

REPRESENTATION OR SENSATION? A CRITIQUE OF DELEUZE'S PHILOSOPHY OF PAINTING

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*In this paper, I shall present an argument against Deleuze's philosophy of painting. Deleuze's main thesis in *Logic of Sensation* is twofold: [1] he claims that painting is based on a non-representational level; and [2] he claims that this level comes out of the materiality of painting. I shall claim that Deleuze's theses should be rejected for the following reasons: first, the difference between non-intentional life and the representational world is too strict. I submit that the non-intentional relation that painting opens up is itself part of and emerges out of the representational force of painting. If this would not be the case, then the criterion for differentiating between paintings and other objects cannot be developed. Indeed, Deleuze fails to give us a criterion. Second, Deleuze's way of dealing with materiality in painting remains unsatisfactory insofar as he is unable to take into account how materiality is charged with an "attitude toward the world." In sum, materiality can only be painting's materiality if we understand it as being formed and disclosed in representation.*

Gilles Deleuze has given us powerful tools and a new language for analysing and thinking about aesthetics and modern art, especially film and painting. Deleuze developed his philosophy of painting primarily in relation to one modern painter, Francis Bacon. Probably, this is because one of Deleuze's central philosophical topics, namely, the relation and tension between representation and what escapes representation, is itself a prominent topic in Bacon's art. In what follows, I shall critically engage Deleuze's theses about painting in general, and about Bacon in particular. Deleuze's main thesis, as expressed in *Logic of Sensation*, as I see it, is twofold: [1] he claims that painting releases a non-intentional level of life and establishes a non-narrative and non-representational identity between us, the spectator, and the painting, and [2] he claims that this non-representational and pre-conscious level is connected to and comes out of

the materiality of painting. Although I strongly support Deleuze's focus on materiality (the claim of which is not unique as such¹) and admire his revealing text, I do not believe that the way he analyses the non-intentional moment of experience and materiality in painting is successfully carried out. In fact, I shall claim that Deleuze's theses should be rejected on the following grounds: First, Deleuze's strict dualistic setup of, on the one hand, non-intentional life and, on the other hand, the representational world is too strict. Put briefly, I do not believe that there is something like "pure presence," at least if the concept of a "sensational reality" is used for a philosophy of painting. In contradistinction to Deleuze, I submit that the non-intentional relation that painting opens up is itself *part of* and emerges *out of* the representational force of painting. If this would not be the case, then the criterion for differentiating between paintings and other objects cannot be developed. Indeed, Deleuze fails to develop such a criterion. Second, Deleuze's way of dealing with materiality in painting remains unsatisfactory, insofar as he is unable to take into account how materiality is from the ground up charged with what I shall call a "bodily attitude toward the world." In sum, materiality can only be *painting's* materiality if we understand it as being formed *and* disclosed in paintings. With Deleuze, it is hard to explain both the way in which materiality comes to the forefront *differently* in *different* paintings and why these different ways of how materiality presents itself to us are showing up *in* paintings. To establish my case, I will proceed in the following order: I shall first briefly outline Deleuze's position; I will then introduce my counter-claim, emphasising with some detail two aspects of

¹ Almost every commentator on modern art after WWII (including Fried, Greenberg, Adorno, and Foucault) starts out with the acknowledgement that modern painting is based on the discovery of its own object character. However, most of the aforementioned commentators do not directly connect the problem of materiality to sensation and bodily phenomena, as the phenomenological tradition tends to do. For an overview of Foucault's lectures on Manet see John Nale, "Divisions of Manet" in *Philosophy Today* 51/1, 2007, 17–25. For an overview of how Deleuze tries to go beyond Merleau-Ponty and Gestalt phenomena see Henry Somers-Hall, "Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty: The Aesthetics of Difference" in *Symposium* 10/1, 2006, 213–21; see also Darren Ambrose, "Deleuze, Philosophy, and the Materiality of Painting" in *Symposium* 10/1, 2006, 191–211 and Zsuzsa Baross, "Francis Bacon, The Philosopher's Painter, and the Logic of Sensation" in *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible*, (ed.) W.W. Wurzer (New York: Continuum 2003), 98–116.

