

RG: Good Madam, I'll start by asking you please for your name and then your date and place of birth

MS: My first name is Maren, my last name, my father, Sell. My married name is Flouest, FLOUEST. And I was born on February 2, 1945 in Flensburg, which was a German town on the Danish border, so in Schleswig-Holstein, in the far north of Germany

RG: And can you tell me something about your family?

MS: About my family ... I was born in Flensburg because my grandparents lived in Flensburg. My parents were political refugees. They lived in Breslau, now Poland. And they took refuge with my grandparents in '44

RG: And your father, what was he doing in Breslau?

MS: My father was an engineer. My mother was a housewife. And my father was building airports. So we have always had one axis, Denmark, I have family from Denmark, and Poland. And my father, what I appreciated, what I learned much later, is that he was, during the crucial years, he had rather built bridges in Denmark

RG: So your father was brought up rather in Flensburg or ...?

MS: They were both born in Kiel, so on the edge of the Baltic mother. And my father's family were entrepreneurs from Hamburg

RG: And from a political point of view?

MS: From a political point of view, that's ...

RG: That's a tough question (RG laughs)

MS: No, it's not a difficult question, but a question that was put aside during our youth, well in my youth. They were not, neither my father nor my mother, they were not Nazis, they were not registered in the party. My father tried, not with immense courage either, but he tried to be a bit on the sidelines of it all. My mother, I had fantasized about something, but it turned out ... (MS laughs) These were fantasies that I was not the only one to have, with our German guilt. I had imagined, let's say hoped, that my mother, since they lived in Breslau, it was next to Auschwitz, that my mother at one point, I don't know, there is something in a speech that made it think so. That my mother had sheltered a German deserter, a soldier. I

RG: That's not true ... Yes, I remember that story. Was it a bit to spare your mother?

MS: No, I imagined being the daughter of a resistance fighter. We had ideas like that. Or seek Jewish origins, or seek to be on the safe side

RG: Okay, we'll come back to that. And then, from a religious point of view, your family was Protestant, Catholic?

MS: Protestant

RG: And practitioners or like that?

MS: Listen, normally yes, practitioners. Finally, I made my confirmation. I liked it, maybe it comes to me from very far away, I like mystical texts. And I enjoyed learning the catechism and the moral rules of Protestantism. I think it was still important. I loved it, we sing a lot in Protestant churches, so Bach's music, all that, in churches, I liked it. Although I had a temptation when I was fifteen, I found it a bit austere, and I compared with Catholicism. And finally I remained Protestant (MS laughs)

RG: It didn't work?

MS: Finally, I went to see in the churches how it was done differently. It was the question of forgiveness, I believe. Since we had a lot to be forgiven, I found it quite convenient to be able to confess and be forgiven.

RG: It's too simple

MS: It's easier!

RG: No, but it was too simple among the Catholics?

MS: Yes, there you go

RG: To go to confession like that

MS: Yes, Protestants bear their responsibility

RG: But as a burden?

MS: Like a burden, there you go. But also as a responsibility

RG: And what did you do for your studies?

MS: So we left Flensburg when I was eight. My father was hired to build an airport in the Palatinate, in Zweibrücken, between Saarbrück and Mannheim. So I grew up in this city.

RG: Zweibrücken?

MS: Yes, ZWEIBRUCKEN. Which was a pretty little town called the city of roses and horses, which was true. The center of town was occupied by horses and roses. And then there were the four garrisons: there were Canadians, there were Americans, there were French

RG: Because it was in which zone of occupation?

MS: It was in the French zone. Finally, French and American. In any case, there was all that. And there I did my baccalaureate

RG: Abitur?

MS: Abitur, yes (MS laughs)

RG: In the gymnasium?

MS: In the gymnasium, yes. So there was the old poly-lingual gymnasium and there was the modern poly-lingual gymnasium. So I wasn't in the old languages, there were two. So I was in the modern literature branch

RG: The school was called the gymnasium of

MS: From Zweibrücken

RG: Was there only one for the ancient languages?

MS: For modern languages there was only one. It was a city that had thirty thousand inhabitants at the time

RG: And it was a mixed gymnasium

MS: Mixed yes. And in retrospect, it was very good. Because there were two or three teachers there where there is really a real transmission, which I remember very well. I had a French teacher who liked me very much, who certainly favored my taste of the French language. And I had a teacher, Madame Giestock (?), Who taught us Germanistik, German and philosophy. And the essays, well what we call the essays here, in the last two classes, before the baccalaureate. It was not at all like in France, there was not such an imposing framework (introduction, conclusion, etc.). We were much freer. And at that age, the discovery of philosophical texts, and a political conscience also through political texts. I remember we used to read Jaspers we read texts, it was a bit fashionable, on the massification of culture, things like that. And that had influenced me a lot. And we were very free in our essays. I loved it

RG: Is this all from the Frankfurt school?

MS: Yes, yes. I remember we had a book, a digest of philosophical texts, in three volumes. It was called Die Fähre, well the boat that goes from one bank to the other

RG: A ferry?

MS: Yes, there you go, the ferry! And they were extracts from philosophical texts until Adorno

RG: Did we read Marcuse at the time?

MS: Yes, yes, of course. We were already reading at school, there, at the time of the baccalaureate, there was Marcuse, there was Adorno, etc. But that was the spirit of the time. So my teacher was very up to date. And then obviously we read a lot

RG: But often in schools there is a gap between what you read at school and what you read outside

MS: Yes. No, but the impetus came from school. This is quite obvious

RG: What year did you take the Abitur?

MS: In '64

RG: And then you continued your studies?

