

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on Cinema: Classification of Signs and Time, 1982-1983

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[The audio recordings of this lesson, present on the Voix de Deleuze en ligne webpage at Paris 8 have been mixed up: part 1 actually corresponds to part 2 and vice versa. The attribution of the two parts of the transcription has accordingly been corrected from the mistaken reversed order given on the website.]

Part 1

...and for him, it wasn't long, right? And then you... you can judge for yourselves how this resonates with you. What was it that amused me in all this? What interested me was to give you a sense, or try to give you a sense, of a breed of thinkers who, in terms of their thinking, speak to us about characters. That is to say... I would say that in doing so they literally change the status of what we mean by a character. Philosophers rarely speak about characters. Of course, there are dialogues, there are philosophical characters, or non-philosophical characters, but in these dialogues, it is the characters who speak and who put forward concepts. The authors I deal with are completely different. They're... they continually talk *about* characters, and it is these characters themselves that they elevate to the status of a concept. This seems to me to be a kind of renewal; in fact, it was a way of renewing philosophical thought. And obviously, this implies that just as the characters they speak about will change their status so too will the concept. Theirs will be concepts of a new kind.

So, it is very odd indeed when Kierkegaard speaks to us of... But what comes to the forefront, what appears on the stage of philosophy with the authors I'm talking about? Well, some very strange things. For example, the "fiancée" not only maintains her singularity but becomes an actual person with a proper name. Here I'm thinking of Kierkegaard's case. Her name is Regine, and at the same time she is a concept, a concept the likes of which we've never seen before, right? And here we have a form of thought he will unleash that is... I can't really call it philosophical theater, and yet these philosophers will be led to make use of very particular modes of expression, including unfinished books, though more often a type of book where one might say to oneself... which often provoked a state of great indignation in so-called classical or traditional philosophers... through modes of expression which seem to me to be highly innovative.

I was telling you in the case of Kierkegaard, for example... You open some of Kierkegaard's books and you will see – I'm not putting Nietzsche in this basket, although his work raises a similar problem, but again, he didn't become entangled in this thought of an alternative or choice... that's why I'm so annoyed that I got stuck in this thought of alternative and choice, which I think is a religious way of thinking. The reason why is not so clear. Yet at this point – and we will look at this today – it appears to be a form of thought based on mystery. It is a

form of thought based on faith, and if necessary, faith as opposed to religion, whichever way you want to put it, but it is a form of thought based on faith. It's a very bizarre thing.

So, what we saw last time was... we were still within the bounds of what for us was a relatively solid field. What we saw last time was that, under the general category of alternative, this whole lineage proposed an *anti-morality*, and this anti-morality could equally be called either the greatest immoralism or the most extreme moralism. And in what way was this moralism or immoralism radically opposed to morality? Because as I was saying, well, morality is always a question of what, in the end? It's a question of referring actions, behaviors, feelings, people to values on the basis of which they can be judged. You moralize whenever you refer one of your actions to a value, and ask yourself: "Is this right or is it wrong?"

You are being moral or immoral or both, on the other hand, when you proceed in a completely different way. Ultimately you don't think of judging, you have given up on judging. You think that actions and people judge themselves. Which means, finally, that what you're asking for is – and this is a theme that we often find in Péguy¹, the one writer I haven't yet spoken about in terms of this lineage – it's ... what we have is a weighing up ... it's a weighing up. It's not a matter of referring actions and persons to values that will always be transcendental. It's a matter of weighing the “immanent weight” of the modes of existence that this person or that action implies.

Up to this point, this is all fine for us because then it would really be a question of *an immanence of modes of existence*. Everything you do, everything you say, implies a certain mode of existence. Which mode? Discover the modes of existence! And this is what I was trying to explain last time: how, at the core of all of Pascal's thought, but also at the core of Kierkegaard's thought, and strangely even at the core of Sartre's thought, it seemed to me that there was a whole dynamic developing, a dynamic of weighing up modes of existence, of an immanent weighing up of modes of existence. And from this what I tried to do was – because it was important to me – to understand what was at stake. So, do any of you have any remarks you'd like to make at this point, things you've thought about over the last week, or is all this quite clear?

So, let's try to be even clearer then, by giving ourselves three minutes of recreation, three minutes of cinema. Because I don't want to do things that are too, too facile, or say things that are too facile. What strikes me about Kierkegaard – I don't know if I mentioned this last year or some other time – but what strikes me about Kierkegaard is that, all of a sudden, you come across a passage written in the middle of the 19th century, which has you saying to yourself: what is this? It's not an example that he's developing. Nor is it... I can't even say that it's a Danish theater production for a Sunday afternoon in Copenhagen. It's not that either. There is something... you understand, I'm taking two examples because they are particularly clear.

All of a sudden in one passage, Kierkegaard says... he introduces this in a passage, something like the story of a bourgeois man who for twenty years has had breakfast with his family, has read the newspaper with his wife and children beside him... and now, all of a sudden, this bourgeois gets up, undoes his collar, rushes to the window and shouts: “The possible, or I shall suffocate!”² And that's it! My question is: what is this new way of... It's very strange that a philosopher should talk like this... Even better, there is a very beautiful text of Kierkegaard's that I really like where he says... well, it's always a bourgeois, because

he has the idea that the bourgeois cannot be distinguished. For him, the bourgeois is imperceptible to the point that the knight of faith³, which is to say the figure of supreme value for Kierkegaard, is according to him someone who, if you met them in the street, you'd think he was a bourgeois⁴. And this too is odd. I find it very interesting because he gives us a way to play the role of the knight of faith. You have to play him like a bourgeois, as if you were representing a bourgeois.

Then you have another typical Kierkegaard anecdote, which is, I would say, more audacious. A man, a man... a bourgeois, very wise, very quiet, good to children, this time single, held in high esteem by his whole neighborhood, goes crazy for an hour a day and his madness consists in this: he makes drawings of little children that are strictly identical. He repeats over and over the same image of the same little child. And the thing is, Kierkegaard says... in his youth – I'm quoting the author himself here – he visited a brothel.⁵ And since then he has been obsessed – and this is where this story of Kierkegaard gets really strange – what is he obsessed by? He is obsessed by the idea that he might have conceived a child there. So, in the Denmark of that epoch, in Copenhagen, he thinks he might have conceived a child. The problem is, you see, that all infants look alike. So, among all those infants, which one might be his? And this possibility anguishes him. This possibility suffocates him. It's all very strange. There is a possibility, isn't there... there is a possibility in "The possible or else I'll suffocate" just as there is another possibility that suffocates me. Let's start again! So, let's try to resume our argument, I said that there are modes of existence.

So, let's move on to cinema now. We can make these modes of existence alternate according to a Pascalian arrangement, according to a Pascalian order. They alternate, exactly in the same way that white, black and grey alternate. But my first task is to put things in order, that is, to find a law of alternation. As we have seen, there is indeed an alternation in Pascal's wager, and I would say that this alternation – to correct what I said last time a little, though I don't go back on it, and you'll see why – this alternation does in fact concern God. First case, God exists. Second case, God does not exist. Third case, I don't know if God exists or not. White, black, gray. The world will be painted in white, black and gray. As I said, this is the alternation. Is it a matter of choosing one term of the alternation rather than another? Absolutely not! That's why I was insisting on you reading the actual text on the wager for yourselves. It is absolutely not a question of choosing white... of choosing between white, black and grey – the affirmation of God, the negation of God, the uncertainty of God. It has absolutely nothing to do with that. And yet, the alternation of terms is presupposed by the wager. But the serious question, the wager itself can only commence afterwards and is not concerned with this. Let's say he takes that as his "basis". So, regarding these alternations, I would say, let's take a pause.

I see them clearly. If you accept the lineage of these thinkers, now I can name them all, these thinkers of faith, and strangely enough, it can be a secular faith – in the case of Sartre, it's a secular faith. In the case of Dreyer in cinema, it is a secular faith. But it's a secular faith that looks very much like a non-secular faith. In fact, I'll take the two cases of Dreyer and Bresson. There is a certain affinity between the two. What does this affinity consist in? It is that they will present us with an alternation, and will do so even from an aesthetic point of view – because don't forget that aesthetics is part of all this. The rhythmic alternations of white and black in Bresson, the geometric alternations, the way Dreyer pushes the rhythm towards a kind of geometric composition, composing geometric alternations to the point that what we have is almost a paving of space: a white square, a black square, a gray square or more often a black square followed by a white square... black square, white square. It is a

very elaborate composition of tones, a highly tonal composition, what is in the end a geometric composition. So how is it presented?

If I try to make the list, a small list of characters, I would say there are men or women of white. There are men or women of white. Is this a good thing? Is this what the choice is all about? You can see right away that the answer is no. No! Why? White may be the cleanest color in the world, but it is also the most terrifying. White is a very rich color. Why is this? Because white is a prison for light. White imprisons light. This terrifying white, this icy white, what is it? It is the white of the cell, or of the clinic, the cellular white or clinical white.

