

Through the concepts of style and stutter, then, Deleuze articulates a revolutionary, political aspect, one that links style and artistic creation to resistance. As he puts it, “creating isn’t communicating but resisting” (N: 143). Deleuze argues for resistance through becomings, and vice versa, for instituting “a zone of proximity with anything, on the condition that one creates the literary means for doing so” (ECC: 1–2). For Deleuze, the process involves us in following language’s own detours, detours that constitute “zones of vibration”, regions “far from equilibrium” (ECC: 109), making “one’s language stutter, face to face, or face to back, and at the same time to push language as a whole to its limit, to its outside, to its silence – this would be like the boom and the crash” (ECC: 113). This style and stutter animate the disequilibrium of language, crashing through fixed social organizations with seemingly tiny fragments of creative experimentation that lead to intensifying and enlarging life.

ELEVEN

Logic of sensation

Jennifer Daryl Slack

How well we have learned that the task before us is the search for meaning. As young children we are taught to accept that words have meanings, to recognize the moral of a tale, to search for the meaning of a poem or the significance of a story. As we become more sophisticated, we may even learn to probe the hidden meanings of visual imagery or the complex significance of non-representational art forms. At some point, however, we may stand perplexed in the inadequacy of our tools, perhaps before a work of abstract visual art or a plotless novel, where in wonder, frustration, or disgust we find ourselves unable to answer with familiar satisfaction the question, “What does it mean?” Or we may glimpse the fact that in our habitual search for the meanings of things we have learned not to ask certain “irrelevant” questions: what is the meaning of a hiccup? Of cool rain on warm skin? Of a tear? Of a scream? Of an angry expression? Of a barn on fire?

But even as I key these questions into my computer, I know, as Deleuze has written, “A story always slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole” (FB: 6). So well have we learned to search for meanings that we cleverly demand of the scream: what made you erupt? Are you a scream of lost love representing recognition in a narrative of pain and abandonment? Are you a cry of happiness representing release in a narrative of joy? Or are you a moan that represents a physiological response to the biting wind of a cold February blizzard? Deleuze writes that this practised application of representation “implies the relationship of an image to an object that it is supposed to illustrate; but it also implies the relationship of an image to other images in a composite whole that assigns a

specific object to each of them" (FB: 6). Even though a scream "no more resembles what it signals than a word resembles what it designates" (FB: 93), we demand to know what narrative, what organization of intelligible relationships renders this response – a scream, a tear, a frisson – a knowable object, a figure that stands against a background of story constituted of other knowable objects.

The best of college classes teach this skill: what is the meaning or meanings of, in, behind, underlying this or that image, film, photograph, sign, story, poem, article, document, book, world event, political demonstration, policy decision, scientific finding, or test result? And even as every savvy student learns to banter with the claim that "there is no one correct meaning", they also already know that meaning is what matters in a pitched battle between "their" meaning and someone else's. We have learned well to navigate with what matters: narrative, symbolization, representation, signification, illustration, character, plot, theme, figure-ground, the animation of a subject against a background. And the singular scream, the tear, the cool rain on warm skin, the hiccup, the anger, the fire, and all the other singular moments and movements that constitute the possibilities of the everyday and the extraordinary are seriously slighted.

Deleuze's concept of the logic of sensation can aid navigation in a manner otherwise than territorialized, guided and constrained by matters of meaning and representation. Thinking with the concept of the logic of sensation deterritorializes, fractures and frees the flows of materials, forces, sensations and affects out of which we otherwise construct this edifice of subject and story. This logic invites us to make way for, to make space for, what is excluded, disregarded, minimized, relegated to a subjugated place in a story. As with all concepts in Deleuze's work, difficulties of understanding arise in that the very tools of explanation elevate the habits of representation. How then to *convey* without asking, "What does the logic of sensation *mean*?"

The initial task requires convincing you of the territorializing, exclusionary work of representation, which the initial paragraph in this essay intends to do. Reducing a hiccup to its meaning would seem an odd operation to perform. When a hiccup bursts upon a scene, it does so as a panoply of sensations affecting (for example) bodies (of both the hiccupper and others), a room, a conversation, a flow, as well as senses of seriousness, appropriateness and self. Oh, how to acknowledge or convey the violence of that hiccup? Surely not by dissecting its meanings, which can only categorize, compartmentalize, intellectualize, diminish and, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, territorialize the full-blown richness and violence of that deterritorializing hiccup. And if we

would do such disservice to a mere hiccup, imagine what greater disservice we would do to a film or a political demonstration by dissecting them thus. But how, then, does the logic of sensation open up a different kind of access? A different way of approaching hiccups, films, political demonstrations?

