

**Gilles Deleuze**

**Seminar on Foucault, 1985-1986**

**Part III: Subjectivation**

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### **Part 1**

... And I'm just coming back to my answer... the answer I gave to... to somebody... obviously, what I've offered you is an interpretation of Foucault's thought.<sup>1</sup> But what do I mean by interpretation? For me, to interpret... I think it's beautiful how Heidegger puts it, that all interpretation is an act of violence. For me, to interpret means, strictly speaking, two things. It means uncovering an author's original concepts, and as I've often said, concepts are particular to philosophy no less than colors are to painting, or lines. You wouldn't confuse one of [Piet] Mondrian's lines with one of... of [Wassily] Kandinsky's. Likewise, you do not confuse the concepts surrounding one philosopher with the concepts of another. Even if you can draw a connection between both of their concepts—just as you can between a painter's lines and those of some other painter—I mean that major concepts are signed, and I see philosophy as a creative task. It's a question of creating new concepts as they're needed, not according to social requirements but ones that are arguably deeper.

Thus, to talk about a philosopher is necessarily to interpret them, to the extent that it involves drawing out the new concepts they were able to invent. These concepts are sometimes designated by well-known common nouns, despite having radically new meanings. Sometimes they're designated by less familiar common nouns. By that I mean common nouns which take on new senses. Sometimes it's necessary—but why is it suddenly necessary? We have to look in each case—sometimes it's necessary to coin a word, a new name. So, I judge that this year, based on my own way of reading, we've covered a few concepts that I picked out as concepts original to Foucault.

The second way I understand “interpretation” is as mapping out the lines, following a certain order—this order can be very complex, but you have to choose one, at any rate—to map out the lines that tie these concepts together and to other concepts from other philosophers who are especially relevant to the philosopher under consideration. You see, for me... I say “for me” not because I feel I'm right but because I want to be clear—I'm not saying that everyone understands interpretation this way. For me, interpretation is absolutely not the search for what something means.

I understand interpretation to mean uncovering conceptual nodes, or conceptual creations,<sup>2</sup> and mapping out how concepts are connected to each other. So, maybe today and next time, for those

who want to come... I think the only reason to come in would be if you had something to say about our work this year. There are two sorts of things you can bring me, plus whatever else you come up with. The first thing you can say is “Personally, I see things differently.” That is, you’ll say, “Foucault has some very original concepts that you’ve overlooked,” or “There are some links between concepts that you missed.” It might be on particular aspects or on the whole. Then I’d say you’d be offering a different interpretation.

And I believe that not all interpretations are worthwhile; an interpretation’s criterion, what makes it better than another, is its richness—it isn’t its inherent truth [but] its richness, its weight; it’s its weight. Just as one talks about the weight of a color, concepts have weight. You’d have to define a concept’s coordinates... I mean, if we’re talking about color, one talks about... about light, saturation, and weight. In music, you have other criteria. In philosophy, you’d have to define the coordinates of a concept. Are we talking about the concept’s weight like we talk about the weight of a color? Do we mean that a concept is saturated? Uh... so on, and so forth... But really, that’d be a different analysis.

So, of course what I want from you is to say, in general or in particular, not that “there’s something wrong” [with my account], since that’d hurt my feelings, but that there’s something important that I failed to see. That’s all. Well... but I’ll back up even further, while I have a few of you who—legitimately—understand interpretation totally differently and who’d say that my take on interpretation, as I’ve just tried to describe it, is insufficient and shouldn’t abandon the question “What does it mean?” For my part, you see, if I’m leaving the question, “What does it mean?” aside, it’s because “what it means” strictly depends on the novelty of the invented concepts and chains of concepts, and it will always mean [what it means] according to the concepts invented. That’s why I say that the true reversal, for me... in my opinion it holds for all philosophy, again, that concepts are signed. You can’t say “I think” without referring to Descartes and without drawing from Descartes’s world. And if you transform it as much as Kant did, then you create a new concept, but this new concept traces a line you have to account for: in what sense it derives from Descartes and in what way Kant transforms it. That means something very simple: proper nouns never designate people; proper nouns name operations, either of nature or of the mind. There is a lot to console us in that, since we are made of proper nouns, but we are not people... [*Interruption of the recording*] [9:00]

