Art, Sensation and the Edges of Thought

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The work presented in the thesis is the candidate's own.

Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between art, sensation and thought. It begins from the contention that thought has a tendency to identify and subordinate the artwork according to what it already knows and how it is already capable of thinking. For an artwork to overcome this tendency it needs to express and trigger processes that lie outside of thought's normative procedures of recognition and identification. It is argued that only in this way can the artwork creatively bring something new into thought. Correspondingly, thought needs to develop ways of thinking in relation to the artwork that potentialise rather than close off its creatively fugitive aspects.

The written element is a thinking through of themes and ideas central to the artwork. It consists of three chapters which correspond to areas relevant to the art practice: beauty, the sublime, and the relation between sound and vision in the audio-visual. Each looks at the limitations of identity thinking and asks how an artwork might overcome it, and examines the potential for immanent modalities of thinking, asking what these may enable us to do. The key thinkers that inform this study are Deleuze and Guattari, Kant, and Massumi.

The artwork involves using film, video, photography and sound to aim at bringing more intense and yet fluidly open modes of engagement with scenarios otherwise overlooked and at the edges of perception. It is in this way that the habitual responses of thought might become overtaken by modalities of 'sensory thinking' more capable of relating not only with the indeterminacy of the artwork as an event but also, in more general terms, to 'life' as it is lived.

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DVD Inside of back cover

Spoil

Hand coloured black and white photograph, 110 x 80 cm, 2007.

Days Like These

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Video or monitor installation with sound, duration 3:00, 2003.

A Place Not Far From Here

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Introduction

This thesis, consisting of both artwork and writing, is underpinned and motivated by an interest in the conditions which lay beneath and at the threshold of determinate perception. The reason for this is that not only do such thresholds provide thought with the potential to disarm its usual habits, assumptions and tendency towards straightforward identification, but also that these less defined edges allow examination of the processes by which identity and meaning are formed.

This approach may considered as a 'radical' or 'superior' form of empiricism. For William James, who coined the term, 'radical empiricism' is radical because it shifts the emphasis from experience as a means to gain knowledge of an already existing external world, to an examination of the conditions of flux, continuity and relation by which experience is constituted, in other words — from the experience of reality to the reality of experience. As the 'immediate flux of life', these conditions become primary to objects of experience rather than secondary, and are perceived directly by the body, as sensation, before becoming registered consciously[1]. Similarly, Gilles Deleuze, reveals the fundamental importance of this shift in emphasis within his own philosophical project of what he terms a 'superior' or 'transcendental' empiricism, when he states: 'on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, all begins with sensibility'[2]. Although each develop a different ontology, for both James and Deleuze, this ever-shifting flux beneath and within things is not consciously registered in any pure form, but is instead, as Brian Massumi writes: 'directly sensed as a "fringe" of

[1] See James, William, Essays in Radical Empiricism, 1912. http://web.archive.org/web/20060104091253/spartan.ac.brocku.ca/~lward/James/James_1912/James_1912_03.html

ongoing, a residue of potential or newness marginally accompanying every determinate perception'[3].

As directly sensed, such conditions are not a theoretical abstraction, but, in this thesis, comprise the foundation for an experiential practice where sensation is a site of pragmatic observation, investigation, and invention. The question, therefore, is not so much that of how the writing relates to the artwork, but more one of how each contribute differently to this underlying practice. In this regard, the artwork attempts a material expression of these conditions. By emphasising the relation of perception to its own indeterminacy, each work reveals a situation in which the experience of perception becomes as or more important than what it is that is actually being looked at. In this way it seeks to bypass straightforward recognition, and reverse conventional hierarchies of perception. In conjunction with this approach, the work utilises different forms of recordable media: sound, photography, film and video. Recordable media is useful due to its capacity to dissect, re-assemble and drive perception. This capacity is used here to bring about more acute levels of sensory engagement and slow down the time of viewing.

Sensation creates thought, but also its indeterminacy presents a problem for ways of thinking that seek to proceed by concepts of fixed identity. By investigating the relation between sensation and thought, the written element of this thesis examines how to think the indeterminacy of sensation and, correlatively, explores the effects produced when thought is placed in flux. The writing is divided into three chapters, each of which takes a different theme, namely: the audio-visual, beauty, and the sublime, and each allows the relation between thought and sensation to be approached in a

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[2] Deleuze, Gilles, Difference and Repetition, trans. Paul Hatton, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p.144.

[3] Massumi, Brian, Parables for the Virtual. Movement, Affect, Sensation, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2002, p.241.

different way[4]. At a very basic structural level, the audio-visual is used here to present the problem of a division between thought and sensation, the chapter on beauty follows this, examining processes whereby thought and sensation merge with one another. The final chapter explores the sublime as a paradoxical situation in which thought and sensation are divided and merging at the same time.

Chapter One (Thinking the Audio-Visual), introduces the philosophical territory of the written thesis which, by and large, consists of a Deleuzian approach to aesthetics. Additionally, it presents the overall question of this thesis: how to think the artwork in ways that proceed beyond the limits of representation, and correlatively, how can the artwork compel thought to think in ways that are non-representational. As the case study for this chapter, the audio-visual serves a dual purpose: firstly, its apparently dialectical construction allows me to present what happens when identity thinking divides up experience into systematic relations between givens. My point here is that analyses that position the audio-visual purely as a signifying duality, strip it of the duration and openness by which it may pressurise thought into thinking outside the parameters of the known. Secondly, it is argued that the audio-visual can present an intrinsic asymmetry consisting of an interrelation between sound and vision in terms of levels of indeterminacy. This allows the audio-visual to be considered in terms of 'difference' rather than through division and signification. It is maintained that to conceive of the audio-visual in this way potentialises it as a power by which thought may create new and more open ways of thinking.

[4] In a similar way, Deleuze's two books on cinema do not produce a theory *of* the cinema as if it were an already constituted domain, but work in creative collusion with the images of cinema to describe cinematic concepts of thinking and sensing: *'A theory of cinema is not 'about' cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices'*, Deleuze, Gilles, Cinema 2, The Time Image, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, Athlone, London,1989, p.280.

Chapter Two (The Asymmetry of Beauty) considers beauty as an instance of 'monadic perception', in which an actual subject and object begin to virtualise and dissolve into one another in ways that exceed the extensive limitations of both. It begins by examining the notion that beauty is characterised by a lightness and brevity which accounts for the familiar idea of beauty as a non-critical or relatively inert condition. This chapter proposes that beauty's pleasurable absence of any distinct concept does not prevent it from countering thought's normative procedures, but in fact produces its potential for transformation. Beauty, thereby, becomes positioned as a transitional and expansive modality of perception that unfolds away from the actual and into the virtual, bringing perception closer to the otherwise imperceptible conditions of its own emergence. I then argue that beauty occurs as an 'interstice' within thought — a felt contrastive shift of opening in relation to the relatively closed parameters of the given.

Whereas Chapter Two examines beauty as an instance where the actual and the virtual fold into one another, Chapter Three (The Sublime is Not the Absolute) approaches the sublime as a condition of dynamic suspense and oscillation between the two. It is maintained that a sublime artwork involves an object that is determinate and expressive of an overwhelming indeterminacy at the same time. The artwork does not trigger a condition of transcendence or an attainment of the absolute, but instead is characterised by an inability to stabilise a final actual or virtual condition. Consequently, it is proposed that the irreconcilability between what the artwork is, and the promise of limitlessness offers, drives a proliferation of thinking and feeling that can be sensed as a feeling of depth that is formless and fluid.

It is the edge of the virtual, where it leaks into actual, that counts. For that seeping edge is where potential, actually, is found.[5]

[5] Massumi, Parables for the Virtual. Movement, Affect, Sensation, p.43.

Chapter One

Thinking the Audio-Visual

The audio-visual presents a seemingly intractable division that is immediately summoned merely by its mentioning. A notion of separateness is suggested by the very term 'audio-visual': two elements side by side spliced together in one bipartite phrase. Although language plays its part in this dividing, it will not be a major concern of this thesis, besides it is not entirely to blame, language can be as poetically indeterminate as anything else.

Generally speaking, when we encounter the audio-visual, a film or video for instance, as we watch and hear we do not divide the sound from the visual image unless prompted to do so. Whatever qualitative interest that may arise as we are experiencing entails an inseparability of process that occurs before any defining of components. If there is a prompting or imperative to divide, then it comes from outside of the flow of the process, as a deliberate analysing and thinking *upon* that proceeds along conventional lines (what I mean by conventional here are the familiar ways of proceeding that act in accordance with the already known and accepted). From a conventional perspective, when we think about the audio-visual we begin by considering a togetherness comprised of two conditions. Sound and vision must be different; we *know* that they are, it is an apodictically empirical reality, the *facticity* that our eyes are not our ears, not just because of their physical placement on our bodies but also because each have their own specific functionality. And yet, just as the experience of the event of the audio-visual is divided only in retrospect (or we might add 'recursively' through a preconceived assumption of division feeding into and conditioning our experiencing), correlatively, the separateness of the organs of sense is also provided from outside of their intrinsically codeterminous process.

As soon as we begin to consider divisions and where they seem to lie they multiply into as many as we can think of; not only sound and vision and hearing and seeing, but also subject and object, idea and object, art and theory, art and life, and so on, expanding outwards into infinite regress. The point being that when we think, we divide, because division is intrinsic to any thought by which a particular identity becomes formed. It is this principle of division and its habituality that makes the audio-visual interesting as a problem, as its analysis clearly brings to light a division that is fundamental to all others: that of reconciling the fluid indeterminacy of sensory experience with the determinations of thought. From the perspective of sensory experience as an eventful and qualitative process, there has to be more than the apodictic mode of the empirical; something in excess of how things immediately (in the sense of habitually) seem to be. Furthermore, this 'more than' may be considered to constitute the power of art in terms of its capacity to be in excess of what we already know, not as something absolutely and unrecognisably other, but as a power to go a little beyond and apply a slight pressure in regard to our conventional preconceptions.

Although in ontological terms, subjects and objects may be considered to reside within and emerge from an indeterminately fluid universe, nevertheless, actuality and division is the point from where we ordinarily begin. In this way the relation – event/experience/thought – presents a challenge that is not only one of thinking about the obscure and amorphous conditions that lie beyond the distinctness of division, but more particularly, how from a perspective of identity and division we might then begin to think less prescriptively and more fluidly and eventfully in order to open and change the ways in which we habitually approach things.

This first chapter outlines a philosophical environment from which the written thesis will draw and within which it is implicated. It is composed of two parts, the first draws on Deleuze's consideration of relations between thought, thinking and image. The second elaborates the ideas of the first, while emphasising the relevance of those relations more in terms of sensation. In both, the audio-visual is taken as case study. The first section employs Deleuze's critique of identity thinking in 'Difference and Repetition' to consider how the audio-visual presents a problem for thought that proceeds by recognition. The second section suggests how the audio-visual may invoke and correspond with a mode of thinking that involves an indeterminacy of sensory becoming as a productive destabilisation of the fixed coordinates by which identity is formed.

Section One

From The Image of Thought to The Thinking Image

Representation is part of thought, necessary for the identifiability and intelligibility of ideas and concepts. What we might term 'identity thinking' is that activity of thought which identifies and then links according to a principle of representation. This mode of thought is a reassuring one in which things make sense, both interpersonally and personally from our own viewpoint as *common sense*. In representational thought, things may seem to be how we remembered them or seem to be specifically different to how they were, events can succeed or fail to meet expectations, structures, equations, laws can be ordained, followed and transgressed.

Conventionally, when we think of what an image is through an appeal to common sense, what perhaps comes to mind is an external, visual picture of something. That picture representing a thing by somehow resembling it or being analogous to it. This approach holds an idea of separateness and relation between. The subject that perceives and interprets an image is separate to that image which in turn is separate to an external object represented by it. The separation between subject, image, object, and the chain of signification between them, is held in place by a representational principle of identity that divides the world according to intelligible elements and then re-links these divisions to account for experience and meaning. This way of thinking about an image corresponds to that of structural semiotics as exemplified by Saussure[6], whereby an image is considered as a sign composed of the picture/image as a signifier and an object or 'referent' as a signified and in which the

[6] See Saussure, Ferdinand de, Course in General Linguistics, trans. R. Harris, Duckworth, London, 1983.

subject plays the role of an interpreter that relates and links the two. It also corresponds to a Kantian approach where individual experience is limited to concepts of objects that are intrinsically representational and which incorporates the same divisions of a thing itself, how that thing appears, and a subject as a centre that judges the meaning of that appearance. In both approaches the thing itself is always shrouded by its representation so remaining unavailable to us, and an *error* occurs when we confuse the two.