And who are these men of white ultimately? Pascal gives them a name. They are the *devout*, they are those who have imprisoned God in white. They have imprisoned light in white. They are the men of authority. It is a whole mode of existence. They are the tyrannically devout. Far from choice having anything to do with them, in the alternation of terms we can say that these are the men of no choice. And they do not leave us any choice. In the name of what? In the name of a theological necessity. God's order, the order of good that will apply whether we like it or not, corresponds exactly to what Pascal calls the devout. They claim not to choose, and they want to deny us any possibility of choice. Certainly, they are not the ones who wager, or at least who consciously wager. They have literally transformed light into something resembling a prison, and here we have Dreyer's great images of the presbytery⁶, with the most beautiful whites that cinema has ever produced, or the great prison images of Bresson: Jeanne's cell⁷, the cell of the condemned prisoner of war⁸. So, I would say, in my alternation, that this is the first category: the men of white. And white is the terrible.

And then there are the men of gray, and nor will the men of gray be the men of choice... of *the* choice. Why not? They are the ones who come next in the alternation, the men who by definition say: "We don't know what to choose, we live in uncertainty." Might there be any examples in the films of the directors I'm referring to here, that will confirm what we focused on last time, that will enable us to discover on another level, that of the image, what we had tried to develop on a conceptual level? Dreyer's *Vampyr*: a poor hero who isn't the vampire but the character of uncertainty. Also, this is one of the films where Dreyer deploys, where he develops a gray... a gray, a kind of very prodigious mist. And in Bresson, you have many characters of uncertainty. In part, the character of *Pickpocket*⁹ who hesitates and doesn't quite know how to choose between two equally violent emotions, that of theft and that of love. And even more so, *Lancelot du Lac*¹⁰. It is not by chance that one of the titles Bresson had imagined for *Lancelot* was precisely *Uncertainty*. What is it that he hesitates between? Between two ways of lying in the face of courtly love – and in parenthesis, would courtly love represent a case of true choice? Well, we shall see... But Lancelot doesn't get away with it. He betrays courtly love in two ways. Because he sometimes, well, in fact, he constantly hesitates between a love he has difficulty maintaining within the bounds of the courtly, and his loyalty to the king to whom he must give back the woman he loves. Uncertainty. These are the men of gray who take their place in the alternation.

And then, we have the men of black. Ah, the men of black! I'm sure that the first two cases present themselves as being outside the category of choice. They deny that it is a question of choice. The first, the devout, leave us no choice in saying: "It will be done, it's the order of God, or simply order *tout court*." The second group tell us that even if there is a choice: "I don't know what to choose." The men of black, at first sight, appear to choose. But what a horrible thing they choose! They choose if not evil, because it may not make sense to say they choose evil, in any case they choose *for* evil. They wager *on* evil. And at first sight, what

can prevent me from wagering *on* evil? Notice that it will not be the same. Already a consolation: it will never be the same evil that I do and that I continue to do by saying “It's not my fault, I have no choice!” If I choose laziness... then I *choose* laziness, it is certain that by choosing this laziness, I raise laziness to a power that makes it nothing like the laziness I assume when I say: “I have no choice, it is not my fault, I cannot work.” If I could choose... but can I choose laziness? If I could choose laziness, I would raise it to the nth power. If I could choose evil, maybe it would be raised to the nth power. We don't know. Who are these men of black? They seem to choose.

And there are some cases of this in the work of the two directors that I refer to here. There are many both in Dreyer's films and in those of Bresson. In Bresson, in *Les dames du Bois de Boulogne*¹¹, there is H el ene and her revenge, her ruthless revenge. It is the story of an act of revenge, and it is a revenge she has chosen. The central character of *Pickpocket*, meanwhile, deliberately chooses to steal. In Bresson's last film the situation becomes more complicated, because at the core of this last film, *L'Argent*¹², it seems to me, is a couple, a very Bressonian couple, the couple of two boys, the boy of white and the boy of black. And what has the boy of white chosen? He has chosen God and charity, it seems. The other one has chosen evil, murder, crime. They seem to be in opposition. Not at all! They form a pair. And here we have a stroke of genius on Bresson's part, which is to have transformed all this into a screenplay that gives it a concrete intensity. And here we see that we are not at all in the domain of psychology, because it is not a psychological story. The boy of white, the devotee, is really a devotee who has the following idea: that in order to attain true devotion and to give alms one must necessarily begin by becoming an informer. One must begin by stealing and by giving false testimony.

What does all this mean? It means... it forms part of a domain where we find ourselves stepping into the greatest mysteries. Why does the boy of white think this? The boy of white thinks the way he does... Well, let's focus on this way of thinking and we'll see if we can draw something from it. So, it's quite a strange situation because the boy of white, the boy of divine charity, begins where the boy of black ends. And what's more, the boy of white has made theft and false testimony the condition of his practicing charity, whereas this very act of denunciation – actually both the theft and the false testimony – it is this very false testimony that the boy of white makes against the boy of black, who wasn't yet black but becomes so on account of the testimony, that then precipitates him into crime. In other words, the boy of white and the boy of black are like two sides of the same coin, but what is it exactly? According to Bresson, it's the two sides of the same filth, which is money itself. Neither of them chooses. Neither one nor the other chooses. We don't choose for evil, but then again, we've more or less understood why we couldn't choose for good. Because the good is precisely the instance that tells me: you have no choice for reasons which are metaphysical, namely, you cannot hide from God.

But, but, but... why can't we choose for evil? Why can't we choose for evil? Well, yes, we can choose for evil. Yes, yes, Bresson says so. And here is someone who said it even better. Yes, you can choose for evil, but not for long. You can choose for evil only once. The choice for evil – this is his formula, his motto – is “once and for all”. You can choose for evil once, not twice. Why? The commissioner in *Pickpocket* says it in the plainest form which is that of common sense: “You can't stop”. The man of black cannot stop. This is what common sense would call a fatal slope. Well, it's a bit plain to say you can't stop.

But when it's Mephisto himself who says it in Goethe, it already becomes less plain. Finally, it no longer comes to us from common sense but from someone who knows what he is talking about, that is, from the devil. And in Goethe, in Goethe's *Faust*, Mephisto enters Faust's house. He enters through the window... No, it's through the door, yes, through the door. It's a splendid, splendid scene!¹³ He enters through the door. And the conversation between him and Faust soon turns bitter, and he says: "Let me go back." And Faust says, "But what's stopping you?" And he answers: "Well, it's that you made the sign of God, the pentagram, on the landing, and the point is facing the way I'd like to go out the door, so I can't go out through the door", and Faust answers: "Well, since you are so clever, you can go out through the window or by the roof, or whatever". And Mephisto says to him: "No, no, I have to go out the way I came in, I have to go out the way I came in. I came in through the door so I have to go out through the door." "Why?" says Faust. And Mephisto's sublime answer is: "We demons or spectres", in modern translation "we demons or vampires, we demons or vampires, we are free for the first act, but we are already slaves for the second"¹⁴. Well, it's already less plain here. The spirit of evil is free for the first act but is already a slave for the second. Which means that he doesn't really choose. He can't really choose.

Well, let's continue. Why do I say that he can't really choose? Someone who chooses once and for all doesn't really choose. Well, if he chooses once and for all, it's because he thought he was choosing only once. He thought he was choosing for the first time, and the second time, he realizes that, not only can he no longer choose but that he had never chosen in the first place. And indeed, Mephisto has not chosen. So, let's leave this aside for now because it's still obscure. Why does the man of black...? What I'm trying to say is not yet clear enough, it's not yet sufficiently rigorous, since we are literally floundering.

And then, fourthly, there is, I suppose, the man of true choice. Why isn't the man of black able to choose in the end, even though he thought he was choosing? It is because he chose the situation such that, once he had chosen it, he could no longer choose. But then who would the man of true choice be? So maybe we'll move forward, then we'll take a definitive step. We are on the edge of reason. A step into the unreasonable? Namely that the man of the true choice is *the one who chooses for every time*. What does this mean? It means that he chooses in such conditions that he will never stop making this choice again without altering it. Indeed, since there is only one choice. As we have seen, the only choice is whether one chooses or not. *The man of true choice is the one who chooses to choose*. Well, this choice of choice, will necessarily be something he makes for every time. That is to say, it is a choice that will never cease to recommence at every moment. We are forced. I mean, we are already forced to say this, wherever it leads us.

If it is true that the man of black could only wager on evil on the condition of making a false choice, that is, of choosing once and not being able to choose afterwards, this imposes upon us the idea that the man of true choice – who you understand should not at all be confused with the man of good, the man of white – the man of true choice is the one who chooses in such conditions that this choice is not once and for all, but all for one. That is to say, a choice that will never cease to recommence, a wager that will never stop putting itself into play by re-wagering. So, in Bresson, but perhaps also the others, we already have four elements in our alternation. The character of white, the character of black, the character of grey and the luminous character, which is the name we could give to the character of true choice.

And then there is a fifth, a fifth, which is very useful, and this is the beast, and the finest of the beasts, the ass. Why? Because the ass is the creature of non-choice. Why? It's not at all

like the others with their false choices. It is the creature that is not in a state to choose. It is not in nature... I mean, it is not in a state to choose. But why is it not in a state to choose? Because... What is the ass's situation? The ass's situation is that it is not in a state to choose, because it is fundamentally in a state and in a situation where it can only undergo the consequences of man's non-choices and choices. In other words, the ass, the poor ass, receives from events only the part that is accomplished on their borders that is damaging to them. It is in a situation where it receives and never ceases to receive the effect of people's non-choices or choices, especially the effect of people's non-choices, and this will be the ass's torture. It will be all the blows with which it is afflicted. It will be the ass as the preferred victim of humanity, that is, as the preferred victim of the man of white, the man of black and the man of gray. But no doubt for the same reason, it will be the object of a preferential union for the man of choice, the luminous man, which is to say Christ. Hmm...

