Summary Descriptions, Spinoza. Velocities of Thought, 1980-1981

"Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought" is a 15-lecture seminar given from November 1980 to March 1981. There is some uncertainty regarding the seminar's initial date since the extant recordings start only with the December 2, 1980, session. In this seminar, Deleuze revisits his examination of Baruch Spinoza's philosophy, having previously published one books on Spinoza: *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (*Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, 1968), and as he presents the seminar, he is in the process of revising his 1970 guide to Spinoza as *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (*Spinoza – Philosophie pratique*, 1970, 2nd ed. 1981). Given that the majority of these lectures correspond to the latter title's publication, these sessions were clearly informed by this new editorial preparation. On The Deleuze Seminars site, we provide as the opening session Deleuze's discussion of the theme of "continuous variation" and Spinoza from February 2, 1978.

Session 0, January 24, 1978 – Affect and Idea

Deleuze pauses in his discussion of continuous variation (during the development of *A Thousand Plateaus*) to bring up a related question: what is an idea and affect in Spinoza? Given Spinoza's important place in *A Thousand Plateaus,* notably in plateau 10 on becoming, this shift does not entirely constitute a detour. Referring primarily to books II and III of the *Ethics*, Deleuze's approach is deliberately terminological, first distinguishing between the Latin terms *affectio* and *affectus*, "affect" corresponding to the latter, *affectus*, whereas "affection" (*sentiment*, feeling) corresponding to *affectio.* As for "idea", for Spinoza this is simply a mode of thought which represents something, the objective reality, while in contrast, affect is any mode of thought which does not represent anything, non-representational, but with a primacy of the idea over the affect. However, the idea also has a formal reality, i.e., the reality of the idea insofar as it is itself something, or the idea of the idea. Spinoza judges this to be the degree of reality of perfection connected to the object it represents, its intrinsic character, in contrast to the idea's objective reality, its extrinsic character. And at this second level, the status of affect becomes clearer: whereas our everyday life is not made up solely of ideas succeeding each other, a regime of continuous variation operates perpetually, a force of existing (*vis existendi*) or power (*puissance*) of action (*potentia agendi*). This continuous variation for Spinoza means to exist, one's power of acting increasing or decreasing, rendering more or less joy depending on the extent to which the power of acting is inhibited or enhanced, with continuous variation occurring in this ongoing process of increase-diminution. In terms of ideas, one never ceases passing from one degree of perfection to another, a melodic line of continuous variation defining affect as it connects to ideas as well as in its distinction from ideas. On this melodic line are two poles, joy and sadness, leading to Spinoza's fundamental moral and political problem, why people with power (*pouvoir*) need to affect us in a sad way, diminishing our power of acting.

For Spinoza, there are three sorts of ideas: affection (*affectio*) ideas (opposed to *affectus*); notions; and essence ideas, each corresponding to a different level of knowledge. Whereas *affectus* was determined as continuous variation of the power of acting, affection (*affectio*) is, first, a state of a body as subjected to the action of another body, hence a mixture of two bodies, but primarily the nature of the modified body yet enveloping the nature of the modifying body. As an idea of every mode of thought representing an affection of the body, the affection-idea is a first kind of knowledge (*connaissance*), the lowest kind, i.e. knowledge of things only by their

effects, i.e., "inadequate ideas" or representations of effects without their causes. Moreover, in speaking of the possibility of chance encounters, Spinoza reflects on the constitution of the body as a complex relation of movement and rest affecting all parts of the body. Since one's bodily mixture with another, positive or negative, constitutes an encounter (good or bad), this naturally leads Spinoza to envisage evil as a bad encounter. Moreover, Spinoza's anti-Cartesian (and anti-Christian) position is clear from his belief that we can only know ourselves and external bodies via the affections produced on our own body, excluding all possibility of the cogito and of Adamic perfection. Through this development, Spinoza concludes that there are two fundamental affects or *affectus*, joy and sadness, corresponding to the two types of ideas of affection or two poles of variation increasing or decreasing the power of action. Given that each thing, body or soul, is defined by a certain power [*pouvoir*] of being affected, the fundamental question arises: of what is the body capable? That is, what power does a body have to be affected? The answer is that the body can be actualized (*effectué*) in such a way that the power of acting diminishes to infinity or increases to infinity, or toward infinity since only God has an absolutely infinite power (*puissance*). Nonetheless one follows lines of continuous variation of the *affectus* as a function of affection-ideas such that my power of being affects is completely actualized, fulfilled, in the mode of sadness or joy, even in local sadnesses and local joys. One needs to gain knowledge of one's intensities in order to avoid risking bad encounters and excess leading toward destruction.

Deleuze shifts toward Spinoza's next level, ethics as a problem of power (*puissance*), not duty, the second level of notion-ideas where escape occurs from the world of passions, no longer the mixture of two bodies, but rather the internal agreement or disagreement of the characteristic relations of the two bodies, e.g., arsenic's and the human body's characteristic relations yielding poison and death. These relations also constitute knowing not by effects but by causes, thus providing an adequate idea, the notion-idea (or common notion, designating something common to all bodies). But how does one move from mixtures, affection-ideas, toward notion-ideas? By striving to experience affects of joy as a springboard that makes us form the idea of what is common, joyful, to the affecting body and the affected body, leading to greater intelligence. Thus, moving beyond the continuous variation, one acquires the potential for a common notion, opening one to joy in the labor of life, to a maximum one's living common notions. Deleuze points to death as a bad encounter, its likelihood increasing as the body ages and the power of acting diminishes, so that knowing how to age means comprehending how things and other bodies disagree with one's own, hence seeking a new grace that corresponds to one's age. At this second level where one attains the notion-idea where relations are combined, one leaves behind the passions and possesses the power of acting.

At the third level, there are singular essences, i.e., degrees of power (*puissance*) constituting one's thresholds of intensity, in contrast to one's relations of movement and rest that regulate agreement or disagreements of bodies from the perspective of their extended parts. So, this third kind of knowledge, discovery of the essence-idea, is passage to the world of essence, knowledge of one's singular essence and God's singular essence and the singular essence of things. And in this third kind of knowledge, all bodies agree with each other in a world of pure intensities, a mystical point of beatitude or active affect, or auto-affect.

Session 1, November 25, 1980

Given that no transcripts or recordings precede this session, Deleuze's presentation seems to develop in midstream, and the session's brevity suggests that even this one is not complete. Deleuze begins by discussing the extent to which seventeenth-century philosophy seems compromised with God, and he connects this impression to painting's numerous representations of God, due to inevitable constraints of the era (e.g., the Church's role in society) and also due to a "religious feeling" valid both for philosophy and painting. With El Greco providing an example of making use of God to achieve a liberation of forms, Deleuze argues that philosophy seized on the theme of God to free concepts from prior constraints and that Spinoza was the philosopher who went too far and too fast, for whom God serves as a philosophical concept. Deleuze first contrasts this to Leibniz's discussion of the role of God's understanding and will in the world's creation through several stages. Ultimately, for Leibniz, God creates the world as a chess game, involving the choice of best combination. Hence, Leibniz's vision of divine understanding is dominated by the calculation of chess. Deleuze then shifts to discuss how earlier philosophers established sequences of concepts regarding the problem of Being and the One (Plato, Plotinus), with the conceptual sequences functioning as do shades and tonalities in painting.

With Spinoza, the danger arose in treating God as immanent (versus emanative) cause, i.e., no longer distinguishing cause and effect. Deleuze follows Spinoza's *Ethics* and his proposition of only one single, absolutely infinite substance, with creatures being modes of being of this substance, without hierarchy among the substance's attributes. Spinoza thereby frees the immanent cause of all subordination to the causal process, establishing a veritable plane of immanence for the great causal sequence. Moreover, this fixed plane implies a certain mode of life, and in response, Spinoza was damned and isolated and forced to endure an illiterate comprehension of his works. Deleuze ends here with a concluding description of the geometric methods in the *Ethics*, its interconnections of definitions, axioms, theorems and corollaries in continuous connections to concepts.

Session 2, December 2, 1980

Deleuze begins in mid-sentence by summarizing work previously done in the seminar regarding "velocities of thought" in Spinoza's "lightning thought" in the *Ethics*, and he emphasizes that book V proceeds differently from the earlier books of the *Ethics*, namely that whereas the earlier proofs were developed under the "second order of knowledge", Spinoza enters the "third kind of knowledge" in book V with a change of demonstrative mode. Deleuze indicates that the speeds in books I-IV are relative, with slownesses and accelerations from one topic to another, whereas when Spinoza introduces "scolies" alongside propositions, proofs and corollaries, they possess their own speeds of affect, discontinuous affects in contrast to the continuous chain of propositions. Deleuze concludes the opening remarks by insisting that these remarks on speed are not merely formal but point also to the problem of ontology, from the point of view of immanence, a topic that he indicates he raised in the previous meetings.

Addressing how to start to discuss Spinoza's problem, Deleuze states that while an answer is imposed on us, i.e., to start with Being as Being, as an absolutely infinite substance, as God, in fact, Spinoza *does not* start there, but rather starts with the *attributes*, i.e., the constituent

elements of the substance. However, reading from Spinoza's incomplete *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* and raising some translation and editorial problems, Deleuze then emphasizes that Spinoza's explicit plan -- *not* to start with God, but with "first elements", the "source and origin of nature" -- occurred as fast as possible and following the rhythm of thought, hence addressing the problem of thought as productive of speeds and slownesses. In saying this, Spinoza refers to the individuality of the body, i.e. relations of speeds and slownesses between unformed, material elements. Deleuze locates Spinoza's philosophical "cries" in the *scolies*, specifically that "we do not know what the body can do" (a cry picked up later by Nietzsche), hence discussing the soul and its relation to the body, a doctrine of parallelism. Returning to the basic ontological proposition of Being, Deleuze states that our only two known attributes are of God, namely extension and thought, and moreover, that "I" am not substance in the same sense as God is substance, "substance" hence being an equivocal term. Yet, since Spinoza develops the fixed plane of the univocity of Being, implying that nothing else may be substance, what there is other than Being *qua* Being is that of which Being is expressed, *l'étant* or the existent (be-ing), which is not substance, or the attributes as elements of Being. From this emerges Spinoza's anti-hierarchical world: all be-ings are equal, Being is stated equally of all be-ings, and extension is equal to thought as perfectly equal attributes. Moreover, we are manners of being, i.e., *modes* or our individuality, within the immanence of all manners of being, i.e., relations of speeds and slownesses on the fixed plane of absolutely infinite substance. Thus, the body is a mode of extension while the soul is a mode of thought, and beyond my limited attributes is an infinity of attributes and manners of being, about which our knowledge is limited. Hence, while I am two through the attributes I implicate, I am one through the substance that envelops me, and in this light, Deleuze distinguishes between an ethics and a morality, the latter being inseparable from a hierarchy of values, whereas no morality exists for "everything being equal", which corresponds to an ethics. In this, Descartes is opposed to Spinoza for whom the soul and body are welded together. From this rises Spinoza's cry, you don't know what a body can do, not even the speeds and slownesses of which the body is capable, nor do you know the soul and thought, and philosophy's task as ethics will be to reach this knowledge of the body and consciousness of the soul which escapes our natural knowledge and consciousness.