## Part 2

... How do you recognize it? You recognize it by the need... Then, how do you recognize that it’s a new concept? It... How do you recognize concepts? ... It comes back to working with coordinates. Thus, that’s what I want from you—maybe a little today and then next time. If you have nothing to say, then hey—I won’t have anything to say, either. So, we’ll meditate in silence. And then today... it’s just... yes, because there are some small things I had to skip, because I got too caught up in my schema last time... uh... I do have some things... so, a line, I said there was a line from Foucault between Foucault and Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, around this business of the fold and the unfold. I’d like to take this opportunity, perhaps, to say very briefly

and even very vaguely since this is no longer my subject... you see that I already... I have nothing else to say, so uh... I'll force myself a bit and try to discuss the relationship between this business of the fold and the unfold... well, it doesn't seem to me very fundamental.

And... and well, in the same vein, I asked one of you who, by the way, suggested that we take a look at... Anyway, it's someone contemporary with Foucault, Pierre Boulez... and who Foucault knew very well, and Boulez knew Foucault very well... There's a piece or rather a set of pieces of Boulez which are titled *Fold by Fold*.<sup>3</sup> And I thought, hey now! If there was someone competent among us—and I have to say that this year we've had so many great talents... I've always been very pleased with Paris VIII audiences, but rarely do we have... I can now say at the year's end that I've been teaching people of whom I feel most know Foucault's writing as well as I do. That's been very, very special to me and a sort of force...

But I was saying, we have this work, *Fold by Fold*, and Boulez borrows the expression, “fold by fold” from a poem by Mallarmé, and he calls it *Fold by Fold* and the pieces, this complex piece by Boulez, is built around three great Mallarmé poems, two to a lesser extent, right—yes?<sup>4</sup>

The presenter: [*Inaudible comments; he explains the organization of Boulez's composition in dialogue with Deleuze*]

Deleuze: That's it, yes, the title...

The presenter: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: Okay, yes—

The presenter: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: The three “Improvisations” ...

The presenter: And the final piece is “Tombeau”...

Deleuze: Ah, I forgot “The Tomb” for [Paul] Verlaine!<sup>5</sup> Uh... then, it's not music based on a few Mallarmé poems, it's... Few musicians, I think, have reflected as much as Boulez has on the musical text/poetic text relationship. So, when he borrows—we'll see under what conditions—when he borrows from Mallarmé for the main title of this work, *Fold by Fold*, it must be noted that he takes it out of its context—the Mallarméan context being very interesting, we'll see, but also very precise—no doubt, he removes it from its context... perhaps, perhaps it's that he wants to highlight the fold of poetry and that of music; perhaps he wants to highlight something about the poem-music relationship. It's not about adding something to Mallarmé's poems, which weren't lacking anything—Boulez is the first to realize it and to say it... Ah yes! It may be an operation, then, that would consist in a little folding—why? To what end? Maybe if we get a handle on that, we'll have no problem jumping ahead, we'll be able to jump ahead and recall some things Heidegger told us about the nature of the fold, since Heidegger's the one who made the fold a philosophical concept. Which would let us come back to Foucault who, when he gets his hands on the notion of the fold, maybe handles it in another way that, by the way, wasn't missed on either Boulez or Heidegger.

So, then I don't at all know how it's going to go, if it's going to work, if we're going to listen uh... You've chosen certain clips... What do you have in mind? Listen for a bit? And then you try to explain your selection...?

The presenter: [*Inaudible comments*] ... to make a short presentation...

Deleuze: Okay, yes, yes.

The presenter: *Fold by Fold* is the title...

Deleuze: You speak loudly... I feel, so we'll need for you and me to switch places... is that okay?

The presenter: [*Inaudible*] ... I move there like that, I could...

Deleuze: Okay, yes. But if we can't see you, we can't hear you turned around; you can't really hear someone from behind. You can do the opposite: have us listen first and then talk after. Maybe the shock of listening to it is good, too.

The presenter: [*Inaudible; he speaks while changing places, hence a long pause, with noise of chairs and of students*]

Deleuze: There, that's good. [*Pause*] ... We have the right... it's private, right? It's private; it's not public. Anyway, surely ... [*Pause, sounds of participants*] ... And you have every right, if you find the music too beautiful, we'll stop there, and we won't talk anymore since ... [*Pause*] [*Brief interruption of the recording*]

The presenter: We will begin with the first piece of [*inaudible words*]

Deleuze: "The Gift", that is!