Let me repeat... Yes, we could speak of the pathetic situation of the ass. The ass is *pathos*. Pathetic situation of the ass: it is not free. Its situation is therefore not a question of choosing or not choosing. In any case, it is unable to choose. But it is still clearly part of the list, it is clearly part of the list, because by not being in the situation to choose, it is in the animal situation of undergoing the effect of people's non-choices or of people's eventual choices. And suffering all the effects of humanity's non-choices or false choices – the choice for evil, the choice for the whiteness of the devout – it will be charged with all sins by the devotee, it will be the preferred victim of the man of evil, a scapegoat, a creature that can easily be tortured, and so on. So it will be the preferential victim of man. And, in this sense, it receives – it is because of this that the ass is like the entire world – what it receives from all events... what it receives is an echo of all events. It gathers in its body the part of events that come to be actualized, and which comes to wound this body. There isn't a single event that doesn't end with the ass being beaten with a stick.

You understand what this means, that we are all asses. Obviously, you've understood this, but at the same time as being the preferential victim of man, whether it be the man of white, the man of gray or the man of black, it will also form the preferential union of the luminous man, that is, the man of choice, which is to say, since... We've been revolving around this since the beginning, which is to say Christ, who is the man of choice. Is that okay? Are you okay with that? Well, now we're beginning to make some headway.

Let's go back to Pascal. What is our whole history? All this filiation of thought, all this line of thought that I'm trying to trace here, to tighten up as much as I can, all of this preferential line, I'd say... I mean, the whole of this line of thought, we can present as *moving from alternation to alternative*. Only they're not at all the same, alternation and alternative. It requires both. It requires alternation as a basis, and then it requires the alternative as an act. In both respects, it is the opposite of expressionism or even of dialectics, because dialectics required the opposition of black and white as the basis of its opposition, while its act, considered as an act of thought, would be the struggle of light with darkness.

Well, I can't oppose more... I can't make a harder duality than that, or a more solid duality than that. Whereas for the others, it's not at all the same. For them, it's no easy matter but there is no struggle. If you read Kierkegaard, Pascal, Péguy and so on, you can see that it's not their domain. I don't even think that they really understand what it means to struggle. It's not a fight. For them, what counts is, on the one hand, as a basis, the alternation of white, gray and eventually... I mean of white and black, and eventually of gray. So, they don't at all conceive white and black as... [*Interruption of the recording*] [46:47]

... they will create space like that, in the form of rhythmic or geometric alternation. These are alternations. In my view, you will be hard put to find, either in Bresson or in Dreyer, the slightest opposition between darkness and light, it is not their problem. This is very clear, for example, in one of Bresson's films where he pushes rhythmic alternations the furthest, namely *The Diary of a Country Priest*¹⁵. What we have are alternations, a series of alternations. Well, and in the same way I would say that the act of thought in relation to this alternation will be the alternative, provided that we don't confuse it... It's not at all a question of struggle. There would be no struggle at all, in the sense of a struggle of the spirit against darkness. What there will be is an alternative.

Well, well, an alternative, but what do we mean by that? We've seen it. So, I'll tell you the story in a nutshell, shuffling everything together. Whether it's Pascal, whether it's Kierkegaard, whether it's Sartre or whether it's Péguy – we'll see later – and in cinematic terms, it's strange, whether it's Dreyer who descends from Kierkegaard, or whether it's Bresson who I suppose descends from Pascal, there's a question that tortures me: Why is it that there has never been an atheistic cinema? What is this profound link between Christianity and cinema? How can we manage to make atheistic images? Godard almost managed, his work partly revolved around that question, but nobody is spared from faith. Well, finally you can feel that... that... that, you feel that... well, I don't know what to feel.

So, I would say this is the situation. You have your alternations. In a way, you have put things in order as if you were Pascal. And understand that putting things in order is already difficult. And then you'd wish to say: Well, there you have it, either white or black or gray. Well, no, that's not how it is! Or you could say: There are two either/ors. There is an either/or of alternation and there is an either/or of alternative. There, you've put matters in order, put your terms in order. And again, I can also say... First box, "God exists" ... it's like at the casino. First box, "God exists". Second box, "God doesn't exist". Third box, "Maybe he does, maybe he doesn't". That's the alternation.

What we saw last time was that these thinkers of whom I speak were breaking away. Given that they needed that as a base, they were actually making a leap. This base was a springboard, and they were leaping. Why? They took the leap because they were leaving behind the alternation of terms for something else altogether: *the alternative of the modes of existence supposed by those terms*. Beneath the alternation of terms, it was necessary for them to discover the alternative of the modes of existence, in order to finally know what these terms concerned. And what would the alternative of the modes of existence, that they would discover as a kind of jumping on the spot, consist in exactly? They would tell us, they would all tell us that in any case it was a question of choosing: You are involved and whatever you do, you choose. That's what the leap was. You see, they had the alternation of terms and they leapt up and down, telling us: You know that whatever you do, you choose, you're involved.

But then again there are choices you can only make if you say: I don't have a choice. There are choices that you can only make if you deny that there is a choice. And what are these choices you can only make on condition of denying that there is a choice? Strictly speaking, all the terms have an alternation, all of them! With no exceptions! The "God exists" of the devotee, the devotee can only say "God exists" on the condition that he has no choice, so it collapses. The "Maybe yes, maybe not" of uncertainty collapses too, being a non-choice. And the choice "God does not exist", that of the man of evil, collapses even more, because it is the worst of the non-choices. He thought that it was enough to choose for the first act. This is the

worst misunderstanding regarding choice. But choice exists only insofar as it is renewed at every moment. Of all the non-choices, that of the man of black, the man of evil is the worst.

So, when I leap from my base into the air, into the question we are now confronting, what do I discover? That all the terms I've placed in alternation are false terms, that is, if I relate them to modes of existence, they are modes of existence that, as the man said, are perfectly inauthentic. And we called these inauthentic modes of existence Sartre's bad faith, Pascal's diversion, Kierkegaard's aesthetic stage, which is to say all those choices that can only be made on the condition of saying that there is no choice.

But then if I annul all... all my alternations, my whole series of alternations, if I cancel all that, what happens then? Well, I could only discover these false choices within the true choice that I was in the process of discovering at the same time. Namely, I discovered that they weren't actually about choosing. I annulled all my alternations, all the successive terms of my alternation in saying: yes, these are choices that I could only make on condition of denying that I have a choice. And from then on, what is it that emerges, splendid, luminous? There is only one choice I can make, affirming that I have choice – and this is the authentic mode of existence – I need only choose choice itself, because if I choose choice, I can no longer choose anything I formerly chose on the condition of denying that I had a choice. Okay!

So much so that the man of faith is asked only one thing, and God asks only one thing of him, the God who is not the God of the devout, but who is the “living God”, what Pascal will call the living God, meaning the one with whom the man of faith has a private relationship. Well, this living God with whom the man of faith, what Kierkegaard will call the knight of faith, with whom the knight of faith has a living relationship, this relationship and this God himself are strictly inseparable from the choice I make when I choose God... No, not at all when I choose God, because this always a false choice – but from the choice I make when I choose the mode of existence I can only choose in knowing that I have the choice. And it is only in this mode of existence that I choose knowing that I have a choice, that I can enter into an unheard-of relationship with the living God, and that I become the knight of faith.

Which is to say... Well, what is it that occurs in the true choice? You see how I literally took a leap, I leapt from the alternation of terms to the alternative of modes of existence, and I don't have to choose between modes of existence, since there is only one that I can choose knowing that I have the choice. All the others I could only choose by never having the choice. All this is very odd... this question... it's very interesting indeed!

Except that we demand a little more because then this real choice, we understand, but we don't understand anything anymore, because this choice is one I obviously make – I don't need to explain why, it's obvious simply because that's the way it is – I make it through sacrifice. Indeed, I have sacrificed all the terms of the alternations. I have sacrificed everything. I have not only sacrificed diversion, which would be nothing, but I have sacrificed even my most sincere loves. In the case of Kierkegaard, I sacrificed Regine. I have even sacrificed my own life. So sometimes I survive, sometimes I die. This is the choice, in a way, it's the choice of Joan of Arc. I say the choice of Joan of Arc because I'm thinking about cinema. She haunts Dreyer... Joan does, she haunts both Dreyer and Bresson. As for Kierkegaard, since he is a reformist, we should not be surprised that he's not much interested in Joan of Arc. No, but it's the same thing. His main concern is Abraham. Abraham's sacrifice

is no less important than Joan's sacrifice. There is always a matter of sacrifice involved in this.

What does this mean? The moment I choose choice, that is, the moment I choose a choice such that I am able to make in knowing that I am choosing, the moment I have risen to the choice of choice, whether I die or not, it is for every time. And whether I die or not – this is where things will become extremely mysterious – everything is restored to me. No doubt because I have renounced everything, all the terms of the alternation, in favor of the only real choice, which was the choice of choosing. So, I renounced all the terms, and now, when I have made and continue to make the choice of choosing, everything is restored to me. Everything is restored to me. Well, here's the mystery, *everything is restored to me in the mode of faith*.