Hence, Spinoza's book is *Ethics*, not *Ontology,* and Deleuze shifts the focus to consider the question of morality implying the position of something superior to Being by discussing the question of evil from an historical perspective, He traces the tradition of philosophers as blissful optimists who asserted, "evil is nothing", from Socrates onward. Explaining evil's two forms, misfortune and wickedness, Deleuze contrasts the Marquis de Sade's view (the wicked are happy insofar as they are wicked and the unfortunate innocent) to Socrates's opposite view (the wicked man is unhappy, the virtuous basically happy) and then to the Renaissance philosopher, Nicholas of Cusa, who introduces the philosopher as idiot, i.e., without knowledge and possessing only the faculty of reason, a natural light. Deleuze then traces this through Descartes's *cogito,* which refers only to implicit presuppositions on the order of inner feeling, i.e., the man of natural reason (the idiot) in contrast to the man of learned reason. Deleuze's next step is to trace the theme of the idiot to its climax in Russia with Dostoyevsky, establishing a philosophical feebleness that Descartes embraced, and this compels Deleuze to return to Plato and to Socrates's "evil is nothing" to considers its objective level (evil is pure negation) and subjective level (because evil is contradictory, you can only want something good), i.e. philosophers already entering into judgment, the wicked man as the one judging badly, the philosopher claiming to judge well. Readers familiar with Deleuze know that the constitution of a system of

judgement is anathema to his own perspectives, but also to his understanding of the origins of philosophy. In his view, philosophy always started by adopting the paradox, the simplest being a proposition posing the unthinkability of a be-ing [*étant*], for example, Zenon of Elea, a disciple of Paremenides. For the Greeks, what *is* thinkable is pure ideality, and they fulfill philosophy's destiny with the system of judging everything that is by rising to the position of something beyond Being, i.e., to fall back on the One above Being, the Good alone, the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio agendi*. Hence evil is necessarily nothing since only the Good creates Being and creates acting, the result of *logos* taken to the extreme. So Deleuze argues that a turning point in philosophy occurred in the reconciliation of evil, movement and becoming with the power of logic in high German Romanticism, with Hegel, bringing a being into accord with the negative.

Returning to Spinoza, he too says "evil is nothing", i.e. no being of the negative, and wickedness being a mistake, the wicked man as someone in error. Spinoza develops the question of evil in letters with William de Bleynbergh, and in so doing, presents a different viewpoint than the path of "Good is the One above Being". Spinoza's path corresponds to philosophers saying "evil is nothing because neither is good; there's neither good nor evil", complete madmen! But Spinoza's view is that while there's neither good nor evil, there is some good and some bad, hence the link between ethics and ontology. That is, whereas the Good is not superior to Being, ethics is the art of the good and the bad insofar as this distinction does not overlap with a good-evil distinction. Ethics is the speed taking us quickly to ontology, i.e., to life within Being, implying an ethical difference between the distinction with good-evil. Deleuze indicates the analysis he will continue in subsequent sessions: good and bad imply, first, a quantitative distinction between be-ings, or existants; and second, good and bad designate a qualitative opposition between modes of existence. For Spinoza, from the ethical point of view, the wicked is not one who judges badly (as is the case for morality) but is one who is false, not in judgement, but as the inadequacy of the idea of the thing, i.e., of the thing's manner of being in itself, as authentic. Deleuze maintains that this perspective is opposite the judgment system, more akin to a world of "tests" (*épreuves*) as in assaying a coin, asking "what can the coin do?", enduring the acid as authentic gold. So, Deleuze will continue the examination of the authentic-inauthentic distinction in contrast to the distinction of good-evil.

Session 3, December 9, 1980

Deleuze reminds the participants that he is continuing to study how Spinoza calls his project of a pure ontology an *Ethics*, not morality, and Deleuze reviews the steps of this ontology that he outlined in the previous session: an ontology presenting itself as the position of an absolutely infinite and unique substance, Being insofar as it is Being, with be-ings, existents, as manners of being or *modes,* hence *ethology* as a practical science of existent manners. Deleuze contrasts this to morality, an operation that recalls us to essence by means of values, as the enterprise of judging all that is and Being itself. This human essence in potential from the viewpoint of morality is that of being a "reasonable animal", with this essence realized as an end value only through morality. In contrast, in the ethical viewpoint, there is no quest to realize essence as an end; rather, there are singularities, existents in their singularity, a quantitative distinction of more or less among existents, and a qualitative distinction between modes of existence. Through these two criteria, ethics are linked to ontology since existents are within Being as the world of immanence, and Deleuze argues that Spinoza's isolation comes from having nothing but

misunderstandings with those who work within the domain of moral values. Deleuze deepens the distinction of each kind of discourse in terms of ontology, the system of judgment and Spinoza's immanent discourse of ethics, returning to Spinoza's "cry", "what can a body do?", and to the two characteristics of the singularity of be-ings, quantitative and qualitative.

Regarding the former, Deleuze refers to "quantitative individuation" developed by nineteenth-century German philosophers (Fichte, Schelling) basing the quantity on what be-ings can do just as the ethicist, i.e., Spinoza, defines man, body and soul. In contrast, moralists define a be-ing by its essence, "by right" (*en droit*). Deleuze develops a "diagram" of a thing's power (*pouvoir*), but quickly defines be-ing, all existents, as being linked to a quantitative scale via that of which they are capable, i.e., more or less *puissance*, "power of action", a level at which everything is singular, an infinite differentiation of the quantity of power of action according to the existents. Focusing on the important layers within Spinoza's terminology regarding essence, power, and power of action, Deleuze considers the process by which Spinoza creates a concept based on a specific problem. Referring to Nicholas of Cusa, Deleuze names the term derived from Latin, *possest,* both a barbarism and a philosophical success, indicating what a thing can do in action. And the scale by which one can define the idea of quantity is an intensive scale, that is, the thing's intensity replacing its essence, and to clarify this, Deleuze pauses to provide an historical framework for the theory of natural right (that which conforms to essence), through the traditions of Antiquity and Christianity, with four basic propositions in each tradition. He then explains Hobbes's counter-propositions of natural right whereby there is no difference between the reasonable man and the madman since each does all that he can, their difference being a civil or social status, but not based on natural right. Hence, given that "nobody is competent for me", i.e., no one can know in my place, Deleuze outlines the background for the concept of the social contract whereby society forms itself by the consent of those taking part in it rather than because the sage dictates the best means to realize essence. Summing up, Deleuze states that whereas the first four propositions he outlined form the basis of the juridical development of a moral world vision, the latter four (from Hobbes) provide the juridical conception of ethics, beings defined by their power of action (*puissance*), with juridical and political consequences. Spinoza takes up this conception of natural right in which the essence of things was nothing other than their power of action.

As for the qualitative polarity of modes of existence, manners of being, each existent is a degree on a scale of power of action for Spinoza, and while one perseveres within Being, one is led to choose between the two modes of existence, based on the question of what mode of existence an action implies. And one ought to be in agreement with oneself to avoid propagating one's illness to others; do something as if you had to do it a million times, otherwise do something else. Hence, what Spinoza defines as the "strong man" is one whose mode of existence stands in contrast to modes of existence that he calls "the slave" or "the impotent" as well as "the tyrant" for whom the commonality is to bring sadness to life, power founded on sadness, through which judgment is passed on life. Deleuze then focuses on linking the two aspects, the identity of power of action through which the thing acts and endures with manners of being, i.e., how power of action at each instant is realized by means of something Spinoza calls "affect", that which at a given moment fulfills my power of action. Hence, whereas the first proposition refers to the power of action-act, the second proposition refers to that which realizes the power of action, i.e., affect, with its two poles depending on which of two modes of existence is distinguished, the passion derived from sadness and joy as two basic affects. Deleuze indicates that he will address Spinoza's theory of passion next time, but provides a brief outline in the

session's final minutes. In short, both sadness and joy realize a power of action, and if sadness does so, then one's power diminishes, whereas if joy does so, then one's power increases. Deleuze maintains that Spinoza develops this theory on several levels, seeming to suggest at first that the power of action is a fixed quantity, but at another moment, that it is actually the passage from one quantity to another, a transitive quantity. Moreover, rather than being an absolute quantity, the power of action is a differential relation between quantities such that the realization of the power of action may go in one direction or the other, resulting in an increase or decrease in that power.

Session 4, December 16, 1980

Having explored, in the 9 December session, the question of ontology as regards morality versus ethics and Spinoza's important fundamental aspect of the power of action, "what a body can do", Deleuze develops this topic extensively as well as answering several students' questions. To Georges Comtesse's unrecorded intervention regarding the term *conatus*, a Spinozist notion translated as the "tendency to persevere in Being", Deleuze maintains that this term derives from the essential notions that he is developing, power of action (*puissance*) and affect. These two viewpoints furnish Deleuze's return to the distinction between the reasonable man and the madman, and as for Comtesse's second question (whether or not Spinoza is a disciple of Hobbes), Deleuze suggests that the answer varies depending on different readings, Deleuze explaining why, for him, Spinoza *on the whole* is a disciple of Hobbes, despite their different styles. Deleuze points out that a question implicit in the seminar's focus on ontology is: in what sense can ontology entail or must it entail a political philosophy? Deleuze describes briefly the importance of Spinoza's political writings within the context of Dutch politics, which he also outlines. Deleuze also raises the problem of revolution (with reference to Cromwell's immediately betrayed revolution) which inspired English Romanticism, but in Spinoza's era, no one speaks of revolution, and democracy itself is liquidated in the Netherlands with the death of the De Witt brothers, so Spinoza did not complete his thoughts on this. To Comtesse's contention that Spinoza necessarily developed the problem of the State, Deleuze argues that this is a question of instituting a political hierarchy, but that a world of ontological immanence is essentially anti-hierarchical, and while a practical hierarchy is needed, each be-ing is equal, hence creating a political problem. Deleuze describes Spinoza's distinction from Hobbes in this regard, notably political relation as one of obedience and not of exercising power of action.