The presenter: The first piece, "The Gift of the poem", from Mallarmé's poem.

Deleuze: Right. For those who know Mallarmé, I'll remind you, it's "I bring you the child of an Idumean night" ... [*Pause*] For those who don't know this, [*inaudible remark*] ... [*Pause*

[*First movement: The Gift*] [*See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W56pQqEVetA>*] [18:52-34:10]

The presenter: So, this was the first movement. [*Pause*] ... [*indistinct words*] a musical portrait of Mallarmé, [*indistinct words*] ... This is a movement with a rather complicated genesis. [*indistinct words; details on the development of this movement in the work*]

[*He then explains the musical and orchestral construction of the first movement as well as some details about the score*] ... It's already deliberately structured by Pierre Boulez [*indistinct words*] ... So, the first page can be considered as a page of declaration, in the first chord [*indistinct words*] ...

So, the first verse, the first poem [*indistinct words*] ... It's the only time where Boulez allowed for us to hear the text perfectly to such an extent that there are [*indistinct words*] ... The singer

has the choice between talking in a low voice or [*indistinct words*] [*Pause*] ... first part which shows his interest in leaving some room for chance, for the aleatory. [*indistinct words*] ... And there, Boulez separated the three groups from one another, [*indistinct words*] ... [*He describes the function of each group, first the middle one, then the lower, then the upper*] the much more eventful upper group with more agitated interventions. [*indistinct words*] ... That poses enormous problems of [*indistinct word*] the score as the conductor [*indistinct words*] ...

Boulez [*indistinct word*] enormously the different modes [*indistinct words*] of instruments. He is looking for the tones and sonorities of instruments for the way that Mallarmé sought out sonorities in words, [*indistinct words*] [*He gives several details about the use of the instruments' different capabilities within this process, with a reading of each instrument's role in the movement*]

A student: Did Boulez try to work with three sound groups or with [*indistinct words*] ..., and what was the need for that? [*Laughter; pause*]

The presenter: I think that the need came from the fact that Boulez did not want a fixed organization like ... [*Pause*] So, I'll try to talk to you about this afterwards. [*Pause*]

[*indistinct words*] [*He comments on the strong role of the piano*] ... and this part ends on a fermata [*indistinct words*] ... and then we move on to the soprano's return in the movement. So, there are so many verses here that aren't borrowed from the poem, but only fragments [*indistinct words*] ... Here as well, a good deal is left up to the soloist's prerogative since [*indistinct words*] ... and in the obligatory borrowings, she sometimes can choose between several solutions and it's normally up to the instrumentalist to decide, up to the prerogative of soloist [*indistinct words*] ...

The references are, in order, first, to the sonnet corresponding to "Improvisation III", second, to the sonnet corresponding to "Improvisation II", and third, to the sonnet corresponding to "Improvisation I", and several pages further on, toward the end of this movement [*indistinct words*] ... And "The Gift" ends with a third and final part which, there again, calls on the [*indistinct word*] choice of the conductor. The orchestra is divided in two levels: the upper lever and the lower level ... [*Pause; sounds of chairs, interruption in the presenter's comments*]

So, the orchestra is divided in two levels: the upper lever and the lower level, and the succession in the [*indistinct words*] ... in five parts: A B C D E. So that gives us: in the upper part A B C D E [*he writes on the board*] and within this part [*indistinct words*], the conductor chooses the trajectory that he wants to take. Then, basically, there are some rules that intervene, that is, the whole of the [*indistinct words*] ... necessarily, and the succession of letters in a line should be respected, that is, well, you can play A B; then, if you want to leave this line and go to A, you're required to eventually work back up to C, but you can't get to D or E. Thus, if one wants to [*indistinct word*], you're forced to go back down to B, you can eventually play BC and climb up to D, and the two E parts are required to be played together. So, Boulez determined six possible trajectories by leaving it up to the conductor to choose which trajectory to carry out.<sup>6</sup>

Deleuze: I would just like...a side note... if you'll let me? You find it...and you'll find this everywhere in contemporary music—the blending of two sorts of rules. I'm trying to connect back up with our discussion. You constantly find in contemporary music the blending of actually binding rules with optional rules. On several points he's already laid out certain rules for the singer: she can speak the lyric, she can sing it... There you have a very good example where you have a blend of rules in which some are binding, and some are optional. And that, in current music—I'm also thinking of [Luciano] Bérió, for example—you find... Recall how, in a completely different context, of course, in Foucault, there is this game of binding rules and optional rules even at the level of statements. Yet this is a beautiful case of musical statements that present this complex of rules very different from each other. And that's all I wanted to add...

