**Beyond the ‘Last Phenomenology’: Rhythmic Modulations in Gilles Deleuze’s *The Logic of Sensation***

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Abstract: This article reconstructs Gilles Deleuze’s engagement with phenomenology, and with the phenomenological problematic of sensation, in his *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Considering Deleuze’s adoption from the phenomenology of art of notions of sensation and rhythm, it examines how Deleuze complexifies these phenomenological notions by aligning them with his profoundly non-phenomenological notion of the body without organs, as well as with the concepts of modulation and the diagram. In mapping Deleuze’s complexification of rhythm and his development of a logic of rhythmic modulation, this article shows how Deleuze immanently refines an approach to working beyond phenomenology, *through* phenomenology.

Keywords: Gilles Deleuze, phenomenology, Henri Maldiney, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, rhythm, sensation

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The relationship between phenomenology and the thought of Gilles Deleuze invites a range of plausible positions. Across his work Deleuze variously draws on and distances himself from approaches in the French and German phenomenological traditions, and interpreters span those who strongly affirm a positive relationship between Deleuze and phenomenology to those for whom Deleuze is most aptly thought of as producing a thorough critique of and break with phenomenology.[[1]](#footnote-1) Here I examine Deleuze’s relationship to phenomenology by focusing on his 1981 monograph on painting, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (2003). In the context of a diverse and cumulatively complex analysis of the work of the painter Francis Bacon, this text features some of Deleuze’s closest engagement with phenomenology, and specifically a strand of the phenomenology of art associated with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Henri Maldiney. This engagement is seen through the priority that both Deleuze and these phenomenologists give to a philosophical inquiry into the creation and experience of art, but also, more explicitly, through Deleuze’s adoption of concepts of directly phenomenological provenance, in particular sensation and rhythm.

We could quickly refer to Deleuze and Guattari’s critical remarks regarding the phenomenology of art in their final collaborative work, 1991’s *What Is Philosophy?*, where phenomenology is rejected as ultimately only affirming ‘perceptual and affective clichés’ (1994: 150). However, the careful readings that connect Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty, the persisting, and indeed resurgent, work in the phenomenology of art,[[2]](#footnote-2) and the sophisticated work that has recently been done to reconstruct and develop the consequences of Merleau-Ponty’s incomplete final work,[[3]](#footnote-3) seem, at the very least, to demand great care in determining how Deleuze’s thought is to be distinguished from phenomenology and the precise means of his departure from phenomenology. Moreover, Deleuze’s thought itself has been characterised as a ‘last phenomenology’, this term being used by Éric Alliez to describe the position that Alain Badiou critically ascribes to Deleuze, with Badiou himself speaking of a ‘natural mysticism’ in Deleuze’s thought (Alliez 2001: 30; Badiou 2004: 80). What Alliez suggests with this formulation of Badiou’s critique is that Badiou takes Deleuze’s thought to be adopting the position of an experiencing subject, albeit one that immerses itself in an absolute ‘outside’: a ‘giving up of all interiority’ (Badiou 2000: 86). Examining Deleuze’s engagement with phenomenology in *The Logic of Sensation* promises to clarify what is at stake in this critique and the possible responses to it.

Despite the short work that Deleuze and Guattari make of the phenomenological understanding of sensation in *What Is Philosophy?*, sensation is nevertheless the key to their understanding of art, with them naming the work of art as ‘a being of sensation and nothing else’ (164). I believe that a full understanding of this definition requires a return to *The Logic of Sensation*, and here I set aside Deleuze’s well-known criticisms of phenomenology in order to explicate the significance of him working from a phenomenological conception of sensation in that text. As such this article can be seen to follow Anne Sauvagnargues’s claim that ‘nothing about Deleuze would be understood without methodologically reproducing his reference work, which is usually implicit and masked in his successive reformulations’ (2013: 3), a feature of Deleuze’s work that in *The Logic of Sensation* is most evident in the integration of Maldiney’s words into Deleuze’s own.[[4]](#footnote-4) My aim here is thus to reconstruct key aspects of Deleuze’s engagement with the phenomenology of art in *The Logic of Sensation*, suggesting routes into the exploration of how *The Logic of Sensation* shares and develops problems examined in Deleuze’s wider work.[[5]](#footnote-5)

I turn to the phenomenological sources of Deleuze’s notions of both sensation and rhythm, that is, to phenomenology of art in general but most specifically to the thought of Maldiney, in order to then show how Deleuze navigates through and beyond these phenomenological notions. I examine how Deleuze complexifies the phenomenological notion of rhythm by aligning it with the non-phenomenological figure of the body without organs, and show how this alignment takes place through the notion of modulation, an idea with phenomenological import but which Deleuze draws from the thought of Gilbert Simondon as well as from music technology. I then show how this complexification of rhythm – mirroring the progressively complex analyses of *The Logic of Sensation* as a whole – is achieved through the constructivist notion of the diagram. What is developed here is a rejection of the phenomenological perspective by which rhythm is understood as fundamentally concerning a separation into self and world. It is the persistence of this distinction that, for Deleuze, limits the phenomenological engagement with art and with sensation more generally, and it is in *The Logic of Sensation* that Deleuze most clearly shows why and how he pushes through this phenomenological perspective. In mapping Deleuze’s complexification of rhythm I thus examine how he progressively and immanently refines an approach to working beyond phenomenology, *through* phenomenology.

**I. On sensation**

What does Deleuze mean by sensation? In the first sustained discussion of sensation in *The Logic of Sensation* Deleuze credits this notion to the painter Paul Cézanne (2003: 31). Cézanne, Deleuze says, rejects abstraction as a means of going beyond artistic figuration, and instead turns to ‘the Figure’, a key notion for Deleuze in his analyses of the non-representational images of painting. The ‘way’ of the Figure is sensation, and sensation is understood as that which ‘acts immediately on the nervous system, which is of the flesh’, in contrast to abstraction, which passes through the ‘intermediary’ of the brain.

