

Gilles Deleuze

Painting and the Question of Concepts

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Transcriptions: Parts 1 & 2, Guillaume Damry (duration 1:13:09); Parts 3 & 4, Ali Ibrahim (duration 1:12:53)

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Part 1

Ultimately, what we're doing by going through these... I'm focusing on this because I'd like for us to pull off two things at once. First, obviously, we're talking about painting. Personally, I find it very difficult to talk about painting. Well, everything is difficult, I don't know, but it's difficult. Then it's not... you know I'm not talking about painting in general. It's not certain whether anything holds for painting in general. Based on what I have to say, anyway, we'll have to see to what extent it's generally applicable, applying it a little at a time to such-and-such painter for this-or-that period.

But along the way and at the same time, I'm equally interested in building—it's a technicality, but anyway—building a sort of concept which would be proper to philosophy. And you know what concept I'm looking for, because it's the very one I've discussed with regard to painting, namely, a concept of the diagram. Which in the end might be uniquely tied to painting—but anyway, it would be coherent as a concept.

As a result, our inquiry into painting is just as much an investigation of the diagram and the possibility of fleshing out a philosophical understanding of the diagram, or a logical understanding of the diagram—and what logic might this view of diagrams belong to? It's why I start by summarizing and tracking the diagram's primary characteristics in the context of painting, since everything I've said thus far boils down to something extremely simple: in a painting—well, one question: what do I mean by “a painting”? Do I mean any painting in general, or a certain type of painting? A particular period, or are there examples in every period? We can't answer all of these questions up front. But let's assume that, in a painting, there is—I have to put reservations aside—whether actually [*actuellement*] or virtually—virtually things are really vague, whether it's an over-simplified context... Virtually—we can always say that it's virtual, okay, but that doesn't help, we aren't certain... we aren't at all certain—whether actually or virtually, there's a diagram on the canvas. Okay, but we don't know what a diagram *is*; that doesn't get us anywhere.

Nevertheless, before arriving at a philosophical understanding, what I'll try to define are the pictorial characteristics of what I'm calling a diagram. Are there diagrams in music? I don't know—that would be a different question... What sort of connection is there between a diagram and a language? These are the sorts of things that open up as objects of inquiry. For the moment,

all I'd like to do is just number some of the pictorial diagram's characteristics. I can see five, based on what we looked at before the holiday...

First characteristic: When it comes to the pictorial diagram, there appear to be two fundamentally related ideas, necessarily interrelated. The diagram would be the necessary relationship between these two ideas... These ideas being that of chaos and seed.

As a result, the diagram would be a chaos-seed. Right. You might ask, why call this a diagram? I'll ask for your patience—bear with me. We'll see if, uh... Unless maybe one of you thinks there's another word that would work better; I'm sure there is one. Obviously, I'd be much more offended if someone thinks *no, painting isn't like that, there's no chaos on the canvas*. Right. That would be a fundamental objection. On the other hand, I'd be much more interested in a formal objection, where somebody says, "Sure, there's something like a chaos-seed on the canvas, but 'diagram' isn't the best word for it." That's possible too. Our inquiry is still—it isn't predetermined. So, for the moment I'll call it a diagram. The first characteristic is [that it is] a chaos-seed, or the relationship—the establishment of a necessary relationship between the two. What exactly do we mean by chaos-seed? The only evidence I have, remember, is what I've gathered from both writings and examples—no examples yet; we'll look at the examples later—by Cézanne and by Klee, where these two painters seem to have really elaborated on this notion of a chaos-seed. But that's a rather narrow time period, from Cézanne to Klee, so I won't make any broad claims—it should be able to stand on its own.

What does "chaos-seed" mean? It's chaos, but the sort of chaos where something ought to come from it. This chaos should be present on the canvas in such a way that something comes out on the canvas. That's the first characteristic.

The second characteristic seems to me... how do I put this, uh... there's a Michaux exhibition, Michaux's paintings in '67—yes, in '67 there was an exhibition of paintings by Michaux, and then Jean Grenier wrote a piece about Michaux's painting. The text, the title of Jean Grenier's text—which is rather short, it's not long; it doesn't say anything major—is "An Orderly Abyss." An orderly abyss [*abîme ordonné*]! It's only the expression that interests me. In a way, painting that doesn't include its own abyss, that doesn't include an abyss, that doesn't involve an abyss, that doesn't establish an abyss onto the canvas—it isn't painting.

But then, in a way, it's very easy to create an abyss; it's very easy to create chaos. Well, I don't know, I don't really know—is it so easy? But suppose that it is, that a bit of schizophrenia is enough to create chaos. So, we have this expression: an orderly abyss. That doesn't mean that there's an order that defies the abyss and replaces it; it means that there's an order to the abyss such that something emerges from the abyss, something which isn't ordinary. "Orderly abyss"—I could use Jean Grenier's term in place of my chaos-seed, right? It's the same.

The second characteristic—I think that when it comes to painting, if that's what the diagram is, how do we describe this chaos-seed? I claim that the second characteristic is that in essence the diagram—now this, this is crucial—is fundamentally manual. And once again, I don't know where this will take us, but I feel it will definitely lead somewhere. It's about the hand, and only an unfettered hand can trace it.

What do I mean by an unfettered hand? Let's break it down. What constraints does the hand have? When it comes to painting, the hand is tied down to the eye, of course. You might say that the hand is in shackles inasmuch as it follows the eye. The unfettered hand is one that is freed from subordination to visual coordinates. And the chaos-seed, the diagram there on the canvas, is fundamentally manual. Ultimately, see, we have to push on and see how this approach, resonates with classical problems, bearing in mind the little we're relatively certain about. Wouldn't this be another way of getting us back to the classical problem: how are the eye and hand related in painting? I mean, is painting a visual art or a manual art? And if we say it's both—well, that's no help: what relationship is there between the eye and the hand in painting? And again, the same reservations I bring up every time: is this something that concerns painting in general, or does it vary painting to painting, or is there at least a broad tendency that we can distinguish? Is a painter "abstract" based on these hand and eye relationships in painting? Instead of basing these categories—abstract, expressionist, figurative, etc.—on juvenile details like whether or not it represents something, isn't there a case to be made for retooling these major categories if they're well-founded, by referring them to totally different criteria? For example: are the hand-eye relationships the same with a so-called abstract painter and a painter we would characterize as figurative? Are they doing the same thing?

How widely can the eye-hand relationship vary? But our sort of biased way of approaching the classical issue of how the eye and hand are related in painting—not that it's right...it's a small bias for engaging with this problem, even if this bias perhaps changes the nature of the problem—it always comes down to the diagram *per* the second characteristic I'm trying to flesh out, namely, that this chaos—if it exists—this chaos laid out onto the canvas, which is like the foundational act of painting, is fundamentally manual. And even if it isn't true of every aspect of the painting, when it comes to the diagram itself, the diagram is manual; it reflects a hand freed from its submission to the eye. A bit like if I sort of scribbled stuff down; I can do it with my eyes closed. As if the hand were no longer guided by visual input—that's what makes it chaotic?

In what sense is it chaotic? It's because it involves this diagram—I'm not saying the whole painting, since, again, the diagram is there so that something can emerge -- so, for now, I'm not talking about what will come out of the diagram; for now, I'm talking about the diagram itself. I'm saying that it's a manual act, and one carried out by a hand liberated from the eye. That's the power [*puissance*] of the painter's hand. So, a hand liberated from the eye is a blind hand, but does that mean that it's random or that it just scribbles around? Of course not! Maybe there are rules the painter's hand must follow; maybe it has a manual sense of direction, manual vectors—at any rate, what makes the diagram chaotic? It's because it implies the breakdown of all visual coordinates. You know, Cézanne's bloodshot eyes, "I can't see anything." I can't see anything, but that doesn't mean I can't *do* anything. Doing without seeing. The hand's liberation. All right.

The diagram is manual. We'll see why that is. Actually, at this point, when it comes to the diagram—as diagram—a painting is not visual; it's strictly manual.

It's the revolt of the hand—the hand's had it; it's sick of taking orders from the eye. It gets its shot at independence, I guess. Only, it's odd, because it's not just that it's independent; it turns the tables. Instead of the hand following the eye, the hand slaps the eye in the face. It commits

violence against the eye; the eye will have a hard time following the diagram. To me, not being able to find the diagram would only prove my point, because the eye cannot find it. It's difficult—instead of the hand following the eye, here we have the liberated hand imposing itself onto the eye. Is the eye capable of seeing what's done by a hand freed from the eye? It's complicated; it really twists the relationship around! The relationship between two organs.

And in paintings, there's indeed a point where you get the feeling that the eye can no longer keep up, as if the hand were animated by a foreign will.¹ Hold on, what do you mean, "As if the hand were animated by a foreign will"? It speaks to what we've been talking about—his development of the idea is great, even better than my paraphrase of it. The hand animated by a foreign will, which terrorizes the eye. But where does that leave us? It's an expression from [Wilhelm] Worringer. Referring to what he calls the "Gothic line". We'll see later what he means exactly by gothic—it's the northern or gothic line which Worringer will analyze in the context of architecture, painting, sculpture. We'll see what it is later on, but for the time being: it's literally an unfettered line, a manual line and no longer a visual line—a manual line that's visible, of course, but which acts as if the hand drawing it were animated by a foreign will. Anyway.

I claim, in fact, that there are two ways of defining painting. They may sound similar, but they are far from it. You could call painting a system of lines and colors [*ligne-couleur*]. Or you could call painting a system of strokes and blots [*trait-tache*].²

I think both formulas have different connotations. When you call painting a system of lines and colors [*ligne-couleur*], that sounds visual. You've already defined it as a visual art. And it probably is. Of course it is! When you call it a system of strokes and blots [*trait-tache*], that has a rather different connotation.³ It's not for nothing that there is a school or movement that goes by the name, "tachism." Strokes and blots—it's not the same. Strokes and blots. It has a manual connotation.

