

just by putting words together, combining phrases, using ideas. You have to open up words, break things open, to free earth's vectors. All writers, all creators, are shadows. How can anyone write a biography of Proust or Kafka? Once you start writing, shadows are more substantial than bodies. Truth is producing existence. It's not something in your head but something existing. Writers generate real bodies. In Pessoa they're imaginary people—but not so very imaginary, because he gives them each a way of writing, operating. But the key thing is that it's not Pessoa who's doing what they're doing. You don't get very far in literature with the system "I've seen a lot and been lots of places," where the author first does things and then tells us about them. Narcissism in authors is awful, because shadows can't be narcissistic. No more interviews, then. What's really terrible isn't having to cross a desert once you're old and patient enough, but for young writers to be born in a desert, because they're then in danger of seeing their efforts come to nothing before they even get going. And yet, and yet, it's impossible for the new race of writers, already preparing their work and their styles, not to be born.

Conversation with Antoine Dulaure and Claire Parnet
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ON PHILOSOPHY

You're publishing a new book, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque. Can you retrace the path that, setting out from your study of Hume (Empiricism and Subjectivity, 1953), brings you now to Leibniz? Taking your books chronologically, one might say that after an initial phase devoted to work on the history of philosophy, culminating perhaps in the Nietzsche of 1962, you worked out in Difference and Repetition (1969) and then in the two volumes of Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1972–1980), written with Félix Guattari, your own philosophy, whose style is anything but academic. You now, having written on painting (Bacon, 1981) and Cinema [1983–1985], seem to be returning to a more traditional approach to philosophy. Do you recognize yourself in such a progression? Should we take your work as a whole, as unitary? Or do you see in it, rather, breaks, transformations?

Three periods, not bad going. Yes, I did begin with books on the history of philosophy, but all the authors I dealt with had for me something in common. And it all tended toward the great Spinoza-Nietzsche equation.

The history of philosophy isn't a particularly reflective discipline. It's rather like portraiture in painting. Producing mental, conceptual portraits. As in painting, you have to create a likeness, but in a different material: the likeness is something you have to produce, rather than a way of reproducing anything (which comes down to just

repeating what a philosopher says). Philosophers introduce new concepts, they explain them, but they don't tell us, not completely anyway, the problems to which those concepts are a response. Hume, for example, sets out a novel concept of belief, but he doesn't tell us how and why the problem of knowledge presents itself in such a way that knowledge is seen as a particular kind of belief. The history of philosophy, rather than repeating what a philosopher says, has to say what he must have taken for granted, what he didn't say but is nonetheless present in what he did say.

Philosophy is always a matter of inventing concepts. I've never been worried about going beyond metaphysics or any death of philosophy. The function of philosophy, still thoroughly relevant, is to create concepts. Nobody else can take over that function. Philosophy has of course always had its rivals, from Plato's "rivals" through to Zarathustra's clown. These days, information technology, communications, and advertising are taking over the words "concept" and "creative," and these "conceptualists" constitute an arrogant breed that reveals the activity of selling to be capitalism's supreme thought, the *cogito* of the marketplace. Philosophy feels small and lonely confronting such forces, but the only way it's going to die is by choking with laughter.

Philosophy's no more communicative than it's contemplative or reflective: it is by nature creative or even revolutionary, because it's always creating new concepts. **The only constraint is that these should have a necessity, as well as an unfamiliarity, and they have both to the extent they're a response to real problems.** Concepts are what stops thought being a mere opinion, a view, an exchange of views, gossip. **Any concept is bound to be a paradox.** A philosophy is what Félix Guattari and I tried to produce in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, especially in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which is a long book putting forward many concepts. We weren't collaborating, we just did one book and then we did another, each "a" book not in the sense of a unity, but of an indefinite article. We each had a past and earlier work behind us: his was in psychiatry, politics, and philosophy, already crammed with concepts, and mine was *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. But we didn't collaborate like two different people. We were more like two streams coming together to make "a" third stream, which I suppose was us. One of the questions about "philosophy," after all, has always been what to make of the *philos*. A philoso-

phy amounted for me, then, to a sort of second period that would never have begun or got anywhere without Félix.

Then let's suppose there's a third period when I worked on painting and cinema: images, on the face of it. But I was writing philosophy books. You see, **I think concepts involve two other dimensions, percepts and affects.** That's what interests me, not images. Percepts aren't perceptions, they're **packets of sensations and relations that live on independently** of whoever experiences them. Affects aren't feelings, they're **becomings that spill over** beyond whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else). The great English and American novelists often write in percepts, and Kleist and Kafka in affects. Affects, percepts, and concepts are three inseparable forces, running from art into philosophy and from philosophy into art. The trickiest case, obviously, is music; an analysis is sketched out in *A Thousand Plateaus*: the ritornello¹ involves all three forces. We tried to make the ritornello one of our main concepts, relating it to territory and Earth, the little and the great ritornello. Ultimately all these periods lead into one another and get mixed up, as I now see better with this book on Leibniz or the Fold. It would be better to talk about what I want to do next.