The path I take is to comment on Deleuze as he paints – that is, enacts – a logic of sensation in his commentary on the paintings of Francis Bacon in the book, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. In serpentine fashion, Deleuze explores Bacon's practice of painting without telling a story, which liberates "the figure" from the mode of representation and accesses sensation that exceeds meaning and representation. Deleuze's concept of the logic of sensation resonates with Bacon's painting practice (including Bacon's own commentary on that practice in Sylvester 1987). The way that Bacon paints, the way that Deleuze writes, and the concept of the logic of sensation connect in a complex rhythmic relation – an already rich accumulation and coagulation of sensation – that incites new ways for the artist as well as the philosopher in each of us to feel and live.

However, since there are differences between viewing Bacon, Bacon on Bacon, reading Deleuze, and Deleuze on Bacon, it is intriguing to note that an appropriate Deleuzian commentary on Deleuze commenting on Bacon would enact yet another layered rhythmic relation or logic of sensation. I can only modestly begin such a daunting task by drawing from *Francis Bacon* a picture of the conceptual space within which the logic of sensation works and painting ways of living with that picture. My goal honours the concept not to explain what the logic of sensation *means*, but to explore what it *does*, how it *works*. And just as a richly textured painting begins with materials, takes shape in the accumulation and convergence of mark making, and converges as a complex sensation, *this* picture emerges in the selfsame fashion.

Materials: rubrics

Deleuze's short foreword to *Francis Bacon* offers guidance for negotiating his essay on Bacon and for working with the concept of the logic of sensation. He states that he considers increasingly complex "rubrics", or "aspects" of Bacon's paintings that converge "in the 'coloring sensation,' which is the summit of this logic" of sensation (FB: 3). What work is performed by these rubrics or aspects that converge in a logic of sensation?

Tempting though it is to think of this simply as a matter of aspects coming together to give form to something else, such a reading would too easily support the habit of searching for intelligible objects and relationships that render something (a logic of sensation in this case) a knowable object or idea. "Aspect", a thoroughly non-corporeal term, too easily suggests a narrative: the aspect in question is subjugated by its designation *qua* aspect as mere placeholder or support in the story of the real subject of the narrative. "Rubric" is more helpful, for if we think of it as drawing on the etymology of the Latin term *rubrica*, or red chalk, or on its sense of the colour red or reddish, it is no mere placeholder. Rather, rubric asserts a sensation, an intensity, a "colouration". Rubrics, "givens" that converge in a logic of sensation, are always already sensations with intensities; they are coloured, textured, flavoured, shaped; they are always already "accumulated" or "coagulated" sensation (FB: 33). As such they come in all sorts of guises: colours, noises, rhythms, odours, textures, longings, desires, practices, feelings, beliefs, gestures, knowledges and so on. For Deleuze on Bacon's paintings, rubrics involve pictorial elements, such as the relationship between figure and ground, the hue and flatness of colours, the movement of the paint.

In thinking about the film *The Matrix* (dir. A. Wachowski & L. Wachowski 1999) using the concept of rubrics, I found it especially generative to work with four that helped me enter, feel, catch the mystery of the sensations and intensities, flows and blockages at work in the film and in the enactment of adolescence: the senses of a person being lost or found, flat or deep; a practice of and a desire to learn without effort; feelings of the adolescent body; and the colour (or quality) of adolescent love (see Slack 2003). None is a placeholder or mere aspect of *The Matrix*. Rubrics are not things, objects, or ideas as such, but already affective movements, flows, blockages, intensities. None, whether simple or complex, whether addressed first or last, is inherently more significant than any other. Their names – not critical in themselves – were chosen to point in the direction of the aggregate of relevant sensations. Rubrics neither respond well to the demands of hierarchy nor correspond to the signifiers with which they are designated.

Convergence: mark-making

Rubrics converge in the space we call a painting, a film or a political demonstration. The philosopher in each of us, like the painter, encounters the rubrics, and in their spatial convergence paints, thinks, acts,

lives. But how does this spatial convergence come about? What does it do? How do these relationships work if they are not (merely) narrative in character, if they are not (merely) an organization of intelligible objects? The challenge was well put by Bacon, who, in discussing this challenge in terms of painting, spoke thus: "how can this thing be made so that you catch the mystery of appearance within the mystery of the making?" (Sylvester 1987: 105).