Deleuze then goes on to say that ‘[s]ensation has one face turned toward the subject … and one face turned toward the object. Or rather, it has no faces at all, it is both things indissolubly’. At first glance it is not clear how this follows from his comments on Cézanne. But Deleuze then proceeds to note that sensation ‘is Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I *become* in the sensation, and something *happens* through the sensation, one through another, one in the other’. In an important footnote Deleuze specifies that Maldiney and Merleau-Ponty are among the phenomenologists under discussion, and indeed this passage is drawn, without quotation marks, almost directly from Maldiney and from Maldiney’s own quotation of Erwin Straus (Maldiney 1973: 136). It is worth pausing here in Deleuze’s explication to consider what these phenomenologists say about sensation.

Merleau-Ponty, in fact, would critique the notion of sensation in both his early thought and his late thought. His 1945 *Phenomenology of Perception* opens with a remark that sensation, despite its apparent straightforwardness, is ‘the most confused notion there is’ (2012: 3), while in *The Visible and the Invisible* he argues that sensation is among the philosophical concepts that separate philosophy from its concern with Being (1968: 107). While the comments that open *Phenomenology of Perception* are broad, taking aim at traditional empirical and psychological perspectives, they can also be seen to be directed at Husserlian phenomenology.[[6]](#footnote-6) Husserl generally conceives of sensations, or, using his later terminology, ‘hyletic data’ or ‘stuffs’ (1983: 205), as primal units of experience, which can be determined only by abstracting back from the subjective procedures of perception (1989: 255–56). They are described as the Ego’s first ‘subjective possession’, originary moments that the Ego then apprehends, gives sense to, and ‘animates’ (1983: 238). Like Kant (1998: A19–20/B34), Husserl conceives of sensation as the matter to which consciousness applies a form in the production of a perception or an appearance.

However, as Deleuze notes, what is at hand for the phenomenologists he is engaging with is often not so much ‘sensation’ as ‘sense-experience’ [*sentir*], or, as it is now commonly rendered in translations of phenomenological work, ‘sensing’ (Deleuze 2003: 156n1; Merleau-Ponty 2012: 214). For the Merleau-Ponty of *Phenomenology of Perception* the notion of a primal unit of sensation is incoherent, and perception, as part of a ‘total configuration’, must be seen to already be at work even when we purport to abstract sensation from the workings of consciousness (2012: 251). At issue with the concept of sensation is that, in the illegitimate claim to its primitiveness, many features of the subject-object relation it involves are presupposed. The term ‘sensing’ then suggests that we are speaking of something that cannot be understood as only the subjective apprehension of individual concrete objects, and Merleau-Ponty aims to show that what has been called sensation implies an imbrication of subject and object.

When he turns to his close engagement with painting, and particularly to Cézanne – Deleuze notes that for these phenomenologists Cézanne is ‘the painter par excellence’ (2003: 156n1) – Merleau-Ponty pushes this imbrication into a more thorough entanglement. In the essay ‘Cézanne’s Doubt’, published shortly after *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty remarks on the ‘paradox’ of Cézanne’s painting, a paradox of seeking to understand the world while disavowing itself of the tools of understanding, denying abstract, objective demarcations in order to stay within the immediate realm of sensation (2007a: 72). Sensation is thematised differently here than it was in the opening pages of *Phenomenology of Perception*, being more closely aligned with the ‘sensing’ of that text, and Merleau-Ponty remarks that ‘Cézanne did not think he had to choose between sensation and thought, as if he were deciding between chaos and order. He did not want to separate the stable things which appear before our gaze and their fleeting way of appearing’ (73).

In Deleuze’s summation of this shift that phenomenology enacts, sensation is said to be analysed ‘not only insofar as it relates sensible qualities to an identifiable object (the figurative moment), but insofar as each quality constitutes a field that stands on its own without ceasing to interfere with the others (the “pathic” moment)’ (2003: 156n1).[[7]](#footnote-7) Merleau-Ponty is certainly in mind here, but the use of the term ‘pathic’ reveals that the more direct reference is to Maldiney, and that something beyond Merleau-Ponty’s early thought is entailed. More precisely still, what is being referred to here is Maldiney’s adoption of terminology from Erwin Straus. From Straus’s 1935 text *The Primary World of the Senses* [*Vom Sinn der Sinne*] Maldiney takes the term ‘pathic’ as referring to the domain of sensation, understood as concerning a pre-intentional moment of experience (Maldiney 1973: 136).[[8]](#footnote-8) With this notion Straus introduces a new relation between sensation and perception, marking a point of tension in phenomenology: where in most prior and subsequent phenomenologies perception is primary, also giving a primacy to forms of the subject, for Straus, and for Maldiney after him, what must be given priority is a notion of sensation through which the distinction between subject and world itself begins to emerge. In a phrase we have already heard in Deleuze’s voice, ‘[t]he sensing subject does not have sensations, but, rather, in his sensing he has first himself. In sensory experience, there unfolds both the becoming of the subject and the happenings of the world’ (1963: 351).

From this we see what Deleuze finds in these phenomenologists: what is key, and what we have already seen is crucial for Deleuze, is that they raise sensation to the level of a legitimate ontological problem, rather than an incidental feature along the path to, or to be abstracted from, perception and the subjective grounding of objectivity. With this they avoid what Deleuze sees as a key error in Hegelian phenomenology, that of ‘short-circuit[ing]’ this moment of sensation (2003: 156n1), terminology that Maldiney also uses when he speaks of sensation as a means to affirm ‘the original belief in the Real’ (1973: 152).[[9]](#footnote-9) It is clear that, for Deleuze, remaining within and elaborating this domain of sensation ‘forms the basis for every possible aesthetic’ (2003: 156n1).

For Deleuze, then, sensation is not to be understood in terms of disembodied qualities and the abstracted perception of them. Sensation is rather ‘in the body’, and ‘[s]ensation is what is painted. What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation’ (2003: 32). So far Deleuze is perfectly aligned with the phenomenologists he cites. Yet he is quick to turn from this position, or rather to push it further. In *The Logic of Sensation* sensation is a violent concept, a concept of mutation and uncertainty. It is understood as a passing between levels or orders, not in the sense of a transformation of form, from one distinct form to another, but as a becoming irreducible to representation, as what is felt in, rather than cognised of, this passage. More than a pathic realm or moment that nevertheless promises stability, sensation is ‘the master of deformations, the agent of bodily deformations’ (32). What is the site of this deformation? What is the ‘body’ we are speaking of? What is this ‘passage’? This is where Deleuze distinctly turns from phenomenology, deepening his account of sensation through a figure he had previously discussed in *The Logic of Sense* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, the body without organs.