We've got plenty of time. Can't we first talk about your life? Isn't there some relation between bibliography and biography?

Academics' lives are seldom interesting. They travel of course, but they travel by hot air, by taking part in things like conferences and discussions, by talking, endlessly talking. Intellectuals are wonderfully cultivated, they have views on everything. I'm not an intellectual, because I can't supply views like that, I've got no stock of views to draw on. What I know, I know only from something I'm actually working on, and if I come back to something a few years later, I have to learn everything all over again. It's really good not having any view or idea about this or that point. We don't suffer these days from any lack of communication, but rather from all the forces making us say things when we've nothing much to say. Traveling is going somewhere else to say something and coming back to say something here. Unless one doesn't come back, and settles down in the other place. So I'm not

very keen on traveling; you shouldn't move around too much, or you'll stifle becoming. I was struck by a sentence of Toynbee's: "The nomads are the ones who don't move on, they become nomads because they refuse to disappear."

If you want to apply bio-bibliographical criteria to me, I confess I wrote my first book fairly early on, and then produced nothing more for eight years. I know what I was doing, where and how I lived during those years, but I know it only abstractly, rather as if someone else was relating memories that I believe but don't really have. It's like a hole in my life, an eight-year hole. That's what I find interesting in people's lives, the holes, the gaps, sometimes dramatic, but sometimes not dramatic at all. There are catalepsies, or a kind of sleepwalking through a number of years, in most lives. Maybe it's in these holes that movement takes place. Because the real question is how to make a move, how to get through the wall, so you don't keep on banging your head against it. Maybe by not moving around too much, not talking too much, avoiding false moves, staying in places devoid of memory. There's a fine short story by Fitzgerald, in which someone's walking around a town with a ten-year hole. There's the opposite too: not holes, but an excess of memory, extraneous floating memories you can no longer place or identify (that did happen, but when?). You don't know what to do with that kind of memory, it gets in your way. Was I seven, fourteen, forty? Those are the two interesting things in someone's life, amnesias and hypermnesias.

This criticism of talking is one you direct against television in particular. You've expressed your feelings about this in the preface you wrote for Serge Daney's book, Ciné-Journal. But how do philosophers communicate, how should they communicate? Philosophers since Plato have written books, expressed themselves in books. They still do, but these days one sees a difference emerging between two sorts of people we call, or who call themselves, philosophers: there are the ones that teach, who go on teaching, have chairs in universities, and think that's important. And there are the ones that don't teach, perhaps even refuse to teach, but try to make their mark in the media: the "new philosophers." We have to put you, it seems, in the first category—you've even produced a "tract" against the "new philosophers." What does giving courses mean to you? What's so special about it?

Giving courses has been a major part of my life, in which I've been passionately involved. It's not like giving individual lectures, because courses have to be carried on over a long period with a relatively fixed audience, sometimes for a number of years. It's like a research laboratory: you give courses on what you're investigating, not on what you know. It takes a lot of preparatory work to get a few minutes of inspiration. I was ready to stop when I saw it was taking more and more preparation to get a more taxing inspiration. And the future's bleak because it's becoming more and more difficult to do research in French universities.

A course is a kind of *Sprechgesang*, closer to music than to theater. Indeed there's nothing in principle to stop courses being a bit like a rock concert. It must be said that Vincennes (and it was the same after we'd been forcibly transferred to Saint-Denis) provided exceptional conditions. In philosophy, we rejected the principle of "building up knowledge" progressively: there were the same courses for first-year and nth-year students, for students and nonstudents, philosophers and nonphilosophers, young and old, and many different nationalities. There were always young painters and musicians there, filmmakers, architects, who showed great rigor in their thinking. They were long sessions, nobody took in everything, but everyone took what they needed or wanted, what they could use, even if it was far removed from their own discipline. There was a period marked by abrupt interventions, often schizophrenic, from those present, then there was the taping phase, with everyone watching their cassettes, but even then there were interventions from one week to the next in the form of little notes I got, sometimes anonymously.

I never told that audience what they meant to me, what they gave me. Nothing could have been more unlike a discussion, and philosophy has absolutely nothing to do with discussing things, it's difficult enough just understanding the problem someone's framing and how they're framing it, **all you should ever do is explore it, play around with the terms, add something, relate it to something else, never discuss it.**² It was like an echo chamber, a feedback loop, in which an idea reappeared after going, as it were, through various filters. It was there that I realized how much philosophy needs not only a philosophical understanding, through concepts, but a nonphilosophical understanding, rooted in percepts and affects. You need both. Philosophy

has an essential and positive relation to nonphilosophy: it speaks directly to nonphilosophers. Take the most remarkable case, Spinoza: the absolute philosopher, whose *Ethics* is the foremost book on concepts. But this purest of philosophers also speaks to everyone: anyone can read the *Ethics* if they're prepared to be swept up in its wind, its fire. Or take Nietzsche. You can, on the other hand, get too much knowledge taking all the life out of philosophy. Nonphilosophical understanding isn't inadequate or provisional, it's one of philosophy's two sides, one of its two wings.

