Gilles Deleuze

Painting and the Question of Concepts / Spinoza, The Velocities of Thought

Session 1, 31 March 1981 / Session 15 (Spinoza)

Transcriptions: Voix de Deleuze, Part 1, Cécile Lathuillère (duration 46 :52); Part 2, Eva Szarzynski (duration 46:47); Parts 3 & 4, Lucie Marchadié (duration 46 :55 + 11 :36) ; augmented transcription and time stamp, Charles J. Stivale

Translation by Charles J. Stivale

Part 1

Deleuze: So, what's the question? [*Pause*] You are out of batteries? So, someone will lend you some… There, take some of them. [*Pause*] So, no questions on Spinoza?

Claire Parnet: No.

Deleuze: I'd really like you not to give up on your reading.

Claire Parnet : No, we've started it.

Deleuze: Ok, good.

A student: I've recently been looking through a book by Hölderlin, and in a letter from Hölderlin's book, there is an expression from Spinoza. I don't know if Spinoza read him or not, but there's a statement emphasizing the connection between Leibniz and Spinoza. We've seen Spinoza and Descartes, Spinoza and Freud, Spinoza and Hegel. We took a look at Leibniz last year. They're somewhat contemporaries of each other, right?

Deleuze: There's a book called *Leibniz and Spinoza*; they're contemporaries. They knew each other.

The student: Ah, they knew each other. No doubt, they were connected to one another.

Deleuze: Leibniz visited Spinoza. Yes, they met.

The student: Ah, they met.

Deleuze: We don't really know what they said to each other, but… Yes, there are even similarities.

The student: Oh, yes, I think so too.

Deleuze: So, after this question…

Richard Pinhas: There's mine!

Deleuze: Yes, there's still another question?

Pinhas: This is quite democratic; we have thirty of us asking it, and I'm the spokesperson.

Deleuze: So, there are thirty of you asking it? You, you, and you…

Pinhas: If that doesn't bother you?

Deleuze: It does.

Pinhas: Really? It does?

Deleuze: No, no.

Pinhas: We'd like to develop this point a bit. In my own case, I'd like to know if, when a composer – or when it's a painter, the question is the same, or a philosopher; this is, in fact, why I am asking it, or a writer – creates something, then (still in quotes) "perceives" something that doesn't yet belong beforehand to the outer world, although it's in an immediate relationship with the outer world, so with the world of relations; or from the moment that Mozart has the perception of a sudden instant in which he is going to develop a whole piece of music; [or] when a writer has a perception of something that moves into his body or his "soul" (in quotes), he is about to develop a text; or when a philosopher like Bergson is going to discover what he calls intuition; [or] when a musician says "there we are, what I am creating" – he doesn't say it like that, it's from the cosmos – but I sense it within me and so what emerges is within me, full stop, could that belong, in [light of] the analysis that you did of auto-affections in Spinoza, to the third kind of knowledge (*connaissance*) or be a step toward the third kind of knowledge? In that case, what would be the direct relation between this perception? Is there something that occurs within and that is already of a somewhat elevated order, on the creative level, as much in the painter as in the musician, the philosopher, or writer, indeed in other people, the relation between that perception, this internal perception and the other perception, even if the term "perception" is not quite right? It's not necessarily perception. So, that's it.

Deleuze: Yeh… That's two questions, yes?

Pinhas: Yes, but together that lets me reach the same thing. [*Pause*]

Deleuze: I'll quickly start with the second one because it's obviously the most interesting, and the most… well, the most difficult, but to which we can only answer generally. So, you are asking both about the nature of certain states, states for which the most striking examples belong no doubt, in fact, to art. What does it mean when an artist – but this must be valid as well for things other than art – when an artist begins to take hold of a kind of certainty? A kind of certainty about what? So, already, to define this kind of certainty… At a [particular] moment… at a somewhat specific moment, it's perhaps also the moment in which he is the most -- this gets difficult -- he is the most fragile in his certainty and is also the most invulnerable. He reaches a

kind of certainty regarding what? Regarding what he wants to do, regarding what he is able to do, all that… So, Richard's question is: if you see these states, in fact, that… which are not at all givens (*donnés*), even for artists. These things are not givens. A date can almost be assigned when someone starts having a – yes – I am not managing to find any other term that this kind of "certainty".

Oh yes, and yet he couldn't say… He couldn't yet say, and there's no grounds for saying what he wants to do, even if it's a writer, even if it's a philosopher. But there's this "certainty". And this certainty isn't at all a vanity because, on the contrary, it's a kind of immense modesty. So, if you see a few such states – indeed, we are going to speak of this regarding painting because that, to me, it's striking that in the case of great painters, one can almost assign dates in which they enter into this element of certainty. Richard's question is: could we say – of course, he is the first to know that his question is a bit strained; Spinoza does not speak of this directly – but, can we assimilate that into something like the third type of knowledge, these states of certainty?

At first glance, I'd say: yes, because if I try to define the states of the third kind, well, what is it? There is a certainty. It's a very special mode of certainty that Spinoza expresses even with the rather strange term "conscius", consciousness (*conscience*), it's a consciousness. It's a kind of consciousness, but that's raised up to a power of action (*puissance*). I'd almost say that it's the final power of action of consciousness. And what is this? How do we define this consciousness? It's… I'd say, it's the internal consciousness of something; specifically, it's a "self-consciousness," but this [is] self-consciousness insofar as it apprehends a power of action. So, this self consciousness is raised up, has become a consciousness of power of action, with the result that what this consciousness grasps, it grasps within the self. And yet, what it grasps in this way within the self is an exterior power of action. So, this is indeed how Spinoza tries to define the third kind. In the end, you attain a third kind, this almost mystic kind, this intuition of the third kind; one could practically say how to recognize it. It's really when you confront an exterior power of action – one must maintain both of them – and when this exterior power of action is within you as you confront it. You grasp it within you.

This is why Spinoza says, in the end, the third kind [of knowledge] is when "being conscious of one's self, being conscious of God, and being conscious of the word, are but one." I believe that it is important here, that we have to take him literally, Spinoza's expressions. In the third kind of knowledge, "I am indissolubly conscious of myself, of others or of the world, and of God." So, that means, in fact, if you will, that this kind of knowledge of self is at the same time knowledge of power of action, knowledge of power of action that is at the same time knowledge of self.

So, in the end, I'd say yes. Why are we at once safe and yet quite vulnerable in this? Well, we're quite vulnerable because all that is ever needed is a minuscule point in order for this power of action to sweep us away. It overwhelms us so much that, at that moment, everything occurs such that we are battered by the enormity of this power of action. And at the same time, we are safe. We are safe because it's precisely within me that I grasp the object of this knowledge that's so exterior insofar as it is power of action. As a result, Spinoza insists emphatically on the following point: for happiness of this third kind, he reserves the name "beatitude." This beatitude, well… in the end, it's a strange kind of happiness. That is, it's a happiness that only depends on me. Are there forms of happiness that only depend on me? Spinoza would say: to ask if any of these exist

is a false question since it's truly the product of a victory (*conquête*). The victory of the third kind is quite precisely to attain these states of happiness in which simultaneously there is a certainty that, whatever happens, to a great extent no one can take them from me. Anything can occur. The idea… You know, we sometimes go through states like that, also, ones that don't last. Whatever occurs, well yes… perhaps I could die, yes, fine. But there's still something that cannot be taken from me, literally, this strange happiness. And there, in book V [of *The Ethics*], I believe that Spinoza describes it very, very admirably.

Hence, I return more toward the first question which is more… Yes, I don't know if I answered, but so I'll say, yes, it's what we called the last time, what I called auto-affection: it's precisely this knowledge of power of action that has become knowledge of self. So, perhaps it's art that presents these forms of knowledge, especially in a particularly sharpened form. The impression of becoming invulnerable, well there, I cannot manage to state the extraordinary modesty that accompanies this certainty. It's a kind of self-confidence that basks in modesty; that is, it's like a relation with power of action. Fine.

But then, to get back to the simpler of Richard's questions, so these auto-affections that define the third kind and that already define the second kind [of knowledge], I insist simply on undertaking some review so that… I believe that it's very important for how the *Ethics* unfolds. You see, I really believe that Spinoza starts from a plane, a plane of existence in which he shows us, for all manner of reasons, how and why we've been condemned to inadequate ideas and to passions. And once again, the problem of the *Ethics* is indeed: but how can one get beyond inadequate ideas and passions? So, he gathered up all the arguments to show us that, at the extreme and at first glance, we cannot get beyond them. That is, Spinoza gathered all the arguments to show us that, apparently, we are condemned to the first kind of knowledge.

I'll give a single example: we aren't free. Fine. We aren't free -- [there's] Spinoza's hatred for this concept, that seems to him to be a very bad concept of freedom. -- We aren't free because we always endure actions -- his idea is very simple – yes, indeed, we always endure the effects of exterior bodies. What does freedom mean? It's even a true idea that we don't grasp. If we take seriously Spinoza's description of the first kind of knowledge, we cannot even see how it might be a question of getting beyond it. We endure the effects of other bodies; there is no clear and distinct idea; there is no true idea. We are condemned to inadequate ideas; we are condemned to passions. And yet, the entire *Ethics* goes on to trace the path, and it's on this that I am insisting: it's a path that does not pre-exist. It's truly the *Ethics* that, in the most closed off world of the first kind of knowledge, goes on to trace the path making possible an exit from the first kind.

So, if I try to summarize this procedure, because that seems to me truly to be the *Ethics'*s procedure, how does one get beyond, once again, this world of the inadequate and of passion? Well, what's fundamental are the steps of this exit. If I summarize completely, I'd say that this is the first step: one realizes that there are two kinds of passion. We remain within passion, within the first kind. But, there we have, and this is going to be decisive, there's a distinction between two kinds of passion. There are passions that increase my power of acting (*puissance d'agir*), passions of joy. There are passions that reduce my power of action, passions of sadness. Each of these is a [kind of] passion. Why? Each is a passion since I do not possess my power of acting. Even when it increases, I don't possess it. Fine.

Thus, I am still fully within the first kind of knowledge. You see, this is the first step, the distinction of joyful passions and sad passions. I have both; why? Because sad passions are the effect on me due to my encounter with bodies that do not agree with me, that is, that do not directly compose themselves to my relation. And joyful passions are the effect on me due to my encounter with bodies that agree with me, that is, that compose their relation onto my own. Fine. [*Pause*]

Second step: when I feel joyful passions – you see, joyful passions are always within the first kind of knowledge – but when I feel joyful passions, [there's] an encounter effect with bodies that agree with mine; when I feel joyful passions, these joyful passions increase my power of acting. What does that mean? It means that they lead me – they don't force me – they lead me, they give me the opportunity. They give me the opportunity; they lead me toward forming a common notion. A notion common to what? A notion common to both bodies, the body affecting me and my body. You see, that's a second step.

First step: joyful passions are distinguished from sad passions because joyful passions increase my power of action, whereas sad passions reduce them.

Second step: these same joyful passions lead me toward forming a common notion, common to the body that affects me and my own body.

There's a subordinate question for this step: and why don't sad passions lead me toward forming common notions? Spinoza is very firm; he can prove it mathematically: because when two bodies disagree, when bodies don't agree, if they don't agree, it's never due to something that they have in common. If two bodies don't agree, it's due to their differences, or their oppositions, and not due to something that they'd have in common. In other words, sad passions – think about this well because it's very… here, there's a theoretical passage to understand, but in fact, it's very practical – sad passions are the effect on my body by a body that doesn't agree with mine, that is, that doesn't compose its relation with my own relation.

