

Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality

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Aesthetics since Kant has been haunted by a seemingly irretractable dualism. On the one hand, aesthetics designates the theory of sensibility as the form of possible experience; on the other hand, it designates the theory of art as a reflection on real experience. The first is the objective element of sensation, which is conditioned by the a priori forms of space and time (the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' of the *Critique of Pure Reason*); the second is the subjective element of sensation, which is expressed in the feeling of pleasure and pain (the 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment' in the *Critique of Judgment*). Gilles Deleuze argues that these two aspects of the theory of sensation (aesthetics) can be reunited only at the price of a radical recasting of the transcendental project as formulated by Kant, pushing it in the direction of what Schelling once called a 'superior empiricism': it is only when the conditions of experience in general become the genetic conditions of *real* experience that they can be reunited with the structures of works of art. In this case, the principles of sensation would at the same time constitute the principles of composition of the work of art, and conversely it would be the structure of the work of art that reveals these conditions.¹ In what follows, I would like to examine the means by which Deleuze attempts to overcome this duality in aesthetics, following this single thread through the network of his thought, even if in tracing this line we sacrifice a certain amount of detail in favor of a certain perspicuity. The first part analyses Deleuze's theory of sensation; the second, his attempt to connect this theory with the structures of the work of art.

1 The Theory of Sensation: 'The Being of the Sensible'

1.1 *Beyond Recognition and Common Sense*

Deleuze frequently begins his discussions of aesthetics by referring to a passage in the *Republic* where Plato distinguishes between two types of sensations: those that leave the mind tranquil and inactive, and those that force it to think. The first are objects of *recognition* ('This is a finger'), for which sensation is a more or less adequate judge. 'In these cases,' writes Plato, 'a man is not compelled to ask of thought the question, "What is a finger?" for the sight never intimates to the mind that a finger is other than a finger . . . There is nothing here which invites or excites intelligence.'² Deleuze defines recognition, in Kantian terms, as the harmonious exercise of our faculties on an object that is supposedly *identical* for each of these faculties: it is the *same* object that can be seen, remembered, imagined, conceived, and so on. To be sure, each faculty (sensibility, imagination, memory, understanding, reason) has its own particular given, and its own way of acting upon the given. We recognize an object, however, when one faculty locates its given as identical to that of another, or more precisely, when all the faculties together relate their given and relate themselves to a form of identity in the object. Recognition consequently finds its correlate in the ideal of *common sense*, which is defined by Kant, not as a special 'sense' or a particular empirical faculty, but by the supposed identity of the subject that functions as the foundation of our faculties, as the principle that unites them in this harmonious accord. These are two poles of what Deleuze terms the 'dogmatic' image of thought, and which constitutes one of the main objects of his critique: the subjective identity of the self and its faculties (common sense), and the objective identity of the thing to which these faculties refer (recognition). Thus in Kant, the 'object in general' or 'object = x' is the objective correlate of the 'I think' or the subjective unity of consciousness.³

But there also exists a second kind of sensation in the world, continues Plato, sensations that force us to think, that give rise to thought. These are what Deleuze will term 'signs', for reasons we shall see below: they are no longer objects of recognition but objects of a fundamental encounter. More precisely, they are no longer even recognizable as objects, but rather refer to sensible qualities or relations that are caught up in an unlimited becoming, a perpetual movement of contraries. A finger is never anything but a finger, but a large finger

can what at the same time be said to be small in relation to a third, just as is hard is never hard without also being soft, and so on. Recognition measures and limits these paradoxical qualities by relating them to an object, but in themselves, these 'simultaneously opposed sensations', says Plato, perplex the soul and set it in motion, they force it to think because they demand 'further inquiry'. Rather than a voluntary and harmonious accord, the faculties here enter into an involuntary discord that lies at the base of Plato's model of education: sensibility compels the intelligence to distinguish the large and the small from the sensible appearances that confuse them, which in turn compels the memory to begin to remember the intelligible Forms.⁴

It is sensations of this second type, Deleuze argues, that constitute the basis for any possible aesthetic. Phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty, Straus, and Maldiney had already gone a long way toward freeing aesthetics from the presupposition of recognition. They argued that sensation, or rather 'sense experience' [*le sentir*], must 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, even though it ceaselessly interferes with other qualities (the 'pathic' moment).⁵ But they still remained tied to a form of common sense, setting up 'natural perception' as a norm, and locating its conditions in a sensible form or Gestalt that organizes the perceptive field as a function of an 'intentional consciousness' or 'lived body' situated within the horizon of the world. If *Proust and Signs* occupies a critical place in Deleuze's oeuvre, it is because *A la recherche du temps perdu*, in Deleuze's reading, presents itself as a vast experiment with sensations of this second type, but one freed from the presuppositions of both recognition and common sense. In Proust, these signs no longer simply indicate contrary sensible qualities, as in Plato, but instead testify to a much more complicated network of implicated orders of signs: the frivolous signs of society life, the deceptive signs of love, the sensuous signs of the material world, and the essential signs of art, which will come to transform the others. Proust's narrator will discover that, when he thought he was wasting his time, he was in fact already embarked on an intellectual apprenticeship to these signs, a search for their meaning, a revelation of their truth. In each of these orders, the search inevitably passes through two essential moments: an 'objectivist temptation' that seeks for the meaning of the sign in the object emitting it (his lover, the madeleine), and a 'subjective compensation' that seeks their meaning in a subjective association of ideas. But in each case, the hero discovers that the truth of signs 'transcends the states of subjectivity no less than the

properties of the object': it is only in the work of art that their nature will be revealed and their truth made manifest.⁶

This distinction between the recognized object and the encountered sign, Deleuze argues, corresponds to a more general distinction between two images of thought. The 'dogmatic' or rationalist image can be summarized in several interrelated postulates: thought as thought formally contains the truth (innateness of ideas, a priori nature of concepts); thinking is the voluntary and natural exercise of a faculty, and the thinker possesses a natural love for the truth, a *philia* (hence the image of the thinker as a philo-sophos, a friend or lover of wisdom); we fall into error, we are diverted from the truth, by external forces that are foreign to thought and distract the mind from its vocation (the body, passions); therefore, all we need in order to think truthfully is a 'method' that will ward off error and bring us back to the truthful nature of thought.⁷ It is against this more or less Greek image that Deleuze counterposes the empirical power of signs and the possibility of a thought 'without image': thinking is never the product of a voluntary disposition, but rather the result of forces that act upon thought involuntarily from the outside: we search for truth, we begin to think, only when compelled to do so, when we undergo a violence that impels us to such a search, that wrests us from our natural stupor - what calls for thought, says Heidegger, is the perpetual *fact* that 'we are not yet thinking';⁸ the negative of thought is not error, which is a mere empirical fact, but more profound enemies that prevent the genesis of thought: convention, opinion, clichés, stupidity [*bêtise*];⁹ finally, what leads us to truth is not 'method' but 'constraint' and 'chance': no method can determine in advance what compels us to think, it is rather the fortuitousness of the encounter that guarantees the necessity of what it forces us to think. *Who* is it that in fact searches for the truth? It is not the friend, says Proust, exercising a natural desire for truth in dialogue with others, but rather the jealous man, under the pressure of his lover's lies, and the anguish they inflict on him.¹⁰ If Deleuze has always considered himself an empiricist, it is because, 'on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, everything begins with sensibility'.¹¹

