Gilles Deleuze

Painting and the Question of Concepts

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Transcriptions: Voix de Deleuze, Part 1, Nicolas Lehnebach (duration 46 :36); Part 2, Fatemeh Malekah (duration 46:32); Part 3, Binak Kalludra (duration 37 :12) ; time stamp and revised transcription, Charles J. Stivale

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Part 1

… On the other hand, I'm in a tough spot because I'm of a mind to draw up some very basic color diagrams [*schémas*]—actually, that preempts what I'm about to say, but I'm thinking I won't have the courage to re-draw them next time, if you know what I mean.

So, if you like, you'll recall that we were in the middle of our analysis of Egyptian space, but I'll make a brief aside on these color diagrams [*schémas*] which I will need next time, and that's it. Then I'll explain them; that way I won't have to draw them again. I was an idiot; I started my drawings and then thought, *no!* And now that will have to do, you know? At least I won't have to do them next time. No, I'll draw them for you now. That's what you want, right? Right away. So, I'm going to go through with it, just to do it all over again [*Laughter*] —great! [*Noise*] I'm not really starting, but it's true that... [*Deleuze does not finish the sentence; there is a brief sequence of crowd noises, laughter*] [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:39]

… [*Pause; Deleuze's voice is heard away from the microphone, probably next to the blackboard*] As a starting point, you have… and you'll see it in these two figures: one is an equilateral triangle, here [*Deleuze taps firmly on the board, laughter*] the other is a circle… the former is known as Goethe's "color triangle", the other is the so-called color wheel… [*Indistinct words*] I'll try to work through Goethe's propositions to make sure you can learn something from this. Apologies to those who already know all this.[1]

The first proposition: Goethe starts with a very important theme—I mean, if you understand this, you might understand the whole thing and how it all develops from [*indistinct words*] … he puts a lot of emphasis on it and the problems tied to color—he emphasizes the dark side of color. Color is dark—what does it mean to say that color is dark? It doesn't mean that he privileges dark colors; that would miss the point [*indistinct words*], there are dark colors, but when he talks about the dark side of color, he clearly has something else in mind. "Color" can be said to have a dark side, since it is the darkening of light. No doubt it's also the illumination of black. It is the darkening of white as well as the illumination of black—and how does it darken white? Darkened white is yellow, [*Pause*] and illuminated black is blue. [*Pause*]

There we have our two so-called primitive or primary colors, yellow and blue. See, here are yellow and blue in the color triangle—an equilateral triangle which itself breaks down into equilateral triangles. Say I want to form a color triangle out of equilateral triangles; if I put them in order, I'd have my two equilateral triangles [*Deleuze writes on the board*] at both ends of the base... yellow and blue. [*Pause*]

Due to the dark aspect of color, darkened light, color is inseparable from movement. You can sense that this is all really very, very rudimentary, but it's so Goethe, it's not surprising that this book is still a basic text on colors. Color is inseparable from a movement yet to be determined. You see what he did, it's already extraordinary, he started with white and black, but he cuts from white and black, he sort of changes direction. If you take a ray of light in depth and if you take white and black in depth, you find the whole range of colors sort of spread out, made distinct; that's how—I think that Goethe's deep concern – it is how color spreads out and becomes distinct from light, in relation to white and black.

And it's from this dark stage—darkened light, which implies an illuminated black—that all color unfurls. Initially in the form of yellow and blue, but I think there's movement that's already dynamic. Yellow as darkened light, blue as illuminated black—there's already a whole dynamic. What do we call this nascent dynamism? At the point now where—not in terms of white and black, since there we already have two colors, but in terms of yellow and blue—where the dynamism of color actually emerges.

Goethe has several names for the dynamism of color: intensification, saturation, darkening. Why darkening? In light of the dark side of color. [*Pause*] The intensification of yellow, or its darkening, into red. It's a simple experiment: you stack up several layers of yellow. In overlaying color on color, you have, you can discern, yellow's dynamic tendency toward red. Thus, you darken yellow. [*Pause*]

However—I think there's something important going on here in Goethe's work—however, you also move into red when you soften blue. What do I mean by softening blue? Blue is illuminated black. If you say that I'm softening blue, you mean that I'm softening the illumination. In other words, blue softened into black releases a tendency toward red. See how—I mean what's really important is how he doesn't view darkening and illuminating as contradictory. Color has a dark side. Color's dark side is at work when you darken yellow no less than when you illuminate blue, since you're illuminating an illumination when you illuminate blue.

Thus, the yellow tends toward red as it intensifies; blue tends toward red as it intensifies. What is pure red (what we would call magenta)?[2] It's—and pay close attention to Goethe's terminology here—it's "fusion," the point of fusion between yellow and blue. The point of fusion between yellow and blue at maximum intensification. Which leads us to say that magenta or red—pure red—is the ideal satisfaction, the fusion, of both colors, yellow and blue, at the point of ideal satisfaction.

So that's still… when I made my triangle I could have said: 1, 1' (*one prime*) yellow-blue, starting from light; 2, red as the maximum point of intensification; 3, I mix yellow and blue. I mix yellow and blue, and I have green. See where red and green aren't symmetrical. Goethe says

that green is the point of real satisfaction. Red is the point of ideal satisfaction, or the point of fusion; green is the point of real satisfaction, or mixture. So, I can make my little triangle up-top red, as the point of maximum intensification, and I can make my little triangle in the middle green, between yellow and blue.

Green starts it over again. It's a sort of—the triangle is genetic: that's the main thing. There's a genesis of color in Goethe's triangle. Green gives us the idea. Green emerged as the combination of yellow and blue. Now I just have to mix yellow and red, which gives me orange above, in the triangle up above. Then I just have to mix red and blue, which makes purple. And there, I've generated my six basic colors—I'm highlighting this because often, when you read Goethe, they're listed as a function of the image of the color triangle. It's not just that there are colors: so-called secondary color blends and primary colors—three primary colors: yellow, blue, red; and three secondary colors: orange, purple, green—that's not it. I felt like the genesis in Goethe's text is really [*indistinct word*], and that the color triangle expresses this genesis.

In order, you have: the emergence of yellow, the emergence of blue, the twofold emergence of red via the intensification of both yellow and blue, the emergence of green via mixing, carrying on mixing through [*indistinct word*] Imagine if I had colored chalk—that'd be lovely—so, what's left? I still have combinations; that will be complicated. That's the reason why we'll need the color wheel later. The combination, yellow – green, here. The combination, green – blue. The combination, orange – purple. And so, the color triangle is complete.

It's simple but elegant. Once again, I think [one must not read it] as a fully complete triangle. It's a genetic triangle. And moreover, you can't build it up gradually, I think you're led to construct it in order -- 1, 1', 2, 3, 4, 4', 5, 5' 5''… That's what the color triangle is [*indistinct word*] You could add to that: color's light-dark, white-black exterior, you can see how powerful, now, how color blooms out of its exterior. That's the origin of the different colors' independence; it's a genesis. So that would be… and I'd say [*indistinct words*] … The triangle is genetic. [*Pause*] So far, so good? Any issues? As for the color wheel, it is structural [*indistinct words*] [*Pause*]

I'm starting with yellow—there's a reason I'm starting with yellow—I'll put it at the top of my circle and from there I'll establish the first diametric opposition. What is the diametric opposite of yellow? Yellow is one of the three primitive or primary colors: yellow, blue, red.[3] The opposite of yellow is the combination of the two other primitive colors. Once I have my three primitive colors—yellow, blue, and red—a diametric opposition would be between one of these primitive colors and the combination of the other two. This diametric opposition is often known as the relationship between complementary colors.

What are two complementary colors? Two complementary colors are such that one is a primitive color, and the other is made by combining the other two. So yellow is diametrically opposed to the combination of blue and red, or purple. Consequently, if I started to draw my circle—notice that this circle is not at all genetic. It begins, starting with the problem of diametric opposition; it begins with drawing a structure. That's why I think that it's obvious that the color wheel is lifeless if you haven't first worked through the color triangle. [*Noises*] You can sense that I have a great preference for the color triangle, a great preference for the color triangle. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, when it concerns the circle… What? [*Someone makes an inaudible remark*] So you've got your first diametrical opposition, yellow and purple, purple as the combination of blue and red forces us to put to our circle -- what you know already, there are six sections, the three primary colors and the three binary colors – so [*indistinct word*] blue and red, six sections for the three primary colors; purple is a combination of blue and red. [*Inaudible words*] Two other colors, henceforth through deduction, and here, it's no longer at all a genesis; it's a deduction of structure, it's a structural deduction whereby you put down your two other sections along the periphery: blue/yellow with green as the intermediary, yellow/red with orange. And you have, you can read from there, your diametrical opposition: just as yellow is diametrically opposed to purple according to the law of complementary colors, red is diametrically opposed to green, since red is a primitive color diametrically opposed to the combination of the other two: the combination of the other two is that between yellow and blue, and yellow-and-blue is green. So, the diametrical opposition between red and green, the diametrical opposition between blue and orange, since orange is yellow-and-red diametrically opposed with the third primitive color… Yes? I'm almost done.

