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La Beauté tragique

Olkowski, Deleuze, and the 'Ruin of Representation'

Dorothea Olkowski

Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation

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298 pp.

'Imagine an eye unruléd by man-made laws of perspective; an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic . . .'. Stan Brakhage, Metaphors on Vision

'In another moment Alice was through the glass and had jumped lightly down into the looking-glass room.' Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

Dorothea Olkowski's book Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation nicely oscillates between: a certain history of philosophy which has accumulated around Gilles Deleuze (with emphasis placed on Henri Bergson's influence); an overview of philo-feminist interpretations, critiques, and uses of Deleuze and

Deleuze/Guattari (which unfortunately omits Tamsin Lorraine's fantastic *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*); an examination of the art of Mary Kelly from the 1970s and 1980s; a cursory examination of the peremptory horizon-based three-dimensional space of our accustomed *trompe l'oeil* representations; and an innovative strategy for the active 'ruining of representation' (an ideal objective first articulated in feminist practice by Michele Montrelay back in 1978 [1]). She identifies the basis of this 'ruin of representation' in the philosophy of Deleuze, and thereupon in the work of Kelly. In particular, Olkowski is motivated to pursue this ruining of representation because she finds representation to be contributive 'to the subordination of women to men' (1). In this respect my dealing with the book in public here is less than satisfactory. Indeed the qualms I have with the book -- which I point out below -- may not be those of women readers, who I take it are Olkowski's primary audience. But, in that I am a philosophically inclined contemporary artist interested in liberational politics, the book immediately and ferociously attracted me to itself. Indeed I read it voraciously and carefully, and found it of maximal scholarly merit. There is no question that it is highly informative and that its heart is in the right place.

The book's pertinence to cinema studies though, I must say, is rather devastating. It achieves this devastation negatively, for one might say that the ruin of representation, as proposed here in the abstract, equates with the disintegration of cinematic framed space. Certainly that is all the more true if cinema continues to adhere to its essential machinic rendering of rational, framed, linear pointed-perspective; that perspective which dominated the Italian Quattrocento (yes, that perspective which called itself 'true' point-perspective). Sure, there are edits which displace the point of view common to cinema, but each cut usually contains a rendering of a scene from one fixed and tapered eye-point at a time. Moreover, cinema usually depends on technical perspective 'framing'. Framing is intended to eliminate what is deemed unessential in the motion picture, to direct the spectator's attention to what is important and to give it special meaning and force. Each frame of film, which corresponds in shape to the image projected on the screen, forms the basis for a graphic composition in the same way as the frame of a painting encloses the area in which the painting must be organized. Although some theatres in the 1970s were enlarged and widened to accommodate 70mm images, a trend toward smaller theatres fixed the image ratio close to 1.85:1 in the United States and 1.66:1 in Europe. On the contrary, the Geode in Paris, which I visit, has a 118-foot sphere containing a cinema in which 180-degree films are projected on a hemispheric screen made up of 3,280 square feet.

In that non-representational unframed filmatic approaches to cinema have now been fairly well assigned to the art museum archives (and exploited/reduced by MTV), I believe I can continue with this

presumption that Olkowski's attempt at fostering a ruin of representation equates a substantial ruining of cinema, after citing a few rare counter examples. Significant in these terms is Stan Vanderbeek's 1966 Movie Drome: a hemispherical 'movie-mural' created in upstate New York, where the viewer assumed a supine position to look upon an onslaught of hemispheric cinematic projections. As Vanderbeek himself described it, the Movie Drome operated as follows: 'In a spherical dome, simultaneous images of all sorts would be projected on the entire dome-screen. The audience lies down at the outer edge of the dome with their feet towards the center, thus almost their complete field-of-view is the dome-screen. Thousands of images would be projected on the screen . . .'. [2] According to Vanderbeek, details of this hour-long 'multi-plex' dense image flow (inherently excessive) were not important. What was important was a 'total scale' felt in rapport with the 'rapid panoply' (what Vanderbeek called the dome's 'visual-velocity') which functioned so as to penetrate, exceed and ruin representation. [3] More recently, this appetite to penetrate, exceed, and ruin representation while filling the field-of-view through projection was appeased in inverse micro-fashion in a one-on-one interactive assisted film-performance by Bradley Eros called Movie Head Box, which he presented as part of The Extremist Show at ABC No Rio in New York City in 1983. Eros provided us with a screen-box which slid over our head -- like a primitive head-mounted-device (HMD). He then projected a color super-8 film on to the immersant's head-screen's facade (which insinuated an erotic chronicle of alchemy), thereby over-flooding our view with simultaneity as the erotic/alchemical images seeped into the box, overlapped, and were reflected off its inner sides. A walkman provided an intimate soundscape accompaniment made up of metallic abstract sounds.

