

Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel Smith (Minnesota 2004; French editions are 1981 and 2002).

Galloway reading notes

**PART 1: BACON'S "THREE PICTORIAL ELEMENTS" (13)**

<b>Figure</b> [ <i>Figure</i> ] (5)	<b>Round Area/Ring</b> [ <i>rond, piste, contour</i> ] (5)	<b>Field (of Color)</b> [ <i>aplat</i> ] (8)
Figure	Contour	Structure
the raised image, the fact (of the figure) (13)	the place [ <i>lieu</i> ]	the spatializing/material structure
in art-historical/sculptural lingo...the Figure	...the pedestal	...and the armature
<i>not</i> equal to "the figurative" (i.e. metaphor, allegory, symbol etc.). See also section on the figurative "mistake" (71).	"the place of an exchange in two directions ... the contour is like a membrane through which this double exchange flows" (13)	the field is "thin and hard" and not behind or beyond the Figure but "to the side of it, or rather, all around it" (8)

**PART 2: THE DOUBLE EXCHANGE OF THE ROUND AREA**  
(see also the summary on 28-29)

**First movement ("athleticism")**

← going from the Field to the Figure

- roughly Chapter 3
- "The material structure curls around the contour in order to imprison the Figure" (14-15)
- [this corresponds roughly to Deleuze's concept of sense, or individuation]

**Second movement ("becoming-animal," "abjection")**

going from the Figure to the Field →

- roughly Chapter 4
- "the movement of the Figure toward the material structure, toward the field of color" (15)
- event: "This is no longer the problem of the place, but rather of the event."
  - [Q: So the event is *only* on the side of deterritorialization?]
- a "spasm" (15)

- meat (20-21)
- head w/out a face
- “The head-meat is a becoming-animal of man” (25)
- “becoming-animal is only one stage in a more profound becoming-imperceptible in which the Figure disappears” (25)
- [this corresponds roughly to Deleuze's concept of nonsense, or impersonalization]

the “rhythm” of the painting (30, 37, 60, 83)... this is Deleuze's term for sensation in general, what in other authors might be called aesthetic unity or even, simply, poetics.

#### INTERMISSION

**“Chapter 6: Painting and Sensation”** \*\*good summarizing and synthetic chapter\*\*

- Cézanne and sensation: “There are two ways of going beyond figuration (that is, beyond both the illustrative and the figurative): either toward abstract form or toward the Figure. Cézanne gave a simple name to this way of the Figure: sensation. The Figure is the sensible form related to a sensation; it acts immediately upon the nervous system, which is of the flesh, whereas abstract form is addressed to the head and acts through the intermediary of the brain, which is closer to the bone” (31).
  - sensation acts directly on the nervous system, on flesh. It's *not* a cognitive function for Deleuze.
    - [Q: why do this in the first place? A: Because otherwise it's not pure sensation (i.e. it could be construed as just thinking).]
  - note: “toward the Figure” does *not* mean Deleuze is simply talking about Symbolism (Gustave Moreau, Odilon Redon, etc). the Figure is just as much of an “abstract” form, it is simply an intensity rather than an extensity. “it is not impressionism, not expressionism, not symbolism, not cubism, not abstraction” (xxxii).
- Series, levels .. as definition of sensation (33)
  1. Not about referentiality (33)
    - The scream without the horror. If you bring in horror, then you have narrative.
  2. Affect over feeling (35)
  3. movement (35) -- “a movement ‘in-place,’ a spasm” (36)

### PART 3: WHAT RESULTS ONCE THE DOUBLE EXCHANGE IS IN EFFECT

#### **the body without organs (39-)**

- Once the Figure is abjected into the Field, and once the Field curls and imprisons the Figure, we are now completely inside the Deleuzian universe. We can now speak of the body without organs, the hysteric, the diagram, etc.
- Against Heidegger: “The phenomenological hypothesis is perhaps insufficient...” (39)
- Artaud
- “The Figure is the body without organs...”
- Hysteria
  - Presence: “The hysteric is ... someone for whom things and beings are present, *too* present” (44). “Painting is hysteria...because it makes presence immediately visible” (45)

couples

triptychs

- active, passive, attendant
- fall, descent (67)