This mode of thought can be continued when we think of what an internal image is in terms of *mental picturing.* Here, memory and imagination may seem composed of image fragments formed through memory re-presenting mental impressions made by external things perceived in the past. Again, such images involve a distinction between image, subject and the thing itself. Whether internal or external, an image *in* thought attains the finality of stable knowledge through assumptions intrinsic to the model of representation: a real object as referent, an image as a copy that somehow resembles that object, and a centered subject that mediates between the two, all distributed within a coherent and predictable space-time.

Fundamental to Deleuze's philosophy is a realization of the limits of this tendency of representation in thought. For Deleuze, the real does not consist of stable images that refer to stable objects within a coherent space-time, but instead, consists of an indeterminate flux. Here, flux is considered as pre-individual and as existing before thought as the basis by which it emerges, a determination of a thought/image forming as an instance of fusion. Crucially, the stasis of determination fixes this flux, obscuring the processes of becoming which Deleuze considers as essential to the creation of the new in thought.

When we examine the basis from which thought might begin, therefore, Deleuze insists that we must first take care to notice any undisclosed representational notions that may be inadvertently assumed. Put simply to begin with, his point is that the limitations of representation, its tendency towards that which is already known and makes sense, are implicit rather than explicit, residing surreptitiously as habits within thought that can pass unnoticed. For Deleuze, these implicit representational assumptions constitute the 'image of thought' that subsists as the conventional basis from which thought and philosophy often begins. These starting points, as 'bearings in thought', then go on to orientate the nature of any thought that might evolve from them.

> the image of thought, the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one's bearings in thought.[7]

Deleuze makes the case that many philosophers, particularly philosophers of reason such as Plato, Kant and Descartes, start from a position that may be considered as a ground zero or neutral point, but actually is not. Ideas and concepts that might appear at first to be new thoughts or ways of understanding, can, through examining their bases and presuppositions, be merely a re-presentation and so a continuation of a pre-existent 'doxa'. As Deleuze writes:

> We have not advanced a single step, but remain imprisoned by the same cave or ideas of the times which we only flatter ourselves with having 'rediscovered' by blessing them with the sign of philosophy.[8]

In this sense, the pre-conditioned ways in which thought proceeds produces a situation in which thought is trapped in cycles where it can only unwittingly replay the

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[7] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix, What is Philosophy?, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson, Verso, London, 1994, p.37.

[8] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.134.

already accepted, wrapped up in ideas and concepts that can never be really new. Furthermore, as a conforming to doxa, this problem does not belong just to philosophy, but manifests in thought generally, extending into every realm of culture and everyday life.

In order to overturn what now amounts to a 'dogmatic' image of thought, it is insufficient to merely counter and negate one idea with another.

> When the presupposition of philosophy is found in an Image of Thought which is claimed to hold in principle, we can no longer be content to oppose it with contrary facts.[9]

A negative critique of opposing facts with facts has its engagement predetermined by the structure that it argues with, and so functions as a perpetuating of that same image. Deleuze maintains that it is only by revealing the implicit ways in which the doxa of representational habits insinuate themselves into thought can philosophy undertake the necessary overturning required for the creation of new ways of thinking. In examining the limits of representation in thought the intention, therefore, is not to employ a negational technique of deconstruction but, rather, to release thought from the confines of habitual modes of operating and so open it onto the creative potential of alternative and affirmative ways of thinking.

The dogmatic image often arises as the common sense of 'everybody knows' by which objective givens are grounded in the assumption of a pre-existing unified subject. Descartes, for example, grounds his philosophy in a subjective 'I think' that assumes the stability of a centred self in each of us, whereas Descartes distrusts objective givens from the outset, the primacy of the centred subject acquires the facticity of a given. Having established a stable subjective viewpoint, the essentially

[9] *Ibid.*, p.133.

'good' nature of thought is then trusted to uncover the 'true'. In this scenario, the identity of any concept that is produced becomes derived from the assured identity of the subject which thinks them, or in a broader sense as Deleuze puts it:

> The postulates of the image of thought culminate in the position of an identical thinking subject which functions as a principle of identity for concepts in general.[10]

Correspondingly, in his critical philosophy, Kant develops ideas in a framework of mental faculties, dividing cognition into as many faculties as 'reasonable thought' is capable of identifying — imagination, understanding, reason, desire, and so on[11]. The faculties are *modalities* of the subject, facets of a thinking mechanism of apprehension and comprehension. These faculties operate according to their own particular characteristics, each playing different roles and pertaining to different aspects of cognition. In his 'Critique of Pure Reason', Kant argues that to establish the identity of a given, the different faculties must enter into a synthesis[12]. The faculties corresponding in a 'harmonious accord' in which an object is recognised through the formation of a consistent and so stable concept.

> For insofar as they (our modes of knowledge) relate to an object, they must necessarily agree with one another, that is, must possess that unity which constitutes the concept of an object.[13]

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[10] *Ibid.*, p.265.

[11] Daniel W. Smith in his essay 'Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: overcoming the Kantian Duality', describes Kant as forming as many different faculties as there are *'natural interests of reasonable thought'*, in: Deleuze: A Critical Reader, ed. Paul Patton, Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, p.33.

[12] *'By synthesis, in its most general sense, I understand the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one act of knowledge'*. Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillan, London, 1973, p.111.

[13] *Ibid.*, p.135.

In this respect, recognition consists of a subjective correspondence and agreement between the faculties in order to form an identity, most notably, the faculty of imagination which gathers an image of the object, and the faculty of understanding that regulates this image in relation to a pre-established concept of the object. With recognition as a subjective process produced internally by the mind, Kant's theory of recognition, therefore, places the cogito at the beginning of thought.

For Kant, representation cannot be surmounted because the subject forms their world, and from the limits of this inescapable subjectivity, the information provided by our faculties cannot truly be the same as the thing itself. Deleuze, however, considers the world as ceaselessly becoming; a process characterised by temporal difference. Both subjectivity as a centre of determination and determinate objects themselves are formed out of, and are the effects of, this flux. From this point of view, it is not so much the mind that relates and synthesises, but a temporal flux of difference that produces a mind as a site of relation and synthesis. For Deleuze, in this respect, the task of philosophy is to think from outside of the limits of both subjectivity and recognition, and from the point of view of this temporal flux of difference.

In the model of recognition thought and thinking are collapsed into a process dominated by identity and understanding. Here, the *process* of thinking becomes one that rationally orders the known into new combinations. For Deleuze, this conception of thinking does not truly create new concepts but only old ones reconfigured to appear relatively different. With philosophy and thought conforming to such implicit unifying structures, Deleuze argues, the potential for a creative confrontation with difference, in terms of 'the genesis of an act of thinking in thought itself'[14], remains unrealised. Such occasions in which thought really thinks from outside of the confines

[14] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.139.

of the predetermined is, for Deleuze and for Heidegger before him, a rare occurrence.[15] As Heidegger writes:

> What is most thought-provoking, what gives us to think, is then not anything that only we determine, not anything that only we are instituting, only we are proposing. According to our assertion, what of itself gives us most to think about, what is most thought-provoking, is this – that we are still not thinking.[16]

Similarly to Heidegger, Deleuze separates knowledge and thinking, with thought considered as consisting of the recognition of truths, and thinking considered as a process of concept creation that occurs through an encounter with something unknown and unthinkable, propelling a thinking within thought that is at once a thinking of that which cannot be thought.

By examining the pre-conditioned image from which thought thinks, Deleuze seeks to reveal the *transcendental illusion*[17] that is fundamental to it. For Kant, this illusion comes from mistaking the representational idea that a subject has of something for the thing itself and so not appreciating the limit that cognition has in regard to what he considers to be a transcendent *noumenal* world. Deleuze places a different emphasis on this illusion, considering it as one by which thought as recognition overwrites the motile becoming of a world in flux with an illusory and ideal stable image. This notion

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[15] Deleuze repeats this point in different ways throughout his writing, often citing Heidegger at these moments.

[16] Heidegger, Martin, What is Called Thinking?, trans. J. Glenn Gray, Harper and Row, London, 1968, p.6.

[17] The term 'transcendental illusion' originates from Kant's Critique of Pure Reason where he writes: *'For truth and illusion are not in the object as it is intuited but in the judgement about it insofar as it is thought'*. p.297. Correspondingly, Deleuze writes in his 'Kant's Critical Philosophy': *'reason cannot help but dream of a knowledge of things in themselves'*, p.26.

of transcendental illusion is developed in line with Bergson's relationship between thought, space and time as it was first examined in 'Time and Free Will' and later elaborated in his subsequent writing.

Deleuze's Bergson influenced 'Cinema 1, The Movement-Image', explores what he terms a 'classical image of thought', in which thought's tendency to identify is one that gives a primacy to divisible, extensive space over the indivisible time of duration. This tendency considers discrete things, including the body, to be potentially identifiable through the limits of their extensity. Relations between things themselves make sense through being positioned or mapped across a linear, homogeneous spatial plane. Such discrete entities are an idealisation; an illusion when considered from the point of view of a heterogeneous but indivisible time of duration. Duration as non-representational continuous change precludes the formation of stable concepts in favour of intuitive concepts that are open ended and able to become and transform in alliance with the nature of duration itself.

This is not to say that the illusion of stable and discrete entities is necessarily erroneous. The freezing into identity is an unavoidable tendency of thought that has a certain gravitational pull. For Bergson, the recognition of separate things in space and their arrangement across an intelligible extensive plane derives from the requirements of the body to move according to its needs. This tendency is necessary for the survival of an organism, since it not only enables space to be negotiated but also provides a coherent and predictable milieu by which cause and effect become rationally linked.

Deleuze's interest is not to deny the representational image of thought, but to separate thinking from it and save it for another operation where it becomes a time driven process and a power. Intelligible factors in thought present determinations that

cover and incapacitate durational, unpredictable and unintelligible factors. Making thinking into an intelligible image consisting of a re-ordering of ideas according to a model of representation and identity, therefore, involves a removal of the unrepresentable process of change thereby closing thought off from its own creativity.

Following on from Bergson, Deleuze consistently describes the processes of difference in terms of a fluid ontology of becoming that is responsible for both the forming and dissolving of identities, and not as the determining of relations between fixed points which he considers to be a characteristic of the 'idealistic' dialectical method found in, for instance, the philosophy of Plato and Hegel[18]. The representational, dialectical form of thought that Deleuze's philosophy seeks to destabilise involves a binary logic where a given is reduced to an identity, which then encounters another identity external to it. In this scenario, difference becomes reduced to relations between located givens that operate through comparison and negation[19]. Relative differences between givens, in this regard, have a contradictory effect on one another, that results in another given or a 'synthesis' between them as the effect of a causal interaction.

The audio-visual seems to have an affinity for representational thinking. Art forms that express the audio-visual, such as cinema, have attracted the attention of stabilising and denotative methods of analyses. The tendency of identification, whether concerned with denoting the meaning of individual givens and/or the systematic

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[18] *'Hegel's circle is not the eternal return, only the infinite circulation of the identical by means of negativity.'*, Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.50.

[19] Kant gives the following description of this dialectical mode: *'If a power of judgement is to be dialectical, then it must first of all engage in reasoning, i.e., its judgements must claim universality and must do so a priori; for a dialectic consists in the opposition of such judgements.'*, Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner. S .Pluhar, Hackett, Indianapolis/Cambridge 1987, para.337 – references to this work are to the pagination along the margin of the text.

relations between givens, becomes compounded in the case of the audio-visual by its apparent dialectical construction. Structural semiotics has, in part, been developed in the context of cinema, and is exemplified in the cine theory of Christian Metz's 'Film Language, a Semiotics of the Cinema', the first few pages make apparent Metz's intention to develop an understanding of cinema that proceeds through a method analogous to that of Saussurian linguistics. In Metz's cine-semiotics there is clear emphasis on the cinematic structuring of identities:

> As an anthropological fact, the cinema has a certain configuration, certain fixed structures and figures which deserve to be studied directly.[20]

And of 'syntagmatic category', Metz writes:

> Every discourse must be governed by them, willingly or not, or else it becomes unintelligible.[21]

It seems as if structural semiotics has sought to show the full capacity of its powers by taking on a medium that is characterised by durational 'self-movement'[22]. The structuring of movement produced in cinema through its arrangements of edited sections appears an appropriate focus for methods of analysis that proceed by the structuring of givens. Similarly, the apparent division within the audio-visual, suggested linguistically by it being part audio, part visual, and physiologically in terms of the separate senses of hearing and seeing, appears to make it appropriate to dialogical methods of comprehension. As Chion notes in his book 'Audio-Vision':

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[20] Metz, Christian, Film Language, A Semiotics of the Cinema, trans. Michael Taylor, Oxford University Press, New York, 1974, p.3.