In the preface to Difference and Repetition, you say: "The time is approaching when it will hardly be possible to write a philosophy book in the way people have for so long written them." You add that the search for these new means of philosophical expression, begun by Nietzsche, should be pursued in conjunction with the development of "certain other arts," like theater or film. You cite Borges as a model for your approach to the history of philosophy (a model Foucault had already invoked for his own project in the introduction to The Order of Things). Twelve years later, you say of the fifteen "plateaus" of A Thousand Plateaus that one can read them more or less independently of each other, except that the conclusion should be read at the end—the conclusion throughout which you stick the numbers of the preceding plateaus in a crazy carousel. As though you felt you had to embrace both order and disorder without surrendering either. How do you see this question of philosophical style these days, this question of the architecture, the composition, of a philosophy book? And what, from that perspective, does it mean to write a book with someone else? Writing with someone else is something very unusual in the history of philosophy, especially when it's not a dialogue. How, why, do you do it? How did you go about it? What made you do it? And who's the author of these books? Do they even have an author?

Great philosophers are great stylists too. **Style in philosophy is the movement of concepts.** This movement's only present, of course, in the sentences, but the sole point of the sentences is to give it life, a life of its own. Style is a set of variations in language, a modulation, and a straining of one's whole language toward something outside it. Philosophy's like a novel: you have to ask "What's going to happen?," "What's happened?" Except **the characters are concepts**, and the set-

tings, the scenes, are space-times. One's always writing to **bring something to life**, to free life from where it's trapped, to trace lines of flight. The language for doing that can't be a homogeneous system, it's something unstable, always heterogeneous, in which style carves differences of potential between which things can pass,³ come to pass, a spark can flash and break out of language itself, to make us see and think what was lying in the shadow around the words, things we were hardly aware existed. Two things work against style: homogeneous language or, conversely, a heterogeneity so great that it becomes indifferent, gratuitous, and nothing definite passes between its poles. Between a main and a subordinate clause there should be a tension, a kind of zigzagging, even—particularly—when the sentence seems quite straightforward. **There's style when the words produce sparks leaping between them, even over great distances.**

Given that, writing with someone else presents no particular problem, quite the reverse. There'd be a problem if we were precisely two persons, each with his own life, his own views, setting out to collaborate with each other and discuss things. When I said Félix and I were rather like two streams, what I meant was that individuation doesn't have to be personal. We're not at all sure we're persons: a draft, a wind, a day, a time of day, a stream, a place, a battle, an illness all have a nonpersonal individuality. They have proper names. We call them "hecceities." They combine like two streams, two rivers. They express themselves in language, carving differences in it, but language gives each its own individual life and gets things passing between them. If you speak like most people on the level of opinions, you say "me, I'm a person," just as you say "the sun's rising." But we're not convinced that's definitely the right concept. Félix and I, and many others like us, don't feel we're persons exactly. Our individuality is rather that of events, which isn't making any grand claim, given that hecceities can be modest and microscopic. I've tried in all my books to discover the nature of events; it's a philosophical concept, the only one capable of ousting the verb "to be" and attributes. From this viewpoint, writing with someone else becomes completely natural. It's just a question of something passing through you, a current, which alone has a proper name. Even when you think you're writing on your own, you're always doing it with someone else you can't always name.

In *The Logic of Sense* I attempted a kind of serial composition. But A

Thousand Plateaus is more complex: "plateau" isn't a metaphor, you see, they're zones of continuous variation, or like watchtowers surveying or scanning their own particular areas, and signaling to each other. A sort of Indian or Genoese pattern.⁴ This is the nearest we come to a style, that is, to a polytonality.

Literature is everywhere present in your work, running parallel, almost, to the philosophy: the essay on Sacher-Masoch, the little book on Proust (which got bigger and bigger), a large part of The Logic of Sense, both in the body of the work (on Lewis Carroll) and the supplementary material (on Klossowski, Michel Tournier, Zola), the book on Kafka written with Guattari and following on from Anti-Oedipus, a chapter of your Dialogues with Claire Parnet (on the "superiority of Anglo-American literature"), considerable fragments of A Thousand Plateaus. It's a long list. And yet this doesn't lead to anything comparable to what we find principally in your books on cinema, but also in The Logic of Sensation: the ordering, rationalizing, of an art form, of a medium of expression. Is that because literature's too close to philosophy, to the very form of its expression, so it can only inflect and accompany the movement of your thought as a whole? Or are there other reasons?