Deleuze then returns to discussing Spinoza's ontology, particularly the status of the be-ing which is double, the quantitative distinction, i.e., quantity of powers of action, and the qualitative distinction between modes of existence, i.e., affects that realize powers of action. Deleuze provides some background regarding the concept of "equal Being" in relation to hierarchy, referring to the medieval era of Scholasticism, insisting that the quantitative and qualitative distinctions are not hierarchical. He then announces the focal topic: how, from the point of view of ethics, the problem of evil arises, and he suggests that there are two unreconciled ways of addressing this problem. On one hand, the view "evil is nothing" may mean that the Good makes Being, i.e., the Good is the One as the reason for Being. On the other hand, if there is no evil but only Being, then Good is also nothing. So, Deleuze addresses the status of evil from the point of view of ethics (the status of be-ings), relying on Spinoza's letters (four each) exchanged with Willem van Blyenbergh. Despite Blyenbergh's irritating comments,

Spinoza continues the correspondence as a means of clarifying the problem of evil which, Deleuze argues, is at the heart of the *Ethics*, and yet is not considered in the *Ethics*. Deleuze examines their exchange in detail (as he does also in chapter III of *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1981), God's sequence of judgements levied on Adam, Spinoza indicating that the system of judgment implies the primacy of the One over Being, whereas Adam simply reduced his power of action by getting poisoned by eating the apple. Concerning ethical consequences, Spinoza's point is that one constantly puts oneself in impossible situations, hence the ethical perspective: while there is Good (*Bien*) or Evil, one must take care since there is some things "good" (*bon*) and some "bad", e.g., health or illness. Hence, ethics is an art of action, of selecting at the level of each situation, but not as morality suggests, "acting for the best". Then Deleuze contrasts Spinoza's perspective on this point to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's, first in the *Confessions,* which, as Deleuze suggests, could be titled, "Sensitive Morality", then in *The New Héloïse*, to provide concrete examples of "situations" through which goodness as well as wickedness emerges. Deleuze suggests that this Spinozist vision is at the heart of Rousseau's theory of the child, enunciated in *Émile [or on Education]*, notably the child's situation of dependency-tyranny, and its reversal, the slave-tyrant, which is the matrix of all social situations. Deleuze's purpose in this long development through Rousseau is to find the resonance between the two authors, namely what Spinoza calls the "effort of reason", namely, to select within situations that which is likely to give one "joy", or independence, and to avoid "sadness", or dependence, what Rousseau called "materialism of the wise man, or sensitive morality," in short, ethics.

Deleuze then turns to a second point in studying the status of evil, the fact that Adam fell ill after eating the apple, a point that causes Blyenbergh to make three points in objection to Spinoza's position: first, that vice and virtue would then be a matter of taste; second, all morality would become a matter of experience; third, crime may become a virtue for someone who finds it tasteful. Whereas Spinoza responds that he abstains from crime since it is repugnant to his singular nature, Blyenbergh responds that Spinoza then does so not because it is a vice, that vice and virtue would then have the same status, such that should crime be suitable for someone, he would be right to be a criminal. Hence, the moral position calls on the ethical position to explain itself. Deleuze shifts focus here, returning to Spinoza's distinction on the problem of illness, and Deleuze provides background on the history of two kinds of illness, illness by intoxication and illness by intolerance, notably allergies. Unfortunately, the session's recording ends abruptly before the end, Deleuze not completing his point regarding the status of evil, to which he returns in the next session.

Session 5, January 6, 1981

Deleuze opens by describing the ongoing work as research into the "status of modes" which constitute Spinoza's *Ethics*, i.e., of any "be-ing" (*étant*), or the aggregate of relations that constitutes a mode, a thing, hence "constitutive relations". These relations may occur between particles or molecules, relations of rest and motion, and Deleuze examines this term, "aggregate of relations" as constitutive relations belonging to "me", relations in constant processes of constitution and decomposition. Drawing from a Spinoza letter to Henry Oldenberg, Deleuze discusses at length an aggregate of relation through the classical view of blood's constitution in two parts, chyle and lymph, as powers of the body in relations of movement and rest, with blood as a "body" of the second power, with each body having "n" powers assuring one's persistence

(or duration), which is how one perseveres in oneself. Moreover, as Spinoza defines things, beings (*étants*) as modes, not as substances, he cannot define their unity substantially, so that unity is rather a system of relations, and the "a/one" is made "a thing" in multiple relations. Such things acting upon me from my point of view of my perseverance, some suit me, and others do not, i.e., do not correspond to my aggregate, hence are "bad" in destroying one of my constitutive relations, causing destruction, illness, maybe death. Likewise, the "good" is attributed to things composing themselves in relations directly with mine (e.g., air), but do so individually given the body's individuality (e.g., of lungs in pulmonary relations with oxygen). Deleuze also takes the example of poison in relations with blood, pointing out that up to Leibniz, traditional philosophy agreed to define the body and the individual solely with reference to the category of substance.

Moving to a second point, Deleuze names two kinds of decomposition of relations: a ceaseless decomposition-circulation and a sudden decomposition-destruction (e.g., for poison), raising the question of how a relation can be destroyed, and which turns out to be impossible since a relation is an eternal truth. In fact, rather than being destroyed, a relation ceases being *realized*, suggesting that to be realized, terms must be present between which the relation is established with truth, thereby creating a logic of relations (in contrast to a logic of substance or of attribution). For Spinoza, we are packets of relations, and what realizes relations are more or less complex particles, i.e., relational supports, and Deleuze again chooses arsenic to explain how such particles shift to another relation, incompatible with one's own. But in furnishing relative terms for relations, each relation extends to infinity, while the terms are relative to a particular level of relation. This leads Deleuze to a third point: as constitutive relations enter into ceaseless communication, they ceaselessly decompose and then recompose (e.g., one's bones), implying the body as a mode of extension, connected to a soul as a mode of thought, with thought and extension both being attributes of God. This parallelism of soul and body suggests that to movement and rest within a body's extension, i.e., in relations of action and passion with other bodies, there corresponds also "perceptions" within the soul, with a circuit of communicating perceptions defining the soul's perseverance. Deleuze describes these processes in terms of relations of particles in blood, in which the elements (lymph and chyle) discern one another since the particles possess powers of perception. Hence, discernment in thought corresponds to particles in extension, and each body's power are linked to a power of discernment constituting its soul which has potentialities, affinities. Deleuze points to phenomena of resonance in Spinoza's thought, for example, with Leibniz's theory of tiny perceptions as well as with more contemporary theories in molecular biology and information theory, arguing that even within relations of decomposition (e.g., due to poison).

He then shifts towards some principles regarding modes or manners of being in order to develop a fourth point, and he emphasizes the extent to which Spinoza was a source of torment and focus of critique for many philosophers, e.g., Leibniz. The fourth point is that in presenting oneself as a manner of being, this is a matter of sensibility, to which Deleuze parenthetically links what he calls a "philosophical sensibility", similar to a musical sensibility. Such sensibility occurs through molecular relations, living as a manner of being which Deleuze explores through practical questions of what would health and illness be for a manner of being. To do so, he develops a typology of cases: first, by considering what is bad when a relation is destroyed; second, while remaining conserved, relations' loss of mobility and communication among one another. Deriving a theory of illness from Spinoza, Deleuze suggests the first case corresponds to intoxication as among illnesses of action (such as viral and bacterial illnesses), while the second

case corresponds to illnesses of metabolism, or of communication between relations, to which Deleuze relates two texts by Spinoza. Then a third case, illness of intolerance or of reaction (e.g., an allergy) which is difficulty of exterior discernment, and in a fourth case, a power of internal discernment is broken, to which Spinoza connects suicide in specific texts but that contemporary medicine connects auto-immune illnesses, i.e., illnesses of perception and of information (discussed by Georges Canguilhem), hence illnesses of error. Moreover, to this case, one can associate senescence, errors of information within the aging process.

Finally, Deleuze considers himself now able to return to the Spinoza-Blyenbergh correspondence on the topic of good and evil, and Blyenbergh's two strong objections: first, within the framework of modes, nature can only be chaos, i.e., the chaotic actions and reactions of bodies upon each other. Second, Spinoza's view – what's bad is that which decomposes my relations; what's good is that which composed them – provides no objective content for the notions of vice and virtue. For if vice is what doesn't agree with you and virtue is what does, then vice could well agree with me, while still remaining vice, whereas morality begins with not assimilating vice and virtue into simple tastes. To understand Spinoza's replies, Deleuze proposes an additional concrete reorganization via three examples of evil in Spinoza's era -- theft, crime, and adultery – that Spinoza offers in his letters to Blyenbergh. Spinoza breaks down what is "evil" in each of these, namely that in my act, I decompose the constitutive relations of another body, whether in murder, theft or adultery. For theft, Deleuze develops questions of property and juridical relations, and for adultery, Deleuze describes the relation of sacrament as by convention, hence destroyed between partners. As for Blyenbergh's objection regarding the pure chaos for the calculus of relations, Spinoza will not yield on how good acts compose relations while bad acts decompose them, a distinction to which Deleuze will return.