**II. On the body without organs and towards rhythm**

When introducing the body without organs in *The Logic of Sensation* Deleuze immediately presents it as an accompaniment to the notion of rhythm (39). Rhythm is discussed here as something that a phenomenological approach could not account for. Yet shortly before this Deleuze had cited Maldiney’s explicitly phenomenological – yet also psychopathological, on which Deleuze does not remark[[10]](#footnote-10) – conception of rhythm (37). It is not clear how we have moved away from this conception, and as such is not clear how we are to understand Deleuze’s engagement with and departure from phenomenology.[[11]](#footnote-11)

In discussing sensation Deleuze takes as crucial accounting for what sustains a sensation, what makes up the ‘sensing or sensed unity’ (33) that allows a sensation to be said to have several levels through which it can pass. He considers several hypotheses, the last of these, and the one that seems to tempt him most, being a ‘phenomenological’ hypothesis. By this hypothesis the levels of a sensation would refer to the different sense organs and their means of referring to each other, with painting’s demand to remain at the level of sensation, ‘the “pathic” (non-representative) moment of *the* sensation’, allowing it to ‘*make visible*’ an original unity of the senses (37), and with this, it is implied, an original unity of the self. Deleuze uses the terminology of phenomenology here, and may be thinking of Straus, as in Straus’s claim that the pathic moment ‘belongs to perception generally and in each case’ (1966: 14).[[12]](#footnote-12) Yet Deleuze’s challenge to this position broadly follows a key aspect of his critique of Kant, and that critique can guide us here.

In his study of Kant’s critical philosophy, Deleuze argues that the ‘free accord’ between the faculties that Kant claims to discover can only be founded on a pre-established harmony between and within subject and world (1984: 20). Deleuze finds this supposition inadequate to the question of genesis, and he turns instead to the ‘discordant harmony’ that he identifies in Kant’s figure of the sublime (1994: 146; 2004a: 62). In short, for Deleuze the stable form of the Kantian transcendental subject cannot account for the transformative character of experience and of sensation. The transcendental subject treats sensation as only the matter to which it applies form. Yet we have already seen that a certain phenomenological notion of sensation, via Straus, has a conjoined genesis of subject and world intrinsic to it, and that, while Straus still assumes a *sensus communis*, Maldiney pushes this further still. A key point of contention regarding Deleuze’s distinction from phenomenology, then, lies in the extent to which the critique of the ‘phenomenological’ hypothesis in fact applies to the phenomenology of art.

In *The Logic of Sensation* Deleuze states that the ‘making visible’ that phenomenology takes art to enact is only possible when sensation is understood to be ‘in direct contact with a vital power that exceeds every domain and traverses them all’ (2003: 37). This power, he says, is rhythm, a ‘logic of the senses’ which is ‘neither rational nor cerebral’. The unity of the senses, then, is produced in relation to rhythm. It refers to, in words that remain phenomenological, ‘the world that seizes me by closing in around me, the self that opens to the world and opens the world itself’. While Deleuze writes here as if we have already surpassed the phenomenological hypothesis, this move in fact comes slightly later, when he remarks that ‘the phenomenological hypothesis is perhaps insufficient because it merely invokes the lived body’ (39): the lived body is ‘still a paltry thing in comparison with a more profound and almost unlivable power’. This is where the body without organs is found.

The body without organs is described in *The Logic of Sensation* in violent, physical terms. This violence is most clearly exerted on any stability of the self, whether of a fully formed transcendental subject or of an embodied Being-in-the-World. The body without organs is said to be an ‘intense and intensive body’, it causes sensation to take on ‘an excessive and spasmodic experience’ (40), it is ‘flesh and nerve; a wave flows through it and traces levels upon it; a sensation is produced when the wave encounters the Forces acting upon the body, an “affective athleticism”, a scream-breath’. In terms of the body without organs, sensation ‘is not qualitative and qualified, but only an intensive reality … Sensation is vibration’ (39). As yet we have not gone very far. The body without organs as described here resembles most not the figure described a year earlier in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where it is said to be ‘a practice, a set of practices’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 150) and a call to ‘[c]onnect, conjugate, continue’ (161), but rather that of 1969’s *The Logic of Sense*, where it poses a powerful, and seemingly unresolved, problem at the heart of that text.

In *The Logic of Sense* the body without organs consists in an ‘absolute depth’ (Deleuze 1990: 93), a prelinguistic order of sounds from the depths of the body, ‘breath-words’ and ‘howl-words’ (88). What is far from clear is how this comes to relate to the field of sense, and Deleuze questions philosophy’s capacity to contend with these depths, speaking of the ‘ridiculousness of the thinker’ (157) who ‘gives talks’ and ‘create[s] special journal issues’ on themes like madness.[[13]](#footnote-13) In the later context, sensation could not have a ‘logic’ if it were to remain at the level of the body without organs: the ‘almost unlivable Power’ beyond the lived body would seem impossible to navigate our way back from. Yet in *The Logic of Sensation* Deleuze seems to have resolved this issue, and resolved it through the notion of rhythm. How does a phenomenological notion serve to solve a problem that exceeds the lived body?

**III. On rhythm**

Even in its most basic state, as vibration at the level of the body without organs, sensation is said by Deleuze to always concern an ‘accumulated’ or ‘coagulated’ sensation: sensation is ‘irreducibly synthetic’ (2003: 33). This synthesis can even be understood in a Kantian sense, with Deleuze, in his 1978 seminar on Kant, arguing that the ultimate ground of any given perceptual synthesis is ‘the evaluation of a rhythm’ (1978).[[14]](#footnote-14) This is why the question of the ‘sensing or sensed unity’ of a sensation arises: as in Merleau-Ponty’s analyses, there is no question of finding a basic unit of sensation. For Deleuze it is always a matter of evaluation and synthesis. What, then, is the rhythm through which this synthesis can be explained, through which a sensing or sensed unity is produced? Deleuze states that this unity can be found ‘only at the point where rhythm itself plunges into chaos, into the night, at the point where the differences of level are perpetually and violently mixed’. What can such a plunge have to do with evaluation? While here speaking of a realm of force beyond the lived body, we can still explicate this comment in phenomenological terms.