So, everything is restored to me in the mode of faith... everything is restored to me in the mode of faith, what does this mean? This is the direction Kierkegaard goes in, which was only indicated by Pascal. I believe that there are texts that indicate it quite well in Pascal. It will be a truly Kierkegaardian contribution, this idea of things being “restored”, that is to say what he will call “repetition”. And this will be taken up again, although here – someone who never read Kierkegaard, and he couldn't have known his work, I think... if he had known him... he might have known him, but I don't think it's very likely that he was familiar with his work – I mean even in someone like Péguy, everything is restored. Good!

It's... it's the character of Isaac [*Deleuze here means Abraham*] who chose the true choice. He entered into, he entered into a private relationship with God. And the true choice is indeed the choice of choice, which is the private relationship with God. It is the Pascalian wager that is opposed to the devout, that is opposed to the God of the devout. In this case, as Kierkegaard is always saying, it is the God of Job and Abraham. But there's worse to come for us. It's that for the first time, already with Pascal and then with Kierkegaard and then with a man, a great follower of this line, this time a Russian – it took a Russian orthodox to complete matters – namely Shestov¹⁶, the opposition of two types of thought, the public professor and the private thinker, will arise. But what had already emerged fully with Kierkegaard was that the man of true choice was the private thinker. The others, the devout, the man of evil, all of them, all those assistants of the false choice, were public professors, professors of virtues or vices, it amounts to the same thing. And here we will have the great attack on public professors, public professors who, for Kierkegaard, were obviously represented above all by Hegel and dialectics. And this will be Shestov's great opposition, which already emerges fully in Kierkegaard, between Athens and Jerusalem.¹⁷

The private thinker is Job or Abraham, the one who enters into a private relationship with God, such that in choosing to choose, he will receive everything twofold. So, the choice that recommences without end, that never ceases to recommence – even if I die from the choice – but this choice is that I have made not once for all time but every time for one. So, it doesn't matter if I die because of it, since everything will be restored to me in dying or in surviving beyond the white death. Everything will be restored to Joan of Arc just as everything will be restored to Christ just as everything was already restored to Job, everything, and finally, everything in the moment Isaac [*Deleuze again means Abraham*], in his idea of madness, in his private relationship with God, chooses to immolate Isaac, his much loved son for whom he had waited so long when he had him at the age of ninety.

And he gets up one morning, and this is what I was telling you, the great opposition that Kierkegaard makes between Agamemnon, the man of white, the Greek man, and the man from Jerusalem, Abraham. Agamemnon says: "I sacrifice my Iphigenia, she is the one I loved the most, I loved her more than anything else, but there is duty to consider, there is the fatherland, there is the nation, there is..." – I can think of many modern Agamemnons – "there's all that, there's war, there's war, the winds must be favorable". And Iphigenia cries, cries, cries. But does Agamemnon cry? No, he does not cry because he is a leader and a leader should not cry, and he tells her: "My tears are all in my heart, my daughter, we have no choice." And again, the whole of Greece applauds, and what is merrier still is that all the Greek girls say: "Bravo, bravo!" Good.

But in the case of Isaac, nothing of the sort takes place. One day Abraham says to Isaac: "Get up! Come! We're going to make a sacrifice!" And Isaac says: "Yes, but where is the beast?" – that is, where is the ass, if you like. And Abraham replies: "God will provide". This "God will provide" is disturbing. Isaac trots behind Abraham and Isaac... no, Abraham, chooses to sacrifice Isaac. Why does he do this? Because he is in the private relation of the wager – what Kierkegaard for his part calls the alternative – he is in the private relation of the wager and no longer in the theological relation with the God of "there is no choice", such that by choosing to sacrifice his son, Abraham makes a choice for the absurd. He wagers on the absurd. And now, Abraham will have everything restored to him. The choice that chooses itself as a choice, and that chooses itself in recommencing, will, in relation to this choice, have everything restored.

Does this mean... well... does this mean Regine will be restored to Kierkegaard who had abandoned her? Kierkegaard was unable to be a knight of faith, something which bothered him a lot. He said: "I do all I can, but I will never be a knight of faith. What I can at least be is a poet of faith." And indeed, after all, the only knight of faith, you might say, for these thinkers is Christ. There is nothing wrong with being simply a poet of faith, it is already something. So they will be, they will be poets of faith. And Kierkegaard had his alternations, which were a bit like Proust's alternations with his young girls. "Regine, shall I marry Regine?" He would wake up every morning, he would wake up asking: "So do I marry Regine? Do I give Regine her freedom? If I don't marry her, will I do something even worse in seducing her only in order to abandon her..." Because Kierkegaard had a pretty shady past in this sense. So, it gnawed at him, it gnawed at him a bit like what happened at the Liberation. Should I join the Communist Party? There are people who lived the period of the Liberation like that, and it seems there were even some after May '68...¹⁸

And the choice he makes, the choice he makes is to give up everything, therefore to abandon Regine all the more since he also gives her up... he gives up Regine. And so on...

[*To a student*] Yes, just a minute, I'm sure you have something to say about all this. The alternation, the whole alternation finally, Regine or not Regine and so forth. He chooses, he chooses. He enters into a private relationship with God, at least in the form of a poetry of faith. And everything will be restored to him. What does this mean? In the meantime, since he took his time in deciding all this, Regine had already married someone else. But she is restored to him. In what form is she restored to him? In what way? Is she restored to him in spirit? No! You can sense... the way all these authors are pursued by a fundamental problem which is that of incarnation. You can't say that it restores ... it doesn't restore what they have lost. What they have lost is not restored to them through the wager, or in the form of resignation or acceptance. No! These people are in no way resigned. It is not restored to them

simply in spirit, and yet neither is it restored to them in the flesh. So, what is going on here? It's what they call *the mystery of repetition*. What do we gain from this? What do we gain? What we gain is that everything is restored to us. So, what does this mean? Let's attempt... we are still mired in the aesthetic stage, you see we are not yet at the stage of... of faith, even poetic faith. So, I say to myself, here we are, let's hypothesize a bit and see if we can go even further.

You see my two levels: alternation and alternative. Once again, you have taken as your base support the alternation of terms. You took the leap and you discovered the alternative, and moreover in discovering the alternative, everything is restored to you in terms of alternation. What does it mean to say that everything is restored to me in terms of alternation? I can only think in terms of light. At the first level of alternation, what was it that alternated? White, insofar as it imprisoned light, cellular white, the white of the cell or clinic. That terrible white! And black, insofar as wherever there is black, light ceases. You see that this isn't the dialectical or expressionist idea of a combat. It is simply the cessation of light. Come on, let's turn it off... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:13:18]

Part 2

The gray was uncertainty, it was the half-tone. There were the two pure tones and then the half-tone, the in-between hours, dawn or dusk, light arising, light going out, this was the third term of my alternation. I rise to the alternative, to the choice of choice, that is, I discover a choice that breaks with all the terms of the alternation, which is to say I've chosen the light. Only the light can be the choice of choice. The light is the only thing I can choose, knowing that it is a question of choosing.

Third moment: as soon as I have made this choice and made it again, since I can only make this choice by making it again at each moment, even in death, as soon as I have made this choice, everything is restored to me. What does it mean to say "everything is restored to me"? All the terms of the alternation. Fine, but in what form? I say everything is restored to me, so let's take this literally, let's allow ourselves to be led: white is restored to me just as black is restored to me just as grey is restored to me, but obviously in another form. And yet, it will be a physical form, which is why I cannot be satisfied with an answer such as: it is restored to me in spirit. But it's no longer the same type of physics. Because what will be restored to me is a form of white. Is this a miracle or not? At the point we are now, it could well be a miracle. It is a white that no longer imprisons light. It is a white that is no longer the prison of light, and it is a black that is no longer the cessation of light, and it is an in-between that is no longer uncertainty or hesitation.

You see, we're making a little bit of headway now because... well, yes, well yes, we can see a little bit better. This white is bountiful, the black is bountiful, and how bountiful is the gray! It is clear that they contained other powers. The white could be something other than a cell of light. Just as black could surely be something other than a cessation of light, and the in-between could well be something other than the midst of my uncertainty. So, what would it be? What is restored to me are whites, blacks and grays that are like the powers of luminosity, the powers of light. What I have lost is Regine, but this was a Regine of alternation; what is restored to me is a Regine of the alternative, that is, a luminous Regine. Well, but I want to touch her and I can't touch this luminous Regine, yet she is once again...

So, what kind of touch are we talking about now? What kind of touch are we talking about? For the moment, we can't go any further.

They discovered that thought, even before being knowledge – and this is the great discovery of this whole German lineage – even before being knowledge, thought had a deeper ground and this deeper ground was called “belief”. And however strange the origin of all this may be, I believe it was with Kant... and yet, and yet... because it was Kant who had discovered that in thought there was something deeper than knowledge, which was belief, and that all knowledge presupposed belief. Well, but how? What path did it have to take? What a strange appearance this Kantian discovery would have... Everything is restored to us, this is the mystery, once again, either of faith or of repetition, white, black and gray as powers of light. You see? Whereas in the alternation of the terms, it was once again white that imprisoned light and black that marked its cessation.