One kind of relationship between colors comes about via diametric oppositions along the color wheel. It's the theme of complementary colors. Goethe's dotted line[4] suggests that there are other relationships. The other relationships are when the relations between colors follow along chords and no longer across the diameter. Diametric oppositions, in Goethe's terminology which will be quite influential, are harmonious combinations. Harmonious combinations between yellow and purple, orange and blue, red and green. They're the complementary relationships.

We leave diameters behind and consider chords. Two types of chords. You select two colors by passing over an intermediary. These must be called the big chords. These are what Goethe will call "characteristic combinations".[5] This is what I've written in dashes; the list of characteristic combinations will be: green – orange, orange – purple. You see you've jumped over yellow. You've drawn a chord in the circle such that you've brought together green and orange by skipping yellow. That's the big chord.

Move onto the second characteristic combination: orange – purple, skipping over red. Third combination: purple and green, skipping blue. In the other direction: combining blue – red, skipping purple; red – yellow, skipping orange; blue – yellow, skipping green. And you have your network of so-called "characteristic" combinations.

And lastly -- what I didn't include there to keep it from getting too complicated [*inaudible words*], but Goethe does include it – what he'll call, and it's not by chance and these are of great importance, what he'll call non-characteristic combinations.[6] [*Pause*] These are the small chords [*Pause*] where you don't skip colors; you just skip over the intermediary between two colors. And the non-characteristic combinations include: yellow – orange, orange – red, red – purple, purple – blue, blue – green, green – yellow. You have your aggregate, your structural aggregate. What I find interesting is that it's your choice. I mean the triangle says genetically what the circle says structurally. In my view, I have my view, the circle is dead, although you might make it turn… which is important because I'm saying, you sense that it's not just the theory, it's the basis for all theory. It's not entirely clear that this is adequate; we'll see that it's not adequate. In

a sense, was it necessary to wait for Goethe for that? We'll see the extent to which this topic is complicated., why it happened at that point in time…, why it happened at that point in time.

I'm saying, in my question, Delacroix made his palette into a real timer, a chromatic timer, a chrono…, [*Pause*] a chromatic timer, a chronometer, that is, a clock—you might say that he wanted to assign hours to the color wheel. That's why there are so many… it's already symbolic. Being necessarily structural, it's symbolic … [*inaudible words; Deleuze starts speaking to someone near the board*] But anyway, you could say the reverse.

A student: [*Inaudible comments*]

So what Delacroix was doing with all that? It's very important to put things in order; they were all very orderly, right? Sometimes, they get photographed in disorderly studios, but that's something else. He placed his diametrical colors, and then he surrounded… in a big pile, and then he surrounded that with derived or blended colors and then that made a chromatic timer. [*Pause*] That's one anecdote… it'd be like exercises. If I were a painter, I'm sure that I'd be really into that necessarily… [*Long interchange with students near the board*]

A painter who hates color is a great painter. How, according to these schemas, how can a painter arrange colors on the palette? That's the first practical problem. Second practical problem: what does it mean when a painter hates a color? For example: Mondrian and green [*inaudible words*] … abomination. A painter who detests green. That's one of his main reasons for leaving New York because New York is the only city in the world where there are no trees…

Claire Parent : That what ?

Hidenobu Suzuki [*both next to the microphone*] I couldn't hear.

Claire Parnet: Gilles, we can't hear over here…

Deleuze: Is that true? What can we do? I've almost finished… From the start you haven't heard anything?

Claire Parnet: I'd like to know why Mondrian left for New York? [*Laughter, noise, indistinct words*]

Deleuze: Because he didn't like green.

Claire Parnet: But why? New York is the only city in the world that…?

Deleuze: It's the only city without any trees! [*Laughter, noise of diverse conversations*] [*Long pause; Deleuze continues chatting away from the microphone*]

There are colors missing from the palette. It's as interesting to ask a painter about the colors that are missing as about the colors they use. Well, so, you could have all sorts of practical exercises. When a color is named after a painter… I don't think it's based on laws or norms, especially

with the genetic element of colors. That's how basic decisions are made. What's more, it's so genetic that it has depth, this triangle. [*Pause*]

But what is its depth? First, it has strata. It's completely stratified; you have to read it perpendicularly. If the genetic color triangle had a structure, it'd be a perpendicular structure—why?

The first stratum: it casts light and darkness. That's the theme with color's dark side. And what proves that color has a dark side? You'll find it at the level… where this kind of emergence from white and from black, if you rotate your color wheel, you get gray from white and black, and that is the deepest stratum—color is emerging from light and darkness.

Then what we should note is that [*indistinct words*] it isn't the same space. The space of light and the space of color are not the same. Color will be… there isn't any color; that's what one means by "chromatic color." The principle of the relativity of colors, what is it? A color is only determined in relation to neighboring colors, the color of context. Color is created in this way, this first stratum casts darkness and light, casts gray, gray being understood as white and black.

The second stratum. It breaks off; it starts to break off from this foundation. Light and dark are color's foundation. White and black are the foundation of color, it emerges from this base. It emerges from this base in the form of yellow, blue, and their shared intensification: red.

At this point, relationships between colors are formed, irreducible to the light-dark relationship. The light-dark relationship still affects color nevertheless, in the form of light and dark colors. The light-dark relationship in color will determine the relationship between light and dark colors, and by no means does it exhaust color relations. It's what is called "value relations", value relations [*rapports de valeur*]. It's precisely in the relationship between light and dark colors. Color only exists through independent relationships, specifically, not between values but between hues, between colors with the same level of saturation. A perfect example is the relationship between complements. [*Pause*]

There are so many strata that… actually, let's go over a brief history of colorism.[7] What is colorism? These are useful terms. And I've come right back to Riegl. Riegl proposed a distinction between polychromy and colorism. Polychromy refers to any detail or any use of color— extraordinarily complex and extraordinarily rich—where color is still subordinate to something else. What do I mean? It can be subordinate to form, to form. You arrange your colors organically according to the lines of the form. Then you'd have polychromy. Egyptian art and Greek art are classic examples of polychromy. [*Pause*]

Color can also be subordinate to light. With painting you actually had to distinguish, if only vaguely, between a luminist tendency and a colorist tendency. Luminists are those who achieve color through light, and colorists are those who achieve light through color, through a treatment of color. Rembrandt, for example, whose works are marvelous, is rightly hailed as among the greatest luminists. [*Pause*]

Fine, there isn't just one possible subordination; I'd say, however, that's already no longer polychromy; you see, it's something else. But it isn't colorism either, because it isn't color for its own sake; it cannot develop in itself… it can realize any value relationship, [but] it can't fully develop all of its relationships in tonality or hue.

And with the color wheel, it's precisely Goethe who strongly emphasizes the following theme: based on the color wheel, each color—this accounts for why there's a movement, a dynamism to color—each color tends to evoke the totality of the color wheel; basically, then, you'd have coefficients of speed or slowness. Every color suggests the entire color wheel, often via its diametric opposition in particular. Red will suggest green, and it's only in your eye that one complement suggests the other. That famous expression in every introduction to color: you stare at a color and then, once the color is taken away, your eye suggests the complementary color. For example, red suggests green.

So, what am I saying? If I were to give a brief overview of the history of colorism: I think that the moment when the first colorism appears it's like at the border of luminism; light-color and problems are combined. That doesn't mean [*indistinct words*] one does beyond the other [*indistinct words*], and colors come up out from ground. And the ground becomes captivating; it's like overlaying two grays. Colors come up out from a ground, from a dark ground. It's the famous dark color, which goes through so many developments in the history of philosophy. And this dark color is now meant to manifest the dark side of all colors, and these emerging, dark colors are? They are ultimately gray on gray; however, it's not a gray gray since there is a luminous gray, a luminist gray from black-white, and a chromatic gray from green-red, two sets of complementary colors.