What then is a sign? In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze assigns two primary characteristics to the sign. The first is that the sign riots the soul, renders it perplexed, as if the encountered sign were the bearer of a problem. The second is that the sign is something that can *only* be felt or sensed [*ce qui ne peut être que senti*]: as Francis Bacon says, it acts directly on the nervous system, rather than passing through the detour of the brain.¹² It is this second characteristic that reveals most clearly

the difference between the encountered sign and the recognized object: the latter can not only be felt, but can also be remembered, imagined, conceived, and so on, and thus assumes the accord of the faculties that Kant calls common sense. By taking the encountered sign as the primary element of sensation, Deleuze is pointing, *objectively*, to a science of the sensible freed from the model of recognition and, *subjectively*, to a use of the faculties freed from the ideal of common sense. Now Kant himself had already hinted at this latter possibility in the *Critique of Judgment* where, for the first and only time, he considered a faculty freed from the form of common sense, namely, the faculty of the imagination. Up to that point, Kant had been content to create as many common senses as there were natural interests of reasonable thought (knowledge, morality, reflection), common senses which differed according to the conditions of what was to be recognized (object of knowledge, moral value, aesthetic effect . . .). In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for example, the faculties are made to enter into a harmonious accord in the speculative interest, in which the understanding legislates over and determines the function of the other faculties ('logical common sense'); in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the faculties enter into a different accord under the legislation of reason in the practical interest ('moral common sense'); and even in the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' of the *Critique of Judgment*, the reflective imagination is still said to be under the 'aesthetic common sense'.¹³

But the third Critique opened up the possibility of a new domain, a 'disjunctive' theory of the faculties. In the 'Analytic of the Sublime', the faculty of the imagination is forced to confront its own limit, its own maximum: faced with an immense object (the desert, a mountain, a pyramid) or a powerful object (a storm at sea, an erupting volcano), the imagination strives to comprehend these sensations in their totality, but is unable to do so. It reaches the limits of its power, and finds itself reduced to impotency. This failure gives rise to a pain, a cleavage in the subject between what can be imagined and what can be thought, between the imagination and reason. For what is it that pushes the imagination to this limit, what forces it to attempt to unite the immensity of the sensible world into a whole? Kant answers that it is nothing other than the faculty of reason: absolute immensity or power are Ideas of reason, Ideas that can be thought but cannot be known or imagined, and which are therefore accessible *only* to the faculty of reason. The sublime thus presents us with a *dissension*, a 'discordant accord', between the demands of reason and the power of the imagination. But this painful admission also gives rise to a pleasure: in confronting its own limit, the imagination at the same time

goes beyond this limit, albeit in a negative way, by representing to itself the inaccessibility of this rational Idea. It presents to itself the fact that the unrepresentable exists, *and that it exists in sensible nature*.¹⁴ From the empirical point of view, this limit is inaccessible and unimaginable; but from the transcendental point of view, it is that which can *only* be imagined, that which is accessible *only* to the imagination in its transcendental exercise.

The lesson of the 'Analytic of the Sublime', in Deleuze's reading, is that it discovers this discordant accord as the condition of possibility for the harmonious accords of the faculties that Kant evoked in the first two critiques, an accord that is not derived from pre-existent external 'facts' (the 'fact' of knowledge, the 'fact' of morality), but is engendered internally in the subject. It is this possibility of a disjunctive use of the faculties, glimpsed fleetingly by Kant with regard to the imagination, that Deleuze will extend to the entire critical project. Rather than having all the faculties harmoniously united in an act of recognition, each faculty is made to confront its own differential limit, and is pushed to its involuntary and 'transcendental' exercise, an exercise in which *something is communicated violently from one faculty to another, but does not form a common sense*. Such is the use of the faculties put forward by Proust: a sensibility that apprehends and receives signs; an intelligence, memory, and imagination that interpret them and explicate their meaning, each according to a certain type of sign; and a pure thought which discovers their essence as the sufficient reason of the sign and its meaning. What Deleuze calls a sign is therefore neither a recognizable object nor even a particular quality of an object, but constitutes the limit of the faculty of sensibility (and each faculty in its turn must confront its own limit). As Deleuze puts it, the sign is not a sensible being, nor even a purely qualitative being (*aisthēton*), but the being *of* the sensible (*aisthetōn*). From the empirical point of view, the sign, in and of itself, is unsensible, not in a contingent way, as if it were too small or too distant to be grasped by our senses, but in an essential way, namely, *from the point of view of recognition and common sense*, in which sensibility can only grasp what can also be grasped by the other faculties. But from the transcendental point of view, the sign is what can *only* be felt or sensed, that which is accessible *only* to the faculty of sensibility in its transcendental exercise. The sign, in short, points to a pure aesthetic lying at the limit of sensibility: an immanent Idea or differential field beyond the norms of common sense and recognition. What then is this Idea of sensibility? What are these forces of the 'outside' that nonetheless give rise to thought?

1.2 The Idea of Sensibility: Differential Relations and Differences in Intensity

Already in 1790, Salomon Maïmon, one of the first post-Kantians to return to Leibniz, had proposed an essential revision of Kant on precisely this point.¹⁵ Leibniz argued that a conscious perception must be related, not to a recognizable object situated in space and time, but to the minute and unconscious perceptions of which it is composed. I apprehend the noise of the sea or the murmur of a group of people, for instance, but not the sound of each wave or the voice of each person that compose them. These unconscious 'molecular' perceptions are related to conscious 'molar' perceptions, not as parts to a whole, but as what is ordinary to what is noticeable or remarkable: a conscious perception is produced when at least two of these elements enter into a *differential relation* that determines a singular point.¹⁶ Consider, for example, the colour green: yellow and blue can be perceived, but if their perception diminishes to the point where they become indiscernible, they enter into a differential relation ($db/dy = G$) that determines the colour green; in turn, yellow or blue, each on its own account, may be determined by the differential relation of two colours we cannot detect ($dy/dx = Y$).

Or consider the noise of the sea: at least two minutely perceived waves must enter into a relation capable of determining a third, which 'excels' over the others and becomes conscious. These unconscious perceptions constitute the 'ideal genetic elements' of perception, or what Maïmon called the 'differentials of consciousness'. It is such a virtual multiplicity of genetic elements, and the system of connections or differential relations that are established between them, that Deleuze terms an 'Idea': the relations are actualized in diverse spatio-temporal relationships, just as the elements are actualized in diverse perceptions and forms. A sign, in its first aspect, is thus an 'effect' of these elements and relations in the Idea: a clear perception (green) is actualized when certain virtual elements (yellow and blue) enter into a differential relation as a function of our body, and draws these obscure perceptions into clarity.¹⁷

Deleuze suggests that Bergson, in *The Creative Mind*, had developed a somewhat parallel conception of the Idea, using the domain of color as an example. There are two ways of determining what 'colours' have in common. *Either* one can extract from particular colours an abstract and general idea of color ('by removing from the red that which makes it red, from the blue what makes it blue, from the green what makes it

green'); or one can make all these colours 'pass through a convergent lens, bringing them to a single point', in which case a 'pure white light' is obtained that 'makes the differences between the shades stand out'.¹⁸ The first case defines a generic 'concept' with a plurality of objects, in which the relation between concept and object is one of subsumption, and the state of difference remains exterior to the thing. The second case defines a differential Idea in the Deleuzian sense. The different colours are no longer objects *under* a concept, but constitute an order of mixture in co-existence and succession *within* the Idea; the relation between the Idea and a given color is not one of subsumption, but one of actualization and differentiation; and the state of difference between the concept and the object is *internalized* in the Idea itself. White light may be a universal, if you will, but it is a concrete universal, a *universal variation*, and not a genus or generality. The Idea of colour is like white light, which 'perplexes' within itself the genetic elements and relations of all the colors, just as the Idea of sound could be conceived of as white noise.¹⁹