Now, if you are sensitive to this, it seems to me, if you are at all sensitive to this question, independently of the problem of faith, you will understand there is already an aesthetic translation taking place. If you think of Dreyer's cinema, well, this is exactly what I just told you about, it's the world of Dreyer's great trilogy. The three women. I put aside Joan of Arc for whom it is obvious, but the three women who rise to the choice and to the consciousness of their choice, to choice and to the consciousness of choice, and from then on, either in death or beyond death – we even have these three cases: one dies, one is “resurrected” and one isn't even required to die. And so we have the woman of *Ordet*, the woman of *Day of Wrath* and the woman of *Gertrud*¹⁹. And Dreyer's great trilogy presents precisely, and at the level of images, at the level of art, absolutely, this passage from alternation, from the alternation of blacks, grays and whites, to the alternative as a firm – to the letter – as a firm spiritual decision, the choice of choice that recommences at every moment. And at that point it is Gertrud who accedes to this choice. Everything is restored to her, beginning with what she had lost that was most precious, namely herself. Everything is restored to her, that is to say above all herself, and so she teaches us, just as Pascal said, that in the matter of the wager, *the wager concerns ourselves*. Just as Péguy would say in another manner. The same thing is true for Bresson's *A Man Escaped*, or for his country priest. So, we stumble upon this, we stumble upon this, well... What happens? What happens? We cannot simply say, as I said before, we can't just say well, this is where faith begins. Now that we've waded into this, we have to try to find a way out of it.

So, I say to myself, even if we accumulate these authors, there is one that we haven't yet looked at and who interests me a lot because he is so... he is very interesting, and this is Péguy. Perhaps from Péguy we might get a glimmer, another glimmer... It's very odd, this business... and then you can sense that – as we have said about many, since this has happened more than once – in order to finish, I need to address Péguy because he will allow us, in a quite pedagogical sense, to go back to Bergson. For Péguy claims to be and proclaims himself a disciple of Bergson. And Bergson was very fond of Péguy, I believe, though he found him an odd disciple... very odd. It's not so much the Christianity that bothers Bergson – although, at that time... Bergson was Jewish, you know, and at the end of his life it appears that he had the intention of converting. But at the end of his life there was the Occupation, so obviously he did not convert because he wished to remain in solidarity with the Jews, and he wanted to wear the yellow star. So, conversion was out. However, all the declarations Bergson made towards the end of his life indicated a desire to convert. But in any case, his would not have been the same kind of Christianity as Péguy's. And we'll see, we will try to

understand how Péguy could have believed himself to be a Bergsonian, and this amounts to the same problem.

What I would like to note is that for me Péguy... and this is why I would say that the problem of faith and that of aesthetics are inseparable. What is Péguy for us? As soon as we open any book of his, unless we have a particular vocation for faith, we see that he is above all a remarkable stylist, and it is this stylist who speaks to you in a way where you find yourself saying: well, I have never heard anything like that anywhere before, I have never heard that anywhere, and it's because *he has made a style of repetition*. And notice that repetition is a theme common to this whole lineage. But the fact is that the others... Kierkegaard said, contra Hegel, who employed large oppositions, he said: I'm going to propose an equally interesting concept, a very Danish concept, he said it was a very Danish concept, which was a way to... well, it was a concept that came from his part of the world, since he was Danish, and so he said, I bring you the concept of repetition. But he didn't make a style out of it.

Open any page of Péguy and one might speak of a litany because he does employ litany, but it wouldn't be sufficient because what he does is something else entirely. He invents something so grandiose that, in my view, Péguy's style is, if you like, akin to that of the great... I mean, the great mad prose stylists. I would say that it's as important, and just as radical and innovative, as Joyce's language and style. It's something very, very peculiar, and yet the rules seem quite simple. I'd like to read you some but just a little sample, because I'd rather you discovered him for yourselves. You take any text of Péguy's and then... I will read you a few short passages that will give you a feel of the power of repetition in this style.

Suppose you adopt this rule: you set down part of a first sentence, then you complete it. You will complete it by introducing new words which might be adverbs. But each time you introduce a new word you start the sentence again, taking into account the rhythmic values – for example there could be inversions, variations, grammatical variations, and what you will have will literally be... taken together Péguy's sentences will be like a wave, not just any wave, but a wave that carries small pebbles with it. Each time, the sentence starts again, the sentence recommences from zero, a new word is added, then another new word, and each time it will be the whole sentence that starts over again. It is not within the sentence that he adds words, as if one crossed out a sentence one had just written to make it more perfect, and it is not that the previous sentence was imperfect either. What he gives the style is, if you like, something that will be the equivalent... something that is quite literally like the rhythm of a walk. It's a way of walking, you see, and each time, each step takes up the whole sentence again by adding a little something. Kierkegaard's sentences, as far as one can judge – which is difficult because he wrote in Danish – but according to the translations, it's not... his constant theme is the idea of taking leaps. It's not the same kind of walk. And then Péguy piles it on, he's constantly telling us: I am a peasant, I am a peasant, so obviously, it's a peasant kind of walk, you know.²⁰

But what is he telling us here? What is he... Well, you'll recognize right away, you'll recognize our problem and the point we've now reached. And he says: When you consider an event – you remember, my whole theme is that there is an alternation and an alternative and we must not confuse the domain of alternation and the domain of the alternative. Péguy begins his history by saying: There are two cuts or there are two lines, there are two cuts or there are two lines. This is how it goes: listen carefully to this first quotation which is taken, I believe, from *Victor Marie, Comte Hugo*, a book that... – Péguy admired Hugo enormously – it's a very fine book on Hugo and on many other things too. “The entire universality of the

horizontal cut of the present time is infinitely multiplied by the entire universality of the sounding [*coup de sonde*]” – Let me continue for the moment – “The entire universality of the horizontal cut of the present moment is infinitely multiplied by the entire universality of the sounding.”

[*Airplane noise overhead*] Ah... it's the airbus, it's that stupid airbus, right? What's that? It can't be...

[*A student*]: It's a Mirage, I think!

Ok, I'll start again: “The entire universality of the horizontal cut of the present time is infinitely multiplied by the entire universality of the sounding, of its vertical deepening, by the entire universality of this vertical cut” – you see how we realize that the word shouldn't be corrected – “by the entire universality of the sounding, by the universality of the vertical cut, of the vertical deepening, by the universality of the vertical cut and of its elevation, of the vertical thread” – cut, sounding, thread, each time we have to start again – “of the vertical thread, by the entire universality of the vertical past which is vertically the richest, of a vertical past that is infinite for each point of this horizontal universe...” – Yes, I got the caesura wrong – “Vertically the richest...” – Sorry, I'll start again, you will understand everything – “The entire universality of the horizontal cut of the present time is infinitely multiplied by the entire universality of the sounding, of the vertical deepening, by the entire universality of the vertical cut and its elevation, of the vertical thread, by the entire universality of the vertical past which is vertically the richest, of a vertical past that is infinite for each point of this infinite horizontal universe of the present time”. Phew!

And I ask you, isn't it the same thing? I'm not risking anything if I say, isn't it the same thing when, in one of his finest books, *Clio*, he tells us: “One can say that inscription and recollection” – inscribe and recollect – “One can say that inscription and recollection are at right angles, she says” – because here it is Clio who speaks, he finds it more amusing that way – “One can say, she says, that inscription and recollection are...” – ah yes, there are two *she-says* – “One can say, she-says” – damn, I'm getting lost... yes, “One can say, she says, that inscription and recollection are...”²¹ [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:33:53]

...slides on a longitudinal groove along the event; history slides along parallel to the event. Memory is perpendicular. Memory sinks and dives and probes into the event. History is this brilliantly decorated, though slightly impotent general, who reviews the troops in full battle regalia on the field of maneuvers in some garrison town. He passes along the lines. And its inscription is some sergeant-major who follows the captain, or some garrison adjutant who follows the general, and who notes down when a cross strap is missing. But memory, but aging, she says, is the general on the battlefield, no longer passing along the lines, but on the contrary (perpendicularly) within his lines, fixed, entrenched behind his lines, launching, pushing forward his lines which stand there horizontal, crosswise before him. And behind a hillock the guard stood massed.”²²

This is quite obscure... what is he telling us? Let's try to make a schema, we're not thinking of Bergson here... What time is it? Where is my chalk?... That's exactly what he's saying. I don't need to start again. Oh, dear! [*Deleuze draws the schema on the board*] That doesn't look like it, this is the horizontal line, you see, this is what he calls the cut, the horizontal cut. What do you place on this horizontal cut? You place [*Deleuze writes on the board*] instants or – let's not be too rigorous, we're in such a state – let's put presents, presents that follow one another,

a succession of presents... a succession of presents. From a to b , it's a horizontal cut, a horizontal cut, but of what? If we knew that... Could we say that it is a horizontal cut of time? We don't know, we don't know. I can only say that... I can establish two vectors, it seems to me, from a I pass to b and this is what I would call – it's not in Péguy but that doesn't matter – a “protention”.²³ I go from a present to the new present. But I can also go from b to a , from the new present, from the *present present* to the old present, which is what I would call a “retention”. So, I keep the old present... [*Deleuze continues to write on the blackboard*] also to make it a bit nicer, I'll alternate... you see, it's nicer like that... here, here is my cut.