So, in an initial colorism, colors indeed emerge from this dark ground, which expresses the overlay of both grays. As vivid as they are, they demonstrate their dark nature. Starting from there, all of colorism's movement, all of colorism's dynamism will assert itself more and more—and what will that entail?... [*Interruption of the recording*] [46:32]

Part 2

… How does one reach this vivacity, expressing the relationship between colors and light? How does one achieve bright hues, since only bright hues express the relationship between colors? It will be done in stages.

Just looking at French painting, I'll use a sequence of three stages, three moments, in Delacroix. What do we see in Delacroix's technique? See, because it's a question of technique. We find something rather strange: the ground's dark color often lingers and for a long time, right, it's already fully color but dark color—only with Delacroix do we get bright colors. How do we move beyond this dark color, these dark colors—how do we draw out more vibrant hues? That's the crucial moment. It's always colorism that appears, that reappears; it's a problem.

And Delacroix invents a process that will be recognized even while he was alive, whether people mocked him for it or instead used it themselves: it's the process of using what are called "crosshatching." He will literally chop up [*hacher*] his dark color—there's no other word for it:

green crosshatching, red crosshatching—and it's with crosshatching that color will realize its bright aspects, in bright hues.

One of Delacroix's greatest moments, "Give me a heap of mud and I will bring out an exquisite color," "give me a heap of mud and I will bring out an exquisite color."[8] It's not like that, it's not a literal formula, it's what he does on the canvas. [*indistinct words*] What becomes possible after Delacroix? The unfolding of relations, the unfolding of bright hues and the relationships between bright hues, in a way that no longer depends on color emerging from a dark ground.

It's as though Delacroix had kept—well, I'm going a little far with the dialectic, it didn't occur like this—it's as though Delacroix kept it only in order that he'd no longer need it. Which doesn't take away, which doesn't take anything away from his masterpieces built around dark color. Who's that? To isolate and heighten the relationship between bright hues without passing into dark color, dark color—of course, that is the Impressionists.

And that's perhaps the first time that colorism appears in its pure form: light, completely subordinate to color. It's perhaps the second time since there was Turner, Turner with his yellows There's a really beautiful, remarkable painting by Turner called "Homage to Goethe", since "Homage to Goethe" is like the pictorial version of the chromatic circle. [*indistinct words*] For the Impressionists, that's the problem. By the same token, Delacroix's crosshatching, which worked as crosshatching since it was used to chop up [*hacher*] the base color, the dark color, what will it become? It became the well-known Impressionist element, the comma-stroke, the juxtaposition of commas, juxtaposition [*indistinct words*] no longer crosshatching chopping up the dark color but little commas on their own.

And well, throughout Impressionism, there are various style when it comes to commas: Monet's commas. That's not… that's how an expert recognizes [an artist]; sometimes you're hard-pressed to distinguish a Pissarro from a Monet, a little bit a lesser Renoir from a Degas. [*Pause*] An expert [*indistinct words*] With the comma, it's not about that, that there's a link. When the comma starts cracking and becomes Van Gogh's signature … [*inaudible words*] but Van Gogh's comma [*indistinct words*] understand that in the end, with colorism and the development of colors for themselves, it's as if the basic unit of painting delivered itself from a smaller unit, a kind of atomism. Delacroix's crosshatching turns into the impressionist comma; the impressionist comma turns into Cézanne's little dabs – well, "becomes", that's not… -- which turns into lastly [*the sounds of cassette pushed into recorders blocks Deleuze's voice*] the apparent impact of Seurat's points, will be transformed into the colorist relationships. [*Pause*] And after that… [*Pause*]

Well, there we are, how well I'm explaining things, right? We'll let all that marinate. For now, this is like a long parenthesis that I completed, and we have that accomplished. What we still need to look at now concerns color, but I didn't get to it yet so we've made progress, and now I'll come back to something else, but this is fine, that's what I'll need… [*Interruption of the recording*] [54:30]

[*After an apparent break, Deleuze has returned to his seat near the microphone*] …You see, the colors aren't good. It's a very nice triangle. [*Pause, noises of students returning*]

Okay, well, see: that's a parenthesis we could put before or after; everything else, it's something to take home with you, okay? You can read more about this in Goethe, right? I'd rather you read it, but if you don't read it... fine, fine, that's… Well, are there any comments, additions?

A student: White and black, [*indistinct words*] I read Goethe's text, and it's very complicated problem, because on the one hand, there are color[s]; he says, white is the first, the first genesis of darkness, and black is the essence of darkness, so they are colors; but at the same time, he challenges Newton on the question of white which is born from the color wheel. Goethe says: not at all, that white cannot be generated from the color wheel; that's gray.

Deleuze: Absolutely.

The student: And this ambiguity that—

Deleuze*:* Personally, I think that the ambiguity is easily accounted for; it's what I was getting at when I said that the triangle should be interpreted genetically. Then color doesn't actually have an absolute beginning—rather, at the same time, white and black are both the milieu for the exteriority of color, the form of color's exteriority, which doesn't yet have any color inside, and the emergence of the inside. Especially since what he reproaches Newton for, among other things then it'd get complicated; we would have to, if we really focused on color, we would indeed have to pit everything in Goethe against Newton.

Anne Querrien: Newton, for me… I feel like he was using the laws of optics, decomposing light through the prism and…

Deleuze: Completely, right.

Anne Querrien: And I mean, on that alone, you'll find some pop science books on color, the idea that the eye's three primary colors [are]—and it's what was used in television—red, green, and blue and as for television, I have the equation here for its wavelengths: it's just about 51% red, 39% green, and 10% blue, and so according to the color triangle, that puts television over completely on the black side.

Deleuze: Yes, yes, it gets pushed over.

Anne Querrien: … pushed over to black, and on the other hand, a big article in the Sunday *Le Monde*—a fascinating article on how color images in television are coded to ensure that color broadcasts are compatible with black-and-white receivers, and well, they subtract color instead of adding it—and so pull it even further towards black, so that black-and-white receivers can pick up color broadcasts.

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes. [*Deleuze's tone is less than enthused, hence laughter all around him*]

Anne Querrien: So then, one would have to compare techniques because it seems that the development of *chiaroscuro* emerges at the same time as color printing and the additive

composition of colors in printing, and Delacroix and company are completely parallel to the research on half-toning in photography.

Deleuze: Or Seurat's method, right, in pointillism, would be another technical comparison to draw with punctual coding …

Anne Querrien: And photography in color …

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, yes. [*Pause*] Well, okay, let's keep going… Yes, another comment?

The first student: Another thing, about the nine chromatic cycles…

Deleuze: A numerical correspondence.

The student: Except for nine, okay, we have three for the three colors, we have six, and now we can't have nine and go on directly to…, and if we keep on separating them—

Deleuze: Let's see.

The student: Whereas in the other—

Deleuze: We have three… In the other…

The student: In the other, we have nine.

Deleuze: Oh, you mean in the triangle! Yeah, that's interesting.

The student: Yes, it's important that we get nine.

Deleuze: It's important!

The student: ...that we get nine, yes.

Deleuze: Well, aren't you an abstract mystic! [*Laughter*]

The student: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes, it's important, but we should… I can't keep up because I'm totally wiped out. We can only get… With the wheel, don't we get…? So, three, three… -- Oh, this is really beyond me -- Think on this; it's an exercise: how we might get nine with the color wheel. [*Pause*] Yes, even though it's clear in the triangle—oh! You could maybe untangle a great mystery. Look! Well, [*Pause*] we'll set that aside for now, but again: we're going to need it soon. [*Pause*]

Do you remember the point we reached? We had just defined our first signal-space, the Egyptian space. But at the same time, this Egyptian signal-space wasn't made for painting, or at any rate, it certainly wasn't exclusive to painting. It's even expressed formally, infinitely more clearly, in

Egyptian bas-relief. And my first question along these lines is: Won't this establish something long-term, something essential about painting? Won't it establish something long-term that's essential about painting, namely, the idea of flatness?[9] Because, look, many critiques have specifically defined painting in two ways—take [Clement] Greenberg for example, a contemporary critic I've already talked about. He says that painting consists in two things: flatness and the determination of flatness. That itself is interesting because what does that mean—the determination of flatness as distinct from flatness. Flatness and the determination of flatness. Okay, maybe, maybe but it's not so self-evident that painting is defined by flatness.