This notion of the differential Idea finds its complement in the concept of *intensity*: these elements and relations are necessarily actualized in an intensive magnitude. Kant himself had defined the principle of intensity in the 'Anticipations of Perception': we know a priori that the matter of sensations will have a degree of intensity, and that this magnitude will change along a continuum starting from the point where intensity = 0.²⁰ But since he defined the *form* of sensibility as extended space, Kant limited the application of intensity to the *matter* of sensible intuitions that come to fill that space. But Maïmon, like Hermann Cohen after him, argued that since space as a pure intuition is a continuum, it is the form of space itself that must be defined a priori as intensive quantity: there is therefore an internal and dynamic construction of space that necessarily *precedes* the representation of the whole as a form of exteriority (which implies that space is actualized in a *plurality* of forms).²¹ In empirical experience, to be sure, we know only intensities or forms of energy that are already localized and distributed in extended space: intensity is inseparable from a process of extension that relates it to extended space and subordinates it to the qualities that fill space. But the corresponding tendency is no less true, since every extensity necessarily envelops or implicates within itself the intensity of which it is an effect. A 'sign', in its second aspect, is an intensity produced by the asymmetry of the differential relations, whereas a 'quality' appears when an intensity reaches a given order or magnitude and these relations are organized in consciousness.²² Sensations thus present a double aspect: they

necessarily refer to a virtual and implicated order of constitutive differences, but they tend to cancel out those differences in the extended order in which they are explicated. These intensive forces are never given in themselves, they cannot be grasped by the empirical senses, which only grasp intensity as already recovered or mediated by the quality that it creates. They can only be sensed from the point of view of the transcendental sensibility that apprehends it immediately in the encounter as the limit of sensibility itself. With the notion of intensity, he writes, 'sensation ceases to be representative and becomes real'. Hence the formula: 'intensity is both the unsensible and that which can only be sensed'.²³

What Maïmon derives from this Leibnizian argument is a transcendental method of genesis rather than one of simple conditioning: a clear sensation emerges from obscurity by a *genetic* process, as it were through a series of filters, a series of successive integrations or syntheses. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant reserved the power of synthesis for the active 'I think', for the activity of the understanding, and conceived of the passive ego as a simple receptivity possessing no synthetic power. Because he considered the sensible to be a quality related to an object that sensibility intuited passively, he defined the transcendental form of space, as the condition of outer sense, by its geometric extension (pure intuition of objects or bodies). And if concepts in turn could be applied to intuitions, if a harmony was possible between the understanding and sensibility, it was only through the mysterious intermediary of the 'schematism' of the imagination, which alone makes the spatio-temporal relations of intuition correspond to the logical relations of the concept. But the problem with the Kantian method of conditioning, which post-Kantians such as Maïmon and Cohen were quick to point out, is that it leaves unexplained the purely *external* duality between the determinable (space as a pure given) and the determination (the concept as thought), invoking 'hidden' harmonies between terms that remain external to one another.²⁴ What the post-Kantians argued (as did Freud) is that the passive ego is itself constituted by a prodigious domain of unconscious and passive syntheses that precede and condition the activity of the 'I think'.

Beyond Kant's external method of conditioning, Maïmon proposes an *internal* method of genesis in which the relation between the determinable and the determination is internalized in the Idea. Rather than perception presupposing an object capable of affecting us, and the conditions under which we would be capable of being affected, it is the reciprocal determination of differentials (dx/dy) that entails both the

complete determination of the object as perception and the determinability of space-time as conditions: *space-time ceases to be a pure given in order to become the totality or nexus of differential relations in the subject, and the object ceases to be an empirical given in order to become the product of these relations in conscious perception.*

'Difference is not diversity,' writes Deleuze, 'diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, by which the given is given as diverse.'²⁵ The error of the dogmatic image of thought is not to deny diversity, but to tend to comprehend it only in terms of generalities or genera. One of Deleuze's philosophic aims is to show that the singularity and individuality of the diverse can only be comprehended from the viewpoint of difference itself. The Idea of sensation is constituted by two interrelated principles of difference: the differential relations between genetic elements, and the differences in intensity that actualize these relations. They do not indicate some sort of metaphysical reality beyond the senses; as Ideas they are posited in order to account for sensibility, though they are not given in experience as such. Whereas in Kant, Ideas are unifying, totalizing and transcendent, in Deleuze, they are differential, genetic, and immanent. It is the series of filters, for example, that accounts for what Nietzsche called the faculty of forgetting, or Bergson's claim that perception is necessarily eliminative and subtractive: subjectivity is (rather than simply *has*) an incomplete, prejudiced, and partial perception.²⁶ Conversely, the significance of sensory distortions, such as those achieved in pharmacodynamic experiences or physical experiences such as vertigo, is often to approach the intensive depth that is always implicated in the perception of extensity: a kind of 'pedagogy of the senses', says Deleuze, that forms an integral part of transcendentalism.²⁷ Deleuze not only gives an account of 'natural perception', but also experiences that are often classed as 'pathological', to which he assigns a positivity of their own. Indeed, in his commentary on Leibniz, Deleuze goes so far as to write that '*every perception is hallucinatory because perception has no object*', since it refers exclusively to the psychical mechanism of differential relations among unconscious perceptions.²⁸ This is why difference must be understood, not as an empirical fact or even as a scientific concept, but as a transcendental principle, as the sufficient reason of the sensible, as the being of the sensible.

Descartes had posited the 'clear and distinct' as the highest principle of common sense, a principle that would be prolonged in various forms in the post-Kantian tradition extending through Fichte and Hegel: the finite mind finds its point of departure in a confused and

obscure understanding of the world, and reason constitutes a universal progress towards the clear and distinct, 'the light which renders thought possible in the common exercise of the faculties'.²⁹ In the lesser known figures of Maïmon and Cohen, Deleuze finds a 'minor' post-Kantian tradition leading indirectly to Bergson and Nietzsche: a clear idea is in itself confused, and is confused *insofar as it is clear*. The conscious perception of the noise of the sea, for example, is clear but confused, for our perception comprehends the whole confusedly, and only expresses clearly certain elements and relations depending on the threshold of consciousness determined by our body. Conversely, the components of the Idea are distinct but obscure: distinct, insofar as all the drops of water remain distinct as the genetic elements of perception, with their differential relations, the variations of these relations, and the singular points they determine; but obscure, insofar as they are not yet 'distinguished' or actualized in a conscious perception. Every sensation, in short, is clear but confused, but is constantly plunged back into the distinct-obscurity from which it emerged. In Deleuze, *the principle of the clear and distinct is broken down into two irreducible values that can never be reunited to constitute a natural light*.

Deleuze's theory of sensibility, in sum, is opposed to Kant's on these three interrelated points: the element of sensation must be found in the sign, and not the qualities of a recognizable object; the sign is the limit-object of the faculty of sensibility, beyond the postulates of recognition and common sense; the Idea of sensibility is constituted by differential relations and differences in intensity, which give a genetic account of thought and constitute the conditions of real, and not merely possible, experience, since the conditions are never larger than what they condition.