this claim, namely, the relation between representation and sensation, and the status of materiality. I will finally conclude with a brief remark on order and chaos.²

Deleuze's Position

Deleuze's book on Bacon addresses Bacon's art from different angles. The focus, however, can be seen in Deleuze's attempt to show that Bacon's art in particular and painting in general can only appropriately be understood if we move away from all narration, representation and figuration, as long as we mean by the latter terms: identifiable signification of something outside of painting. Deleuze's overall interpretation of Bacon is, in part, supported by Bacon himself, who underlines in his famous discussions with David Sylvester that Bacon's art of painting has something to do with violence, the nervous system, life, excitement, and death. However, instead of addressing these issues from the point of an existential philosophy, Deleuze tries to exploit Bacon for his own philosophy, by subjecting Bacon's work to his thesis that "painting directly attempts to release and presences beneath representation, beyond representation,"³ which leads to the distinction between "the recognized object and the encountered sign."⁴ This main thesis is carried out in two respects: first, Deleuze deals with the status of sensation as a pre-representational realm as such; second, he works out a different conception of the body, which follows his interpretation of the role of sensation in experience in general and in painting in particular. Sensation, according to Deleuze, has an immediate status in experience and indicates a pre-conscious, perhaps organic, form of being in direct contact with the world. As such, sensation is the level of "pure presence" (LoS, 47) and is conceived by Deleuze as the condition for sensational differences, such

² For a better elaboration of the hermeneutical position see Christian Lotz, "Depiction and Plastic Perception: A Critique of Husserl's Theory of Picture Consciousness" in *Continental Philosophy Review* 2, 2007, 171–85, where I also deal with Klee's theory of art. For the hermeneutical position in general, see Gottfried Boehm, "Sehen: Hermeneutische Reflexionen" in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 1, 2002, 50–67.

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, (tr.) D.W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 45; henceforth cited as LoS.

⁴ Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality" in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, (ed.) Paul Patton (Malden: Blackwell 1996), 29–58, here 32.

as vision, touch, and hearing. Put in Deleuzian prose, “[S]ensation is not qualitative and qualified, but has only an intensive reality, which no longer determines within itself representative elements, but allotropic variations. Sensation is vibration.” (LoS, 39) This concept of sensation has consequences for how Deleuze addresses bodily experience and the handling of the body in Bacon. If sensation, according to Deleuze, enters the bodily level, it emerges in the form of a “spasmodic appearance.” (LoS, 40) What Deleuze has in mind is a bodily experience that is not (or not yet) organised and ordered through bodily organs. “The” sensational body, for Deleuze, is a body that escapes every cultural as well as organic differentiation. For example, as Deleuze points out, on the “spasmodic” level of sensation and material life, a difference between mouth and anus is not experienced; rather, both are ways in which life appears before it enters an organised form. Deleuze finds traces of this original unorganised sensation in Bacon’s art, which, he claims, “disembodies bodies.” (LoS, 47)⁵ Put simply, Bacon’s paintings depict a body, which tries to “escape” from itself in the form of a chaotic, non-restrained, and non-structured “entity.” Bacon’s repeated fascination with “the” scream is introduced as an example.

Though this summary of Deleuze’s main claim is certainly abbreviated, we can use it as a springboard for our discussion. Accordingly, I shall now turn to a discussion of the aforementioned centre of Deleuze’s radical interpretation of sensation and Bacon’s painting. I shall first address the conceptual difference between representation and sensation.