Rather than focusing on or attending to intelligible relations of objects or ideas, Deleuze pays attention in a different way: to "sensations", "forces", "matters of fact" and "events". Each of these otherwise everyday terms is coloured by the Deleuzian point of view. "Sensation", the more evocative term, is that which exceeds intellectual control and works directly on and through the nervous system. Whether visual, auditory, taste, proprioceptive and/or mental, sensation is of the flesh, of the body. It is "transmitted directly", avoiding the "detour" of a story. We do not *think* sensation, we "*become* in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation" (FB: 31, original emphasis). Sensation is "in the body, and not in the air" (FB: 32). Sensation and force, Deleuze tells us, are closely related, but forces are invisible, "insensible" (FB: 48). Only when a force is "exerted on a body" does a sensation come into existence (FB: 48). Sensation is force made visible, audible and/or palpable, and is thus embodied. For Bacon the challenge is to paint the sensation that makes invisible forces visible: to paint pressure, contraction, elongation, a scream and so on. Not to paint something that represents these, but to paint the sensation on, in and of the body. Bacon is not interested, for example, in painting horror, but the "sound of the scream and the forces that sustain it" (FB: 51). Deleuze writes that "If we scream, it is always as victims of the invisible and insensible forces that scramble every spectacle, and that even lie beyond pain and feeling" (FB: 51). That is what Bacon paints, and that is what Deleuze would have us access: the invisible and insensible forces that scramble every spectacle, the sensations on, in and of the body that are otherwise disregarded, minimized and subjugated in the territorializing practices in which meaning and representation prevail.

As embodied fact, sensation is always located in particular places, corporeal expressions or "events". An event might be called a painting, a dance, a hiccup, a film or a political demonstration. As such, sensation may exist radically independent from the experience of a particular spectator: it is what is painted, drawn, written, expressed; but what is painted "is the body", as the experience of the sensation (FB: 31–2). An event, a particular combination of rubrics of variable intensity that coexist and connect, encompasses and constitutes a characteristic "rhythmic unity",

a distinctive “thisness” that encompasses and constitutes participants, subjects and stories in particular forms. To experience the sensation as a spectator, one must “enter” the event, live the sensation in the body, become the sensation. “Painting the sensation” corresponds for Deleuze (and for Bacon) with “record[ing] the fact” (FB: 32; Sylvester 1987: 57–8), and “feeling the event” (see Stivale 2003b: 46–7). What we experience in the sensation, what we become in the sensation, and what we do with the sensation exceed whatever story and meaning we might attach to the fact, the event of the sensation.

Sensations are multiple; they happen in aggregate, in what Deleuze has called, in *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, “a entire complex web of sensations” (ABC: “I as in Idea”). In painting a picture, exploring a film or experiencing a political demonstration, sensations assail the body as part of, as well as apart from, the way we read story and meaning. The rubrics or aspects of the web are conjoined throughout *Francis Bacon* in relations of “convergence”, “intersection”, “coexistence”, “correlation”, “connection”, “coupling”, “confrontation”, “proximity” or “co-precision.” Noticeably absent in these depictions of relations are terms of cause and effect (one force effecting another), interpenetration (one identity engulfed by another) and hierarchy (one rubric more important than another). This is neither a systems approach, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, nor a structural causality, where aspects are causes and have no identity outside their effects. This web is, rather, a composite of asignifying traits, strokes, sensations of distinguishable quality or character with features that permit us to identify or recognize them. Painters might think of these traits as brush strokes or marks; in the Deleuzian sense each has its own intensive reality or facticity, its own affective register in and on the nervous system. Just beyond, outside, repressed by the habits of representation to hold “*reign over vision*” (FB: 12, original emphasis), thought and practice, these marks, sensations and rubrics flow with variable intensity. Together they constitute a “*bloc of sensations*” (WIP: 164), a map of relations among rubrics, but a map as large as the territory, a map that *is* the territory, a map that exceeds what habits of representation could conceivably comprehend, a map in which the rubrics fold on to one another to create complexity and possibility. The web of sensation is thus a sort of totality of sensation that exceeds the intellect, that cannot be “summed up” or “figured out”, and that entails creative possibility even as it includes the sensation of subject, meaning and representation.