MS: Afterwards I had the chance, but really it was quite, because I didn't quite know what to do. And my dad wasn't completely sure if he wanted to pay for my education. And I had discovered in a magazine a competition, organized by the television of Stuttgart, the apprenticeship of television, one year. Where you could be a bachelor, or more concretely, have trained as a cameraman or other training that is more specifically television. And I had by chance - it was a national competition - I had sent my CV. I don't know why I was taken. And I was taken. So I left after the baccalaureate, so in September '64, to live a year in Stuttgart in this television environment.

RG: And did it work well?

MS: It was exciting. There were twenty-five of us, from very different origins. And we had teachers, so I'll tell you, who were the editor-in-chief of the various shows at the time. But we were also doing fiction. I have pictures, I was dressed as Marie-Antoinette, well we did everything. And that interested me a lot. And I did it quite successfully. What I would have liked to do is to go in the direction of political and social reporting. There was the professor, Arthur Müller his name was, I remember very well, who made me come to his office, who said to me: 'Maren, I would love you to become my assistant, but I would be even more thrilled if you come back in three years after your studies'. And that was absolutely wonderful. So I really owe him a lot. So I said to him: 'I don't know if my parents will want, etc'. And he organized me in Saarbrücken, because my parents lived forty kilometers from Saarbrücken, so in Zweibrücken. So I could enroll at the University of Saarbrücken and he had

organized little shows for me on Saarbrücken television which enabled me to earn pocket money. And I used to do churches (MS laughs) had organized small programs on Saarbrücken television which enabled me to earn pocket money. And I used to do churches (MS laughs) had organized small programs on Saarbrücken television which enabled me to earn pocket money. And I used to do churches (MS laughs)

RG: That is to say?

MS: That is to say, I was sent every Saturday to do a little report, a mini-report, on one of the churches of the Palatinate or the Saar.

RG: Was it interesting?

MS: It was interesting because I was very young, I had a small team with me. So it was an apprenticeship. And at the same time it was good to have a rooting in a world of work and on the other side to study. So it helped me a lot

RG: But you have studied the churches from an architectural point of view or from the belief of the people?

MS: No, no, architectural

RG: And then you continued your studies then?

MS: I made a first installment in Saarbrücken. In Saarbrücken the great advantage is that, as it had only become German since '53, if memory serves, it was French before. So the university had a very French orientation, the French language. And it was the only university where the courses, when we did romance, so when we studied French literature, where the professors gave the lessons in French.

RG: But German or French teachers?

MS: Germans. There his name was Straub, I remember. He was German, or half German, half French. But in any case, the lessons were in French. So it was not bad. And then he was transferred to Friborg. So I liked working with him. And in fact I followed him, because I wanted to stay

RG: Strauss?

MS: Straub. I think, or Strauss, I don't remember anymore. In any case, I followed him. And I did the second part of my studies in Friborg

RG: Im Breisgau?

MS: Yes, Breisgau. Very very pretty town

RG: Yes, I know. What year is it?

MS: So it was ... So '64 -'65 was ... '66 was Saarbrücken. '67 -'68, yes that's it

RG: '67

MS: '67, yes. And '68, because I was not in Paris, I was in the hospital when there were the events of '68

RG: We will come back to that later. So in Friborg you did a master's degree, a doctorate?



MS: It was already the beginning of the socialist student movement. It's funny, because it seems short to me. In my opinion it is very condensed. So I was active in Freiburg, with the Dutschke organization, which had groups all over Germany.

RG: The SDS?

MS: Yes, the SDS. And at the same time, I had taken Roland Barthes as a subject for my thesis. And I came to France at the end of '68, October '68, with both ideas in mind. The first, to see what happened in '68 and find groups that stayed in that spirit. And go to college

RG: To come back to this activism. What kind of militant action was it? Demonstrations, meetings?

MS: Yes, yes. Meetings, demonstrations. We read Marx, discussion groups based on Marx's texts, it was of that order

RG: Because it is often said that in federal Germany '67 was more important than '68, is it true?

MS: '77 or '67?

RG: No, '67

MS: '67? Yes. This is where it started. In Berlin there were the, Vietnam was in '67

RG: The Shah's visit?

MS: The visit of the Shah, there you go. And there were demonstrations in '67 everywhere: in Frankfurt, in Freiburg, yes, yes. It was really the year when there was for my generation a beginning of political consciousness

RG: Yes, of course, political awareness. And you say in your book, you lived in community at that time

MS: In Friborg

RG: And when you say in community, what was it exactly?

MS: Well, it was like, we shared the apartments. It was the spirit of the time. There was a kitchen, we cooked together, and we prepared the leaflets together. It was, well, inside and outside, it was communities that were already mini-intervention groups.

RG: Because in your book you say that they are islands in the middle of a rotten world

MS: Oh good, I say that. Okay

RG: The question is: is living in a community like that a cultural, social gesture, or is it already a political gesture?

MS: Oh no, I think ... Maybe all together. But in any case, what was inconceivable was to repeat the same, structurally, the same as our parents. At the time, we thought that there was more freedom to live in community than ... My fear was, because I could do the Staatsexam, I remember very well. So I inquired. With Straub we had just thought about it and all that. So while doing the Staatsexam what happens next? Well, we become a teacher, we go to the Black Forest, I don't know, to a small town. And for me that was what was absolutely inconceivable. How old was I, twenty-three, twenty-four. I felt like my life couldn't end there already

RG: A life as a civil servant?

MS: There you go, no. And so the idea of the community was precisely, we had the impression of starting our life

RG: And so you didn't want to repeat

MS: The parental pattern

RG: Your parents' family pattern. Because at that time what was your relationship with the parents?

MS: The reports weren't bad at all, but I thought it was tight. For me, they were cells, each for himself. It was like German families, we listened to a lot of music, it was very warm. But after all, everyone cultivated their own little garden, and if you will, there was not a very great vital energy. In fact what I was looking for was probably more energy

RG: And still this silence on this period of the war?