[21] *Ibid.*, p.209.

[22] Describing this self-movement in terms of cinema where Deleuze writes: *'Cinema as industrial art achieves self-movement, automatic movement, it makes movement the immediate given of the image. This kind of movement no longer depends on a moving body or an object which realizes it, nor a spirit which reconstitutes it. It is the image which itself moves in itself.'* Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.156.

> At best some people are content with an additive model, according to which, witnessing an audiovisual spectacle basically consists of seeing images plus hearing sounds. Each perception remains nicely in its own compartment[23]

In an audio-visual event both components are intrinsically transient and fluid. The establishing of identifiable givens between which relations can be drawn structurally and dialogically, necessitates an omission of that fluidity. In this way, dialectical approaches in which the audio-visual is considered as composed of two different signifiers which may then correspond to form another signification, exemplifies the problem of transcendental illusion and the ease by which thought and analyses gravitate towards it.

When arising together, sound and vision could be said to be in the form of a composite. The most reductive way of examining this composite is by using an additive model in which the audio-visual event is divided into its two constituents, the meaning/value of each ascertained and then added together to arrive at a new combined value. This combined value signifies through the identification of its components in regards to a given situation, for example, the sight of a door + the sound of footsteps approaching = someone approaching the door. This combined signification depends on a currency of common learned experience that conforms to our common sense expectations.

This idea maintains a kind of transcendent overview, an ability to step outside of the occurring of the audio-visual event in order to conceive of it as an arrangement of identities. The concept of the event that I am using here and throughout this thesis is one that gives primacy to the unique singularity of an occurrence, as Massumi writes

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[23] Chion, Michel, *Audio-Vision*, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p.xxvi.

in his introduction to 'A Shock to Thought': 'Not just an event: *this* event. *This* event is its own everything, its own happening'[24]. With the emphasis on the singularity of 'its own happening', the event becomes irreducible to any state of affairs or fixed coordinates and so stands in clear contrast to the tendency to simply identify according to a logic of determinate recognition. However, the irreducibility of the event does not mean that it is entirely outside of perception. In 'The Logic of Sense', Deleuze describes the event as having both a realised, actual aspect and an unrealised, virtual one[25]. One the one hand, events realise themselves spatio-temporally in a state of affairs, entering into perception as a sensory becoming — 'the felt reality of relation'[26]. On the other hand, events have their own autonomy, continuing to pass through and beyond perception. Key to understanding this notion of the event is that it is always a condition of 'more than' that is other to and in excess of any given moment of capture and signification.

If we consider the audio-visual as an event, then any notion of division becomes one that is external to the unique singularity of the event itself, happening as a retrospective interpretative response that changes it into something fundamentally different. The point I am making here is that, as an event, the audio-visual is non-representational and non-divisible. When we identify and divide it into a discursive structure, as if it were extensive matter, the durational experience of that event becomes replaced by thought as recognition and its active temporality is reduced to its meaning effects. This raises the question of how to account for the characteristics that are intrinsic and particular to the audio-visual in a way that does not entirely

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[24] Massumi, 'Like a Thought', in: A shock to Thought, Expression After Deleuze and Guattari, ed. Brian Massumi, Routledge, London, 2002, p.xxvii.

[25] Paraphrasing Maurice Blanchot, Deleuze writes: *'On one side, there is the part of the event which is realized and accomplished; on the other, there is that "part of the event which cannot realize its accomplishment."'*. See 'The Logic of Sense', trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, Atholone, London, 1990, pp.151 – 152.

[26] Massumi, Parables for the Virtual, p.16.

empty it of duration by conceiving of it in terms of pre-conceived stable identities. One approach may be to consider the differences between sound and vision in terms of the tendency of each towards fluidity and stasis, representation and indeterminacy. To put it simply for now, it seems that the visual lends itself to the identification and positioning of discrete objects in a prescribed and extensive space, and correlatively, sound tends towards a condition that is relatively more spatially indeterminate and durational. This distinction is one that is explored by Edward Branigan in his essay 'Sound, Epistemology, Film', where he writes:

> Certain features of the world and how it impinges on us are deeply embedded in our language, cognition, and actions. The result is an asymmetry in the way we ascribe visible and audible properties to objects. It appears that objects are composed of visible (and other) properties while sound seems detachable and transient. This asymmetry accounts for the privileged position of vision in the understanding objects depicted in the medium of film.[27]

Branigan's essay is one of the few within audio-visual analysis that explores the presuppositions which condition the identification of visual and sonic objects rather than examining their relation in terms of signification[28]. His approach, initially at least, meets with one of the principle interests here in seeking to examine the limits and potential of sound and vision in regards to identity, and so asking not *what* something means but *how* it means.

Branigan first approaches the problem in terms of a perceiving subject with certain expectations and habits that pertain to sound and vision. His argument here is that although vision (in terms of light) and sound have the same basis in wave motion, these expectations and habits influence how each are perceived. We hear sound as

more fluid and transitory, seemingly *emitted* by an identifiably static object, however, we see light in terms of colour and shade, as *possessed* by an object. In this sense, vision is more absolute in terms of identification by being apparently more tied to a material object.

For Branigan, perceptual differences between sound and vision stem from both the body's physical movement in space and from language. In terms of the movement of the body, Branigan makes the point that light is a more reliable indicator of spatial position, whereas sound is more uncertain and shifting, bouncing off surfaces, reverberating and appearing to come from places that we might ascertain as not its 'true', i.e. materially extensive source. We can, for example, hear sounds that emanate from around corners and in regards to the accurate location of an object that may be directly in front of us, sound presents a more *blurred* image of its spatial position than light. Compared to sound waves, as Branigan notes 'the straight-line propagation of light is able to resolve the edges and shape of an object with great accuracy'[29]. This physical property of light suggests that it seems more bound to a material object because it allows for a more successful relative movement between the body and the materiality of extensive space. The connection between light and materiality is, therefore, a perceptual attribution originating from a need to move and survive.

> There is no doubt that we have a bias toward material objects: the car will hit me not its light or its sound.[30]

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[27] Branigan, Edward, 'Sound, Epistemology, Film', in: Film Theory and Philosophy, ed. Richard Allen and Murray Smith, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997, pp.95 – 124. Citation from p.96.

[28] It is worth noting here that there seem very few analyses of the audio-visual in print.

[29] Branigan, Sound, Epistemology, Film, p.97.

[30] *Ibid.*, p.96.

That vision is more useful than sound in terms of movement and survival supplies, in Branigan's view, a reason for the hierarchy of vision over sound. Furthermore, the attribution of more determinational accuracy to the seen than to the heard continues when we watch a film, even though a film does not directly necessitate the physical movement of a spectator. It is this superiority of vision as a point of reference that accounts for what Chion terms the 'magnetisation' of sound to visual image in cinema, by which a monaural sound becomes positioned by relation to the spatial position of an appropriate visual source that is seen on the screen.

> If the character is walking across the screen, the sound of the footsteps seems to follow his image, even though in the real space of the movie theater, they continue to issue from the same stationary loudspeaker.[31]

The hierarchy of vision over sound is often brought to bear in structural semiotic accounts of cinema. For Branigan, Christian Metz exemplifies this approach. In his essay 'Aural Objects'[32], Metz describes how the more determinative capacities of vision are aligned with a naming function of language, whereas the less reliable determinative capacities of sound are aligned with a descriptive function of language. From this perspective, the meaning function of language is considered as a determining factor in the nature of perception, positing perception as the linguistically structured means by which meaning is ascertained. For Metz, vision is a noun and sound an adjective, in this sense it is vision which supplies the reliable knowledge of existent things required to reliably name those things. The more dubious determinations of sound necessitate that it be only a descriptive attribute of visual and referential noun/objects. It is difficult to disagree completely with Metz on this point,

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[31] *Ibid.*, p.69.

[32] Branigan's citation: 'Christian Metz, Aural Objects, trans. Georgia Gurrieri in Weis and Belton, Film Sound 155-156, repr. from Yale French Studies. Aural Objects, is an excerpt from 'The Perceived and the Named', trans. Steven Feld and Shari Robertson, Studies in Visual Communication, 6:3 (Fall 1980), 56-68.'

the tendency of sound being an attribute of the visual is familiar. We say 'the ringing of the bell', rather than 'the bell of the ringing' or that a train sound is the sound of a train.

The fluidity of sound is less graspable and seems to move and happen in relation to a more solid visual source. This presupposition is one by which sound becomes correspondent to an indivisibility of time as a continua of duration and the visual becomes correspondent with the fixed parameters of an extensive, divisible and measurable space. Just as the superiority of vision over sound is implicated in the common sense registers of language, similarly, language reveals the presupposition of a subordination of durational time to the more graspable materiality of extensive space. In this respect, time is conceived to be an attribute of space when we say, for example; something flows or something happens.

The main problem regarding this habit within thought is that movement becomes discontinuous by being considered as a passage from one determinately fixed point to the next. Correlatively, determinate points become essentially immune to the transitional processes by which they themselves emerge and then transform to become something other to what they already are. In other words, and from the point of view of thought, the intransigence of identity remains in place while the motility of time continues to pass ineffectually around it. It seems that the only way to reclaim continuity to the duration of movement, in this scenario, is to consider it as incompatible to, and detached from, the divisible space through which it passes. Deleuze, in his Bergson inspired 'Cinema 1. The Movement-Image' describes this as follows:

> movement is distinct from the space covered. Space covered is past, movement is present, the act of covering. The space covered is divisible, indeed infinitely

> divisible, whilst movement is indivisible, or cannot be divided without changing qualitatively each time it is divided.[33]

As an established hierarchy within our 'cognition and actions', the subordination of sound to vision and time to space, is sufficiently 'embedded' to be exhibited in the syntactical construction of language. These preconditions of thought form the contingent terms in which any durational and non-representational event of the audio-visual might arise, and with which it must compete. Although Branigan examines the conditions for signification by exploring how sound might pertain to meaning formation in a different way to the visual, my own interest concerns not only this difference, but also the question of how an audio-visual event might curtail the level of fixity within identity thinking and even compel thought to think by presenting that which is asymmetrically discordant to its habitual mode of recognition. From the point of view of duration, the asymmetry between sound and vision in terms of their differing tendencies towards fluidity and stasis, reveals a process by which each may act upon and alter the condition of the other, furthermore, this asymmetry of relation may suggest ways in which fluidity and indeterminacy might impinge upon the intransigence of representational thought. This asymmetrical relation between sound and vision, thought and fluidity will be examined later on in the next section of this chapter.

Deleuze's antidote to the representational image of thought is one that can account for thought's encounter with the 'imageless', to reveal a problem-driven, creative process of thinking within thought. Thinking in thought occurs through a failure of recognition, an encounter with something that is unfamiliar to us and in which the

[33] Deleuze, Gilles, Cinema 1. The Movement-Image, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Athlone, London, 1992, p.1.

faculties cannot form an agreement upon an identity. In this temporal interval in which recognition becomes suspended, identity thinking is placed in crisis and, in its hesitation, becomes subsumed by an imageless thinking. Here thought begins to think because it is compelled to do so by a situation that necessitates a search for a resolution, and with it a propulsion towards a new image.

> The violence and resonance triggered by the sentiendum is always responsible for the awakening of thought from its natural dogmatic slumber.[34]

This process, where thought grapples to present an image of incommensurability, is reminiscent of Kant's theory of the sublime in the 'Critique of Judgement'. Unlike the critiques of Pure Reason and Practical Reason, where a higher faculty determines and legitimises the others in order to form an identified concept, the third critique describes an imageless and boundless thinking that begins from a disorder of the faculties. The sublime involves a dissension between the faculties of reason and imagination, in which the imagination confronts a limitless chaos, the immensity of which is beyond its capacity to form it as a representational totality.