Henceforth, sad passion is the effect of my body by a body that is grasped from a viewpoint of having nothing in common with mine. This same body, if you manage to grasp it from a viewpoint of having nothing in common with yours, at that point, it no longer affects you with a sad passion. As long as it affects you with a sad passion, it's because you are grasping this other body as incompatible with yours. [*Pause*] So, Spinoza can very well say: only joyful passions, and not sad ones, lead me toward forming a common notion. You recall that common notions are not at all theoretical matters. These are extremely practical notions. These are practico-ethical notions. One must not at all make of it… We cannot understand anything if we make mathematical ideas of them. Thus, the fact is that the joyful passion, which is the effect on me of a body agreeing with mine, leads me toward forming the common notion between two bodies. [*Pause*] I'd say, literally, that in order to account for this second step, joyful passions overlap common notions. [*Pause*] So, common notions are necessarily adequate. We've seen this; I won't go back over it.

So, you see what the pathway is, whereas we were tending to say, we never could get beyond the first kind of knowledge. There's a pathway, but it's a very broken line. If I became aware of the

difference of nature between joyful passions and sad passions, I realize that joyful passions give me the means to go beyond the domain of passions. It's not that the passions are suppressed. They are there; they will remain. Spinoza's problem is not to cause passions to disappear. As he himself says, it's so that in the end, they only occupy my smallest part. Well fine, what does it mean for them only to occupy my smallest part? That's not so easy to do either! It's up to me to create my own parts that are not subject to passions. Nothing is given! Nothing is given up front.

So how do I create my own parts that would not be subject to passions? Look at Spinoza's answer: I am making the difference between sad passions [and] joyful passions. So yes, I have sad passions. "To the extent that it's within me", as he says according to his formulation, I attempt to feel the most joyful passions possible and the fewest sad passions possible. Fine. I do what I can. All of this is quite practical. I do what I can. You'll tell me: that goes without saying; it happens quite naturally. No. Because, as Spinoza insists, we never stop… People never stop poisoning life. They never stop wallowing in sadness. They never stop; they never stop. Fine. The whole art of impossible situations that we discussed, they deliver themselves to impossible situations. All of this, fine… A wisdom is already needed to select passions of joy, to try to have as many of them as possible. Fine. And about this, passions of joy remain, survive as passions. But they lead me toward forming common notions, that is, practical ideas of what there is in common between the body that affects me with joy and my body.

The common notions are adequate ideas and they alone. Between a body that does not agree with mine, between a body that destroys me and my body, there are no common notions. For the viewpoint from which a body does not agree with me is incompatible with the common notion. In fact, if a body does not agree with me, it's from the viewpoint in which it has nothing in common with me. From the viewpoint in which there's something in common with me, it agrees with me. That's obvious; that's for certain.

So, you see, at the point I've reached, the second step, I've formed common notion. But these common notions, if you take them practically, if you don't make abstract ideas out of them… The idea of a common relation, that is,… And at the same time, I construct it. A common relation between the body that agrees with me and my body, what does that come down to saying? That comes down to saying: the formation of a third body of which we – the other body and mine – are parts. That doesn't pre-exist either. This third body will have a composed relation which will be located both within the exterior body and within my body. That's what it means to be the object of a common notion.

Thus, from common notions will result… From common notions that are adequate ideas will result affects, feelings. Above all, don't confuse – here's what I wanted to say – above all, don't confuse affects what are *at the origin* of common notions, and affects that *result from* common notions. This confusion would be a serious misunderstanding; that is, at that point, the *Ethics* could no longer function, just to tell you that this is serious.

What differences are there between two sorts of affects? The affects at the origin of common notions – I just tried to state what these are – are joyful passions. Joyful passions – again I am repeating so that, I hope, this will be clear – as the effect on me of a body agreeing with my body, joyful passions lead me toward forming the common notion, that is, an idea of what there

is in common between two bodies. And the idea of what there is in common between the two bodies is the idea of a third body of which the external body and mine are parts. Thus, you see that the feelings that lead me, leading me toward forming a common notion, are passions of joy. They're passions of joy. We saw that passions of sadness didn't lead us toward forming common notions, whereas feelings that result from common notions are no longer passions of joy. [*Pause*] These are active affects.

Since common notions are adequate ideas, from this result affects that are not satisfied with increasing my power of action, like joyful passions. The affects resulting from this, on the contrary, depend on my power of action. Be very careful about Spinoza's terminology and make no mistake since he never confuses these two expressions: that which increased my power of action and that which results from my power of action.

That which increases my power of action is necessarily a passion since, in order for my power of action to increase, we must indeed assume that I have not yet taken it into my possession. My power of action increases to the point that I tend toward possessing this power, but I haven't done so. That's the effect of joyful passions. As a result, under the action of joyful passions, I form a common notion. At that point, I possess my power of action because the common notion is explained through my power; it's explained through my power. At that point, therefore, I enter into possession of my power. Within formal possession, I possess my power formally. From this this formal possession of my power of action through the common notion, active affects result.

As a result, if I try to summarize all these moments, I'd say: the active affects that themselves result from common notion are the third step. I'd say that we have here the three steps: first step, you select joyful passions as much as you can; second step, you form common notions – these are formulas (*recettes*), eh! – you form common notions that overlap the joyful passions. They do not suppress them; they overlap the joyful passions; third step, from the common notion overlapping the joyful passions, active affects result and overlap the joyful passions anew.

At the extreme, passions and inadequate ideas no longer concern… no longer concern – but I couldn't say this earlier; we had to develop this – no longer concern anything but the smallest proportional part of yourself. And the greatest part of yourself is concerned with adequate ideas and active affects.

The final step: in fact, common notions and active affects that result from common notions are themselves going to be overlaid with new ideas and new states, or with new affects, the ideas and the affects of the third kind, that is, these auto-affections that remain for us a bit mysterious, [*Pause*] and that will define the third kind [of knowledge] whereas common notions only defined the second kind. You see?

So, there is a thing that fascinates me, to conclude all of this. The thing that fascinates me is this: it's why doesn't Spinoza say this? The answer obviously must be complex. In fact, if he didn't say this, it means that all I am saying would be false. He has to say this. And he did say it. So then, my question is transformed: if he said this, why didn't he say this very clearly? Well, then, here I think it's simple. He couldn't do otherwise. Where does he say this? He says this and he has this very curious order: [first step] inadequate ideas and joyful passions, selection of joyful

passions; second step: formation of common notions and active affects resulting from common notions; third step, third kind of knowledge: ideas of essences, no longer common notions, but ideas of singular essences, and active affects resulting from them.

These three steps, they… He presents them as three successive steps, but in the fifth book. And the fifth book is not an easy book, as we saw, since it's a book in great acceleration (*à toute vitesse*) and, once again, not because it's poorly or quickly completed. For, in the third kind of knowledge, we reach a kind of speed of thought that Spinoza follows and results, in the *Ethics*, and gives to the *Ethics* this admirable ending, like a kind of accelerated ending (*terminaison à toute allure*), a kind of lightening ending. Fine.

So, he says it in the fifth book, it seems to me. I draw your attention notably toward a theorem, a proposition. At the start of the fifth book, Spinoza says: [*Proposition XXXVIII Proof; also Prop. X and Proof*] "the greater will be the part not touched by… the greater will be the part not touched by emotions that are contrary to our nature" (*"tant que nous ne sommes pas tourmentés par des sentiments contraires à notre nature, nous pouvons"*). For me, this text is fundamental since this cannot be stated more clearly: what are emotions that are contrary to your nature? You will look at the context. These are the aggregate of passions of sadness. How are passions of sadness or emotions of sadness contrary to our nature? Literally, by virtue of their very definition, to wit: these are effects of the encounter of my body with bodies that do not agree with my nature. Therefore, these are literally emotions contrary to my nature.

So then, "so long as we are not touched by emotions", that is, "to the extent" that we are touched by such emotions, that we experience a sadness, feel a sadness, there's no question of forming a common notion relative to this sadness. I can only form a common notion when joys are accessible. That's it, passive joys. Only when I have formed a common notion, when a passion of joy is available, at that moment, my passion of joy is overlaid with adequate ideas, common notions of the second kind and ideas of essences of the third kind, and again overlaid with active affects, active affects of the second kind and active affects of the third kind. [*Pause*]

So, what is happening? And at the same time, there really is no need [for this]. I insist on this to conclude. But what's bothering me is that, obviously, joyful passions are leading me to form [common notions]. That's like a good use of joy. But at the extreme, I imagine someone who might feel joyful passions through… Chance would be good, fate would favor this, he'd be greatly filled with joy. And there wouldn't be… He wouldn't form any common notion. He would remain completely within the first kind of knowledge. So there, it's obvious that this isn't a necessity. Joyful passions do not prevent me from forming the common notion. They give me the opportunity. It's there that, between the first and second kinds of knowledge, there is something like a gap. So, do I jump across it or not?

If freedom is decided at a given moment, for Spinoza, that's it. It seems to me that's it. In fact, I could stay, even while feeling joyful passions, I could remain eternally within the first knowledge. In that case, I'd be making a very bad use of joy. However strongly I might be led toward forming common notions, I am not, properly speaking, bound to do so. [*Pause*] There we are. In any case, it seems to me that it's a kind of very solid succession, both logical and chronological in the history of modes of existence or of the three kinds of knowledge.

I am insisting on this idea of doubling or overlapping. In the beginning, I am filled with inadequate ideas or passive affects. And little by little, I manage to produce things that are going to overlap my inadequate ideas and passive affects, to overlay them with ideas that themselves are adequate and with affects that themselves are active. As a result, at the extreme, if I succeed… if I succeed, I will always have inadequate ideas and passive affects since they are linked to my condition as long as I exist. But these inadequate ideas and these passive affects will, relatively speaking, only occupy the small of part of me. I will have hollowed out within me – literally, that's what it is – I will have hollowed out within me some parts that are concerned with adequate ideas and active affects or auto-affections. There we are. … Yes?

A student: [*Inaudible comments*]

Deleuze: [*Pause*] I am thinking, ok? I'm thinking. [*Pause*] They both are not necessarily opposed to one another. [*Another student briefly answers here, comments inaudible*] Yes, agreed. [*Pause*] They are not necessarily in opposition. In any case, I'd answer that it's not a question of… [*Deleuze does not complete the thought*] because quite often, there's a tendency to interpret Spinoza that way, and that really make him very ordinary, I believe. It's not a question of a science. Once again, that's why I am insisting: common notions, of course, have a viewpoint. If you will, I believe… I'd say rather, for example, that geometric ideas… doing geometry is very important for Spinoza, for life itself, really, within life. But geometric ideas are not what define common notions. Geometric ideas, we could say, [or] geometry, this is the science of common notions. And common notions are not in themselves a science**;** they are a certain kind of knowing (*un certain savoir*). But it's almost a skill (*savoir-faire*).

So, concerning your precise question, I'd say, Anne [Querrien] stated it well: there are, in fact, three things in the terms you are using. I'd say: common notions are not at all opposed to the idea of a game. There is a veritable game, in the wide sense, of common notions since it's a play of composition. There is a common notion once there's a composition of relations. So, I can always try to compose. That's certainly opposed to improvisation since it implies and assumes, first, the long, selective procedure in which I have separated my joys from my forms of sadness.

Anne Querrien: [*Barely audible comment; she addresses several aspects of improvisation*]

Deleuze: If you think about improvisation defined, in fact, as feeling, then a kind of lived feeling of the composition of relations, for example, in fact, in the example of jazz, one can take in everything, but… Well, in the jazz example, for example, the trumpet enters in at a particular moment. I believe that this is exactly what the English word "timing" expresses, "timing", that is, timing… There are words… Here, French doesn't have these words. The Greeks had a very interesting word that corresponds exactly to American "timing": it's *kaïros*. *Kaïros* is a notion entirely… The Greeks make extensive use of it. *Kaïros* is precisely the correct moment, not missing the correct moment. It's also, it's translated… but French doesn't have as strong a word… There was a god; there was a kind of divine power of *kaïros* among the Greeks. The favorable occasion, the opportunity, the spot: so, well yes, it's the moment when the trumpet can take things over there.