MS: Yes. Well, it changed later when I came to ... It was really an abscess. Afterwards I remembered the people who came. My parents it was apparently okay, but well people ... I had a discomfort sometimes parents, well, for example a friend. For me it's a very traumatic memory that I found, when they spoke, I felt that they were former Nazis. And he must have felt it too, and he committed suicide by the way

RG: Who is that, sorry?

MS: My first love. So my parents used to hang out with his parents, and when the father spoke, it made me very, very uncomfortable, because, obscurely, I felt that it

was Nazi words. And he was a very unhappy boy. Who committed suicide two years later. So it was really something that in families was unbreathable, from the moment we understood the monstrosity of the thing

RG: And this protest movement in '67 was partly to criticize the politics of the parent generation, right?

MS: It's more complicated

RG: No doubt (RG laughs)!

MS: No, but because to criticize means to have a reasonable speech, or rationalized, etc. It was not the case. It was visceral. It was: never again. I remember my first event, I don't know, maybe in '66. There was Kissinger, at the time, who was our chancellor, Henry Kissinger, who had left Baden-Württemberg, who was visiting Zweibrücken, a small town, where we were, I don't know, maybe two or three friends who were a bit, who were looking for political arguments. He came, well all was well, received by the mayor, there were flowers, there was music, etc. And then this guy was a former Nazi. And so we went to our little village, on the front line, and we shouted: 'Kissinger ist ein fascist!'. And I found it to be very liberating. I set out on this path which was liberating for me. And now, it started like that, with ... We felt a family straitjacket. This family straitjacket was weighed down by silence. And people, finally parents, they wanted to get involved in anything more, as it was the time of the German miracle: we are going towards more wealth. Finally the concerns were of this order. And at the same time, we felt that half the population had quite other functions when they were younger. It was a terrible climate. In addition there was the Vietnam War. We were doubly concerned in Germany. Because you know Mitscherlich's book *Le Mourning Impossible* And now, it started like that, with ... We felt a family straitjacket. This family straitjacket was weighed down by silence. And people, finally parents, they wanted to get involved in anything more, as it was the time of the German miracle: we are going towards more wealth. Finally the concerns were of this order. And at the same time, we felt that half the population had quite other functions when they were younger. It was a terrible climate. In addition there was the Vietnam War. We were doubly concerned in Germany. Because you know Mitscherlich's book *Le Mourning Impossible* engage in anything, as it was at the time

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RG: I don't know

MS: Alexander Mitscherlich, a psychoanalyst. He had written - he was a friend of Marcuse by the way - a book which was quite decisive for us at the time, it was called *Le Deuil impossible*. Where he explains that after the war, when the Nazi ideal and Hitler had fallen into ruins, the Germans, which has since been done, but instead of doing a work of consciousness of what they were and their faults, they had immediate identification with the Americans. Because I remember, when I was little, the presence of Americans. Well, obviously it was the liberators, but it was also people who had cigarettes, Milky Ways, cars, who were a model of wealth. And everyone, well the Germans, followed the American model. So for Mitscherlich mourning was impossible, because for mourning you have to have a phase of downward spiral and despair. So when we replace one ideal by another immediately, we are a little bit, we have missed the maturity

RG: We don't do the memory work

MS: Of mourning

RG: And when you militated in Saarbrücken or in Zweibrücken or in Freiburg, did you have any particular friends? Because we, for example, are working on Germany, we are trying to rebuild the networks. Are there any names that come to mind?

MS: Oh dear ... In Friborg I have more names. Besides, I really have a bad memory. In Frankfurt, because we were going, the important meetings were held in Frankfurt. And there, for example, there was Klaus Theweleit, who wrote this wonderful book about male fantasies. A sociologist who was an important figure in the SDS. There was KW Wolf, who now has his publishing house. There was Anders, who wrote a book on Adorno which was ... So it was kind of the intellectuals of the movement that we met there. Then there was also Brigitte Heinrich, who was afterwards engaged with the Baader Gang, who was in prison, who died. Well, at that time there was not yet Dany, after that there was Dany. Well then there was a meeting, Dutschke was there. And then there was a meeting that was important to me, where we had in Frankfurt, so our group from Freiburg, or a certain number, and it took place in Frankfurt. There were leaders say from '68 in France who were invited to tell us what had happened in '68

RG: And when was it?

MS: I think it must have been, I have to ask my friend Jean-Marcel Bouguereau

RG: But after May-June

MS: Yes, yes, in June, finally something like that I think. Or at the very beginning of September, finally something like that. And there, there was a great friend of Jean-Marc who intervened, who is called Jean-Marcel Bouguereau, who wrote the newspaper Action. And who told us about the different currents of '68. And I remember, I went to see him after the conference and we talked with some German friends, etc. And he said: 'Maren, you do romance, etc., you should go to Paris and see'. And Jean-Marcel gave me his phone number and address. That was my first contact in Paris. When I arrived I believe in October, I contacted him. And through him I immediately got to know Guy Hocquenghem, Henri Weber, well all the leaders of the movements in France. Here. And my second contact, because I was already working, so I don't even remember why, I had contact with Surkamp Publishing (?) in Germany, and who had taken an option, if memory serves, on a book that André Glucksmann had published in '67, which I had read, which is called The Discourse of War. And who more or less instructed me to contact Glucksmann for a possible translation

RG: And you contacted him?

MS: Yes, yes. I contacted him

RG: It was like back then? Because he has since changed his mind

MS: He was very handsome (MS laughs)

RG: Ah good, so much the better (laughs from RG)!

MS: So it was a very good contact. Yes, he was very handsome, and he lived in Faubourg Saint Antoine. And then we set up, it was not me who translated, I would not have been able, but with, we did a bit collectively, in any case, the translation

RG: From his book on war

MS: On the war, yes, on Machiavelli

RG: So you enrolled in faculty?