I don't know, I don't recognize that difference. I've dreamed about bringing together a series of studies under the general title "Essays Critical and Clinical." That's not to say that great authors, great artists, are all ill, however sublimely, or that one's looking for a sign of neurosis or psychosis like a secret in their work, the hidden code of their work. They're not ill; on the contrary, they're a rather special kind of doctor. Why has Masoch given his name to a perversion as old as the world? Not because he "suffered" from it, but because he transformed the symptoms, he set out a novel picture of it by making the contract its primary sign and also by linking masochistic practices to the place of ethnic minorities in society and the role of women in those minorities: masochism becomes an act of resistance, inseparable from a minority sense of humor. Masoch's a great symptomatologist. In Proust it's not memory he's exploring, it's all the different kinds of signs, whose natures have to be discovered by looking at their setting, the way they're emitted, their matter, their system. The *Recherche* is a general semiology, a symptomatology of different worlds. Kafka's

work is a diagnosis of all the diabolical powers around us. As Nietzsche said, artists and philosophers are civilization's doctors. It's hardly surprising that, if they consider it at all, they're not particularly interested in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is so reductive in the secrets it pursues, so misunderstands signs and symptoms; everything comes down to what Lawrence called "the dirty little secret."

It's not just a matter of diagnosis. Signs imply ways of living, possibilities of existence, they're the symptoms of life gushing forth or draining away. But a drained life or a personal life isn't enough for an artist. You don't write with your ego, your memory, and your illnesses. In the act of writing there's an attempt to make life something more than personal, to free life from what imprisons it. The artist or philosopher often has slender, frail health, a weak constitution, a shaky hold on things: look at Spinoza, Nietzsche, Lawrence. Yet it's not death that breaks them, but seeing, experiencing, thinking too much life. Life overwhelms them, yet it's in them that "the sign is at hand"—at the close of *Zarathustra*, in the fifth book of the *Ethics*. You write with a view to an unborn people that doesn't yet have a language. Creating isn't communicating but resisting. There's a profound link between signs, events, life, and vitalism: the power of nonorganic life that can be found in a line that's drawn, a line of writing, a line of music. It's organisms that die, not life. Any work of art points a way through for life, finds a way through the cracks. Everything I've written is vitalistic, at least I hope it is, and amounts to a theory of signs and events. I don't think the problem takes a different form in literature than in the other arts, it's just that I haven't had the chance to do the book I'd like to have done about literature.

Psychoanalysis still runs through, underpins, albeit in a strange way, Difference and Repetition and The Logic of Sense. From Anti-Oedipus, the first volume of Capitalism and Schizophrenia, onward, it patently becomes an enemy to be toppled. But on a still deeper level it remains from that point on the prime outlook we have to get rid of if we're to think something new, to think anew, almost. How did this come about? And why was Anti-Oedipus the first major philosophy book to come out of what happened in May 68, perhaps its first real philosophical manifesto? For the book says, right at the start, that the future doesn't lie in some Freudo-Marxist synthesis. It frees us from

Freud (from Lacan and his structures), rather as some people thought the "new philosophers" would soon free us from Marx (and the Revolution). How do you see what thus seems a striking analogy?

Oddly enough, it wasn't me who rescued Félix from psychoanalysis; he rescued me. In my study on Masoch, and then in *The Logic of Sense*, I thought I'd discovered things about the specious unity of sadism and masochism, or about events, that contradicted psychoanalysis but could be reconciled with it. Félix, on the other hand, had been and was still a psychoanalyst, a student of Lacan's but like a "son" who already knew that reconciliation was impossible. *Anti-Oedipus* marks a break that followed directly from two principles: **the unconscious isn't a theater but a factory, a productive machine, and the unconscious isn't playing around all the time with mummy and daddy but with races, tribes, continents, history, and geography, always some social frame.** We were trying to find an immanent conception, an immanent way of working with the syntheses of the unconscious, a productivism or constructivism of the unconscious. And we came to see that psychoanalysis had no understanding at all of the meaning of indefinite articles ("a" child . . .), becomings (becoming-animal, our relation to animals), desires, utterances. Our last piece on psychoanalysis was something we wrote about the Wolf-Man in *A Thousand Plateaus*, showing how psychoanalysis is unable to think **plurality or multiplicity, a pack rather than a lone wolf, a pile of bones rather than a single bone.**

We saw psychoanalysis as a fantastic project to lead desire up blind alleys and stop people saying what they wanted to say. A project directed against life, a song of death, law, and castration, a thirsting after transcendence, a priesthood, a psychology (all psychology being priestly). If our book was significant, coming after '68, it's because it broke with attempts at Freudo-Marxism: we weren't trying to articulate or reconcile different dimensions but trying rather to find a single basis for a production that was at once social and desiring in a logic of flows. *Délire* was at work in reality, we saw only reality all around us, taking the imaginary and the symbolic to be illusory categories.