And he tells us that there's something else, there's a vertical cut and a vertical sounding. I don't yet know what the event is but, he tells us, there, on the horizontal line, you pass along the event. You pass along the event, which means what? More than that, you walk along the presents, you pass from one present to another. But at each of these instants a , b , c , d , let's imagine that there is a vertical cut, right? This time, I plunge into the event. The event is the halo of each present, the halo. H-A-L-O. It's what surrounds every present.

When I live, in my daily life, I never stop passing alongside events. I am like the general who marches along the line of troops – as he has just said – a little impotent, because I am getting more and more tired. Then I put things in order. I would say I put everything here for the moment, this is the alternation... “Woman...” Damn! I was trying to quote by heart, but obviously I've forgotten. “Woman... you would put away God himself...” You don't know this poem? “Woman, I tell you, you would put away God himself if... if... if he ever came down to set foot in your house” – Yes, it's something like that: “Woman, you would put away God himself if he ever came down...”²⁴ This line, sometimes he calls it... it would take a lot of study to see why he calls it... it's the line of... it's the line of putting away, it's the line of accumulation, only what I accumulate are diminishing values. And, we might add, this is the line of money, the accumulation of diminishing value. He wrote a quite interesting book on money which I don't know if Bresson is familiar with...

So, we might as well say, if you followed me, that this is the line of alternation. Oh, look at that! White, black, gray, exactly as I look at time, I pass along time, I open my windows. It is white, it is black, it is gray. Call it what you will: line of aging, line of alternation, line of money, line of... it's all the same. I pass along the event, or if you prefer, since it amounts to the same thing, along events. One event follows another. Well, if you're at b ... if I were Pascal, I'd say it was the line of diversion. No sooner do I reach a than I say, “Oh, let's make haste to b ,” no sooner am I at b than I say, “Oh, when will we get to c ?” Right. That... [*Deleuze points to the schema*] that doesn't count, that cross there... it's not a pattern.

Then, suppose that at a bend in the road, you're running alongside events, you see what an odd conception this is. At a push, it's not the events that are moving, it's not the presents that are moving, it's you running like crazy, it's you running like crazy along this line of the present, so it's your own pauses that define the presents. Well, and then... mixing everything together, if you allow me, I could say – though I haven't justified this yet – if one day you decided to choose to choose, that is to say, to choose in knowing that it's a question of choosing, you couldn't... you'd be literally expelled from this line. You would have made a sounding, and the sounding is the path of the vertical line. You see how there is a common point between the two lines: it is the path of the vertical line. It's the sounding as he says, as he says in the first text... now you can perhaps understand it better:

“The universality of the horizontal cut of the present moment...” – that's it! [*Deleuze indicates on the board*] – “is infinitely multiplied” – this is something we can't yet understand – “is infinitely multiplied” – this will pose a problem – “is infinitely multiplied by the entire universality of the sounding, of the vertical deepening” – I just commented on *sounding* and *vertical deepening* – “by the entire universality of the vertical cut and the elevation of the vertical thread” – all of this works – “the universality of the vertical past which is vertically the richest” – I haven't commented on this *past* – “of a vertical past” – not commented on – “that is infinite for each of the points of this infinite horizontal universe of the present time” – that I did comment on – “for each of the points of this infinite horizontal universe of the present time” – I mean, for each of the points I had distinguished on the horizontal line.

Well, now, instead of passing along events, you're going to plunge into an event. If you've ever plunged into an event... So maybe we have a hasty approximation of what the order of faith is? Because if you have ever plunged into an event, literally speaking, you have never come back from it. Perhaps everything will have been restored to you. So, I say to myself, I'm beginning to understand – I don't understand much for the moment, but I would say that to plunge into an event is no small matter. What does it mean to say that I plunge into an event? And what does this idea consist in? In my view, I have no choice. Here I'm beginning to make a bit of headway. You see, at a stretch, I could conceive of a relation from *b* to *a*, from *c* to *a*, from *d* to *a*, no less than in the other direction, from *a* to *b*, from *b* to *c*, from *c* to *d*. But what will happen here? We have to furbish this idea of “plunging into the density (*épaisseur*) of an event” with something. If an event has a density, it must have points. Yes, it has to have points.

Moreover, Péguy will make use of a word that, since I too happen to use it constantly, is a further reason for me to feel happy – he will use the term *singularity*... singularity. On this line, we have many singularities. “For in the density of an event”, he tells us – and this, once again, gives him the opportunity to create a very fine stylistic effect – Oh, no... he doesn't say *singularity* but it doesn't matter. I say it doesn't matter because it amounts to the same thing, so it's of no importance, it doesn't matter. He says it very eloquently in two splendid passages in *Clio*:

“But is it not obvious that the event is not homogeneous, that perhaps it is organic, that there are what in acoustics we call...” – this is his acoustic metaphor – “that there are what in acoustics we call antinodes and nodes” – it is not only in acoustics, this also occurs in mathematics in the theory of functions – “plenitudes and voids, a rhythm, perhaps a way of regulating tensions and relaxations, periods and epochs, axes of vibration, points of uprising, points of crisis.”

Another, even clearer passage: “By a crisis point... there are critical points of the event... there are critical points of the event just as there are critical points of temperature, melting points, freezing points, boiling points, points of condensation, points of coagulation and of crystallization. And in the event there are even states of supercooling which will only precipitate, which will only crystallize...” – You see, supercooling is what happens when a physical state, the physical state of a body, has exceeded the threshold where normally it should melt, and it is in a state of supercooling – “these states of supercooling which will precipitate, which will crystallize, which are determined only thanks to the introduction of a fragment of a future event.”²⁵

Great, we had to go all the way to the end. And it's only when he says the craziest thing of all that we understand everything. I have no choice, I have no choice. If I plunge into c ... if I stay on the horizontal, in c I will have relations with b and a . But if I plunge into c , I can wave all that goodbye because I plunge into the density of the event. And what shall I say now? Let's start from d . If I keep to a temporal succession following the horizontal line, what I have is a dotted line... [*Deleuze writes on the board*] Excellent! You have understood everything, we have everything we need. We are saved. Faith has hit you.

You have an a' there, so you don't have just an a . This a' ... if I situate myself in the c sounding this famous c , it will become a'' . Why will it become second? Because it is b that occupies a that will have been transformed into a b' . There, if I situate myself in the c sounding – here you should sense the emergence of a theory of time that will be of crucial importance to us – then we have b'' . Why? Because I have a c' , and I have an a''' . This line is infinite, so what I can represent here is a ridiculously small part. The sounding of the event, the vertical sounding, the vertical thread, will unite an instant c not to b and a , but to b' and a'' , while the instant b will unite... will conjugate not with c , b and a , but with c' , b'' and a''' . Here I would say that my horizontal line consists in the connections, the connections of the present time.

What is this? What we have are *the conjunctions of an infinite past*. Indeed, on my vertical line, I don't find the old present, I find a b' , which is of a different nature to the old present that I will call "of the past". Each sounding will grasp the totality of the past in the density of the event. Each sounding will be a small m , which will include on its vertical line a' , b'' , c''' , d'''' ... and so on and so forth. At that moment, a in relation to b was only an old present, whereas a' in relation to b is a real past. Only it is a past that... what? It is a past that is restored to you, that is restored to you in the vertical line or on the vertical line, in the density of the event.

And you will be able to say of the horizontal line that it is *time*, it is time. Just as you can say of the vertical lines that this is the eternal. But in fact, that's not what it is, because *the eternal has become time*. In what way? Indeed, what is important is the point of intersection. It is that at each moment of the present, there is what he called this 90 degree encounter between the vertical cut and the horizontal line.

On the horizontal line you have the succession of a , b , c , d ... that is, the succession of presents that pass. Remember this well because we are making some headway. This is the succession of presents that pass. And on the vertical lines, what do we have? On the contrary, we have contemporaneity, the coexistence of an instant with all the pasts, which are not just old presents. The old present was a in relation to b , whereas what I call pasts would be a' , a'' , a''' , b' , b'' , b''' . You plunge down, you don't reascend the course of time. You plunge into the event that restores to you *within the event itself* all you had lost on the first line. How could such an author say to Bergson, "Don't you see that I am your disciple"? He has no reason to.

And I might add: What does he do in the last sentence that is so amazing and that makes me so happy? Well... "Sometimes there are in the event of these states of supercooling which precipitate..." – in what he calls points of crystallization, boiling points etc. So here we have my list of b' ... no, I mean c' , b'' , a''' . Everyone will define a critical point in my line-sounding. And he adds, "Sometimes I require a fragment of the future event". Indeed, why shouldn't it also go in the direction... of what is still to come? What he is doing is to integrate

the future – not at all in the form of predestination, since he is not saying that the future has already been realized, it remains a future – but that doesn't prevent my soundings from including fragments of future events that I myself, at that moment, would be incapable of recognizing, making me say: “What's going on here?” And in a presentiment, I would say to myself: Yes, this belongs to me, in a kind of “inverted reminiscence”, it belongs to me, but it has not yet arrived.

So how can we say that he is Bergsonian? I would like to finish on this point because it is an extremely difficult one. So, if this is faith... well, maybe this is what faith is? Can you sense... what does it mean to say that everything is restored to us? In each sounding, well, yes... c' , it's not c that will be given back to you, it's c' , b'' , a''' , which is to say the *powers*. I could even have said c^2 , b^3 , d I don't know what, a I don't know what... What we have are elevations, potentialities, what is restored to you. These are potentialities.