Representation and Sensation in Painting

At first, it seems that Deleuze’s discussion of the role of sensation follows phenomenological patterns, especially since it can partly be read as a transformation of the kinesthetic approach to sensation, which embeds sensation in an intentional framework. Deleuze deals with three attempts to analyse sensation: [1] sensation as a series of different “impressions” (LoS, 33), [2] sensation as a form of affection or feeling (*ibid.*, 35), and, [3] sensation as a motor phenomenon (*ibid.*, 36). Against these concepts,

⁵ See also Ronald Bogue, “Gilles Deleuze: The Aesthetics of Force” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, 257–69, here 262.

he puts forward an interpretation of sensation as a material concept and in regard to Bacon, as a form of “spasm,” which is best understood as a chaotic, bodily materiality before the body becomes ordered through (intentional) movement.⁶ However, Deleuze’s move is really more radical because he strictly opposes sensation and representation. It does not seem surprising, then, that he chose Bacon as an artist who follows this schema in his artistic praxis. For in his interviews with Sylvester, and in his figural paintings, Bacon points out several times that he tried to overcome the narrative, the identifiable, and figurative painting. This comes to the forefront in how he isolates figures.

However, the fact that Bacon, without becoming an abstract painter, sought a way out of narrative painting should not lead us to the conclusion that his (or even any) painting is not representative and can be encountered on the level of “pure presence.” What makes Bacon’s art of painting so interesting is not that it establishes a non-intentional relation to the spectator (which it undoubtedly does *too*); rather, the interesting point is that his paintings in some sense *are dealing with* and are *about* this relation. The direct effect of painting on our nervous system, at which Deleuze is looking, is not simply an effect of its materiality, but it is an effect of *how Bacon presents the relation to sensation in his paintings*; otherwise and this is the decisive argument against Deleuze, the materiality of Bacon’s paintings could no longer be differentiated from objects that are not paintings, such as a well-crafted wallpaper. Not only a painting but also wallpaper, according to Deleuze’s considerations about sensation and how it functions in *general experience*, must have some direct effect on our nervous system. Put differently, we need a qualifying element that differentiates a painting by Bacon from any other object around us, since *both* fall under Deleuze’s philosophy of sensation. Consequently, the “pure” non-intentional moment, if there is some-

⁶ I have dealt in length with the concept of sensation, especially in Husserl, in Christian Lotz, *From Affectivity to Subjectivity. Husserl's Phenomenology Revisited* (London: Palgrave 2007). In contradistinction to Deleuze, I do not believe that the sensational level can be separated from the intentional level.

thing like that, must somehow be *disclosed*.⁷ Disclosure, however, requires a representational moment and it is precisely this representational level (*Darstellung*) that allows Bacon's paintings to differ from even the most beautifully crafted wallpapers. Indeed, representation in painting (which does not necessarily mean identifiable figures!) presupposes a minimal *difference* between sensation and representation in order to allow us to speak meaningfully about Bacon's paintings as paintings that "directly release" (Deleuze) presences beneath representation. If it is not the sensational level, which we also find in an experience of wallpaper, then it *must* be the representational level.

Moreover, I think that there are at least two reasons for why not only Bacon's, but all painting, is representative: [1] any form of sign or image presupposes a form of negativity if we want to differentiate it from objects such as wallpaper. In order to mean something, a sign must point to something that it is not (external negativity). In order to present something, an image must let something be seen in it (internal negativity). If we simply perceive something in front of us that neither points to something external (signifier-significant) nor to something in itself (image-presentation), then we will only see a surface structure. I should underline that "representation" does not necessarily mean that we see tables, plants, or Holy Mary in a painting; rather, as Gadamer would put it, representation (*Darstellung*) is the very moment of an image that allows us

⁷ I would like to thank the blind reviewers of this article for their reviews, which helped me to clarify my thoughts on these issues. One reviewer remarked that I am claiming that abstract paintings are not distinguishable from wallpaper; however, that is not what I am claiming here. I am not making a claim about abstract paintings (which does not make sense in regard to Bacon anyhow); rather, I claim that we cannot philosophically distinguish between paintings in general (whether they are abstract or not) and non-paintings, such as wallpaper, *if* we assume, with Deleuze, that the non-intentional aspect is the centre of this experience. This is because *both* the experience of wallpaper and the experience of a painting contain this element. Accordingly, we must assume that the sensational level *presents* itself *in* the representation, i.e., the painting, whereas in wallpaper this does not occur because wallpaper is not presenting anything. Consequently, I am also not arguing for an absolute distinction between representation/recognition and sensation; rather, I claim that the sensational level of the experience of paintings must reach recognition. In this vein, I reject Smith's claim that "the painting itself is a sensation" (Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation," 42). Why do we speak about *painting* and not, for that matter, wallpapers, which, from that perspective, also "are" sensations?