Watching the film *The Matrix* for the first time, I “felt the event”, although I do not know for certain why it had that affect for me. As Bacon has put it, “It is a very, very close and difficult thing to know why

some paint comes across directly onto the nervous system and other paint tells you the story in a long diatribe through the brain” (Sylvester 1987: 18). What’s more is that feeling the event while reading Deleuze (not at the same time, but folded in space) helped me to feel the importance of *sensing* rather than *knowing* the logic of sensation. *The Matrix* has clearly affected very many spectators, spawning a virtual industry of *Matrix* commentary. But most of that commentary seeks the meanings of the film, critiques or defends its representations of gender, youth, violence and so on, analyses the degree of accuracy or inaccuracy in representing the world, assesses its predictive potential, or merely sets out to clarify or expand the story. What is *The Matrix* about? Like photorealism, a purported representational rendering of *The Matrix*, circulates, washes over us, and colonizes (or territorializes) our access to it, our ability to experience and explore sensation. Just as a recent issue of *Discover* asserts:

EVEN IF YOU HAVEN’T SEEN THE MATRIX OR ITS sequels, you most likely know the basic premise of the movie: It’s the distant future, and intelligent machines rule the world, having learned to harness an omnipresent and previously underutilized source of electrical power – humans. The machines “grow” people in vast industrial farms and siphon off the small current of electricity generated by the bodies. You, me – we are battery. (Burdick 2004: 15)

It is true; even if you haven’t seen it, you know this is the meaning. At the very least, this is where we have to begin. What more we may find represented – a psychoanalytical conflict, a love story, a post apocalyptic world, a mythic tale, the battle between good and evil and so on – contributes to accessing the film in terms of filling out or “fleshing out” its meanings. Those meanings are not sensations, that is, not on, in and of the flesh.

Experienced another way, by entering the event and living its sensations in the body, *The Matrix* provides a different kind of access. In the section on “Materials” above, I mentioned four rubrics (of many others, certainly) with which one can traverse *The Matrix*, to “feel the event”. These rubrics are not what this film is *about*. Instead they are the accumulated and coagulated sensations that coexist, converge, and fold on to one another. I invite you to encounter *The Matrix* from within the space of these sensations: within what adolescence *feels like*. The film is not *about* adolescence, but for reasons I could only begin to guess at, the film transmits sensations of adolescence directly onto the nervous system. They are enfolded sensations that render visible the otherwise

invisible forces that work in adolescence, forces that are typically territorialized into forms of being adolescent. The sensations are there and felt on, in and of bodies, even though every viewing experience may not connect with them. Recall that to experience the sensation as a spectator, one must “enter” the event, live the sensation in the body, become the sensation. The success and popularity of *The Matrix* points to the likelihood that many of its viewers are spectators, that they feel the event in spite of a lack of conscious awareness of how the film *works*. Rhythm possesses bodies, bypassing the brain.

In entering the event, I sensed that the rubric “lost and found, flat and deep” affectively paints a picture of the isolation, indifference, suspicion and suffering of adolescence. For example, Neo, the main character is “lost” in the everyday until he is “found” by the Resistance; but once found he must accept suffering as a condition of his salvation. The rubric “learning with eyes closed” affectively paints a picture of learning without teachers, rules or sustained effort. For example, characters learn what might otherwise take years of hard work by simply and very quickly having information injected into them machinically; thus learning feels machinic, is delivered on a need-to-know basis and is physically easy, even if mentally fatiguing in the short term. The rubric “what the body feels” affectively paints a picture of computer use, drug use, criminality and a search for truth and freedom in a spirit-killing world. For example, exhausting criminal computer hacking is precisely what draws the Resistance to rescue Neo; the feel of criminality and of being saved are thus coupled. The rubric “the colour of love” affectively paints an escape through romantic love from isolation, from suspicion and from annihilation. For example, Trinity’s expression of love for Neo brings him back to life; thus the unreal expression of romantic love is the final saving power against death. While it is impossible in this short space to map the way these four rubrics – to which I have barely done justice – intersect rhythmically as they transverse the story of *The Matrix*, let me at least assert that they conjoin as a logic, a web of sensation. They are different from one another, on different levels Deleuze would say, that resonate, vibrate and flow in rhythmic relation, transversing the story, rather than being the story or providing a background for the story. Indeed, I think they are far more interesting than the story, for they access adolescence, that is, “the sum total of material effects belonging to” (ATP: 260) adolescence, a seriously misunderstood affective domain. Access to that affective domain can help us understand the logic of sensation within which certain ways to live *make sense*, including the fact that certain kinds of violence *make sense*. As Deleuze puts it optimistically, in his commentary on a Bacon painting of wrestlers:

It is within this visibility that the body actively struggles, affirming the possibility of triumphing, which was beyond its reach as long as these powers remained invisible, hidden in a spectacle that sapped our strength and diverted us. It is as if combat had now become possible. The struggle with the shadow is the only real struggle. When the visual sensation confronts the visible force that conditions it, it releases a force that is capable of vanquishing the invisible force, or even befriending it. (FB: 52)