The presenter: In Boulez's work, in fact, optional rules are used, not in all of his works, but [*indistinct words*] he uses [*indistinct words*] ... pure chance [*indistinct words*] ...

Deleuze: Yes, never! Never.

The presenter: ... in any event, to preserve the conductor's or the soloist's ability to choose, to make a certain number of possible choices, and I think that [*indistinct words*] ... but the choice should be determined by a person; it's not the intervention of pure chance [*indistinct words*] ...

Deleuze: And it's forced, eh? The difference—you're absolutely right—the difference between Boulez and [John] Cage in this regard, it's required; there can't be pure chance... [*Interruption of the recording*] [55:37]

### Part 3

Deleuze: What's funny is that, at the same time, he moves back closer to Cage; this represents Boulez's step towards... reunion with Cage.

A student: Can I ask a question?

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, yes!

The student: [*indistinct words*] When the soloist comes in, how can one know ... [*indistinct words*]

The presenter: So, at the moment when there are [*indistinct words*] ... the soprano comes back here, and on the previous page, Boulez marked [*indistinct words*] ... in other words, the whole orchestra is then led by the conductor. So, at that point, the hierarchical organization can be respected. And then, when it comes to the soprano's intervention, [*Pause*] she takes syllables from verses [*indistinct words*] ... And there, she has a choice to make between three columns A, B, C ... So, she has two required concerns: she must choose three syllables in the same column, either AAA, BBB, or CCC. But she has to distribute them... over time in two [*indistinct words*] ... [*Pause*] She has an optional insert [*indistinct words*] ... [*Pause*]

The student: [*indistinct words*]

The presenter: So, when she sings, she of course has her own line with precise notes to be sung...

The student: Her line is independent?

The presenter: Her line is independent. So there, the orchestra is no longer divided in blocs but is reunited, and at that point, there is [*indistinct words*] ... a resonance that supports the soprano's voice, at least makes the words more intelligible—not a lot, but more so than with the whole orchestra performing scattered sounds [*indistinct words*] ... would mask the soprano's voice.

The student: [*indistinct words*]

The presenter: To a certain extent, yes—ultimately, I'd say yes. In the end, one would have to ask Boulez [*indistinct words*] ...

The student: [*indistinct words*]

The presenter: I don't know, [*Pause*] that might be less clear, since the structures aren't the same; there, it is the lyrics that intervene and... [*indistinct word*] of the soprano, whereas previously, the music is written out entirely, there aren't [*indistinct words*] ... movement between the three blocks, and in each case, [*indistinct words*] ... [*Pause*] I was thinking that eventually there are [*indistinct words*] ... to make some remarks about ... [*He explains to Deleuze what he hoped to present next*]

Deleuze: I'd like to... we don't have unlimited time, I mean, unfortunately; I'd almost like for you to choose another piece, if it were possible, another passage... Myself, I'm struck by this morning's questions on the singer's role that I think you only partially answered, since there are actually several instances in what you played for us... where the words... the point is that she casts words, and there are [*types of*] word-casting with very different functions uh... already it seems to me, in what you said and what you played for us, there is a lot... there is a lot to reflect on. So, I'd almost like, if you wouldn't mind, for you to do the same thing, only with another piece. For you to forget those who are already interested or familiar, or what you can gather from reading Mallarmé's poems, and so on. We'll say what we have to for the books, the book that will help you, and so on... not difficult. So, we'll act a little as though it said something differently to everyone. So, you take either "The Tomb,"<sup>7</sup> if you like, or something of... an "Improvisation" ...

The presenter: I think we would have to listen to an improvisation,

Deleuze: That's fine, it's your choice.

The presenter: ... regardless, because it's delicate... we can bring together the orchestral movements ...

Deleuze: Okay, which improvisation?

The presenter: So, "Improvisation I on Mallarmé"...