Take one problem I have—this is still me working through the diagram's second characteristic. There's a major problem: if I want to describe painting as really an *agencement*,⁴ what would that amount to? What does this "*agencement*" involve?

We'll say that the *agencement* involves or has involved or can involve the following: a canvas, an easel, paints, brushes. Canvas on an easel, paintbrushes. The canvas on an easel, okay. That's totally visual. Why? The edges of the painting, and you know at this point, the painting's edges, its borders, is a big deal... Anyway, because this problem has troubled painting throughout its history, the canvas on the easel acts like a window. The motif of the window. The window is a funny thing. There's a really great article—a rather stunning text—that just came out in *Cahiers du Cinéma*. By [Paul] Virilio, "On the Audiovisual".⁵ There are five or six pages in particular that I enjoy; it's Virilio at his best.

He says that there were two events, two basic developments associated with the house. The first is the door-window, and everything started with the door-window, one of the house's fundamental components: I go in and out, and light goes in and out. But he has us appreciate the window's abstraction, since even if you physically *can*—it isn't easy—you're not supposed to go in or out of the window. The window is an orifice for air and light to come in and go out. So, it's

a wild sort of abstraction, its abstraction—the idea of making windows that aren't door-windows involves a high degree of abstraction. According to Virilio, the first major abstraction is what you might call anthropocosmic, i.e., the isolation of light.

Well, anyway, notice that putting the canvas on an easel carries out this sort of visual abstraction. Door-windows, on the contrary, are both manual and visual; the window is visual. But I think that the canvas on the easel is painting's visual determination, its optics. And the brush in your hand is the hand subordinated to the eye. Hence the ridiculous classic image—which no one ever took seriously—of the painter closing one eye and stepping back, their hand tracing what they're given, the visual givens, and so on. But we can all tell that the relations between the eye and the hand aren't so simple in painting. There's a text by Focillon—incidentally, a really great art critic—by Henri Focillon, called “In Praise of Hands.”⁶ It's a text that's been very influential. I really try to find the good in texts. I can't get behind this one at all. Because it's—it's sort of, uh... it's a little over done — “In Praise of Hands” basically explains why the hand is necessary for painting, and then at the same time the only thing for it to do is to realize the eye's pictorial ideas—he praises the hand for being fundamentally subservient. That doesn't sit right with me! If a painting doesn't involve a kind of rebellion of the hand against the eye, it isn't a good painting. Right?

Now, nothing has been as essential to painting as the easel-and-brush—again, for me, the easel stands for what's to be painted, like a window, and the brush stands for the subordination of the eye—oh, excuse me—the hand to visual requirements. To the point where the question isn't even “Which painters do without easels?” There are many who've given up on easels today, who no longer paint on easels; there are some who've kept the easel—you can always keep the easel and use it in such a secondary way that it no longer fully functions as intended. So it's not a *de facto* question—does a painter still have a use for an easel?—It's a question *de jure*.⁷

To take a well-known example: Mondrian, for example, I think used an easel, but you certainly wouldn't call his work “easel painting.” That is, the canvas isn't treated like a window, to emphasize the visual reality of the easel: when you paint on an easel, it's like you approach the canvas as if you were looking through a window, or as if it itself were the window. And the theme of windows in painting was fundamental throughout classical painting. But notice that already with impressionism, they carry around their easel—to the studio, to the subject, out into nature. Van Gogh, Cézanne—they go on walks, they... [*Interruption of the recording*] [26:19]

... throughout Van Gogh's writings there are many comments like, “cannot go out today,” because it's windy, and his easel will blow away. Why not put down some stones on the canvas to hold it down? No that won't work either. Maybe because in the outdoors the easel no longer functions as an easel. Again, Gauguin, Van Gogh paint on their knees in order to get a low horizon line. So, what happens to the easel? They have to shorten its legs. Anyway, right, we see that the question... as I was saying!

All painters, even those who painted with brush-on-easel, everyone knows that they're always taking the canvas off the easel, just as the brush can always act as something other than a brush. What instruments does the painter have besides the brush? You know, it could be anything, as

we've seen throughout history. I mean, modern painters weren't the first to, uh... Maybe modern painters have honed it down to its purest form.

We would have to figure out why, throughout history—with Rembrandt, it's obvious that he didn't paint with a brush, or I mean, not only with a brush. Historically speaking, what have painters painted with? They paint with scrub-brushes—actual brushes—they paint with sponges, brushes, rags. What else? Pollock famously painted with basting syringes. Now that's something—basting syringes. Right—scrub-brushes, sponges, basting syringes; you can use sticks... sticks have always been important in painting. Rembrandt used sticks—so what, why am I bringing this up? I'm still working out the diagram's second characteristic, which comes down to the fact that there's a problem, there's a sort of tension, a pictorial tension, between the eye and the hand. Don't mistake it for a question of harmony, where the hand both obeys the eye and renders something ultimately visual—that's not it. Whatever it is, if you aren't getting or sensing a certain tension, a certain antagonism in painting between the eye and the hand, it's because we haven't looked at it concretely enough.

But if the easel-paintbrush together represent painting as a visual art, what about when we move away from the easel? Beyond the easel—I'll determine it negatively because there are so many things it could be! It could mean painting on walls, but it could just as easily mean painting on the ground; are those the same thing? So, in Mondrian's case, for example, it's very clear: he uses an easel but it's no longer significant, since his painting is fundamentally wall-painting opposed to easel-painting.

And I think—I'm not sure—but it would be difficult, there are certainly writings by Mondrian where, or if he said anything about the easel, he would say... [because] the time has not yet come for the true wall painting such as he conceptualizes it. And it's true that his idea of wall-painting implies an architecture that perhaps existed at the time, but it was in its infancy, just like Mondrian thought he was the beginning of something. Wall painting. That is, the canvas is no more—see how that's opposed to easel-painting; the canvas no longer functions as a window.

And Pollock? He doesn't paint on an easel. He puts an unstretched canvas on the ground. An unstretched canvas on the ground is a bit of a departure: it's a totally different solution, it's not like Mondrian who still used an easel. Pollock—at least some of Pollock's paintings eliminate, that completely do away with the easel. So much to say there's a wide variety: beyond the easel, the two tendencies are toward Mondrian's wall-painting and Pollock's expressionist painting on the floor. Outside of using easels, then, there's brooms, brushes, basting syringes, sponges, rags—painting as a manual process. So, I'm not saying that they're opposed; I'm saying that they're very different things, like how I was saying that it's perfectly acceptable to define painting as a system of lines and colors. By no means am I saying it would be illegitimate; it's a perfectly legitimate definition, but it's a *visual* definition. If you define painting as strokes and blots, that's a manual definition.

Why? You have to feel it! Similarly, if you give a material definition, if you define painting with easel and brush, that's a possible material definition. Of course, you already know that it doesn't account for every painting, but it gives you an idea. It's a nominal, material definition.

But there's the other manual definition, beyond the easel: stick, scrub-brush, basting syringe. And that will also give you a definition of the material elements of painting, only this time they're manual elements. So, we can work with that, both aspects could be reconciled. You know how you say "painting" in German: it's *Mal*; "painter" is *Maler*. That alone is noteworthy for those how have a knack for languages because the German word—this will come up later, by the way—is absolutely unrelated to the French; there's no connection.

What is *Mal*? It's a word whose etymology is from Latin, from *macula*.⁸ What does *macula* mean? *Macula*—which is the name of a great journal on painting, unfortunately out of print, I believe—*macula* is a blot [*la tache*]. So, for Germans, it's almost like the language itself implies that a painter is tachist. Okay, so why do I think this is important? The German word veers painting toward being strokes-and-blots, that is, towards the manual reality of painting, whereas the French word, *pingere*, draws painting toward its visual reality. Whatever agreement between the eye and the hand that is possible in painting, we can't assume that there isn't a fundamental problem with their tension and their virtual opposition. Even virtual—I'm bringing back the vague word, virtual, that's why I found Focillon's piece so interesting but so unsatisfying. Because what I found interesting was precisely the history and all the possible variation. When it comes to the antagonistic struggle, there's always a point—I'm not saying that painting doesn't resolve the eye-hand tension. I'm saying that there's always a point in painting or an aspect of a painting where the hand and the eye lock horns like enemies.

It might be among the more interesting moments in painting. So, as for the second characteristic—the first characteristic of the diagram was simply, well, that it's a chaos-seed. The second characteristic I'd attribute to the diagram is that it is made up of strokes and blots [*un ensemble trait-tache*] and not lines and colors [*ligne-couleur*]. It's a set of strokes and blots, and it's manual.

Note that this second characteristic is an extension of the first because—I'll explain why: there is chaos. If the diagram is fundamentally manual and reflects a hand freed from its subordination to the eye, if only provisionally, again, this doesn't apply to what "comes out" of the diagram, what "comes out" of the chaos. But if that *is* what's going on with the diagram, it's easy to see why it's chaotic since, again, it entails the breakdown of visual coordinates, courtesy of the hand's liberation. In other words, it's a set of traits/strokes [*traits*], ones that do not constitute a visual form—thus, we ought to call these traits/strokes literally "non signifying" or meaningless. And what about blots [*la tache*]? The blot or stain might be a color, but it's like an undifferentiated color. A set of meaningless strokes and undifferentiated colors. That's chaos, the collapse. Right. Onto the third characteristic.

The third characteristic—we've covered it, so I can be brief—is that, if the diagram is the manual stroke/blot that emerges onto the canvas and defies optical coordinates, visual coordinates, that causes them to break down, how do we define this stroke/blot? Well, now we can consider it from the other end and define it based on what's supposed to come from it... because something comes out of the diagram. What results from the diagram are pictorial colors and pictorial lines. We don't yet know what a pictorial line or a pictorial color is. That is, the color's pictorial state, the line's pictorial state. Klee gave us the answer: it's gray. The blot is gray, and that's what the diagram is: it's gray.