These excessive filmic configurations conform to what Jonas Mekas has called **absolute cinema**. Indeed, it seems to me that only an absolute cinema (in those terms) might survive the devastation I detect for cinema through the ruin of representation. But to do so, filmmakers must take up her call for the use of an 'excess of signifier' in 'perpetual displacement'/'perpetual disequilibrium' in their practice (224). And I don't see that happening much today.

I believe that I first detected this devastating course for cinema in the book through Olkowski's use of the work of Mary Kelly to make her point about how to achieve a ruin of representation. Specifically, Olkowski chose Kelly's Post-Partum Document series (1973-79) (an installation in six consecutive sections [4]), and her Interim series from 1984-89, to make her point about how to achieve in art a ruination of representation. But this choice, for me, failed in that Kelly's important work (for other reasons -- particularly its strategic visual/intertextual impact on the discourse of sexual difference [5]) adheres to the framing and centering tropes indispensable to the comprehension striven for in prototypical representation and the

average book (the effect is as if we are viewing her art through the renaissance intentional window; the onlooker holds an exclusive singular viewpoint and hence space becomes geometrically isotropic and rectilinear). Clearly this centering reduction of our actual wobbly wide peripheral vision into one bounded point of view can only be achieved by negating our peripheral visual attention. Only by establishing the fiction of the viewer's partial absence and lack of extensive simultaneous glance can enthrallment by fixed representational perspectivism be secured. The perspectivist viewer is thus mostly excluded from any self-ruining of representation, held at bay as it were, and invulnerable to the ruin of representation in the interests of objectiveness through the methods of centering and voyeurism. Correspondingly, the representational world, as seen by this immobile and atemporal gaze, becomes stagnant, reified, fixated, inert, and, one might even say, deadened. So, the ruin of such representation entails not framing and centering tropes, but rather an ambient and simultaneous impulse which returns framed and centered perspective to its rightful place as contingent, and only instrumental, convention.

In fact, instead of ruining representation, I see Kelly's art as constructing new ones (a new nomos -- in her case built on the experiences of motherhood in confrontation with social/political/intellectual expectations), in that she adheres to the practice which Olkowski identifies as Aristotelian. Practices which in Olkowski's words 'serve to legitimate or justify certain visual, linguistic, social, and political practices that developed around the demand for intelligibility, rigidity, and hegemony' (25).

This is really a question of form rather than content. But as Olkowski points out on the same page, 'the ruin of representation can be accomplished only on the level of practice', so the question of form here is urgent. On the level of form, Kelly's project does no more than a film like [Baise-moi](#) (Coralie Trinh Ti and Virginie Despentes, 2001) in ruining representation. Indeed it supplants common representations with new ones which build off the old. That is not a 'ruining' by my measure -- and might even be said to be just another subordination to the phallogocentric order.

Kelly's adherence to what Olkowski calls the 'paradigmatic norm of visual representation' (3) is at the root of this deficiency, a deficiency nurtured by the typical pastiche postmodern aesthetic of the era in which the work was crafted -- the late 1970s and the mid 1980s. Kelly's use of 'borrowed' schemas and 'stock' art supplies (11) is exactly how, in my view, the ruin of representation is *not* effected. Kelly may disrupt the typical reading of psychoanalytic schemas in her work, but she hardly ruins representation. Rather, she presents her material neatly within the boundaries of the framing rectangle --

centered, in fact, like a typical logo -- just like the framing window device (which is critiqued by Olkowski here) does with its basis in Euclid's superannuated ideas of space. Indeed, for most of the world, *reality* -- as sustained by film -- is just this centered perspective of the logocentric apparatus which is associated with frontality.