Deleuze Okay, is it "This virginal long-living lovely day"? That's right, yes. [*Pause*]

The presenter: Well, I think it might be best to listen.<sup>8</sup> [64:15-64:50]

Deleuze [*interrupting the recording*]: Uh... could you... could you stop and rewind... is that possible?

The presenter: From the start?

Deleuze: No, no, no, no! It's the tempo for me reading the poem because it really changes if you've... I'll read it plainly, alright, so that you'll hear the sonorities, otherwise it's...

[*Deleuze reads*]

“This virginal long-living lovely day / will it tear from us with a wing's wild blow / The lost hard lake haunted beneath the snow / By clear ice-flights that never flew away!

A swan of old remembers it is he/ Superb but strives to break free woebegone / For having left unsung the territory / To live when sterile winter's tedium shone.

His neck will shake off this white throe that space / Has forced the bird denying it to face, / But not the horror of earth that traps his wings.

Phantom imposed this place by his sheer gleam, / He lies immobile in scorn's frigid dream / Worn by the Swan dismissed to futile things.”<sup>9</sup>

There we are... now you might have a better idea... Let's...

Deleuze: You already grasp—because the poem, “This virginal long-living lovely day,” is an extraordinary demonstration of voice, at the start...

[*Transmission of the Boulez recording: see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3lK40JuGKw>*] [66 :40-72 :05]

The presenter: So, in this first improvisation, I'm going to try to see to what extent the form of Mallarmé's sonnet influenced the improvisation's musical form. To better [*indistinct words*] ... of the score according to the organization into quatrains and tercets with interludes between each [*indistinct word*]. [*Pause*]

The divisions aren't mine; it's indicated on the score—it's by Boulez. [*He's writing on the board as he speaks*] The first quatrain, then, he puts at zero. At A, an instrumental interlude, interlude 1. At B, the second quatrain. At C, interlude 2. At D, the tercet. At E, interlude 3. [*Pause, sound of students' voices speaking*] ... At F, the second tercet. And at G, one can't call it an interlude, but a coda, an instrumental coda. [*Pause*]

So, the divisions are very clean since, in the interludes, the voice doesn't intervene at all, at any time. These are purely instrumental passages. So, if we follow the alternation, we can eventually divide the piece in two groups—one which would go from zero to C, the other which would go from D to G—which would each alternate between instrument-and-voice, instruments-only, instrument-and-voice, instruments-only. There's the same alternance in the entire [*indistinct word*].



That's one form of the whole piece's organization. It's one possible reading, but there are others. [indistinct words] ... One can see the different parts as organized by tempo as a determining mode of organization. So, [indistinct words] ... A B C D E F G [he draws on the board] So, at the top, to in moderate A; in B, very moderate; in C, very slow; in D, again, not too slow; [Pause] in E, moderate; [Pause]; in F, not too slow; and in G, very slow.

Then, with one exception, one could have another mode of organization, which would be the following: [indistinct words; he describes a different organization of rhythms] [Pause] So, the different parts [indistinct words] ... Next, if someone is working on the instrumentation of the different parts, work undertaken by Dominique [indistinct name] in his work on Boulez, [indistinct words] ... to distinguish four possible modes of instrumentation: he called the first *alpha*, instrumental [indistinct word] composed of [indistinct words] ...; instrumentation *beta* which has vibraphone and harp in A, and vibraphone, harp, and gong in E; and instrumentation *gamma* is the most instrumental, without [indistinct words] ...

So, if we drew up a third schema... can I erase one? [indistinct words] [Pause; he draws a new schema] ... So, this organization would allow us to see the arch shape, rather traditional in [indistinct words] ... [Pause] By taking middle part, C, as the peak of the arch, as the form's culminating point, which is equally in relation with [indistinct words] ... At this point, let's still consider Part C as a coda, something not contradicted by the [indistinct word] of the score; it's starting from [indistinct word] that the tempo becomes important, [indistinct words] ... So, these different forms aren't... they coexist. All readings are possible, [indistinct words] ... the plurality of discourse that emerges. [Pause]

A student: [indistinct words]

The presenter: [indistinct words]

The student: That—it's called improvisation”?

The presenter: It's called “Improvisation I on Mallarmé”.