I mean, isn't there a thickness to the canvas? [It's] why some—and not all—there are some painters who even revolve around there being thickness to the canvas. Wouldn't this idea of painting as flatness and the determination of flatness in part come from a very old horizon in painting, the Egyptian horizon, an Egyptian achievement? Why? Because we saw if we try to define Egypt's signal-space, according to Riegl, we more or less get the following formula: form and ground are taken on the same plane, flatness—i.e., an equal flatness of form and ground. Form and ground are taken on the same plane, both equally close to each other and equally close to ourselves. That's what it is – if I try to sum up the presentation of Egypt according to Riegl – that's what it is: form and ground are taken on the same plane, both equally close to each other and equally close to ourselves. That's Egyptian bas-relief -- and we saw how it could be equally true for pyramids, in a more complicated way -- and that's Egyptian painting.

Yes, we'll have to hang onto this idea of "flatness." Perhaps it's Egypt that realized painting as flatness. And then this theme, he developed from there, but it didn't have any of the same urgency. Again, it doesn't go without saying that a canvas is flat. After all, there are some, there are some painters who paint backwards; many painters today paint backwards. What does painting backwards mean, if not that the canvas has thickness? There are painters who problematize the idea of surface. There's a group—there's a very important group, the Supports/Surfaces group,[10] and then still other groups, a group that many Americans haven't stopped problematizing it. But we'll leave all that aside.

Flatness won't so much be the necessary outcome of painting as it will be painting's Egyptian horizon, painting's external Egyptian horizon. And indeed, that is what Egyptian space is. Is this the expression of a will to art, as Riegl puts it, or is it tied to -- then it's all fair game, we can always dream -- is it tied to certain conditions of both civilization and nature, right, the desert, bas-relief's relationship to the desert, the pyramid's relationship to the desert, the eye's relationship to the desert? Doesn't this relationship specifically imply of *planning* of space?[11]

Because, in fact, I'm hitting on something I didn't get to say last time, when Riegel tries to say what sort of vision corresponds to Egyptian space. See, on the side of the object—I'm just summarizing here— on the object side, there's indeed an operation of *planning*; the relationships in space are transformed into planimetric relationships. Well, form and ground are on the same plane, it's linearity and, like [Greenberg] says, [the determination][12] of linearity, that is, what determination of linearity will result from the fact that form and ground are taken on the same plane?

Coming back to what we covered last time: the determination of linearity that results from this involves three elements of painting. It's the three laws of painting precisely because form and ground are taken on the same plane, inhabit the same plane, that painting will have three elements: *ground*, *form*, and what relates ground to form and form to ground, namely the geometrical crystalline *contour*. The geometrical crystalline laws [*légalité*]. And I said that when we look, when we happen to look at a modern canvas, and are in a situation such that we—it's like we're forced, subjected, led to distinguish three elements: form, ground, and contour—then we can say, "An Egyptian's been here!" [*Laughter*]

I'm thinking of a painting, and maybe some of you know it off the top of your head, can see it in your mind—it's a beautiful painting, I think, really very beautiful! A painting by [Paul] Gauguin: *La Belle Angèle, La Belle Angèle.* What a painting![13] It's a very fine example—and in my opinion, it might be one of the first examples in modern painting—of what's called—I tried to put it in broad strokes—shallow depth, limited depth. There is depth but it's very, very limited; form and ground are really close to the same plane. What is the form? It's the head of a Breton named Angèle—one Gauguin was fond of: a real Breton! [*Laughter*] She's depicted with her headdress. She's perfect. Okay. Anyway.

What is the ground? It's—and this says it all—a field; it's a field.[14] With what we're given it's not clear who invented it; the letters are murky. Is it Van Gogh? Is it Gauguin? Well, it doesn't really matter who. Or was it another third member of their group? They made fields, but still—to liven them up—they put bouquets of flowers, like on wallpaper. They put little bouquets of flowers. There's a… Van Gogh was close to a postman in Arles. And he made several portraits of this postman. There's one of those—very, very fine—where the ground comprises a field like wallpaper. It's green, if memory serves. [https://www.peintures-tableaux.com/Portrait-du-facteur-Joseph-Roulin-2-Vincent-van-Gogh.html] Because he made several. There's a blue one—one with a blue field. There's a green one. And I think the green one has really charming little bouquets of flowers! Which weave a decorative motif onto the field. Anyway. There's the field, then. There's the form. What is it? The form is the head of the Breton. And she is clearly not treated as a field.

There's still one problem. You'll notice that it runs throughout the history of painting. When it comes to colorism, what do you do about flesh? It's right here, bizarrely, that painting and phenomenologists come together, because both are so animated by the question of flesh, by embodiment. It was the problem of flesh that led [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty to painting.[15]

What do you do about flesh? I tracked down a quote from Goethe, just to tie everything together...oh! Where is that quote? A very nice quote from Goethe—Here it is: "For flesh, the color should be totally liberated from its elementary state."[16] Flesh poses an odd problem for painting. How do you make flesh without winding up with gray? If there is a case—even in the case, even in the case of impressionism, flesh is even more of a problem. How do you depict flesh? Things are no big deal, but flesh doesn't exactly give off much light, you know! How do you prevent flesh from getting muddy? It's tough! You need to treat color in a particular way. So, it's incredible in *La Belle Adèle*—no, Angèle—in *La Belle Angèle.* Yes, *La Belle Angèle. La Belle Angèle,* since you have two color treatments corresponding to your first two pictorial elements.

Naturally, it wasn't like that with the Egyptians; that's why it's a great modern painting. You have one way of treating flesh And I'm jumping to… I'm foreshadowing because… Finally, one major solution to treating flesh, to treating flesh pictorially, is using what's called broken color; it's by breaking the color. What is broken color? Well see later on, won't we! It doesn't matter, here we're situating a word, a new category in color; broken color is how Van Gogh and Gauguin, for example, treat flesh. Yet, alright. Alright. So, you have the use of broken color, the form, the figure, the use of color fields, the ground's treatment, you have your two elements.

And Gauguin uses a method that a guy, unfortunately a minor—well, not unfortunately!—a minor painter in Gauguin's day tried to bring back, and this painter called it "*cloisonné*."[17] You'll find it in *La Belle Angèle*: the figure is surrounded by a sort of yellow circle that'll be very important—for starters, this yellow circle unquestionably has a comic effect. Gauguin had a real sense of humor, visually; he's one of the most lighthearted painters, the most… yes, painting's comic. And when it's bracketed off in *cloisonné, La Belle Angèle* starts to look like a head on a cheese tin, on the side of a cheese tin; it's cropped like she's a Breton mascot for Camembert—that's just Gauguin, instead of… Well. And this yellow, this yellow line, is great because, really, that's what brings out the figure's broken color and the ground's color field [*ton aplat*]. And there's a kind of… And at the same time that'll be a crucial component of shallow depth, that is, it'll establish the form and ground "almost" at the same plane.

So, when you see a painting like this—or I mentioned Bacon which is actually very different—but when… when, in the large, large majority of Bacon's paintings, you'll find three elements that stand out. They aren't all necessarily like this. The three elements are: a field for the ground; second, the figure is always done in broken colors; and the autonomous contour, or what refers the form to the ground and the ground to the form, which in Bacon is no longer mere *cloisonné* with its volume, its surface or volume—it's kind of a rug—in the color-relationships with the grounding field, with the field of color. You might say there are three colors in Bacon that form a sort of rug or ring in the middle of which—or inside, at least—the figure is contained or propped up. Such that you get three regimes of color: a contour regime, secured by the rug or ring; the ground's regime secured by the field; a figure regime secured by the broken colors; and these three regimes work together; you can declare: homage to Egypt.

But this kind of return to Egypt is clearly a return to Egypt via thoroughly non-Egyptian means, since now we find the three Egyptian elements again in different approaches to color. And maybe you see what he [Greenberg] meant by linearity and the determination of linearity:[18] the Egyptians provide for linearity, or the identical plane shared by both form and ground, and thereby determine this linearity with three elements: form, ground, and autonomous contour. Well, if you've understood that, and that the Egyptians didn't settle it, and that it can live on only if a modern painter can recover it and resurrect Egypt via non-Egyptian means—then you've understood generally what happens every time, what happens all the time in art.