Maldiney, as Deleuze highlights and echoes (2003: 157n17), extends on and seeks to explain the primacy that Straus gives to sensation via the concept of rhythm. Deleuze offers a first definition of rhythm, speaking from the perspective of the body sustaining a sensation:

EXT Everything is divided into diastole and systole, with repercussions at each level. The systole, which contracts the body, goes from the structure to the Figure, whereas the diastole, which extends and dissipates it, goes from the Figure to the structure. But there is already a diastole in the first movement … and there is a systole in the second movement … and even when the body is dissipated, it still remains contracted by the forces that seize hold of it in order to return to its surroundings. The coexistence of all of these movements in the painting … is rhythm. (29–30)

Both this terminology and that of the ‘plunge into chaos’ come directly from Maldiney’s development of Straus’s analyses, where he gives an account of three ‘moments’ of art.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The first moment in Maldiney’s account concerns a ‘primordial spatiality which has no system of reference, nor coordinates nor point of origin’ (1973: 149), a ‘being lost’. Cézanne is again exemplary, with his landscapes presenting, in Cézanne’s words repeated by Maldiney, an ‘iridescent chaos’, ‘abyss’, and ‘catastrophe’ (150). Merleau-Ponty is not discussed here, but it seems clear that he allowed Maldiney to make this step beyond the more suggestive formulations of Straus. In his late text ‘Eye and Mind’ Merleau-Ponty speaks of Cézanne as exemplifying the figure of the painter as one who has the capacity to engage with a ‘primordial ground’ (2007b: 370) and who can begin to deal with space in terms of ‘the sketch of the genesis of things’ (372). This marks an elaboration of an earlier critique: in *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty argued that Husserl assumes that an originary division between self and world can be posited unproblematically (2012: 198), as in the previously elaborated distinction between perception and sensation, and in this late work Merleau-Ponty goes further than before in thematizing the conditions for and emergence of this supposedly originary divide.

Prior to this divide, Merleau-Ponty finds Being: the act of the painter is to draw from the opaque wildness of Being, and to make it visible (2007: 352–53). It is in this light that in his writings for the unfinished *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty can make primary a ‘vortex’ that is at once schematised by the act of consciousness and productive of the contingent spatialisations and temporalisations that make consciousness possible (1968: 244). For Merleau-Ponty this necessitates a ‘return to ontology’, specifically an ontology of ‘wild’ or ‘brute’ Being, an ontology of the ‘flesh’ that precedes the distinction between subject and object (167). This is the crucial philosophical step that allows phenomenology to make sensation a legitimate ontological problem, and Deleuze’s divergence from phenomenology must thus be considered as a direct confrontation with this moment.

It is on this ontological ground that Maldiney can then produce his account of rhythm. From this chaotic and catastrophic first moment – here still in the context of landscape painting, but with more general implications that Deleuze will pursue – follows a second moment of a systolic compression, or contraction. Produced here is a ‘stubborn geometry’ of the determination of a self separating from the world. Self and world begin to diverge towards their own poles, but never completely. This second moment is accompanied by a third moment, that of a diastolic expansion. This again dissolves forms in an ‘expansive irruption’, through which ‘an aerial, coloured logic abruptly displaces the stubborn geometry’ (1973: 185).

The terms of systole and diastole are here not distinct as such, but rather constitute a ‘double movement’ (178). While often posed as sequential, Maldiney will also note the simultaneity of these movements (190). It is precisely in this simultaneity that we find rhythm: a rhythm of contraction and expansion, of a ‘perpetual modulation’ (171) marking the movement of form in formation (157). Maldiney will even remark, as Deleuze did later, that sensation signals the ‘leap’ between levels in this movement (169–70). Rhythm, then, names a process by which self relates to world in an open and transformational manner, leaving room, as Maldiney stresses in his psychopathological work, for the contingency of the event that may radically change the very form that the self takes (2007: 183).

We can see, then, that Maldiney’s account of rhythm and its relation to sensation matches Deleuze’s own account precisely. When Deleuze turns to the body without organs, however, we find that he resists accounting for these rhythmic relations not only in terms of subject and object, as the phenomenologists already do, but also in terms of self and world.[[16]](#footnote-16) This is hinted at even when Deleuze first introduces the phenomenological perspective, where sensation is described as not only having the two ‘faces’ of subject and object, not as with Maldiney as a simultaneous movement, but of having ‘no faces at all, it is both things indissolubly’ (2003: 31) – already a remark that challenges phenomenology from within a phenomenological register. But this alone is not enough: without self and world there is still much in this movement to be explained. Deleuze finds it necessary to account for how the ‘simple sensation’ of vibration flowing through the body without organs can be coupled into relations of ‘resonance’ with other sensations (2003: 60–61), and then beyond this into the complexities of rhythm properly speaking that Deleuze, in a difficult and subtle account that marks a culmination of his analyses, argues Bacon’s triptychs clearly manifest (62–70). And here, in the first instance, Deleuze still does not, it seems, diverge from Maldiney, as the notion he turns to is modulation.

**IV. Modulation**

The question at hand is of how sensations come to be brought into relation, and what this relation involves. This leads, in turn, to further questions of sensation and relation, as sensation alone is said to be ‘ephemeral and confused, lacking duration and clarity’ (91). These are key topics in chapter 13 of *The Logic of Sensation*, ‘Analogy’, and Deleuze addresses them with an unexpected turn to music technology, specifically to the synthesizer to the distinction between digital and analogical (or analogue) synthesizers.[[17]](#footnote-17)

With the form of relationality entailed in the digital, individual elements are understood to be basic units of a code, of the kind that could explain artistic abstraction in terms of a reduction to elementary formal units (92). This evokes the account of sensation that Merleau-Ponty, Maldiney, and Deleuze all challenge. With the digital synthesizer, on Deleuze’s presentation, we have an ‘integral’ setup, defined by the homogenisation of the data received and the requirement of a ‘conversion-translation’ for the production of sound (95).[[18]](#footnote-18) However, Deleuze resists any quick distinction between a digital that operates through code and an analogical that proceeds, as the term ‘analogy’ suggests, by resemblance, as the digital too can pertains to ‘certain forms of similitude or analogy: analogy by isomorphism, or analogy produced by resemblance’ (94).[[19]](#footnote-19) In these instances the digital can be said to ‘take analogy as its object’ (96). It is clear here that the distinction between digital and analogical is a fine one, to be determined only through a critical perspective.