The student: [indistinct words]

The presenter: No, no, no, [indistinct words] ... no room for randomness. Well, what it is, it's that there are effectively two versions. A first version was presented in concert [indistinct words] ... The grand version [indistinct words] ... by Boulez so that it pairs with “Improvisation III” when the work is played in its [indistinct words] ... In that case, there's a correspondence. The first movement corresponds to “Tombeau” [fifth movement], “Improvisation I” goes with “Improvisation III” [indistinct words] ..., and “Improvisation II” would be the center of the form [i.e. the arch]. But there isn't any room for randomness.

The student: [indistinct words]

The presenter: Randomness [indistinct words] ... [Pause]

Deleuze: I think that seems like enough, right? You've given us a very rich subject. A lot to think about.

The presenter: [*indistinct words; he explains something regarding the presentation he'd planned*]

Deleuze: Yeah, thankfully, because, if you had, it's not what I wanted, in any case; what I wanted was for... nobody wanted that.

The presenter: That gives us something to think about...

Deleuze: Yeah, that's exactly what I had in mind, and I think you did it very, very well, that is, we are all... thanks to you, we have material where we can... I wouldn't dare say "analyze in a different way"—neither is it a question of analyzing it philosophically—but [we can] think about the subject with which I began: *Fold by Fold*. I'd almost say that we have a good case here, thanks to you.

But where are the folds? And what does it mean to "fold"? And what does it mean to "unfold"? What does "fold by fold" mean? What do "fold and unfold" mean as artistic or philosophical gestures? Personally, you know, it occurred to me, while I was listening, that somebody might be able to—it's not my thing, I mean—but really, I wondered whether a Heideggerian could comment along these lines on Heidegger's main take on the fold and the unfold; in other words, he could render it as a musical presentation. It should exist, after all, because some Heideggerian musicians uh... He is very close... I mean, a comparison between a great musician, for example, [Karlheinz] Stockhausen with Heidegger, would be as valuable as a comparison between Boulez and Mallarmé. Now, in my opinion, one would be surprised to see that, once again, the fold and the unfold are presented as creative acts... or something else, other operations, eh, other operations.... that's what... So, at least you had something to add... thanks to you, we can dwell a little on this point.

The presenter: Well, this organization [*indistinct words*] ... [*He speaks about the organization of the final movement, "Tombeau", then connects to another Boulez piece*]

Deleuze: Yes, there, we don't need to hear any more... I mean, with regard to the text you're reading, we don't need to listen to anymore. I mean it's the text, *Points de repère*<sup>10</sup> ... Right, yes, it's the same text. Yes. Yes, yes, yes because he did it deliberately. The text is so far from the music that...

The presenter: [*indistinct words*]

Deleuze: Right, right.

The presenter: Otherwise, in [*indistinct title*], there's an article by Foucault on Boulez.

Deleuze: Ah.... Tell us! Do you have it with you? Give us the rundown. Is it a long article?<sup>11</sup>

The presenter: No, there's... a column.

Deleuze: You've marked the important passages? Is that it?

The presenter: [*indistinct words*]

Deleuze: Oh, it's long. [*Laughter*] I mean, it's long, it's not... [*Pause*] You've read it... you have... do you have another copy, or is that your copy? Does it say anything essential?

The presenter: In this paragraph, here...

Deleuze: You found it?

The presenter: There's something

Deleuze: This? This one?

The presenter: Yes, that one. [*Pause; Deleuze prepares himself to read*]

Deleuze: "During a time in which we were being taught the privileges of meaning, of the lived through [*du vécu*], the sensuous [*du charnel*], of foundational experience [*de l'expérience originnaire*], subjective contents or social significations..." -- See, this applies to everyone but especially to phenomenology -- "[...] to encounter Boulez and music was to see the twentieth century from an unfamiliar angle—that of the long battle..." -- Hey, a theme very dear to Foucault... -- "that of the long battle around the 'formal.' It was to recognize how in Russia, in Germany, in Austria, in Central Europe, through music, painting, architecture, or philosophy, linguistics, and mythology, the work of the formal had challenged the old problems and overturned the ways of thinking. A whole history of the formal in the twentieth century remains to be done: attempting to measure it as a power of transformation, drawing it out as a force for innovation and a locus of thought, beyond the images or the 'formalism' behind which some people tried to hide it." -- He's telling us that this formal is less formal than it seems -- "And also recounting its difficult relations with politics" -- Alright -- "We have to remember that it was quickly designated, in Stalinist or fascist territory, as enemy ideology and detestable art." -- That's funny -- "Boulez only needed a straight line, without any detour or mediation, to go to Stéphane Mallarmé, to Paul Klee, to René Char, to Henri Michaux, and later to Cummings. Often a musician goes to painting, a painter to poetry, a playwright to music, via an encompassing figure and through a universalizing aesthetic. [...] Boulez went directly from one point to another, from one experience to another, drawn by what seemed to be not an ideal kinship but the necessity of a conjuncture..."<sup>12</sup> That's curious, eh? I think it's a text of... transition from Foucault—what year is this?