Anne Querrien: [*Barely audible comments; she compares the concept of improvisation with collective assemblages*]

Claire Parnet: In fact, the collective assemblage is constructed as soon as each person understands what the relations are that constitute it. In the end, there nothing else that can permit it, really.

Anne Querrien: [*Inaudible comments*]

Claire Parnet: Well, of course.

Anne Querrien: [*The inaudible answer continues*]

Claire Parnet: But that's not an improvisation; it's an understanding of the relations that constitute you.

Anne Querrien: [*Barely audible response*; *she refers to the experience of jazz musician friends and how their interplay might correspond to a collective assemblage*]

Deleuze: The notion of collective assemblage is difficult because it cannot contribute much to our understanding of Spinoza, especially since Spinoza uses his own term that mostly replaces that one. When he says, "common notion", once again, that means something quite precise. I even think that, in the end, it's impossible for him, as he sees it, that I, me, a living individual, would form – I tried expressing this earlier, understand – I cannot form – it's a notion that is hardly intellectual, common notion, but it's so vital – I cannot form a common notion, that is, the idea of something common between my body and an exterior body without, once again, a third body coming into existence, into which the exterior body and my own are only parts. If I form the common notion of my body and the body of the sea, of the wave, returning to my example: through learning to swim, I form the common notion of my body and the wave. At that point, I am forming a third body in which the wave and I are parts.

And with all the more reason, this is why Spinoza tells us: "But it's obvious between men that common notions…" [*citation left incomplete*]. Here we see quite well what he has in mind and the extent to which it's not at all like… like people sometimes say about notions. Once again, they're treated… It's a catastrophe when they… In my view, the catastrophe preventing us from understanding all that [Spinoza] means is when common notions are treated like abstract things. And in this, it's his own fault, but he had his reasons. It's his fault because the first time that he introduces common notions, he does so in this way: "the most universal common notions; example: all bodies are within extension", extension as common notion. [*Interruption of the recording*] [46:50]

Part 2

… That's what bothers the reader. So, he has a reason, and this reason doesn't help us. So, when he tells us, on the contrary, but in the end, privileged common notions are notions that are shared by several men, that is, this is the human community. That's what it is! That's the site of the

common notion. In other words, here, notions emerge as essentially political, to wit: the common notion is the construction of a community.

Here we see quite well the point at which this overlaps, and greatly so, the physico-mathematical notions that he nonetheless demanded in Book II [*of the* Ethics]. In Book II, as he wants to start by explaining the most universal common notions, there they really seem to be abstract things, to be things like kinds of science. All bodies are in extension, speed and movement as a notion common to all bodies, etc. So, if we remain stuck at this particular moment, I believe we lose all the concrete richness of common notions.

You understand, the common notion is when, fine… It's which third body you create with someone you love or really like, how… what rhythm… Yes, here are examples. Here, the example provides the rhythm, in fact. Rhythm is a common notion with at least two bodies. Rhythm is fundamentally common on at least two bodies. There is no rhythm of the violin; there's the rhythm of the violin that responds to the piano and the rhythm of the piano that responds to the violin. There we find a common notion in this case. It's the notion common to two bodies, the body of the piano and the body of the violin, from the viewpoint, from one viewpoint or another, that is, from the viewpoint of the relation… of the relation that will constitute a particular musical work and that forms the third body. You see, it's very concrete.

So, I'd say, yes, everything is possible, yes, in this question. It's not just any kind of knowledge; it's not just any kind of game since it's a game or play of composition, of combinations with an understanding of relations. So, the expression "game" (*jeu*) is obviously very ambiguous because I conceive of games that would consist, for example, uniquely of games of chance, if we don't go seeking a martingale strategy. As soon as we go looking for a martingale – however, these are abominable examples in Spinoza's case – you can play in a way that you simply accept the results. And it's quite funny! You accept the results. For example, you are playing a game of roulette, and you accept the results. With Russian roulette, you turn roulette in to a mortuary practice, and that could happen. So fine, these are passions of sadness. You are playing, you win or lose; if you lose, you're sad, unless you happen to be especially strange; if you win, you're happy. But it's a passion. What does it mean to go looking for a martingale or roulette? Fine, you find people who seek out a martingale [scheme] as a kind of job. It's not a kind of science, but it is work. So, what does that mean? In this, they raise themselves, they are trying. Now, they might be completely wrong; I do know that Spinoza would obviously say that this is not material for common notions as this game, precisely, is condemned to the first kind of knowledge.

But let's imagine a Spinozist gambler. He'd say that, in the attempt to elaborate a martingale strategy, there already is a search for common relations, research into a kind of relation and law for the relation. Fine, we cannot say that this is scientific research, [but] it's research into forms of knowledge (*saviors*), it's an entire craft, it's an entire… What is it? Do we arrive at a common notion that would be an adequate idea? There is a small treatise; nonetheless, he had great interest in these questions since he participated – as did the entire 17th century, a century of gambler, you know, the 17th – he participated in this, and in Dutch, he wrote a very small treatise, of a few pages, titled "Calculation of chance" (*Calcul des chances*). Like everyone, he was reflecting on games with dice, the dice throw. All this is the birth of the calculation of

probabilities. It's not just Pascal, it's… All mathematicians of the era were enormously interested in probabilities, and Spinoza produces a little treatise, it's…

Anne Querrien: [*Comments inaudible*]

Deleuze: That gets interesting, but in the end, it's not Spinozist joy, it's not Spinozist joy! [*Laughter*] [*Pause*] So there you are, I leave it to you to follow up on all this, but above all, follow up with the *Ethics,* with your readings.

Richard Pinhas: The rare discussions that I've been able to have with some remarkable musicians has given me the intuition that from the moment that one is overtaken by [*inaudible;* inspiration?] -- because in fact it's not something that is deliberately accessible – so from the moment that there's this encounter, it is completely impossible to avoid it, that is, there's a characteristic of necessity, of inevitability unless one were to destroy all relations. [*Subsequent comments are inaudible*]

Deleuze: Yes! And at the same time, I firmly believe that even at this level, Spinoza doesn't express it that way, so in fact, we are no longer speaking of Spinoza. I have the impression that at the same time, however strong the certainty of the third kind [of knowledge] might be, everything can still be ruined. Life is so amazing in this way because -- and through this, we are introduced to what we will now be undertaking – there isn't any moment, however strong my certainty might be – it could be huge --, in which everything might be not ruined. That's very strange. Everything could collapse. Why then… And well, I can be swept away by that power of action instead of harnessing it; I can be swept away. A kind of exasperation can always arise, exasperation. Exasperation is when suddenly, fine, I have a power of action, but in the end, I have no more words. In short, I collapse (*je craque, quoi*).

[*Here begins the new seminar, on painting*]

So, there you are, you understand that this introduces us well to what I would like to do for the rest of the year, and this presumes that I am speaking to those here… [It's] yet another reason for me not to pretend to say things with any great depth (*grand savoir*). I'd like to speak about painting, and in what way? So, I'd like to speak about painting. I myself am not sure – we'll see how it goes – that philosophy has brought anything at all to painting; it's even… I don't know… And then, perhaps this isn't the way to pose questions. But I'd rather ask the question in reverse, to wit: the possibility that painting has something to bring to philosophy and that the answer might not be completely in one direction. I mean that we cannot transfer the same answer for music onto painting. For music, we've encountered the need – in this, it wasn't through preference or choice of a path -- the need to refer to it because, in previous years, we expected something I don't know what from it. What can philosophy expect from things like painting, like music? What it can expect is, once again, some very, very different things. We have to… If philosophy expects something from painting, it's something that only painting can offer it.

So, what is it? What is it? Perhaps some concepts, but does painting concern itself with concepts? Fine, but since we've already asked the question, is color a concept? Is color a concept? I don't know; what is a color concept? What is color as a concept? This would be… If

painting brings that into philosophy, where is that going to lead philosophy? I mean, how do we proceed? How do I proceed so that… Here, I'd like to… There's also a problem of speaking about painting; what does "speaking about painting" mean? So I believe that it means precisely forming concepts that are in direct relation with painting and only with painting. At that point, in fact, the reference to painting becomes essential. If you understand, even in a vague way, what I mean, at that point, I've already resolved a question. – [*Deleuze questions his own grammar, the past participle of* résoudre] I've "résous"? "Résolu"? What do we say? [*Claire Parnet:* Résolu] – I've resolved a question, specifically: speaking about painting, fine, I assume that those who will listen to this will know as much as me, and sometimes much more, about painting. What I don't want to do is to bring in any reproductions, to show [them] to you… So, we'd even no longer have any desire to talk… We'd say: "Oh, well, yes, what's there to say?" So, I will call upon your memory. Only in some very rare cases will I show a small image, when we will really need to do so. Otherwise, you will recall from memory, or you can go see them or else… But this will go easily, with no need for any reproductions.

So here we are, each time perhaps… Nor am I pretending to say, to reflect on what the essence of painting is. So, each time, I'd like, in order for those attending the sessions on this research topic to be able to follow me, I will try to indicate more or less precisely the theme that I am following each time and the painters to whom I am referring because there is no reason – the unity of painting poses a problem – there is no reason to establish one [a unity], I mean… There's no reason to establish one.

For example, we'll nonetheless again be led to consider, on the level of materials – and here also, this might have something to do with philosophical concepts, even in things related to philosophy – [materials like] watercolor and oil, and oil and acrylics today, all that, fine, because these are not the same things. Where is the unity of painting located? Is there a common genre for watercolor, for oil, for acrylics, all that? I don't know; we take nothing for granted (*on ne se donne rien*). I've chosen the themes that interested me, and sometimes they will flow into philosophy – those will be delightful moments for me. This will happen when painting inspires a spark within me, a new spark for me onto philosophical concepts. Fine, so let's give it a try.

So, today I am saying that my whole research endeavor is extended onto this notion about which I once spoke, the notion of catastrophe, the notion of catastrophe, which assumes what? This obviously assumes that painting has a very special relation with catastrophe. And first of all, I won't try to found [the relation] theoretically. It's rather an impression, a very special relation [which] means that writing and music wouldn't have this relation with catastrophe, or not the same kind, or not as direct, and very precise painters. But I'd just like for you to sense precisely the extent to which these are limited examples so that we can then consider if they indicate something more general about painting or if that's only valid for certain painters. I don't know anything in advance. The painters on which I would like to establish this are chosen within a relatively similar and relatively recent period. I am taking them – I am stating immediately [that] I'd like to base myself on this series "the catastrophe," and we shall see where it leads us – I am choosing, for example, Turner, an English painter, nineteenth [century], a great, great English painter – I'm only choosing great ones, of course! – Turner, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Paul Klee, and another English modern, [Francis] Bacon.

Fine, so that's what I want to say – and I am immediately careful, very, very careful. I am saying that, when we go to a museum, we are immediately taken, struck by a certain number of paintings. There are very few museums that don't offer some paintings of this type, paintings that depict a catastrophe, and what kind of catastrophe? For example, when the painting presents mountains to us – paintings of an avalanche, paintings of storms, the storm, the avalanche, etc., fine, this [is] a comment having entirely no interest. There is even a Romanticist painting in which this theme of a certain kind of catastrophe seems… [*Deleuze does not complete this*] Fine, what does all that mean? It's idiotic, really, it's idiotic. But, no it's not because I notice that these paintings of catastrophes extend into the entire painting something that is always present in… that is perhaps very often – yes, you correct this yourself; I never say "always" – that is very often present in painting, to wit, they extend into the entire painting, these paintings of catastrophes, they extend into the entire painting, they generalize a kind of imbalance, of things that are falling, collapsing, kinds of disequilibrium.