The analogical, by contrast to the codifications of the digital, is ‘produced “sensually”, through sensation’ (2003: 94). It is said to be ‘a language of relations, which consists of expressive movements, paralinguistic signs, breaths and screams, and so on’ (93). We are here again within the terms of the body without organs. In terms of the synthesizer, unlike the ‘integral’ setup of the digital, the analogical synthesizer is ‘modular’ and establishes ‘an immediate connection between heterogeneous elements’ (95). While Deleuze does not elaborate, this modularity of the analogical synthesizer is quite concrete, pertaining to individual modules with distinct functions of producing or processing signals, which can then be connected in various non-predetermined ways. Thus when Deleuze suggests that ‘[a] second difference appears at the level of filters’ (95), it is perhaps more accurate to understand this as an elaboration on the characteristics of modularity itself. Deleuze describes this distinction in some detail:

EXT The primary function of the filter is to modify the basic color of a sound, to constitute or vary its timbre. But digital filters proceed by an additive synthesis of elementary codified formants, whereas the analogical filter usually acts through the subtraction of frequencies (‘high-pass’, ‘low-pass’, …). What is added from one filter to the next are intensive subtractions, and it is thus an addition of subtractions that constitutes modulation and sensible movement as a fall. (95)

The introduction of filtering helped early sound synthesis escape extremely labour-intensive and impractical additive methods (Evens 2003: 92–93), and it is only in recent years that digital technologies have begun to approach the reproduction of the complexities that often simple subtractive analogical procedures allow for. In the kind of sound synthesis Deleuze describes, the effects of this can be clear: the most rudimentary of sources can, through subtractive filtering procedures, become profoundly rich sonic materials. Modulation, as Deleuze later puts it in discussion of Bacon, ‘must simply consist of internal variations of intensity or saturation’ (2003: 118), and subtractive synthesis must be seen as bringing to focus this kind of internal variation in sound. We might think of the famous moment at the centre of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s early electronic music work *Kontakte* (1960), where a sustained tone is timbrally transformed and slowed into a steady pulse. In these cases we might say that the listener can hear the passage from vibration through to resonance and, perhaps, onto rhythm.

Modulation appears here as the logic of the passage of a signal through different modules, that is, the relation of the distinct functions of different modules. On this basis Deleuze will say that it is ‘*perhaps the notion of modulation in general (and not similitude)* that will enable us to understand the nature of analogical language’ (95). Should this be understood differently than Maldiney’s conception of modulation, of the rhythmic simultaneity of contraction and expansion (1973: 171)? At first it may appear not, with Deleuze defining Cézanne’s modulation of color as ‘a double movement of expansion and contraction: an expansion in which the planes … are connected and even merged in depth; and at the same time, a contraction through which everything is restored to the body’ (2003: 97). Yet the musical example has one clear distinction from the example of landscape painting, and this is that the constitution of self and world, in their simultaneity, are nowhere to be found.

The vantage point of musical synthesis seems to show a singular modulation at work in a profoundly nonhuman manner. Yet at this level it is difficult to see what it has to do with the ‘evaluation’ of rhythm discussed regarding Kant. We entered the discussion of modulation in order to show how, despite rejecting the ‘phenomenological’ solution to the unity of sensation, Deleuze did not remain trapped in the inchoate body without organs. And Deleuze later remarks that, with regards to the elements of Bacon’s painting, modulation explains ‘the unity of the whole, the distribution of each element, and the way each of them acts upon the others’ (2003: 116). But at this moment with the analogical synthesizer, modulation can seem like only a natural or technological process, with the specificity of art and sensation lost. To show Deleuze’s route out of this problem what is required is a further explication of the non-phenomenological side of modulation at hand here.

When Deleuze states that modulation ‘must act as a variable and continuous mold’ (97), or, later, ‘a temporal, variable, and continuous mold’ (108), he points to the importance for this notion of the thought of Gilbert Simondon (164–65n20). Some contextual features of Deleuze’s long-standing engagement with Simondon are significant here. In his largely positive 1966 review of Simondon’s *L’Individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, Deleuze critically remarks on what he calls Simondon’s ‘moral vision of the world’, which takes the form of a resistance towards the ‘aestheticism’ that seeks to maintain the complete individual ‘[cut] off from the pre-individual reality from which he or she emerged’ (2004b: 89). This ‘moral vision’ takes as a clear target Kantian and Husserlian kinds of transcendental subjectivity, which take sensation as their matter but are not themselves changed by it. Against this ‘aestheticism’, Simondon favours an ethics that opens this individual towards the transindividual, rendering ‘what is interior … also exterior’. Deleuze’s concern here is that this may introduce another form of the self, in the shape of an ethical subject.[[20]](#footnote-20) We can see that this remnant of constitutive subjectivity is something that Deleuze wrestles with even when not explicitly dealing with phenomenology, and his concern with regards to phenomenology would be that even a minimal, emergent form of the self runs the risk of taking on an illegitimately determining role.

Yet it is notable that in his account of Simondon in this period, Deleuze does not directly engage with Simondon’s notion of modulation, despite the centrality of this concept to Simondon’s thought. Deleuze does, however, pick up this notion in his 1979 seminar leading up to the publication of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1979), and these reflections can be heard throughout Deleuze’s work into the 1980s. Key to Deleuze’s discussion of modulation in this seminar is Simondon’s critique of Aristotelian hylomorphism (Simondon 2005: 23–25), which can equally be applied to Kantian or Husserlian perspectives on form and matter. If the hylomorphic model involves an imposition of form on matter, a mould that shapes matter under its fixed terms, modulation is what Simondon, in a passage quoted by Deleuze, calls a ‘continuous, temporal mold[ing]’ (Simondon 2005: 47; Deleuze 2003: 165n20). The risk, then, of positing an ethical subject through which the process of modulation persists, the ethical subject that Deleuze earlier diagnosed as a risk of Simondon’s thought, is that this subject would take the form of a mould, an external interpretive norm or transcendent code that serves to order relations. What comes to take the place of this ethical subject? The answer to this question, for Deleuze, comes through a concept that is said to be ‘the agent of analogical language’ and to act ‘not as a code but *as a modulator*’ (2003: 98), a concept that Guattari draws first from the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, the concept of the diagram.