Anti-Oedipus was about the univocity of the real, a sort of Spinozism of the unconscious. And I think '68 was this discovery itself. The people who hate '68, or say it was a mistake, see it as something symbolic or imaginary. But that's precisely what it wasn't, it was pure reality

breaking through. I don't, at any rate, see the slightest analogy between what *Anti-Oedipus* did with Freud and what the "new philosophers" have been doing with Marx. I find the very suggestion shocking. If *Anti-Oedipus* seeks to criticize psychoanalysis, it's in terms of a conception of the unconscious that, whether right or wrong, is set out in the book. Whereas the new philosophers, denouncing Marx, don't begin to present any new analysis of capital, which mysteriously drops out of consideration in their work; they just denounce the Stalinist political and ethical consequences they take to follow from Marx. They're more like the people who attributed immoral consequences to Freud's work: it's nothing to do with philosophy.

You're always invoking immanence: what seems most characteristic in your thought is that it doesn't depend on lack or negation, systematically banishing any appeal to transcendence, in whatever form. One wants to ask: Is that really true, and how can it be? Particularly since, despite this generalized immanence, your concepts always remain partial and local. From The Logic of Sense on, it seems you've always been at pains to produce a whole battery of concepts for each new book. One does of course notice concepts migrating, intersecting. But, on the whole, the vocabulary of the books on cinema isn't that of The Logic of Sensation, which is different again from that of Capitalism and Schizophrenia, and so on. As though, rather than being reworked as they're explained, refined, ramified, and consolidated in relation to one another, so to speak, your concepts had each time to form a distinct grouping, a specific plane of invention. Does that imply they're not amenable to being brought together into any overall scheme? Or is it just a question of opening things up as far as possible, without presupposing anything? And how does that fit in with immanence?

Setting out a plane of immanence, tracing out a field of immanence, is something all the authors I've worked on have done (even Kant—by denouncing any transcendent application of the syntheses of the imagination, although he sticks to possible experience rather than real experimentation). Abstractions explain nothing, they themselves have to be explained: there are no such things as universals, there's nothing transcendent, no Unity, subject (or object), Reason; there are only processes, sometimes unifying, subjectifying, rationalizing, but just processes all the same. These processes are at work in con-

crete "multiplicities," multiplicity is the real element in which things happen. It's multiplicities that fill the field of immanence, rather as tribes fill the desert without it ceasing to be a desert. And the plane of immanence has to be constructed, immanence is constructivism, any given multiplicity is like one area of the plane. All processes take place on the plane of immanence, and within a given multiplicity: unifications, subjectifications, rationalizations, centralizations have no special status; they often amount to an impasse or closing off that prevents the multiplicity's growth, the extension and unfolding of its lines, the production of something new.

When you invoke something transcendent you arrest movement, introducing interpretations instead of experimenting. Bellour has shown very well how this happens in cinema, in the flow of images. And interpretation is in fact always carried out with reference to something that's supposed to be missing. Unity is precisely what's missing from multiplicity, just as the subject's what's missing from events ("it's raining"). Of course, things *are* sometimes missing, but it's always to do with something abstract, some transcendent viewpoint, if only that of a Self, when you can't construct the plane of immanence. Processes are becomings, and aren't to be judged by some final result but by the way they proceed and their power to continue, as with animal becomings, or nonsubjective individuations. That's why we contrasted rhizomes with trees—trees, or rather arborescent processes, being temporary limits that block rhizomes and their transformations for a while. There are no universals, only singularities. Concepts aren't universals but sets of singularities that each extend into the neighborhood of one of the other singularities.

Let's go back to the ritornello as an example of a concept: it's related to territory. You get ritornellos in any territory, marking it out; and then others when you're trying to find your way back to it, afraid at night; and still others to do with leaving: "Farewell . . ." That already differentiates three stances, so to speak. And the ritornello thus expresses the tension between a territory and something deeper, the Earth. But then the Earth is the Deterritorialized, it can't be separated from a process of deterritorialization that is its aberrant motion. Take any set of singularities leading on from one another, and you have a concept directly related to an event: a lied. A song rises, approaches, or fades away. That's what it's like on the plane of imma-

nence: multiplicities fill it, singularities connect with one another, processes or becomings unfold, intensities rise and fall.

I see philosophy as a logic of multiplicities (I feel, on this point, close to Michel Serres). **Creating concepts is constructing some area in the plane, adding a new area to existing ones, exploring a new area, filling in what's missing.** Concepts are composites, amalgams of lines, curves. If new concepts have to be brought in all the time, it's just because the plane of immanence has to be constructed area by area, constructed locally, going from one point to the next. That's why it comes in bursts: in *A Thousand Plateaus* each plateau was supposed to be that sort of burst. But that doesn't mean they can't be taken up again and treated systematically. Quite the reverse: a concept's power comes from the way it's repeated, as one area links up with another. And this linkage is an essential, ceaseless activity: the world as a patchwork. So your twin impression of a single plane of immanence, and concepts on the other hand that are always local, is quite right.