to see something *in it*, which turns representation into a presentation of something, namely, an image.⁸ Even monochrome painting is based on the difference that it opens up, namely, the material surface and the colour that it presents to us *in it*. We come to see “a” (perhaps even “the”) colour *in* a coloured and structured surface. Without this *minimal* condition of depiction, we would neither be able to see something in a painting nor to differentiate a painting from other non-depictive objects surrounding us. Only this way is it possible that Deleuze can claim that Bacon’s paintings “make presence immediately visible” (LoS, 45); otherwise we would encounter in Bacon’s paintings a night in which—to take up a Hegelian formulation—all cows remain grey. In sum, it would be wrong to take Bacon’s search for the non-narrative dimension in painting and the violence of painting beneath or despite the figurative as a form of painting that is not representation. It is representative, but in a unique way.⁹

In a similar fashion, a concept of sensation determined without it being part of some kind of intentionality or representation remains diffuse, and in Deleuze’s version, it is ultimately contradictory: for example, Deleuze claims that Bacon’s paintings “*make visible*” (LoS, 37) a “pathic” dimension of sensation. He asks us to think of these as being localised *before* sensations are differentiated by the different senses or sense organs. This “original unity of the senses” (LoS, 37), according to Deleuze, appears visually in painting, though it itself remains pre-representational. This determination of sensation remains a fictitious invention by Deleuze for two reasons: first, the claim that sensations are somehow “working” in us before their sensual differentiation and before we can qualify them, remains problematic, since Deleuze says something *about* sensation by terming and further describing them as “rhythm” and “vibration.” Consequently, we should reject his thesis that “sensation is not qualitative and qualified” (*ibid.*, 39), since by determining sensation *as* rhythm or *as* vibration Deleuze *qualifies* sensation (that is, he diffe-

⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (tr.) J. Weinsheimer (New York: Continuum 2003), 110–21.

⁹ For a similar claim against Deleuze see Ernst van Alphen, *Francis Bacon and the Loss of the Self* (London: Reaction Books 1992), 30–41. Van Alphen claims that Bacon’s paintings cannot be fully understood if we take them to be *against* narrativity *per se*; rather, as van Alphen points out, narrativity in Bacon’s paintings can be found on the perceptual level, i.e., “the representation of perceiving as a sequence of events, which are embodied, not illustrated, by the figures.” (*Ibid.*, 30)

reniates sensation from what is not sensation by determining it as rhythm). In addition, we might raise the following obvious question: what else should the claim that the painter makes these forces *visible* mean, if not that these forces become at some level represented (i.e., put in some *form*) by the painter? Accordingly, sensations cannot *simply* be understood as “invisible forces” (*ibid.*, 52), as Deleuze later claims, because by *determining* them as invisible, Deleuze presupposes that they are (somehow) *accessible*. Accordingly, there is not simply a “pure presence” or a “vibrating chaos;” rather, sensation is here conceived by Deleuze *as visible*, that is, as (somehow) *noticeable*. In a similar fashion, if figure, as Deleuze claims (LoS, 60) would “become” figure, then it would no longer make sense to differentiate both. However, it is undeniable that Bacon’s painting, including his repeatedly carried out portraits, are based on figures. They *are* formed into *de-figured* figures (but still figures). Somers-Hall falls into the same trap as Deleuze. He claims that with Deleuze we can go beyond the *Gestalt*: we “see traces of that which is behind the Gestalt.”¹⁰ This claim, though, remains ultimately contradictory: on the one hand, he claims we are able *to see* these traces and, on the other hand, he claims that these forces remain “invisible” and *cannot* be sensed.¹¹

¹⁰ Somers-Hall, “Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty”, 220.