The presenter: '82.

Deleuze: '82? That was quick! [*Laughter*] Let's check... it'd be better for my case if it were '72. [*Laughter*]

The presenter: '82.

Deleuze: Okay, okay... You don't always get what you want... So, there you have it. I'd like for you all to bear with me, in these final musings, since we're putting everything together. This bit about music with Boulez, this folding business with Heideggerian ontology, this story... the movement of the fold and unfold in Foucault, with all the problems that entails... This article recalls the problem of thought's relationship with art, with a possible glimpse at painting also...

How do we sort it out? We aren't even looking for coherence. First thing... uh, my first comment, is how I see it. The fold—I wouldn't say that it's a metaphor, but I would say that it's a strong term. I don't know if it's metaphorical or not. It's a strong term in... And how does it appear? What does the fold involve? As I see it, it's that the fold concerns something that's hidden at first glance. [Pause]

What does the folding? What does the folding is something that conceals and that folds in order to conceal. In this sense, it's not only the curtain that will fold, it's not only the lace that will fold like a so-called pleated curtain. But (even) the dust, the fog will fold. And after all, one of Mallarmé's problems was that of presence and absence, an invocation to the fold, you'll find it everywhere. Just like you constantly see lace, the fog, the fan that folds and unfolds. The movement of being folded, or the movement of folding and unfolding, is fundamental. And, if Boulez's piece is called *Fold by Fold*, it's due to a poem by Mallarmé of which I'll read the first stanza: "At times" that is, at certain times... "At times, when no breath stirs it..."<sup>13</sup>

"At times, when no breath stirs it, all / The almost incense-hued antiquity / As I feel widowed stone let her veils fall / Fold by fold furtively and visibly / Floats or seems not to bring its proof unless / By pouring time out as an ancient balm."

That's it. Fold by fold, all the commentaries will tell you, but we can't say, then, that we're still dealing with the poem... what does that mean? It concerns Bruges, the famous city in Belgium, uh... and *at times... at times, when no breath stirs it...* That is, when there isn't yet any wind, to put it plainly, early in the morning, before there is any wind. Well, there is the fog, which dissipates. The fog dissipates and "all the almost incense-colored antiquity," that is, the "widowed stone," that is, Bruges. Bruges the dead, Bruges the widow, begins to emerge as the fog's folds come undone.

I mean... and at the same time, they "come to be" [*se font*] — what "comes to be", right, the fog, you see, in certain hollows or at certain times, you have the impression that its folds come down just like the folds in a curtain. And that already takes us to something we cannot avoid... they're fundamentally linked, the fold and something we see... what, that we see through the fold, to the extent that the fold comes undone... I don't know what it'd require... We'd have to find just the right formula. Well, in relation to the fold or in the fold, something unfolds. If we say that, we've already stopped considering the fold and the unfold as two opposites. In the fold, something unfolds; Bruges emerges. In the fold of the fog, Bruges emerges.

A short work by Thomas de Quincey, famous 19th century English author, was recently translated, where there are... everyone has their favorite lines—I read it: a story about an Asian people, then a part of the Russian empire, who emigrate, who all pick up and leave, a big tribe... all leave the Russian empire and head back east. And the text is sublime. It's called *The Revolt of the Tartars*. Editor: Actes Sud. And, in the end, we're shown the place where they're going to reach, through the catastrophes, they've overcome every catastrophe, and they arrive, and we see them arrive. We seem them arrive at their refuge. Listen to what it says: "There arose a vast, cloudy vapor."<sup>14</sup> "There arose a vast, cloudy vapor [...]. Through the next hour, during which the gentle morning breeze had a little freshened, the dusty vapor had developed itself far and wide

into the appearance of huge aerial draperies...” “Through the next hour, during which the gentle morning breeze had a little freshened, the dusty vapor had developed itself far and wide into the appearance of huge aerial draperies, hanging in mighty volumes from the sky to the earth; and at particular points, where the eddies of the breeze acted upon the pendulous skirts of these aerial curtains, rents were perceived...”<sup>15</sup>