As Olkowski entails (16), we in the west have inherited this logocentric apparatus from the Renaissance. The invention of photography, and the astounding rapidity with which it spread, is closely connected to the fact that perspective, and its specific corresponding intellectual configuration, had pervaded visual habit since the Renaissance. However, Renaissance linear perspective, it must be remembered, is only a convention which is a cultural attribute comprehensible only for a quite specific sense of space or perception of the world, and is definitely not an absolute perceptual truth.

In this respect, Olkowski seems to agree with Samuel Edgerton's seminal book, The Renaissance Discovery of Linear Perspective, where he explains that today we are the exhausted descendants of the engendering of linear perspective (the so-called rules that determine the relative size of objects on a flat plane), and that 'the magic of perspective illusion is gone'. [6] This exhaustion bodes poorly for cinema if one accepts, as I do, that a rupture (or bifurcation if you prefer) has occurred between the capture technology of the 20th Century (straight filmatic photography and video) and the far-more elastic and participatory technology of the computer. Surely this is true if cinema adheres to its central function of linear perspective creator, with its 'celebration of the eye of distance' (as Robert Romanyshyn calls it [7]) -- which has become elevated into a cognitive methodology. In my view, this logocentric defect typical of the centralized image exactly illustrates what is wrong with framed cinematic representation. As Olkowski rightfully notes, systems of representations operate 'by establishing a fixed standard as the norm or model' (2). In this sense Kelly's work, regardless of its groundbreaking treatment of subject matter, fails to effect a ruin of representation, as Olkowski claims it does. But then what creative art form could?

May I suggest to Olkowski and Kelly -- and those interested in pursuing Deleuzian flights of anti-logocentric thought filmatically -- that they look for the ruin of representation in certain artistic uses of virtual reality (VR -- even though the term 'virtual environment' (VE) is more accurate), specifically with VR's advantage of presenting visual/audio information through its fundamentally spherical, all-over, 360-degree panorama. I am not talking about VR which remakes the rules of representation (something to which we are accustomed), but rather that which places the subject inside the perceptual circuitry of a

particularly lavish (i.e. aesthetically-informationally intense) proprioceptive feedback-loop. [8] The key value of creative immersion, in terms of formulating an original theory of representation in ruins, is in its underscoring of the fiction behind the assumed 'real' mechanistic perspective when seen as empirically true and universally valid, instead of as conventional and as a contingent compliance.

Olkowski does hint at such a creative immersive approach when she writes how Deleuze/Guattari bid us to 'open up our thinking and practices to the nomadic nomos that creates wandering distributions of assemblages, distributions whose plurality of centers mix perspectives and points of view . . .' (31), for this describes meritoriously the experience of navigating a lavish and aesthetically-informationally intense VE. She too seems to support this contention with her examination of Antonin Artaud's theoretical work (187). Perhaps a further and deeper examination of his proposals found in *Le Theatre et son double* (*The Theatre and its Double*) would be beneficial to a ruin of representation, as Artaud proposes that art (in his case drama) must become a means of influencing the human organism and directly altering consciousness by engaging the audience in a ritualistic-like activity involving excess. Georges Bataille confirms this assertion of excess as ruin in his essay 'Baudelaire', particularly by linking Baudelaire's imagination with notions of the impossible. [9] As immersive 360-degree-ity places us in the position of indeterminate unknowing (indeed in the position of the impossibility of knowing what we are to see/think in one intuitive moment) conceptions of 'objective' or 'subjective' representational consciousness cease from being definitive and become omnijectively inter-relational questions; questions which disable previous emphasis on the false objectivisms of representation accorded to cultural production. In this condition of arduous inter-relational questioning, what is clarified in terms of the ruin of representation is the human idiosyncratic ability to imaginatively convert absence into presence.

Even though in his essay 'The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation' Jacques Derrida describes how Artaud's theory may be seen as impossible in terms of the established structure of Western thought, [10] this is precisely why immersive art theory (with its vital connections to the representational impossible) can be placed in parallel position to Artaud's hypothesis. This is so in that, when inside aesthetic immersive art, one may experience a prelude to the work's fullness (its impossible vastness diverts the immediacy of the art), thus stimulating a desire which bio-chemically affects the state of the body and mind. With aesthetic immersive desire the amount of endorphins unconsciously released into our bio-system increases. This bio-chemical desire involves an Artaudian prying-loose from former representational familiarities and hence is a state where representation is always attacked and opposed by simultaneous excess.