> the sublime can be found in a formless object, insofar as we present *unboundedness*, either (as) in the object or because the object prompts us to present it [35]

The overburdened imagination, striving towards its limit, can only produce a formless and so imageless presentation. Only reason has the capacity to think an idea of infinite limitlessness, reason demands that the imagination forms an image equal to its idea, and it is this imperative which propels the imagination towards its limit.

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[34] Boundas, Constantin V., Deleuze-Bergson: An Ontology of the Virtual, in: Deleuze: A Critical Reader, p.90.

[35] Kant, CJ, para. 244.

> our imagination strives to progress towards infinity, while our reason demands absolute totality as a real idea[36]

For Kant, this inability on the side of the imagination and ability on the side of reason, attests not only to the superiority of reason[37] but also demonstrates a discordant failure to form a determinate, representational cognition. It is this contrariety between capacities that accounts for the particularity of sublime feeling; a mixture of pleasure and displeasure producing what Kant terms "a vibration, a rapid alternation of repulsion from, and attraction to one and the same object"[38].

Deleuze's notion of difference places the indivisible flux of duration as a concrete universal. The forces of difference may be considered to depend upon a kind of 'zero point field'[39], a temporal, virtual and energetic ground state that forms the conditions for the emergence of any thing, including both actual givens and the structuring of relations between givens. The discord of the faculties is a way of comprehending the emergence of difference in subjective experience, and correlatively, the dissolution of the experiencing subject into difference. There are, in this respect, some important differences between Deleuze and Kant. For Kant, the form of a given is dependent on subjective processes of cognition that are pre-structured in advance. In 'The Critique of Pure Reason', Kant provides a subjective theory of experience in which things in themselves or *noumena* are separate from the *phenomena* of how things appear. Experience is limited to phenomena, the true essence of a given, being unavailable to it. Here the phenomenon has two sides, one from the object as a manifold entity

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[36] *Ibid.*, para. 250.

[37] As Kant writes: *'all the might of the imagination still inadequate to reason's ideas.'* CJ, para. 256.

[38] *Ibid.*, para. 258.

[39] Defined as the energy present in a vacuum. Investigations of the Zero Point Field are considered to have the potential to unite relativity with quantum field theory, its precise characteristics being much argued within particle physics. To my understanding, one aspect of this field that is consistent with Deleuze's notion of difference is that it is considered not as a seamless continuum but as an infinite heterogeneity.

supplied by the senses, and another that is undertaken by the subjective organisation of the perceptual field, determining and ordering the manifold of the object into recognisable form.

Contrary to this, Deleuze's project of Transcendental Empiricism goes beyond empirical experience to try to account not only for the conditions of subjective experience but also for the conditions by which the subject as a given becomes given. Rather than a theory of the subjective experience, Transcendental Empiricism is a theory of a whole in which there are tendencies towards subjectivity. The subject's interpenetration with, not separation from, the whole is utilised as a force that can place the inertia of fixed objects and centred subjects into movement. For Kant, the whole beyond experience is a passive, unified space-time in which givens arise through the activities of perception that are inseparable from the volition of the subject. While for Deleuze, on the other hand, the whole is not a unified totality but an actively differential flux in which the givens of thought and subject are both images in a continual process of actualisation and dispersal. This engenders a different idea of the discord of the faculties. In the Kantian model, there is an impasse in terms of representation produced by the failure of imagination to present an image of the infinite whole. The limit of the imagination is at once the limit of the subject of which the faculties are modalities. For Deleuze, this limit point constitutes an opening of those faculties that compose the interiority of the subject onto an exterior, mobilising power of becoming. In this sense, the sublime is not purely a matter of subjectivity, but an opening of subjectivity onto a temporal whole that exteriorises it. The process of transformation and any actualisation produced by that process is in these situations a manifestation of that exterior temporal power.

At this point, thinking can be seen as a response in thought to a confrontation with an imageless force in the world as a whole, the energy of which enters thought

involuntarily, and compels it to create new concepts with which to grasp that confrontation. A question arises here concerning the nature of that confrontation; if it is imageless and unavailable as a concept to thought, then how does it manifest and how is it apprehended? For Kant, the sublime is formless and so devoid of any cognitive object and is apprehended indirectly as 'a mental *agitation* connected with our judging of the object',[40] producing an internal subjective feeling of pleasure and displeasure. For Deleuze, such encounters are also felt and sensed rather than thought of in terms of distinct cognition. The difference between them, however, is that for Deleuze, sensation is not a purely subjective process that occurs in relation to an external object. Deleuze's thinking around sensation is considered in more detail in the chapters which follow, for now I will undertake only a fleeting account. Generally speaking, for Deleuze, sensation manifests as a 'vibration' of the nervous system[41], a differential flux of intensity that is directly connected to the becoming of a whole that passes beyond the subject. Fundamentally, it is sensation as intensity and as differences in intensity that sets thinking in motion and on a path to actualising as thought. From this point of view, the imageless and unpresentable does not so much *exist*, but *happens* and is *happening*, and the ways in which it does so lends itself to being sensed and felt.

> Empiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics an apodictic discipline, only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being of the sensible, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity.[42]

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[40] Kant, CJ, para. 247.

[41] *'the vibration, which characterises the simple sensation (but is already durable or compound, because it rises and falls, implies a constitutive difference of level, follows an invisible thread, that is more nervous than cerebral)'* Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.168.

[42] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.57.

In collusion with Kant, the apprehension of sensation and of non-representational *objects of sensation* is, for Deleuze, provided in sensibility as a faculty concerned purely with the apprehension of sensate affects. In terms of thought's encounter with the imageless, without a determinate image or any regulating principle to bring the separate faculties into a harmonious accord, this sensory vibration provided in sensibility becomes communicated across all of the faculties, as Deleuze writes:

> each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others.[43]

Deleuze's reworking of Kant's discord of the faculties, in 'Difference and Repetition', becomes interwoven throughout his critical project as a way of positing the differential violence of sensation as that which drives thinking into overturning the dogmatic image of thought. In this respect, art, conceived of as 'harnessing forces of sensation', attains an important role within his philosophy, providing fugitive images as 'blocs of sensation' capable of inducing the creation of philosophical concepts. Correlatively, philosophy can supply new ways of thinking about art by introducing more intuitive, looser ideas that work together with art's temporal and fugitive characteristics. In terms of the audio-visual, modes of analysis that consider it purely as a signifying duality, strip the audio-visual of its indeterminate motility. Conceiving of the audio-visual as a sensate temporality, on the other hand, potentialises its creativity in regards to thinking. This is not to say that art does not involve signification and meaning, the point is that there is another aspect to art and to thinking which is alternative to that governed by representation, that is creatively productive through offering the transformative potential to move thought away from that which it already knows and is already able to think.

Section Two

From The Encountered Sign to The Becoming of Thought

> Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter.[44]

The first section of this chapter outlined an idea of a representational tendency within thought that is dependent upon the assumption of static points of reference that divide the continua of duration. This section explores an alternative to this tendency and the ways in which it actually operates and how it might enable us to think. In this respect, the aim consists of describing a process that moves in two directions at once, on the one hand, towards loosening the representational conventions of transcendental illusion that block the potential of flux, on the other, towards revealing the conditions of flux without attempting to represent it. To do this I would like to begin by examining in a little more detail the argument that Deleuze develops from Kant's disorder of the faculties.

For Kant, sensory occurrences are apprehended by a faculty of sensibility as well as the faculties of understanding, memory and imagination that seek to stabilise and so comprehend those occurrences. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze considers a way in which the faculties can be disordered and prevented from combining to form common sense recognition through a particular kind of occurrence: a 'fundamental encounter' that is resistant to habitual recognition.

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[43] *Ibid.*, p.146.

[44] *Ibid.*, p.139.

> (The fundamental encounter) is imperceptible precisely from the point of view of recognition – in other words from the point of view of the empirical exercise of the senses in which sensibility grasps only that which also could be grasped by other faculties, and is related within the context of a common sense to an object which also must be apprehended by other faculties.[45]

Deleuze's notion of the fundamental encounter describes an operation in which thought outstrips and overturns the model of recognition in order to think 'difference itself'. This overturning of thought is not a case in which faculties other than sensibility are excluded from the fundamental encounter, time continues, and although the operation of the faculties is suspended in terms of recognition, they do not stop but vibrate or oscillate as different aspects of the intensive 'affect' of the event. Since each faculty is operatively sustained in the fundamental encounter, the differences particular to each faculty are also sustained, preventing the formation of a common accord between them.

Not all sensation manifests as a fundamental encounter and not all sensation is outside of recognition. Sensations can be remembered, imagined and conceived of as having an object and as being brought about by a recognisable thing. The scent of a rose, for example, can only be recognised through recourse to the memory of an apparently similar sensation, in which case the particular event of that sensation becomes conditioned and overlaid with a re-presentation of a similar occurrence external to that event itself. Consequently not all sensation can force thought to think and transform the processes of conventional thought. In order for sensation to do this it has to be momentarily aleatory to thought as a something beyond and before recognition. The object of this encounter, its particular and non-representational sensate characteristics, is, for Deleuze, an imageless 'sign' that is 'sensed' and felt rather than thought in terms of a signification. Deleuze is clear about this distinction:

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[45] *Ibid.*, p.140.

> Signification refers only to concepts and the manner in which they relate to the objects conditioned by a given field of representation; whereas sense is like the Idea, which is developed in the sub-representative determinations.[46]

The sign, as unrecognisable and 'sub-representative', therefore, interrupts the 'natural stupor'[47] of habitual thought, compelling thought to think 'in order thus to exorcise the void in which it chokes'[48]. However, this interruption is a 'void' only from the point of view of recognition, in terms of sensation, on the other hand, this interruption is filled with the sensory intensity by which becomes felt. This process can be regarded as having two related aspects; firstly, from the perspective of the intensive indeterminacy of the sign, the potential for cognition subsists as a sensate image 'seed' that contains its own power of 'self-organisation' that dissipates as it actualises into a thought image. The sign, then, is not only a sensate interruption within the order of conventional thought, but its intensity is also the impetus for the process of thinking by which thought forms. As Deleuze notes:

> Between the intensive and thought, it is always by means of an intensity that thought comes to us.[49]

Secondly, from the perspective of thought's tendency towards identity there is an interpretative direction, with the sign compelling a creative response from the faculties in order to form a new cognition, 'as though the object of encounter, the sign, were the bearer of a problem - as though it were a problem'[50]. As a 'problem' for thought, the

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[46] *Ibid.*, p.155.

[47] *'In fact concepts only ever designate possibilities. They lack the claws of absolute necessity – in other words, of an original violence inflicted upon thought; the claws of a strangeness or enmity which alone would awaken thought from its natural stupor.'* Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.139.

[48] Deleuze, Gilles, Proust and Signs, trans. Richard Howard, Athlone, London, 2000, p.98.

[49] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.144.

[50] *Ibid.*, p.140.

sign thereby compels the thinking of a 'solution' by which the event becomes again shrouded by a thought that may account for it.

For the sake of perspicuity, up to now, there has been some oversimplification consisting of a polarisation regarding the two images of thought. At first glance Deleuze's writing seems full of these apparent polarities, all of which may be considered as corresponding to a consistent and fundamental ontological logic which entails a movement between the poles of the virtual and the actual. Whereas the actual is characterised by levels of finitude and is to a variable extent localisable, by contrast, the 'pure' virtual is an infinite temporal flux that is formless and beyond perception. Importantly, although there are movements between virtual and actual, the two are not in dialogical opposition; the molecular virtual persists both outside of and at the same time within the molar actual, allowing for what Constantine V. Boundas terms: 'a closed, 'extended' or 'cool' system inside the open-ended, intensive chaosmic virtual.'[51] The virtuality of the sign, therefore, arises as a condition of intensive virtuality within thought's relatively fixed and actual parameters, not as something entirely and transcendently other to it, but as a power of unthought dynamic potential that is inside of and intrinsic to thought itself.

In this regard, it is important to note that the virtuality of the sign as a creative impulse and opening within thought is not the same as the arising of a 'possibility' in thought. As Deleuze puts it:

> The only danger in all this is that the virtual could be confused with the possible. The possible is opposed to the "real" the process undergone by the possible is therefore a "realisation". By contrast, the virtual is not opposed to

[51] Constantine V. Boundas, Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual, pp.84-85.