Session 6, January 13, 1981

As if to provide evidence that he is already developing the next seminar (on Painting), Deleuze devotes the session's first sixteen minutes to matters regarding Spinozism in relation to light in Dutch painting, and in response to a question, he develops how the creative impulse emerges more as an accident, indeed as an event, and not as a form of essence. He links this distinction to changes of imagery between Egyptian bas-relief, the Christ figure within Christianity, the pictorial deformation of figures (bodies and objects), D.H. Lawrence's description of Cezanne's achievements in painting as well as texts by Merleau-Ponty, Henri Maldiney, and Erwin Straus. Then, returning to Spinoza versus Blyenbergh, Deleuze reviews the two objections posed by Blyenbergh: Spinoza's view of nature leads to nature conceived as chaos, to which Spinoza answers nothing, i.e., from the point of view of the whole of Nature, there are only compositions of relations, but from the point of view of our understanding, i.e. only a part of nature, relations are composed to the detriment of another. Then comes Blyenbergh's second objection: from this particular point of view, vice and virtue ultimately correspond to a particular criterion of taste (that which is or is not agreeable to me), to which Spinoza replies that there is indeed an objective criterion for the good-bad, virtue-vice distinctions, his response is located in two texts that Deleuze examines in detail (as well as in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy,* pp. 35-40), one in a letter to Blyenbergh, the other in a scholium of the *Ethics*, Book IV, proposition 59. Spinoza implicitly responds to the question, "what can the body do?", namely that we can be determined to one and the same action, at once from images of things that we conceived confusedly and

from images of things which we conceive clearly and distinctly. The confused-distinct distinction links to the bad-good distinction in that the bad arises when I decompose a relation, i.e., I associate the image of the act with the image of something whose constituent relation is decomposed by this act, in contrast to the good, i.e., the opposite association and effect of composing something directly with my action. This leads Deleuze to outline the Spinozist method of analysis of action, a logic of action, in two dimensions: the image of the act as power of action of the body, and the image of the object on which the act bears, between the two being a relation of association (Deleuze develops this with reference to Spinoza's examples in his texts). As a response to Blyenbergh's second objection, Spinoza says, while there is always composition and decomposition of relations at once, good and bad are indeed discernible since he calls "good" an action implementing a direction composition of relations even while implementing an indirect decomposition, while "bad" action implements a direct decomposition even while implementing an indirect composition, i.e., a distinction between decomposition as a consequence but not as a principle, and having value only for my point of view.

At this point, Deleuze is interrupted by several questions leading away from his development, first from Georges Comtesse, in response to which Deleuze outlines Spinoza's theory of the sign, i.e., there are expressions in the world but never signs, for example, God revealing to Adam the physical truth, a composition of relations, of the poisoned apple, but not a sign. Then Deleuze responds to Richard Pinhas's questions regarding direct and indirect composition, insisting that for Spinoza, the order of compositions of relations dictates that all relations must be realized, with the whole of Nature being the totality of realizations of all necessary and possible relations. Deleuze also argues that whereas for Spinoza a "law" is a composition of relations between bodies, people are "limited" and thus often do not understand laws, such as Adam not comprehending God's "law" excluding constitutive relations with a poisoned apple, merely grasping this as one of God's prohibitions. Then Deleuze summarizes one of Spinoza's theses from the *Theological-Political Treatise,* that God proceeds by expressions and never signs, with the language of signs as a false language, the language of expression as true, as the language of the composition of relations to infinity. But as the limited understanding of people, signs are a vital necessity in the world, society defined by its introduction of the minimum of signs indispensable to life in which there are relations of obedience and command. Hence, for Spinoza, the domain of signs or symbolic domain is of the order of commandment and obedience while the domain of knowledge (*connaissance*), of thought, is the domain of relation, i.e., univocal expressions. And for Spinoza, the political regime in which signs infringe the least on the power of thought, and leave all the chances for the free man, the final answer is that it's democracy. Moreover, despite being vilified by the Church, Spinoza says that Christ is divine understanding, in two senses, because it's through Christ that revelation of relations flows, and that it is Christ who creates an economy of the most reasonable signs, in the end, that allow us to live the best. Finally, if one takes no account of one understanding or another, then God is expressed, and God's expression is absolutely adequate for God's being. A third, unnamed participant intervenes (at about minute 93) professing to know nothing of Spinoza and yet voicing energetic objections, with Deleuze involved for the rest of the session in successive responses which are a model of his careful analysis of and respect for the participant's remarks while remaining unyielding in terms of this presentation of Spinoza's thought (in fact, Deleuze describes the participant as "my own Blyenbergh"). Specifically,

Deleuze summarizes the comments as Spinoza's thought providing nothing at all that's liberating, as also conforming to a scientistic utopia, and finally destroying the symbolic, i.e., poetic dimension. Deleuze points out that while the participant has every right to his impressions, Deleuze finds Spinoza's thought at once liberating and non-utopian as well as highly poetic, and faults himself for failing to communicate this adequately, so he dedicates his remarks if not to the participant (who seems unwilling to be persuaded), to the others listening. Deleuze attempts to describe how Spinoza's logic of the relation does, in fact, encompass the symbolic and poetic. Deleuze also emphasizes how the body enters into the logic of relations, i.e., various corporeal variables such as interactions and approaching, distance between them, presentation of aspects, going so far as to offer a Spinozist analysis of "hello". Deleuze concludes that even if the participant does not connect with Spinoza in his life, this simply means that he will have someone else to connect with. When the participant accuses Deleuze of deforming Spinoza and of "objectivizing" the participant, Deleuze reacts more forcefully, but then he allows the participant to continue his objections at some length, finally rejecting the participant's assertion that Deleuze turned his discussion of Spinoza into a kind of "laboratory" especially in supposedly selecting obscure Spinoza texts to make his points. For Deleuze, whatever the references, Spinoza discusses the composition of relations in the light of life, the process of composing of decomposing relations.

Session 7, January 20, 1981

Deleuze once again takes up Spinoza's answers to Blyenbergh's two main objections: first, "do good and evil exist from the point of view of nature?" with the answer, no since, within Nature, there are only compositions of relations. Second, from within a point of view of such bundles of relations, "is there good (*du bien*) or evil (*du mal*)?" with the answer, no, but there is good (*du bon*) and bad (*du mauvais*). The latter are defined as when my relation is composed with relations that suit me (good), or when one or more of my relations is decomposed (bad). Moreover, from the particular point of view, there is a criterion of distinction of vice and virtue, not reduced to my simple taste, but rather when one acts and that action is associated with the image of a thing, whether the action decomposed the relation of this thing (vice) or is composed directly with the thing's relation, expressing a power of action (virtue). This image of a thing associated with an action is an *affection* (Latin, *affectio*), i.e., the determination of my power of action (*puissance*) under a particular action. In one letter to Blyenbergh, Spinoza gives an example of being led either by a basely sensual appetite or by true love, both associated with specific images of things, in one case the "thing" decomposed by one's action (adultery), on the other composed. In any event, one is as perfect as one can be as a function of the affections of one's power of action. Deleuze points out that faced with Blyenbergh's response – that essence can only be measured through its duration, e.g., one becoming better or worse --, Spinoza stops the correspondence, with his response located in the *Ethics*, about which Spinoza must remain careful not to expose key aspects.

Deleuze proposes to reconstitute Spinoza's answer, first regarding duration of which Spinoza is indeed aware and through which he distinguishes between affection (*affectio*) and affect (*affectus*). Whereas the former is a kind of horizontal, instantaneous relation between an action and an image of a thing, i.e., a perception, the latter is a kind of third dimension,

something that affection envelops, i.e. a passage or transition between a preceding state and a current state, hence a duration, insofar as it is lived. Deleuze likens this to Bergson's use of duration, every affection enveloping the passage through which we reach it, infinitely, and Deleuze calls this the decomposition of three dimensions of the essence which, first, belongs to itself under the form of eternity; then, second, affection belongs to essence under the form of instantaneity; and third, affect belongs to the essence under the form of duration. As for the passage (the basis for Spinoza's theory of affect), it consists of being an increase or decrease of a power of action, i.e., each instantaneous state always enveloping such an increase or decrease of lived powers of action, an increase corresponding to joy while a decrease, to sadness. Sadness comes from the thing whose relations do not agree with mine, tending to decompose one or the totality of my relations, thereby decreasing the power of action, even engendering hate. As for joy, in contrast to a direct joy derived from increasing power of action, Spinoza imagines "indirect" joy as being pitiful in that it is derived from one's inflicting sadness on another. These occur through "encounters" of bodies, with a physical effect, a fixation or tensing, when encountering a body whose relation does not compose with mine, hence a need to ward off the thing's action and thereby waste both time and effort. With something agreeable (such as music), however, power of action is increased as one's body and soul compose its relations with resonant relations, constituting a third individual as power of action increases. Moreover, some people are so devoid of powers of action that they are dangerous in seizing power (*pouvoir*) constructed on the sadness of others.

By suggesting that these perspectives raise problems for Spinoza regarding manners of living -- since one cannot know beforehand which encounters might yield which kind of affect --, Deleuze turns to concrete matters that distinguish morality – what one must do – and ethics – inventing superior individualities, which do not preexist, into which one can enter as a part, i.e., increasing one's power of action. Following the degrees of power of action, Deleuze considers, first, the dimension of essence as eternal, i.e., an "intensity" to which Spinoza assigns the term "eternity", as a power (*puissance*) of God. Second are instantaneous affections in which relations compose or do not, the dimension of *affectio*, affection. Third is the dimension of belonging, the sphere of affect in which a power of action increases or decreases, varying in duration. Essence as a degree of power of action is an intensive quantity, inherently made of differences, and Deleuze opens a parenthesis of "pseudo scholarship" to situate these aspects of degrees of power within the Medieval philosophical context as well as Spinoza's geometrical reflections in a letter to Louis Meyer, emphasizing that a degree of power of action, as intensive quantity, is difference between a maximum and a minimum, i.e. between two thresholds, to infinity. Returning to the three dimensions of "belonging of essence", the realization of an increase or decrease of power of action by affection (second dimension) occurs within the frame of a threshold, of a minimum and a maximum (third dimension), resulting in our being a kind of vibration within this amplitude, the extremes of which are the minimum (death) and maximum (joy, or "beatitude"). To a question from Georges Comtesse whether one can consider beatitude as beyond joy and sadness, without affect, Deleuze says that Spinoza calls these affects "passions", the opposite of action in seventeenth-century terminology, of which there are joyful and sad passions, but which are distinguished from active affects which are solely joys. Deleuze develops Spinoza's distinctions between passive and active affects and his belief that at the level of beatitude, one composes relations with the world and with God as well as oneself, with no difference between outside and inside. For this third kind of knowledge, beatitude, is the inner coexistence of the idea of me, of the world, and of God.

Then, to a student's question regarding the geometric figure Deleuze drew on the board with reference to Spinoza, he comments on three paradoxical aspects of the figure as a portrait of essence, corresponding to three different situations in Spinozism. Returning to ethics, Deleuze notes Spinoza's belief that each being is at the mercy of encounters, of the risk of decompositions, as the state of nature, for which the *Ethics* offers a practical outline regarding everything in terms of becoming, becoming reasonable, becoming free. Hence, this first aspect of reason for Spinoza – selecting, experimenting with relations that compose with one's relations, avoiding those that do not – is an apprenticeship in finding signs alerting one to relations as well as to what one is capable of doing, without previous knowledge. And the signs that one must find constitute an ambiguous language, one of equivocity, with the goal of increasing one's power of acting, to experience passive joys, and to reach a more certain stage of greater reason and freedom, a stage that Deleuze proposes to consider in the next session.