¹¹ Similarly, Daniel Smith and John Protevi write in their entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: “[...] Deleuze cites Francis Bacon: we’re after an artwork that produces an effect on the nervous system, not on the brain. What he means by this figure of speech is that in an art encounter we are forced to experience the ‘being of the sensible.’ We get something that we cannot re-cognize, something that is “imperceptible”—it doesn’t fit the hylomorphic production model of perception within which sense data, the “matter” or *hyle* of sensation, is ordered by submission to conceptual form. Art, however, cannot be re-cognized, but can only be sensed; in other words, art splits perceptual processing, forbidding the move to conceptual ordering.” (Daniel Smith and John Protevi, “Gilles Deleuze” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/deleuze/>], 2008; see also Smith, “Deleuze’s Theory of Sensation,” 34, 40–1). It is apparently false to claim, as these authors put it, that art can *only* be sensed, though I agree with their skepticism regarding concepts. Moreover, it is impossible to claim that Bacon paints a “scream” without *seeing* the painting *as* a scream. What would allow us to claim that Bacon “paints a scream,” while a Pollock painting does not, if it would not be something that presents itself in the painting?

Of course, I agree with Deleuze and his interpreters that representation—both in general and in the special case of Bacon—does not mean a narrative or identifiable “objects;” nevertheless, *something presents itself and shows up in the painting* and this implies that sensational forces are treated, formed, made, evoked, etc. *in* the painting. This is precisely what representation (*Darstellung*) is. Moreover, the non-intentional moment in Bacon, as clearly indicated in his interviews with Sylvester, is not only something that is in tension with what Bacon calls “narrative” paintings; rather, it stems from his way of taking on the moment of *chance* in painting.¹² Astonishingly, Deleuze is not at any point, except in his discussion of the role of the scream in Bacon (LoS, 51–2), dealing with this obvious fact. My suspicion for why Deleuze omits such a discussion is that the discussion of chance would have let him back to intentionality, for what else is chance if not the *unexpected* moment within a framework of expectation (i.e., for Bacon what cannot be *foreseen* by the painter and the painting process)? Accordingly, non-intentionality and unintended material marks have a sense, namely, being other than the sense of what cannot be foreseen, represented and anticipated *in advance*. In sum, then, though I think that the claim that we find in Bacon and perhaps in all painting the attempt to go beyond the representational level convincing, Deleuze’s strategy of reducing everything to the sensational realm fails.

The Status of Materiality in Painting

As I argued in the last section, the total separation of sensation and representation leads to an insufficient concept of painting, since Deleuze loses the criterion for making a differentiation between objects that we usually call paintings and other objects, such as wallpaper. In this part of my paper, I shall offer a few remarks on the materiality of painting. In Deleuze’s account of materiality, I find it rather difficult to differentiate between sensation and materiality, since these concepts seem to be fused into each other (which is consequent, given that sensation is taken to mean “pure presence,” where the spectator *becomes* the painting).

¹² Francis Bacon and David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson 1987), 11, 52.

Though I do not agree with Deleuze's fusion of these two sides, I do agree with his claim that there is a "pathic" relation between spectator and painting. Let me clarify this point by repeating what I said above: if pathic non-intentionality and intentionality would really be strictly opposed in the way that Deleuze claims, then there would no longer be a difference between the materiality of a painting and the materiality of any other object because we would be related to a painting and to a wallpaper in a "pathic" form. Since the affect, according to Deleuze, is pre-representational, representation is unable to function as the criterion for why we are only affected by the painting, and not by the wallpaper. Consequently, we should reject Deleuze's explanation of the pathic moment; instead, we should claim that the pathic relation is only interesting for a philosophy of painting if it is *not* taken to be "real." Instead, the pathic relation is a *relation* and, therefore, must have to do with *how* paintings are related to their own materiality, and *how* this materiality is *charged* and expressive. This can be done in the form of a *refusal*: A painter who *refuses* the representational world does precisely this; by forming her refusal into a formed image [*Gebilde*]. For example, in every painting, the material, colours, paints, and brushes used *show up* in a certain form *in* the painting, and it is precisely *this* moment that not only confronts us with a specific relation toward the world but also shows up in a painting, that is, it must present itself *in* the image. For example, a comparison between the way in which materiality is charged in a painting by a German Expressionist, such as Schmidt-Rottluff, and a painting by an American Pop-Artist, such as Andy Warhol, leads immediately to a different pathic relation since the way in which these painters form the relation *to* materiality *into* the *appearing* materiality is different and indicates a different worldly *attitude*. As such, paintings, to use here an expression from Sokolowski, "present worlds in which something like us can be".¹³ Even in paintings that are abstract, this attitude is still alive in the form in which they are carried out (symmetrical, expressive, action-like, intimidating, etc.).