And painting following a particular manner has always meant painting local imbalances. Why? Why is this theme of the thing in disequilibrium so important? One of the writers who wrote the most deeply, truly the most deeply, about painting is [Paul] Claudel, notably in a splendid book titled *The Eye Listens* and that especially addresses the Dutch [painters]. And Claudel says it very well; he says, "What is a composition?" You see, this is a pictorial term. What is a composition in painting? He says, "It's an aggregate (*ensemble*)". He says something very odd, as he says this precisely about the Dutch masters that he was considering. "A composition is always an aggregate, a structure, but in the process of becoming imbalanced or in the process of coming apart." Fine, we will only hold onto this for the moment: the point of collapse, a glass about which we'd say it's going to tip over, a curtain about which we'd say it's going to fall back. So fine, here, there is no need to refer to Cézanne, the pots by Cézanne, the strange imbalance of these pots, as if they were really grasped at the moment, at the birth of a collapse. Fine, I tell myself good, very good. I no longer know who, there's a contemporary of Cézanne who spoke about the drunken pottery, the tipsy pots.

So, I tell myself, fine, a painting of an avalanche, all that, this is generalized disequilibrium, ok. But in the end, this doesn't go that far because, at first glance, we remain within the painting, within what the painting represents. So, I am also going to refer to another catastrophe in painting, specifically a catastrophe that would affect the act of painting itself. You see, we are going from the represented catastrophe, either the local catastrophe or the catastrophe of the aggregate within the painting, to a more greatly secret catastrophe, one that affects the act of painting itself. [*Pause*]

And my question becomes, good, in this way, can the act of painting be defined without this reference to a catastrophe that affects it? Doesn't the act of painting, at the deepest depth within in itself – I'll make corrections, I'll adjust for certain painters, etc., we shall see – confront, encompass this catastrophe, even when what is represented is not a catastrophe? In fact, Cézanne's pottery isn't a catastrophe; there was no earthquake. For Rembrandt's glasses, there was no catastrophe, fine. So, it's a matter of a deeper catastrophe that affects the act of painting in itself. What would this be, to the point that the act of painting could not be so defined otherwise?

The example – I'd like to provide examples, as one offers musical examples, so to take up pictorial examples – for me, the fundamental example is that of Turner, since in Turner, we would see this as a kind of typical example. Also, in his initial [period]… He had something like two periods, two great periods, and in the first one, he paints a lot of catastrophes. What interests him in the sea is storms; what interests him in the mountains is often avalanches. So, this is a painting of avalanches, storms, fine. He already shows great genius.

What happens around 18.. – Is everyone fine with this assignment of dates? – around 1830? I'll need that [date] later, as if this catastrophe that affects the act of painting, well, could be strangely dated overall. For Turner, [it's] 1830. Around 1830, ok, everything unfolds as if he entered into a new element, in fact so deeply that it remains linked to his first manner of painting. What is this new element? Catastrophe is at the heart of the act of painting. As it is said, the forms vanish. What is painted and the act of painting tend to be identified with each other, and in what form? In the form of gusts of steam, of balls of fire, in which no form any longer maintains its integrity, or in which some strokes are merely suggestive.[1] We proceed through strokes, into what? Into a kind of furnace (*brasier*), as if the entire painting there emerged from a furnace. A ball of fire, the famous dominant, Turner's famous dominant, the golden yellow. A kind of oven (*fournaise*), fine, boats split open by this oven.

A typical example – try to go see a reproduction – a painting with a complicated title: "Light and color". He himself called it "Light and color," and in parentheses "Goethe's Theory", since Goethe created a theory of colors. So the title is: "Light and Color (Goethe's Theory, the Morning After the Deluge)". We will need all that, so try to go see it. And the painting is dominated by a gigantic and admirable ball of fire, a golden ball that provides a kind of gravitation for the entire painting. So then… What? Yes?

[*Interruption by someone outside the classroom, inaudible comments; Deleuze briefly speaks to her about a scheduling matter*.]

Yes, why is this title important? In this as well, Turner left stacks of watercolors in groups; you know, Turner's history at the end is very, very… As is said, he was so much, so much, so much ahead of his time that he didn't exhibit his paintings; he stored them away, all that. He left all of that to the State, England, which left that for a long while in crates. And then there's [John] Ruskin, at once admirable and vexing, who was his passionate admirer, who burned many of them because some were pornographic, so in the end, this was catastrophic. There's a text by Ruskin, a declaration that makes one shiver – well, in the end, no one can condemn anyone – in which Ruskin says: "I'm proud, quite proud to have done that, to have burned all kinds of stacks of Turner's drawing and watercolors." But in the end, Ruskin's merit remains for having been one of the few to understand Turner while he was alive. So, Ruskin baptizes all kinds of stacks of watercolors: "the birth or the start of color". For this introduction, I don't want to say more.

If you will, here we have Turner who I am using to present one case. It's not at all that this is general, that we pass from one kind of painting that in certain cases represents avalanche-type catastrophe, storm-types, into a infinitely deeper catastrophe, a catastrophe that concerns the act of painting, that affects the deepest aspect of the act of painting. And I am adding – this is all we can grasp for the moment – this catastrophe is inseparable, in the act of painting, this catastrophe

is inseparable from a birth. A birth of what? The birth of color. We almost have a problem here, you see; we constructed it almost voluntarily. Was it necessary for the act of painting to pass through this catastrophe in order to engender this creative element, specifically, color? Was it necessary to pass through the catastrophe in the act of painting so that color would be born, color as pictorial creation?

Good, so at that point, we have to believe that the catastrophe affecting the act of painting is also something other than catastrophe. What is it? We haven't made much progress. What is this catastrophe? If you see a Turner from the end of his career, I am assuming that if you have it in mind, or if you go see it, you accept the term "catastrophe", and why at that point, coming to our aid – I see this as something else – are painters who use the word, who use the word, who say, yes, painting the act of painting passes through chaos or through catastrophe? And they add, but see here, something emerges from this. And our idea is confirmed, the necessity for catastrophe in the act of painting so that something might emerge.

What emerges? It's strange in that perhaps I'm choosing painters of the same tendency; I don't know, but the answer is the same: in order for color to emerge, for color to emerge… And who are these catastrophe painters? There's Cézanne fine statement, that catastrophe affects the act of painting, so that what emerges? Color, according to Cézanne, so that color arises. And [from] Paul Klee, the necessity of chaos for the emergence of what he calls the egg, cosmogenesis, the egg or cosmogenesis, and at the same time, panic. My God, or at least the painters' God! Who prevents catastrophe from seizing everything?

What happens if catastrophe seizes everything so that nothing emerges? So, in this regard, would there be on this level a danger in painting? There would be a danger in painting; what is it? If the painter confronts – even here, we've left literature behind, I believe – if there is indeed this kind of catastrophe for the painter himself, for something that concerns the painter, if he confronts this catastrophe in the act of painting, if he cannot paint without a catastrophe affecting his act at the deepest level, but at the same time, the catastrophe must be like what? What does this mean? To control. What happens if nothing emerges, if the catastrophe spreads, if it creates a mess? Fine, don't we have the impression that in certain cases, right, the painting gets ruined. Painters never cease failing; they never cease throwing out their paintings. Painters are astonishing, right? There's a kind of destruction, consumption, consuming of the painting. Fine, when catastrophe overwhelms, can one again control a catastrophe? Certain [painters], Van Gogh, that's right, that's right. As it's said, he brushes against something. Good, where does Van Gogh's madness come from? Does it come from his relations with his father, or from these relations with color? [*Laughter*] I have no idea. In any case, color is perhaps more interesting, right?

So, our task now is going to be to look at two texts, since after all this has laid out our problem, I have not yet spoken about any painters' texts. I believe that the manner in which a painter speaks about his painting is not analogous or the same thing as the manner in which a musician speaks about his music. There is a relation, in both cases; I am not saying one is better than the other. I am saying that we can expect from a painter's text some things that aren't at all, that are of a very special type. I am going to refer to some texts presumably by Cézanne and a formal text by Klee, that have in common to speak deliberately about catastrophe in its relations with painting. Fine, I am going to the secretary's office, so take a break. [*Brief pause in the session*] [1:18:07]

[…] And with him and named [Joachim] Gasquet. And Gasquet created a book on Cézanne, a very important one, and in this book, he reestablishes, he takes himself a bit for Socrates's Plato, that is, he reconstitutes dialogues and conversations with Cézanne. But it's not transcriptions; it's many years later, and it's not transcription. And the question is: What does Gasquet – who wasn't a painter, but a writer – what does Gasquet reinsert of himself? Many critics are suspicious of this text for this reason.

As for me, I am entirely following [Henri] Maldiney on this point who, on the contrary, considers this to be a text that truly risks being very faithful because the arguments there are very strange. You know that there is a kind of – I am saying this in passing – there's a kind of thing, an expression, rumors, that painters are always treated a bit as if they were uneducated creatures or not very clever. As soon as we read what painters write, we're reassured; it's neither of these things at all. And one of the reasons the authenticity of Gasquet's text gets discussed is that Cézanne strangely starts speaking from time to time like a post-Kantian, so people say its… [*Deleuze doesn't finish the sentence*]

But Cézanne, in fact, greatly enjoyed speaking with people, when he trusted them. He would ask them lots of things. On the other hand, Cézanne was very, very educated; he didn't reveal it, or did so rarely. He played an astonishing role as, really, as a peasant, a yokel (*bouseux*), whereas he had considerable knowledge, and read a lot. It's difficult to understand. Painters always pretend to have seen nothing, to know nothing. I think that they read a lot at night. [*Laughter*] And one easily imagines even that Gasquet told Cézanne some things about Kant, and what Cézanne understood is quite fine because he understood much more than someone university educated.

Following Gasquet, [Cézanne] at one point makes this great statement, indeed: "I would like to paint space and time and make them become forms of the sensibility of colors, since I sometimes imagine that colors are like great noumenal entities, living ideas, creatures of pure reason."[2] So, as commentators have said, Cézanne couldn't have said that; it's Gasquet that attributes it to him. I'm not sure that, one evening, they weren't talking about Kant, whom Cézanne understood quite well, because when I say that he understood better than a philosopher, he saw very well that in Kant, the noumen/phenomenon relation was particular (*était tel*). To some extent, the phemonenon was the appearance of the noumen, hence the reflection [that] colors are noumenal ideas. Colors are noumens, and space and time are the form of the appearance of noumens, that is, of colors, of colors appearing in space and in time, but in themselves, they are neither space nor time. This seems to me to be a very, very interesting idea; in this, I only see great similarities that… [*Deleuze does not finish the sentence*]

So, of course, at the same time, Gasquet's text takes things from letters sent to him by Cézanne, so he creates mixtures, yes, but concerning what's essential, everything is fine for us since, in the text that I am going to read, I am going to take as it unfolds. Cézanne – I am commenting on this almost logically – distinguishes two moments in the act of painting. So, he is going to bring things to us fully situated within our problem. And in one of these moments, he calls it "chaos" or "abyss", chaos or abyss, and the second moment -- if you read the text closely, since it's not clear, in fact, but it's a supposed conversation – he calls the second moment: "catastrophe", fine. And so, in the end, the text is very logically and very rigorously organized; in the act of painting,

there is the moment of chaos, then the moment of catastrophe, and something emerges from this, from chaos-catastrophe, which is color. When it emerges! Once again, there is still the possibility that nothing emerges, one is never certain; in this, nothing is given in advance.