Session 8, January 27, 1981

Although Deleuze continues the discussion about the signs that arise in existence, he shifts midway through this session to material related to painting, thereby indicating his ongoing preparation for the next seminar coming at the end of March. Regarding Spinoza's take on encounters with bodies as the conditions of existence, especially the problem of escaping relations that decompose us, Deleuze insists that for Spinoza, everything from birth separates us from innate ideas such that the conquest of what is innate is what mobilizes all lives. Deleuze adds that a second goal for the session is to consider a modern problem that arises in Spinoza, a general semiology that Deleuze associates with Saussure as well as C.S. Peirce and about which Spinoza offers three characteristics: first, as opposed to the constancy of natural law, the variability of the sign, specifically, in interpreting the Old Testament, about which Spinoza considers the Jewish prophet the man of the sign, calling out for a sign; second, the associativity of the sign, i.e., as an element caught within chains of association, or language for Spinoza; third, with reference to negative theology and the multiple meanings of words, the equivocity or analogy of the sign. Also, each characteristic contains both an extreme dimension (a relation with God) and a daily dimension that Deleuze outlines and to which he associates what Spinoza calls the first kind of knowledge, i.e., life according to signs. Such knowledge creates a world of light and shadow to which theologians of negative theology belonged, seeking the phenomenon of "depth" (*fond*) and inspiring texts on mysticism and philosophy (e.g. Jacob Böhme) as well as German Romantic philosophy.

Deleuze considers Spinoza a philosopher of light not concerning himself with shadow, in relation to 17th-century philosophers, and with reference to terms such as Descartes's "the clear and distinct idea" and "natural light", Deleuze shifts toward contemporary painters who discover light (hence, toward material for the following seminar on painting), linking Spinoza to this enterprise of "thinking within light" through painting. On one hand, Deleuze emphasizes the philosophical transformation (notably, Descartes's) of the concept of truth as "clear and distinct", and on the other hand, chiaroscuro techniques emerge in this century, painting becoming optical while retaining tactile referents, developing contours (e.g., Rembrandt, Velasquez). Deleuze argues that readers should understand Descartes's "clear and distinct idea" and "natural light" within this context. Instead of considering the Greeks as having invented an optical space, Deleuze points to mosaic painting and architecture in Byzantium. Hence, in the 17th century, the

role of optics emerges, Descartes as well as Spinoza and lens grinding, and Deleuze points out also that in this century, science and metaphysics were not in conflict, leading Deleuze to reflect on the current mistake of considering knowledge in both science and philosophy too difficult. The balance between science and metaphysics was in their mutual development of "pure optical space", and moreover, the 17th century was dominated by a thought of infinity in all its orders, the infinitely large and infinitely small, which is also the deployment of optical space freeing itself from finite forms. Deleuze points to the importance of the development of infinitesimal analysis and infinitesimal calculus in this era, and he also emphasizes that the 18th-century problem of perspective must be linked to the 17th-century development of pure optical space. To a student remark, Deleuze points out that Nicholas of Cusa functioned as a hinge point and also that astronomical work also corresponded to pure optical space. He also considers Dutch painting in terms of light and optics as well as Cézanne's famous texts on the gray day.

Deleuze returns to the starting point regarding Spinoza's desire to pull us from the world of equivocal signs toward a world of light, a world ultimately of univocal expressions, which explains for Deleuze why Spinoza using geometry to expose metaphysics without equivocity, a language that he commits himself to constructing. Deleuze refers to the first books of the *Ethics*, to Spinoza's references to God's understanding and will, insisting that if there is infinite understanding (God's), then it is in the same sense as there are finite understanding (humans'), a point of view of immanence since understanding would be a mode of thinking, not a part of substance. Then, shifting back to the domain of signs, Deleuze asks what the kinds of signs are, and to break with them, one needs to see their genres, and Spinoza proposes three kinds of signs corresponding to the three preceding characteristics, that Deleuze outlines. First is the imprint of an external body on my body, imprint-signs, or an "indicative" sign. Second are "imperative" signs which one reaches through the illusion of purposes (*finalités*), which distribute commands and forms of obedience. Third, in a world where words are constantly and necessarily interpreted, are "interpretive" signs, to which Deleuze proposes to return in the next session.

Session 9, February 3, 1981

Deleuze picks up from the previous session with, on one hand, the world of signs, or state of affairs, in which I can only know myself through affections I experience, within darkness and confusion, with three characteristics (variability, associativity, equivocity) and three kinds of signs (indicative, imperative, interpretive). On the other hand, the goal is to arrive at a world of univocity, no longer with equivocal signs, but rather a world of univocal, luminous expressions, with certain rules set in advance, and the question remains, how to escape the confusion of the world of signs, the first effort of reason. To do so, Deleuze reviews the three kinds of sign – perception (indicative), fictions based on final causes (imperative), abstraction (interpretations) -- as a way to derive a fourth sign: while affections (*affectios*) are always the instantaneous cut, *affectus* or affect is the increase or decrease of power of action (*puissance*), i.e., the passage from one affection to another. That is, while *affectios* as indicative signs of effects of a body on mine are defined by a quantity of reality (a scalar quantity), the *affectus* or passage defined by increase or decrease of power of action is a vector quantity, hence the vector sign of joy or sadness. So, Deleuze poses the obvious question, how might vector signs enable an escape from the world of signs, and while the good vector, joy, advances us, the bad vector, sadness, pushes us back into the world of signs. For it's only the tyrant or the tyrant's ally that needs sadness to assert power

such that selection of joys and eliminating sadness are crucial for living, but Spinoza insists that each, joy and sadness, are punctuated with each other, for example, indirect or partial joys punctuated with some sadness. Yet, from the line of joy, love arises, i.e., direct and complete joys, with the increase of power of action, and to get into this vector, one must select the lines of joys by avoiding poisonous situations and knowing what one is capable of. Still, to get out of the world of signs, one ceaselessly increases power of action through encounters with bodies that are suitable, but one also leaves the realm of passions, i.e. the simple perception of the external body's effect on mine. Hence one must come to possess one's power of action by grasping hold of the composition of relations between a body and my own rather than their imprints or effects.

With this step, Deleuze arrives at Spinoza's second effort of reason, which occurs as a process of learning, i.e., organizing the encounter, and Deleuze considers different examples (e.g., swimming, navigating, dancing) of grasping things no longer by the effect on one's body, but by things within the composition of their relations with the body, hence, tending toward possessing a power of action. In this perspective, the world turns into a composition of infinite relations, something that cannot occur with sadness since this level is no longer the first realm, *affectio*, the encounter of a body, but rather the level of composed relations between a body and one's own. Moreover, at this level, one's ideas are necessarily adequate, and they always result from active affects, i.e., expression of my power of action, hence a world of univocity. Reaching this level leads to the question of why this constitutes a necessarily adequate idea, and Spinoza calls the ideas of composition of relations "common notions", with a tradition going back to the Stoics, "common" in the sense of a domain of knowledge that is united with life. Deleuze returns to an earlier example, the combination of chyle and lymph to form a third body, blood, indicating the common notion's characteristics as, first, expressing the cause, and second, being common to the part and the whole. Deleuze refers to book II of the *Ethics* where he starts with the most universal of common notions, the idea in which all bodies agree, through being in extension and agreeing that they have movement and rest. However, Deleuze says that what's most interesting are the least universal or the more precise common notions, e.g., between a body and my own, through which we raise ourselves toward the more universal, and where common notions express themselves between one and the sense in each body.

Yet, there still remains a term constantly occurring in Spinoza, essences, bodies envisaged in their essences. After a terminological parenthesis regarding the abstract idea and the general idea, Deleuze concludes that Spinoza's common notions are not abstract ideas (which are a return to equivocal language), nor do they state the essence anything, hence a third step is needed to raise oneself from common notions to knowledge of singular essences of everything. For Spinoza, the former are springboards to reach the latter, and with this point in mind, Deleuze summarizes Spinoza's distinction of three kinds of knowledge: first, the aggregate of affections and affects-passions resulting from it, i.e., the world of signs; second, the aggregate of univocal common notions and the active affects resulting from them; third, a knowledge or intuition of essences which, like the second kind, constitutes the world of univocity. Deleuze refers to book V of the *Ethics* in which Spinoza refers to the second and third kinds of knowledge as "the eternal", never experienced by people leading their lives in the first level, but for people with lives composed with affections of the second and third kind, the smallest part of them will die because they have fulfilled the greatest part of themselves. Hence, eternity for Spinoza is a matter of active experimentation, building one's own eternity within the second or third kind of knowledge, and Deleuze concludes with Spinoza's definition of a general idea of man, by the composed relations likely to suit all men, i.e. a composition of relations of all men that would be

the ideal society. But for Spinoza, as men are always within the first kind of knowledge, societies are necessary to manage within the first kind, while the individual has three dimensions, extensive parts belonging to him or her (under a particular relation), the relations that characterize him or her, and the singular essence that corresponds to him or her. Deleuze indicates that the status of these three dimensions will be the problem for the next session.

Session 10, February 10, 1981

Opening with a response to a comment or question, Deleuze dismisses the notion that a philosopher (namely, Spinoza) might borrow ideas from someone else's text, but does offer a reference text (despite his misgivings about the need for this), Victor Delbos's detailed summary on the *Ethics* (*Spinozism* [Vrin, 2005]). He then returns to the seminar's starting point, the relation between ethics and ontology, particularly an ethical analysis of Spinoza's conception of the individual and individuation formed on three dimensions. First, the individual's "parts" that Spinoza calls "simplest bodies" which are extensive parts, and a body that is a mode of extension is divisible into parts, even the soul as a mode of thought. A second dimension: those parts belong to a body according to a reason, namely for Spinoza, is according to a certain relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness, relations that characterize the particular body. A third dimension: the essence of the individual is an intensity, i.e., a part of power of action (*puissance*), suggesting that individuation for Spinoza is intensive, not extensive. Hence, the individual, made up of many extensive mobile parts in movement or in rest, is an intensity in his/her/its essence.