¹³ Robert Sokolowski, "Visual Intelligence in Painting" in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 59/2, 2005, 333–54, here 346.

In this vein, Wentworth has claimed that “the materials of painting...become a world the painter inhabits,”¹⁴ a thesis first put forward by Merleau-Ponty. As much as I agree with this thesis, I do believe that the expressive effect of painting is more than a simple bodily expressiveness. Instead, as I would further claim, speaking of bodily expressiveness only makes sense if we take into account that the expressive form implies an *attitude toward the world* as well as a *specific conception of what the object of the painting is*. For example, the landscape paintings of the early period of German expressionism all deal with a new relation toward nature: by looking at these paintings we encounter the sensual, in this case the visible, “working out” of a whole new world. Indeed, what we find here is a new emotional, rational and bodily conception, projection, and disclosure of what it means to be in this world. This world, formed into an attitude toward nature presented in *images*, is totally different from what was worked out in 19th century landscape painting, in Abstract Expressionism, or in Edward Hopper’s Realism. All of these different ways are attempts to establish *specific* world attitudes, which are at least partly opposed to each other and involve the way in which they embody their meaning.

A painting, in other words, comes with a specific character that is produced by the expressiveness of how the materiality *appears* in the painting. It is not simply the paint or simply the way the painter paints; rather, the expressiveness and bodily quality of a painting is visible in *how the materiality shows up* and brings itself to presence within the whole of the painting, i.e., the whole of a world attitude. In this vein, we should see a painting as like a *face* that looks at us. All faces somehow look alike; they have a general form, and yet they are determinate shapes. Faces have certain characteristics, such as being bigger or smaller, as well as certain appearances, such as being “harsh,” “smooth,” or “friendly.” Just as faces are what they express, the same happens in painting: the materiality, as it appears in front of us as a *specific* way of laying paint on a canvas, has a character that *faces* us, and it is precisely this character that we should call the bodily gesture [*Gebärde*] or *gestureness* of a

¹⁴ Nigel Wentworth, *The Phenomenology of Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004), 49.

painting.¹⁵ This gesturefulness is not, as Deleuze's sensation, pre-representational, material, or pre-conscious. It is likely mainly due to dogmatic reasons that Deleuze has no sense of this worldly relation, reducing everything, instead, to fit his own terminology; the consequence of this is that he is blind to Bacon's existential humanism.¹⁶ If we take this concept of attitude into account, then we should come to the conclusion that the flesh-like realm, which painting establishes between itself and the spectator, comes with what I would call "positioning:" a painting forces the spectator to take a certain stance toward the *attitude* formed and opened up by a painting. On the side of the painter, this shows up in the form of a mood. As Bacon says in his interviews with Sylvester, "and with the record of the image, of course, comes a mood, because you can't make an image without its creating mood."¹⁷ In Bacon's case, this attitude is what Wieland Schmied has analysed as "disgust" in Bacon's paintings¹⁸, since the figures are formed in a way that shows them as being repulsive toward themselves and their appearance.