And you will recall that last year and at the beginning of this year I was constantly reiterating the following story: in the event, there are two things... in the event, there are two things, there is the part of what is actualized in bodies. But there is also something else: there is a part that exceeds all actualization, there is a part that exceeds its actualization. And yet it is something real, it's just that it isn't actual. It's real without being actual. It is, I said, the part which is non-actualized, but which is, on the other hand, fully expressed, the event as expressed and not as actualized. It will never be sufficient for me to actualize death in my body, in a certain way I will have to express it, to express it in part. Which part? The part that eludes accomplishment.²⁶

And we find this conception of the event explicitly developed by Blanchot in his own particular style,²⁷ when he explicitly distinguishes between what can be actualized in the event and this kind of potential – which is nevertheless perfectly real and which is not a simple possibility – which has the potentiality of a power and which exceeds all actualization, *the part of the accomplished event that cannot itself be accomplished*. Here, I believe – and I think that Blanchot would perhaps recognize this, although I don't remember at all if he ever wrote about Péguy – but it's clear that Péguy had an influence on Blanchot that comes notably from the fact that Blanchot, in his youth, was an author and a thinker of faith, and the influence of Péguy on Blanchot seems to me to be something... something completely obvious...

Hideobu Suzuki: He did write a text, there's a text of his on Péguy...²⁸

Deleuze: So, he wrote a text on Péguy. Well, he has everything you would need to understand him and he has clearly retained something fundamental from this.

Now, you understand, here we find... on our part, I would say we find exactly these two aspects of the event. Both are perfectly real. The part of the event that is actualized in states of affairs, that is a , b , c , d . And the part of the event that is expressed as pure power or quality and *that can only be expressed*, that is, *the part of the event that eludes actualization*. And in *Clio*, what is... what is it that Péguy begins with? He begins with some splendid pages which read more or less as follows: How could you imagine that in an event there is not something that exceeds its actualization? For example, Homer writes the *Iliad*. An event is actualized, fine. There must be something which exceeds its actualization, since we will never have done with the *Iliad*, since there will always be a reader who will make a new actualization of the

Iliad. We must therefore believe that in the event, there is a reservoir of potentiality, something that cannot be exhausted by its own actualization.

What's so Bergsonian about this? It is known that Bergson opposed duration to homogeneous space, but that was for the basic readers of Bergson. For the great readers of Bergson – and this is the kind of leap Péguy makes – *it is within duration itself that we find the true Bergsonian duality*. And Bergsonian duration, according to Péguy, will be this point of juncture between the horizontal cuts and the vertical soundings. And then he proposes an image of Bergson that clearly no one before him had conceived of, with the exception of Bergson himself in his own texts. In my view, he is the only person who understood *Matter and Memory* at the time of its publication. He understood it, he re-translated it into his own language, he remade it, yet the authenticity of his Bergsonism is clear. But why?

Hence the concept that to me seems so brilliant, at least the word Péguy invents, whose brilliance must be noted. Each point of this junction of the two lines which constitutes the true status of the duration... what will this be? It is what he will call the Aternal (*internel*).²⁹ It will be the Aternal, that is, *the junction between time and eternity*. And there is never an eternity independent of this junction. There isn't the eternal and then time and then their junction. *There is only the Aternal, which is duration itself*. And the Aternal is the presence of the eternal in time, that is, the presence of the sounding on the horizontal line and the presence of the horizontal line through the soundings.

So, is this what Bergson said? Yes, but he didn't push the schema far enough, because he was in a hurry to make other schemas. And at the beginning of Chapter 3 of *Matter and Memory* you find a text that seems extraordinary to me because... I have tried to make this schema for... it isn't actually in Péguy, I say this in all honesty. Péguy does not make a schema... it was to try to... to be as clear as possible. In *Matter and Memory*, Chapter 3, you'll find a very simple schema, which is charming, which explains everything, and which explains the point where Péguy really anchored himself to Bergson. [*Deleuze looks for the passage*] Yes, but I can no longer find it. Very simply, I want to show you that it is there, you see? Here it is. Now, what is he telling us with this schema? Simply this... but it will get much more complicated later. Two horizontal lines, a vertical line, a junction point, *a, b* and up at the top *c*.³⁰

This is what he tells us... what he tells us is still very odd. He says: it's very strange because no one... I'm summarizing the text. You're there, you're in *i*. Well, *a, b, i*, it's... Let's call it – I hope this will bring back memories – the *plane of matter*, it's the succession of pure presents, it's the plane of matter. I am on this plane with my body, my body is in *i*, my body is in *i*, you see? He says, it is nonetheless very strange. Everybody admits that the line *a-b* extends outside my body, not only in what I see from a distance when I say, “Ah, I perceive *that*, it's over there, it's not in my body but it's over there!” But nobody is surprised that the physical world continues beyond even what I can perceive. In other words, no one is surprised that there are images that are not perceived. Since I remind you that for him... he demonstrated that any movement of matter was an image, but never mind. Nobody is surprised that it continues outside of my consciousness.

And now, by a strange perversion – but one that will be very important and this will be the real perversion – in term of the vertical line, this is something I don't want, namely I don't want the past or, if you prefer, I don't wish... I do wish for things to be extended beyond my consciousness, on the horizontal line. But I don't wish for states to be extended beyond my

consciousness on the vertical line. You'll tell me that Freud did want this, but let's not involve him in this story. Besides, *Matter and Memory* was 1896 – we don't wish for states to be extended... in what? On the vertical line of time, in the same way as things continue outside of my consciousness on the horizontal line of matter. In other words, one wants space to preserve and time, on the contrary, to dissipate. He says – and this is the great mystery – why do people want this? How is it possible that people don't realize that if they admit that objects extend beyond my body and the perception I have of it, then also states must exist no less beyond my body or outside of my consciousness and therefore beyond the images that I have of them?

In other words, *there is a pure memory* – this is the memory Péguy speaks of – there is a pure memory which constitutes an integral conservation, an integral conservation of all states, as much as matter and space constitute a conservation of all the constituent objects of a universe. And Bergson says he finds quite incomprehensible the attitude of people who wish for things to be lost in time but preserved in space. There is no more difficulty, says Bergson, in admitting that the past is preserved outside of me, than in admitting that an object exists outside of me. Now, everyone finds it quite normal that an object exists outside of me.

You see, what he is doing here is constructing an extremely simple schema. And this will be the idea that, in fact, there would be exactly what Péguy called the Aternal and that Bergsonian duration is found neither there nor there... [*Deleuze indicates the schema*] but is in fact the continual insertion of the vertical line in the horizontal line, and the continual tracing of the horizontal line in relation to the vertical. It's the “passing alongside of”, at the same time as the “plunging into”, the vertical sounding. That's what was needed. In other words, here we have the two components of duration.

So, the schema I proposed... what does it accomplish? It accomplishes absolutely nothing other than to complicate the Bergsonian schema, but it was already part of it. The Bergsonian schema was already all this, since it is enough to shift *i* there... [*Deleuze indicates the schema*] to move *i* along my line *ab* in order to obtain this very schema, and each of the vertical lines, once again, will be between a point *i* and not points *a, b, c, d*, but points *a', c', b''* and so on and so forth. And there you have the event, the event of the first line, the event of the second line, the event of the second line, the event of the third line. And here you have the event insofar as it is not exhausted by its accomplishment, and here instead you have the event insofar as it accomplishes itself in actualizing the state of things.

Yes. So, there's only one problem remaining, which is how to justify this vertical line from the point of view of time. What is this vertical line? What conception of time might it imply? If we discover that, we will have discovered everything we needed. That is to say, you see what I'm getting at... *it is at this level that we will be able to encounter direct time-images*, if we manage to deepen this vertical line. But at least we have seen the extent to which Péguy, it seems to me, had already grasped something of Bergson, something that is, that will be completely irreplaceable.

I have the feeling I've forgotten something very, very... important but I can't think what it is. Too bad.

So you've had enough, eh? If you want, you can speak next time. That way you'll have had time to reflect before you start speaking.

Student: [*Inaudible remarks*]

Deleuze: Yes, well, it's like you say. [*Laughter*] [*End of the recording*] [2:19:19]

Notes

¹ Charles Pierre Péguy (1873-1914) was a French poet, essayist and editor whose work, combining a frequently uneasy mix of socialist and nationalist ideas, made him a hero to both right and left. He was killed in battle in the early days of World War I. Among his most celebrated works are the long poem *Le Porche du Mystère de la Deuxième Vertu* (*The Portico of the Mystery of the Second Virtue*), *Clio. Dialogue de l'Histoire et de l'âme païenne*, *L'argent* and *Eve*.

² Variations of this scene are paraphrased both in the notes to *The Movement-Image*, where in the translation it is mistakenly attributed to one of Kierkegaard's early works, *The Concept of Dread* (which nonetheless contains a lengthy discussion on being "educated by possibility") and in *What Is Philosophy?* In actual fact, the episode, which Deleuze envisages here almost as if it were a scene in an Ibsen play, is reported in a somewhat less dramatic mode by Kierkegaard in *The Sickness unto Death*: "When someone faints, we call for water, eau de Cologne, smelling salts; but when someone wants to despair, then the word is: Get possibility, get possibility, possibility is the only salvation. A possibility – then the person in despair breathes again, he revives again, for without possibility a person seems unable to breathe".