#### **cliché**

- “It is a mistake to think that the painter works on a white surface...” (71). Note how structuralist this sounds: “...he paints on images that are already there...” (71)
- data/the givens [*données*].
- Note also that Bacon was above all a fetishist, for he painted the same painting over and over again throughout his entire career. Thus a distinction must be made between the fetish and the cliché.
- Cézanne
- photography--Bacon's use of photography, and his supercession of it.
- chance vs probability (76-77)
  - “chance” or what he calls “free marks” “can be called 'nonrepresentative,' precisely because they depend on the act of chance and express nothing regarding the visual image: they only concern the act of the painter. ... the chance choice made at each move is...nonpictorial or apictorial” (77)
  - probability is connected with cliché. i.e. it's the kinds of “structural” outcomes that are in some sense predetermined, at least on a probabilistic or macro scale.

#### **diagram (82)**

- a *catastrophe* (*kata* [down] + *strophe* [turning]) that overcomes the canvas (82, 83)
- “these marks, these traits, are irrational, involuntary, accidental, free, random. They are nonrepresentative, nonillustrative, nonnarrative. They are no longer

- either significant or signifiers: they are a-signifying traits” (82)
- “There are two ways in which the painting can fail, once visually and once manually. One can remain entangled in the figurative givens and the optical organization of representation; but one can also spoil the diagram, botch it, so overload it that it is rendered inoperative...” (82)
- is “‘suggestive’” .. introduces “‘possibilities of fact’” (83)
  - “The essential point about the diagram is that it is made in order for something to *emerge* from it, and if nothing emerges from it, it fails” (128)
- as a total structure of flows (83)
- two paths in modernism
  - abstraction -- Mondrian, Kandinsky -- “optical”
  - abstract expressionism/Action Painting -- Pollock -- “manual”
    - “Somewhat like a map that is as large as the country, the diagram merges with the totality of the painting, the entire painting is diagrammatic” (85)
  - Bacon as 3<sup>rd</sup> way (88-90). to “[s]ave the contour” (89)
- \*\* “Roughly speaking, the law of the diagram, according to Bacon, is this: one starts with a figurative form, a diagram intervenes and scrambles it, and a form of a completely different nature emerges from the diagram, which is called the Figure” (125) \*\*

<b>Digital</b>	<b>Analogical</b>
code; “turn painting into a code” (92)	diagram or motif (92)
additive	subtractive
first an infinite plane, to which heterogenous elements come and integrate themselves	first a set of heterogenous elements, which are related in immediacy
integral “ <i>Digital</i> synthesizers, however, are 'integral': their operation passes through a codification, through a homogenization and binarization of the data” (95)	modular “ <i>Analogical</i> synthesizers are 'modular': they establish an immediate connection between heterogenous elements” (95)
	“Analogical language would be a language of relations, which consists of expressive movements, paralinguistic signs, breaths and screams...” (93) “Painting is the analogical art par excellence” (95)

[Note: there is a strong case to be made here that Deleuze was and remained a philosopher of the “analog” paradigm, and that the paradigm of the digital was only vaguely sketched out by him during his lifetime.]

#### **PART 4: BACON'S RELATION TO ART-HISTORICAL DISCOURSE (THE "HAPTIC")**

Chapters 14-17: The haptic. Touching w/ the eyes

- the "Egyptian assemblage" (99); "Bacon first of all seems to be an Egyptian" (109)
- [See Aloïs Riegl (1858-1905, formalist art historian in the Vienna School) on "tactile" versus "optical" perception and on the "haptic."]

Chap 16 on color

- here Deleuze replays the figure/contour/field triad, but with color in mind

Chapter 17: "The Eye and the Hand"

- digital, tactile, manual .. vs .. haptic
- Bacon is the second type (124-125)