What for me takes the place of reflection is constructionism. And what takes the place of communication is a kind of expressionism. Expressionism in philosophy finds its high point in Spinoza and Leibniz. I think I've found a **concept of the Other**, by defining it as neither an object nor a subject (an other subject) but the **expression of a possible world**. Someone with a toothache, and a Japanese man walking in the road, express possible worlds. Then they start talking: someone tells me about Japan, it might even be the Japanese man who tells me about Japan, he might even be speaking Japanese: language thus confers reality on the possible world as such, the reality of the possible as something possible (if I go to Japan, on the other hand, then it's no longer something possible). Including possible worlds in the plane of immanence, even in this very sketchy way, makes expressionism the counterpart of constructionism.

But why this need to create new concepts? Is there any "progress" in philosophy? How would you define what it needs to do, why we need it, and even its "program" these days?

I think there's an image of thought that changes a lot, that's changed a lot through history. By the image of thought I don't mean its

method but something deeper that's always taken for granted, a system of coordinates, dynamics, orientations: what it means to think, and to "orient oneself in thought."⁵ However one sees it, we're on the plane of immanence; but should we go around erecting vertical axes and trying to stand up straight or, rather, stretch out, run out along the horizon,⁶ keep pushing the plane further out? And what sort of verticality do we want, one that gives us something to contemplate or one that makes us reflect or communicate? Or should we just get rid of all verticality as transcendent and lie down hugging the earth, without looking, without reflecting, cut off from communication? And then, have we got a friend with us, or are we all alone, Me = Me, or are we lovers, or something else again, and what are the risks of betraying oneself, being betrayed, or betraying someone else? Doesn't there come a time to distrust even one's friend? How should we understand the *philos* in philosophy? Does it mean different things in Plato and in Blanchot's book *L'Amitié*, even though it relates to thinking in both cases? From Empedocles on, there's a whole dramaturgy of thought.

The image of thought is what philosophy as it were presupposes; it precedes philosophy, not a nonphilosophical understanding this time but a prephilosophical understanding. There are lots of people for whom thinking's just "a bit of discussion." OK, it's a stupid image, but even stupid people have an image of thought, and it's only by bringing out these images that we can determine philosophy's preconditions. Do we, for instance, have the same image of thought that Plato, or even Descartes or Kant, had? Doesn't the image change in response to overriding constraints that express, of course, extrinsic determinants, but above all express a becoming of thought? Can we, flailing around in confusion, still claim to be seeking truth?

It's the image of thought that guides the creation of concepts. It cries out, so to speak, whereas concepts are like songs. On the question of progress in philosophy, you have to say the sort of thing Robbe-Grillet says about the novel: there's no point at all doing philosophy the way Plato did, not because we've superseded Plato but because you can't supersede Plato, and it makes no sense to have another go at what he's done for all time. There's only one choice: doing the history of philosophy, or transplanting bits of Plato into problems that are no longer Platonic ones.

One might call this study of images of thought "noology" and see it as the prolegomena to philosophy. It's what *Difference and Repetition* is really about, the nature of the postulates of the image of thought. And the question runs right through *The Logic of Sense*, where height, depth, and surface are taken as the coordinates of thinking; I come back to it in *Proust and Signs*, because Proust confronts the Greek image with all the power of signs; then I come to it again, with Félix, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, because the rhizome's the image of thought that spreads out beneath the tree image. We've got no model for dealing with this question, no guide even, but there is something to which we can constantly refer and relate it: what we know about the brain.

There's a special relation between philosophy and neurology, which comes out in the associationists, in Schopenhauer, in Bergson. Our current inspiration doesn't come from computers but from the microbiology of the brain: the brain's organized like a rhizome, more like grass than a tree, "an uncertain system,"⁷ with probabilistic, semi-aleatory, quantum mechanisms. It's not that our thinking starts from what we know about the brain but that any new thought traces uncharted channels directly through its matter, twisting, folding, fissuring it. It's amazing how Michaux does this. New connections, new pathways, new synapses, that's what philosophy calls into play as it creates concepts, but this whole image is something of which the biology of the brain, in its own way, is discovering an objective material likeness, or the material working.

Something that's interested me in cinema is the way the screen can work as a brain, as in Resnais's films, or Syberberg's. Cinema doesn't just operate by linking things through rational cuts, but by relinking them through irrational cuts too: this gives two different images of thought. What was interesting about pop videos at the outset was the sense you got that some were using connections and breaks that didn't belong to the waking world, but not to dream either, or even nightmare. For a moment they bordered on something connected with thought. This is all I'm saying: there's a hidden image of thought that, as it unfolds, branches out, and mutates, inspires a need to keep on creating new concepts, not through any external determinism but through a becoming that carries the problems themselves along with it.

Your last book was devoted to Foucault. Were you doing history of philosophy? Why Foucault? What are the relations between your two philosophies? You already introduced the notion of the fold in the Foucault book. Is there some relation between Foucault and Leibniz?