How is that the diagram? Because there are two grays, because it's a double gray. Because gray is simultaneously the gray of black-white—and this gray is where all the visual coordinates fall apart—and also the gray of green-red, from which the whole spectrum of colors emerges; you could also say that the whole light spectrum comes out of the black-white gray. What comes out of the diagram is the two-fold pictorial spectrum: Light – Color.

Listen to what Klee said in some of his writing, which I think is wonderful—on gray, in particular. “The gray point leaps over itself...”⁹ It's double, the two sides of gray: the gray of black-and-white and gray as the matrix of color. But it's not yet a color, so something needs to come out of it.

The same goes for the other aspect of the diagram. The blot [*la tache*] is thus gray in this—now you can tell that the tension is no longer between the eye and the hand; the tension is within the blot itself. In the blot's gray, in the grayness of the blot, there are two aspects, insofar as this gray is black-white and insofar as it is green-red, the color matrix.

Then the same goes for the stroke: strokes aren't pictorial lines, but pictorial lines result from them. And in that regard, what are they? I claim that strokes are not yet lines; lines are made up of strokes. Or strokes are the manual elements of composition of the visual line. The visual line is composed neither of points nor is it made up of segments; visual lines are composed of manual strokes. The component and the composite are heterogeneous, since strokes are strictly manual while lines produced by strokes are visual. So, the stroke ought to be defined, precisely in order convey its originality, as a line that at no point bears a constant direction. Thus, this line has no visual reality. A line that almost constantly changes direction—that's what a stroke is, let's say.

Notice that I'm distinguishing the diagram from two things irrevocably bound up with it: its before and its after. It's related to a before because it leads the before into catastrophe: the visual world. It's related to an after since something will come out of the diagram, the painting itself. As a manual, pictorial unit, the stroke-blot causes a visual catastrophe—what emerges as a result? Something new? What do we call it? For convenience's sake, what about “the third eye”? The eyes had to be annihilated to bring out the third eye, but where does the third eye come from? It comes from the hand, from the diagram. It comes from the manual diagram. All right.

Fourthly, the fourth characteristic—let's make it a little more concrete. I'll just sum up what we saw at the beginning. What is the function or purpose of the diagram? Looking back, looking at what was there before it, it's simply to get rid of any resemblance. Clearly everyone knows there's never been such a thing as figurative painting—if by figuration we mean the act of “making a likeness”—it's obvious there's never been any figurative painting. Getting rid of resemblance has always been something that happened not only in the painter's head but in the painting as such. Even if some resemblance remains, it's so secondary that even the painters who feel they need it, need it as something that regulates rather than defines the painting; in this sense, there's never been such a thing as figurative painting, right.

So, unmaking resemblance has always been inherent to the act of painting, but it's the diagram that unmakes resemblance. Why? It came up last time: for the sake of—as some painters put it,

like Cézanne, for example—for the sake of a deeper resemblance.¹⁰ What does that mean? It's to make the image emerge. Let's take that seriously and look at it one piece at a time: getting rid of resemblance so that the image can emerge. What? If only to change up our vocabulary for, uh... let's take a look at this idea, which might help us along. I could also put it this way: getting rid of representation so that presence can emerge. Representation – Presence. Representation is what comes before—before painting anything. Presence is what comes from the diagram. Which is another way of saying: getting rid of resemblance to bring out the image. What emerges, what comes out of the diagram, is the image. The image without resemblance.

Very early on, Christian theology fleshed out a wonderful concept that should prefigure all the fraught relationships between art and religion. The idea of an image without resemblance. If you went through catechism growing up, you'll remember—you cover it in catechism—you get it straight from the church fathers; catechism had these great expressions. “God created man in His own image and likeness, and through sin, man preserved His image but lost His likeness.” Sin is the act whereby man is constituted as an image without resemblance. Man kept his image—not even God could take that away from him—but he's lost any resemblance. What? How is that possible? How can an image be an image if it doesn't resemble anything?

An image with no resemblance—that's where painting comes in. It gives us an image with no resemblance, if we were looking for a word for an image without resemblance—always looking for cleaner vocabulary, trying to see where that leads us—isn't that what we call an “icon”? An image with no resemblance. Indeed, an icon isn't representation, it is presence, and yet it's an image. An icon, the iconic, is an image *qua* presence, the presence of the image, the weight of the image's presence. Fine.

Anyway. See, I'm saying that the diagram is the instance whereby I get rid of resemblance in order to produce the presence-image. That's why I'm bringing up diagrams: breaking down resemblance and producing the image. There's the aspect before and the aspect afterward, with the diagram in between—I'll try to distinguish them terminologically: given features [*les données*], the possibility of fact, and the fact.

But why is it that the given, the visual given [*données*], falls apart in the diagram? It's so that the pictorial fact can emerge. The pictorial fact, specifically. And what is the diagram? According to the painter, Francis Bacon, it's the possibility of fact. The possibility of fact. The image with no resemblance. Well, as I see it, personally at least: Who is the painter—always trying to squeeze in an example wherever I can—who is the painter who really pushed, established the raw presence of the pictorial fact? One of the first—no one was first because really, it's always been the case—but to us, from our modern or pseudo-modern perspective, is synonymous with the affirmation, the imposition of the pictorial fact, is Michelangelo. Look at a painting by Michelangelo, and there's no denying that he's a sculptor. A sculptor-painter, you might say. You're confronted with a pictorial fact where there's nothing left to justify, where painting has achieved its own justification. But what form does that take? I really do think that our artistic categories, the main artistic categories, are well-founded. A lot of people say, “Romanticism, Classicism, Baroque: they're just words!” Abstract, expressionism—I don't think they're just words. I think they're well-founded terms; I just think we need to find better definitions than, say,

“abstract is the opposite of figurative,” because that won’t cut it. They’re perfectly fine categories, and besides—categories are philosophy’s bread and butter, so all the better.

However, I claim that the coexistence, the contemporaneity, of Michelangelo and mannerism is crucial. I think the category of mannerism neatly sets us up to understand what the “pictorial fact” is. In the most general sense of the term: something is “mannered” in the painting’s figure, in the figure as such. Where does it come from? It comes out onto the painting; it comes out of the diagram. It comes from the diagram with a sort of mannerism that we can still interpret anecdotally.

Take Michelangelo’s figures, Tintoretto’s figures, Velázquez’s figures. It’s a mix of... anecdotally, your first impression is that it’s an extraordinary mix of effeminacy, of mannerism in the attitude, the pose, almost a muscular exuberance, as if the body were both too strong and singularly effeminate. Michelangelo’s characters are unbelievable! The school known as mannerism, with some extreme masterpieces—but the way they depict the figure of Christ is not believable, given what you could call the artificial character of attitudes and postures. Which is what our eye sees at first blush; it’s sort of obvious that it’s the most beautiful sort of painting, the affirmation of the pictorial fact. It’s necessary that, compared to what you see, the pictorial fact presents the figure in forms that our eye finds extraordinarily stylized, extraordinarily artificial. And there’s something, uh, hm... trivial about it—it’s not the most profound sort of painting—but there’s a little provocation from the painter. The manner just says, “it’s not what you think.”

As a result, when people point to anecdotal accounts of the painters’ homosexuality, that’s not what it is, right? That’s not it. It’s insofar as they are painters that they work in mannerism. Yeah, obviously. Well, that’s all pretty trivial. Anyway. Using the diagram to get rid of visual givens, which establishes a possibility of fact, but the fact itself is not given. The fact is something to be produced, and what is produced is the pictorial fact, i.e., basically, the arrangement of lines and colors, the new eye. The diagram’s manual catastrophe was required in order to produce the pictorial fact, that is, to produce the third eye.

Anyway, the last characteristic of the diagram, the fifth characteristic, if you’re following me so far, you see that the diagram should be there; I no longer think that it can only be virtual... Or it can be covered back up, but it’s there; a painting has to have it there, it can’t just be in the painter’s head before they start painting. The painting must reflect this brush with chaos, the so-called orderly abyss, as someone said [Jean Grenier]. It’s not about an abyss, and it’s not about making a well-ordered painting. What the painter is concerned with is the order proper to chaos, establishing an order proper to the abyss...

But see, then there are huge risks, even in terms of technique. And I’m backing up because it’s... that’s how I’ll eventually rearrange, reclassify everything we did before, because it’s really—I’d like to convey it to you as concretely as possible, because it’s a bit funny how this whole business with... -- Again, what I’m trying to do is chart the painting’s journey through time. I don’t think of a painting as a spatial reality; I really look at it temporally via the synthesis of time proper to painting: the before, the diagram, and the after. All right, what are the risks?

We've already seen them, so I'll recap. The first danger is that the diagram takes over, that the diagram scrambles everything, that it scrambles the whole thing, that... Maybe now that makes more sense because this would be... [*Deleuze does not complete the phrase*] Maybe there are paintings like this, or paintings that come close! Because the paths get narrow at this point. And maybe that will allow us to renovate our main categories. What does it mean to be abstract? What does it mean to be expressionist? Because at what point can I say about a painting, *wow!*¹¹ Well, you can tell that, even though it's a matter of taste, after a while there's nothing to say, all you can do is wait for reactions, for everyone to have their own reactions, which isn't easy.

To understand what looking at a painting makes me feel when there's so much has already been done, that itself is difficult... but at what point can I say *oh!* The paintings that seem to have missed the mark. They fail because.... It was close; they could have been great, were it not for a bit of grayness or a stray brushstroke, stray and ultimately arbitrary brushstrokes—I ask myself why not...you can do that, but...? He could have just as well done something else, there's nothing stopping him. You know, the enemy of any form of expression is gratuitousness: when they say there's no wrong answer, that you can't make a mistake—but why are you expressing what you're expressing? Is it worth the trouble of expressing it? Likewise, is a painting worth the trouble of making it? Even for those who made it, plenty of painters make paintings and there's no need for them to do so, but who decides that? I don't know, it's complicated, but anyway, it feels like something could come out of it; once the diagram takes over, however, nothing can come out of it.