> the real; it possesses a full reality by itself. The process it undergoes is actualisation.[52]

When the virtual is confused with the possible it becomes a point of view in which the real is the identifiable and the virtual is a 'lack' awaiting realisation. This re-emphasises an important methodological point. From the perspective of thought as recognition it is possible to navigate around moments or situations that we do not understand and define them in familiar negative terms as gaps in our thinking, empty moments, and presentations of lack and absence. This approach proceeds from the actual viewpoint of a centred subject operating within the terms of the already known and having the power to decide where signifying or identifiable content does or does not reside. By being positioned as negative in relation to the positive of the known, this empty gap, therefore, holds the speculative possibility of it being filled by an identity. However, conceiving of the virtual as being empty, on the basis that we cannot think it, is to omit any consideration of its creative potential to transform thought. The indeterminacy of the virtual thereby becomes merely a 'passing bad moment'[53] to be covered over by a determination that is either predictably defined in advance or 'produced after the fact, as retroactively fabricated in the image of what resembles it'[54].

From the point of view of the indeterminacy of the virtual, on the other hand, the absence of any recognisable identity is precisely what enables the sign to bring something new into thought by arising as that which is outside of thought's already established habits. The sign impacts within thought producing what Deleuze terms a

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[52] Deleuze. Difference and Repetition. p.211.

[53] *Ibid.*, p.137.

[54] *Ibid.*, p.212.

disturbing 'violence' to our habitual modes of existence'[55]. The nature of this violence might be considered as a form of eruption in which a sensed change in intensity mobilises and then settles to leave a changed cognitive landscape. It is in this way that the process of thinking compelled by the sign becomes a transformative and creative process:

> To think is to create – there is no other creation – but to create is first of all to engender 'thinking' in thought.[56]

The pure virtual lies beyond the range of determinate perception and, therefore, does not involve any localised points by which *we* may assert any stable identity or differences between. Furthermore, from the point of view of the virtual *we* as individual subjects are also not yet existent since there is not yet any division by which a subject may be considered to have emerged and become different to the world as a whole. The pure virtual is not that of centred subjects, perceptual entities or determinate material forms, but to the contrary, Deleuze's ontology of the virtual is one in which determinate co-ordinates and identities are composed by, and own there existence to, differentials between virtual forces that form the self-propagating condition for the emergence of the actual. However, this is not to place the virtual as an immaterial phantom that haunts the matter of the actual, but, instead, that matter incorporates differing levels of actuality and virtuality, perceptibility and imperceptibility, fluidity and stasis.

In his essay 'Deleuze, Becomings and the open ended Becoming of the World', Manuel De Landa provides an analysis of precisely this process of differentiation in regard to matter. Following Deleuze, and with recourse to contemporary notions in

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[55] "In fact concepts only ever designate possibilities. They lack the claws of absolute necessity – in other words, of an original violence inflicted upon thought; the claws of a strangeness or enmity which alone would awaken thought from its natural stupor" Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.139

metallurgy and thermodynamics, De Landa considers matter as comprised of intensive asymmetries; uneven differentials within conditions such as temperature, pressure and tension[57] that account for the 'morphogenetic' processes by which matter both forms and becomes open to transformation. Crucially for De Landa, this implication of the virtual within the actual and force within matter is in marked contrast to phenomenological and essentialist approaches in which subject and object, and the means by which each emerge, are held as transcendent to one another.

> Essentialism views matter as an inert receptacle for forms that come from the outside (transcendental essences); here; by contrast, matter is seen as possessing its own immanent intensive resources for the generation of form from within.[58]

Similarly, this procedure of the morphogenesis of 'form from within' corresponds closely to Felix Guattari's creative process of 'Chaosmosis' in which the virtual is constituted by a chaos that is not the antithesis of order and structure but is the force of an ontological 'homogenesis' that forms and 'heterogenesis' that unforms.

> The movement of infinite virtuality of incorporeal complexions carries in itself the possible manifestation of all the components and all the enunciative assemblages actualizable in finitude.[59]

From a rationalist and empirical position, the pure virtual is a purely hypothetical and ultimately rhetorical concept. We might not believe in this pure virtual, perhaps because we cannot 'clearly and distinctly perceive it'. However, from the point of view of both Guattari's and Deleuze's ontology of difference, their molecular and energetic

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[56] *Ibid.*, p.147

[57] See Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, pp.222 – 223.

[58] De Landa, Manuel, 'Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Open Ended Becoming of the World', in: Becomings, ed. Elizabeth Grosz, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, p.31-32.

conception of reality is one in which the pure virtual *is* the real; a heterogeneous vibration or imperceptible *hum* of the world as a whole, out of which the actual forms. In the case of Deleuze's conception of the sign, this condition of pure motility has formed a virtual object as an indeterminately sensed motility in thought, the edges of which can be loosely defined by relation to the less motile and extensive field in which it arises. It seems, therefore, that the sign has a degree of limitation incurred by it being a particular event of interruption within a particular and identifiable situation. Indeed the sign itself is not the whole, but rather a *crystalline* fragment[60] that works as an opening onto the whole. As a virtual object that is contingently placed in an actual framework of thought, the sign becomes an opening within that framework connecting to the dynamically motile forces capable of transforming it.

> What forces us to think is the sign. The sign is the object of a fundamental encounter, but it is precisely the contingency of the encounter that guarantees the necessity of what leads us to think.[61]

There is, then, a movement from the molecular virtual towards the molar actual. Like the cracking of a whip, these movements contract as they move through a process of actualisation to culminate at a finite point of perceptually captured material expression. The characteristics of this movement of actualisation being contingently formed in relation to the particular scenario in which it emerges and becomes localised.

The actual is more complex and diverse and unlike the virtual it does not have a pure condition. The process of actualisation is not an all or nothing scenario with a precise

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[59] Guattari, Felix, Chaosmosis, An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm, trans. Paul Bain and Julian Pefanis, University of Indiana Press/Power Publications, Indianapolis/Sydney, 1995, p.112.

[60] The crystalline fragment as an opening of virtuality within the actual is discussed in Section Two/Chapter Three of this thesis.

[61] Deleuze, Proust and Signs, p.97.

cut off point between the actual and the virtual. Instead, there are different registers of obscurity and distinctness, produced through different processes of identification situated within different circumstances that combine to form different levels of actuality. In terms of the actuality of thought, this variability corresponds with differing levels of intransigence and motility in terms of either resistance towards or potential for transformation. My point here is that if we take into account a variability of levels of openness regarding the structures in which signs arise (their *readiness* for transformation so to speak) then, the sign's dynamic potential for transformation, the degree to which it is sensed and felt, is also contingently variable.

It has been noted that the audio-visual succumbs easily to dialectical approaches that identify and relate components. The audio-visual event and its capacity to express the kind of sign just discussed are bypassed equally easily. An audio-visual occurrence does not exist already split into sensory divisions of the visual alongside the heard, but is a singular enduring event. The splitting of the audio-visual occurrence requires the identification of two separate sensory systems, and then the application of the notion of that separation onto that occurrence. From an empirical perspective, the audio-visual invites this division, as the organs of hearing and vision are separate senses with different tasks.

The audio-visual event, like any other, could be termed as sub-representational. In the case of it being a sign in the Deleuzian sense, it has attained sufficient intensive charge to interrupt the processes of recognition. In the particular case of the audio-visual this includes the interruption of any recognition of it being composed of separate sensory systems. In this regard, there is no conscious discernment of two

separate and interacting sensory systems because there are no fixed points of identification within it and no purely external point from which to analyse it. Referring to his concept of the time-image as an event in cinema, Deleuze writes:

> We run in fact into a principle of indeterminability, of indiscernability: we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental in the situation, not because they are confused, but because we do not have to know and there is no longer even a place from which to ask.[62]

In analysing the audio-visual we might gravitate toward two apparently incompatible approaches. On the one hand, we may wish to place an audio-visual event as unfettered by any notion of division. On the other, we may gain some purchase on the nature of that event by describing intrinsic differences between vision and sound, seeing and hearing. Such differences form the beginnings of the contingency of the audio-visual, supplying the minimum degree of actual identification necessary to define the audio-visual as a particular order of event. Admittedly, this is to bring a pre-condition to the event itself, however, examining these differences is not the same as substituting the event with fixed identities and significations. Neither would this be to supply an *entirely* retroactive division. As sub-representational, the sign arises before the actuality of determinate recognition but also involves the conditions for recognition, in this sense, it is an interruption of virtuality that becomes and actualises. To consider differences between sound and vision is not to consider the audio-visual in terms of a pure virtuality, but is instead to begin further up the line towards actualisation, not the actual precisely, but the audio-visual as a sensate, temporal occurrence in which the intrinsic differences between seeing and hearing form the interrelating pre-conditions for that which becomes actually seen and heard. In this case, the audio-visual is not considered through differences between static components and identities, but through differences in intensity and differences in the

[62] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.7.

capacity for intensity, converging and diverging to form tensions, disharmonies and asymmetries. This relation between sound and vision may be compared to a difference in intensity between two fluidly motile conditions. Manuel De Landa gives the following simple example of thermodynamics:

> If we have a container separated into two compartments, and we fill one compartment with cold air and the other with hot air, we thereby create a system embodying a difference in intensity, the intensity in this case being intensity. If we then open a small hole in the wall dividing the compartments, the difference in intensity causes a spontaneous flow of air from one side to the other. It is in this sense that differences in intensity are morphogenetic, giving rise to the phenomena of experience, even if in this case the phenomenon that emerges is too simple.[63]

What, I will argue, constitutes the relation in intensity between sound and vision may be summarised as the differential between each in terms of their tendency towards movement and stasis. This difference may be comparable to two fluids of differing densities, the denser fluid moving the other towards increased viscosity and resistance while the less dense mobilises and liquefies. However, one important aspect where the audio-visual exceeds this comparison is in its relation to perception. In this respect the differential between sound and vision, as it will be described here, becomes analogous to that which passes between thought's tendency towards identity and the potential for its movement towards the indeterminacy of the virtual.

In terms of thought, the question here becomes one of how there can be a persuasion away from thinking in terms of fixed points and spatial extensity and toward a less determinate fluidity. To account for determinations of divisible space and the identity thinking to which it corresponds, and at the same time account for time as durational continua, requires a conception of time that is ever changing and yet incorporates

[63] De Landa, Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Open Ended Becoming of the World, p.31.

differentials of density and speed, density in terms of the relative solidities, inertias and resistances of matter, and speed in terms of the relative velocities of perception in which duration may speed up or slow down to approximate the apparently immobile. As Bergson writes in 'Matter and Memory':

> In reality, there is no one rhythm of duration; it is possible to imagine many different rhythms which, slower or faster, measure the degree of tension or relaxation of different kinds of consciousness and thereby fix their respective places in the scale of being.[64]

In 'A Thousand Plateaus', Deleuze and Guattari consider this form of temporality as that of 'Aeon' which is in contrast to the clock-time of 'Chronos'.

> *Aeon:* the indefinite time of the event, the floating time that knows only speeds and continually divides that transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-here, a simultaneous too-late and too-early. A something that is both going to happen and has just happened. *Chronos:* the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject.[65]

The temporality of aeon involves two interrelated aspects: an indefinite and ever changing continuum that in regards to the actually seen or heard is always 'too-late' or 'too-early', and the emergence of time as chronos within it, not as an already divided arrangement of static points, but as a temporal process of continual dividing by which things transpire to become formed and unformed. From the point of view of temporality as aeon, therefore, time is no longer subordinate to space, instead the reverse, the contingencies of space arising impermanently within the continua of time as 'dune points' of relative solidity that form out of and slope back into a temporal flux.

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[64] Bergson, Henri, Matter and Memory, trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer, Zone, New York, 1994, p.207.

In terms of modes of perception that begin from extensity and stasis, this notion of time provides an expanded temporal field that contains and exceeds the assumptions of any fixed position or centred subject. In this sense, aeon reveals a potential for the determinacy of both subject and object to be considered from outside of their prescribed limitations and as open to the process of their own becoming.