Foucault's a great philosopher, an amazing stylist too. He mapped out knowledge and power in a new way and traced specific relations between them. Philosophy takes on, in him, a new sense. Then he introduced **processes of subjectification** as a third dimension of his "apparatuses," as a third distinct term that provides a new approach to forms of knowledge and articulates powers in a new way, thereby opening up a whole theory and history of ways of existing: Greek subjectification, Christian subjectifications . . . his method rejects universals to discover the processes, always singular, at work in multiplicities. What's influenced me most is his theory of utterance, because it involves conceiving language as a heterogeneous and unstable aggregate and allows one to think about how new types of utterance come to be formed in all fields. The importance of his "literary" work, his literary and artistic criticism, will come out only when all his articles are collected; his text on *The Life of Infamous Men*, for example, is a beautiful comic masterpiece; there is in Foucault something close to Chekhov.

The book I did wasn't about the history of philosophy, it's something I wanted to do with him, with the idea I have of him and my admiration for him. If there was any poetry in the book, one might see it as what poets call a *tombeau*.⁸ I differed from him only on very minor things: what he called an apparatus, and what Félix and I called arrangements, have different coordinates, because he was establishing novel historical sequences, while we put more emphasis on geographical elements, territoriality and movements of deterritorialization. **We were always rather keen on universal history, which he detested.** But being able to follow what he was doing provided me with essential corroboration. He was often misunderstood, which didn't get in his way but did worry him. People were afraid of him, that's to say his mere existence was enough to stop idiots braying. **Foucault fulfilled the function of philosophy as defined by Nietzsche: being bad for stupidity.** Thinking, with him, is like diving down and always bringing something back up to the surface. A thought that

folds this way and that, then suddenly bursts open like a spring. I don't in fact think he was particularly influenced by Leibniz. Although there's a remark in Leibniz that applies particularly well to him: "I thought I'd reached port, but found myself thrown back onto the open sea." Thinkers like Foucault advance by lurching from one crisis to another, there's something seismic about them.

The last approach opened up by Foucault is particularly rich: processes of subjectification are nothing to do with "private lives" but characterize the way individuals and communities are constituted as subjects on the margins of established forms of knowledge and instituted powers, even if they thereby open the way for new kinds of knowledge and power. **Subjectification** thus appears as a middle term between knowledge and power, **a perpetual "dislocation,"** a sort of fold, a folding or enfolding. Foucault finds the initial movement of subjectification, in the West at least, with the Greeks, at the point where free men imagine they have to "master themselves" if they want to be able to govern others. But subjectification takes many different forms, which explains Foucault's interest in a Christianity permeated by these processes on an individual and collective level (hermits, religious orders and communities), not to mention heresies and reforms, with self-mastery no longer the guiding principle. One might even say that in many social formations it's not the masters but rather those excluded from society who constitute foci of subjectification: the freed slave, for example, who complains he's lost any social role in the established order, and opens the way for new kinds of power. Plaintive voices are very important, not just poetically but historically and socially, because they express a movement of subjectification ("poor me . . ."): there's a whole order of elegiac subjectivity. Subjects are born quite as much from misery as from triumph. Foucault was fascinated by the movements of subjectification taking shape in our present-day societies: what modern processes are currently at work producing subjectivity? Thus, when people talk about Foucault returning to the subject, they're completely missing the problem he's addressing. Here again, there's no point arguing with them.

One does indeed find scraps of universal history in Anti-Oedipus, with the distinction between coded societies, overcoding States, and capitalism decod-

ing flows. You then return to this theme in A Thousand Plateaus, introducing an opposition between nomadic war machines and sedentary states: you set out a "nomadology." But do any political stances follow from this? You belonged, with Foucault, to the Prison Information Group; you sponsored Coluche's standing for president;⁹ you came out in support of the Palestinians. But since the aftermath of '68 you seem, especially compared with Guattari, to have fallen rather "silent." You've taken no part in the human rights movement, or philosophical debate about the constitutional state.¹⁰ Is this a matter of choice, or reticence, or disillusion? Doesn't the philosopher have a role to play in society?

If you're talking about establishing new forms of transcendence, new universals, restoring a reflective subject as the bearer of rights, or setting up a communicative intersubjectivity, then it's not much of a philosophical advance. People want to produce "consensus," but consensus is an ideal that guides opinion, and has nothing to do with philosophy. A sort of philosophy-as-marketing, often directed against the USSR. Ewald's shown that you need more than just a legally constituted subject to have human rights, that you have to confront juridical problems that are in themselves very interesting. And in many cases the states that trample on human rights are so much outgrowths or dependencies of the ones that trumpet them that it seems like two complementary activities.