So, when the diagram takes over, I might call it pure chaos; the seed is dead. Klee's turn of phrase is great: if the gray point takes over, overwhelms everything visible, the egg dies.¹² So it's up to you. What does it mean when a painter judges other painters? He's not actually judging them because, again, out of all artists painters might be the proudest but also seem to be the most modest. They don't pass judgment; they express preferences. It's always interesting to hear why a painter says they aren't drawn to this or that form of painting. When Bacon is looking at a Pollock and says, "This is sloppy—just sloppy," no offense to Pollock, right? It takes nothing away from him.

Why does it matter? Not because it tells us anything about Pollock; we learn more from what Bacon says about a painter he likes and admires. When he just says—what exactly does it mean for Pollock to be sloppy?—he goes so far as to say that he "hates" expressionism, in an almost racist way. "I hate that kind of sloppy sort of Central European painting,"¹³ that sloppy Central European—you can tell what he means; he's Irish, he's Anglo-Irish, a sloppy sort of Central European painting, right. How is that relevant? It's relevant because when Bacon sees a Pollock, he ought to flip it around, he ought to say, "This is chaotic," and indeed, when you see one of Pollock's paintings it can genuinely come across as a chaos-painting. All right. Well, Pollock aside, some paintings have this effect: the diagram leans so far into its first aspect of chaos, where it's descended into chaos, so that nothing can come out of the diagram; everything is blurred, greyed out, or else there's too much color so everything's gray, a ruined canvas. So, that's the first danger.

What's the second risk we run? It's that the diagram... as the diagram brings about the breakdown of visual givens... the risk has been very clearly articulated—without using the word,

diagram—very clearly articulated by Cézanne. There are letters where, with some apprehension, Cézanne writes: instead of assuring their junction, the blank spaces—note that it isn't a question of perspective because painting has nothing to do with perspective, it's a meaningless concept...there is a concept of it, but perspective is only one possible response to the pictorial problem, which you can only pose pictorially in the form: do paintings allow us to—in paintings where there is a reason for distinguishing different levels [*plans*], for in some paintings there is no need to differentiate levels [*plans*]—well, how does it work, how does the painter bring different levels [*plans*] together?¹⁴ But perspective is nothing if not a case of conjoined levels [*jonction des plans*]—the real pictorial problem is that, if there *are* different levels [*plans*], by what method will they be connected?

Cézanne says, well... when it comes to the abyss of chaos, instead of coming together, the different levels [*plans*] fall on top of each other, they fall on top of each other. Instead of falling into a sequence, the colors mix together. And this mixture is nothing but gray. The object—the painted object—has lost its resemblance, has lost it in the chaos, is fundamentally off-kilter. Right. Levels [*plans*] collapsed onto each other, colors mixed into gray, the object all wrong and off balance—this extreme case has the painting so bound up with the diagram that there's nothing but chaos. But the failures aren't what's interesting; I'd say that what matters are the ones that take this risk. Which ones come dangerously close but actually manage to avoid falling into this danger, and do so masterfully? Then it gets interesting: what is it that's able to run the first of the diagram's risks—but is it because the painter is especially talented, or do all great painters manage to avoid it?

That might let us establish our first artistic category: I think it's specifically what was known as abstract expressionism. Abstract expressionists—that is, the whole American movement that dominated American painting—the generation that's now some sixty years old. I think the way they flirt with chaos, where the diagram takes over; they get really close to chaos, but the diagram still manages to produce something fantastic. I think that's what Pollock is about. It's Morris Louis. It's [Kenneth] Noland. All the ones many of you are familiar with. In particular, I'd refer to Pollock in terms of lines and to Morris Louis when it comes to color-stains [*tache-couleur*]. But later we'll see that this is the trend with abstract expressionism, reaching a maximum level of chaos with the diagram. But of course, contrary to what Bacon says, I think it's obvious that they don't descend into chaos, that their paintings are neither muddy nor sloppy.

Well, look at the diagram's other tension. So, the first tension is for the diagram to take over and it all just looks like chaos. Which, if you like, we could call abstract expressionism. What about the other tendency? See, now I'm defining artistic categories by privileging what's happening with the diagram, and without any regard for what's going on with figuration, which is not relevant.

Coming at it from the other side, what would the diagram's second tendency be? It's to be minimized, to be minimized. Okay, how do you minimize a shallow stream? By making a *very* shallow stream. By retaining nothing but the bare minimum. This time, just like I was saying earlier that when you maximize the diagram's power it tends to turn into chaos, its first aspect. When you minimize it, it tends to fully lapse into a pictorial order. That is, you tend to effectively reduce the diagram, even replacing it. With what? Let's tentatively say—and this is

the first time we've run into this idea, a term which might do a lot of heavy lifting for us—you tend to replace [the diagram] with something rather remarkable: a sort of code.

And if this term opens things up for me, it's insofar as, well: doesn't this offer us a new diagram/code dynamic, such that the difference between diagram and code will help us make a lot of progress on what a diagram is? In terms of the philosophical concept that we're after. What does it mean? What gives me that impression? Obviously, a code can mean something grotesque—I'm thinking of botched paintings, but you get what I'm trying to... the attempt to reduce the diagram to a maximum—No, minimum! And to replace it with a code... which is what, exactly? It's an obvious way to define so-called abstract painting. With the great abstract painters, we'll see it's correct, we'll see if it's true. But when it goes wrong—and God, abstract painting has some awful painters. Just as many as other kinds of painting, but with abstract painting it's catastrophic. The guys who make squares or whatever—it's horrible. Well, I mean, it's so pretentious; a square can be pretentious, a square can be crap. You shouldn't think that just making squares is enough to make... A square can be hideous. There are some hideous squares in bad abstract art. Well, anyway, all these types of abstract painting, at the most basic level, tend toward a sort of geometrism. You get the feeling that yes, that what they tend to do is replace the diagram with code.

When that doesn't work is when the painting merely applies an external code. So, if I'm using painting to apply an outside code... what's the difference—to put the question another way—what the difference between one of Kandinsky's triangles and a triangle from a geometer? What makes Kandinsky's triangle an artistic triangle? What makes ... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:13:09]

Part 2

... Bringing up non-Euclidean geometry and the possibility of painting using non-Euclidean codes doesn't change anything. It's obvious that when a great abstract painter—when a great abstract painter actually moves toward replacing the diagram with a code, it's not about that, because at that point, abstract painting would just be another sort of catastrophe for painting. If the abstract painters are great, what makes them great? If they are great painters, it's because they have an understanding—doesn't matter whether it's ascetic or spiritualistic—of the spiritual life! At bottom, they have a religious soul, don't they?

What do they make? Only the code they want to inaugurate—what they think will be possible in the future—if you look at all the abstract painters' major declarations, they're always addressed to a future world, which they create, a future world heralded by new codes—it goes without saying that it's a pictorial code—but it's funny, if we look at it that way—along with it come all sorts of paradoxes. Establishing a pictorial code! In other words, a code unique to painting. A code that would be proper to painting, i.e., sorting out codifiable elements, elements of codification that are at the same time completely pictorial.

Again, there's a fine line—just like I was saying earlier. It's true, Pollock's painting verged on becoming too sloppy and letting chaos reign, but then he gets out of it. Abstract painters verge on a sort of painting-code where painting would be obliterated, but then the great abstracts knew

how to pull it off and forged the elements of a code that'd be uniquely pictorial; they turn code into pictorial reality instead of applying a code onto painting; they're Kantians. With Kandinsky, it's obvious that he's a disciple of Kant to some extent—they create an Analytic of elements. Kandinsky offers us a stupendous Analytic of elements. Here too, it would take very little for this to fail. I would at least try to define abstract painting by saying, see, this is the other side of the diagram: they reduce the diagram to a minimum; they ultimately replace the diagram with a code, but it's a properly pictorial code, inherent to painting. One painter who best makes my case here isn't Kandinsky, nor even Mondrian, although they all basically share an understanding of code—both Kandinsky and Mondrian converge on one point, which I find fascinating, namely, that ideally, genuine code is binary.

What exactly is binarity? Painting's specific form of binarity has nothing to do with a binary calculation that would churn out paintings; you can always do that with a computer—there are generated paintings, a computer can be programmed to make paintings. You know what I mean: at that point, code is external to painting, you've merely encoded your input in such a way that the computer can render a portrait. There's a famous image [*dessin*], a portrait of Einstein¹⁵ made with binary signals—it's not hard to program a computer that way. But that's obviously not what Kandinsky or Mondrian are doing.

What's with this binarity? What sort of binarity do abstract painters use? The main binary relationship is, as everyone knows, between horizontal and vertical. Mondrian's well-known formula: the horizontal and the vertical are the two elements—that's the analytic of elements, there's the horizontal and the vertical, and that's it. Because you can make anything with this binary code. You can do anything, not like where you apply a code from outside. In every direction, you can develop the code within painting. All right, so that gives us the second route whereby painting also brushes with danger.

And the abstract painter who I think went the furthest, probably further than any other abstract painter, in forming a pictorial code is—he's on my mind because not long ago he had an exhibit in Paris—it's [Auguste] Herbin. For those who know this painter, I think he's one of the only abstract painters who at heart are truly colorist. If you ask me, he's the greatest or one of the greatest colorists (*H-E-R-B-I-N*). I'll show an example, for your viewing pleasure—you should be able to see it from there. Herbin had a showing in a small gallery, but it's over now... [*A student asks for the gallery name*] Yeah, I'm looking. A small gallery on the Rive Gauche. I have the street, but I don't have the name. But I'll get it for you, since I have the catalog—this catalog is different, it's older, and in Paris museums there are pieces by Herbin, but in my opinion there aren't any that are very good, it must have been bought. There might just be some Herbin at... maybe at Beaubourg there are some Herbin. [*A student proposes a name*] What? Yes, yes, Rue de Seine, it was Rue de Seine, I'll look at the catalog and let you know next time because I'll take a look at the catalog. Fine.