Here's the text; I am beginning with the first aspect. I'll indicate when, in my view, the first moment ends: "In order to paint a landscape correctly, first I have to discover first the [geological] strata. Imagine that the history of the world dates from the day when two atoms met, when two whirlwinds, two chemicals joined together. [I can see rising] these rainbows, these cosmic prisms, this dawn of ourselves above nothingness" (*Conversations*, p. 114)[3] – If I am mixing up everything, no matter, it's not far off – "These rainbows, these cosmic prisms, this dawn of ourselves above nothingness." Fine, the style is good, but some might say this is from Turner. So yes, why not? The history of the world, what does that mean? What interests us in this? It's the first time that one finds a theme that, in my view, traverses most of the great painters, the theme of "they never paint but one thing: the start of the world," that's their business: they depict the beginning of the world.

Fine, so what is the beginning of the world? It's the world before the world, that is, something exists; it's not yet the world. It's really the birth of the world. Henceforth, why can painters be Christians? Can the history of creation be of interest to them? Insofar as someone is a painter, it's obvious. It's obvious that they are involved in something that concerns the creation of the world. You understand that each day, I should add a coefficient of essentiality to this; I mean, it's an essential concern of painting, having us face all this.

Fine, "Imagine that the history of the world dates from the day when two atoms met, when two whirlwinds, two chemicals joined together." -- [For] Turner, it's about chemical dances, of, fine. Yes, these are chemical dances of color. -- "… this dawn of ourselves above nothingness, I can see them rising, I immerse myself in them when I read Lucretius." And then, in fact, Cézanne read lots of Lucretius, fine. And, in fact, Lucretius's interest concerns atoms, of course, the dance of atoms, but equally strangely, it concerns colors and light. There's no question of understanding anything in Lucretius if one doesn't attend to what he says about color and light in relation to the atom, fine.

"These rainbows, these cosmic prisms, this dawn of ourselves above nothingness, I see them rising, I immerse myself in them when I read Lucretius. In this fine rain …" – he's standing under a fine rain – "in this fine rain" – that's what his subject is for painting, this fine rain. And understand, although he creates a portrait, although he creates a pot, although he paints a woman, fine, one mustn't forget this, that's it's always about expressing the fine rain, or expressing something of this order – "In this fine rain, I breathe the virginity of the world." What does "the virginity of the world" mean? It's the world before man and before the world, before man and before the world. Fine, but what is this?

"A sharp sense of nuances works on me. I feel myself colored by all the nuances of infinity. At that moment, I am as one with my painting." This is strange, "I am as one with my painting"… ; what does that mean? We have to comment on this precisely, my painting in waiting since -- as the rest will remind us even more precisely – he hasn't yet begun to paint. Perhaps we even have a reason for already understanding better, or for anticipating why the catastrophe belongs to the

act of painting. [The catastrophe] comes before. It occurs during as well. But the catastrophe, it begins before. The painting is yet to be painted.

"Under this fine rain, I breathe in the virginity of the world." A sharp sense of work, it's the pre-pictorial work, and here, the catastrophe is already pre-pictorial. That at once suits us fine and yet bothers us because at that point, a definition for it, also pre-pictorial, is necessary. It's as if the condition for painting comes before the act of painting.

A sharp sense of nuances works on me. I feel myself colored by all the nuances of infinity. At that point, I am as one with my painting. We are" – me and the painting. Hey, to go back to the other [earlier] point, this is really the composition of the third side, the painting not yet undertaken and the painter not yet having started to paint. "We are an iridescent chaos." – We are an iridescent chaos – "I come before my motif " – you see, he hasn't painted anything yet – " I come before my motif, I lose myself in it. I dream I wander." – He gets lost facing his motif, a chaos – "Silently the sun penetrates my being, like a faraway friend [who] warms my idleness, [fertilizes it]. We germinate." Hey, if he comes from the germ or seed, this will literally recur with the same term used by Klee. "We germinate. When night falls again, it seems to me that I shall never paint, that I have never painted." All this is pre-pictorial; it's the "before painting" for eternity. "I need night to tear my eyes away from the earth, from this corner of the earth into which I have melted. The next day, a beautiful morning"– I'm still in the first moment, and you see, this pre-pictorial moment of chaos has taken place. He no longer sees; he merges with his motif; he no longer sees anything, night is falling.

As he says, explaining in a letter, my wife scolds me because when I return, my eyes are red. What does that mean?[4] He no longer sees anything. The eye, we have to ask: what is the eye? What is an eye? A painter's eye? What does an eye in painting mean? How does it function, an eye? Fine, so, it's already a reddened eye. "The next day, a beautiful morning, slowly, [geological] foundations appear, the layers, the major planes form themselves on my canvas. Mentally I compose the rocky skeleton." -- "The next day, a beautiful morning, slowly, [geological] foundations appear, the layers, the major planes form themselves on my canvas. Mentally I compose the rocky skeleton." If you see the landscapes of Aix by Cézanne, you immediately see what he is calling the rocky skeleton. "The major planes form themselves on my canvas. Mentally I compose" – you see, he still hasn't yet begun – "Mentally I compose the rocky skeleton, I can see the outcropping of stones under the water; the sky weighs on me. Everything falls into place." – Everything falls into place. – "A pale palpitation envelops the linear elements. The red [patches of] earths rise from an abyss." – The abyss is the chaos seen earlier. It's the previous evening's chaos – "Red [patches of] earths rise from an abyss." – But what form of red? These must be brownish red patches of earth; these must be darkish purple, tending toward black – "Red [patches of] earths rise from an abyss. I begin to separate myself from the landscape, to see it." – You see, this is also a genesis of the eye, this tale, at the moment of pure chaos; no eye, it's melted, the eye is completely red, it no longer sees anything. I am beginning to see the landscape. – "I detach myself from these geological lines." – I detach myself from the landscape, meaning that there's a relation with vision – "I detach myself from these geological lines. Geometry measures the earth." In other words, geometry is identical with geology.

Fine. What am I saying, to sum up? I am saying that this first, very pictorial moment is the moment of chaos. One has to pass through this chaos. And according to Cézanne, what emerges from this chaos? The sheathing of the canvas. Here we have the great planes being sketched out. "Everything falls into place": this is already dangerous. There's a letter in which Cézanne says, "This isn't going well." He says, "Planes collide with each other" (*Conversations*, p. 48). There, in that moment, everything could collapse; it's the first coefficient of a possible collapse. The distinction of planes might very well not succeed in occurring. The distinction of planes emerges from chaos, fine. If chaos seizes everything, if nothing emerges from chaos, if everything remains chaos, the planes fall onto each other, instead of falling upright. The painting is already ruined; it's already ruined before having started. That's what shit is, and it's true that in the painter's experiences, there are things, it goes fine, it doesn't go well at all, I'm blocked off, I'm not blocked off… [*Interruption of recording*] [1:33:42]

Part 3

Deleuze: Yes, perhaps, right ?

Anne Querrien: I have the impression that there is exactly the same thing for architects in the great debate that occurs at the end of the eighteenth [century] about the sublime and the picturesque. And precisely, within the picturesque, they pass through three stages whereas, in the sublime, they only keep two of them, and they raise up the sublime directly through its opposition to chaos. And finally, chaos comes first. From chaos, they construct the sublime, and either they remain within the sublime, that is, geometrical lines, etc., or they manage to pass into the picturesque, that is, into color and all that. … [*Inaudible comments*], and it was by inheriting, by composing with what my architect friends told me in their discussions about the sublime and the picturesque and about what you were telling us about Kant and the sublime and chaos in Kant… [*End of comments are inaudible*]

Deleuze: Well, in that case, we'd have to, perhaps it might be better, in fact, to go back, but to do that is beyond us. Let me indicate for those who might find this point of interest, there's a book by Kant that, I believe, is one of the most important books in all of philosophy, the *Critique of Judgment*, that Kant wrote at a very, very old age and that contains one of the first great philosophical aesthetics. There's a theory of the sublime, and Kant distinguishes two aspects or two moments of the sublime. One he names the "geometric or mathematical sublime", and the other, "the dynamic sublime." And here, if we really wanted to, in fact, one would have to – for those interested in this, consult his texts – they are quite difficult, but if we have the time, perhaps I will make some comments about them. This would be quite curious; in fact, perhaps we could create, without forcing the texts too much, an intersection of Cézanne's two moments with Kant's two moments of the sublime, the first one being a geometrical sublime according… the expression itself, or "geological", according to Cézanne's very expression. But Kant's text is extraordinary. It's one of the great founding texts of Romanticism.

Fine, we are now moving into the second moment. You see that the first moment is chaos, and something emerges from it, specifically the framework (*armature*). The second moment, "a feeling of tenderness comes over me", a feeling of tenderness comes over me. "Some roots of this emotion raise the sap, the colors. It's a kind of deliverance. The soul's radiance, the gaze,

exteriorized mystery are exchanged between the earth and the sun, [ideal and reality], colors! An airborne logic"– Before, there was a terrestrial, earthly logic in play, with the geological strata – "an airborne, colorful logic quickly replaces the somber, stubborn geometry." -- This is a beautiful text. You see, elements are being changed -- "An airborne, colorful logic quickly replaces the somber, stubborn geometry. Everything becomes organized: trees, fields, houses." (*Conversations*, p. 114). – Hey, by commenting in this way, I… [*Deleuze does not finish*]

But then, everything wasn't organized, yet the planes were falling into place, and all that. – "Everything becomes organized" – As if he was recommencing from zero. This is strange. "I see. I see" – and there's a second genesis of the eye – "I see. By patches: the geological strata." This is what will reveal the secret to us. This is strange, he doesn't say it; he seems to be starting again from zero. Whereas "I see", he already said this, "I am beginning to see", and here he acts as if he were seeing for the very first time. What has happened? There's only one answer: it's that the first time, it was chaos or the abyss and something emerged from it, specifically the framework, and so what emerged at the first moment, the framework, collapsed once again, in fact, collapsed again: "I see. By patches: the geological strata, the preparatory labor." There he says it formally: the entire first moment was a preparatory, pre-pictorial work: "… the geological strata, the preparatory work, the world of drawing all cave in, collapse as if in a catastrophe."

What makes this text very, very interesting to me is that [Cézanne], in his own name, in his own experience, distinguishes, in what we can call "the catastrophe" in general, he distinguishes two moments: a moment of chaos-abyss from which the "strata" or "the framework" emerges; and then a second moment, the catastrophe that sweeps away the strata and the framework, and what is going to emerge? "The geological strata, the preparatory work, the world of drawing all cave in, collapse as if in a catastrophe. A cataclysm has carried it all away, [regenerated it]. A new era is born. The true one! The one in which nothing escapes me, where everything is dense and fluid at the same time, natural. All that remains is color, and in color, brightness, clarity, the being who imagines them, this ascent from the earth toward the sun, this exhalation of the depths toward love" (*Conversations*, pp. 114-115).

This is odd because, as [Henri] Maldiney points out here, we could make a connection not only with Kant's texts on the sublime, but term for term, the equivalent would be located as well in texts by Schelling, the Schelling who is associated greatly with painting. That's quite bizarre. Fine.

"I want to use this idea, this burst of emotion, this smoke of existence" – color that is rising – "of the smoke of existence above the universal fire." Here as well, this is a way of honing a description of Turner's painting. And it's not about Turner that he is saying this; it's about his own paintings, it's about what he wants to create: "this universal fire".