2 The Theory of Art: 'Pure Beings of Sensation'

2.1 Philosophy and Art

With this rather summary sketch of Deleuze's theory of sensation in hand, we are now in a position to determine its relation to the theory of art. If Deleuze's many writings on art constitute an integral part of his philosophy, it is because works of art are themselves explorations of this transcendental realm of sensibility. The most general aim of art, according to Deleuze, is to produce a sensation, to create a 'pure being of sensation', a sign.³⁰ The work of art is, as it were, a 'machine' or 'apparatus' that utilizes these passive syntheses of sensation to

produce effects of its own. The genetic principles of sensation are thus at the same time the principles of composition of the work of art; and conversely, it is the structure of the work of art that reveals these conditions. Deleuze has consequently developed his 'logic' of sensation through a creative interaction with the various arts. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze defines philosophy as a practice of concepts, a discipline that consists in the formation, invention, or creation of concepts. 'One can very easily think without concepts,' he writes, 'but as soon as there is a concept, there is truly philosophy.'³¹ Art is an equally creative enterprise of thought, but one whose object is to create sensible aggregates rather than concepts. Great artists are also great thinkers, but they think in terms of *sensations* rather than concepts. Painters, for example, think in terms of lines and colours, musicians think in sounds, film-makers think in images, and so on. Neither discipline has any privilege over the other: to create a concept is neither more difficult nor more abstract than creating new visual or audible combinations; and conversely, it is no easier to read an image than it is to comprehend a concept.

As a philosopher, Deleuze's aim in his studies of the arts is to create the concepts that correspond to these sensible aggregates. *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* creates a series of philosophic concepts, each of which relates to a particular aspect of Bacon's paintings. The text is organized in a quasi-musical fashion, divided into seventeen sequences or series that develop local concepts as if they were melodic lines, which in turn are made to enter into increasingly complex contrapuntal relations, and which together form a kind of conceptual composition that parallels Bacon's sensible compositions. Similarly, Deleuze's two-volume *Cinema* is 'a book of logic, a logic of the cinema' that sets out 'to isolate certain cinematographic concepts', concepts which are proper to the cinema, but which can only be formed philosophically.³² The same must be said for Deleuze's essays in music, literature, and the theatre, notably those collected in *Critique et clinique*.³³

Modern art and modern philosophy converged on a similar problem: both renounced the domain of representation and instead took the *conditions* of representation as their object. Paul Klee's famous phrase echoes through Deleuze's writings on the arts like a kind of motif: *not to render the visible, but to render visible*.³⁴ Twentieth-century painting aimed not at the reproduction of visible forms but the presentation of the non-visible forces that act behind or beneath these forms. It attempted to extract from these intensive forces 'a block of sensations', to produce a material capable of 'capturing' these forces in a sensation. When pious critics reproached Millet for painting

peasants who were carrying an offertory like a sack of potatoes, Millet responded by saying that what matters in the painting is not *what* the peasant is carrying, but rather the exact weight common to the two objects: his aim was to render the force of that weight visible in the painting. In the paintings of Cézanne, who gave this notion of force its first full expression, mountains are made to exist uniquely through the geological forces of folding they harness, landscapes through their thermal and magnetic forces, apples through the forces of germination. Van Gogh even invented unknown forces, such as the extraordinary force of a sunflower. Proust discovered that what the worlds of signs render visible are nothing other than the various invisible structures of time (passing time, wasted time, time regained).³⁵ Modern music has perhaps confronted this problem most directly, trying to develop a highly complex and elaborate material capable of making the nonsonorous forces of time audible, a material that could render duration sonorous, as in the rise of timbre in Stravinsky and Boulez, Edgar Varèse's ionization of sound, or John Cage's experiments in noise such as the prepared piano.³⁶

Properly speaking, there is no 'theory of art' in Deleuze: 'art' itself is a concept, but a purely nominal one, since there necessarily exist 'diverse problems whose solutions are found in heterogenous arts'. Hermann Broch wrote that 'the sole *raison d'être* of a novel is to discover what only the novel can discover',³⁷ and each of the arts, and each work of art, confronts its own particular problems, utilizing its own particular material and techniques, and attempting to capture intensive forces of very diverse types. To say that the aim of art is not to represent the world, but to present a sensation (which is itself a composition of forces, an intensive synthesis of differential relations), is to say that every sensation, every work of art is *singular*, and that the conditions of sensation are at the same time the conditions for the production of the *new*. For this reason, we will limit ourselves here to Deleuze's examination of the oeuvre of a single artist in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*.

2.2 The 'Figure'

One of the most important concepts in Deleuze's analysis of Bacon is what Deleuze calls, following Lyotard, the 'figural', which stands opposed to figuration or representation. The danger of figuration or representation in painting is that it is both illustrative and narrative: it relates the image to an object that it supposedly illustrates, thereby subordinating the eye to the model of recognition and losing the

immediacy of the sensation; and it relates the image to the other images in the painting, thereby tempting us to discover a narrative link between the images. As Bacon says, 'The story that is already being told between one figure and another begins to cancel out the possibilities of what can be done with the paint on its own.'³⁸ Figuration plays a similar role in painting as does recognition in philosophy. Painting has neither a story to tell nor an object to represent: the painting itself is a sensation, an encountered sign. But this is precisely what constitutes the difficulty of the artistic task: 'It is a very, very close and difficult thing,' says Bacon, 'to know why some paint comes across *directly* onto the nervous system and other paint tells the story in a long diatribe through the brain.'³⁹ We return to Deleuze's formula: the sensation produced by the painting is something that can only be felt or sensed.

How does one attain a sensation in painting? Bacon's attempt to 'paint the scream' is an exemplary case in point. His aim is not to paint the visible horrors of the world before which one screams, he says, but rather the intensive forces that produce the scream, that convulse the body so as to create a screaming mouth: the violence of a horrible spectacle must be renounced in order to attain the violence of the sensation. Expressed as a dilemma, one might say: *either* he paints the horror (the 'sensational') and does not paint the scream, because he represents a horrible spectacle and introduces a story; *or* he paints the scream directly (the 'sensation') and does not paint the visible horror, because the scream is necessarily the capture of an invisible force. If Bacon, like Cézanne, was so severe with his own work, and either destroyed or renounced many of his paintings, including many of his screams, it was because they failed to attain the sensation, and fell back into the clichés of figuration and narration. Deleuze poses the problem in this way: 'If force [intensity] is the condition of sensation, it is nonetheless not the force which is sensed, since the sensation "gives" something completely different from the forces that condition it.' So that the essential question of the artist becomes: 'How will the sensation be able to turn in upon itself, extend or contract itself sufficiently, in order to capture, in what is given to us, forces that are not given, in order to make us sense these unsensible forces, and *elevate itself to its own conditions?*'⁴⁰ This then is the task faced by the artist: How can the material used by the artist (paint, words, stone) attain this level of forces? How can it become capable of 'bearing' the sensation?

Deleuze suggests that there are two general routes through which modern painting escaped the clichés of figuration and attempted to

attain the sensation directly: either by moving towards abstraction, or else by moving towards the figural. The first movement, towards abstraction, developed in several directions, but was perhaps marked by two extremes. At one pole, an *abstract art* like that of Mondrian or Kandinsky, though it rejected classical figuration, still retained an arsenal of abstract forms that tried to refine sensation, to dematerialize it, to reduce it to a purely optical code. It tended towards a plane of architectonic composition in which the painting became a kind of spiritual being, a radiant material that was primarily thought rather than felt, and called the spectator to a kind of 'intellectual asceticism'. At the other pole, abstract *expressionism*, like that of Jackson Pollock, went beyond representation not by painting abstract forms, but by dissolving all forms in a fluid and chaotic texture of lines and colours. It attempted to give matter its maximal extension, reversing its subordination to the eye, exhibiting forces by a purely manual line that no longer outlined or delimited anything, but was spread out over the entire surface.