As a result, to wrap up our history of Egypt, there's just, there's a lot we should, at the end, we should talk about still, but it's fine -- there's one last thing to be done: as regards the subject, what's going on? We've defined the objective elements: the same plane for the form and ground; the three elements constituting the determination of flatness: the ground field, the form, the bas-

relief figure; and the contour, once again, the geometrical crystalline contour, the geometrical crystalline law [*légalité*] that carries the form to the ground.

So, what stays in your eye, your Egyptian eye—it goes without saying that Egyptians have lost this eye and that today's Egyptians no longer have this eye [*Pause*] unless they do have it, I don't know… after all… well, anyway, yes [*Pause*] yes, yes, yes, yes, the eye… That's how Riegl defines the Egyptian eye, but you'll see that the Egyptian eye can only be defined according to its correlate, that is according to Egypt's signal-space. What is the Egyptian eye?

And so, in the first edition of Riegl's crucial text, *Art Industry -- Late Roman Art Industry -- w*e find something difficult, something very simple but which comes across as difficult. The first edition tells us, sure! Yeah, this Egyptian space is a closed-in space; it invites a close-up view. No, that's not shocking. You might think that's not really artistically motivated: it's because of the desert and light that one's view is fundamentally drawn in; in Egypt, you look quite closely.

A student from outside: Excuse me… [*Inaudible comments; her remarks concern an official action at the university level requiring that students sign some kind of form*]

Deleuze: Where do we drop them off?

The student: [Room] C 196.

Deleuze: So, fill them out at the end, okay?

The student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: What's that? Oh! Yes, yes—

The student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: It's alright; the meetings are everyone's concern. You don't know about the meetings? Oh! That's my fault; I should have told you. Yes, yes, you know the dates? Oh dear.

The student: There's a committee room.

Deleuze: … And that we've yet to see, in teaching, it's true; I'd like a newsletter with updates on late-stage proposals for everyone in their respective fields to up-to-speed with proposals that are already far along—for example, the university project was catastrophic. It's not hard to understand. The university project consisted in bypassing university councils.[19] Well, our knee-jerk reaction is always that no one gives a shit about the university council! But hold on, what will you replace it with? And what about contacting the EBU—I mean, credits would have been distributed directly to the EBU. Which, clearly, hands regional unions—who are also complacent—absolutely put them in the ministry's hands, because there was no longer any university structure. Now that was a terrible proposal.

So, any time I talk to somebody in a given field, oddly enough, they confirm it. I saw not long ago, I saw -- he didn't tell me any secrets -- I saw a banker, and he said, you know, there was a plan to blow up banks' collective bargaining agreements—a very late-stage proposal. But it would be very interesting… -- [*Deleuze reacts here to a student's remark*] yes, but that occurred in context of the banks, in a particular way -- it'd be interesting to get a rundown so that we know advanced proposals that'd go into effect one or two years from now. But for me, that's what elections are for. What were they plotting? This is no joke!

The student: General Assembly—you have the floor.

Deleuze: That's true; that's why I'm thinking if these meetings...

The student: …that's how we found out about it, at 10 pm… that's why we've decided to take action… so if you want to respond… Goodbye.

Deleuze: Okay, then. Goodbye. To reiterate: Yes, it won't do if only professors show up to these meetings. Everyone who is able to go has to… You should look into it. Personally, I think it's Friday or Saturday, but you—you think it's Thursday… At any rate, you all have to go, have to show up with numbers. Because it's important: to redirect—at present there is still a small chance to salvage something from everything that's… yes, so normally, as I see it, it's Friday and Saturday. Look! I'll stop there, alright, and we'll take a break since we've had enough! [*Class continues without break*] Listen to me! [*Some students try to quiet the ones still arguing*]

Claire Parnet: Ah, what a chatterbox she is! Anne, shut up!

Deleuze: He [Riegl] is trying to say what sort of eye corresponds to Egyptian space. And I told you that in the first edition, he says, well! It's very strange: it's a near-sighted vision, then, it's near-sighted vision but how does the near-sighted eye behave? Well! He says, it's bizarre, but literally, see, form and ground both occupy the same plane, and I—the viewer, with my eye—I'm just as close. It's an eye that literally acts like touch. It's a tactile eye. It's a tactile eye.

And here Riegl—it's a little—anyway, what we need to see, what we get from this passage in Riegl, is that it's not a metaphor, that moreover, Riegl is pointing out two of the eye's functions: you have optical vision, and you have tactile vision. The eye as an eye is not—see, the tactile eye isn't an eye that's supplemented with touch, like when I use my hands to confirm something I've seen, when I touch a face, for example—that's not what it is. It's the eye as such that acts like touch, so this passage from Riegl is still ambiguous, and it's just—it's bizarre. It's in the second edition that he comes out and says that we should distinguish—indeed, he has to coin a complicated word to avoid equivocating—and he says there are like two visions: there's optical vision and there's vision that he calls "haptic," h-a-p-t-i-c, haptic vision. He borrows the word from the Greeks: *hapto*, which means to touch, the eye's touch, a haptic sense of sight.[20]

So, we'll define the haptic sense of sight, if we want to give it a real sense, the haptic sense of sight would be a use of sight that's no longer optical—no longer vision from a distance. See, optical sight is from a distance, relatively speaking; however, the haptic use of vision, or haptic

sight, is a close-up sight that grasps form and ground on the same equally close plane. Well let's suppose, then, before you we take a break, I'm thinking—there are a lot of problems here!

We'll keep this word, haptic; after all, these categories, these categories, it might be really interesting because painting is intended for the eye, right, it's intended for the eye! But which eye? I might suggest that painting perhaps gives rise to an eye within the eye—that painting, okay, might literally have something to do with the so-called third eye. Would we have two optical eyes, two eyes for optical vision, and then a third eye? A third haptic eye? As a result, is it painting that produces the haptic eye? Is there a haptic eye outside of painting? I'm jumping ahead, that's no longer the Egyptians. See, it's knowing whether this talk of "the haptic" will do anything for us. And what would this haptic eye be?[21]

Anyway! Let's reconnect with everything we've covered today. Look. Light—light is the optical eye; light solicits an optical eye, perhaps. I don't know. Maybe we could say that. But doesn't color belong to a whole other eye? Isn't it a whole other eye? Doesn't color solicit a haptic eye? Wasn't all that earlier about how a haptic eye is reconstituted out of the optical eyes?

In a spirited letter, Gauguin says, "The painter's eye is in heat"— I don't remember what page, but it when it comes up it's pretty funny.[22] What is the painter's eye? This eye, which Cézanne himself claims turns all red, so red, so red—I come back home and my eyes are red, so red that I can't see anymore. Eyes so red they can't see anything: the painter's eye, Gauguin's eye in heat—it's really bizarre. Isn't this a really very strange kind of vision? Isn't it the reconstitution of a haptic eye, the Egyptian eye, the third eye, right?

I'm saying "third eye" not because it's in the brain. It isn't in the brain; it's in the nervous system, but only because, I mean, it's in the middle of the two other eyes. That's where the painter is. But then, is color — I don't know, let's take it as far as we can — wouldn't color be a totally independent and original way of reconstituting haptic sight that the Egyptians had achieved in an entirely different way? The Egyptians created haptic vision by placing form and ground on the same plane and by producing three elements: form, ground, and geometrical crystalline contours. But, for us, hasn't an Egyptian eye been recovered through non-Egyptian means, namely, through colorism? Isn't the haptic eye the eye that draws from an optical external milieu – light, white and black —the inherent relationships of color?

Alright, we've wound up with all sorts of questions left hanging, because now we stumble upon the question: The Egyptian world appears to be dead; it can only be resurrected via totally independent means. What made the Egyptian world die off? Ah! What brought it to an end? [*Pause; someone answers from the back and Deleuze starts laughing*] I'm always bad about posing abstract questions, and well, I'll tell you, what caused the Egyptian world to die… [*Deleuze keeps laughing; another student makes a comment*] Sure, you might say that. You might put it another way. Okay, go take a break. Take a break. [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:33:02]

Part 3

… A lot of you during our break, a lot of you have been saying that you've been feeling sick and tired with this weather… I should just cave in and shorten class [*cheers and applause*], there we are! So, I'd just like to try to determine, see, we're trying to find out what this spatial event is, or rather this determination; I'll stick to the expression "linearity" and the "determination of linearity." Again, we saw it for Egyptian space. "Linearity" is the plane. "Determination of linearity" is the plane's three elements: ground, form, and contour.