So look, I am starting over: a first, decomposed moment in two aspects, the "chaos-abyss", I am seeing nothing; a second aspect of the first moment: something emerges from the "chaos-abyss", the great planes, the framework, geology. A second moment: catastrophe sweeps away the strata and the great planes. Catastrophe carries them off, that is, we again start from zero. We again start toward a new conquest, and yet if the first moment hadn't been there, no doubt this would

not work. And again, there's a danger that catastrophe might seize everything and that color wouldn't arise.

Hey, let's consider a bit of progress: what happens when color does not rise, when color does not set within the fire? Color has to emerge from this kind of fire, from this catastrophe fire. If it does not emerge, if it doesn't cook or it cooks badly… It's odd, it's as if the painter… [*Deleuze does not finish*] Fine, is the painter concerned with ceramics? Yes, obviously yes. He uses other means, but he has his furnace; there's no color that doesn't emerge from this kind of, from a furnace which is what? Well, which is at the same time on the canvas. It's the globe of fire, Turner's globe of light. What will it be for Cézanne, and what do we call it? We don't know yet. Color is supposed to emerge from it, but if it doesn't emerge, what is it? What do we say about a painting in which the color doesn't rise, doesn't emerge? If color rises, what does one have to grasp? Is this a metaphor? No, it's no metaphor, obviously not for Cézanne. That means that color is a matter of ascending scales (*gammes ascendantes*). It must rise. Fine, must it rise? Is this true for all painters? Obviously not. No, on the contrary, there are painters for whom there are descending scales. It happens that, for Cézanne, we'll see why, [it's] ascending scales, such that what seems to be like metaphors are not metaphors.

Anne Querrien: And so, that rises toward white.

Deleuze: Ah, it rises toward white? No, not really.

Claire Parnet: [It's] toward blue.

Anne Querrien: No, no, because [*Inaudible comments; we hear Deleuze groaning*] there's an ascending scale toward black; it's the intense black body. So, one has to know…

Deleuze: Yes, but for Cézanne, it doesn't rise toward white. It rises.

Anne Querrien: So, it's colors. [Deleuze: Yes…] So, that goes into light…

Deleuze: No, these are ascending scales; it's within the order… In the end, it's… Well, we'll see that.

Anne Querrien: No, because in the exhibition of forms of realism of the interwar years, it appears that there are people who were beginning to promote black and darkness as intensity.[5]

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, but here, this is Cézanne, right? So, what does it mean when the color does not rise, when it doesn't set, when it doesn't cook? People say: oh, all that? It was… Oh, la, la, the planes fall atop one another; they are not in place, the failure of geology. They aren't in place. And what does "in place" mean? Since it's an uprightness that only exists in the painting; is it the uprightness of resemblance? It's necessary that… Otherwise, if the planes fall one atop other, the painting is already ruined.

Fine. You see, this is much more important than the problem of depth. The problem of depth is completely subordinate to the problem of planes and of how planes fall. Planes have to fall and

not onto each other. All kinds of creation are permitted as far as depth is concerned. But we always get exactly the depth we deserve as a function of the way in which we cause the planes to fall. That's the painter's problem. The painter never had the least problem with depth. The problem of depth is a joke (*c'est pour rire*).

Fine, the second [moment], colors don't rise, so what is the danger? The danger is – it's stated quite well; painters say it quite well – it's… what is it? It's swampy colors; it's a swamp, a marsh, it's a mess, a mess, I've created a mess. It's grey; it's greyness (*grisaille*). The colors don't rise, the planes don't fall, it's awful. It's… [they] collide with each other. It's confusion. [If] the colors don't rise, it's greyness. Hey, it's greyness. Oh yeh? Isn't this going to help us a bit? It's greyness. In fact, that creates paintings, in the end, at the extreme, dirty paintings. Gauguin was very annoyed because a very great critic of the era had said: all the colors are "muted and scabby" (*sourdes et teigneuses*). [*Laughter*] For that, [Gauguin] was unforgiving; twenty years later, he remembered that, "the muted and scabby color", that someone said that about him. Color is difficult; it's difficult to get away from the muted, the scabby, the grayness.[6]

Ah good, but then, what would this be? How does that occur? Why am I introducing this idea? It's because… [*Deleuze does not finish*] There's a famous text that all painters always repeated, a text by Delacroix in which he says: "Grey is the enemy of color; it's the enemy of painting."[7] We indeed see that what means, right? At the extreme, what is grey? It's where white and black are mixed together, at the extreme, where all colors are mixed together. All colors are mixed together; colors do not rise. It's greyness.

And, not long after this text that I just read, the same Cézanne said this; listen a bit. He said to Gasquet: "I was at Talloires. […] You want grays? Well, you've got them. And greens, all the greenish grays in the whole world. The surrounding hills are high enough, it seemed; they appear low, and it rains. … There's a lake between two gorges, a landscaped English lake. Sketchbook pages fall, already watercolored, from the trees. Surely that's still nature… But not as I see it. Do you understand? … Gray on gray." -- Grey on grey. – "You're not a painter if you haven't painted gray. Delacroix said that gray was the enemy of all painting, but he was wrong. You have to know how to paint gray to be a painter." (*Conversations*, p. 118).

What does he mean? It's fine, because he's wrong to criticize Delacroix. Delacroix's text is as important and passionate as Cézanne's, and furthermore, they are saying exactly the same thing. There's a grey that is the grey of failure. And then, there's another grey. There's another grey. What is it? There's a grey that's one of the colors that rise. Would there be two greys? There I feel that we can… This touches so much on… Or else, there are a lot of greys, there might be a huge number of greys. In any case, it's not the same grey. The grey of colors mixing together, that's the grey of failure, and then [there's] an essentially luminous grey, a grey from which colors emerge.

We have to proceed very carefully because it's known that there are two manners of creating grey. Kandinsky recalls this; he has a beautiful text about this, on the two greys, a passive grey and an active grey. There's the grey that's the mixture of black and white and, at the same time, we can't limit ourselves to that. I emphasize this immediately to avoid objections. There's a grey, let's say, that's a mixture of black and white, and then there's a grey that is a mixture, the great

grey, and it's not the same, that is the mixture of green and red, or in an even more extended manner, that's a mixture of two complementary colors, but above all, a mixture of green and red. And Delacroix spoke about this other grey, that grey, of green-red. It's obviously not the same grey.

So, this would be easy for us to say: "Ah well yes, there's a grey of colors that are mixed, it's the white-black grey." And then, there's a grey that is like the matrix of colors, the green-red grey. Kandinsky calls the green-red grey a truly "dynamic" grey, in his theory of colors, a grey that rises, that rises to color. Good, but why is it not enough to say that? Because if, for example, we take Chinese or Japanese painting, it's well known that they already obtain all the nuances that we'd like, but an infinite series of nuances of grey beginning with white and black. So, we cannot say that the mixture of white-black isn't also a matrix. I am simply posing the question of grey. Why am I posing the question? No doubt in order to move from Cézanne to Klee, because we're going to see the story of grey return again.

I am summarizing everything regarding Cézanne. Here's what he tells us: he nonetheless gave us significant information for our work: Catastrophe belongs so much to the act of painting that it's already there before the painter can begin his task. He has given us a detail. It's a detail, and it's one that we haven't worked through, you see? Why does this interest me? Because what is it that we are in the process of grasping, of beginning to grasp? We are in the process, and that interests me; at least for my own purposes, that interests me.

It doesn't suffice to place painting in relation with space because this is obvious. I even believe that in order to understand its relation with space, we have to take a detour. What detour? The detour of placing [painting] in relation with time, a time that's specific to painting, to treat a painting as if a painting already operated a synthesis of time, to say that a tableau implies a synthesis of time, to say: careful, painting only concerns space because, first, it incarnates a synthesis of time. There is a synthesis of a properly pictorial time, and the act of painting is defined by this synthesis of time. So, this would be a synthesis of time that is suitable only for painting.

If I tell myself how to find and how to manage to define – if this hypothesis is correct – how to manage to define the synthesis of time that I could call properly pictorial, we are beginning to understand. Let's suppose that the act of painting refers necessarily to a pre-pictorial condition, and on the other hand, that something has to emerge from what the act confronts. The act of painting must confront its pre-pictorial condition in order for something to emerge. There I indeed have a synthesis of time. In what form? A temporality belonging to painting in the form of a pre-pictorial, before the painter begins, of an act of painting and of something that emerges from this act, fine, and all of that would be within the painting. This would be the time belonging to the painting to the extent that about any painting, I would have the right to say: What is the pre-pictorial condition of this painting? These are not at all general categories. Where is, where is, show me that act of painting in this painting, and what emerges from this painting? I would therefore have my synthesis of properly pictorial time.

So, if I take, if I summarize Cézanne's topic from this perspective, first of all, pre-pictorial conditions: chaos, chaos or abyss, from which the great projected planes emerge. So, that's the first [time].

A second moment: the act of painting as catastrophe. The great planes must be swept away by catastrophe. And what emerges from this? Color. Fine, I'm moving on.

Above all, you must not relax nor reflect, not that. I am moving on to Paul Klee. For Paul Klee, there was always a very strange matter in all his, in many of his texts. It's recurrent: the topic of the grey point, what he calls the grey point. And we sense that he has a relation with the grey point; it's his own private matter, and that's how he can explain what painting means to him. And it's not to a particular text; for example, there is in what's been translated under the title *Theory of Modern Art* (in the French edition Médiations), there's a text by Klee titled "Notes on the grey point", p. 56.[8] But all the way through it, he won't abandon his idea of the grey point and the adventures of the grey point. He discusses it everywhere, or rather, he talks about it often. And here's what he tells us; I'll read this very quickly:

"Chaos as the antithesis of order is not properly chaos; it's not true chaos. It's a localized notion, relative to the notion of cosmic order. True chaos couldn't place itself on the disc of a scale, but forever remains imponderable and incommensurable. It would correspond rather to the center of the scale." In fact, it doesn't correspond; he says "rather". You are going to see why it doesn't correspond. What does he tell us here? He is very philosophical; he says, if you talk about chaos, you know, you cannot just take it on like that because if you do, you cannot get out of it. I say, I'm ready to take it on. I'm ready to take it on because I'm a painter. But you cannot, from a logical perspective, take on chaos as if it were the antithesis of something because chaos seizes everything, and it risks seizing it all. You cannot call chaos the opposite of order. Chaos is relative to nothing. It is opposed to nothing; it's relative to nothing; it seizes everything. And so, from the start, it already places in question any logical thought of chaos. Chaos has no opposite; no, it has no opposite. If you take on chaos, how are you going to get out of it? Klee is going to try to say how, for himself, he gets out of a chaos that has no opposite, a chaos that's not relative.

He says, so chaos is a non-concept. That's interesting for my question: can painters bring concepts to us? Yes, he starts by telling us, you know, chaos, you know, if you take seriously the idea of chaos as a non-concept. The symbol of this non-concept is the point. So good, we say, "aha", we must discover this text with pleasure, with delight. So, it's not a question of discussing nor even asking him why; we have to allow ourselves to consult the text. "The symbol of this non-concept is the point, not a real point, but a mathematical point," that is, a point that has no dimension. This is what he means. "This being-nothingness or this nothingness-being" – Klee is very philosophical – "This being-nothingness or this nothingness-being is the non-conceptual concept of non-contradiction." That's good, that's very joyful. About chaos, he says, "this being-nothingness or this nothingness-being is the concept of non-contradiction since it is opposed to nothing. Since it's not relative, it's absolute. Chaos is absolute." He says, it's quite simple. "To bring it into view," that is, in order to have a visible approximation of it – "coming to something like a decision on this matter, one must reach out to the concept of grey, to the grey point, the fateful point between what becomes and what dies."