MS: Yes, I registered at the Sorbonne

RG: To do what exactly? A doctorate, or ...

MS: It was necessary, I remember not too well, it was necessary first equivalences, because it was not enough to have the authorization to study in French. So I did the equivalences. And then I was enrolled at the Sorbonne, but as I had my intellectual boyfriends, I quickly understood ... So I did a course at the Sorbonne, with Le Goff, well people, but I " was especially going to see the lessons of Roland Barthes

RG: Who was where?

MS: Who was rue de Tournon

RG: But still at the Sorbonne?

MS: It was the École Pratique des Hautes Études. And then there was the creation of Vincennes, of the University of Vincennes. And I had my file transferred, so I was registered at Vincennes. And there it was then the ideal place to mix studies and politics. They were all there

RG: Did you work with a teacher in particular at Vincennes?

MS: So I followed, I stayed with Roland Barthes. But I followed the courses of Deleuze, Lacan, Foucault, well all that I could. At the time it was quite rich

RG: And then with regard to militant life, among all these movements, all these trends, did you have a preference?

MS: Oh yes, I became a Maoist

RG: How's that, exactly?

MS: Look, I don't know if it was very ... Well, one, it always happens like that too, you must not believe that people when they are young have discernment ... So this is how it is. 'happened. My friends, I became very friends with André and with Robert Linhart, the people who were therefore in the

RG: UJC (ml)



MS: Among the maos, the GP

RG: Because it was the GP at the time

MS: Yes, it was the GP. And since I was still a foreigner, and it showed

RG: Was it visible?

MS: Yes

RG: What do you mean?

MS: Because they always told me it showed. In Germany the, how to say, the women were freer I think. Because here the militants, in the Maoist or Trotskyist groups, etc., it came after that there was, that we were talking about sexual difference, etc. But they were male activists, completely. And me, it was not really my type. And I was criticized elsewhere. I had to be self-critical because I was wearing lipstick or because I was wearing low necklines. Finally in Germany, when we were feminists, we didn't wear a bra at the time (MS laughs)

RG: So it was the French women who put on lipstick?

MS: No, no

RG: It was you!

MS: In France, for activists, it was very frowned upon to wear make-up

RG: Because at the time it was a question of both political revolution and sexual revolution

MS: Cultural

RG: So for you what was your approach on the sexual and cultural question?

MS: I thought the Germans were ahead. Because there was this anti-authoritarian movement

RG: Because living in community ...

MS: Nanterre too, of course, it started from there. But there was a life in community. And then I think in the communities, it is true that the mores were quite free. In France there were no communities. Finally, there were one or two, but not significantly

RG: Not at that time, later maybe

MS: But we did one afterwards, of women, but it was later, in '74

RG: And where?

MS: Next to where there is 'Liberation' now, in the third arrondissement. So I was a little on the sidelines, because I had not lived before '68 too. Maoists suited me. First, because I had friends who were Maoists, it was by affinity. Two, which they had decided at that time and on the militant level, because they created the Red Help. The Red Help was what they called the democratic enlargement of the Proletarian Left, so there were people in all the neighborhoods who didn't want to be Maoists, Stalinists, etc., they could do democratic work in their neighborhood.

district. And I was in the Secours rouge in the fifth arrondissement, that's where I lived at the time. And so we were, we had a double membership. We went to the meetings of the Proletarian Left, so we had precise instructions. But at the same time we were a little mixed with the population of our neighborhood

RG: And so you defended which causes? The question of immigrants or questions of arrests ...

MS: Yes, for example in Saint Médard it is called, there were centers of immigrants. To the left and to the right of rue Mouffettard, there were several immigrant centers. So we intervened for that. We intervened because the Gare d'Austerlitz was a little part of our radius, so we made interventions, finally actions with the railway workers of the Gare d'Austerlitz. And I was always used, or I offered myself, as an informant. Since I looked a bit like a foreigner, it was convenient. That is, people didn't think I was an activist, I put on a little fur or something like that. I didn't have the look

RG: The look of a leftist activist?

MS: And then they created this militant newspaper 'J'accuse'. So on the militant level it was the Red Aid, on the press level so there was the newspaper of the GP

RG: Was it more Le Cri du peuple?

MS: No, it was right after, yes. What was the newspaper of the GP called ...?

RG: Yes, it's called J'accuse at one point

MS: No, no. There were both. There was the very hard militant newspaper, which was called The Cause of the People

RG: Oh yes, The People's Cause, sorry

MS: And then there was a newspaper which was in the movement of democratic enlargement, which was called J'accuse. So in this newspaper, it was a fairly mainstream newspaper. Because La Cause du Peuple was a theoretical newspaper with very strong positions, very militant. And I accuse, they had managed to interest journalists, for example from the Nouvel Observateur or du Monde, who found that their newspaper did not sufficiently reflect the struggles. And it was a very good newspaper. Foucault for example wrote in it, Glucksmann was editor in chief, there was François (inaudible 41:36). There was Michèle Manceau who came from the Nouvel Observateur '. So they were great signings. But it was in the spirit that intellectuals come down from their pedestal and that they go and see what's going on. As far as Foucault is concerned, in the prisons. We did what it is called, the textile which was threatened in the Moselle, which has now completely disappeared, (inaudible 42:10) there you go. So there was the French Joint scandal. It was a bit like the time of kidnappings. So there was a bit of a military detachment from The Cause of the People who carried out the actions, and we were the smugglers.

RG: But when you say 'us', apart from Glucksmann, who was it?

MS: There the names that I gave, for example Francis (inaudible 42:40), Michèle Manceau, and others, Foucault, there you go. So we were in this ... And what moreover gave a little after the impetus for Liberation

RG: Okay. And did you keep your contacts with the militants in Germany?