Part One of this chapter discussed Branigan's notion of the difference between sound and vision in terms of the tendency of each towards fluidity and stasis. This equated sound with the continua of temporality and vision with the divisible of extensive space. To bring in the concept of differential ontogenesis and the temporality of aeon that characterises it, provides a means to think the audio-visual which moves away from a pre-destined hierarchy of visual space over sonorous time and towards a situation of interpenetration. This now dynamic interrelation between the two accounts for how the use of music and ambient sound can seem to *smooth-out* the visual divisions between edited sections of a film, rendering them more continuous than they otherwise would be. Furthermore, this quite simple and familiar temporalisation of the visual by sound may on occasion increase to a level where the apparently determinate parameters of the visual become sufficiently uprooted to result in a feeling of floating and drift. The time as continua of music and ambient sound, therefore, appears to destablise the fixity of visual identification. In such cases sound is not something that exists in time, but instead sound *is* time, as Deleuze and Guattari write in 'What is Philosophy?': 'music may be said to make the sonorous force of time audible'[66]. Sound, in this regard, reveals time as a sensory becoming and, in terms of the visual, implicates that sensory becoming within it.

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[65] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix, A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Brian Massumi, Athlone, London, 1996, p.262.

[66] Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.182.

This potential for the dynamic destabilisation of space by time is one by which the continuity of time may *feed into* the discontinuity of space, to produce a space that is itself fluid and which overflows and exceeds the boundaries of the discrete objects that may be assumed to populate and define it. Space, therefore, may also be considered and actually perceived as a continuum in which objects arise and become situated. As Deleuze notes:

> dynamisms are no less temporal than spatial. They constitute a time of actualisation or differenciation no less than they outline spaces of actualization.[67]

However, it is important to note that in regards to the differences in intensity that form the conditions for emergence mentioned earlier, this continuum of space would not be a passive 'void' in which objects are situated, but would itself be dynamically heterogeneous, correspondent to the time of aeon by being composed not by the already divided but by processes of dividing, relative fluidities and thickenings of material density. In terms of actual perception, the arising of a sense of space as continuum expands the scope of perception beyond that of simple and linear relations between discrete objects. Furthermore, this temporalisation of space produces a more indeterminate and open level of capture, implying a feeling of transition and becoming in respect to an object in particular.

> The picture of a relatively undifferentiated and continuous topological space undergoing discontinuous transitions and progressively acquiring detail until it condenses into the measurable and divisible metric space which we inhabit, is a powerful metaphor for the genesis of structure.[68]

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[67] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.217.

[68] De Landa, Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Open Ended Becoming of the World, p.56.

Ambient sound in particular may be considered to exemplify this expanded mode of spatial perception. In cinema, ambient sound may be considered as background noise that is often secondary to speech and to the particular sounds of visually perceived objects. In this case, ambient sound may become merely the sound of a visual and extensive space. However, when media incorporates the use of stereo, almost without exception, sounds are arranged within, and are themselves arranging, a spatial sound field. Sound, therefore, can produce a space on its own without requiring a visible image with which to 'magnetise' and determine its spatial co-ordinates into a more pinpoint location. The composition of space through sound consists not of individualised sound objects occurring as separate events that are things in space, but of sonic micro events that converge to *gel* into a spatio-temporal fabric. These micro-events constitute what may be termed as the texture or *grain* of the sound. Sound grain can have differing levels of coarseness and smoothness ranging from the relatively differenciated sounds of a busy street to the sound of trees in the wind and to the even more diffuse sound of air in a room[69]. Rather than being fragmentary, this sound field presents a uniform yet indeterminately fluid spatial environment that can have different magnitudes of smaller or larger. Importantly, whatever the apparent size of a sound field, its limits, nevertheless, remain indeterminately edgeless and vague. This notion of space is that which Deleuze and Guattari term 'smooth' as opposed to the 'striated' space that is subordinated to points:

> Whereas in the striated forms organize a matter, in the smooth materials signal forces and serve as signals for them. It is an intensive space rather than extensive space, one of distances not of measures and properties. Intense *spatium* instead of *extensio*... Perception in it is based on symptoms and evaluations rather than measures or properties. That is why smooth space is occupied by intensities, wind and noise, forces, and sonorous and tactile

[69] The term 'air' in sound engineering is used to describe varieties of the *smoothness* of white and pink noise that is often used as a basic soundscape.

> qualities, as in the desert, steppe, or ice. The creaking of ice and the song of the sands.[70]

Returning to the relation between sound and image, ambient sound may become the space in which both a visual object and the viewer may reside. One example of this could be a visual close up of an object, the spatial environment of that object may never be seen, but resolved only in a *global* sense by sound. This sound space can expand beyond the space of the visual object and spatio-temporally continue out-of-field and beyond the limitations of the edge of the screen, pressurising the visual by defocusing and unsettling its spatial fixity. Correlatively, sound can be focused onto the object, overwhelming its passivity by implying forces within it and so making its form voluble and resonant. This focusing and defocusing of sound can, therefore, produce a defocusing of the distinctness of vision, resulting in the perception of a more multiplicitous and indistinct visual field comparable to watching the shimmering of light on the surface of the ocean. It is worth noting at this point that from within the audio-visual there are also occasions where there is more spatio-temporal indeterminacy to the visual than to the sound, in which case it is the visual that destabilises the relative determinacy of the sound, however, the examination of such events lies outside of the scope of this study.

Where the audio-visual may differ from any *naturalism* of seeing and hearing is through its ability to be actually constructed and shaped to express particular sensory effects that impinge upon and dissolve the limitations of thought by intercepting and transforming our habitually conditioned sense of reality. The spatio-temporal conditions that it produces can be discernible and even recognisable in ways that do not involve fixed reference points but are fluidly indeterminate. In this regard, there can, it seems, be modes of diffuse and vague identification and recognition that are

[70] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p.479.

less dependent upon an assumption of a static space external to the event, and more open to being shaped within the temporal becoming of the event itself.

Coming back to the particular aims of this written thesis, the emphasis here is not, in the end, in dialogically contrasting the identifiable against the non-identifiable or the real against the false. Rather, its focus is on revealing ways of extending thinking and perception away from representational habits towards more fluid and creative openings. For Deleuze and Guattari, in 'A Thousand Plateaus', to think difference is to undergo a radical 'deterritorialisation'[71], a schizophrenic state that involves a loss of ground. However, there is the inevitability and the need for a 'reterritorialisation' as a coming back to the centre. In this respect, the interest is not the polarity of the two conditions, but the variability afforded by a passing back and forth between structure/recognition and its dissolution. There is, then, not an attempt to undertake or encourage a plunge into pure difference, but more tentatively, to examine the slope either side of the 'dune point' of determination. In considering levels of actualisation from the point of view of consciousness, the intention is to move toward expansive modes and away from more limited ones, not purely towards virtualisation, but towards an actualisation of the virtual that allows for and retains some dynamic and indeterminate potential.

An aesthetics in which the art object is characterised as a process of becoming within thought requires ways of thinking and describing that meet with its motile processes without entirely canceling their fluid indeterminacy. This does not entail avoiding representational thinking by only concentrating on non-representational processes,

[71] Deleuze and Guattari's project of 'Schizoanalysis' is developed most notably in 'Anti-Oedipus' and 'A Thousand Plateaus'. Here the schizophrenic state is one without fixed the co-ordinates of either determinate objects or subjects. In terms of the subject, 'deterritorialisation' is a loss of centre that results in an exteriorised 'body without organs'. Correspondingly 'reterritorialisation' is a regrouping or regrounding that involves a coming back to the centre.

although the event itself is non-representational, there are, nevertheless, conditions that are indeterminate yet discernibly available to more open modes of capture. The creativity within an approach that seeks to be affirmative rather than negational or deconstructive, lies in locating the discernible 'edge' that lies within the encounter between the formative of actualisation and the unforming of virtualisation. To return to the Massumi quote at the beginning of this thesis: "It is the edge of the virtual, where it leads into actual, that counts. For that seeping edge is where potential, actually, is found". To think or *image* becoming at this edge with a minimum of reduction and limitation, entails less actualised levels of recognition that are more precise by being looser and more unstable.

Chapter 2

The Asymmetry of Beauty

Section One

Superficial Beauty

Beauty and beautiful are common terms, and at an everyday level there is a lightness and speed to their usage, a casual brevity that is somehow a part of what beauty actually is. Beauty is expected and allowed to be a vague and spontaneous notion, a non-critical reflex or moment in which the efforts of analysis, questioning and reason momentarily relax while at the same time an indeterminate affirmative pleasure takes over.

Beauty may be coming to the fore again in art and in debates around art, while its affective power seems increasingly put into play throughout a variety of media. The first challenge is to outline and then step outside of the baggage of cliché and opinion that the topic of beauty carries. Just as beauty in its colloquial use seems accepted as quick and vague, it may be argued that preliminary analyses of beauty within its traditional field of the humanities also prey to the same quick assumptions that are perhaps a reactive symptom of beauty's fugitive and fragile character.

A movement toward beauty is a step closer to a seductive capture of attention (rapture) and a movement away from the clear and distinct communication of information and a movement away from the exactitude of a critique. This movement towards something perhaps obscure and ineffable, can be considered as an

impoverishment of critical thought's capacity to identify, relate between, conceptualise and so deliberately effect change. This can lead beauty to be regarded as unproductive by conceiving it as something ineffective and inert rather than effective and purposeful, or even as anterior to any critical project through being a non-active complacency in regards to the normative forces that the radical attempts to operate against.

This apparent inertia is not negative in itself — the perceived danger of beauty, however, lies in the seductive power of its pleasure. Beauty itself may be 'disinterested' in a Kantian sense but can nevertheless activate interest through arising concurrently with, and then being attributed to, a determination in particular. Beauty, when instantiated in media can operate as a pleasure vehicle or 'vitality effect' behind which might lay some kind of surreptitious capitalist or egotistic coercion, in this sense, beauty can be strategically deployed as a deceptive force in the service of some vested interest.

At a glance, therefore, beauty can attract suspicion from a perspective of critical thinking which may consider it to be inert or even counter-critical. This suspicion may be further compounded by the theoretical and art historical baggage that gets associated with it. At this point I am just elucidating a relatively quick and light register of opinion that can at times be in play. Within this register it can be assumed and/or argued that many of the traditional arguments in support of beauty seem to have lost some of their original impetus and faded into cliché. This is perhaps in part because these supports tend to link readily with the very romantic idealism that the modernist critical project has often sought to overturn and replace. The repertoire of negative associations that beauty has picked up overtime seem largely predicated upon notions of critical unassailability considered as intrinsic to how beauty has been formulated. A brief list may include: a privileging of taste, a taking refuge in subjectivity

that is at the same time a turning away from the problems of an external world, and an explicit belief in, or implicit reliance upon, what might now be regarded as unsupportable notions of transcendence.

Both at the level of everyday speech and in more theoretical registers there can be a lightness and speed to how beauty is handled: different levels of common sense that are contingently formative of beauty's operative characteristics. In regards to ideas of beauty, this brevity affords an easiness by which agreement and contagion follow familiar paths of least resistance and become instantiated in how beauty may be packaged and presented. At this point I think it is useful to briefly substantiate this idea within contemporary art, as a reminder of how a reticence in regards to beauty is an issue that is operatively in play. In 2000, Norman Rosenthal and Max Wigram curated 'Apocalypse, Beauty and Horror in Contemporary Art' at the Royal Academy. In the catalogue, Rosenthal displays a nervousness towards beauty along the lines discussed so far, writing: 'It is important that we do not look away and merely take refuge in superficial beauty'[72]. What we are taking refuge from, in this case, is the curatorial counterpoint to beauty: 'horror'. There is, however, a broadness to the horror considered by Rosenthal, he continues, by citing Adorno's much quoted 'After Auschwitz to write a poem is barbaric'. This suggests an idea of horror at its most unmediated and experiential in terms of individual and group suffering, and marks one extreme end of this curatorial beauty/horror dichotomy. Within this axis, Rosenthal draws into less extreme contrasts from which he interprets the work of the artists in the show: the photography of Wolfgang Tilmans is considered as a balance of beauty amidst 'sleaze and pollution', the video work of Mariko Mori is interpreted more loosely as "not just beauty but horror too". The thinking behind the exhibition is not theoretically tight, but open, and perhaps usefully so. Beauty and horror are placed as

[72]Rosenthal, Norman, catalogue essay, Apocalypse: beauty and horror in contemporary art, Norman Rosenthal, Michael Archer, Royal Academy of Arts , London, 2000.

contrastive in a light and dark kind of way, the appealing comfort and safety of the superficial, counterbalanced with a seriousness appropriate to the suffering in the world.