The logic of sensation: colouring

A logic of sensation, such as that enacted in a painting, in *The Matrix*, in Deleuze’s essay, or in any event or singular moment, is never necessarily a completed project, fixed in time and space. An assembled logic of sensation might in fact work like what Deleuze calls a “diagram”, a “relay” that, even as it completes or constitutes a “stopping point”, “always has effects that go beyond it” (FB: 111). Thus we always have a plethora of opportunities to become spectators of and participants in sensations that have been there all along. Further, having come to appreciate the role played by routinely marginalized sensation, it makes sense, as Deleuze suggests, to seek out novel encounters with the intent of being open to new sensations, to access creatively productive possibility. Deleuze encourages searching for paintings, films, pieces of music or events that might touch, affect and insert us into the folds of an event, into the pulsing of a logic of sensation. The encounter is not entertainment, but intellectual discovery, an escape from philosophy through philosophy (ABC: “C as in Culture”). Without searching out such encounters, we are more likely to ride the crest of the “givens” and remain defined by and dependent on the ready made, the represented, the cliché: painting illustrations and representations with sonambulistic skill; seeing only through habits of meaning and representation; seeking only that which we already know; reproducing the same. Tom Conley, commenting on *Francis Bacon*, warns that “A perception of a reign of clichés in the mental and visual world alike gives rise to a politics” (2003: 143). Order is constituted in such clichés. In the face of clichés and the order of life-constraining politics, Deleuze challenges us to free possibility, to colour the world differently, to promote new political realities, to enliven life, to, as Bacon puts it, “bring back the intensity of . . . reality” (Sylvester 1987: 172). There is possibility in even the most oppressive conditions. As Brian Massumi notes, “there’s an objective degree of freedom even in the most deterministic system.

Something in the coming together of movements, even according to the strictest of laws, flips the constraints over into conditions of freedom" (Massumi 2002b: 222).

To respond to Deleuze's challenge, to flip the constraints, we need first to feel the logics of sensation with which the order is assembled and, secondly, to free productive sensations, new colours, new logics. We all work with "givens", whether painter, film-maker, dancer, writer; or spectator, audience member, reader. Deleuze writes that "An entire battle takes place on the canvas between the painter and these givens" (FB: 81). Just so, an entire battle takes place in life between the philosopher in each of us and the givens with which we live. Encounters open the space to free what has been excluded, minimized, diminished and subjugated in life-stultifying, territorialized colourations. In the end – in the middle of this battle really – Deleuze does not do away with meaning and representation, for to give up territorialized order entirely would be *mere* chaos. But *more* chaos or catastrophe is, for Deleuze, a welcome move, for that is what marks out "possibilities of fact" and a "germ of order or rhythm" in relation to a new order (FB: 83). Unlocking new areas of sensation – new colours, noises, rhythms, odours, textures, longings, desires, practices, feelings, beliefs, gestures and knowledges – gives rise to new facts, new events, new rhythmic relations, new logics of sensation, in short: new ways to appreciate life and new ways to live. With Deleuze, then, we can take up the challenge to vanquish life-deadening clichés, befriend life-enhancing colours and rhythms that already pulse with unacknowledged intensity, and embrace the accidents, encounters and chaos that unleash creative possibility.

TWELVE

Cinema

movement–image–recognition–time

Felicity J. Colman

Is that everything? It seemed like he said quite a bit more than that.

Bob (Bill Murray) to translator,

Lost in Translation (dir. S. Coppola 2003)

The criteria for working with Deleuze's cinema books – *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* – might be summarized quite simply: how and where do we see, hear and sense the perception of being? What is learnt, what is lost, what is wasted, what is invented in the recognition of the narratives, concepts and structures of life, giving rise to images of meaning in the cinema? How does the activity of relationally generated thought-perception occur within the cinema, and how might it be analysed?

If a viewer selects a favourite colour, character, dialogue, moment, movement, sound or gesture from any film, that aspect, person or thing has its characteristic and/or its gesture given in the juxtaposition between the viewer's contextual perceptual space, aesthetic preferences, historical moment and that aspect, person or thing itself. The conjunction and coordination of this vast range of possibilities provide the pulsing channels of perceptual power (*puissance*), and becoming perception of and between entities. According to Deleuze, the cinema provides such passageways of thought, showing itself to be a profound and sometimes rigorous surface that covers the visible world.

Deleuze's cinema books engage four fundamental interrelational concepts with which to chart a philosophy of cinema: movement, image, recognition and time. This philosophy assembles an epistemological bracketing of the how and where of cinema, and an answer to the