But Deleuze then addresses the distinction between simple and composed bodies, and for Spinoza, this links to the whole of nature, which is composed of all bodies, to infinity. Deleuze again returns to Spinoza's example of composition of blood (with chyle and lymph) which then enters into compositions to form a larger whole, infinitely. Declaring that the session will henceforth be very technical, a practical exercise to consider the simplest bodies, Deleuze refers first to a text by historian of philosophy Martial Gueroult's two-volume commentary on the *Ethics* (*Spinoza* [Aubier, 1968]), who clarifies a specific point in Spinoza's work regarding "movement" (in contrast to Descartes's "quantity of movement", or mass multiplied by speed, *mv*). Deleuze examines Gueroult's detailed distinction between Descartes and Spinoza, and their relation to Leibniz's critique of Descartes, and provides a mathematical formula on the board representing Spinoza's "what is preserved is a certain relation of movement and rest". As Spinoza viewed bodies not as substances, but as relations, he defined the individual in the order of relations, e.g., a relation of movement and rest, hence composition or decomposition of relations. Deleuze's purpose with these comments is to consider "simplest bodies" composed solely as movement and rest, speed and slowness, while "composed bodies" are distinguished by other aspects, e.g. shape (*figure*) and magnitude (*grandeur*). Yet since for Gueroult, the simplest bodies cannot have the same shape or magnitude, Deleuze addresses his difference with Gueroult (simplest bodies having neither shape nor magnitude) by closely following Spinoza's text, and he returns to the starting point: the composed body with its large number of parts, while simple bodies proceed by infinities such that a particular infinity of simple bodies *has* shape and magnitude, more or less large. Clearly, such relations of infinities emerge from Spinoza as geometrist, and to provide background, Deleuze considers aspects of the Greek origins of mathematics and the development of complex numbers, then fractions, then irrational numbers,

reaching the conclusion that the infinite appears to be geometric reality itself, and number is always subject to the discovery not only of magnitude, but of the infinite in magnitude.

Following some questions regarding mathematical distinctions, Deleuze continues, first, with the theory of ratios in Euclid, then the Hindu-Arab mathematical tradition, then ideal number theory in Plato. Returning briefly to Spinoza, he recalls that simple bodies belong to a composed body only through a relation that expresses the composed body, through a relation of movement and rest, a relation (or ratio) to which Deleuze turns by following Spinoza's geometrical examples. The purpose of these developments is to explain why simple bodies have no shapes or magnitudes because they proceed through infinities, i.e., through infinitely minute terms. But such terms do not exist independently of the infinite collection of which they are parts, hence corresponding to expression as non-formed elements, and also because speed and slowness are differentials. Deleuze insists on the relational character of infinity and infinite sets, and then points to "the strangest proposition" from seventeenth-century philosophy, that "actual infinity" exists, meaning there is infinity in action, i.e., distinguished from the finite and the indefinite. Deleuze examines theories of finitude and the indefinite, then shifts to Kant's view on the infinity of diameters, linked to his understanding of the synthesis of time. Deleuze continues this development regarding aspects of infinity vis-à-vis the indefinite into eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mathematics, then returns to the seventeenth century by citing Leibniz's *Of The Radical Origin of Things,* the exposition of the so-called cosmological proof of God's existence, at the heart of debates between proponents of finitism and indefinitism. Deleuze points out that seventeenth-century philosophy implies a mutation of the cogito, "I think", into a kind of "I think space" with time considered secondary, with a belief in infinite space and in "actual infinity". Deleuze describes this as the two branches in mathematics, the "Greek theme" (magnitudes greater than numbers) and the "Indian theme" (the independent number compared to the magnitudes), the latter based on a consciousness of time, the former with an acute consciousness of space. He recalls a Pascal text as a seventeenth-century text in a pure state, with man spatially wedged between two infinities, whereas a modern text would be temporal, e.g., the basis of German Romanticism, a temporal perspective that Deleuze connects to music and painting as well as philosophy, literature, and mathematics. Deleuze then attempts to swerve back to the point of departure for this long digression, seventeenth century thought of "actual infinity" – neither finitude nor the indefinite -- a finite thing wedged between the actual infinity of the infinitely large and the actual infinity of the infinitely minute. The session ends without him managing to return to Spinoza.

Session 11, February 17, 1981

Deleuze starts by explaining that in the previous session, he attempted to analyze the different dimensions of individuality through the presence of the infinite in seventeenth-century philosophy, a way of providing concrete aspects of an infinitist conception of the individual. In Spinoza, the individual is relation, or a whole plane of composition, *compositio;* the individual is also power of action, *potentia;* and third, the individual is an intrinsic mode, called *gradus* in the Middle Ages, a degree or mode, and it is through these aspects that the individual is not substance, but rather a relation. Deleuze refers to Nicholas of Cusa as a very early attempt to think of the relation in it pure state, putting into play a mutual immanence of the infinite and relation, but Deleuze argues that it is only in the seventeenth century that the relation is thought

independent of its terms, precisely through the development of infinitesimal calculus. Deleuze shifts toward how this calculus puts in play the differential relation (the dy/dx = type) with a detailed explanation of the differential. Besides pointing out onne important mathematical tool used in this calculus, the infinitely minute, Deleuze explains that the differential relation designates a third term (the trigonometric tangent), and in gathering the three terms (pure relation, the infinite, and the finite), the differential relation tends toward a limit (the third term). Deleuze's purpose is to point out the equilibrium point reached in the seventeenth century between the infinite and the finite through a new theory of relations, and his first question is how the individual is a relation, i.e., the limit at the level of the finite individual. Responding to a student's query, Deleuze affirms that the limit (or finite) toward which the relation tends is the reason for knowing (*connaître*) while the infinite is the reason for being (*raison d'être*). Deleuze then proposes pursuing thought experiments regarding the three terms (infinity, relation, limit) in order to make them into a drawing.

However, the apparent lack of student interest spurs him toward another topic, momentarily discussing the first point, the logic of relations, within the history of philosophy (e.g. Bertrand Russell), then shifting to the theme of the individual as power of action (*puissance*), which follows from the previous mathematical discussion in terms of the concept of *conatus*, the effort or tendency toward a limit, i.e., *puissance*. Regarding the term "limit", Deleuze returns to Greek, *peras*, and Plato's theory of the limit as contours (cf. Plato's *Timaeus*), the individual conceived as the form related to its contour. With this point, Deleuze takes painting as an example of the tactile-optical kind, with the Greek world understood as one of *eidos*, visuality, and to which Aristotle reacts with reference to sculpture. After a brief terminological debate with Georges Comtesse, Deleuze provides another example of the conception of limit from the Stoics, which he pursues at some length, then poses a practical-exercise question: "does everything have contour?", referring to Gregory Bateson in response. Deleuze provides other examples of limit in relation to powers of action and distinguishes a dynamic limit from a contour-limit, asserting that the thing has no other limit than the limit of its power of action. Deleuze concludes that the Stoics' term *tonos*, or contracted effort defining the thing, is necessary to the thing itself, just Spinoza takes up the question, "what can a body do?"

Then, Deleuze provides a second example from Neo-Platonism, namely Plotinus's *The Enneads* (specifically IV, book 5), a meditation on light as belonging to true ideal things, and lighting extending as far as its power of action extends. Deleuze argues that light scours shadows, that shadow is a part of light as a gradation that develops space, and he proposes comparing the end of Plato's book six of *The Republic* to *The Ennead* IV to grasp the difference between the two worlds of each. Deleuze develops these distinct aspects, noting that space understood as a product of expansion was not part of the classical Greek perspective and that Oriental influences were needed to develop this direction. Then, turning to a third example, Byzantine art, he cites Alois Riegl regarding the differences between Greek art and Egyptian bas-relief, particularly the primacy of foreground in the former, and the background privileged in the latter, Byzantine shape having form-contour but rather expansion of light-color. Then, before approaching a final example, Deleuze summarizes his outline of limits: a contour-limit that I a tension-limit; then, a space-limit and a spatialization-limit; then a light-color limit, as well as a *terminus* limit. As for the final example, Deleuze studies the concept of contour-limit, asking how animals (in fact, how cows) create a dynamic conception of limit, a cow zone, a limit of power of action of grazing in the meadow. Deleuze concludes that the dynamic limit is spatializing while the contour-limit supposes a measured space. Deleuze asks the participants to

consider the limit as territories or dynamic expressions and no longer geometric contours, in short, violating the contour-limits.

With these successive developments in mind, Deleuze returns to specific points in Spinoza: first, an absolute criticism of Ideas, with Spinoza criticizing geometric shape while employing a geometric method, insisting that nothing in nature is created through shape and contour. Deleuze suggests Spinoza's discussion of definitions for the circle, favoring the genetic definition, regarding the circle's power of action. Deleuze also returns to the paradoxical notion of differential relations, whereby a limit is defined getting smaller than any assignable quantity. Likewise, in the seventeenth century, one sees an attempt to return to a pure optical space, light identified with power of action, and he suggest that infinitesimal analysis is to mathematics what seventeenth-century painting is to the painting of light, where limit emerges in a different sense than as the limit of shadow and light, more an art of zone or tension-limit than of contour. Deleuze concludes by pointing out that the first group of notions discussed, relation and infinity, is linked to the second group, power of action-limits, since limit is the limit of the relation, with a constant intersection of both sets of notions. Finally, through both groups, the individual is designated as an *intrinsic mode*, a notion that Deleuze attributes to Duns Scotus, and he proposes to pursue this at the next session.