A keen example of this Artaudian prying-loose notion as art is to be found in the aforementioned Stan Vanderbeek's 1966 proposal for telematically connected virtual worlds. In his essay 'Culture: Intercom and Expanded Cinema: A Proposal and Manifesto' Vanderbeek called for the transformation of his *_Movie Dromes_* into perception banks which by 'computer inter-play' would function as global 'communication and storage centers'. According to Vanderbeek, 'by satellite, each dome could receive its images from a world wide library source; store them and program feedback presentations to the local community . . .'. [11] Vanderbeek also went so far as to predict that such a linking of visual 'feedback' could 'authentically review the total world image 'reality' and hence produce 'a sense of the entire world picture'. This process of linking visual dome-worlds Vanderbeek labelled 'intra-communitronics'. [12]

As Robert Romanyshyn has made clear, linear perspective vision has now achieved 'a kind of geometrisation of the space of the world, and within that space we become observers of a world which has become an object of observation'. [13] This 'objective' rendering, with its emphasis on the horizon-line and vanishing point, formed the pictorial ideals for painting and photography of course, but the opposite is true when VR is used to its fullest advantage as presenter of spherical, all-over, 360-degree perspectives. Of course the vast majority of media images (and most visual art) produced today still cleaves to the horizon-line based Quattrocento framing operation, as opposed to the immersive field-of-view span where horizon and frame dissolution is desirable.

For me this alternative spherical, all-over, 360-degree perspective was aptly demonstrated in 1996 on experiencing on a single-processor Silicon Graphics (SGI) VGX R4000 Reality Engine a bewildering switch into what in VR is called the 'allocentric mirror world': the Icarian bird's-eye view of a virtual world. Here the artist may emphasize an aesthetic immersion based on excess and hence approach better Olkowski's desired 'nomadic nomos' (26). In the allocentric mirror world a 360-degree cognitive-vision enlivens receptive and organizing attributes of peripheral awareness and, as such, intensifies thalamic input to the cortex by making the active thalamic neurons in that region fire more rapidly than usual. In this connective condition, notions of a singular, discrete, logocentric consciousness are incoherent.

What such an emphasis on aesthetic immersion does is to replace the severed eye back into the ritual position by dragging it down into the felt 360-degree omni-perspective of the enthusiastic and participatory. It is through just such visual procedures (whether corporeal or conceptual) that immersive cognition exceeds pat

representation and approaches a ruin of representation. Immersive spherical thinking, as stimulated by the immersive spherical perspective, opens up a territory of signification and possibility for the creation of hybrid and deterritorialised non-representational meanings. Non-representational meaning in art and in life then advances by seeing more clearly the underlying assumptions of excess inherent in the immersive outlook, by facing up to the radical implications of those assumptions, and by purging itself from conventional ways of thinking.

This non-representational consciousness suggests a sense of immense inner incomplete excess, commensurable with the outer range of partially perceived aorist excess, as in this state of immersive but non-representational consciousness one is never presented with concluded consequences, as there always remains some further qualification to be made and some new perspective from which an idea or percept may be observed. In this sense total-immersion helps constitute a post-Hegelian consciousness, as Hegel maintained that no idea has a fixed meaning and that no form of understanding has an unchanging validity. Indeed this post-Hegelian consciousness of excess is how total-immersion challenges distinctive ontological beliefs about the limits of the self and the validity of representation. In total-immersion, self-re-programmable thought takes over the space displayed around the represented self (avatar) as the meta-programming ego expands to fill by transference the vastness of immersive aorist excess. So conceived, the ontological self ceases to think of itself as a substance or thing or representation and, by contrast, thinks of itself as a continuously changing process of events in search of evermore non-representation. That is to say it conceives of itself as a process of becoming in all directions.