*[End of the recording; given that this de Quincey text continues (see session 11 from the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque) and also since Deleuze usually makes a final remark announcing the end of each session, it is possible that some of the recording is missing] [1:41:54]*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This was Deleuze’s response to a comment by Georges Comtesse the previous week, May 20, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> “Conceptual design” is a common translation for this phrase but given Deleuze’s frequent description of philosophy as a creative endeavor, “creation” might be more appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> The title is taken from a Mallarmé poem, “Remémoration d’amis belges”, of which Boulez makes no direct use. In the poem, the poet describes how a mist that covers the city of Bruges gradually disappears. Let us note that while we provide the translation of “pli selon pli” as “fold by fold”, the Tom Conley translation of this title and phrase in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* is “fold after fold”.

<sup>4</sup> The composition is in five movements, the first and last using a line from a Mallarmé poem, the three middle movements using the entire text of a Mallarmé sonnet. The movements and their associated poems are: *Don* – “Don du poème”; *Improvisation I sur Mallarmé* – “Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd’hui” ; *Improvisation II sur Mallarmé* – “Une dentelle s’abolit” ; *Improvisation III sur Mallarmé* – “A la nue accablante tu” ; *Tombeau* – Mallarmé’s poem of the same name. See also the discussion of Mallarmé, that this discussion in many ways prepares and announces, in session 9 of the Leibniz and the Baroque seminar, February 3, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> This refers to a commemorative poem (or “tombeau”) written on January 10, 1897, following the death of Verlaine.

<sup>6</sup> While the translation follows the text as transcribed, Deleuze and the presenter, in particular, refer to sheet music and/or other diagrams/notation of Boulez’s composition. Emily Adamowicz’s dissertation offers an excellent account of the “rotational array” described above; her work is replete with helpful diagrams and musical notation. Cf. Emily J. Adamowicz, “A Study of Form and Structure in Pierre Boulez’s Pli selon Pli,” *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository* 3133 (2015).

<sup>7</sup> This refers to the fifth movement of Boulez’s composition, one of several by Mallarmé.

<sup>8</sup> This is Boulez’s « Improvisation 1 on Mallarmé » corresponding to the Mallarmé poem that Deleuze reads immediately after.

<sup>9</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Collected Poems and Other Verse*, trans. E.H. and A.M. Blackmore, introduction by Elizabeth McCombie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 66-69.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably this refers to Pierre Boulez, *Points de repère* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> The selections that follow defer to Robert Hurley’s translation of the article, including his bracketed translation notes. See Michel Foucault, “Pierre Boulez, Passing Through The Screen,” trans. Robert Hurley, in *Essential Works*

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of Foucault vol. 2: *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 241-244. The original text, "Pierre Boulez, l'écran traversé", appeared in a collection edited by M. Colin, J.-P. Leonardini, et J. Markovits, *Dix ans et après. Album souvenir du festival d'automne* (Paris: Messidor, 1982), pp. 232-236; see also *Dit et Écrits IV* (Paris : Gallimard, 1994), pp. 219-222.

<sup>12</sup> See the Hurley translation, pp. 242-243.

<sup>13</sup> Mallarmé, 59-61. Translation slightly modified to accommodate Deleuze's reading: e.g., "fold by fold" where the translator has it "fold *on* fold," to reflect the typical translation for the title of Boulez's piece. See note 3 on other variations of this expression.

<sup>14</sup> Reading the original English, one sees that Deleuze appears to omit nearly a page separating the arrival of the dust cloud and the line which begins "Through the next hour." Cf. William Edward Simonds, *De Quincey's Revolt of the Tartars, Edited with Introduction and Notes* (Boston: Athenaeum, 1899), 53-54. The ostensible omission is indicated in brackets; see also the analysis that Deleuze will present of this text in session 11 of the seminar on Leibniz and the Baroque, March 3, 1987.

<sup>15</sup> The French translation, which Deleuze reads here, has "the pendulous skirts" as "*les plis*."