To summarise briefly, paintings and their materiality cannot simply and immediately be experienced since the relation between representation and *its* materiality must itself *appear* and must be *part of* the representation. This is to say that the facticity of the painting (i.e., its materiality), *disturbs* the process of understanding or perceiving paintings *because* understanding is not purely dealing with itself but with itself as *appearing* or being present. Accordingly, the conflict between the representation and the appearance of the painting and its materiality is inter-

¹⁵ The concept of "gesturefulness" is rooted in Gadamer's concept of "bodily gesture" [*Gebaerde*] (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, volume 8 (Guetersloh: UTB 1998), 327–8) and in Cassirer's concept of "expressive perception" [*Ausdrucks-wahrnehmung*] (see, Ernst Cassirer, "Zur Logik der Kulturwissenschaften" in *Aufsätze und kleine Schriften, Text und Anmerkungen bearbeitet von C. Rosenkranz. Gesammelte Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe*, (ed.) B. Recki, Vol. 24 (Hamburg: Meiner 2007), 391–414.

¹⁶ Bacon/Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact*, 61–2, 78, 133–4; see also Jörg Zimmermann, *Francis Bacon. Kreuzigung. Versuch eine gewalttätige Wirklichkeit neu zu sehen* (Frankfurt: Fischer 1987), 77–8, and for a general overview of Bacon's relation to Existentialism see, Arnim Zweite, *Die Gewalt des Faktischen*, Ausstellungskatalog. K20–Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (Duesseldorf: Hirmer Verlag 2006), 90–4.

¹⁷ Bacon/Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact*, 26.

¹⁸ Wieland Schmied, *Francis Bacon: Commitment and Conflict* (Munich: Prestel 1996), 12.

nally constituted by what I would call “inner negativity” in two ways: on the one hand, the materiality of the painting “crosses out” the representational aspect by pointing to its presence, and on the other hand, the representational aspect crosses out the materiality aspect by transcending materiality. This conflict is mirrored in the perceptual going back and forth between *seeing something* (representation) and *seeing this* (materiality).¹⁹ “To experience something as a work of art,” as Sonderegger has it, “means to experience it as a representation of a part of the world, which is crossed out by the objecthood of the representational moments.”²⁰

Conclusion: Order versus Delirium

Though Deleuze is an admirable interpreter and reader of what Bacon himself said about his paintings and his painting practice, he misinterprets Bacon’s ideas about life as something immediate. Bacon not only underlines my thesis, namely, that “painting is a duality”²¹ between non-intended materiality and intended representation (of this materiality). Bacon remarks: “I think that great art is deeply ordered. Even if within the order there may be enormously instinctive and accidental things, nevertheless, I think that they come out of a desire for ordering and for retur-

¹⁹ Though ultimately I do not agree with this theory, I am also following here Wollheim’s concept of “seeing-in” as a *minimal* condition for pictorial depictions (Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1990)).

²⁰ Ruth Sonderegger, “Kunst als Sphäre der Kultur und die kulturwissenschaftliche Transformation der Ästhetik” in *Handbuch der Kulturwissenschaft, Band 3: Themen und Tendenzen*, (eds.) Friedrich Jäger, Burkhard Liebsch, and Jörn Rüsén (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler 2004, 50–64, here 57.

²¹ Bacon/Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact*, 58.

ing fact onto the nervous system in more violent way.”²² Violence here should not be understood as an effect of chaos; rather, it is an effect of the relation between order *and* chaos. Thus, what Bacon has in mind here is not that “sensational violence” is the condition for the possibility of order, as Deleuze’s tries to show; rather, violence is the effect of how chaos *and* order are *interrelated*.

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²² *Ibid.*, 59. Consequently, I believe that scholars who cite Bacon’s comment about the “direct” influence of painting onto our nervous system overlook that Bacon wanted to *present* this *in* his paintings, i.e., to make it a *moment of* presentation (*Darstellung*). For example, for this mistake see Smith’s otherwise very helpful article on Deleuze’s theory of sensation (Smith, “Deleuze’s Theory of Sensation,” 32). Consequently, I reject (one aspect) of Smith’s claim that the “artist is capable of effecting such syntheses (i.e., forces; C.L.) in the material” (*ibid.*, 45) because such effects are only thinkable if they show up in how the forces and the material itself is formed *in* a representation. Sylvester calls this the “complete interlocking if image and paint.” (David Sylvester, *Looking Back at Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson 2000), 185)