**V. The diagram**

As Guattari develops the concept of the diagram across his thought in the 1970s, it functions as what Kamini Vellodi terms ‘the experimental constructor of new relations’ (2014: 84), or, in terms immediately relevant to *The Logic of Sensation*, a ‘synthesizer of difference’ (94n51). Deleuze adopts the diagram in both *The Logic the Sensation* and *Foucault*, referring to it in the latter as ‘the map of relations between forces … which … acts as a non-unifying immanent cause’ (2006: 36–37), where ‘thinking is not the innate exercise of a faculty, but must become thought’ (87). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, in turn, the diagram is said to take on a ‘piloting’ role, not representing anything but ‘rather construct[ing] a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 142). In each case, articulated in somewhat different ways, the diagram names not a fixed form or model, but a process of construction, an undoing of the given and creation of the new. As I will elaborate, it is not only that modulation *happens*, but that the diagram *acts* as a modulator.

As such, the diagram appears in *The Logic of Sensation* as an eminently practical notion. It arises in the context of Deleuze’s well known remarks that ‘[i]t is a mistake to think that the painter works on a white surface’ (2003: 71). Deleuze argues that the canvas is filled, before the painter’s work begins, with ‘givens’, visual clichés that stand in the way of the painting attaining sensation. The work of the painter with regards to the ‘blank’ canvas is then to ‘empty it out, clear it, clean it’. In the first instance this, at least in Bacon’s case, involves the application of ‘free marks’ to the canvas, nonrepresentative chance marks that ‘destroy the nascent figuration’ in the image being painted and ‘give the Figure a chance’ (76). This destruction of figuration brings us back to the phenomenological problematic of rhythm, in the first instance to Maldiney’s catastrophic ‘first moment’: the application of chance marks leads to figuration being ‘disorganized and deformed’ (76), as if ‘in the midst of the figurative and probabilistic givens, a *catastrophe* overcame the canvas’ (82).

Yet rather than this catastrophic moment finding itself, as if incidentally, separating into self and world, Deleuze finds at this point the need to thematise the diagram. As well as from Peirce the terminology here comes directly from Bacon himself, Bacon’s term in English being ‘graph’. In relation to the application of chance marks the diagram can be understood to be ‘the operative set of asignifying and nonrepresentative lines and zones, line-strokes and color-patches’ (82–83), and in Bacon’s practical terms it is ‘suggestive’, or, in Deleuze’s more technical language, it produces ‘possibilities of fact’ (83). At this moment the marks are ‘traits of sensation, but of confused sensations’. But as well as being ‘a chaos, a catastrophe’ the diagram is also ‘a germ of an order of rhythm … a germ in relation to the new order of the painting’ (83). Having elaborated on rhythm these striking remarks are given clarity. It is clear that, at least in his reading of Bacon, Deleuze does not want to remain within this catastrophic moment. Chance is not probability but ‘a type of choice or action without probability’ (76), a manipulated chance in service of the emergence of the Figure, ‘the emergence of another world’ (82).

In concrete terms, this emphasis on chance shows that there is a closeness between Bacon’s work and abstract expressionism, but also a crucial distinction with regards to chance’s relation to chaos. Abstract expressionism has its own diagram, a diagram that ‘merges with the totality of the painting’ (85), by which the painting becomes ‘a catastrophe-painting and a diagram-painting at one and the same time’ (86). Here ‘it is at the point closest to catastrophe … that modern man discovers rhythm’: ‘[i]n the unity of the catastrophe and the diagram, man discovers rhythm as matter and material’ (86). But Bacon’s diagram and his use of chance is importantly different than that of the abstract expressionists. In Bacon’s case catastrophe and diagram cannot be the same, as this brings with it the risk of creating a ‘mess’ (89) or of being ‘sloppy’ (128): ‘Being itself is a catastrophe, the diagram must not create a catastrophe’ (128). For Bacon the diagram is not a stopping point but a ‘relay’, and ‘something must *emerge* from the diagram’ (111), ‘and if nothing emerges from it, it fails’ (128). The diagram is ‘a possibility of fact – it is not the Fact itself’ (89).

In this way the modulating force of the diagram is key. It is not enough to remain at the level of confused sensation and catastrophe, but nor is it adequate to reintroduce a subject or self that would seem to take on a determining role after its sudden appearance from out of chaos. Without an emergence from the diagram the question of modulation would not be relevant, or rather, it would maintain the character of a merely physical process operating through probability. What Bacon’s work shows is the importance of the diagram as a kind of agent of evaluation that yet does not take on the moulding role of the subject or self. It undoes figurative givens, it brings with it a moment of catastrophe, but its persistence in the painting allows for relations to be reconstituted. It not only ‘dismantles the optical world’, but must also be ‘reinjected into the visual whole’ (111) and serve as the common ‘locus’ that allows for the relations of modulation (114).

**VI. *The Logic of Sensation* beyond phenomenology**

A question raised of Merleau-Ponty’s late ontology of the flesh, an ontology that accounts for what is prior to the dualistic relationship between a transcendental subject and its objects of perception and thought, is in what way this philosophy can still be said to be a phenomenology. Maldiney’s response states that, while an openness to the world becomes primary for Merleau-Ponty, this openness is still oriented towards the task of constituting a new phenomenology (2000: 59). Merleau-Ponty’s ontological move remains a phenomenology because it remains primarily concerned with the conditions of perception, even insofar as these conditions come to radically decentre the perceiving subject. As Maldiney notes, this means that our subjective position is always one of *arrival*, of a subject being constantly reasserted in terms of its relation to being (58). This position could also be ascribed to Maldiney himself, but not to Deleuze.[[21]](#footnote-21)