Session 12, March 10, 1981

Deleuze announces first that the next session (March 17) will be the final one on Spinoza, but discussions in class will require that the Spinoza seminar extend into the March 31 session. Then he starts this session with development of the three strata of the individual and details of a logic of the relation, first emphasizing the importance of the individual's extensible parts of which it is composed, i.e., of simple bodies. Deleuze recalls his previous discussion of "the actual infinite" (in contrast to the finite and the indefinite) in 17th century thought, i.e., the infinite "in action" of infinitely minute terms. He also recalls the previous session's discussion of shape and magnitude which are not applicable to the collection of infinitely minute things corresponding to the particular individual. Deleuze examines more closely the nature of things infinitely minute in 17th thought, their lack of interiority, i.e., modal matter of pure exteriority reacting on each other. To distinguish these infinite sets, Deleuze considers the second layer of individuality, the particular relation (*rapport*) realized by an infinite set occurring through movement and rest, speed and slowness. Deleuze relates Martial Gueroult's hypothesis that this relation constitutes a vibration to 17th century physics (e.g., the pendulum), concluding that the model cannot work as vibration but can work in terms of mathematics of the era. After noting the importance of fractional, algebraic and differential relations for Spinoza's era, Deleuze considers these successively with the third, differential step, the relation between its terms determined as well as tending toward a limit. For Deleuze, this corresponds to Spinoza's reference to relations of movement and rest, i.e., a differential relation in infinite sets of infinitely minute things (e.g., the example of blood composed of chyle and lymph). Moreover, the infinite sets are distinct due to their different powers, i.e., they can be at a higher power than other ones, hence the definition of the second layer of the individual as the differential relation that defines the power (*puissance*). Such relations belong to me alone as long as it lasts, i.e., as long as I have parts entering into my relation (otherwise, I die). Hence, at a third level, the relations of movement and rest only

express a singular essence, expressed in differential relation types under which are infinite collections of infinitely minute things belonging to the individual.

However, to answer the question of what the singular essence is, Deleuze argues that for Spinoza, "existence" requires a very rigorous determination: first, having an infinity of minute extrinsic parts belonging to me, which are no longer realized after death, but singular essence and characteristic relations in which this essence is expressed are eternal, and this is a system in which everything that exists is real. Deleuze contrasts this view to Leibniz's, particularly the different senses of the term *conatus* (tendency) for each thinker, and to develop Spinoza's position, he returns to the discussion of shapes in the previous session, commenting on a text from Spinoza's early work, the *Short Treatise*. For Spinoza, bodies exist within extension, and he calls the body's shape a "mode of attribute", Spinoza maintaining that essences are singular (not to be confused with the existent), and in the *Ethics,* he notes that existent modes exist insofar as they are said to last while essences of modes exist insofar as they are contained within the attribute. Deleuze suggests that besides shapes, another mode of distinction is the degree, or *gradus*, for example, a degree of light or of white, also called "intensive quantity", to which Deleuze adds the terminological distinctions of "quality" and "magnitude" or extensive quantity composed of parts. Here Deleuze brings in Duns Scotus regarding "intrinsic modes": besides being realized as extrinsic modes, shape also has a kind of latitude or degrees of shape, hence intensive quantities or intrinsic modes which Deleuze compares to the concept of differential calculus. He also relates these distinctions to theological questions from the Middle Ages, notably the Holy Trinity and a metaphysics of shapes. Then he addresses the distinction between intensive and extensive quantity, or shape which is composed of homogeneous parts, responding to the actual infinite. Deleuze argues that extensive quantity can only be thought of within space according to a kind of duration, and also as the result of a synthesis, of time, while intensive quantity has non-additive magnitudes, a multiplicity within the moment, a synthesis of the instant. Singular essence for Spinoza, then, is a degree of the attribute, a quality, and there would be intensities of extension, or powers. Moreover, for extension under this or that power, there would be a distinction of degrees or intrinsic modes fully distinguished from the distinction between modes of existence. Each intensive quantity is in a relation with zero, in relation to acts, and as intensive quantities, essences are expressed in differential relations.

After a break, Deleuze suggests that they consider the question of eternity, but he asks students for question regarding Spinoza's conception of individuality. To a first question regarding biogenetics and types of preformation in the 17th century, Deleuze explains (and seems to announce already aspect of "the fold) the mechanism of development or "explication" (enveloped parts being unfolded), something enveloped in the seed, then shifts to discuss the later theory of epigenesis (development via new formations), from undifferentiated to differentiations. Deleuze sees preformation as inseparable from the conception of the actual infinite, a symbolic system that must collapse to allow for the shift to epigenesis, and Deleuze suggests the Romantic revolution – namely, the emphasis on the synthesis of time, of creative – provides the link to the shift to differentiation. As for preformationism, one finds the theme of the actual infinite and the infinitely minute applied to living matter, hence corresponding the symbolic system of the era. To a question from Georges Comtesse regarding Spinoza's use of "singular essence" in relation to the possibility of the "pure real", Deleuze suggests that Spinoza be viewed within the context of his era's symbolic system, and then parses specific terms (part; totality; unity) before returning to Spinoza's sense of singular essences and the degree of power, finally providing two senses of the word "part" (extensive and intensive). In their extended

dialogue, Deleuze maintains that he deliberately has limited his analysis to Spinoza, objecting to Comtesse's implicit critique that other thinkers than Spinoza might be better, and also to Comtesse's reference to a text on Spinoza by Jean Wahl whose perspective differs from Deleuze's regarding Spinoza's deployment of a system of relations. In closing, he proposes to continue with Spinoza's claims regarding the experience of eternity and also to review Spinoza's ontological view at the heart of the course.

Session 13, March 17, 1981

An edited version of this session was prepared for the Gallimard release of the audio CD, "Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza : immortalité et éternité" (2003) and, as such, can be considered an exemplary session, at least from the post-seminar perspectives of the CD editors, Claire Parnet and Richard Pinhas. Deleuze intended this to be the final session on Spinoza, which proves not to be the case. His goal is to draw conclusions, first, based on the previous study of Spinoza's perspectives on individuality, about his statement, "We feel and we experience that we are eternal". Second, he proposes to conclude about the relationship between ontology and an ethics, and for the first point, he reviews the three dimensions of individuality (an infinity of extensive parts; relations of movement and rest; expression of a degree of power of action [*puissance*] and relations constituting one's singular essence). Deleuze notes the harmony between these three dimensions and what Spinoza calls "three kinds of knowledge": first, the set of inadequate ideas (passive affections and affects that result) due mainly to individuals' having extensive parts, a knowledge of the effects of encounter, i.e., of actions and interactions; second, a knowledge of relations, of their composition and decomposition, adequate knowledge, no longer abstract but a question of life problems, the art of composing relations; third, an intuitive kind of knowledge of essences, on which relations depend, knowledge of the degrees of one's powers of action (*puissance*). However, a problem arises since every individual is made up of the three dimensions at the same time, and some individuals never rise above the first dimension, so Deleuze considers when oppositions arise, e.g., hatred, leading him to reflect on problems arising in an axiom from the *Ethics,* book IV: a thing being given and defined by a degree of power of action, there is always a higher degree, yet there is also something stronger by which it can be destroyed, but only in a certain time and place, i.e., within its existence. Deleuze concludes that this concerns the individual existence here and now, for example, opposition arising as a function of extensive parts, but even when, at death, there are no terms left to realize the relation, an eternal truth remains independent of its terms, an actuality of the essence as an intensive part, a degree of power of action. This suggests a double eternity, on one hand, eternity of the relation, on the other, eternity of the individual essence, unaffected by death, and where there is no opposition due to agreement of essences as pure degrees of intensity. Thus, the experience of feeling eternal that Deleuze locates in authors like D.H. Lawerence and Edward Boys, and Deleuze provides two concrete cases, one regarding an individual who remains solely in the first knowledge, and a second one who gains insight within the second knowledge. After summarizing the dimensions of the individual, Deleuze suggests that for Spinoza the first individual at death loses the extensive parts whereas in the second case, having reached adequate ideas and active affects, the individual's loss at death is a relatively small part.

Then Deleuze links this to the question of the eternal, of the soul's immortality, and he reviews some texts in which this is addressed, notably Plato's *Phaedo*. As for Spinoza, he

opposed eternity to immortality but not as a matter of before and after (as in previous cases); rather, he considers that one experience being eternal at the same time as being mortal, i.e., experiencing something that cannot exist within the form of time: the eternal as the intensive parts, the degree of power, differing from the "in time" extensive parts, hence an immortality of coexistence but not of succession. Spinoza links this possibility to gaining a lived sense of proportion through the criterion of importance, judging what is important as one lives, allowing one to retain intensive parts even as one loses extensive parts at death.

During the rest of the session (the final hour), students pose questions regarding various points, starting with the theme of death and realizing intensive parts, and Deleuze provides successive explanations regarding Spinoza's view of death. To Richard Pinhas's description of artistic creation as a kind of unfolding and realizing, Deleuze suggests that they also choose non-artistic examples of apprehending and evaluating time that remains, but insists also, with Spinoza, that death always comes from outside, for example, old age as attrition of the external parts. Then, George Comtesse raises objections to death coming from the outside, and drawing examples from Henry Miller, Comtesse argues that there are also unspeakable affections and effects that arise. Deleuze replies by explaining that Spinoza speaks of intimate, singular essence that is a degree of power encompassing in itself other degrees of power, whereas at the level of existence, there is no interiority, which would preclude Comtesse's formulation of an outside affect passing within. Deleuze reformulates the Miller example within the Spinozist framework of inadequate ideas and equivocal signs, within the first kind of knowledge, particularly as concerns sexuality, whereas Spinoza proposes a kind of concrete effort to replace this world of obscurity with a world of another nature. To a student's question about what is missing should one reach the third kind of knowledge, Deleuze points out that the second kind of knowledge grants one understanding about relations that compose and decompose, but not about the singular nature or essence of each individual, i.e., about the question of passing to the third level. Deleuze cannot fully develop that aspect except to point to book V of the *Ethics,* suggesting that one proceeds from common notions in the second kind of knowledge to the idea of God as foundation of all relations, and in the idea of God, there are all the singular essences. Deleuze follows Spinoza's two portraits of God in book V, finding therein a love of God for itself and love of God for us, the third kind of knowledge. Deleuze hears Richard Pinhas ask if one can be a Spinozist who remains happily in the second kind of knowledge, whereas Pinhas in fact asks at what point does Spinoza feel the need for the foundation in God, and Deleuze replies that since for Spinoza God cannot be treated as a simple common notion, God necessarily is the idea of a being both infinite and singular. But Deleuze also responds to the first question (that Pinhas did not ask) to point out that one could opt for a truncated Spinozism, believing there are only relations but not essences. But should one think there is Being, then one cannot remain at common notions and relations. Deleuze and Pinhas debate various aspects of what Deleuze calls Pinhas's "mutant Spinozism" regarding the artist's relation to common notion vis-à-vis essences, and their differences seem to revolve around distinct conceptions of creation, with Deleuze emphasizing the realization of essences within objects, e.g., the bow on the strings, the particular piece of wood, having an essence of wood just as there is an essence of melody. This discussion provides the outline of two kinds of Spinozism, a "restricted Spinozism" (second kind of knowledge) and "integral Spinozism" (all the way to the third kind of knowledge), and to Pinhas's difficulty with the term "foundation", Deleuze explains Spinoza's need for a foundation for relations since these must be internal to something, a purer, deeper Being. Comtesse suggests that for this accomplishment between levels to occur, Spinoza must have an idea of truth as the

immanent cause of all powers of Being, and Deleuze suggests this as pure light in contrast to equivocity. Another student raises Spinoza's distinction of morality in terms of life as progress or as actualization of extensive parts, and Deleuze responds that morality is necessarily a judgment system, and for Spinoza, there is no autonomy in judgment and that, ultimately, whatever one does, one always judges oneself, or rather the nature of one's kinds of sadness and joy judges. For Spinoza, people who only want to spread sadness are judging themselves, such that Spinoza rejects morality, whereas he talks about a kind of physico-chemical test, a self-experimentation, like a gold piece testing itself, according to the affects it has. Here, Deleuze likens Nietzsche's view of judgement to Spinoza's: in an immanent mode of existence, you always have the affects that you deserve by virtue of your mode of existence. For Spinoza, wisdom about modes of existence is for each person to manage, for example, where one places one's anxiety, where vulnerable points may lie that Deleuze compares to a potter's test, whereas Spinoza's great trinity of judgment is the tyrant, the priest (or the "man of anguish") and the slave. Deleuze then notes that at the next session, he will provide a "conclusion of conclusions" regarding judgment as well as ontology, truly to finish with the Spinoza seminar.