However, there is more here to the choice of a horror/beauty relationship than a closed system of aesthetic or theoretical contrast. It may be argued that the balancing of these two themes operate at a more local political level. Taking into account its venue, the exhibition might also be considered as a balancing of the traditional tendencies associated with the RA against what may be a desire for a radical presentation of contemporary art. Here, the balance between beauty and horror becomes analogous to a familiar comfort of safety balanced against a radical discomfort of risk. In this sense the theme has the useful effect of potentially establishing equilibrium between competing critical expectations: horror's aura of gravitas, supplying a feeling of critical nouse to otherwise superficial beauty, while the appeal of beauty works seductively to sweeten the displeasure of horror.

What is interesting about 'Apocalypse' is not its *neatness* as an example but that it frames such a potentially complex array of interrelating tendencies. Both beauty and horror can be readily understood as general terms, yet both retain an indeterminacy that allows interpretation to shift according to circumstance. Whereas we might understand horror/beauty within a *felt* axis of pain/pleasure, the conceptualisation of horror and beauty can change shape indefinitely to the point at which horror can be found in beauty and vice versa, and thereby an equivalent finding of pleasure in pain. This is not purely the arena of the sublime, however, what is important here is what is happening in the relation between the singular indeterminacy of event and the fluid representational structures that attempt to uphold them. The terms may not be as polarised as they may at first seem. To turn towards a pleasure of beauty can be said to be at the same time a turning away from a displeasure of suffering, considered in

'Apocalypse' to be its counterpoint of horror. Yet horror in art has a gestural quality; discursive ideas of beauty and horror are not the same as events of beauty and horror. Ideas of horror are not necessarily eventfully horrific; an artwork that implies, for example, genocidal horror is clearly not the same as a raw living out of genocide, torture and death. Beauty on the other hand operates in a different way; a representation of beauty can more easily overlap an event of beauty because an artwork can be discursively about beauty and at the same time *be* beautiful. This difference between horror and beauty, in regards to event/representation, is not down to any differences in essential character, it is more practical than that, eventful horror itself could potentially become an artwork, but the will to engage would in that case be limited, while eventful beauty, as artwork, may be considered dependent upon, and an incitement of, that will to engage.

Representation can stand in for and so obscure the event, but what is of interest here is the region of fluid uncertainty between the two, in other words, how the tendency of capture can operate in direct relation to a condition of immanence and to processes of becoming. Deleuze's concept of immanence is one that stands opposed to notions of transcendence, most notably, those of a separation between mind and body, subject and object. Instead, all such divisions are considered as composed within a single material continuum as a 'plane of immanence' or 'plane of consistency'. The concept of the plane of immanence, therefore, corresponds with the Deleuzian 'differential field' — a dynamic field of virtual intensities, emergence and becoming. What the concept of immanence adds, however, is an emphasis on inclusivity and embeddedness, where divisions, as with all individuation, are effects produced by and from within this virtual plane[73].

[73] 'Intensity is immanent to matter and to events, to mind and to body and to every level of bifurcation composing them and which they compose.' Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.226.

One way of understanding the relation between immanence and the procedures of thinking and sensing is through a notion of reciprocity where mind, body and sensory apparatus are in direct material contact with an extensive material world. In this sense, the two poles of representation/event can be considered as a reciprocal feedback loop, each continually feeding into the other in a dynamic process of co-determinous formation and variation. In this regard, beauty is just one example in particular. How beauty is prescriptively thought to operate directly effects the way in which beauty actually does operate, and where beauty is considered to reside effects where it can be found. Correspondingly, the manner in which an event of beauty emerges can effect how it is thought. The stability of representational images vary from one localised incidence to the next; some occurrences are perceptually more eventful than others, having an indeterminacy of sufficient strength to enable the circuit between representation and event to be analytically explored. In this respect, the instance of beauty stands out through expressing its indeterminacy so distinctly and often.

What happens when beauty is considered in terms of its eventful process? Not only might this eventfulness reveal something of the operative process of thought in relation to the event, but may also reveal a scenario in which beauty potentialises that process, with thought opening and loosening to meet a process of emergence. The point here is not to rethink beauty as a critical solution to problems at a macro level, but to allow for a potentially transformational process at a micro level. What criticality is good at is identifying and combating what may not be wanted or needed and structuring external domains on which to think and act. Critical thought, whether in art or not, may raise the awareness of a problem or suggest a solution at a macro level, yet still remain effectively distant and closed off from that problem. This study of beauty works progressively towards a processual engagement in which explorations are active *within* a problem itself, rather than separate from, and then active *upon* a

problem - again thinking is indissociable from its object because thought prescriptively effects the nature of the event. Generally, here, a critical reticence towards beauty is replaced by an attempt to revitalise the term in an admittedly minor way. In this sense, any shift in how beauty may be thought, however small, can have a correspondingly small, yet palpable, effect on how beauty is lived.

From Intensive to Extensive Beauty

> Almost everyone declares that the symmetry of parts towards each other and towards a whole with, besides, a certain charm of colour, constitutes the beauty recognised by the eye, that in visible things, as indeed all else, universally, the beautiful thing is essentially symmetrical, patterned.[74]

The conventional theoretical heritage of beauty is a product of a habit within thought that divides the whole into discrete objects and subjects. Theories of beauty are, it can be argued, traditionally developed within a fundamental dualism. There is an apparent consistency between how beauty is often considered theoretically and how it is assumed at the level of common sense, an accord, so to speak, between the careful considerations of theory and the brevity of everyday practice. In this regard, the aim here is not so much to give an accurate account of thinkers or moments in history, but to begin to reveal an idea of the ground from and in which discursive conventions of beauty operate.

From a dualistic and common sense perspective, beauty can be considered to be a property of an object, in other words, *integral* to the form of an object. Much of the philosophical thinking in support of this idea dates back to ancient Greece, most notably perhaps to Aristotle and Plotinus, and was redeveloped in various ways during the Renaissance by thinkers such as Vitruvius. In general terms, the notion that beauty resides in an object derives from the tendency towards extensity and division, but then perhaps goes further to regard the process of division itself as characteristic of a natural creative force, a kind of morphogenisis through splitting. Considering beauty to be a formal attribute of an object is an act of thinking beauty into place, rendering it as an essential facticity held in extensive spatial matter. A thing can then

be said to be beautiful when it demonstrates particular rules founded upon the notion of division itself.

> The chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in a special degree.[75]

Similarly, Vitruvius considers a direct relation between beauty and symmetry:

> Hence no building can be said to be well designed which wants symmetry and proportion. In truth they are necessary to the beauty of a building as to that of a well formed human figure.[76]

A man-made object that demonstrates symmetry can be considered as exemplary of a perfect nature. Perfect in that the notion of absolute symmetry is one of an absolute commensurability of parts, and natural in the sense that its characteristics can be taken as a preconstituted order that may be exhibited both by the human body and by the biaxial symmetries of animals, plants and crystalline structures. Symmetry may be defined, temporarily at least, as a spatial conception in which a frame of reference is taken and an axis or fulcrum point is established. Any element or sum of elements on one 'side' of that division can then be found to have an equivalent on the other. The commensurability of parts may be found to be pleasing since every element tallies and no identifiable thing is left out as unresolved.

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[74]Plotinus, Ennead I, Sixth Tractate: Beauty, in: Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger, Trans. Stephen MacKenna, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, University of Chicago Press, 1976, p.141.

[75] Aristotle, Metaphysics book xiii 1078b, in Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger, Trans. W.D. Ross, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, University of Chicago Press, 1976, p.96.

[76] Vitruvius, Marcus, de Architectura, book III Chapter 1.1, trans. Penelope Uchieago, http://penelope.uchieago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/vitruvius/3*.html.

The rational capacity to divide the world into units can, firstly, allow for a concept of nature as separate from its own process, and secondly, then find in that objective nature a principle of division that can be regarded as an external and a priori. Assuming symmetry to be a fundamental natural principle enables that principle to be said to be exemplified in, for instance, Plato's forms, and explored precisely in studies of division and commensurability; namely geometry and the logic of number. The object of beauty, separated to begin with from the thought that might think it, can then find a further symmetry by finding this perfection mirrored in the mind of someone who reflects upon it. From the perspective that regards the object as essentially existent before perception, perfect objective symmetry may foster a correspondent subjective mental symmetry, and the contemplation of perfection, by leading thought to a fundamental perfection, may be considered as an activity of purification.

The flip side of a formal beauty as the property of an object is found in the convention of subjective beauty as a felt response characterised by agreeable pleasure. From a purely subjective viewpoint, the mental capacity to think an extensive symmetry is, co-determinately, the perception of the symmetrical object; a mental projection of thought elaborating its own tendency to subtract an assumedly commensurate order from the multiplicity of the whole. This placing of beauty 'inside' is consistent with the cliché that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. In art this finds its equivalent in the notion of the value of art being itself subjective, qualitative and individual. Both common sense perspectives - objective/formal/quantifiable and subjective/personal/qualitative - are not necessarily contradictory, but may be regarded as reciprocal, both depending upon a pre-supposed division and both defining themselves in relation to one another. The division that establishes a dominant perspective, a difference between subject and object, or a commensurate parity between symmetrical sides, assumes a *closed* system of stable co-ordinates and relations. Through this presupposition of a distinct and limited frame, objects and events can be said to begin and end. However, when

beauty is thought in terms of extensity and fixity in this way, it retains an intensive characteristic that is sensed or 'felt' and yet left unaccounted for. Determining something to be symmetrical also implies an asymmetry external to its localised and closed framework; change the framing or shift the centre slightly, and the whole system can go out of balance. Similarly the symmetrical frame can contain an unlimited number of smaller, asymmetrical or off-centre framings within it. In this sense, when beauty is thought through the notion of symmetry it appears ordered because the problems of incommensurability, asymmetry and duration have been subtracted from it.

This stabilisation prefigures the co-ordinates required for the notions of equilibrium and compositional harmony that underpin a 'classical order'. This order, carried through, for instance, within the history of art, establishes an orthodoxy that modernity and radical critique can operate against. Yet to an extent, equilibrium remains in place precisely through being negated because thought passes through that same tendency of subtraction and equilibrium in order to posit the determinations required for its activity of negation.

> Every phenomenon refers to an inequality by which it is conditioned. Every diversity and every change refers to a difference which is its sufficient reason.[77]

The problem with symmetrical perfection is that its purity necessitates the omission of problems inconsistent to its terms. By subtracting disorder from it, the *phenomenon* of symmetry is cut off from the differential processes that condition its own emergence, as Manuel de Landa puts it: 'Intensive differences are subordinated to the extensive structures (structures extended in space-time) they give rise to'[78].

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[77] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.222.

[78] De Landa, Manuel, Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Open Ended Becoming of the World, p.32.

What I am proposing is that beauty can be considered in a quite different way to the classical notions summarised above. Rather than being characterised as a harmonious symmetry, beauty may be a theoretical and even a sensed 'unbalancing'; a perception riven with intensive instability. To consider the incommensurate aspect of beauty as contained in an actual yet durational apprehension of intensive becoming, is to reclaim the problem of incommensurability, not as something purely external and ineffable to an established order, but as a transformational potential of immanence and a creative force that is not *other* to the determinations of thought.

> The reason of the sensible, the condition of that which appears, is not space and time but The Unequal in itself, *disparateness* as it is determined and comprised in difference of intensity, intensity in difference.[79]

Deleuze explores the theory of a difference driven ontogenesis most notably in two texts: 'The Asymmetrical Synthesis of the Sensible', in 'Difference and Repetition' and his interpretation of Leibniz and the Baroque in 'The Fold'. Although elaborated in different ways, both are characterised by the subordination of representation and identity by an immanent field in which any representation or thing both occurs and owes its existence. Deleuze's conception of the Baroque is one of a fluid universe in continuous movement, 'a continuous variation of matter' in which the determinations of thought and solid matter consist of curvilinear moments of relation. Not only does time and thought not stop, but also the perspective in which things in particular become apparently located is merely a contingent singularity amongst a plural multiplicity.

> The Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity.[80]

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[79] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, pp.222-223.

[80] Deleuze, Gilles, The Fold, Leibniz and the Baroque. Trans. Tom Conley, Athlone, London, 2001, p.3.