Now in breaking with representation, both these poles of abstraction also broke with the ancient hylomorphic model, which conceived of the artistic task as the imposition of form upon matter: the abstractionists wanted to free up the *form* in an optical code, while the expressionists wanted to free up *matter* in a manual chaos. What the hylomorphic schema ignores in defining form and matter as two separate terms, as Gilbert Simondon showed, is the process of continuous 'modulation' at work behind them. Matter is never a simple or homogenous substance capable of receiving forms, but is made up of intensive and energetic *traits* that not only make that operation possible but continuously alter it (clay is more or less porous, wood is more or less resistant); and forms are never fixed molds, but are determined by the *singularities* of the material that impose implicit processes of deformation and transformation (iron melts at high temperatures, marble or wood split along their veins and fibres). This is the importance of Deleuze's notion of intensity: beyond prepared matter lies an energetic materiality in continuous variation, and beyond fixed form lie qualitative processes of deformation and transformation in continuous development. What becomes essential in modern art, in other words, is no longer the matter-form relation, but the *material-force* relation. The artist takes a given energetic material composed of intensive traits and singularities, and synthesizes its disparate elements in such a way that it can harness or capture these intensities, what Paul Klee called 'the forces of the cosmos'.⁴¹

This task is not without ambiguity, technical and otherwise. The synthesis of the disparate elements of a material requires a certain *degree of consistency*, without which it would be impossible to distinguish the elements that constitute the sensation. Klee, for example, said that in order to produce a complex sensation, in order to harness the forces of the cosmos and render them visible, one must proceed with a sober gesture that simplifies the material, selects it, limits it. All one needs is a pure and simple line, an inflexion, and he was infuriated when people complained about the 'childishness' of his drawings.⁴² If one multiplies the lines, if one elaborates too rich and complex a material, the claim is that one is opening oneself up to all events, to all irruptions of force, but in fact one can merely wind up producing nothing but a scribble that effaces all lines, a 'sloppiness' that in fact effaces the sensation.

It was in order to avoid this danger, as well as the danger of formalism, that Bacon followed a second path, which finds its precursor in Cézanne, and for which Lyotard coined the term 'figural'. Whereas 'figuration' refers to a form that is related to an object it is supposed to represent (recognition), the *figure* is the form that is connected to a sensation, and that conveys the violence of this sensation directly to the nervous system (the sign). In Bacon's paintings, it is the human body that plays this role of the Figure: it functions as the material support or framework that sustains a precise sensation. Bacon frequently begins by *isolating* the human body inside a contour, by putting it inside a circle, a cube, a parallelepiped; balancing it on a rail; placing it on an armchair or bed. The isolated Figure is then subjected to a series of *deformations* through a series of manual techniques: making random marks, throwing the paint at the canvas, scrubbing or brushing the painting. These techniques have a double effect: on the one hand, they undo the organic and extensive unity of the body, and instead reveal what Deleuze calls its *intensive and non-organic* reality; on the other hand, these marks also undo the optical organization of the painting itself, since this force is rendered in a precise sensation that does violence to the eye. The marks reveal the precise point of application of the intensive force contorting the body, a cramp or a spasm twisting the figure from within, making the body shudder or vibrate violently. Bacon's primary subject matter is the body deformed by a plurality of forces: the violent force of a hiccup, a scream, the need to vomit or defecate, of copulation, the flattening force of sleep. Despite those who find Bacon's paintings horrific, Bacon's figures are not tortured bodies, but ordinary bodies in ordinary situations of discomfort, just as a person forced to sit for hours would inevitably assume contorted postures.

In Bacon, the Figure is the support for a precise sensation; without this support, the sensation would remain diffuse and ephemeral, lacking clarity and duration. In many ways, Bacon's criticisms of expressionism had already been anticipated in Cézanne's criticisms of impressionism: sensation is not in the 'free' or disincarnate play of light and colour; it is in the body, and not in the air, whether this body is the human body (Bacon) or the body of an apple (Cézanne). 'Sensation is what is being painted,' writes Deleuze, '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.'⁴³ This then is the *via media* followed by Bacon: without a material framework, the sensation remains chaotic, but on its own the framework remains abstract.

2.3 *The Asymmetrical Synthesis of the Sensible*

How does the Figure attain the 'sensation' in Bacon's painting? We have seen that every sensation is intensive, it implicates within itself a difference in quantity between unequal forces; it is thus necessarily *synthetic*, effecting a passive and asymmetrical synthesis between forces. 'Every sensation is already an "accumulated" or "coagulated" sensation.'⁴⁴ A sensation cannot capture the 'forces of the cosmos', in other words, unless the artist is capable of effecting such syntheses in the material. If we left the nature of these syntheses unexplored until now, it is because it is in the work of art that they are most clearly revealed. On this score, Deleuze has analyzed three fundamental types of asymmetrical syntheses of the forces that Bacon effects in his work.⁴⁵

'*Vibration*', or the *Connective Synthesis: the construction of a single series*. The first type of synthesis is vibration, which characterizes a simple sensation. Even this simple type of sensation, however, is already composite, since it is defined by a difference in intensity that rises or falls, increases or decreases, an invisible pulsation that is more nervous than cerebral. Like every great painter, Bacon will attain this vibratory state primarily through a complex use of colour. The Impressionists had already discovered the role of complementary colours in painting: if one is painting grass, there must not only be a green on the canvas, but also the complementary red, which will make the tone vibrate, and achieve a sunlit sensation that is produced by the 'flash' between these two complementary colours. Cézanne, after having reproached the Impressionists for submerging the object and depicting the atmosphere, refused to separate the tones according to the visual spectrum

(the Newtonian conception of colour) and instead mixed his complementary colours in critical proportions (in a manner closer to Goethe's theory of colour than Newton's), thereby attempting to restore to the object a 'Figure' through a progressive *modulation* of chromatic nuances.⁴⁶ Bacon will do much the same when he constitutes the flesh of his Figures through a flow of polychromatic colours, which are frequently dominated by blue and red, the colours of meat. 'Each broken tone indicates the immediate exercise of a force upon the corresponding zone of the body or the head, it immediately renders a force visible.'⁴⁷ When Deleuze writes, in the preface to *Francis Bacon*, that the summit of the logic of sensation lies in the 'colouring sensation', it is because, for the painter, everything is 'rendered' through pure relations of colour, *colour is discovered as the differential relation upon which everything else depends*. Even a simple sensation is a relation between colours, a vibration. Jean-Luc Godard is one of the great colourists of the cinema, and his statement about *Weekend* – 'It's not blood, it's red' – constitutes one of the great formulas of colourism.⁴⁸

'Resonance', or the *Conjunctive Synthesis: the convergence of (at least) two series*. The second type of syntheses, more complex, is that of *resonance*. In this case, two simple Figures or sensations, rather than simply being isolated and deformed, confront each other, like two wrestlers, in a 'hand-to-hand combat', and are thereby made to *resonate*. Bacon, for instance, frequently puts two bodies in a single painting, bodies that are copulating or sleeping entangled, in such a way that the bodies themselves are rendered indiscernible, and are made to resonate together in a single 'matter of fact', in order to make something appear that is irreducible to the two: this sensation, this Figure. Deleuze argues that the great example of resonance in literature can be found in Proust's involuntary memory, in which two sensations (for instance, the present flavour of the madeleine and the past memory of Combray) are coupled together in order to make a pure Figure appear that internalizes the difference between the two sensations: Combray-in-itself. What is important in resonance is that (at least) two sensations are coupled together, and from them is extracted an ineffable 'essence' (Proust) or 'figure' (Bacon) that is irreducible to either of them: something new is produced.⁴⁹