In his DeleuzoGuattarian reworking of art history, Éric Alliez argues that phenomenological approaches to art cannot but ‘restore *something essential* upstream of the broken link between man and world’ (2016: 370). For Alliez, the various theoretical moves that phenomenology makes in order to surpass the limitations of immediate sense-experience, a passage that takes us from ‘perceiving’ and ‘seeing’ to the flesh and Maldiney’s ‘appearing’ (xxii), can end only in a reduction back to perception. This reduction, says Alliez, cannot account for the accident, the inorganic and experimental ‘constructivism of expression’ (377). This constructivism, manifest through the notion of the diagram, is key to Deleuze’s departure from phenomenology in *The Logic of Sensation*. We can see this in the limited departure from the limits of phenomenology that the notion of modulation allows Maldiney. Yet, as Claudia Blümle thus describes the distinction between Maldiney and Deleuze, in terms that will be familiar from the earlier discussion of modulation, ‘in the case of Maldiney chaos forms the starting point of all art’, while ‘Deleuze and Guattari think rhythm in permanent relation to chaos’ (2017: 86). The notion of sensation having ‘no faces at all’ (Deleuze 2003: 31) that Deleuze interjects into his most phenomenological moment, implying that there is no longer the simultaneous movement of Maldiney’s thought but rather a singular process, proves to be the key to his departure from phenomenology.[[22]](#footnote-22)

This, then, has wider implications for Deleuze’s thought. For Deleuze, with and without Guattari, rhythm is not in the end a systolic-diastolic movement between chaos and the arrival at a relatively distinguished phenomenological self and world. It rather concerns a modulatory movement between milieus themselves: rhythm ‘arises when there is a transition from one milieu to the next’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 313), and the problem of art is ‘no longer that of beginning’ but of ‘consistency or consolidation, how to consolidate the material, make it consistent, so it can harness unthinkable, invisible, nonsonorous forces’ (343). Chaos stands in relation not to a self-world dyad, but to the proliferation of milieus in a relation of modulation. Such a notion of rhythm is then key to the conception of the refrain in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and so the account of sensation in *The Logic of Sensation* can enrich our perspective on that earlier text.

This offers an answer to one of the puzzles that faces the reader of *The Logic of Sensation*: how are we to understand a text that is, seemingly simultaneously, a phenomenology of painting, an account of artistic creation, and an ontology of forces? How do the shifts in register between these perspectives operate? What is the ‘body’ that somehow spans these three perspectives? This character of *The Logic of Sensation* is more comprehensible when we see that the ‘rhythm’ that arises across the text is not what we could consider a ‘vertical’ rhythm of the separation of self and world, but rather a ‘horizontal’ rhythm of many diverse milieus in relation, exemplified by Deleuze’s study of Bacon’s triptychs.

Yet this alone is not enough to explain how rhythm is something other than a merely physical process, how it still, outside of its phenomenological boundaries, can serve to explain the problem to which the phenomenologists direct it, namely the problem of sensation. It is here that the constructivist element of Deleuze’s thought is key. The plunge into the body without organs, a realm of confused sensations at the limit of lived experience, can be responded to in several ways. For Deleuze there are two ‘phenomenological’ responses to it, which ultimately overlap: the immersion into this chaos, the ‘giving up of all interiority’ that Badiou accuses him of, or the reinstatement of a stable point of reference such as the self.[[23]](#footnote-23) But the diagram circumvents this choice and shows a third path out, a constructivist path.

It is clear that the path from the body without organs to the perceiving eye is not a smooth one. It involves a passage from vibration through resonance and onto rhythm, and accounting for this this requires a close study of the contingent processes through which the eye comes to perceive. The ‘Brain-Eye’ that Alliez (2016) formulates following *What Is Philosophy?* thus names a rethinking of the innate link between eye and mind that Merleau-Ponty invests in. We rather have an account of the passage from a body without organs, that is, a being of sensation in the state of vibration, onto an ‘indeterminate polyvalent organ’ (Deleuze 2003: 42) through which sensation comes to be organised, onto ‘temporary and transitory’ determinate organs. Under this schema we reach an important definition of the eye and its relation to painting:

the eye becomes virtually the polyvalent indeterminate organ that sees the body without organs (the Figure) as a pure presence. Painting gives us eyes all over: in the ear, in the stomach, in the lungs (the painting breathes…). This is the double definition of painting: subjectively, it invests the eye, which ceases to be organic in order to become a polyvalent and transitory organ; objectively, it brings before us the reality of a body, of lines and colors freed from organic representation. (45)

In this context, the diagram is a kind of experimental situation, or the setting up and working through of such a situation. Returning to the key question of what gives a sensation unity, the answer cannot be an assumed *sensus communis*, which itself can only be contingent and emergent. What gives sensation unity is rather, in a sense, itself, itself as it is subject to rhythmic modulations. The movement from the convulsive body without organs to the determinate yet transitory organ through which we experientially but also critically engage with art is a movement of working with sensation, of applying a diagram to it, modulating it, seeing what it can do. From catastrophe the question arises of what kind of sensation has been freed here, what effects can it have, what can it create?