From the allocentric mirror world I experienced, one can see all of the world (including oneself) while experiencing a fluidness of movement concerning yaw, pitch, roll, pan, zoom, and swivel. This allocentric occurrence was one first of disorientation and then of reorientation into a supra-perspectivisation, connected to joyful feelings of floating within an expanded hyper-space of colossal dimensions. Experiencing the hyper-space's vertiginous heights and deep abysses and vast widths through the penetration of apparent solid confines entailed an experiential feeling of beatific disembodiment and placelessness. The artists group Knowbotic Research KR+cF uses the term 'non-locations' for such spatial experiences; terminology inspired by the concept of deterritorialisation in the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Knowbotic Research KR+cF distinguish non-locations as 'aggregates of multi-layered occurrences in physical and electronic space' which are 'non-homogeneous, fragmented, incomplete' while being at the same time 'continuous, hermetic and flowing'. [14]

Moreover, with this immersive non-representational vision there is a shift to a more conscious peripheral mode of perception which entails a deautomatisation of the perceptual process (whereby more emphasis is placed on what is on the edges of sight and consciousness), thus presumably adjusting the immersant up to an expanded and fuller non-representational consciousness. This emphasis on the peripheral utilizes the Deleuzian broad scan: Deleuze's non-linear dynamic conceptual displacement of a view along any axis or direction in favor of a sweeping processes in space/time. [15] Hence immersive non-representational vision may acquire an increasingly computational-like encompassing range, useful in expanding the customary (160-degree vertical by 180-degree horizontal) field-of-view outward so as to increase situational awareness and a ruin of representation through excess.

Will film, with its inherent framing and linear motion, take up such a challenge and utilize de-framed, multi-layered, non-horizontal based occurrences the way sophisticated painting does occasionally? Superimpositional layering has been tried of course in the 60s/70s (as I noted above, plus one thinks here of the expanded theatre ideal of Milton Cohn's late-60's *Space Theatre*; the essence of which was a rotating assembly of mirrors and prisms mounted on a flywheel, around which were arranged a battery of light, film, and slide projectors -- essentially it was an expanded version of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's famous *Space-Light Modulator* into which one may enter), but is the film world today ready to make substantial use of multi-layering with its inherent loss of coherence and representational ruin? I really don't think so. No, that would be too big a shift for cinematic convention to bare, and thus be its ruin. With framed film we are stuck with a detached transcendental subject constructed by ignoring the holo-optic characteristics of immersive space and by repressing peripheral attention to the encircling atmosphere. However, artistic VEs are capable, due to their all-over field approach, of articulating just such a sublime expanse (the sublime is identified by Olkowski as being important to the ruin of representation as instigated by Arthur Rimbaud's poetic formula based on the 'derangement' of all the senses (180)) because they may have no solitary representational subject-matter and no central representational focus. In aesthetic gesamtkunstwerk immersion we are essentially challenged to find new expanded boundaries of self-representation within a shifting non-representationality.

Surely the exceeded, expanded, and thus ruined representations which I have been suggesting here extol Artaud's theory of cruelty, as hinted at by Olkowski, as they challenge us to find new expanded boundaries of self-representation. Through temporary loss of self-consciousness -- due to the immoderate excess of perceptual possibilities in an aesthetic immersion (which involves a more active

and continuously searching situation) -- one enters and thus understands through experience Deleuze's virtual state (nicely summarized here by Olkowski (232-233)); a state which circumvents the current representational view of the self in the world which has been built into the structures underpinning visual representation. Undoubtedly, we need ruined representations to live fully now, and just such sublimely ruined representational shifts are far easier to contribute to the public in the form of artistic VEs than in film houses, as artistic VEs may display in 360-degree artistic data of a non or (if you like) ruined representational nature; replete with a newness based on a long preparatory gestational development. [16] Effectively, such an artistic and perceptual shift in our self-representational ontology (a shift which involves fundamental changes in aesthetic perception) can also be expected to engender extraordinarily deep artistic -- and departmental -- conflicts. This will entail a review of past and present approaches towards both non-representational and representational aesthetics which _Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation_ certainly advances, for our imagined representations of a possible cultivated future depends on the kinds of astute and discriminating questions we seek to construct in our aesthetic philosophy and artistic practices right now.

Paris, France

Footnotes

1. Michele Montrelay, 'Inquiry into Femininity', _m/f_, no. 1, 1978, pp. 83-101.

2. Stan Vanderbeek, 'Culture: Intercom and Expanded Cinema: A Proposal and Manifesto', _Film Culture_, no. 40, Spring 1966, p. 16.

3. Ibid., p. 17.

4. _Post-Partum Document_ -- The Complete Work (1973-79). Documentation I -- Analyzed fecal strains and feeding charts: 28 February 1974. Documentation II -- Analyzed utterances and related speech events: T2 6 February 1975. Documentation III -- Analyzed markings and diary-perspective schema: 10S2 28. MOs. Documentation IV -- Transitional objects, diary, diagram: T5 20 May 1976. Age 2.6. Documentation V -- Classified specimens,

proportional diagrams, statistical tables, research and index: L4, Fig. 4a, Fig. 4b. Documentation VI -- Pre-writing alphabet, exerque and diary: 4.515 B.