'Forced Movement', or *Disjunctive Synthesis: the affirmation of divergent series*. Finally, there is the most complicated of these syntheses, what Deleuze calls a *forced movement*. This is no longer a coupling of sensations, but on the contrary their distention or deviation. In Bacon, this appears most clearly in the triptychs, in which the Figures, rather

than being isolated or coupled, are set apart from each other in separate panels. How can the separated Figures of the triptychs be said to present a single 'matter of fact'? It is because in them the separated Figures achieve such an extraordinary amplitude between them that the limits of sensation are broken: sensation is no longer dependent upon a Figure per se, but rather *the intensive rhythm of force itself becomes the Figure of the triptych*. The Figures loosen their grip on each other, and are no longer united by anything but the *distance* that separates them, and the light, the air, or the void which inserts itself between them like a wedge. It is because of this amplitude that Deleuze assigns a privileged place to the triptychs in Bacon's work.⁵⁰

Vibration, resonance, and forced movement are the concepts Deleuze creates to describe the three types of syntheses that Bacon utilizes to 'paint the sensation'. In general, these constitute the intensive conditions of sensation, the three 'varieties' of compositions of sensation, the three modalities of a 'being of sensation'. To be sure, each of these syntheses co-exist in Bacon's paintings, which are concrete assemblages of differences, mixed states. In the individual paintings, for example, the large fields of uniform colour already effect a distancing function similar to that of the triptychs (disjunction), but are likewise themselves composed of subtle variations of intensity or saturation (connection); and vibrations in turn are already effects of resonance, since they couple together diverse levels of sensation (conjunction).⁵¹ The important point is that the artist utilizes these intensive syntheses in order to produce 'a pure being of sensation'; the work of art is a functional 'machine' that *produces* effects of vibration, resonance, and forced movement. The question that must therefore be posed to a work of art, argues Deleuze, is not 'What does it mean?' (interpretation) but rather 'How does it work?' (experimentation): 'What are the connections, what are the disjunctions, the conjunctions, what use is made of the syntheses?'⁵²

The sensation itself, however, must not be confused with the material in which these syntheses are effected. Art is composition, but the technical composition of the material is not the same as the aesthetic composition of the sensation. It is true that in fact (*quid facti?*) the sensation lasts no longer than its support or materials (stone, canvas, chemical colour, etc.). But in principle at least (*quid juris?*), the sensation is of a different order than the material, and exists in itself for as long as the material lasts. Oil painting, Deleuze suggests, provides a useful example of this distinction, since it can be approached in two manners. In a first case, the *sensation is realized in the material* and projected onto it: an outline is sketched on a white background, and

colour, light and shade are added afterwards. In a second case, which modern art has increasingly tended to adopt, it is the *material that passes into sensation*: rather than beginning with a sketch, the painter gradually 'thickens' the background, adding colour alongside colour, piling up or folding the material in such a way that the architecture of the sensation emerges from the medium itself, and the material becomes indiscernible from the sensation. In either case, however, it is matter itself that becomes expressive, so that one can say of the sensation itself that it is metallic, crystalline, stony, colouring, and so on. The material constitutes the de facto condition of the sensation, and insofar as this condition is satisfied, even if only for a few seconds (as in Tinguely's self-destructing creations), it gives the compound of created sensations the power to exist and to be preserved in and of itself: a 'monument'.⁵³

The work of art is thus a synthetic unity. But what is the nature of this unity, if the heterogenous elements it synthesizes have no other relation to each other than sheer difference? The elements brought together by the work of art cannot be said to be fragments of a lost unity or shattered totality, nor can the parts be said to form or prefigure the unity of the work through the course of a logical or dialectical development or an organic evolution. Rather than functioning as their totalizing or unifying principle, the work of art can only be understood as the *effect* of the multiplicity of the disconnected parts. The work of art produces a unity, but this product is simply a new part that is added alongside the other parts. The artwork neither unifies nor totalizes these parts, but it has an effect on them because it establishes syntheses between elements that in themselves do not communicate, and that retain all their difference in their own dimensions. Art establishes 'transversals' between the elements of multiplicities, but without ever reducing their difference to a form of identity or gathering up the multiplicity into a totality. The work of art, as a compound of sensations, is not a unification or totalization of differences, but rather the *production of a new difference*, and 'style' in art always begins with the synthetic relations between heterogenous differences.⁵⁴

Deleuze's aesthetic theory is not a theory of reception, an analytic of the spectator's judgments of a work of art, but a theory of aesthetics written from the point of view of creation. Its guiding question is: What are the conditions for the production of the *new*? In light of this question, our aim has been to show how Deleuze's philosophy of 'difference' overcomes the duality with which aesthetics has been encumbered since Kant. On the one hand, in breaking with the model of recognition and common sense, and the image of thought from

which they are derived, Deleuze locates the element of sensation, not in a recognizable object but in an encountered sign. The sign constitutes the limit-object of sensibility, an intensive product of differential relations: it is intensity, and not the a priori forms of space and time, that constitutes the condition of real, and not merely possible, experience. On the other hand, these genetic principles of sensibility are at the same time the principles of composition of the work of art. The artist uses these intensive syntheses to produce a bloc of sensations, and in turn it is the work of art itself that reveals the nature of these syntheses. In this way, Deleuze's logic of sensation reunites the two dissociated halves of aesthetics: the theory of forms of experience (as 'the being of the sensible') and the work of art as experimentation (as 'a pure being of sensation'). 'The work of art quits the domain of representation in order to become "experience", transcendental empiricism or the science of the sensible.'⁵⁵ If Deleuze's various writings on art are, as he says, 'philosophy, nothing but philosophy', it is precisely because they constitute explorations of, and experimentations within, this transcendental domain of sensibility.

NOTES

- 1 For Deleuze's formulations of the aesthetic problem, see *Difference and Repetition* [1968], trans. Paul Patton, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 56-7, 68; and *The Logic of Sense* [1969], trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin Boundas, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 260.
- 2 Plato, *Republic*, VII, 523b. Deleuze appeals to this text in *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 138-42, 236; *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, London: Athlone, 1983, pp. 108, 210 (n. 33); *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard, New York: George Braziller, 1972, pp. 96, 166.
- 3 See Deleuze's analyses in *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984, esp. p. 15.
- 4 Plato, *Republic*, 524d; see also *Philebus*, 24d; *Parmenides* 154-155; and *Theaetetus*, 152-155. These paradoxes, known in antiquity as Megarian sorites ('How many grains constitutes a heap?'), are treated in formal logic as 'vague predicates'; see Pascal Engel, *The Norm of the True*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, pp. 199-215. Deleuze treats the theme of becoming in *The Logic of Sense*, series 1, pp. 1-3.
- 5 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, pp. 216-17; Erwin Straus, *The Primary World of the Senses: A Vindication of Sensory Experi-*