MS: Yes. Because in fact it was my function, has always been this one

RG: From smuggler

MS: From passeuse

RG: Yes, sorry (Laughs from RG and MS)

MS: So obviously yes, I had contacts. I went regularly to Berlin, to Frankfurt. I was also going to accompany the French intellectual friends to contact, finally to make contact and to discuss with the German militants. Good men, and then women too. So there was at that time a very large, interference that was strong

RG: Because in your book you talk about your contact with Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof

MS: Yes. That was, for example, the meetings in Frankfurt, they were there. They were activists like, engaged students like the others. And then in '68 there was the supermarket fire, which was their action to protest against the consumer society, where there was material damage. And since they were there, we were looking for them. They were wanted by the police from that point on. And we, in France, in '69 - '70 we lived in a very small community, there were three of us, in the fifth, rue Monge. With Jean-Marcel Bouguereau precisely. Intellectually we separated a bit, because he remained in the action, and afterwards he was more trade unionist than me. So he made the May Notebooks, etc. And then I got closer to Glucksmann. I remember I had done an interview with Sartre, because the Proletarian Left needed money and the Spiege had agreed to pay dearly for an interview with Sartre. I thought about this earlier, because I did and I was very, very proud of myself, of course. And then, when I got home, I checked and the beautiful recording machine hadn't worked! So that was absolutely a disaster. He was adorable, I called him, I said, 'Listen, excuse me, I screwed up', 'That's okay, we'll do this again', etc. (Laughs from RG and MS). At all levels, we were trying to take advantage of Franco-German relations. So we had, Jean-Marcel and André, moreover, speak German very, very well. And there was also a fellow German philosopher who lived there, so there were three of us. So it had become, for the French militants to go to Germany and live in a community, that posed no problem, because there was a lot of space. In France it was really a problem of space, that is to say people lived in two rooms, we had three tiny ones and to welcome the German friends it was much more difficult. But anyway, our small structure was a little designated as the possible contact in France, in Paris, where everyone spoke German, we agreed to add a mattress, and voila. And Andreas and Gudrun came to contact us. Well, you know, we tried to find accommodation for them, it was Régis Debray's apartment. And they were three: so Gudrun, Andreas and Thorwald Proll. Who at that time, during that month, or two months that they lived in Paris, decided to choose a fate other than that of what was called the Baader Gang, the Red Army Fraction. And so he left them

RG: And why?

MS: It was certainly a French influence. Because there were very sectarian small groups in Paris at that time, there were more and more of them with splits and

divisions. But still one of the great inspirers of '68, it was Guy Debord and the Situationists, Vaneigem, etc. So the third one, Thorwald, started reading the Situationists when he was here in Paris and he found that it was his way

RG: Which one?

MS: The third one, who left them. So there remained Gudrun and Andreas, who from Paris left for Rome to make contact with the Red Brigades.

RG: And why do you think they took this direction?

MS: To engage in armed struggle?

RG: Yes, towards armed struggle

MS: For paranoid reasons I think

RG: No, but seriously

MS: I'm very serious (Laughs from RG and MS). Well, he was very megalomaniac, Baader. He wanted to organize the armed struggle in Europe. So they made contact with the Red Brigades. They had made contact here with the Maoists, who therefore had this somewhat military detachment, the New Partisans it was called. And in France it didn't work. Thanks to the presence of intellectuals: Foucault, etc., who was highly respected, who was committed. When there were directions to take the leadership of the GP - Sartre was also with the GP, with the Maoists - they were asked for advice. So they all have, Foucault anyway ... Well, Sartre did things afterwards, he went to Stammheim. Foucault too, he went to Berlin, to Heidelberg, to protest against the conditions of detention

RG: At one point, when Sartre went to Germany, he defended violence

MS: He was in the same positions as Genet

RG: Who were which?

MS: Jean Genet, who wrote an editorial in Le Monde, where he perfectly justified violence

RG: Because, for example, I spoke to Olivier Rolin, who was in these New Partisans, or New Resistance. And he tells me, he gave me an article he had written, under another name. Which explains why the French, even those of the GP, did not do violence, for a number of reasons. Including the fact that they were normaliens and philosophers, and normaliens philosophers did not do violence

MS: But I'm telling you pretty much the same thing! Except that philosophers can also lose their mind (MS laughs)

RG: Exactly! Yeah, so you haven't lost your mind, are you?

MS: In any case, no. There was discussion whether to engage in armed struggle or not. Within the Proletarian Left there were supporters of the armed struggle, who wanted to do like the Baader Gang. But there was a majority of philosophers, both inside the Proletarian Left and outside, because Foucault was not part of it, who was a bit of a highly respected godfather. I remember the sentence was that when there is military action, it must reflect the will of the people. So it was not to exclude

RG: And you were aware that the people were not for violence, would not support you

MS: So we have decided that there will not be a European armed struggle orchestrated by the German Red Army Fraction. So that was very clear. The actions that were carried out, we can not say that it was not violent, because a sequestration is still also, even it was in a context ... And that was perhaps probably really the