5. Post-Partum Document is a seminal work of the seventies in which the mother-child motif is addressed in a completely new way and from a female perspective. The work consists of 139 individual parts and has been exhibited in edited versions on numerous occasions. In Post-Partum Document Kelly uses the conceptualist procedure of documentation to introduce an interrogation of the subject. In the 'Introduction' and the six following sections the relationship of the working mother with her male child are dealt with. The artist observes the emergence of gender difference and broaches the controversial topic of female fetishism. Psychoanalysis, in particular its linguistic reformulation by Jacques Lacan, represents an important reference for this work. The discussion of these insights in consciousness raising groups, as well as the collective activism of the women's movement in London in the seventies, form the practical backdrop.

6. Samuel Edgerton, The Renaissance Discovery of Linear Perspective (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 4.

7. Robert Romanyshyn, Technology as Symptom and Dream (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 33.

8. In almost all of Knowbotic Research KR+cF projects (see: <http://io.khm.de>) we encounter highly abstract aesthetically-informationally intense VR space, for example in their work Simulation Mosaik Data Klaenge from 1993. Knowbotic Research KR+cF (principally Yvonne Wilhelm, Christian Habler, and Alexander Tuchacek) have experimented with so called 'intelligent agents', applications which can conglomerate diaphanous information by themselves (also called knowbots), and intelligent virtual spaces (flexible information-environments distributed in electronic networks). Also relevant are the VE works Osmose and Ephemere, from 1995 and 1998 respectively, by Char Davies (see: <http://www.immersence.com/osmose.htm>), which are exemplary of aesthetically-informational intensity, as they are highly immersive pieces which utilize a HMD (head-mounted-device) with modified optics to produce a 105-degree field-of-view (with 40-degrees of stereo overlap). Her VEs present to the immersant an evocation of a quasi-naturalistic realm. Scene complexity is managed through the use of segregated worlds with transition portals which bring the immersant to particular 'zones' within the greater VE. For me, the deepest and most aesthetically satisfying substratum is 'Code World', found deep in Osmose, where the 20,000 lines of 'C' code of which

Osmose is constructed rise up in immense colonnades. 'Code World' is also exemplary in that it attempts to explore the inter-relation between exterior nature, inner code and interior self. The work utilizes stereoscopic 3D computer graphics and spatialized sound activated with real-time interaction. The participant wears a stereoscopic HMD and a motion-capture vest with a breathing and balance sensor to enter into the environment.

9. Georges Bataille, _Oeuvres Completes: Lascaux: La Naissance de l'Art_ (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), pp. 200-202.

10. Jacques Derrida, 'The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation', in _Writing and Difference_ (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 232-250.

11. Stan Vanderbeek, 'Culture: Intercom and Expanded Cinema: A Proposal and Manifesto', _Film Culture_, no. 40, Spring, 1966, p. 17.

12. Ibid.

13. Robert Romanyshyn, _Technology as Symptom and Dream_ (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 33.

14. Knowbotic Research KR+cF, _Interfacing Realities_, ed. C. Hoekendijk (Amsterdam: V2 Organisatie, 1977), p. 3.

15. For more on this see Ronald Bogue, 'Word, Image and Sound: The Non-Representational Semiotics of Gilles Deleuze', in Ronald Bogue, ed., _Mimesis, Semiosis and Power_ (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1991), pp. 83-84.

16. For more on this gestation see the Introduction to my Ph.D. dissertation 'Immersive Ideals/Critical Distances: A Study of the Affinity Between Artistic Ideologies Based in Virtual Reality and Previous Immersive Idioms'. My research into Virtual Reality technology -- and its central property of immersion -- has indicated to me that immersion in Virtual Reality electronic systems is a significant key to the understanding of contemporary culture, as well as considerable aspects of previous cultures, as detected in the histories of philosophy and the visual arts. The Introduction to the thesis,

entitled 'Frame and Excess', can be read on-line at:
<<http://www.eyewithwings.net/nechvatal/ideals.htm>>.

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