Then there's a third way. Somewhat vaguely, rather vaguely, I currently have something like two categories: abstract painting and expressionism. Where do these terms come from, and why, so on and so forth... What makes them modern? I think that speaks to a problem that's actually rather modern, which motivates a lot of painters. But the less they think about it, the better it is. Why painting today? Why painting especially... while people are dying, but basically... There

are many who think, “Yeah, you know how it goes: writing is outdated, maybe painting is outdated,” and so on. There are painters who get hit by these things pretty hard. But the ones I’m talking about have experienced it, the ones who are really modern—it’s obvious for abstract painters. They claim they’re getting at the heart of painting because today’s painting—we’ll elaborate on this further—it can lead to a renunciation of painting. A renunciation of painting for the sake of new forms of art, or quasi-new forms of art.

Okay, but otherwise, when it comes to how today’s major painters have answered the question, “Why painting? What’s the point of painting these days?” notice how concrete their answers have become—for example, it’s significant that, with a Mondrian sort of response, one basically does murals and breaks away from easel painting. Which entails a whole new—ostensibly, at least—a whole new understanding of what a painting is. Namely, it no longer even pretends to represent anything. Why? Because it serves a different purpose. The painting’s task has become to divide up its own surface. Hence the squares: see how it’s a pictorial code but not merely the application of a geometrical code. The task of the wall painting, the task of the painting that’s fallen off its easel, that’s come off the easel. The painting ceases to be a window. Why does the painting have to split up its own surface? At the same time, I’d almost say there’s an isomorphism with architectural division. Dividing with walls on the one hand and the divisions within each wall, on each wall, on the other. Then the painting is no longer attached to the easel as a mobile entity; it’s bound to the wall. That was Mondrian’s approach. He viewed his own paintings as abstract—the wrong sort of abstract—insofar as they lacked their corresponding walls.

In fact, by dividing up its own surface, the canvas ought to resonate with divisions on the surface of the walls, whereby painting becomes mural. Hence, the need for a code... well, anyway! What’s the answer? Why paint today? Well, see, it’s... it can... ultimately, it can only emerge from what we called the diagram. If the diagram is the chaos-seed... I think every painter, whether they say it or not, thinks painting is still worth the trouble precisely because it has a certain relationship to chaos that they claim—sometimes philosophically, sometimes poetically—that everyone recognizes in modern humanity. Our world has descended into chaos. Our world is tumult and chaos. Kandinsky is always talking about it. The modern world has descended into tumult and chaos. Okay... so why painting? You can read anything stereotypical examples of modernity into this: the atomic bomb, city life, pollution, and so on... tumult and chaos.

Why paint today? Because painting would probably be justified based on the extent to which it does or does not ward off chaos. No, but it comes face to face with chaos in order to draw out a—let’s tentatively call it a possible modern order. Only, how is this possible modern order supposed to emerge from chaos without dispelling it?

Here there are various answers. Abstract painters might say, “by keeping chaos to a minimum,” and chaos “is life outside.” A constant theme in Kandinsky’s work is that modern humanity needs a new spiritual life and that painting becomes the principal agent of humanity’s spiritual life. He’s always talking about it: “inner life,” “spiritual life is empty.” Kandinsky comes back to it time and time again. So, why exactly is it painting’s mission to form a spiritual life, to draw something out of chaos? That might sound like a figure of speech, but it ceases to be so. Abstract

painters *are* spiritualists. They are the heralds of the spiritual life to come; that's their charge. But why? Well, if I know anything about painting's spiritualist ambition—the title of Kandinsky's famous book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, etc.¹⁶—if their claim to spirituality is indeed justified it's precisely because painting cannot get around its confrontation with chaos. And thus, because the conditions of modern life give rise to chaos. If that's true—that might not be enough on its own—but if that's true, it's specifically because painting offers the most close-up confrontation, there on the canvas, and has to pass through chaos in order to draw out something which the painter thinks is a response to it. Why paint today? To form modern humanity's third eye. In other words, to form our inner eye. Going so far as a sort of mysticism—Herbin is fascinating; with Herbin, you get a sort of mystic materialism.

Right. From the other side, what would an expressionist say? See, but the answer we got from the abstract painters is bizarre. It amounts to saying, “you'll extract the seed of chaos by keeping chaos to a minimum,” that is—formally, as Kandinsky puts it—“by turning your back on the tumult,” and inventing future code. I think that abstract expressionism, expressionism has a very similar response to the question, why paint today? Again, because painting offers a close encounter with chaos. However, for an abstract expressionist, for an American, for Pollock and his following, you obviously won't manage to get out of chaos by establishing a pictorial code. It's almost the opposite; it's by fully confronting it. Because for them, it's another way of experiencing rhythm, because for them, for the expressionists, rhythm is as close as one gets to chaos. The closer you get to chaos, the closer to get to material tumult, to the tumult of matter, to molecular tumult, the more likely it is that you'll get the seed, the rhythm. In a way, the formula behind abstract painting would be: let's limit chaos as much as possible so that a modern order can emerge, which would be a code for the future. Expressionism's formula would be: let's keep adding to the chaos, adding on to the chaos, just a smidge beyond its limits, until something comes out of it.

See, these two approaches might very well misunderstand each other—or not be interested in each other—but both approaches are unusual and each of them flirts with catastrophe. Expressionism's catastrophe is falling into chaos, pure and simple. The catastrophe risked by abstract painting is the external application of a code.

Which is what happens with bad expressionists—it's just sloppy! Or what you get with bad abstract painters—too much order, orderly enough to be fascist! Well. Anyway, what about the third approach?

We might be tempted to call the third approach moderate, if that wouldn't be an insult for the painters who adopt this approach. Because we'll see that this moderate, temperate approach isn't really temperate; it's only temperate by virtue of the fact that it's not one of the others. So, what is the third tendency?

It's the bizarre act of measuring chaos. Using the diagram but preventing it from contracting or expanding too much. Putting limits on chaos or maintaining chaos to a limited extent. That's hard to do. So, we might call it temperate or moderate, but at the same time, it tries to localize chaos, tries to hold it off. It's a terrible undertaking. Your eyes get tired, your hand starts shaking.

Your hand shakes because it no longer follows the diagram's visual cues; your eyes get tired because visual cues come undone in the diagram.

Well, then, it's difficult to say what I would call that. We cannot call it figurative. The approach I described does come down to establishing chaos, but something comes out of the chaos: the figure. It's not a reproduction; it's an image without resemblance. With whatever trend you like—starting with Cézanne, this line would have Van Gogh, there's Gauguin... the so-called “figural,” rather than figurative, painters. Anyway. And you can see in all these cases that this third position is a very awkward one: the diagram for itself—neither extending so far that it descends into chaos, nor limiting it in order to replace it with a code. The diagram and nothing but the diagram. But it lends the diagram some dramatic weight, so it would be wrong to call it a temperate approach, and yet it fits because it's what drives Van Gogh mad: preventing the diagram from giving into chaos, but chaos still remains.

In other words, to put it in somewhat abstract terms, consider two contemporary painters: Van Gogh and Gauguin. They both belong to this line, what I'm describing as a temperate third line, but it's obvious that Van Gogh verges on sort of an expressionist adventure. The encroachment of chaos is fully present, so this third approach doesn't avoid any danger.

I think Gauguin is the opposite. If we can call Van Gogh a major precursor to expressionism, you can equally call Gauguin a major precursor to abstract painting. He leans toward the other aspect. So, that's how we could start to arrange our categories. And so, for the moment I'd like to start off with three categories: Abstract painting, Figural painting, Expressionist painting.

And my concern is specifically with regard to what we've defined and how we've defined them strictly according to three scenarios regarding the diagram. By no means did we define them in terms of figuration, which we did away with outright. These three scenarios—ultimately the three positions the diagram can find itself in: The first scenario: the diagram verges on chaos. The second scenario: the diagram leans toward code and is even replaced by a code. The third diagrammatic scenario: the diagram acts like a diagram, but that brings us back—I'll try to elaborate. Let's bring back the eye-hand dynamic and apply our three categories. When you look at a painting—for example, take a Pollock for example. What's going on? It's a strange problem.

Maybe you all are tired; do you want a break? What time is it?

Claire Parnet: Noon.

Deleuze: Noon? Yes, right, let's take a break. Let's rest up. [*Interruption of the recording*]
[1:38:08]

... So, yeah, see, we're making some progress, because now the idea of a diagram isn't enough on its own; we've introduced the concept of positions, different diagrammatic positions. The diagram can take different positions—now, we've identified three such positions, and I'd like to follow up on these in concrete terms. How do they work—it's not only about their effect on us—it's how do they happen? How can such effects come about? And it's really a matter of a slow and—for the painters—a very dangerous, a very dangerous confrontation with chaos itself, not

an abstract chaos but the chaos on the canvas, based on these diagrammatic positions anyone can experience for themselves.

So, let's try to pin down what we mean by—what could we mean by “expressionist”? Since if I understand—first of all, if I interpret the major pictorial categories based on the diagram's position, on diagrammatic positions, we'll have to see what follows as a result, that is, what new definitions result from these categories. Thus, what expressionism is *qua* the diagram's relative position, its diagrammatic situation. What is the most striking about a so-called expressionist painting? Ultimately, I think even if we describe them as tendencies, even if it doesn't always work this way, what are they tending towards? I think the answer has already been spelled out, particularly by certain American critics. In the end, if you take a painting from a period of Pollock's career—it depends, not any period, but truthfully many periods of Pollock's work—you can immediately tell that it's a total rejection of the canvas's organic existence on the easel.

