in the *Petit Larousse*, eh, what natural numbers are, eh, so that you establish for yourself ... in numbers natural. ... fine, let's just assume this, just hold onto that -- And natural numbers define or belong to so-called denumerable sets, denumerable sets. Hence a great dismay, and that was one of the first great crises of axiomatics, the idea that what we call in mathematics, and regardless that non-denumerable sets had a power that made them escape the axiomatic, that the axiomatic could not exceed the power of the denumerable. An example of a power that exceeds the power of the denumerable: well then, there is a famous power, the power of the continuous, that is, the power of the points on a ... composing a line. This power of the continuous is a power of the non-denumerable ... of ... of a non-denumerable set.

Good. So the axiomatic... there, it is no longer the question of limits; it is the question of a higher power, a power irreducible to the axiomatic and yet in relation with it and which would be like a power of the non-denumerable, whereas the axiomatic operates within infinite, but denumerable sets, if need be. Is there a way, for axiomaticians, to overcome this difficulty? Is this difficulty fundamental? It doesn't matter. I am saying: our third problem would be the problem of the power in its relation to the axiomatic. If I continue what, for the moment, is only a metaphor for us, what do we mean when we say if... Does the following proposition mean something: that the global axiomatic releases, in a way, a power that it is not sure itself to control? You will tell me: oh well, yes, that, we see what that means, it is all these apocalyptic visions, eh... it is... that's the current millennial visions; that used to be the atomic bomb, so now it's... good... all of that... Fine, is there anything for us to learn from that? And under what conditions? The relations of an axiomatic of capital with a power of the non-denumerable? We'll indeed see. Is this a metaphor or is it better than a metaphor?

Final point: another ... another great crisis of the axiomatic occurred when an axiomatician was able to demonstrate theorems, a series of famous theorems according to which, in the attempt to axiomatize arithmetic, which seemed precisely one of the easiest, richest domains for axiomatics... er... In this attempt, well, there necessarily occurred an encounter with some propositions that this axiomatician named "undecidable", "undecidable propositions", which does not mean propositions whose consequences we do not understand, but propositions which we cannot demonstrate, by relating them to the system of axioms, whether they are true or not true, that is, which place into question the principle of the excluded third. We cannot demonstrate whether they are true or false; in this sense, they are undecidable.⁸

So my third problem... my fourth... this is my fourth problem, I no longer know... my fourth problem is: does every axiomatic, including the supposed global axiomatic, include a certain type and a certain number of propositions that we would be entitled to call undecidable propositions, and which would obviously be our last hope, because... otherwise there isn't much, there isn't much... hope, if there are not undecidable propositions?

So, understand, that doesn't at all mean ... For example... I distinguish... propositions... even unpredictable ones; it is known that no economist and no banker can predict the increase in a money supply. We cannot foresee the increase of a money supply. This does not mean that increasing a money supply is an undecidable proposition in the system, because its

unpredictability is particularly ... absolutely is part of the system of axioms and refers to the system of axioms. It's not that. But are there any propositions so that, so this time it won't be their truth and their falsity, what will it be? Well, it will be their ability to stay in the system or else to get out of the axiomatic and... to react against the axiomatic, but reacting how? Does every axiomatic generate and secrete its undecidable propositions? There you go, you see, I am considering these problems, but hey, that's how it is... You... you can think about this, and then we will resume after... [vacation] You wanted to say something?

A student: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: Yes? What's this?

The student: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: Could we use it there? It would be amazing if you did.

The student: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: No, you are not fully ... ? No, I'm asking you because if you have any way of [He doesn't finish his sentence] ... Think about it, if you see a way to... next time, talk about that, yeah. Yes, completely. Well then, there we have it. [End of the session] [1: 59: 45]

Notes

¹ Karl Marx, "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy", *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 28 (London: Lawrence & Wishart 2010), 41.

² Deleuze refers to "cosmopolitan energy" in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 453 and p. 460, with references given to Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), p. 129.

³ Deleuze provides the citation in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 569, note 48: "On the historical independence of the two series and their 'encounter', " see Balibar in Althusser and Balibar, *Lire le Capital* (Maspero, t. II, pp. 286-280).

⁴ Jean Saint-Geours, *Pouvoir et finance* (Fayard, 1979). See *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 569-70, note 52.

⁵ Robert Blanché, *L'axiomatique* (PUF, 1955). Deleuze refers to Blanché's text in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 570, notes 54 and 60. The discussion in this part of the session – including the American and Russian space programs -- corresponds almost directly to *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 454-460.

⁶ This is no doubt the edition in several volumes published, starting in 1939, under the name of Nicolas Bourbaki, *Théorie des ensembles* (Hermann).

⁷ On the axiomatic and the four problems that Deleuze lays out, see plateau 13 (on the apparatus of capture), "Proposition XIII. Axiomatics and the presentday situation", *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 460-473 (*Mille plateaux*, pp. 575-590).

⁸ The final section of plateau 13 on the apparatus of capture is, in fact, titled "Undecidable propositions", *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 471-473 (*Mille plateaux*, pp. 588-590).