You see, it's the grey point that is responsible for being like the pictorial sign of chaos, of absolute chaos. "This point is grey, because it's neither white, nor black or because it's white as much as it's black." You see, this grey that he's discussing, it's the grey of black-white. He says it there explicitly. "It's grey because it's neither high nor low, or because it's above as much as it's down; [it's] grey because it's neither hot nor cold." In terms of colors, you know, hot colors [are] with expansive movement, cold colors [are] with contracting movement. "[It's] grey because it's neither hot nor cold, grey because [it's a] non-dimensional point" – this text is beautiful; we don't know where he's going, but he's going there with a sense of rigor – "grey because [it's a] non-dimensional point, a point between dimensions, between dimensions and at their intersection, at the crossroads of paths." There you are; there's the grey point-chaos.

He continues, and here, I am going to combine texts. He continues the very text I am quoting: "To establish a point in chaos is necessarily to recognize it as 'grey' by reason of its principled concentration and to confer on it the character of an original center from which the order of the universe is going to spring forth and emanate in all dimensions. To realize a point with a central merit is to transform it into the locus of cosmogenesis. To this becoming corresponds the idea of every beginning, or better yet, the concept of the egg." Well, well. He brings two concepts to us: the non-conceptual concept of grey and the concept of egg. Fine. If you were listening to the second paragraph, I'll re-read it very rapidly: "To establish a point in chaos is necessarily to recognize it as 'grey' by reason of its principled concentration and to confer on it the character of an original center from which the order of the universe is going to spring forth and emanate in all dimensions."

That's where we are, on this second level; we are at the genesis of dimensions. The first grey point is "non-dimensional". The second paragraph evidently speaks to us about a second grey point. What is this second grey point? This time, in contrast to the first one, or rather, it's the first one, but how is it first? [It's] affixed (*fixé*). It's the centered first one. If you understand something, you see here the echo of Cézanne's text. The planes topple down. Ah! I have affixed the non-dimensional grey point. I've affixed it; I've made it the center. In itself, it's not at all the center, not at all. Here, I've affixed it; I've made it a center, so that it becomes the matrix of dimensions. The first point was unidimensional, the second is the same as the first, but affixed, centered.

In another text – this is why I need other texts – he has an even stranger expression, it's very, very odd – "The established grey point," that is, understand this well, the grey point once it's affixed (*une fois fixé*), once it's taken as center. It's a cosmogenesis of painting that he is trying to create here, I believe. "The established grey point jumps past itself" – you see that it's the same and not the same – "the established grey point jumps past itself into the field where it creates order." The first point was the grey chaos, non-dimensional point. The second one is the same, but the same in another form, at an entirely different level, at another moment. There are two moments of the grey point.

This time, it's the grey point [that's] become center, henceforth the matrix of dimensions, to the extent that it is established, that is, between the two, that has jumped beyond itself. And as Klee adored creating little drawings of his cosmogenesis – you see quite well the grey point that jumps beyond itself – what does that mean? Consulting yet another text, I add – so much is he obsessed

with the tale of the grey point -- this text, this excerpt from Klee, seems to be extremely valuable for us. "If the grey point expands" – it's a question of the second grey point as center that's become matrix of dimensions – "If the grey point expands and occupies the totality of the visible, then chaos changes its meaning, and the egg becomes dead."

This is the Paul Klee version of the question we were asking earlier: And if chaos seizes everything? So, if chaos seizes everything, well, we have to pass through chaos, but something has to emerge from it. And if nothing emerges, if chaos seizes everything, if the grey point doesn't jump beyond itself, then the egg is dead. What is the egg? It's obviously the painting. The painting is an egg, matrix of dimensions. So what is Klee's grey? I'd say, to create a parallel with Cézanne's text:

First moment: the grey chaos point, it's absolute. Obviously, this is prior to painting. There's no question of painting this grey-chaos point. And yet it has an impact fundamentally. Painting, the act of painting, begins when? It's on both sides at once (*à cheval*). The act of painting, if I dare say, has a foot, a hand in the pre-pictorial condition, and the other hand within itself. In what sense? The act of painting is the act that seizes the grey point in order to "affix" it, in order to make it into the center of dimensions. That is, it's the act that results in… that makes the grey point jump beyond itself. The grey point jumps beyond itself and, at that moment, it engenders *order* or the egg. If it doesn't jump beyond itself, it's ruined, the egg is dead.

So, the two moments, grey-chaos point, grey-matrix point. Between the two, the grey point has jumped beyond itself, and that's the act of painting. It was necessary to pass through chaos because it's in chaos that the pre-pictorial condition is located.

So, since here Klee does it explicitly, even more directly than Cézanne, can we reconnect with the problem of color and grey? Fine, is it the same grey? Can we say, is it enough to say – there would even be all sorts of questions – can one say, yes, perhaps? One can say approximately yes, the first grey, the grey chaos point, is the grey of black-white. [*Pause*] The grey point that jumped beyond itself is not the same. It's the same and not the same. It's still the grey point, but this time, when it jumped beyond itself, wouldn't this be this "other" grey, the grey of green-red, the grey that organizes the dimensions and, henceforth, simultaneously, organizes colors, the matrix of dimensions and colors? Can we say this? Yes, we can. Yes, certainly. Is it enough to say this? No, because it would be stupid to say that the grey of black-white isn't also already the entire egg, the entire rhythm of painting, everything. So, it's a way of saying all that. Fine.

How to get beyond this? We are very slowly making progress, that is, we are beginning to perceive [that] this synthesis of time is present. In my view, this is how when we can, if you will, it's really a question of assignment (*assignation*). In a painting, well yes, that works for Turner, evidently. That works for Cézanne; for Klee as well, certainly. And you see why henceforth they can be linked so much to the idea of a beginning of the world. The beginning of the world is their business, their business, their direct business. I want to suggest that if [Gabriel] Faure, for example… Does music have a relation with the beginning of the world? Yes, yes certainly. In what way? I don't know, I really don't know. Here, one has to think for the… In any case, we cannot mix everything up. So, there you are, you understand.

Fine, we feel blocked. So, each time we feel blocked, we have to jump to another painter, but perhaps among you, there are some… What am I looking for? Well, I'm looking for something to help me move forward a little. So, I shift to a painter that's going to come… These connections are not required, but it's connections of painters that I'm undertaking. I'm going to look into this current painter, this contemporary painter, Bacon, because I've been very impressed, and I'm staying with texts. The next time perhaps, I'll show you exceptionally a small painting, one small painting so that you see what he is trying to say, perhaps, but maybe not.

There's a very, very odd text. Bacon did some interviews that have been published in the Skira Editions. And there's a passage that seems to me completely bizarre because he also is lucky enough to be English, well, English, Irish, and he makes a statement, a statement that the English greatly admire – and this statement then, perhaps we shall find salvation there in our… Here's the text. Why am I citing this text right now? For me, it comes now because Bacon says that, before painting, there are many things that have occurred. Before even starting to paint, there are many things that have occurred. What? Well, let's leave that aside. And this is why painting precisely implies a kind of catastrophe; why? It implies a kind of catastrophe on the painting, in order to undo everything that precedes, everything that weighs on the painting before the painting has even started. [It's] as if the painter had to get rid of something; so what do we call these things that he has to get rid of? What are these ghosts of which the painter… What is this struggle with ghosts that precedes painting?

Painters have often provided an almost technical term in their own vocabulary: clichés. We might say that cliches are already on the painting before they've even begun, that the worst is already there, that all the abominations of what is bad in painting are already there. Cézanne knew about clichés, the struggle against the cliché before even starting to paint. As if clichés were there like animals rushing in, already there on the painting before the painter had even picked up his brush. One has to – here we understand a bit better perhaps if that's it; we will understand why painting is necessarily a flood – one has to drown all that, one has to prevent all that, one has to kill all that, prevent all these dangers that already weigh down on the canvas by virtue of its pre-pictorial character or its pre-pictorial condition. All that must be undone, and even if we don't see it, they're there, these kinds of ectoplasms that are already… So where are they? Well, in one's head, in one's heart? They're everywhere. In the room, they are here in the room. It's great, these are ghosts! They're there; we don't see them, they're already here. If you don't move your painting into a catastrophe like a furnace or a storm, etc., you will only produce clichés. People will say, oh! what a lovely brush stroke! Ah, that's nice, quite decorative, from a decorator. Yes, it's lovely, quite lovely! It's nicely done, oh yes, nice! Or else [it's] a fashion design; fashion designers know how to sketch quite well, and it's also shit, with no interest, none, zero, fine, zero.

We must not believe that a painter, a great painter, has less danger than another. It's simply that in what matters to him, he knows all that. That is, they all know how to create a perfect drawing. They may not seem to, but they know this quite well; sometimes they have even learned this in academies where at one time they learned to do this quite well. And so, we do not even conceive of a great painter who doesn't know quite well how to create these kinds of reproductions. They've all been through this, all of them, all. Fine, but they know that this is what one has to bring through the catastrophe. You see, if catastrophe – we are beginning to specify a bit, and yet

this is very insufficient what I am saying; I'm not at all saying that we will remain here – but I am saying, if the act of painting is essentially concerned with a catastrophe, it's first of all because it's in necessary relation with a pre-pictorial condition and, on the other hand, because in this relation with a pre-pictorial condition, it must make impossible everything that is already "danger" on the canvas, in the room, in his head, in his heart. So, the painter has to throw himself into this kind of storm, which is going to what? Which is precisely going to cancel and cause clichés to flee. [It's] the struggle against the cliché. Fine.

So, let's assume that for Cézanne, in fact, the struggle against the cliché for Cézanne is almost a, it's a thing in which, understand, if someone devotes his whole life to painting and the struggle against the cliché, it's not a schoolroom exercise. It's something in which he risks… You understand, it's awful. You're trapped, at first glance; at least the painter is trapped: if he doesn't pass through catastrophe, he'll remain doomed to the cliché. And even if you tell him, "oh still, that's really beautiful, not at all clichés," that might not be clichés for others, but for him, it will be. There are some Cézannes that are not clichés for us. For him, they were. [*Pause*] Fine. So, we have to talk about all this; it's so very complicated. This is why painters are so severe, great painters, about their own works, and this is why they throw out so many things.

So, that's a first danger. One doesn't pass through catastrophe. Catastrophe is avoided. Are there great painters who avoided catastrophe, or else reduced it to a minimum, such a minimum that it's no longer visible at all? Perhaps there are great painters who were sufficiently… I don't know, so this is for later… They appear to pass for… But nothing at all. And then there's the other danger: one passes through catastrophe and stays within it. The painting stays within it. Well, this occurs all the time. As Klee says, "the grey point has dilated." The grey point has dilated instead of jumping beyond itself.

Here we have Bacon's text… Oh, la, la, so I don't have time. I don't have time. Well, here we are, you see, we have a text by Bacon who says… Here's what he says. Fine, no, I want to read it but this… It's silly; do you want it?

Several students: Yes. [*Pause while some students exit, apparently making noise*\

Deleuze: Yes, because this will let you… I'd like for you to think about this for the next class.

[*Several students ask those leaving to make less noise:* Shhh!]