What do I mean by the canvas's organic existence on the easel? It's an organic existence because nothing is the same on the canvas, before you even touch the canvas, everything changes: there's the problem of the center, centers, focal points, and edges. And any issue with the edges is made all the more pressing with the addition of the frame or bounds of the painting. What do you do with the frame? If you think of a painter who isn't expressionist, someone like Seurat, how he looked for a way to keep the frame from being a fixed boundary, turning to a wide range of scientific and artistic techniques to make the frame a part of the painting—it's one problem that arises—why is it that, when we're looking at a Pollock, we immediately know that this wasn't a problem for him? It's a particular American expression—which I'm going to butcher—they're so-called “All-over” paintings; American abstract expressionism is all-over. It means that lines do not start at the edge but begin virtually, they start long beforehand. The painting captures as much as it can of a line with no end or beginning. Really, the way it treats the painting's space is such that what we call the “edge” could just as easily be the “center.” Anyway, it's interesting to think about this “all-over” line running from one end to the other, doubling back on itself, etc., almost covering the entire painting. See, I've begun with an example of a “line”; let's call it “the Pollock line” for now.

It was spelled out really well—there's an American critic who published a long article titled “Three American Painters” in the *Revue d'esthétique*, it was translated in the *Revue d'esthétique*, which was reprinted in a 10/18 titled “*Painting*,” a guy named Michael Fried, *F-R-I-E-D*, a great American critic.¹⁷ No, he's gone downhill; allegedly his work has gone downhill because... well, that happens! It happens. But anyway, it's an in-depth look into today's American painters—actually, it's a bit older—and it's quite good. Because he does a good job explaining why, if you look at one of Pollock's lines, there's no mistaking that it's Pollock. Why? Because strictly speaking, it's a line with no shape [*sans contour*].¹⁸ It's a line that doesn't outline anything. If you look at a closed shape [*figure*], there's an outline.

So, you can say, “This is a triangle, this is a flat circle, this is a circle, this is a half-circle,” etc. You can see how it's different with a shapeless line: it loops from one end of the painting to the other; it circles back on itself without ever closing. It's an odd sort of line that doesn't outline anything and so has neither inside nor outside. It doesn't mark an inside or outside. It's a moving line that never stops moving. You aren't able to pick out this as the inside or that as the outside.

Just like the line started before the painting and... before the left side and continues far beyond the right side; it has no beginning or end. No inside or outside, no beginning or end. It's obvious if you're able to imagine a Pollock painting. A line that is still a line and yet comes close to acting like a surface. A line that builds up and thus almost acts like surface—in other words, one that brings its one-dimensionality closer to being two-dimensional. Surfaces are two-dimensional, lines are one-dimensional—and Pollock's line verges on turning into a surface. It's the line's attempt to overcome its being one-dimensional while remaining a line, thus, a perfect adequation between what is on the painting and the painting itself. The line taking up the painting is equal to the painting. The line as a surface. It will act like a surface. It's a shapeless line. So, the line achieves a dimensionality that's, properly speaking, infinite. In a way, chaos would be averted by itself.

How can that be? Actually, that might not make much sense for those of us who can't picture a Pollock painting; it might seem too abstract. I should have brought one with me—oh well—it's clear when you look at his paintings: the line is all over the place. It really takes up the whole surface. I'll just point out, because we talked about it in another course, and someone here knew a lot about this author—there's a mathematical logician who wrote a really interesting text on what he calls “fractal” objects. His name is—this is by memory; I'm just bringing him up to give to encourage you to make run-ins like this—his name is [Benoit] Mandelbrot, Mandelbrot, *M-A-N-D-E-L-B-R-O-T*, and his book, *Fractal Objects*, was published by Flammarion. What are these fractal objects? They're specifically these objects that turn out to have a fractional number of dimensions. What—a fractional number of dimensions? Fractional dimensional objects are bizarre. It's fascinating. So, he proposes a form of mathematics and logic for fractal objects. What does he have in mind? Well, it would be a line that's more than one-dimensional and less than two-dimensional.¹⁹ A surface is something that has two dimensions. A volume, three. Suppose there's a line with a fractional number of dimensions; it's a line that remains a line but tends towards becoming a surface. Mandelbrot's example is straightforward and compelling: take a straight line—bear with me—see, take a straight line. Split it into thirds. Swap out the middle part for an equilateral triangle. You end up with this shape. Take all the remaining segments—you'll have one, two, three, four—take all four-line segments and split them into thirds. And then put an equilateral triangle onto each of those middle sections. Ad infinitum. You're still working with lines in two dimensions—and yet your line is enough to cover the surface.

We'll call that a fractal object. See, it's in the process of becoming; it has a number—a fractional number of dimensions. There are all kinds of other examples, it's really interesting. What's my point? My point is very simple: a line that appears to change direction at any given moment has a dimension greater than one—make it change direction at every turn, and you wind up with a line that acts as a surface. For example, a similar example from Mandelbrot is Brownian motion. Brownian motion is such that its direction is never the same from one point to the other. A line that changes direction at every point, no matter how close the points are to each other. Looking for a mathematical formula to describe this is one thing, but it's also interesting to express it artistically—we're at a point where there's no question of reducing one to the other, where they act as two different expressions: a potential mathematical expression and an independent artistic expression, exactly what Pollock's line is. Of course, it doesn't just use equilateral triangle,

which would amount to a mathematical formula: forming equilateral triangles in the middle of each line segment *ad infinitum* is a mathematical construction.²⁰

Pollock clearly takes an artistic route, with a line taking up the entire canvas without outlining anything, without concluding in a contour. So, you can see how expressionists can claim to be much more abstract than abstract painters. They can look at abstract painters—Pollock, for one, could say (just as Bacon says about him)—he could say: personally, I’m not interested in Mondrian, or I’m not interested in Kandinsky. I don’t know what he would say, exactly, since Pollock said so little—he didn’t say much about what didn’t interest him or why it didn’t interest him. Because he doesn’t much care whether a shape is abstract or concrete; it makes no difference. Moreover, he’ll say that “abstract painting is purely figurative.” It’s not about the difference between abstract and concrete, since, again, you can form abstract shapes, which are still figurative. You can say that Kandinsky—we’ll see how an abstract painter might respond to this—but Kandinsky paints triangles, right: he paints triangles, or he paints tubes, or he paints circles instead of painting men and women, but what makes that abstract? Whenever you have an outline, you have a shape [*figure*].

So, that isn’t very interesting for Pollock. If Pollock doesn’t belong in the category of abstract painting and if I think these categories are well-founded, it’s for this reason. For Pollock, real abstraction begins with a shapeless line and not with the abstract characteristics of what’s depicted by an outline—as a result, as soon as a line outlines something, it isn’t abstract. It’s only the Pollock line, i.e., the shapeless line. Thus, expressionism is the one capable of pulling off real abstraction, and expressionism can rightly lay claim to genuine pictorial abstraction—the others are abstract in a way that has nothing to do with painting; pictorially, they remain figurative. They’re abstract only because of what they depict. They say their work doesn’t depict anything, but that isn’t true; it’s still representational. It’s represented abstractly, but it’s an extra-pictorial abstraction, outside of painting—in terms of painting, they are perfectly figurative since they outline shapes; they use lines but couldn’t detach lines from and outlines.

Well, let’s assume that this line—you can probably already imagine expressionism from the perspective of abstract painters, in a bit we’ll follow up on the real problem of abstraction—but the problem of expressionism is how to draw shapeless lines.

And the same goes for color; the colors don’t form shapes. It’s difficult to prevent color from suggesting an outline, since in the end there are two ways of forming outlines: through lines, but also through color. Colors form shapes no less than a line does, a closed line. And just as I turned to Pollock for shapeless lines—whose work I really do consider to be an incredible, fantastic breakthrough in painting—I would want to look to Morris Louis for shapeless color, to what’s thought of as one side of expressionism, so-called tachism.

But how do you keep a stain [*tache*] from suggesting an outline? In terms of technique, the required methods are very simple. Morris Louis turns to soaking, to picking up pigment with a roller—we can add the roller, right, to our list tools other than paintbrushes. Pollock did a lot more with his syringe, his pastry syringe and Morris Louis’s roller—it’s interesting because with letting pigment seep onto the canvas you get these amazing halo effects, such there are two way you can look at one of Morris Louis’s paintings, one of his tachist paintings—or despite

everything, you have one way of looking at it, restoring the color's shape [*contour*], which itself is interesting because it takes effort—you get the impression that its giving off a perception doesn't count as it having shape if it takes effort to pin down the color stain's outline. With Morris Louis, there's something on the canvas counteracting any suggested outline. Anyway, it gives off a halo effect that's incredibly beautiful and relatively easy to obtain on canvas; bad painters can do it—but not like Morris Louis can. So, what I'm saying is that this definition of expressionism via “shapeless lines” or “shapeless colors” also applies to what we might call the line of chaos. There's a chaos-line and chaos-color; they bet on chaos, they planted chaos onto the canvas thinking that the more they managed to capture chaos on canvas, the better the result. See, by drawing infinitely near to chaos this one-dimensional line suddenly becomes two-dimensional, or becomes greater-than-one-dimensional, a fractional dimension—this is where they'll focus their energy.

So, if that's how it's defined, the word expressionism is interesting because—not to overdo it—it's all well and good to define expressionism as a diagrammatic position and not by what it depicts, but how does it work? I mean, what exactly is expressionism? It's noteworthy when critics manage to propose a category—at their own risk and peril, again—if we accept well-founded categories, if we believe in the philosophy of art. I think people are fully justified for rejecting the philosophy of art and opting to talk about painting as little as possible—the less we talk about it, the better. And actually, I wonder if it wouldn't be better, but even so, in the absence of such a lofty stance on the matter—if we're going to use categories, they need to be well-founded.