I mean, what's causing this space to be somehow overturned!? Once again, this space will be so overturned that you'll only be able to find traces of Egypt using means that are completely—It'll be a resurrected Egypt. So, what could happen? If we stay there, we leave Riegl (or we'll come back to him, at least) but there we'll pose ourselves a question—and as always, like I'm always trying to show you, in a way, we don't have a choice—what might happen in this flat space where form and ground occur at the same plane as the three elements?

What's the accident? Accidents are accidents. Events are events. But what is accident and what is event? The spatial determination of the accident or event is exactly this. You have your Egyptian space—well look! Bas-relief. However slight, it's like an earthquake. It causes an earthquake. That is, the plane splits up; imagine that the plane splits up—but the aftermath, it's insane! The plane splits up, a foreground draws in, a background pulls back, even if only slightly. Disjunction of planes. Really, a disjunction of planes. From there—from there, anyway, it'll be fixed—there will be a foreground and there will be a background. And it's no big deal, as small as it is. The disjunction of planes; that'll be what brings us to other signal-spaces.

And after all, if I have a disjunction between planes, what does that give us—so we're really speeding through uh—what can come of it? A space where planes are disjointed, and which is essentially organized around the foreground. That's the first possibility -- I'm trying to think through the possibilities -- this is the signature of this space: there's a distinction between planes, but it's determined by the foreground [*avant-plan*]. I'm still using the concept of determination.

So that's great, that'll be great, this foreground-determined space. Then why not the other way around? Let's think of a background-determined space. Well that, you say, no—that's what we want whenever there's something new, that's what we want because that sounds great—a background-determined space. Why isn't it the opposite? Let's break it down — a background-determined space. We say: no, really, it's *that* one we want – each time, there's something new -- it's *that* one we want, a background-determined space. Just consider this: everything emerges from the ground, comes from the ground. So much power compared to the foreground-space! Form *comes out* of the ground in the most energetic sense of the word, while on the flip-side, when the fore-ground is predominant, the form sinks into the ground and determines its own relation to the ground—while here, form literally stems from the ground when the background is determinant. Ah, that must be a beautiful space—before being sure of it, I'm looking for logical positions for my spaces.

And what else can there be when the planes are disjointed? There might be a third thing. It's funny—something very, very winding. As the planes are disjointed, you don't worry so much about the planes themselves, neither the foreground [*avant plan*] nor the background [*arrière plan*]. We'll generate everything between the two planes. But what's between the two, and what

can be between them if it's not dependent on either the foreground or the background? I see three positions—logically, there are three.

But all, let's try to pin down some names. What about this artistic space where the foreground is determinant? So, there's volume—volume since the planes are disjointed. Anyway, you see that it's the end of the Egyptian world since volumetric relations have been liberated from planimetric relations. There is volume, but what's determinant is the foreground, because it's the foreground that contains the form, and the relationship to the background is determined by the form and by how the background takes shape in the foreground.

We'll all recognize this as Greek art. Take a Greek sculpture—it's a rare example; I'll still try to illustrate it clearly, but I like starting with a purely abstract schema. Not in order to apply it, but because I'd like to demonstrate something right away, the highs and lows of Greek sculpture.

What are the highs—the reliefs, brilliant reliefs. The Greeks had words for a sculpture's highs and lows, and the lows are the hollows—the hollows and the shadows and the whole sculpture has different levels, and that's how the art is evaluated: Greek harmony entails the variable distribution of highs and lows in equal measure. It's the highs in the reliefs that are determinant in Greek sculpture, that is, it's in the foreground where form is worked out, and working out the form determines the relationship with the background.

It's an aesthetic space of the foreground where it's the form that's determinant. And [Henri] Maldiney puts it well when discussing this in his book, *Gaze Speech Space*[23] : It's wrong—oh so wrong—wrong to say that the Greek world is the world of light. It's not the world of light because light is strictly subject to form's requirements. Sure, it's the world of light, but non-liberated light, light subject to form; light ought to reveal form and submit to the requirements of form. And all Greek sculpture is this way of handling light, this wonderful way of handling light in the service of form. No longer the haptic world of the Egyptians—it's an optical world, only an optical world where light's in the service of form; it's an optical world that still refers back to tactile form: it's a tactile-optical world.

And that's why Riegl defines Greek art as tactile-optical art with a corresponding space: the primacy of the foreground over the background. Which results in what's likely the most profound conception of art as rhythm or harmony, rhythm and harmony in the Greek sense and not in the modern sense. But we'll get to that. From one revolution to the next, imagine the reverse: I hope you'll be convinced if you look at Greek sculpture, but the same holds for all of Greek art. Light — not at all —light is subordinate to the cube's requirements, and the cube is the sort of environment particular to the foreground. It is form on two planes: there is a depth, there are shadows, there are lights, and all of that has to submit to the rhythm of the form, since the rhythm *is* form.

Well, so it's not at all a world of light—that'll have to wait; it's a serious problem because, see, it'll ultimately force us, next time it'll force us to really reconsider our conventional understanding of the Greek world.

Moving on to yet another revolution, what happened that could have reversed the Greek relationship such that the background becomes the determinant ground and that the form, the figure, springs from the ground? But it's a very different sort of figure when it springs out of the ground. It took what amounts to—look, we always talk about the Copernican revolution, and these revolutions are even more important, or at least just as important as the Copernican revolution. To say that Egyptian space gives way to a space determined by the foreground is just as consequential as saying whether the Earth revolves around the Sun or the Sun revolves around the Earth. It's about reversing the structure of space, let alone a second reversal where it's the ground, where everything comes from the ground.

Yeah, everything comes from the ground; that's how it is. How do you expect form to have the same bearing when it's determined by the foreground -- even if it's only responding to the background -- as when, on the other hand, it's literally projected by the background? By no means is it the same conception of form. When the background becomes determinant, where does the figure come from—it comes directly out of light and shadow. In other words, the space of the background is a space where light and shadow are liberated from form. Now it's form that depends on the distribution of light and shadow. It's a radical reversal of Greek space.

Who is responsible for this? That's why it's so sad, because it seems that we no longer understand it—even books on this start off by associating this with Greek space, when it's the opposite of Greek space. So, there are similarities—obviously, there are similarities—but it's *Byzantine* space. Byzantine art's great place in art history is by no means due to this alone, but its hallmark is having the figure emerge from the background instead of determining the figure as a form in the foreground. This time, light *is* set loose—shadow even more so—the Byzantines are the first colorists, since liberating light from form isn't too far from liberating color. And the Byzantines are the first, I think, the first in art to manipulate both color scales: the luminous scale, in value, and the chromatic scale, in color [*tons*].[24]

And the Byzantines even had three primary colors: gold, blue, red—the three well-known mosaic colors—with complex relationships to white (as in marble) and black (as so-called "smalt"), which grow and form a kind of framework through the relationships between colors, and the first luminists, just like the first colorists, i.e., giving up polychromy for colorism and luminism, that will be Byzantine. That warranted persecution, as the emperor will end up persecuting these artists.

Well, this history—if you consider the opposition between Greek space and Byzantine space—this isn't a linear historical development. If I'm looking for another sequence (this time painting/painting), this is perfect. Just picture a Byzantine figure: everything has to emerge from the ground because the mosaic is in a niche. It's a far-sighted vision; it's far-sighted vision from the viewer's perspective. Far-sighted vision—mosaic is embedded in a niche, and you get these figures eaten up by eyes. It isn't form that defines the figure. What is it? Form answers to light; it answers to shadow and light. The eyes of a Byzantine figure are everywhere there—or the eyes spread to anywhere these gazes up from the ground do. It's the very antithesis to the Greek world. And it might be one of the most beautiful spaces—really there's no better or worse—but really, Byzantine space is… if you compare it to Greek space, it's the exact opposite of Greek space.