Deleuze (*He reads and quotes*): "I am making marks." – His painting, it's about the moment when he has… It's Cézanne's moment in which he has the great planes – "I am making marks" – It's what he calls random marks. You see, it's really a kind of… Or what he calls "cleanup"; he takes a brush or a rag, and he cleans part of the painting, one part. Always recall that this is not taking everything over, that catastrophe isn't seizing it all. He is establishing his own catastrophe – "The random marks are made," he says, "and you survey things" – that is, the painting with one part cleaned – "and you survey things like you would a sort of graph [diagram]."[9] – Marvelous, marvelous, this is going to launch us forward; retain this word, diagram; he calls it that – "And we see within this [diagram] the possibilities of all types of fact being planted". – He's not saying, we don't see facts… [*Interruption of recording*] [2 :20 :37]

Part 4

["This is a difficult thing; I'm expressing it badly. But you see, for instance, if you think of a portrait, you maybe at one time have put the mouth somewhere, but you suddenly see through this graph that the mouth could go right across the face."][10] – Understand, it's bad if it's not through the diagram; if it's not through the diagram, that would produce a caricature -- what he's just said -- that is, something not very strong – " you maybe at one time have put the mouth somewhere, but you suddenly see through this graph that the mouth could" – could go from one point – "right across the face". Fine, a huge mouth, you stretch out the feature; so there you state explicitly that it's a diagrammatic feature. – "And in a way" – here's what's most important to me – "And in a way, you would love to be able in a portrait to make a Sahara of appearance." – Act so that the painting becomes a Sahara. – "To make it so like, yet seeming to have the distances of the Sahara" [*Interviews,* p. 56]

That means, and I hold onto this: establishing in the painting a diagram from which the work will emerge: the diagram is precisely the equivalent of the grey point of… there, completely; and this diagram is exactly like a Sahara, a Sahara, from which the portrait will emerge, creating the portrait so faithfully although it seems to contain the distances of the Sahara.

What is this and why does this word "diagram" interest me? Because this is why I ask, is this random? I don't know if it's random, but I assume that Bacon as well, like so many painters, is well read. "Diagram" is a notion that has taken on great importance in contemporary English logic. Fine, that's good for us, so… It's even a way of seeing what the logicians, certain logicians, call "diagram." Notably it's a notion from which a great logician named [C.S.] Peirce created an extremely complex theory, the theory of diagrams, that has great importance today within logic.

Nor is this very far from a notion that I'm aware of, Wittgenstein rarely using the word "diagram". But Wittgenstein, on the other hand, speaks frequently of factual possibilities. So I don't even exclude the possibility that Bacon here is winking at people by whom he became aware of these conceptions, whose books he read, because the word "diagram" is strange. At the extreme, he might very well not have read these and takes the word "diagram" that, I believe, has a certain contemporary usage in English.

And what is he telling us here? What do I find of interest? You see, the diagram is this cleanup zone that, at the same time creates catastrophe on the painting, that is, erases all the previous clichés, even if these were virtual clichés. He sweeps everything into a catastrophe, and it's from the diagram, that is, the initiation of this Sahara within the painting. It's from the diagram that the Figure will emerge, what Bacon calls the Figure.

Fine, so I'd ask, if here, the word "diagram" can be useful for us? Yes, to some extent, because I'd say, following Bacon, let's call "diagram" this dual notion, around which we've been circling from the start, [this dual notion] of germinal catastrophe or germinal chaos. The diagram would be the germinal chaos. This would be the germinal chaos since both for the cases of Cézanne and Klee, we saw [that] there is, in this very special instance the catastrophe in such a way that it's catastrophic and, in some ways, is rhythm, color, whatever you'd like. And so, this unit (*unité*)

for making palpable this germinal catastrophe, this germinal chaos, that's what it is, that's what it is, the diagram. Henceforth, the diagram would have all the preceding aspect, specifically, its tension toward the pre-pictorial condition. On the one hand, it would be at the heart of the act of painting, and on the other hand, from within it something must emerge.

If the diagram extends to the whole painting, overtakes it all, everything is ruined. If there is no diagram, if there's no cleanup zone, if there isn't this kind of crazy zone unleashed within the painting so that the dimensions and also colors emerge, if there isn't this grey of the green-red kind, from which all the colors will arise, from which all colors will arise and create their ascending scales, there is nothing left.

Hence, everything that seemed complex to us – we've made a minuscule leap -- everything that seemed complex to us in these dual ideas of "chaos, catastrophe, germ", we can at least unify them within the proposition of a notion that would be properly pictorial, specifically, a diagram. At that point, what is a painter's diagram? Fine, the notion has to become pictorial. That opens lots of new horizons for us, logical horizons, creating a logic of the diagram. Perhaps this would be the same thing as a logic of painting if it's oriented in this direction. But on the other hand, would a painter have one or several diagrams? What would a painter's diagram be? It's not the same for all painters, otherwise it's a notion that wouldn't be painting. We'd ought to find each painter's diagram. This might be interesting, and then perhaps they change diagrams. Perhaps there is… We might even be able perhaps to assign dates to diagrams. What would a diagram be that could be revealed in the painting, variable according to each painter, at the extreme even variable according to eras, that could be dated? I am saying a Turner 1830 diagram, what is it? Are these Platonist ideas? No, since they have dates, they have proper names, and that's what is the deepest in painting. What is Turner's diagram? Fine. I'm not going to summarize it in a painting.

A Van Gogh diagram. Here we're comfortable because this is one of those painters whose diagrams can be seen best. That doesn't mean he had a formula (*recette*). But in his work, everything occurs as if the relation with catastrophe was so greatly exacerbated that the diagram almost appears in a pure state. Everyone know what a Van Gogh diagram is: it's this infinite world of tiny scratches, tiny commas, tiny threes that go, according to the paintings – and obviously, this isn't a formula – that sometimes cause the sky to throb, sometimes cause the earth to rock, sometimes completely sweep away a tree. So you are also going to find – which has nothing to do with a general idea – but you are going to find this in a tree, in the sky, on the earth, and which will be Van Gogh's treatment of color. And this diagram, I can date it. In what sense can I date it? Entirely like the completely different diagram that's Turner's. I can say, yes, this diagram of tiny commas, of tiny crosses, of tiny threes, etc., I can show how from the start, in a rather obtuse and stubborn way, Van Gogh deliberately is seeking that kind of thing.

But is it by chance, and for our own comfort as we come to an end, that Van Gogh discovers color quite late, that this genius devoted to color spends his whole life in what? In non-color, in black and white, as if color terrorized him and that he put off, that he always put off to the following year, the apprenticeship to color, and that he wallows in greyness (*grisaille*), but then really in the black-white grey, and he lives from that and sends his drawings to his brother. He constantly demands him to send mountain chalk. I don't know what mountain chalk is, but it's

the best chalk. He says, mountain chalk, send me mountain chalk, I'm not finding any here. Fine, charcoal and mountain chalk and all that, that's how he spends his time. And he flails about… It goes badly, very badly. How will he return to color? What will occur when he enters into color, and what entry will he make into color after having held himself back so much?

So, then, Klee's story becomes vital, dramatic. The grey point jumps beyond him. The black and white grey point becomes the matrix of all colors. That becomes the green-red grey point or the grey point of complementary colors. He has jumped beyond himself. Van Gogh entered into color, and did so because he confronted his diagram. And what is his diagram? It's the catastrophe, it's the germinal catastrophe, specifically these kinds of tiny commas, tiny colored hooks with which he is going to undertake his entire apprenticeship and mastery of color.

And what's going to occur? What experience will he have? And I can date it; in general, I can date it, yes generally. Just like for Turner's diagram, one must say 1830 because that's when Turner, however strong he may have been before his own diagram, directly confronts the diagram.

And [for] Van Gogh, [it's] 1888. It's at the start of 1888 that his diagram truly becomes something mastered, something… and at the same time, something fully varied since his little commas, you'll notice in all Van Goghs, sometimes they're straight, sometimes they're curved, they never have the same curve, etc.

That's what the variability of a diagram is. The diagram is, in fact, an opportunity for infinite paintings, an infinite opportunity for paintings. It's not at all a general idea. It's dated, it has a proper name, the diagram of one, then another, and in the end, that's what creates a painter's style. So there certainly is a Bacon diagram. When did he find his diagram? Fine, there are painters that change diagrams. Yes, there are some that don't change; that doesn't mean they repeat themselves, not at all. It's means that they never finish… analyzing their diagram. Hence, we've reached this question, good. There we have perhaps an adequate notion of this history of the catastrophe and of the germ in the act of painting: this would precisely be this notion of the diagram.

Oh, la, la, one-twenty, my God… [*Crowd noises are heard; end of the cassette*] [2:32:12]

Notes

[1] The following footnote from Daniel W. Smith explains a terminological issue: "The French word trait, like its English equivalent, is derived from the Latin tractus, the past participle of *trahere,* to draw. The term has two primary senses: etymologically, it refers to a graphic line, or, more specifically, to the action of drawing a line or set of lines (a stroke, a draft, a 'touch' in a picture); by extension, it is also used to designate a distinguishing quality or characteristic mark, a feature that allows one to identify or recognize a thing. Deleuze often refers to both meanings: it is the marks or strokes on the canvas that introduce traits of animality into the human figure, thereby constituting a 'zone of indiscernibility' between the human and the animal. Since the English term is most commonly used in the latter sense, however, I have occasionally translated trait as 'stroke' in those contexts where the literal meaning is predominant, that is, when Deleuze is referring to the activity of the artist's hand on the painting (as when one

speaks of "a stroke of the pencil" or "brush stroke")" (*Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation,* trans. Daniel W. Smith [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003] p. 154, note 6; [London: Continuum, 2003] pp. 173-174, note 6).

[2] *Conversations with Cézanne,* ed. Michael Doran, trans. Julie Lawrence Cochran (Berkley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 114 (hereafter cited in the text *Conversations*). [*Reference furnished with our gratitude by David Lapoujade,* Sur la peinture *(Paris: Minuit, 2023)*]

[3] The Cochran translation reads "to discover the geographic strata" rather than "geological", which corresponds to Deleuze' citation, retained here in the text. The use of "geographic" is repeated further on.

[4] *Conversations with Cézanne*, p. 125: "And my eyes, you know, my wife tells me that they jump out of my head, they get all bloodshot…" [*Reference furnished with our gratitude by David Lapoujade,* Sur la peinture *(Paris: Minuit, 2023)*]

[5] This allusion is to the exhibit organized at the Pompidou Center, 17 December 1980-20 April 1981, with the title: *Les Réalismes: entre révolution et réaction, 1919-1939* [Realisms, between revolution and reaction, 1919-1939]. [*Reference furnished with our gratitude by David Lapoujade,* Sur la peinture *(Paris: Minuit, 2023)*]

[6] Comments by Joris-Karl Huysmans, *L'Art moderne* (1883). [*Reference furnished with our gratitude by David Lapoujade,* Sur la peinture *(Paris: Minuit, 2023)*]

[7] Eugène Delacroix, *Journal (1822-1853)* (Paris : Plon, coll. "Les Mémorables", 1981), note from 15 September 1852, repeated on 13 January 1857: "The enemy of all painting is gray. The paint will almost always appear grayer than it is by its oblique position under the light. Banish all earthy colors." [*Reference furnished with our gratitude by David Lapoujade,* Sur la peinture *(Paris: Minuit, 2023)*]

[8] Paul Klee, *Théorie de l'art moderne* (Paris: Folio, coll. Essais, 1998), p. 56 ; *On Modern Art* (New York : Faber and Faber, 1966) (unfortunately, this edition does not contain the "Note" in question.)

[9] Francis Bacon, *L'Art de l'impossible. Entretiens avec David Sylvester,* p. 115; David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon 1962-1978.* 3d ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987), p. 56. Henceforth abbreviated *Interviews.* In the English edition, the term used is "graph", not "diagram" which Deleuze would prefer; I have substituted the word "diagram" in brackets where "graph" appears in the interview.

[10] The complete quote cut off by the cassette change is furnished here. [*Complete reference noted with our gratitude by David Lapoujade,* Sur la peinture *(Paris: Minuit, 2023)*]