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1. The former approach has been reflected primarily in work associating Deleuze with Merleau-Ponty, as seen recently in Wambacq (2017) and Levin (2016), and, somewhat more ambivalently, Somers-Hall (2006, 2019), Lawlor (1998, 2003), and Reynolds and Roffe (2006). Joe Hughes, however, argues that Deleuze’s thought unfolds through the terms of a minimally defined Husserlian phenomenology (2008: 3), while Marc Rölli has detailed the importance of Husserl’s account of passive synthesis to Deleuze’s thought (2016: 95-127). The view that Deleuze produces a fundamental break with phenomenology is represented in, for example, Montebello (2012) and Alliez (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Some directly relevant recent examples include Wambacq (2017), Wiskus (2013), and Levin, Roald, and Funch (2019). The final of these deals with Maldiney’s conception of rhythm. Paul Crowther notably draws from phenomenology to challenge Deleuze’s work on art (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This line of research received significant motivation from the work of Renaud Barbaras, contemporary with Deleuze and Guattari’s final work together (Barbaras 2004). Alloa, Chouraqui, and Kaushik (2019) provide some important contextualisation of the possibility for revisiting phenomenology beyond the more polemical rejections of it that were prominent in the 1960s and ’70s. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Loiseau and Rastier’s linguistic study of Deleuze’s writings highlights Deleuze’s borrowings and *detournements*, noting the effects of the shifts in register and translations between discourses of the ‘collage’ style of this integration (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Somers-Hall (2016) for another perspective on the importance of reading *The Logic of Sensation* in the wider context of Deleuze’s work. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Leung (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. With this move we can see that post-Husserlian phenomenology is already trying to overcome the ‘wrenching duality’ that Deleuze diagnoses of Kantian aesthetics, a duality between a ‘theory of the sensible which captures only the real’s conformity with possible experience’ (1994: 68) and a ‘theory of art’ (1990: 260), or between understanding and sensibility: see Merleau-Ponty (1968: 45-46). Ronald Bogue notes that Maldiney too is contending with this duality (2019: 278), which he works through, as we will see, through his notion of rhythm. Daniel W. Smith (2012) provides a lucid account of Deleuze’s theory of sensation in relation to the Kantian duality, to which my analysis here owes much. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ronald Bogue’s (2019) careful study of the significance of Maldiney to Deleuze’s thought has been important to my reading here. See also Goddard (2008) and Grosz (2008). The Maldiney text most important to my discussion is ‘L’Esthétique des rythmes’, originally published in 1968 when he and Deleuze were colleagues at the University of Lyon. Also important, and noted by Deleuze, are ‘Le dévoilement de la dimension esthétique dan la phénoménologie de Erwin Straus’ and ‘L’art et le pouvoir du fond’ (Maldiney 1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This position is developed from a different philosophical angle in *Difference and Repetition*, where Deleuze speaks of the ‘false’ movement that Hegel creates in contrast to the ‘true’ movement of the thesis that ‘subsists in its immediacy’ (1994: 52). This can be read in terms of the overcoming of sense-certainty that Hegel enacts – for Deleuze all-too-quickly – in the opening pages of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977: §§90–110). Maldiney also writes at length on the limits of Hegel’s conception of sense-experience (1973: 254–321). Deleuze, however, will also challenge the ‘Urdoxa’ of the ‘original belief in the Real’ that Maldiney finds in sensation (152). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See Maldiney (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Likewise in *A Thousand Plateaus* rhythm is put forward as a decidedly non-phenomenological notion (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 313), and so examining rhythm’s phenomenological provenance is crucial to understanding how it functions in that text too. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This text, originally published in 1930 and anticipating some aspects of *The Primary World of the Senses*, explicitly discusses the unity of the senses in terms of rhythm, and so may have been a point of reference for Maldiney. See Levin, Roald, and Funch (2019). Levin, Køppe, and Roald (2019) also discuss this limits of phenomenology in accounting for the long-standing problem of the *sensus communis* that Deleuze has in mind in his reading of Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Smith (2009) and Thornton (2017) are among those who have detailed how Deleuze’s encounter with Guattari allowed him to overcome this problem by other means, particularly in relation to the break with structuralism that this encounter entailed. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Smith (2003) outlines the importance of this seminar series to understanding Deleuze’s conception of sensation. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. It is also important to note that in the first instance Maldiney’s conception of rhythm arises not in the context of his phenomenology of art, but in his work in psychopathology. In this context, the notion of rhythm helps account for a self-world relation that is in constant becoming and open to radically contingent ‘events’ (2007, 183). See Thoma (2019). My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for this point. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Bogue (2019: 282–83) on this point. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Deleuze’s account is influenced by Richard Pinhas, whose own engagement with this question can be found in the section ‘Le rythme et la modulation synthétique’ of his *Les Larmes de Nietzsche* (2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. At the time of Deleuze’s writing digital synthesis was a technology in its infancy, and recent work in digital culture may challenge the kind of distinction Deleuze makes between digital and analogue in theoretically provocative ways. On this topic see Ikoniadou (2014), and for a more detailed theoretical study of sound synthesis, Evens (2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This language here links directly to some important reflections in *A Thousand Plateaus*, at a point where Deleuze and Guattari are in contention not with phenomenology but with structuralism. Under the heading ‘Memories of a Naturalist’ they critique the relations of similitude and analogy that here they associate with series and structure (1987: 234), before, significantly, seeming to take Deleuze’s own pre-Guattari form of structuralism as a critical target when explicating their notion of becoming (237). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This is what Muriel Combes alludes to in referring to the tendency towards an implied normative ethical essence of Simondon’s thought, of a ‘having-to-become’ (2013: 63), in distinction from the disparate individual Simondon’s theory of individuation otherwise emphasizes. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Here Deleuze and Guattari’s critique becomes inescapable, insofar as they argue that in maintaining a subjective sense of perceiving and being perceived, Merleau-Ponty, despite his intentions, fails to affirm the primacy of wild Being. In short, phenomenology cannot adequately account for the work of forces. As with the ‘tamed’ world that Claude Lefort diagnoses in the concept of the flesh that still ultimately finds its point of arrival in the subject (1990: 12), for Deleuze this phenomenology is ‘ultimately too pacifying’ (2006: 93). In Éric Alliez’s words, this would involve an attempt to ‘immediately seize the thing in itself’, which in turn ‘falls back on subjectivity’ (1995: 54). On Deleuze’s critique of phenomenology, see Lawlor (1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. There is yet more to pursue regarding the decisiveness of this break, with, for example, Stefan Kristensen’s recent *La Machine sensible* (2017) drawing together Merleau-Ponty, Maldiney, and Deleuze and Guattari in highlighting a possible continuity between phenomenological, psychoanalytic, and ‘machinic’ perspectives. Moreover, Maldiney’s position spanning phenomenology and psychopathology permits further development of the distinction he makes between Being-in-the-World and Being-with-the-World (1973: 136) in a way that may be congruent with Deleuze and Guattari. I thank the anonymous reviewer for this final point. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The self would be the most prominent stable point of reference for phenomenology, but when he speaks in *The Logic of Sensation* of Bacon taking a path distinct from not only the chaos of abstract expressionism but also the ‘spiritual salvation’ of abstraction (2003, 84), he can be seen to target the nascent ‘theological turn’ of phenomenology (Janicaud 2000), which by *What Is Philosophy?* had become more explicit. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)