Anyway, the term expressionism was actually coined by Worringer, which is interesting because he coined it in a context where there were a lot of complaints about German museums buying too many French paintings; they bought Cézanne... [*Interruption of the recording*] [1:59:53]

... he took a side and called the painters in this movement expressionist—what did he mean by that? If you want to understand the word's origin, we have to consider what Worringer had himself written on Gothic art, in particular. Because he tried to define this northern, so-called Gothic line—given what we've been talking about, the way he defined it ought to interest us. He defined it this way: the Gothic line, or northern line, is an abstract line. He says—yeah, it's strange—it's an abstract, that is, an inorganic line. That alone is intriguing. Why? Because Worringer was no fool: he didn't see abstract as the opposite of figurative. He doesn't even bring that up, it doesn't interest him. For him, the abstract was the opposite of the organic, and indeed, according to Worringer's classification, the so-called classical world is not defined by figurative painting but by organic painting.

The line is an organic line, which doesn't refer back to a portrayed object; it speaks to the faculties of the subject, the subject looking at the painting, i.e., looking at lines used in classical painting, the subject detects the harmony of their faculties within themselves, the organic harmony of their faculties. What do I mean by that? Well, it's a line subject to the principles of regularity, symmetry, enclosure—in other words, the organic line is one that outlines something, the line that traces an outline, and whose harmony resides in the outline it traces. See, that is not a figurative definition, but he thinks concrete lines are organic lines—consequently, they are

figurative; the lines represent something primarily because they are themselves organic. For example, they represent the higher organism: the human body.

All right, good. Notice what he's trying to say. Meanwhile, that's not how it is with the Gothic line. It's an abstract line. It's an inorganic line. He goes so far as to say that it's a mechanical line that substitutes the power of repetition for organic symmetry. He adds: unleashed, the unleashed power of repetition. Why? Symmetry is rather a repetition which is limited; it's a repetition that's capped off, forming an outline. For example, when boiled down to two terms, it's a repetition where the repeated element counters itself, right and left, such that it closes up and prevents repetition from carrying on.

With the Gothic line, on the other hand, repetition breaks loose—what does it mean for repetition to break loose? He puts it beautifully: it's a mechanical line, but notice that it's a line that makes us aware of the mechanical forces. Once more, he brings up Kant—the Germans owe a lot to Kant—he brings up Kant, raising mechanical relationships to intuition, in order to avoid our misunderstanding what he just said. If you hear “mechanical line,” then you'll imagine it's a line that could be drawn by a machine. Not at all. It's a line where the mechanical becomes an object of intuition, right, instead of the organic. Thus, it's an inorganic line, which allows for all the possible forms this line might take: either, says Worringer, it gets endlessly lost in a chaotic upheaval, or it circles back and ends up that way, in upheaval, or it keeps pitting itself against an obstacle and receives force and liberation from this obstacle, i.e., it confronts an obstacle that it only overcomes by changing direction, and it constantly changes direction.

In other words, Worringer, in the “gothic”, in my opinion, if you revisit it, there are two books by Worringer translated into French: one through Klincksieck editions, called *Abstraction and Empathy*, and another at Gallimard titled *Gothic Art*.²¹ There's a lot that he repeats in both books. But you'll notice that what he calls the Gothic line comes close to defining or reaching the idea of the shapeless line—not in those words, but it's there in his definition of the Gothic line.

Okay, so if that's what abstraction really is, why does that fall under expressionism? Because look, that's abstract painting: it's inorganic, there's a line with no beginning or end, etc., with no shape—that's what abstract painting is. Well, it is abstract, but Worringer goes on to say that this abstract is brimming with life, that is, we aren't dealing with geometrical abstract art—there's nothing organic or concrete, but neither is it a geometrical abstract.

The Goths, or the barbarians—it's barbaric art, Gothic art. The northerners come up with something unusual: shapeless lines, non-geometrical abstraction.

It's abstract in a non-geometrical way, because see, the geometrical abstract would be... would refer to... there is classical art, which was organic; the quintessential example of geometrical abstraction would be Egyptian art. But the Goth, the barbarian, is different! Like the path they themselves lead, the shapeless line they invent has no end—it begins with Scythian art and what actually happens? It's abstract, but it isn't geometrically abstract, i.e., it's an abstract brimming with vitality, Worringer says. It's a beautiful idea—an abstract brimming with vitality, which is enough to set it apart from the geometrically abstract, but beware that “vitality” knocks it back over into the organic. Yet we saw that the shapeless line was opposed to the organic line forming

an outline, so Worringer is quick to add—something that runs throughout his understanding—that there’s a radical distinction between vital elements and organic elements. The life of the abstract Gothic line is a non-organic life. It’s a life beyond the capacities of the organism and the organic; it’s a non-organic life. And the violence of non-organic life is that it counters and punctures the classical world of representation, that is, the world of organic life. Organisms crumble under the rift caused by such powerful, inorganic life. So, the abstract Gothic line is a vital line. It’s non-geometrical. It’s a vital abstraction. See, it’s a very particular sort of abstraction. It’s life that’s been abstracted from organisms rather than essence abstracted from appearances, as is the case with geometry.

So, it gets weird—at the heart of the why the term, “expressionist,” was created is that this abstract line, this shapeless line, is fundamentally expressive because it is the vector for non-organic life. Is it a coincidence that it doesn’t take much to see Worringer’s understanding of the Gothic line in one of Pollock’s paintings? Is it a coincidence—I’m not one to turn up my nose at superficial, still, we should use whatever we find—Is it a coincidence that more than one of Pollock’s works is specifically titled *Gothic*, which specifically involve this kind of shapeless line, which ultimately produce a sort of stained-glass effect.

Anyway, Gothic... And naturally, American critics then used abstract expressionism to describe Pollock and his influence. The lineage that leads us to define expressionism as the use of shapeless colors or lines which are endowed with a non-organic life, and so we’ve caught up with the same movement that’s sometimes called informalism. There has been a lot of discussion about informal art around [Jean] Paulhan.²² You can see what makes it informal art—here, at least, I think our diagrammatic approach has the advantage of accounting for why [Pollock’s work] might also be seen as informal art. It’s because there isn’t any form insofar as the line doesn’t outline anything but being informal is a consequence rather than a pre-condition; it’s informal because the line doesn’t outline anything. So, there isn’t any form, it’s true that there is no form, the line does not delineate a form, it delineates no form. Okay, and yet it is pictorial materialism at its purest; it comes together as if it were molecular. I think these are the first painters to really pull it off, managing to bring pictorial matter to a sort of molecular state.

The act of painting doesn’t consist in informing anything; it’s about inventing painting’s molecular matter, and this is what the line that’s colorless²³ creates with the points, the points put down, the points of color that Pollock puts down; the line literally runs between things, between points. You can never pin down a point on the line. Rather, the points are distributed over the entire painting such that the shapeless line constantly moves between points and goes back between them again in another way. But the shapeless line is actually one that doesn’t designate anything but instead perpetually passes between things. Accordingly, once an artistic expression comes to the fore and reaches self-awareness, you can always look back and say, yeah, of course, but it’s always—so we’re shaking up categories, but we’re shaking them up in a good way—it’s been there throughout the history of painting, even if it’s more or less secondary: the attempt to have it so that lines no longer determine things but instead have them move between things.

It’s well known what Élie Faure said of Velázquez—well known because Godard made such good use of it: Velázquez “no longer painted things, was no longer interested in outlines.”²⁴ Élie Faure had no stomach for expressionist art. He painted what happened between things, air

currents, everything without contour, light between one thing and another. For a lot of painters, everything that happens between things is crucial.

So, I'm bringing up Velasquez through this incredible text by Elie Faure but consider a painter like Turner—insofar as there are any lines at all; if there are no lines, there are blots of color—in Turner's work you'd be hard-pressed to find any, there is a sort of coordinated dissolution of things in order to move the lines and blots between things. All against the backdrop of the diagram's chaos, the use of the diagram: stretching chaos until there are no more things, etc., and it's from the chaos itself, by stretching the chaos over the whole canvas, that you extract the secret for a new order, the new order being the course of the shapeless line or the shapeless color-stain.

You might be wondering what makes this a new order. Well, it has a molecular movement; humanity is led to order itself molecularly via a sort of materialism. See, it's sort of tit-for-tat—it's not that they can't, it's that abstract spiritualism doesn't do anything for them. I mean, it *is* a human being doing the painting; an informalist or an expressionist is certainly capable of leading a deeply spiritual life. I mean, I'm not enough of an idiot to claim otherwise, but I do think that [the painter's] pictorial tendency is a deeply materialist one. Not a materialism external to painting—that's how the artist can indeed be extremely spiritualist—but concerning an order born from drawing molecular pathways [*issu du tracé des traces moléculaires*]. It's like a pictorial micro-material, which, of course, justifies the connection drawn between modern physics and informal art—I don't see anything incompatible! It's fine. Based on the idea that the abstraction here is a very particular sort of vital abstraction.

And circling back to a very simple point, Worringer said of Gothic art that—you see, it's abstract, but what... What sort of abstract is this that doesn't outline anything? There are coiling lines, snail shells, that either reset or run out in a sort of swirling hole—that's the Gothic line. From one perspective it could equally be understood as a ribbon and as an animal. But a non-organic animal, hence the penchant for monsters in barbaric art, hence the strangely contorted animals—I can't think of other ways to put it—this new mannerism, a uniquely barbarian mannerism, since all I'm trying to say is that it's sort of an attempt to sing the glory of Gothic mannerism in painting, these coiling beards that could just as well be abstract ribbons, or folds of cloth—in Gothic art, folds of cloth do an astonishing job of serving as shapeless lines. Only to eventually pulse with vitality, exploding onto the scene, causing us to wonder what it is? Again, is it a ribbon? Is it a spiral? Is it a beard? Really weird, overly convoluted animals? Well, this had already shown up in this kind of barbarian art, but my last question is just this: how are we to characterize expressionism?