- ence, trans. Jacob Needleman, New York: Free Press, 1963, pp. 316-31; and Henri Maldiney, *Regard Parole Espace*, Lausanne: Éditions l'Âge d'Homme, 1973, pp. 134-8. For Deleuze's criticisms, see *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 57; *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1981, pp. 31-3; and *Difference and Repetition*, p. 137.
- 6 *Proust and Signs*, p. 36. Plato, in Deleuze's reading, remains tied to the model of recognition in two ways: in defining the sign as a qualitative contrariety, Plato confused the being of the sensible with a simple sensible being [*aistheton*], and he related it to an already-existing Idea that merely shifted the operation of recognition to the process of reminiscence. For the critique of Plato, see *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 141-2; for Proust's break with Platonism, see *Proust and Signs*, pp. 96-103.
- 7 The analysis of images of thought is one of the central objects of Deleuze's philosophy: see in general *Proust and Signs*, pp. 159-67; *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. 103-10; and *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 127-67. More specific analysis of these 'noological' themes can be found in *The Logic of Sense*, pp. 127-33 (height, depth, and surface as coordinates of thought) and *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pp. 3-25 (the tree and the rhizome as images of thought), pp. 374-80 (the State-form versus 'nomad' thought), and 474-500 (the smooth and the striated).
- 8 Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray, New York: Harper & Row, 1968, p. 28. Heidegger, however, still retains the theme of a desire or *philia*, substituting metaphors of the 'gift' for those of violence, and adhering to the subjective presupposition of a pre-ontological understanding of Being. If Artaud plays an important role in Deleuze's thinking, it is because his case presents, in its clearest form, the fact that what thought is forced to think is its own impotence, its own incapacity to take on form on its own: Artaud's problem was not to orient his thought, but simply to manage to think *something*. Hence the determining importance of images of thought: can being mad belong to thought in principle, or is it simply a contingent feature of the brain that should be considered as a simple fact? See *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 146-7 (commentary on Artaud) and p. 321, n. 11 (criticisms of Heidegger).
- 9 Deleuze has analysed each of these figures of negativity: on stupidity, see *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 105 ('stupidity is a structure of thought as such... it is not error or a tissue of errors... there are imbecile thoughts, imbecile discourses that are made up entirely of truths'); on convention, see *Proust and Signs*, p. 160 ('truths remain arbitrary and abstract so long as they are based on the goodwill of thinking. Only the conventional is explicit... Minds communicate to each other only the conventional'); on opinion, see *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlin-

son and Graham Burchell, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 144–50 ('opinion is a thought closely molded on the form of recognition'); on clichés, particularly as they pose a problem for the artist, see *The Movement-Image*, pp. 208–9, and Francis Bacon, pp. 57–63.

10 According to Proust, jealousy is not a disease of love but its truth, its finality, and all love is 'a dispute over evidence', 'a delirium of signs' (*Proust and Signs*, pp. 117, 122).

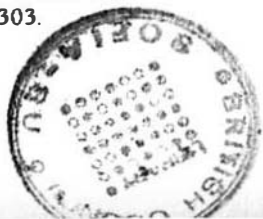
11 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 144; see also *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin, New York: Zone Books, 1990, p. 149: 'One is always struck by the diverse inspirations of empiricists and rationalists. One group is surprised by what fails to surprise the others. If we listen to the rationalists, truth and freedom are, above all, rights; they wonder how we can lose our rights, fall into error or lose our liberty . . . From an empiricist viewpoint, everything is inverted: what is surprising is that men sometimes manage to understand truth, sometimes manage to understand one other, sometimes manage to free themselves from what fetters them.'

12 Francis Bacon, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with David Sylvester*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1975, p. 18.

13 Kant presents this theory of common sense in the *Critique of Judgment*, §18–22, §40.

14 See *ibid.*, §29, General Remark. Kant's 'Analytic of the Sublime' lies at the centre of Jean-François Lyotard's conception of 'postmodern' art, which he defines as that which *presents the unrepresentable* in his essay 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?', in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, pp. 71–82. There is a profound difference between Deleuze and Lyotard, despite numerous lines of convergence between their respective theories of art: Deleuze's theory is derived from an analysis of sensibility (intensity), whereas Lyotard's is derived from the faculty of the imagination (the sublime). Lyotard sometimes speaks of the 'imagination or sensibility' in the same sentence (e.g., pp. 80, 81), but without ever taking the further step of extracting the limit-element of sensibility, which is precisely not that of the imagination. The difference would seem to bear on the nature of the Ideas appealed to each instance: transcendent in the case of the imagination, immanent in the case of sensibility. For Lyotard's analysis of the sublime, see his important commentaries in *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

15 Salomon Maïmon, *Versuch über die transzendental philosophie*, Berlin: Christian Vos, 1790. For commentary, see above all Martial Guérout, *La philosophie transcendentale de Salomon Maïmon*, Paris: Alcan, 1929, esp. pp. 55ff and 76ff; Sylvain Zac, *Salomon Maïmon: Critique de Kant*, Paris: Cerf, 1988, esp. ch. 6; and Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 295–303.



- 16 *Note on the differential relation.* The nature of the differential relation can be made clear by comparing three types of relation distinguished in mathematics. A first type is established between elements that are themselves independent or autonomous, such as $3 + 2$ or $2/3$. The elements are real, and these relations themselves must be said to be *real*. A second type, for example $x^2 + y^2 - R^2 = 0$ (the algebraic equation for the circle), is established between terms whose value is unspecified, but which nevertheless must in each case have a determined value. Such relations can be called *imaginary*. But the third type of relation is established between elements that themselves have no determined value, but that nevertheless are determined reciprocally in the relation: thus $ydy + xdx = 0$ (the universal of the circumference or the corresponding function), or $dy/dx = -x/y$ (the expression of a curve and its trigonometric tangent). These are *differential* relations. The elements of these relations are undetermined, being neither real nor imaginary: dy is completely undetermined in relation to y , dx is completely undetermined in relation to x . Yet they are perfectly determinable in the differential relation: the terms themselves do not exist apart from the differential relation into which they enter and by which they are reciprocally determined. This differential relation, in turn, determines a singular point, and it is the set of these points that determines the topological space of a given structure (a triangle, for example, has three singular points, while curves and figures are derived from more complex distributions). See Deleuze, 'A quoi reconnaît-on la structuralisme?', in François Châtelet, ed., *Histoire de la philosophie tome 8: Le XXe siècle*, Paris: Hachette, 1972, pp. 299–335; *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 88; *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 172–5.
- 17 For Deleuze's interpretation of Leibniz's theory of perception, see *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, ch. 7, 'Perception in the Folds', pp. 85–99, from which the above examples are taken. For Leibniz's primary texts, see *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §33; *Consideration of the Doctrine of a Universal Mind*, §14; *Monadology*, §20–25; *Principles of Nature and Grace*, §13; and the *New Essays*, chapter 1.
- 18 Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison, Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1965, p. 225. Deleuze analyses this example in 'La Conception de la différence chez Bergson', *Études bergsonniennes* 4, 1956, pp. 77–112, and draws out its consequences in *The Logic of Sense*, p. 136: 'To have a colour is not more general than to be green, because it is only this colour, and this green which is this nuance, and is related to the individual subject. This rose is not red without having the redness of this rose.' Deleuze is closer to Goethe than Newton. Goethe's theory of colour has similarly been retrieved in certain contemporary scientific theories: redness is no longer perceived as a band-width of light but as a singularity within a chaotic universe, whose boundaries are not

always easy to describe; see James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science*, London: Sphere, 1988, pp. 164–6.