intrinsic difference between the Germans and the French. That is to say in France we thought at that time, and then there was a general strike anyway in '68, we generally thought, well the militants, that we could trust the people. It is a people who had resisted Nazism, etc. In Germany, we thought rather that we could not trust the people at all, because of history. And also I remember, I wrote something at the time when Helmut Schmidt was chancellor: we were lucky to have had two or three chancellors in Germany - Willy Brandt was exemplary, and Helmut Schmidt too - who were more enlightened than the people. That is to say, they made decisions, finally Willy Brandt made this symbolic gesture by kneeling in Warsaw. In Helmut Schmidt's speeches, he was much more enlightened than the majority of the German people. So there was no solidarity from the German people to the Baader Gang, there was none. Well, occasionally a few workers, but good. So it was an armed struggle that was separated from the people and Helmut Schmidt too - who were more enlightened than the people. That is to say, they made decisions, finally Willy Brandt made this symbolic gesture by kneeling in Warsaw. In Helmut Schmidt's speeches, he was much more enlightened than the majority of the German people. So there was no solidarity from the German people to the Baader Gang, there was none. Well, occasionally a few workers, but good. So it was an armed struggle that was separated from the people and Helmut Schmidt too - who were more enlightened than the people. That is to say, they made decisions, finally Willy Brandt made this symbolic gesture by kneeling in Warsaw. In Helmut Schmidt's speeches, he was much more enlightened than the majority of the German people. So there was no solidarity from the German people to the Baader Gang, there was none. Well, occasionally a few workers, but good. So it was an armed struggle that was separated from the people So there was no solidarity from the German people to the Baader Gang, there was none. Well, occasionally a few workers, but good. So it was an armed struggle that was separated from the people So there was no solidarity from the German people to the Baader Gang, there was none. Well, occasionally a few workers, but good. So it was an armed struggle that was separated from the people

RG: But they were aware that the people were not following them and that we had to be in a way a vanguard?

MS: Yes, yes, that's it. They thought the more they escalated the violence, the more they were going to radicalize the people. Grossomodo

RG: And there were still some people in the GP who were for violence on this model?

MS: Yes, yes, there was that



RG: But who were outvoted?

MS: Absolutely

RG: And at that point they were silent?

MS: They folded, but they were already a bit ... Well, the GP was dissolved in '74 I think, but hey it was already quite wobbly two years before

RG: And do you have a memory of the struggles in Lip?

MS: Oh yeah, great. So as far as I'm concerned, there was, always created by the maos, in the register where we thought it was mine, so kind of smuggler, they had created a Liberation press agency. Which was parallel to the Agence Presse France, AFP, which was installed rue de Bretagne. And there we were activists who published a little bulletin every day. So in France that meant that we had information from the militants in the different factories, or the peasants, or neighborhoods. And we published everything that reflected the struggles happening in France and we had contacts with foreign countries. And me in particular with Germany, to publish in a bulletin of the demonstrations of students, of the strikes which were happening in Germany. And that lasted for two years. So these bulletins were distributed to the various editorial staff, and it was quite appreciated. Journalists have indeed realized that there were censorships or mini-censorships to talk about what is happening at the base. And this agency was the base of the newspaper Liberation

RG: And so you worked in there? Both in the PLA and in Liberation

MS: There you go. So there was some of the journalists, well I don't know if we were journalists, at least people who did this work, so it was mainly mao, with Jean-Claude Vernier, there was Sartre. So this idea of creating a newspaper Liberation, widens the purely Mao circle to a trend that was called at the time Vive la Révolution !, VLR. So Philippe Gavi, everyday life, rather the cultural revolution. So there was this mix, political Maoist revolution, and cultural revolution, which was a component of the events of '68. And that's what gave Liberation. And Liberation ... So I was for

the international, well European let's say, with the contacts I had in Germany, a little in Italy. So I was doing this. Et al' Inside the newspaper we created a women's page which corresponded ... Because July's thesis was: 'You are not journalists, you are only the echo, you echo the people, you are the echo of the people, you are there, you pass on what the people have taught you '. It was the spirit. And in fact the newspaper should be made by the workers, the peasants, etc. Except that the peasants, the workers, did not come to the newspaper. And in that same spirit, I said, should be done by women in struggle. And the women in struggle came to the newspaper every Wednesday (MS laughs), and it created a bit of a mess echo of the people, you are there, you pass on what the people have taught you '. It was the spirit. And in fact the newspaper should be made by the workers, the peasants, etc. Except that the peasants, the workers, did not come to the newspaper. And in that same spirit, I said, should be done by women in struggle. And the women in struggle came to the newspaper every Wednesday (MS laughs), and it created a bit of a mess echo of the people, you are there, you pass on what the people have taught you '. It was the spirit. And in fact the newspaper should be made by the workers, the peasants, etc. Except that the peasants, the workers, did not come to the newspaper. And in that same spirit, I said, should be done by women in struggle. And the women in struggle came to the newspaper every Wednesday (MS laughs), and it created a bit of a mess

RG: Why the mess?

MS: Because it was a popular presence, in the neighborhood, where women ... At the time, it was abortion, etc. So this great invitation that July had made, that it's not a tower ivory an editorial staff, it must be permeable, open, etc. In fact, every Wednesday afternoon I invited the women who had things to say

RG: But were there also women from the MLF?

MS: Yes, of course. Every Wednesday we had a meeting and everyone said what had happened in their neighborhood or where the Karman method was - at the time it was that for abortion - etc. So it was very democratic

RG: And have you had any contact with feminists in particular?

MS: I was with all the feminists, but I was closer to Antoinette Fouque and Political Psychoanalysis.

RG: Psyche and Po?

MS: Yes. And so there the big one, Lip was in '73. So the newspaper existed but a little in trouble. And so it had started in April, if memory serves, Lip's struggles. And we decided to do a Lip special in August '73. And there the special Lip we did, so Liberation special Lip. And there everyone was, it was interesting because it was a bit the ... Well, Pierre Victor, who was the chief of the maos, had moved a lot. Those who really had the floor were rather the CFDT, Piaget. And we were, we I think it was a bath of understanding, at least for me what. Finally I believe for others too. That is to say there for example it was completely excluded, given the spirit in which they were, to attempt something that would resemble violent action. So we were very present, we put up posters, we participated in general assemblies, etc. But it was less hysterically Maoist

RG: I see. But was there a feeling at the time that you spent years trying to do, to remobilize the workers, the people ... And then now, they have mobilized without you?