Session 14, March 24, 1981

Insisting that this is the final session on Spinoza, Deleuze begins with the question of how Spinoza can say that any affection is an affection of essence, referring to definitions that Spinoza provides at the end of book III of the *Ethics*. Deleuze situates this discussion of affection and affect within 17th century distinctions and then, addressing problems in Spinoza's statement, Deleuze explains that for Spinoza, passions and even inadequate ideas belong to essence no less than adequate ideas, yet with a difference. Deleuze reviews the occurrence of inadequate ideas from which a passion-affect emerges, concluding that as long as one exists, a relation of movement and rest is realized by the extensive parts that belong to an individual according to this relation. Deleuze points out a slippage of notions in the *Ethics*, a double vocabulary, sometimes kinetic, sometimes dynamic, for example, a relation of movement and rest, in two senses. Deleuze concludes that since affection is the idea of an effect, then one's extensive parts necessarily encounter each other constantly and are defined by the relation of movement and rest, with an affection being the reception of the effect, or "I perceive". To this kinetic formulation, Deleuze adds the dynamic version, one is defined through a power of being affected, and there is no moment in which one's power of being affected is not fulfilled. Deleuze provides some examples to clarify why every affection and every affect is an affect of essence since they exist only insofar as they fulfill one's own power of being affected. In short, for Spinoza, this means "there is only Being," but not that "everything is equal", and to address this, Deleuze considers "every affection is affection of essence" in terms of "insofar as what?": insofar as the essence has an infinity of extensive parts belonging to it according to such a relation. Then, as one rises to the next levels, one has adequate perceptions and active affects, and these also are affections of essence, but with the difference that they come from the inside, i.e., essence as it expresses itself in a relation.

From this point onward (for the next 80 minutes), student questions and interventions (some inaudible) will alternate with Deleuze's responses, notably on the inside-outside distinctions he has made regarding affections, and then continuing with his development regarding the relation of ethics and ontology, and Deleuze asserts that Spinoza is the only

philosopher to have realized philosophy as ontology. With reference to authors who consider themselves pantheists, Deleuze compares D.H. Lawrence to Spinoza in terms of their cult of the sun, or of light, with three ways of being in a relation with the sun (as extensive parts of the body; as involvement and a particular relation with the sun, e.g., a painter's easel-canvas relation; a mystical mode of intrinsic distinction, a solar auto-affection) each corresponding to a successive kind of knowledge. Deleuze agrees with a student's suggestion that this relation to the sun might also correspond to Michel Tournier's *Friday*, adding that these experiences (Tournier's, Van Gogh's, Lawrence's) constitute a special involvement with the sun. Then, returning to the question of ontology, notably to nine propositions in book I of the *Ethics*, Deleuze asks what is really new in Spinoza, and to respond, he introduces a Greek term, *hen panta*, as a cry of philosophy, the "One All", which resounds an essence across all philosophy, specifically "panantheism" (One-All-God). Deleuze sees Spinoza as the confluence of the purest pantheism with philosophy, since he takes literally the final consequences of *hen panta,* which proceeds to explain. He argues that what is new in Spinoza is the statement that the same attributes in the same form are stated regarding God and regarding things, an extraordinary proposition for all other philosophers who maintained that the same word in the same sense cannot be attributed to God and to all things. Deleuze explains what Spinoza's proposition means, that we humans know only two infinite forms, thought and extension, the soul as a manner of thinking, the body as a mode of extension. From this, Spinoza develops a doctrine according to which these same forms of infinity attributed to God also belong to finite things, in distinct ways, i.e., forms stated "in relation" and yet stated of unequal terms, hence a community of forms, *hen panta*, "the One All Things". Deleuze refers to the Muslim philosopher, Avicenna, and his query whether one could possibly think of a pure essence, and he creates the formula (translated into Latin) "animal tantum", i.e., "animal insofar as being animal", animal essence outside the criteria of universal and singular. Later, from Saint Thomas Aquinas came the theory of analogies of Being, and then with Dun Scotus, Being is related to God and creatures in an analogous way, as strictly univocal, one and the same Being, i.e., neutral, neither infinite, nor finite, nor singular, nor universal. Finally, to liberate this Being from its neutrality, Spinoza affirms that this Being is the real, Nature, the same Being that is stated regarding all be-ings (*étants*) of God and creatures, an equality of Being for unequal essences. With this, says Deleuze, ontology begins and also ends. Deleuze closes by saying that he will begin with a different seminar, on Painting, but he will in fact devote half the session to additional questions on Spinoza.

Spinoza, Session 15, March 31, 1981 / Painting and the Question of Concepts, Session 1

Having hoped to finish the Spinoza sessions two weeks earlier, Deleuze proposes to finish by addressing students' questions and then, in the second half, to introduce the seminar on "Painting and the Question of Concepts." During the session's first part (about 54 minutes), Deleuze addresses several questions, first, regarding how the third kind of knowledge relates to the relation of artistic states of creativity, i.e., the knowledge of the self as knowledge of power of action, and vice versa. Deleuze points out that while this state is vulnerable to being swept away due to the enormity of this power of action, it is also safe as one grasps the object of this knowledge. With Spinoza presenting this knowledge as "beatitude" (in the *Ethics*, book V), a dual faceted knowledge, or auto-affection, Deleuze reviews Spinoza's three-step path in the

Ethics, from apparent condemnation to the first level of inadequate ideas toward successive levels. This path is related to the passions (sad and joyful) and increasing the power of action with joyful passions; encountering bodies that agree with one's own, leading one to form common notions, i.e., practical ideas of what exists in common with the body that affects my own with joy; through the second step, the formation of a third body having composed relations as the object of a common notion, hence active affects resulting from common notions, depending on one's power of action. With this build-up of active affects overlaid with new ideas and new states, auto-affections then emerge as the third kind of knowledge. Deleuze emphasizes that in book V of the *Ethics*, Spinoza seems to indicate that one could very well feel joyful passions while still remaining within the first knowledge, i.e., one is not bound to follow the ascending path. Deleuze describes this situation as a kind of overlapping, inadequate ideas or passive affects remaining linked to one's condition while still succeeding in moving forward toward adequate ideas and active affects. To other questions, Deleuze suggests that there is an element of play or improvisation in the composition of relations, and he suggests that "timing", or *kaïros* from Greek, the correct moment, has a function in this procedure. He returns to the importance of one's body and exterior body necessarily forming a third body in order to reach a common notion (e.g., in swimming, my body and a wave forming a third body), and he insists that for Spinoza, privileged common notions are necessarily political in that they are shared as a construction of a human community. As the 17th century was a century of gamblers, everyone including Spinoza, says Deleuze, was interested in games and chance, corresponding to the birth of calculating probabilities, but however strong the certainty of the third kind of knowledge might be, the possibility of collapse or catastrophe still exists. With this theme, the seminar on Spinoza ends (at the session's minute 54) and provides a link as Deleuze begins to introduce the seminar on Painting.

Session 15, Spinoza/Session 1, Painting and the Question of Concepts, March 31, 1981

Foremost in Deleuze's initial presentation is the importance of the "concept", for example, color as "concept", thereby foreshadowing the concept's importance in developing the broader theme of "what is philosophy?". He immediately raises the importance of the catastrophe in painting and its affect in the act of painting itself, the painting of imbalance, the relation of catastrophe and the birth of color. Referring to different painters and theorists (Claudel, Goethe, Klee, Turner, Ruskin, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Francis Bacon), he links the question of catastrophe to the previous discussion of affects such that color emerges from chaos. In particular, he emphasizes Joachim Gasquet's book on Cézanne and the emergence of chaos-catastrophe as pre-pictorial, seen in Cézanne's letters. Deleuze responds to a student's remark by briefly connecting these perspectives in terms of Kant's theory of the sublime.

Continuing with Cézanne, Deleuze emphasizes the first moment of "chaos-abyss" following which color would emerge, but he also reflects on possible failure of this emergence, and he reflects at great length on the color scale emerging, or greyness in non-emergence. However, Deleuze is cautious here, discussing kinds of grey in Kandinsky, and then Deleuze announces a detour, to reflect on painting's relation to time and painting operating a synthesis of time. Here he comes to his second text, from Paul Klee on the grey point, but also on chaos and the emergence of color. This emergence constitutes the beginning of the world, also present in music, but feeling blocked, Deleuze shifts to another painter, Francis Bacon's interviews, painters' struggles with clichés, and then pursues a reading from Bacon to create a bridge to the

next session. This reading yields several notions, especially that of the diagram as germinal chaos, similar for Cézanne and Klee, the tension towards a pre-pictorial condition. Here, Deleuze can point to starting points for each painter (Turner's 1830 diagram; Van Gogh's diagram; Klee's black-and-white grey point as matrix for all colors), and he considers when Bacon found his diagram, indicating this notion -- this history of the catastrophe and of the seed in the act of painting, that is, the notion of the diagram – as the first step of the seminar's analysis.