- 19 Likewise, one could speak of a white society or a white language, which contains in its virtuality all the phonemes and relations destined to be actualized in the diverse languages and in the remarkable parts of a same language; see *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 203–7. For a fuller analysis of musical form along these lines, see Jean-François Lyotard, 'Several Silences', in *Driftworks*, ed. Roger McKeon, New York: Semiotext[e], 1984, pp. 99–110.
- 20 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1929, A169/B211: 'Every sensation has a degree, that is, an intensive magnitude which can always be diminished [to the point where the intensity = 0] . . . Every colour, as for instance red, has a degree which, however small it may be, is never the smallest; and so with heat, the moment of gravity, etc.'
- 21 Hermann Cohen, *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung*, 2nd edn, Berlin: Dümmler, 1885, p. 428: 'Space and time itself, the sensible conditions of the unity of consciousness, insofar as they represent *quanta continua*, are constituted as *continua* by the *reality of intensive magnitude* as the condition of thought. Intensive magnitude consequently appears immediately as the prior condition of the extensive . . . Such was the necessity that led to the infinitely small, positing something that became a unity not in relation to One but in relation to Zero' (p. 428). See Jules Vuillemin's commentaries in *L'Héritage kantien et la révolution copernicienne: Fichte, Cohen, Heidegger*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954, pp. 132–207.
- 22 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 20: 'By "sign" we mean what happens within such a [differential] system, what flashes across the intervals when a communication takes place between dispartes. The sign is indeed an effect, but an effect with two aspects: in one of these it expresses, *qua sign*, the productive dissymmetry; in the other it tends to cancel it.'
- 23 Francis Bacon, p. 34; *Difference and Repetition*, p. 230.
- 24 Kant himself admitted that this schematizing power of the imagination was 'blind', 'an art concealed in the depths of the human soul', an activity 'nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover' (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A78/B103, A141/B180–181). It is for this reason that Heidegger took the imagination as the focal point of his reading of Kant, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.
- 25 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 222.
- 26 Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Essay II, §1, pp. 57–8: 'What we experience and absorb enters our consciousness as little while we are digesting it . . . as does the thousandfold process involved in physical nourishment . . . so that it will be immediately obvious how there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no *present*, without forgetful-

- ness.' Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, New York: Zone Books, 1988, pp. 35–6: we never perceive objects per se, but rather objects *minus* those aspects that do not interest us as a function of our needs.
- 27 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 237. In the chapter on 'The Perception-Image' in *The Movement-Image*, Deleuze argues that, if the cinema goes beyond normal perception, it is in the sense that it reaches this genetic element of all possible perception: 'In the "kino-eye", Vertov was aiming to attain or regain the system of universal variation in itself,' to 'reach "another" perception, which is also the genetic element of all perception' (pp. 80–6).
- 28 *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, p. 93.
- 29 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 213. Martial Gu eroult discusses the role this notion played in post-Kantian philosophy in *L'Evolution et la structure de la Doctrine de la Science chez Fichte*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930, vol. 1, pp. 14ff ('clear and distinct understanding was posited as the fruit of a continuous development whose point of departure was the confused understanding, the sole form under which the totality of the universe could be given originally in the finite mind').
- 30 *What is Philosophy?*, p. 167.
- 31 Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, New York: Columbia, 1995; cf. *The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 280: 'The theory of cinema does not bear on the cinema, but on the concepts of the cinema, which are no less practical, effective, or existent than the cinema itself.'
- 32 *Negotiations 1972–1990*, p. 47. *The Movement-Image*, p. ix.
- 33 Deleuze, *Critique et clinique*, Paris: Minuit, 1993.
- 34 Paul Klee, 'Sch opferische Konfession', in *Das Bildnerische Denken*, B ale, 1964, p. 76, as quoted in *Francis Bacon*, p. 39 and *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 342; see also Maldiney's commentary in *Parole Regard Espace*, pp. 143–6. Lyotard's similar formula – 'not to represent, but to present the unrepresentable' – is discussed in 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988, pp. 89–107.
- 35 See *Proust and Signs*, pp. 17–18: 'Time, which usually is not visible, seeks out bodies in order to become visible, seizing bodies wherever it encounters them so as to cast its magic lantern,' modifying this feature of someone we knew long ago, elongating, blurring, or crushing that one. Deleuze distinguishes four structures of time in Proust: lost time is both 'passing time' and 'wasted time'; time regained is both a 'time recovered' at the heart of time lost, and an 'original time' that is affirmed in art.
- 36 For these examples, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 343; *Francis Bacon*, p. 39.
- 37 Quoted in Milan Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, trans. Linda Asher, New York: Grove Press, 1988, pp. 5, 36.

- 38 Bacon, *The Brutality of Fact*, p. 23.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 40 Francis Bacon, pp. 39–40.
- 41 Gilbert Simondon, *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964; Deleuze was heavily influenced by Simondon's text.
- 42 Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, trans. Paul Findlay, intro. Herbert Reed, London: Faber, 1966, p. 53: 'Had I wished to present man "as he is", then I should have had to use such a bewildering confusion of lines that pure elementary representation would have been out of the question. The result would have been vagueness beyond recognition.'
- 43 Francis Bacon, p. 27.
- 44 Francis Bacon, pp. 28–9; cf. *Difference and Repetition*, p. 234.
- 45 The primary texts on these sensible syntheses in art are: Francis Bacon, pp. 48–9; *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 167–8; and *Proust and Signs*, pp. 131–42.
- 46 In Newton, for example, the 'optical' grey is obtained through a combination of black and white, whereas in Goethe the 'haptic' grey is obtained through a combination of green and red. See Goethe, *Color Theory*, ed. Rupprecht Matthaei, New York: Van Nostrand, 1971. On Cézanne's relation to the Impressionists with regard to colour, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Cézanne's Doubt,' in *The Essential Writings*, ed. Alden L. Fischer, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969, p. 236.
- 47 Francis Bacon, p. 96.
- 48 *The Movement-Image*, p. 118. On these relations of colour, see Deleuze's discussion in Francis Bacon, ch. 15, 'La traversée de Bacon', pp. 93–7.
- 49 On the role of resonance in involuntary memory, see *Proust and Signs*, ch. 5, 'The Secondary Role of Memory', pp. 51–64 (Joyce's 'epiphanies', Deleuze suggests, can be analysed in the same manner). On coupling in Bacon, see Francis Bacon, ch. 9, 'Couples et triptyques,' pp. 45–9.
- 50 On 'forced movement' in Bacon, see Francis Bacon, ch. 10, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un triptyque?', pp. 51–6. The question concerning the conditions under which disjunction can be a form of synthesis (and not an analytic procedure that excludes the predicates of a thing by virtue of the identity of its concept) is one of the decisive questions posed by a philosophy of difference, though it lies beyond the scope of this paper. For Deleuze's discussions of the problem, see 'La synthèse disjonctive' (with Guattari), in *L'Arc* 43 1970, pp. 54–62 and *The Logic of Sensation*, pp. 172–6, 294–7.
- 51 In *What is Philosophy?* (p. 168), Deleuze suggests that, of all the arts, it is perhaps sculpture that presents these three syntheses in an almost pure state: first, there are the sensations of stone, marble, or metal, which vibrate according to strong and weak beats; second, there are the protuberances and cavities in the material, which establish powerful combats that interlock and resonate with each other; and finally, there is the set-up

- of the sculpture, with large empty spaces between groups, or even within a single group, in which one no longer knows if it is the light or air that sculpts or is sculpted.
- 52 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, New York: Viking, 1977, p. 109.
- 53 On the relation of the sensation to the material, see *What is Philosophy?*, ch. 7, passim, esp. pp. 191-7.
- 54 See *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 42: the work of art 'is a whole of its constituent parts but does not totalize them; it is a unity of its particular parts but it does not unify them; rather, it is added to them as a new part fabricated separately'. On the concept of 'transversality' formulated by Guattari, see *Proust and Signs*, pp. 149-50 (and p. 157, n. 106).
- 55 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 56.