MS: Yes, of course. And well mobilized. In a way that we can call average. Negotiation, discussion, respect for work, the tradition of this watchmaking. For us it was ... I was staying with an executive, I forgot his name, it was absolutely wonderful. Because there were two of us sleeping at his place, sleeping at his house, and he had us ... This working-class pride in doing ... It was quartz that had arrived, to use new technologies but at the same time not to give up traditional work, etc. It was really very good. And me, it comforted me. Well, the Germans, what we were saying earlier, maybe we had more than it would have been right, an admiration for the French people. Because for us the French people had resisted the Germans, to the Nazis And there I found a sample of cultivated workers, in love with their work, respectful of others. Awesome. I loved

RG: But did you have the feeling, as a Maoist or a Liberation activist, that you did your job, or rather that they did your job for you, and that you no longer had nothing to do

MS: For me, it was the month of August, I was a little alone, what I had to do is what was within my means. It was to do this special issue of 'Liberation'. So to be there we can say more reporter and journalist than activist

RG: And did you do a report on the Larzac?

MS: Not me personally. But it was Patrick who ... There were people at Liberation who had their engagement like that for personal reasons too.

RG: But to come back to your German friends, how did you report the violent actions of the Band to Baader, etc. ?

MS: Reported how? How did I feel?

RG: By appreciating it, criticizing it? Because you explained that there was kind of a discrepancy between those who took the path

MS: The exile what, finally who put themselves aside

RG: Those who, you took the Red Relief route, APL, Liberation, rather

MS: That the armed struggle

RG: But how did you report in Liberation the gestures, the actions of those who chose the armed struggle? Grossomodo, did you agree or disagree?

MS: Listen, it's not at all for, well, the possible. That is to say in my opinion what ... That's why I wrote the book afterwards. In meetings I have always tried to stress the German particularity. And what we said earlier about the revolt held back because there was no reason to revolt against the parents, since we were not aware, etc. ... And also the impossible mourning, for other reasons than ... Well, there was something, an accumulated despair that obviously they were already marginalized, but they were also so quickly demonized and marginalized by the police repression

RG: And by the public

MS: And by the public, that I had a theory quite early on, which was: they were in a death drive. And the death drive was stronger than the life drive. They got into this spiral so as not to continue to be children of the Holocaust. That was my, that's what I was thinking. So this escalation of despair and violent explosion. And if we take it like that, in psychoanalytic terms, they had lost the notion of the symbolic. And by the language, while good it is sad, because it is one, I like the German language a lot, there are many possibilities to keep a beautiful language. Their language has become a hammer tongue, finally a completely Marxist-Leninist choice, moreover, without any nuance. They had put themselves in a mold intellectually, and therefore at that level they had lost the notion of the symbolic. And also I think, I would have preferred it to be like, for example when they killed Schleyer, I thought I would have preferred it to be like Isaac, you see God does not ask for a human sacrifice, so we can put something symbolic in place of sacrifice. This is how humanity was made. They had lost that notion. Listen, when you have, I remember, I saw things in the photos in my parents' basement, when we see the babies torn from the bellies of women by the Nazis, when we see the accumulated skeletons, etc. , there was more notion of the symbolic. So there was a legacy of the lack of a symbolic dimension that they practically continued to mirror. But that, well, that is something they didn't know. They were a bit mirrored with this horror

RG: They responded to horror with horror

MS: There you go. As they said, for example, I remember - Jean-Marcel kept everything, I kept nothing, but - the end was state war, war against war. When they were maybe fifty. But they thought so, in a duality of confrontation

RG: Okay, to come back to things a little less difficult. Your background: how long did you stay at Liberation?

MS: Until '75. Because there was, therefore, the page on women, it was good, in the spirit of the cultural revolution for short. And then there was the carnation revolution in Portugal, in '74. And what we read in the press of this revolution, beh me I found that formidable. And there were several of us who thought it was great. And we asked the editor-in-chief to go and see. And the editorial staff, at the time, thought it wasn't a proletarian revolution, so it wasn't worth going. And we went anyway, two, a journalist, Pierre Audibert his name is, and me. So we went to Lisbon and sent some

reportage papers on what was happening in Lisbon. We had met Otelo, we had met each other, and it was a great revolution! And so we stayed two months I think. We were warned that there was an important meeting at Liberation, so we returned, it was in '75. We had already come back and gone, because it lasted a little while. And there I remember, Dany had come, Glucksmann, there were people who found that it was nevertheless an important event

RG: In Lisbon?

MS: Yes. And on the way back, on the second return, there was this meeting. And that was the first split in Liberation, where we were six I think, six or seven to leave

RG: Because they had misunderstood the revolution in your eyes?

MS: They asked us for a self-criticism, they found that our papers were too complacent with the soldiers. Anyway, things like that. In any case, we were not happy, and others were not happy for other reasons. So there was what always happens, there were internal conflicts and it ended in a part of the team resigning. But not only for the issue of the carnation revolution, there were other reasons for internal power, repetitive things.

RG: We say from time to time that it was a little macho environment in there

MS: Oh yes, yes. But there was that too. That's what we were for, I already wanted to slam the door at some point. We had a column, you remember, at the time it was Benoîte Groult who started to want to create a dictionary of the feminine. And we began to know how to read, let's say where there was machismo inside the language. It was called sexist insults that were found in advertising, etc. And we had published that we had a section on sexist insults, so there were some every week. And then we had decided to also do a section on sexist insults inside Liberation (laughs from MS). We collected a number of them, so there they were not happy. There is a time when the model maker, when he modeled it, who was a pretty guy ... he wanted to beat me up. So I said: call the boss. It was July. And left in the tail of a sausage

RG: And for the future you continued in the world of publishing, journalism?