³ Kierkegaard's idea of the knight of faith or the knight of the infinite is most fully discussed in *Fear and Trembling* but also appears in *Either/Or*.

⁴ Kierkegaard muses on the probable bourgeois guise of the knight of faith, and thus his unrecognizability, in a passage in *Fear and Trembling*: "As I said before, I have not found anyone like that; meanwhile, I may very well imagine him. Here he is. The acquaintance is made, I am introduced to him. The instant I first lay eyes on him, I set him apart at once; I jump back, clap my hands, and say half aloud, 'Good Lord, is this the man, is this really the one – he looks just like a tax collector!' But this is indeed the one. I move a little closer to him, watch his slightest movement to see if it reveals a bit of heterogeneous optical telegraphy from the infinite, a glance, a facial expression, a gesture, a sadness, a smile that would betray the infinite in its heterogeneity with the finite. No! I examine his figure from top to toe to see if there may not be a crack through which the infinite would peek. No! He is solid all the way through. His stance? It is vigorous, belongs entirely to finitude; no spruced-up burgher walking out to Fresberg on a Sunday afternoon treads the earth more solidly. He belongs entirely to the world; no bourgeois philistine could belong to it more. Nothing is detectable of that distant and aristocratic nature by which the knight of the infinite is recognized." See Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*, (Trans. Howard V. Hong & Edna H. Hong), Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983, pp. 38-39.

⁵ *Stages on Life's Way* quoted in *The Movement-Image*. "In *Stages on Life's Way* (Trans. Walter Laurie, 1940), it is the story of the accountant who goes mad for one hour a day, and seeks a law which could capitalise and fix resemblance: one day he was in a brothel, but retains no memory of what happened there, it is the possibility which makes him mad".

⁶ Here Deleuze is no doubt specifically referring to *Day of Wrath* (1943) where the paving effect is achieved through the insistent play of white collars and hats against jet black cloaks.

⁷ *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (Orig. *Le procès de Jeanne d'Arc*, 1962) is a film by Robert Bresson starring Florence Delay as Joan. The screenplay is drawn from the transcripts of Joan's actual trial and initial rehabilitation. Bresson, it should be noted, was not a great enthusiast of Dreyer's much acclaimed *Passion*.

⁸ *A Man Escaped or: The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth* (Orig. *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé ou Le vent souffle où il veut*, 1956) is a film by Robert Bresson based on the memoirs of André Devigny, a member of the French Resistance held in Montluc prison by the occupying Germans during World War II. The film follows the arduous and meticulous efforts of Fontaine, a prisoner of war (played by Francois Letterier), to escape his confinement.

⁹ *Pickpocket* (1959) is a film by Robert Bresson starring Martin LaSalle and Marika Green. It was Bresson's first original screenplay and centres on an occasional thief who falls in with a group of professional pickpocketers.

¹⁰ *Lancelot du Lac* (1974) is a film by Robert Bresson inspired by the medieval romances of Chrétien de Troyes and others around the figure of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table at Camelot. Featuring unknown actors in the key roles (including the painter Luc Simon and the future film producer Humbert Balsan), it retells the story of Lancelot's doomed courtly romance with Queen Guinevere as the order of Camelot, stricken by internal rivalries, crumbles.

¹¹ *Les dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945) is Robert Bresson's second film. In part a modern adaptation of Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste*, it stars Maria Casares, Elina Labourdette, Paul Bernard and Lucienne Bogaert.

¹² *L'argent* (1983) was Bresson's last film. Loosely inspired by the first part of Leo Tolstoy's 1911 novella *The False Coupon*, the story concerns how the lives of two men, Yvon (an electrical worker) and Lucien (the assistant in a photography shop) become intertwined in the wake of a false banknote being used to pay for a picture frame. By bearing false witness when Yvon is wrongly accused of the fraud, Lucien becomes responsible for Yvon's descent into a life of crime but his attempts to repair the damage by helping Yvon escape from prison lead implacably to tragedy.

¹³ See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I & II*, (Ed. And Trans. Stuart Atkins), Princeton: Princeton UP, Part I, Lines 1385-1412.

¹⁴ In the Atkins translation Mephistopheles' reply is as follows: "For demons and for spectres there's a rule: where they've got in is where they must go out. The former's up to us, the latter's not in our control."

¹⁵ See Session 21 of the Cinema 2 seminar, note 24.

¹⁶ Lev Isaakovich Shestov (1866-1938) was a Russian existentialist and religious philosopher, best known for his critiques of both philosophic rationalism and scientism. His works include studies on Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard.

¹⁷ See Lev Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem*, (Trans. Bernard Martin) Athens, Ohio UP, 1966. In the foreword Shestov writes: "The task which I have set for myself in this book, *Athens and Jerusalem*, consists in putting to proof the pretensions to the possession of truth which human reason or speculative philosophy make.

Knowledge is not here recognized as the supreme goal of man. Knowledge does not justify being; on the contrary, it is from being that it must obtain its justification. Man wishes to think in the categories in which he lives, and not to live in the categories in which he has become accustomed to think: the tree of knowledge no longer chokes the tree of life."

¹⁸ See *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, "G comme Gauche", where Deleuze explains why he didn't join the Communist Party.

¹⁹ *Gertrud* (1964) was Dreyer's last film. Based on the 1906 play of the same name by Hjalmar Söderberg, it stars Nina Pens Rode in the title role as a woman who goes through several relations with different men (an arrogant poet, her ambitious politician husband and a philandering young pianist), each of whom turn out to be disappointing in different ways but none of whom are able to blunt the absolute faith in and capacity for love that sustains her throughout her life.

²⁰ On style in Péguy, see also *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, "S for Style". An interesting comparison can be made between Deleuze's description here of Péguy's style and that offered by André Gide: "Péguy's style is like that of very ancient litanies. It is like Arab chants, like the monotonous chants of heath and moor; it is comparable to the desert; a desert of esparto, a desert of sand, a desert of stone... Péguy's style is like the pebbles of the desert which follow and resemble each other so closely, one so much like the other, but yet a tiny bit different; and with a difference which corrects itself, recovers possession of itself, repeats itself, seems to repeat itself, stresses itself, and always more clearly." See Andre Gide, *Nouveaux Pretextes: Réflexions sur quelques points de littérature et de morale*, Paris: Mercure de France, 1918.

²¹ Though the tape is interrupted at this point, here is the whole of the passage Deleuze quotes from: "One can say", she says, "that inscription and recollection are... at right angles", she says, "that they are inclined at ninety degrees with respect to one another. History is essentially longitudinal, memory essentially vertical. History essentially consists of passing along the event. Being inside the event, memory essentially and above all consists of not leaving it, staying in it and going back through it from within. Memory and history form a right angle. History is parallel to the event, memory is central and axial to it. History slides, so to speak, on a longitudinal groove..." See also *The Time-Image*, p.297 note 3.

²² See Charles Péguy, *Clio, Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris: Gallimard, NRF, 1916, Volume IV, pp. 285-286.

²³ The term "protention" comes from Husserl who theorizes it in relation to memory: "Every memory contains expectation-intentions whose fulfilment leads to the present. Every process that constitutes its object originally is animated by protentions that emptily constitute what is coming as coming, that catch it and bring it toward fulfilment. However, the recollective process does not merely renew these protentions memorially. They are not only there in the process of catching what is coming; they have also caught it. They have been fulfilled, and we are conscious of this in the recollection". See E. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of The Consciousness of Internal Time*, (Trans. John Barnett Brough), Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic, 1991, p. 54.

²⁴ See Charles Péguy, *Ève*, in *Oeuvres de Poésie 1873-1914*, Paris: Gallimard, NRF, 1925.

²⁵ See *Clio*, op. cit. p. 269. Deleuze comments on this passage and the previous one in session 4 of the seminar Cinema 2, and on these axes and the event see *The Time Image*, p. 297, note 3.

²⁶ On actualization, see session 4 of the Cinema 2 seminar, December 7, 1982.

²⁷ See session 4 of the Cinema 2 seminar, December 7, 1982.

²⁸ In his essay, "The Solitude of Péguy", Maurice Blanchot speaks of the way Péguy is haunted by presentiments of an unrealised future, noting for example how shortly before his death he referred to himself in the third person and in the past tense: "In one of his last writings, *L'Argent suite [Money, continued]*, in the

course of a long examination of sin and grace, he suddenly used the following phrase: ‘That is what Péguy said when he said that by the creation of the freedom of man...’ What does this verb in the past tense mean, this mysterious intervention of an already impersonal Péguy? One might say that having all his life gotten ahead of duration, he had finally crossed the line of time and now, close to the end, he is obliged to look backward to see himself, perceiving the man that he still is in the form of a past that no longer exists.” See Maurice Blanchot, *Faux Pas*, (Trans. Charlotte Mandell), Stanford: Stanford UP, pp. 279-283.

²⁹ On the Aternel, see session 4 of the same seminar, and also *What Is Philosophy?* pp. 111- 113.

³⁰ Deleuze reproduces this schema by Bergson in *The Time-Image*, p. 297, note 3.