One can't think about the state except in relation to the higher level of the single world market, and the lower levels of minorities, becomings, "people." Beyond the state it's money that rules, money that communicates, and what we need these days definitely isn't any critique of Marxism, but a modern theory of money as good as Marx's that goes on from where he left off (bankers would be better placed than economists to sketch its outlines, although the economist Bernard Schmitt has made some progress in this area). And below the state are becomings that can't be controlled, minorities constantly coming to life and standing up to it. Becomings are something quite distinct from history: even structural history generally thinks in terms of past, present, and future. We're told revolutions go wrong, or produce monsters in their wake: it's an old idea, no need to wait for Stalin, it was already true of Napoleon, of Cromwell. To say revolutions turn out badly is to say nothing about people's revolutionary becom-

ing.¹¹ If we've been so interested in nomads, it's because they're a becoming and aren't part of history; they're excluded from it, but they transmute and reappear in different, unexpected forms in the lines of flight of some social field. That's one difference, in fact, between ourselves and Foucault: he saw social fields as criss-crossed with strategies; we see them as fleeing all over the place. May 68 was a becoming breaking through into history, and that's why history found it so hard to understand, and why historical society found it so hard to come to terms with.

People talk about the future of Europe, and the need to harmonize banking, insurance, internal markets, companies, police forces: *consensus, consensus, consensus*, but what about people's becoming? Is Europe leading us into strange becomings like new versions of '68? What's going to become of people? It's a question full of surprises, not the question of the future, but of actuality, the untimely. The Palestinians are what's untimely in the Middle East, taking the question of territory to its limit. In unconstitutional states it's the nature of the necessarily nomadic processes of liberation that counts. And in constitutional states, it's not established and codified constitutional rights that count but everything that's legally problematic and constantly threatens to bring what's been established back into question that counts. There's no shortage of such problems these days; the whole Civil Code's strained to breaking-point, and the Penal Code is in as great a mess as the prison system. Rights aren't created by codes and pronouncements but by jurisprudence. Jurisprudence is the philosophy of law, and deals with singularities, it advances by working out from singularities. All this may of course involve taking particular positions to make some particular point. But it's not enough these days to "take a position," however concretely. You need some sort of control over how it's presented. Otherwise you'll quickly find yourself on television replying to stupid questions or face to face, back to back, with someone, "discussing things." What if we were to get involved in producing the program? But how? It's a specialized business, we're not even the customers any more; television's real customers are the advertisers, those well-known liberals. It would be pretty sad to see philosophers being sponsored, with company logos all over their outfits, but maybe it's happening already. People talk about intellectuals abdicating their responsibility, but how are they supposed to express

themselves in some all-purpose medium that's an offense to all thinking? I think there's a public for philosophy and ways of reaching it, but it's a clandestine sort of thinking, a sort of nomadic thinking. The only form of communication one can envisage as perfectly adapted to the modern world is Adorno's model of a message in a bottle, or the Nietzschean model of an arrow shot by one thinker and picked up by another.

The Fold, devoted to Leibniz (even though his name appears only in the subtitle, coupled with a theme: "Leibniz and the Baroque"), seems to hark back to the long series of books you devoted to particular philosophers: Kant, Bergson, Nietzsche, Spinoza. And yet one feels it's much more a book of than a book on a philosopher. Or rather that to an amazing extent it's at once about both Leibniz and the whole of your thought, here more than ever before present as a whole. What's your view of this dual aspect? One might say that by drawing on Leibnizian concepts, the book combines series of concepts from your other books, somewhat reworking all the earlier results in a very ingenious way to arrive at a new and more comprehensive result.

Leibniz is fascinating because perhaps no other philosopher created so much. They're at first sight extremely odd notions, almost crazy. They seem to have only an abstract unity, along the lines of "Every predicate is contained in its subject," except the predicate's not an attribute, it's an event, and the subject isn't a subject, it's an envelope. His concepts do however have a concrete unity in the way they're constructed or operate that's reflected on the level of the Fold, the folds of the earth, the folds of organisms, folds in the soul. Everything folds, unfolds, enfolds in Leibniz; it's in the folds of things that one perceives, and the world is enfolded in each soul, which unfolds this or that region of it according to the order of space and time (whence the overall harmony). So we can take the nonphilosophical situation implicit in Leibniz as something like a "windowless and doorless" baroque chapel that has only an inside, or the baroque music that finds the harmony in any melody. The baroque carries folding to infinity, as in El Greco's paintings and Bernini's sculptures, and so opens the way to a nonphilosophical understanding through concepts and affects.

I see this book as both a recapitulation and a continuation. One has to follow in Leibniz's footsteps (he's probably had more creative followers than any other philosopher) but also in those of artists who echo his work, even unknowingly—Mallarmé, Proust, Michaux, Hantai, Boulez—anyone who fashions a world out of folding and unfolding. **The whole thing is a crossroads, a multiple connectedness. We're still a long way from exhausting all the potential of the fold, it's a good philosophical concept.** That's why I wrote this book, and it leaves me in a position to do what I now want to do. I want to write a book on "What Is Philosophy?" As long as it's a short one. Also, Guattari and I want to get back to our joint work and produce a sort of philosophy of Nature, now that any distinction between nature and artifice is becoming blurred. Such projects are all one needs for a happy old age.

Conversation with Raymond Bellour and François Ewald
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