Alright. I'm looking for a sequence in painting—There's another guy, just like how I singled out Riegl, there's a major figure in the history of painting named [Heinrich] Wölfflin. It's translated in French—a rather good book—on the 16th-17th centuries. But he obviously read Riegl because among other things, we find, moving from the 16th to the 17th century—his analyses are very thorough, very detailed—moving from the 16th to the 17th century we leave behind the 16th century's still tactile-optical vision. First, it was something else. First, I'm looking at the short transition between the 16th and the 17th century. We move away from tactile-optical vision—that of [Albrecht] Durer, or Leonardo [Da Vinci]. So that already involves a lot of variation; I'm not saying that it's the same space, but in a way it all belongs to a tactile-optical space.

And in the 17th century a kind of key or major revolution starts to take shape which will be the discovery of a purely optical space. The discovery of a pure space that culminates with Rembrandt, for example, but plenty of others beside. But with these two spaces—16th century space and 17th century space—what comes first, as the first determination? The primacy of the foreground… if you can think of something by Leonardo da Vinci or Raphael, you'll see it right away. Yet with one remarkable innovation—Raphael, for example—the foreground is curved. Wonderful curve, and a wonderful discovery only possible thanks to the primacy of the foreground.

I think… let me clarify, since there are some things I'm taking from Wölfflin that are so great, and then there are some things that… well, this a bit of a tangent, but around the 16th century there's a wonderful discovery and it was the same, I think, as what the Greeks discovered. What discovery? Well, it's… I don't like it, but I don't have a better word: it's "the collective line." You can really see the contrast, with the Egyptian line. The Egyptian line is fundamentally individual; indeed, it's the contour of individual form. That the collective is able to take on form is an idea that… that didn't occur to Egyptians. In other words, for an Egyptian, an individuality can get stronger and stronger, but it's always structured as an individuality. Collectivity as such doesn't… that starts with the Greeks.

What do you find in Greek art? You get the invention of a line that no longer coincides with this-or-that individual, a line that encompasses several individuals. There aren't real lines anymore: it's the contour of the ensemble. The invention of the collective line means that the line becomes the contour of an ensemble. The Apostles, for example: of course, they're still individualized, but that's not the point. What matters is the enveloping line that goes from the left-most Apostle to the right-most Apostle. I'm thinking of a famous painting, *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes,* by Raphael.

Well, in my opinion it seems obvious, but we're no longer there, think about how the collective line can be made specifically—it's the line of the foreground. It's specifically—it can only be identified via the foreground, as if the fact that the foreground has become determinant allows us to overcome the individual limits of form. Whereby what takes on form—and that's insane from an Egyptian perspective—from a Greek perspective, what takes on form? In Greek statues it's an ensemble, even if it's only a couple. You know right away I can imagine the objection: *but there are plenty of solitary figures*—sure! We shall see. Well, no matter. Anyway, couples in Greek statues: great! The line is the contour shared by two individualities.

And what develops in 16th century painting? Leonardo da Vinci's collective line, or Raphael's collective line. They aren't the same. You can tell painters apart by their collective line, their style of collective line. Something remarkable emerges with 16th century painting: a tree has a collective line that doesn't depend on its leaves, and the painter has to render the collective line in the foreground. A flock of sheep has a collective line, both flocks of sheep and groups of Apostles; group-painting literally moves downstage, overwhelms the foreground. Yet that appears to be just as true for Greek art as for 16th century art, but in entirely different conditions.

On that note, there's something that stands out throughout—or very often—in Leonardo da Vinci's writings, where he says: "Form must not be surrounded by lines."[25] Read that way, we risk of running into a contradiction because the sentence can be understood in two different ways, one of which Leonardo did not intend. You might think that it means that form should be free of lines. That's not what he means. Why not? Because the line's primacy is indisputable for him. Besides, what is a form free of lines? It's form subordinate to light and to color. Yet that's obviously not what da Vinci means. I think his writings and context make it clear that he means form shouldn't be contained by lines; it means that form exceeds the line of individuality. Form exceeds individual lines. But form will be determined by the line of the foreground.

Hence why it matters that Raphael starts to bend the foreground, like some kind of balcony, where the foreground itself is curved. That's one of the great achievements, the real achievements, of this period. But see, when it comes to space, I'd say the same thing goes for both 16th century art and Greek art; it's like they change signals.

The primacy of the foreground and the discovery of the collective line. Byzantium and the 17th century thus switch signals: the background has primacy, unleashing light and even color. But with the unleashing of light, everything comes from the ground [*fond*]. And that's what 17th century painting is all about. And it's so obvious, for example—I have something really simple in mind, a theme in the 16th century—it's well known, everyone's pointed it out—the 16th century theme: Adam and Eve. It's also one of Wölfflin's examples. Adam and Eve, standing side by side. It could be very complicated since this foreground is the foreground. It might be a curved space; it could be a curving foreground.

What perspective is famous in the 17th century? Diagonal. It's as if—if you will—there's no more foreground. Of course, there *is* one, but it's not what counts. It's like the foreground was punched out; it was punched out by a depth that drags the left toward… drags it toward or pulls it from the ground [*fond*], pulls the right from the ground.

There's no more foreground [*avant-plan*]; there's a differentiation based on the ground [*fond*]. It's clear, for example, in a great painting by Rubens that depicts the meeting of two people. In the 16th century they'd meet in the foreground and their meeting would take place in the foreground. Not at all with Rubens. Between the two meeting, there's practically an alleyway between them, made up of other people on other planes. So that each of the two meeting in the foreground—both of them—comes from the ground by differentiating, highlighting the alleyway separating them. They meet in the foreground, but only inasmuch as each comes out of the ground. It's no longer the foreground that determines things. Everything comes from the ground. It's the background that's determinant.

Anyway, in the end, then, there are two new spaces: Greek space or 16th century space, [and] Byzantine space or 17th century space, and then I was saying there's still one more—let's say we're no longer interested in planes, neither background nor foreground: what's between the two? Well, you have to be interested between the two. Who could be sufficiently barbarian to reject the plane and be interested in the in-between, and what would the in-between planes be? By what term can one call this thing that is neither ground nor form? What would that be?

For convenience, let's call it barbarian art. Maybe it's barbarian art. It has to be barbarian art—it should be, but who knows. And you see how we then come up with our three positions: primacy of the foreground; primacy of the background. Between them? The barbarians arrive—they always arrive "in-between." What happened? What happened is that somehow the Egyptian way of achieving unity shifted. The foreground and the background shifted. What's going on?

I said that it's either an accident or it's an event. Accident or event. That's the formula for accidents or events. Because once the planes have shifted, once there's a disjunction between planes, what do you want form to do? There's only one thing form can do: fall. It falls between the two planes. Or if push comes to shove, if it's animated by some miraculous energy, it will rise. Now we really get into the history of Western art—one that all comes down to rise and fall. The figure is constantly falling and rising. Say what? It's always on the verge of disequilibrium.

In other words, either accident or event—accident: the fall of the figure; event: the rise, the figure's ascension -- never stops. Fall and ascension are the two vertical movements perpendicular to the spreading of planes. They fall and rise again, you know, and what's the point? It's the aesthetic sensibility of, for example, it's the Christian aesthetic sensibility. The figure affected by this rising, falling. Deposition of the Cross and the Ascension.[26] And I mean at this level, we're no longer talking about religious categories; these are aesthetic categories. The succession, the endless series of the Depositions of the Cross or the Ascensions of Christ. And it'll never end. The figure is surrounded. It's no longer determined as an "essence"; the figure becomes fundamentally swept up by accidents or events. The painter of "essences" was Egyptian. Now accidents and events take their place, artistically. Always something just a bit off balance.

In a great text, *The Eye Listens* by [Paul] Claudel, specifically on Dutch painting, he analyzes in detail what he calls this kind of imbalance of bodies. There will be no curtain painted that doesn't seem to… just fall back down.[27] Or in Rembrandt, the lemons from which some peel dangles, or these glasses that are on the brink of tipping over, so much so that Cézanne invents—this isn't what prompts him to invent, while he's also looking essentially for the point of imbalance of form. It couldn't be otherwise.

And in a few great passages Claudel asks, "What is a composition?" What is it, composition? *The painting* becomes the composition! In what way? In the celebrated form of still-life, for example. And he says—he says it all in one beautiful sentence—he says, "Composition is organization in the process of coming undone." He doesn't say it like that, but almost.[28] It's organization in the process of coming undone. That is, it's an organization taken at the point of imbalance. And Claudel also talks about disintegration by light. Disintegration by light will be the motif running throughout his commentary on Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*.[29] We'll see that.