MS: Then I wanted to return to the faculty. So I went back to Vincennes and started working with Hélène Cixous, who had created the department of women's studies. And that had interested me a lot. Because first and foremost, he is someone I hold in high esteem. So Hélène was doing, in her own way, a rereading of works and fiction and documents and psychoanalysis, etc., under the gaze: how is sexual difference manifested, grossomodo. So I stayed with her, I worked with her for three years, until '78

RG: Did you publish things?

MS : Oui, oui. Dans les revues allemandes j'avais fait des choses. C'était aussi le moment de l'écriture féminine. Donc elle avait incité un peu tout le monde, elle disait que pour les femmes c'est important d'écrire. J'avais déjà écrit un romans, mais que j'ai pas réussi à publier, en '73, quelque chose comme ça. Et là j'ai commencé à écrire en français, un peu sous son inspiration on peut dire. En fait c'est là que les passages un peu poétiques disons dans Mourir d'absence sont nés. Et d'être dans ce contexte-là, ça m'a... D'abord, c'est pourquoi je suis reconnaissante, énormément, parce qu'elle avait vraiment une façon de lire un texte de près, ça m'a toujours toujours servi depuis dans mon métier. Et ça m'a donné un rapport à l'écriture, à ma propre écriture. C'était quelque chose qui était un peu enseveli, mais je crois que tout le monde était un peu d'accord qu'on avait besoin d'un petit bain d'intelligence après toutes ces années de militantisme. Donc mon bain d'intelligence, c'était les cours avec Hélène

RG: And when you published Dying from Absence, This Iron Man, the Jewish Lover, is that an invention?

MS: No

RG: It's not an invention?

MS: No

RG: Because for a long time I thought it was true, then at one point you say it's an invention

MS: It was a fictionalized reality, we can say

RG: And was it to rework this question?

MS: Yes, of course, in relation to the Shoah

RG: German responsibility

MS: It must be said that it was a kind of learning by the flesh, well the body not the flesh, in his own body, what it could have been like suffering. Finally, difficulty in communication between the Jews and the Germans. With André and then with Robert too, finally people who could not return to Germany at all. And, as I may have had an admission of guilt, after obviously the Germans we did a great job, but at the time it was quite new, to make possible something that by history was not. more. So it was a bit like that. And then it was also, we were in shock from Stammheim at that time

RG: For you, has there been a reconciliation with Germany, with the parents, with the history of Germany? Because I note that at the beginning of each chapter you quote in German great poets, German writers

MS: That's something that still pleases me today, I've never read it again, but it was really a very nice moment. Because at the time I no longer spoke German, I no longer wanted to speak German. For about six years. Except when I went to Germany, but in Germany I pretended to be a Frenchwoman. I really had something, a rejection, even in the language. I was in Bayreuth for Wagner's opera with Boulez and Chéreau, so it was that time, '77, or '78, I went two years in a row. And I had the trials of Dying of absence. And on the tests there was not that. And all of a sudden one afternoon, because in the past I liked very much, even now, to learn poems by heart, etc. One afternoon I started to render, finally open my memory, and these are sentences, I have not checked a single one, but they are all correct. But it was my German unconscious, it was the digest of my German unconscious that I expressed



there, my dearest poets. Afterwards I found the German language again, with a lot of pleasure. But it was six years of boycott

RG: Because during that time, you haven't returned to Germany?

MS: Yes, yes

RG: Well, except for activist visits, of course, but to go see your parents?

MS: Yes, to see my parents. Well I was going, my parents it was obvious that I had to see. When I saw, I was working for a German publisher, in Berlin, (inaudible 1:21:16), where I was going. Well, we were so politically on the same wavelength, so it was fine, with people who were completely in the same sensibility, the same horizon. But the German daily life, the German people, the metro, thing, etc., well the bus, I couldn't stand, the common German. But it came back, there, at that time

RG: Two little more questions, on your personal journey. Because you lived in community, but did you come back to a more bourgeois life at some point?

MS: Yes, now yes

RG: I see (laughs from RG and MS)! But at what point if I dare to ask?

MS: We lived in community ... So we had created a German community of German women. Finally, it was the initiative, it was two friends, Dorothee, Anna and me. We had found an apartment in rue Franche-Comté where there were five rooms, a common kitchen. And there were five of us, two French and three Germans, in this community

RG: When was that?

MS: And so it was after the departure of Liberation, so in '75. Until '79. All the same! Four years. After that I lived with a friend for two years. So that was more of a community. And then I got to know my husband. But I had already been married once before, with a Frenchman who, moreover, shared this small community with Jean-Marcel Bouguereau, rue Monge. He was my first husband. I completely forgot the coffee there! What do I do ? Can't you give us a coffee Georges? That would be great

RG: When you revisit that period, the end of the sixties, the beginning of the seventies, what are your feelings? Of joy, of sorrow, was it a period of learning or awakening?

MS: There is the notion of intensity, that's for sure. And maybe something in me is looking for intensity. Because when I was so horrified by the idea of spending the rest of my life as a teacher, I had a curiosity, so probably I looked for intense things. I have a strong sense of injustice, which I have completely kept. I have the same way today, I want to mobilize myself when I have the impression that there is a very great injustice that has been done

RG: Like in Tibet?

MS: Like in Tibet for example. So this is something that remains, that is perfectly intact. What may be narcissistically pleasing is that this is a generation that has shared things and has not lost sight of each other. Finally for me, it is obvious that it was a collective family. As I had no family ties in France, there were friendships that were almost family. And that these people, who have all aged in the same way, I am quite moved, when something serious happens, as in Tibet, all you have to do is make a phone call and it's good. And that's good

RG: Yes, that's great. Okay, thank you, we worked very well