Getting back to this business with the eye and the hand, I think you picked up on a problem... and well, it would help us along more quickly, but we'll be done very soon. I'd say yeah, that's exactly what the manual line is, it's exactly that: the hand freed from the eye. Insofar as the hand remains subject to the eye, it forms shapes. The lines are still organic or geometric depending on whether it's the mind's eye or the seeing eye. When the eyes fail, when they are beset with chaos, the hand's power is unleashed, but then the hand is animated by a foreign will that imposes itself on the eye instead of serving it. The eye is hit with a line it can no longer control; the eye can no longer grasp the rule or law whereby it constantly changes direction; the eye doesn't get a

moment's rest. It doesn't get a moment's rest—the tragedy of the eye. The eyes might as well stay closed; they're terrorized by the hand and the hand's product, the manual line.

Given the manual character of the expressionist line, is it any wonder that it doesn't require an easel? Is it any wonder that Pollock laid his canvas out on the floor? In other words, that he needed a tactile contact with the floor? And it's not just an affectation. Is it any wonder that by all accounts and on video—since he was one of the first painters to be filmed while working—his work is a frenetic dance? A frenetic dance. The first American critic to have labeled Pollock and his school “Action Painting” was a really great guy—but we'll look at the issue—named Harold Rosenberg.

Rosenberg calls it “Action Painting,” and according to him, in a way, the act of painting itself becomes—you can immediately see the stereotypes this can lead to—becomes the real subject of painting, the true object of painting. The expression, action painting, has the advantage of highlighting the manual nature of this form of painting: it no longer uses easels or brushes; it involves pastry syringes and the floor, putting the canvas on the floor, sticks, scrub-brushes, sponges—whatever you like—and so the painter whirls into a frenzy, a tactile frenzy, a manual frenzy above all. The eyes can't keep up, which is why the films of Pollock painting are significant: the eyes really can't follow what he's doing, and the paint thrown—Pollock's famous stream of paint—isn't directed by the eyes but by the hand. The hand has found its expression: lines which the eyes can no longer follow. Okay, in what sense should painting become a transgression against the eyes? It has to liberate modern humanity—you see what that means: we're trying to draw a metaphysics from all this. Modern humanity will fundamentally be a manual one, but we don't even know yet what the hand can do once its freed from the eye. There's a sort of dare I say revolutionary message here—we'll get into it later, so I'll just ask you to hold that thought because abstract painting will take a completely opposite stance.

But what bothers me, and this is where we'll pick up next time, is that American critics, who are very good, not just Fried, who I talked about earlier, but also a wonderful critic who was closely associated with Pollock and even kick-started his career, was crucial, as a critic, in getting Pollock off the ground, named [Clement] Greenberg. He put out a book—unfortunately yet to be translated, but fascinating—on art and culture where he talks a lot about this period of American painting. But Greenberg emphatically defines the abstract expressionism of Pollock, Morris Louis, and so on as the inauguration of a purely optical world.

So, it's annoying, given how important Greenberg is—there's no denying it with all the commentary he's written—for him, abstract expressionism is modern precisely because it manifests a world which is now purely optical. In other words, Pollock would be like the founder of a breakaway movement leading to so-called optical arts. Greenberg is unambiguous as to what he means by a purely optical world, that it's cut off from any tactile reference. Fried takes up the same idea in that excellent article on three American painters; he makes the same claim, that Pollock and his influence establish and bring about a purely optical world in painting.

Why does it bother me that I have the exact opposite view? My sense is that it's absolutely not an optical world, that it's a manual world—the only thing I would agree with is that it's an innovative undertaking. But personally, I'd describe its innovation in exactly the opposite way,

namely, that it's the first time that a manual line is absolutely free of any subordination to visual givens. So, something isn't right. That's where we'll begin next time. I believe that they've simply misunderstood—and that I'm right, obviously... Yes?

A student: [*Inaudible comment*]

Deleuze: You could say that, but I don't know if that would go far enough. Think about it between now and next week, and we'll start there...

Another student: [*Inaudible question*]

What? [*Inaudible question*] Come see me. We'll pick up from there... Come see me for a second... [*End of the session*] [2:26:07]

Notes

¹ While this wording may appear clunky in English, the word, “foreign” is preserved in keeping with Worringer’s analysis of the Gothic line as a “northern”, “barbarian”, “foreign” development. Deleuze discusses this foreign will or power in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation* (New York and London: Continuum, 2003), p. 127, 137.

² In *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, Daniel Smith opts for “trait” or “stroke” depending on the context for the French “trait”. The discussion in the rest of the session largely corresponds to the development in chapter 12, “The Diagram”.

³ There are several possible translations for *tache*; no one option sounds natural in every context. I settled on “blot” in this context—as in ink blot, etc.—and “stain” when talking about Morris Louis’s work. Note that the Daniel Smith translation in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation* adopts “patch” or “color-patch” for “tache”.

⁴ *Agencement* is often translated as “assemblage.” The reader may also understand it to mean “arrangement” or “set up.”

⁵ Deleuze misspeaks here. The title of Virilio’s 1981 interview in *Cahiers du cinéma* is “La Troisième fenêtre.” See Paul Virilio, “The Third Window: An Interview with Paul Virilio,” trans. Yvonne Shafir, with preface by Jonathan Carry. In *Global Television*, eds. Cynthia Schneider and Brian Wells (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 185-197.

⁶ Henri Focillon, “In Praise of Hands,” trans. Charles Beecher Hogan. In *The Life of Forms in Art* (New Haven: Yale, 1942), 157-184. On this work, see Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation* (New York and London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 154-155.

⁷ On the easel and painting, see *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, pp. 104-109.

⁸ As with Deleuze’s other etymological accounts, his explanation here may have been more authoritative at the time. However, the German word, *Makel*, was a loanword from Latin *macula*. *Mal*, in the sense of “mark” or “sign,” has older Germanic roots and is likely a cognate with *macula* (but is not derived from it).

⁹ Deleuze seems to be glossing several moments in Klee’s *Bildnerische Denken*. To see how Klee introduces his understanding of chaos, the gray point, and the “cosmogenic egg,” see especially Paul Klee, “Contributions to a theory of pictorial form,” in *Paul Klee Notebooks, Volume 1: The Thinking Eye*, trans. Ralph Manheim, ed. Jürg Spiller (London: Lund Humphries, 1961), pp. 3-5.

¹⁰ Deleuze attributes this quote to Cézanne, but it likely comes from Van Gogh. In a 1888 letter to his sister (Letter 626), Van Gogh writes, “And you see—this is what Impressionism has—to my mind—over the rest, it isn’t banal, and *one seeks a deeper likeness than that of the photographer*” (emphasis translator’s).

<http://www.vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let626/letter.html>

¹¹ Deleuze says “ah, là, là” which could be either approval (as in “wow”) or the opposite (as in “sheesh”). In fact, both options are possible in this context.

¹² See Klee, pp. 3-5.

¹³ See David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon 1962-1979*, 3rd edn. (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1987), p. 94.

¹⁴ In this context, *plan* corresponds to different “grounds” in English, i.e., the background, foreground. Because *plan* is a pervasive term in Deleuze’s career—in both solo- and jointly-written work — the original French is included when it appears for the sake of readers interested in tracking it.

¹⁵ Deleuze is likely referring to Herbert Franke’s 1972 *Elektronischer Einstein*, which used early processing techniques to interpret and manipulate aspects of a scanned photograph of Einstein.

¹⁶ The reference is to a work from 1912 published in the 1954 French translation; in *Francis Bacon. Logic of sensation*, the reference provided is *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977).

¹⁷ This reference to Fried is presented in *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, pp. 185-186 note 14. The discussion of Pollock and this section is situated in chapter 12, “The Diagram”.

¹⁸ “Shape” is often a translation for *figure*, which is particularly important in Deleuze’s book on Francis Bacon (and comes up often any time he discusses painting). “Shapeless” seems more natural and less cumbersome than “with no contour.” Thus, *ligne sans contour* and *tache sans contour* is rendered as being “shapeless,” etc., with *contour* or *figure* included in brackets where the translation might mislead the reader.

¹⁹ In addition to Mandelbrot, the reader might recall a similar idea in Paul Klee’s writings, another of Deleuze’s sources. In his lecture notes, Klee describes the “linear-medial,” which is “neither line nor plane, but some sort of middle thing between the two. At the beginning it is linear, the movement of a point; it ends up looking like a plane.” Paul Klee, p. 109.

²⁰ Deleuze returns to Mandelbrot only in the final seminar, on Leibniz and the Baroque, in session 2, November 4 1986, and session 8, January 27, 1987.

²¹ Deleuze provides partial bibliographical information in *Francis Bacon. Logic of the Sensation*, pp. 189-190 (p. 81 in the French), note 5; Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963) and *Form in Gothic* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1927).

²² Jean Paulhan (1884-1968) published *L’Art informel* with Gallimard in 1962. A controversy followed in particular with François Mauriac.

²³ *Ligne sans couleur*. However, given the prior discussion, Deleuze might have meant *ligne sans contour*—shapeless line, or line with no contour.

²⁴ Deleuze is taking liberties with Faure’s quote. In Godard’s *Pierre le fou*, the following line is read from Élie Faure: “Velázquez, after the age of fifty, never again painted sharply defined things, he wandered around the objects with the air and the twilight; in the shadow and transference of the backgrounds he surprised the colored palpitations which he used as the invisible center of his silent symphony.” Translation from Élie Faure, *History of Art IV – Modern Art*, trans. Walter Pach (New York: Harper, 1924), p. 124.