So, I'm just stating what we've established, that it is solely this that is… you get into all kinds of adventures once you discern a disjunction between the two planes. I'm not at all saying that everything gets mixed up, only that all these adventures fall under the heading: the fall or rise of accidents. These accidents can be all sorts of things. The line might be the collective line of a temporary group. Flocks of sheep, leaves rustling on trees in the wind, etc. It might be light that no longer coincides with the form of the object. that might be the eruption of color's break—in other words, painting found its essence in what was an accident for an Egyptian context.

Alright, good so far? Well, so what we need to… that's what we still need to look at; you can see what's left for us to cover. We still have two more meetings: all of this and then color. All this business with space, if I have time, and then color. Anyway, there you go. [*End of the recording*] [2:10:00]

Notes

[1] We should note that in contrast to Deleuze's detailed consideration of Goethe's color theory here, he only makes passing references to Goethe in his brief presentation of color theory in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation* (New York and London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 132-134, 139-140, and 191 note 14; (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 105-108, 112-113, and 164, note 14.

[2] Goethe's *Purpur* (which Deleuze calls here *pourpre*) predates the introduction of the word "magenta." There's precedent for retrofitting Goethe's color wheel to include magenta instead of "pure red." I'm putting words in both Goethe's and Deleuze's mouths, making them say "magenta" or "red" for *Purpur/pourpre* and "purple" for *violet,* for the sake of clarity.

[3] Let us note that *primitive* is rendered as as "primary" when it appears alone; here, however, "primitive" is retained because it appears alongside *primaire.* This is to avoid misleading the reader into thinking Deleuze has special plans for this term or is drawing a meaningful distinction between the two terms.

[4] Deleuze is working through an illustration. No dotted line in any available sources, but presumably the color wheel he's drawn or is looking at has dotted lines running along the different chords (as Deleuze describes them below).

[5] Cf. §§816-7 of Goethe's *Zur Farbenlehre*.

[6] *Ibid.,* §§826-9.

[7] In *Francis Bacon. Logic of Sensation,* Deleuze pays considerable attention to "colorism" and color: see pp. 139-143 as well as chapter 16, "Note on Color".

[8] While we are unable to locate this exact quote, the closest is a line often featured in books on painting, color and optics from the early 20th century: *"Donnez-moi de la boue, j'en ferai la chair de femme d'une teinte délicieuse"* (Give me some mud and I'll make of it a woman's flesh with a delicious hue), in Paul Signac, *D'Eugène Delacroix au néo-impressionisme* ([1911], Paris: Hermann, 1978), p. 86. This may actually do a better job of serving Deleuze's point. While some painters despaired over gray, muddy colors (Delacroix calls gray the enemy of the painter; see Signac, p. 37), he boasts that he can bring out beautiful colors from even the muddiest gray.

[9] "Flatness" is far and away the most common translation for *planéité*. "Planarity" is much less common and a bit clunkier in English, although it preserves "plan," for the sake of readers tracking plan/plane in Deleuze's career. The term "flatness" is chosen here because it is Greenberg's term: "The irreducible essence of pictorial art consists in but two constitutive conventions or norms: flatness and the delimitation of flatness." Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism," *Art International* 6.8 (October 1962), 30.

[10] Supports/Surfaces congealed as a group in the French political turmoil of the late '60s. It was patched together out of loosely connected painters from Southern France (André-Pierre Arnal, Vincent Bioules, Noël Dolla, Toni Grand, Bernard Pages, Patrick Saytour, Viallat,) and from Paris (Louis Cane, Marc Devade, Jean-Pierre Pincemin, Valensi and Daniel Dezeuze) who all shared a common interest in rejecting the status quo of the second School of Paris. Beyond their geographical differences, they all agreed on the fact that practice (painting) should go hand in hand with theory (writing, or critical thinking), but the southerners foregrounded practice where the Parisians emphasized theory and political activism. Even before the group's name was coined, their work had developed into a critique of Paris's centralized art system and comfortable esthetics. It is worth noting that before they briefly made it on the

Parisian art scene as a group, most of the artists were "provinciaux"-- mainly from the southeastern cities of Montpellier and Nice -- a term used more or less derogatorily in French to designate someone who is not up to speed with the latest trends. This conflictual dynamic between Parisians and Provincials was very much at the forefront of the members' relationships, and when the group eventually fell apart in 1972, it did so along that particular fault line. [A footnote by David Lapoujade in *Sur la peinture* for consideration: "Deleuze says 'in reverse' (*à l'envers*) or backwards, but the context suggests that probably meany 'on' the reverse side (*sur l'envers*), as suggested by his subsequent mention of the Supports / Surfaces movement" (p. 243).]

[11] For consistency: "flattening" of space, if *planéité* is "flatness." "Planification" is an option, but its only justification would be that it highlights the *plan* common to *planéité* and *planification.* The same effect is attempted by italicizing the word "planning," and "planning" is the strongest choice by cluing the reader into the relationship between *plan* terms, and it also communicates something happening in the French: the simultaneous use of different meanings of *plan*—as both "plane" and "plan."

[12] Word missing in transcript.

[13] https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/artworks/la-belle-angele-286.

[14] Here "field" is used for *aplat,* for lack of a better term. As above, an ideal translation would communicate the "flat" in *à plat/aplat,* in association with *planéité* and *planification.* "Flat area of color," "flattened color," and other similar phrases are sometimes used for *aplat,* but these weigh Deleuze's analysis down in other parts of the seminar.

[15] Deleuze cites Merleau-Ponty in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, p. 178 note 1, from *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), pp. 207-42.

[16] While there are several references to flesh and skin in Goethe's text, a precise match for Deleuze's quote is not present. However, *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, the discussion of Gaugin's "La Belle Angèle" and Van Gogh's postman paintings precedes consideration of flesh in different artists' work, notably Bacon, pp. 140-143.

[17] The French term is often preserved in English. "Partitioning" might also work.

[18] This might be an error. The reference earlier was to "flatness [*planéité*] and the determination of flatness," but here he says "linearity." The context here increases the doubt: if we're talking about how, for the Egyptians, form and ground occupy the same plane, that seems to be a question of "flatness" rather than "linearity."

[19] The translator notes that as he was unable to pin down the appropriate context for this discussion, much of the translation here is uninformed.

[20] On haptic and the following distinctions, see *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, pp. 154-156 and 195 note 2. The reference is to the second edition of Riegl's *Late Roman Art History,* trans. Rolf Winkes (1901; 2nd ed., Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 1985).

[21] Deleuze ends *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation* with these words: "But the fact itself, this pictorial fact that has come from the hand, is the formation of a third eye, a haptic eye, a haptic vision of the eye, this new clarity. It is as if the duality of the tactile and the optical were surpassed visually in this haptic function born of the diagram" (p. 161).

[22] Deleuze cites Gauguin (without specific reference) in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, p. 55, as "The eye, insatiable and in heat".

[23] Henri Maldiney, *Regard Parole Espace* (Lausanne: Éditions l'Age d'homme, 1973).

[24] Let us note the effort here to avoid translating *ton* as "tone." In most contexts in English, tone specifically refers to a shade of color—you obtain different tones by adding black to a color (as opposed to adding white in order to obtain different tints). So far, this sentence makes the best case against using "tone." Doing so would render these two different scales/ranges synonymous: a range of different "tones" would be none other than a range of different "values" in color. In nearly all cases, "color" or "hue" is a better equivalent for Deleuze's *ton*.

[25] "The boundaries of bodies are the least of all things […] Wherefore O painter! *do not surround your bodies with lines*, and above all when representing objects smaller than nature..." From *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci,* ed. Jean Paul Richter, vol 1 of 2 (New York: Dover, 2012), 49. Manuscript pagination. Emphasis added.

[26] These terms are treated in a more general way, but one could alternatively understand them as references to titles of paintings.

[27] See *The Eye Listens,* trans. Elsie Pell (Port Washington, NY: Philosophical Library, 1950), 42, a reference to a curtain "raised for an instant[,] ready to fall again" that makes its way into the book on Francis Bacon.

[28] Deleuze may not be quoting Claudel *verbatim,* but here he comes closer. In *L'oeil écoute,* Claudel calls Dutch still-life *un arrangement en train de se défaire.* For reference, see the 1950 translation by Elsie Pell: "Dutch still-life is an arrangement in imminent danger of disintegration", p. 48.

[29] See *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation,* p. 182 note 5.