Division as a dualism of total separation from which relations 'between' can be then quantified becomes a dividing as 'bifurcation'. Instead of positing straight lines set at given distances and at precisely quantifiable angles to one another, bifurcation develops through curves within curves - curving away and towards. In this process, intersections and distances between are never exact points but nominal approximations or 'nuances'. In his book 'Bergsonism', Deleuze points to a comparison between a Deleuze/Bergson approach to philosophy and the procedure of infinitesimal calculus developed in part by Leibniz:

> When we have benefited in experience from a little light which shows us a line of articulation, all that remains is to extend it beyond experience - just as mathematicians reconstitute, with the infinitely small elements that they perceive of the real curve, "the curve itself stretching out into the darkness behind them".[81]

The Baroque supplies an image of a fluid universe, not as a metaphor but as a 'lived analogy'; the Baroque fold is that in which perception itself becomes as it contemplates. A further analogy may be the Proustian 'glass of tea', the glass containing an eddying and mixing of liquids of differing densities, most of which on a micro level extend beyond the limits of conscious perception, being too small or too fast to be perceived. The glass itself and the 'I' point perspective that contemplates it are developed and enveloped with that same process, not only on a micro level of the 'too small', but at a macro level of the too large and too slow.

[81] Deleuze, Gilles, Bergsonism, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Zone, New York, 1991, p.27. "the curve itself stretching out into the darkness behind them" is a citation from Bergson; see 'Matter and Memory', trans. N.M. Paul and W.S Palmer, Zone, New York, 1994, p.185.

> Macro perception is the product of differential relations that are established among micro perceptions: it is thus an unconscious psychic mechanism that engenders the perceived in consciousness.[82]

Here, the 'complexity' of the perceived is not a Cartesian one, constituted as an amalgam of 'clear and distinct' perceptions, the Baroque fold unfurls 'all the way to infinity' and can never be completely unfolded. The spatial notion of 'framing' mentioned earlier, introduced an idea of a 'discrete multiplicity' in terms of an unlimited number of positional frames or perspectives at once, however, in this conception of the Baroque, there is also more than one duration at once. The question of whether something is *either* symmetrical *or* asymmetrical becomes, here, further complexified; not only are relations potentially unlimited in terms of positions in space and time, but these relations are actively and ontogenetically mobilised in duration. Bifurcation does not stop or start, but continuously relates differing levels of intensity[83], dynamic asymmetries that turn into and out of the symmetrical.

The movement that drives this process of intersection, constructs and integrates through a fundamental and continuous turbulence that envelopes and develops both perception and matter co-determinously. The indeterminacy of intensity, therefore, is not separate from the extensity in which it is developed. Deleuze makes this point quite precisely in the following passage from 'Difference and Repetition':

> It turns out that, in experience, *intensio* (intension) is inseparable from an *extensio* (extension) which relates it to the *extensio* (extensity). In these conditions, intensity itself is subordinated to the qualities, which fill extensity

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[82] Deleuze, *The Fold,* p.95.

[83] In 'Difference and Repetition' Deleuze makes the following point: *'since it is already difference in itself and comprises inequality as such, intensity affirms difference. It makes difference an object of affirmation. Curie commented that it was useful but misleading to speak of dissymmetry in negative terms, as thought it were the absence of symmetry, without inventing positive terms capable of designating the infinite number of operations with unmatched outcomes'*, p.234.

> (primary physical qualities or *qualitas,* and secondary perceptible qualities or *quale.* In short, we know intensity only as already developed within and extensity, and as covered over by qualities.[84]

Carry the above idea into the context of Baroque movement and the scenario becomes potentialised as a 'differential creating' that is expressed through the stresses of 'intensions' and 'de-tensions' as they fold and unfold, producing bodies not as totalised static states but as 'points of culmination'; relative slowing downs and contingent and transient *thickenings* of perceptual matter. One important characteristic of this differential ontology is that it is in no way logocentric, and neither is it a 'theory of everything' that is gathered into a stable and unified image, since the notion of a multiplicity of viewpoints precludes the existence of any one omniscient universal god's eye view that could unite all of the others. Instead, each perspective is 'monadic' and entirely singular and also potentially unlimited in itself. This notion of a monadic perception that is singular by its contingency and multiple by being unlimited and without any totalisation, accounts for both open (in being immanent) and closed (in being a singular perspective) systems.

Beauty may be considered as an event of monadic perception that is both actual and virtual: actual by being a singular perceptual determination, and virtual by being a perception that goes beyond the limits of any delineated object. By thinking through a philosophy of immanence, Deleuze attempts to open territories out beyond the self limiting auspices of stable structures, conceiving of them as constituted by, and immersed in, a plurality of becoming in which they may disorganise, modulate and become reinvented by encountering forces external to any given unity. This method supplants the given linear relations of cause and effect assumed in dialectical critical modes of discourse,[85] with an energetic vitalism in which all determination is no more

[84] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.223.

[85] Thinking very generally here of thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

than an 'expression of world'. However, there is I believe, a danger here that needs to be clarified. Conceptualising a philosophy of immanence as a simple vitalism can again lead to the presupposition of a dualism in which virtual duration is divided from the actualities of space. The ground for this division lies in the empirical assumption that the actual is the real perceived in terms of representation, while the virtual is the unrepresentable which cannot be perceived. Yet this would be to understand the virtual as a indeterminate and transcendent extreme of which there can be no discernible perception and in which there can be no representation. In this scenario, the problem arises of how might thought and a thinker connect to this transcendent virtual realm in order to think the event.

Whatever beauty is or does, and however it might be formulated, the event of beauty has a fragility that can be easily drowned out by the exactitudes of totalisation. To think *with* the indeterminacy of beauty and to accept the actual possibility of a virtual monadic perception is to step outside of the 'clear and distinct' and entertain something far more open and unpredictable. Whereas the stability of representation and the harmony of symmetry tend to omit any instability or asymmetry that cannot be equalised or represented, Deleuze's ontology of difference asserts a primacy of the potential creativity of immanence over the habits of representation, yet does not omit representation from immanence or, correlatively, symmetry from asymmetry.

> deterritorialisation is always double, because it implies the co-existence of a major variable and a minor variable in simultaneous becoming (the two terms of becoming do not exchange places, there is no identification between them, they are instead drawn into an assymetrical block in which both change to the same extent, and which constitutes their zone of proximity)" so asymmetry arises through the actual and the virtual being aspects of becoming, becoming is always asymmetrical almost as if the differentiation is based on liquids of differing densities.[86]

[86] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia, p.306.

From the perspective of dualism there can be images of thought in which to think, and, correlatively, a transcendent temporal and imageless virtual that cannot be thought. But even from this dualistic perspective these two poles are not necessarily entirely separate, but may be considered to involve a circuit of double movement by which the virtual turns into the actual and then turns again into the virtual. Crucially however, the tendency of dualism can be encompassed by a fundamental monism in which the actual occurs in the virtual and the virtual occurs in the actual[87]. The asymmetrical motility that characterises this monist 'whole' generates and contains the apparent givens that provide positions for invention and intervention by privileging the potential for movement away from the fixed and towards the intensities of the virtual.

The idea that I will bear in mind from here on is that beauty is a discernible event of differentiation, which, unlimited by a concept or determinant *thing*, perpetuates as an open ended becoming within perception itself. In this regard, the critical power of beauty is not one that entails the production of a negational concept in order to counter a particular given, and neither does it re-affirm a presupposed unified symmetry between or within subject and object. Instead, beauty may be the expression of an alternative mode of perception in which the habitual momentum of identification and division becomes overtaken by virtual forces that affirmatively destabilise that tendency within thought.

[87] The problems that arise from the idea of a monism that allows for dualism to be contained within it seem to be the focus of Deleuze's Bergsonism; the final two chapters in particular.

Section Two

Turning Beauty Inside-Out

> If we judge objects merely in terms of concepts, then we loose all presentation of beauty.[88]

To recognise something there needs to be a pre-existent idea of it. In existing beforehand this idea obscures the singularity of the event by determining it according to an image acquired in the past, this is particularly clear in the case of discrete *things* or *instances* that appeal to cognitive understanding. However, beauty is a case of an experience that is registered as feeling more than through cognition. This acquisition through feeling is less conducive to an obscuring of the event with a determinant past image, and more conducive to an activity of thinking that has sufficient freedom and indeterminacy to intensively become and emerge in alliance with the event.

In the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' Kant argues that beauty does not involve a concept of the object or 'cognitive judgement' but instead a non-conceptualised 'aesthetic judgement' that consists of an internal relation between the faculties of a subject. This is not to say that the form of an external object plays no part, but that although an aesthetic judgment of the beautiful refers to the empirical presentation of an object, it nonetheless concerns how the subject is effected by that presentation.

> The judgement is called aesthetic precisely because the basis determining it is not a concept but the feeling (of inner sense) of that accordance in the play of mental powers insofar as it can only be sensed.[89]

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[88] Kant, CJ, para. 215.

[89] *Ibid.*, para. 228.

The lack of any definite concept allows the faculties, most notably imagination and understanding, to sustain their activity in an indefinite and accordant 'free play'. For Kant, the role of the faculty of the imagination is to reflect the form of an object, gathering it into a 'concrete presentation'. In the case of beauty, the imagination, unrestricted by a conceptual finality, continues in an ongoing process of reflecting and gathering that amounts to a sustained contemplation[90]:

> our imagination is playing, as it were, while it contemplates the shape, and such a concept would only restrict its freedom.[91]

The task of the faculty of understanding is that of correlating the presentation given by the imagination with a concept, contributing to a synthesis in which presentation and concept become unified. In the absence of a determinate concept, understanding proceeds in a free play of conceptual indeterminacy. Deleuze, writing in his book 'Kant's Critical Philosophy', describes this relationship between the faculties as follows:

> The imagination reflects a particular object from the point of view of form. In doing this it does not relate to a determinate concept of the understanding. But it relates to the understanding itself, as the faculty of concepts in general: it relates to an *indeterminate* concept of understanding. In other words the imagination, in its pure freedom is in agreement with the understanding in its non-specified legality.[92]

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[90] Kant defines contemplation as a process of mental reflection that is directed not to concepts but involves *'a judgement that indifferent to the existence of the object'*. CJ, para. 209.

[91] *Ibid.*, para. 230.

[92] Deleuze, Gilles, Kant's Critical Philosophy, The Doctrine of the Faculties, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Athlone, London, 1995, p.48.

Beauty, therefore, cannot be grasped intellectually but only 'sensed' as a 'feeling accompanying the given presentation' [93], which is that of an objectless and harmonious pleasure. In this way, Kant considers beauty as amounting to an instance of felt indeterminacy that is produced by a purely internal operation between the faculties of imagination and understanding. Furthermore, for Kant, this felt indeterminacy demonstrates the ability for cognition to continue without a concept.

> (If) the presentation has a merely subjective determining basis, i.e., one that does not involve a concept of the object, then this basis can be nothing other than the mental state that we find in the relation between the presentational powers (imagination and understanding) insofar as they refer a given presentation to *cognition in general*.[94]

Ordinarily, in a cognitive judgement, imagination and understanding would form an accordant agreement in regards to an external object. However, since beauty does not entail a concept of an external object, the accord of the faculties becomes instead one in which each enters into a mutuality of indeterminate free play. Importantly, for Kant, this free play reveals what he terms 'a deeply hidden basis, common to all human beings'[95] which is the basis for 'cognition in general'. Rather than a *something* that is distinctly understood or imagined, this objectless basis involves the processing of the presentational powers themselves, in other words, imagination and understanding stripped back to an underlying, raw functioning. What is, therefore, made conscious to the subject in this process is not the thought of a determinate concept, but a sense of harmonious and unrestricted freedom; an excitation that consists of, as Kant puts it, 'the facilitated play of the two mental powers (imagination

[93] Kant, CJ, para, 217.

[94] *Ibid.,*

[95] *Ibid.,* para. 232.

and understanding) quickened by their reciprocal harmony'[96], and this harmonious and free interrelation of powers, Kant suggests, is pleasurable in itself.

As that which reveals the conditions for 'cognition in general' and which 'can only be sensed', Kant's conception of beauty places sensation, as felt affection, as the means by which this ground of cognition discloses itself to subjective consciousness. Generally speaking, for Deleuze, sensation is neither a purely subjective process nor a property of a discrete object, but is equated with the differential process of intensity by which object and subject become actualised. Here, sensation is considered as having two aspects: firstly there is 'affect' as sensation that impinges on the body in ways that are as yet unconscious, and secondly there are 'affections' by which affects transform to become captured as consciously felt.

> Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them.[97]

Affects are imperceptible expressions of intensity that go beyond the individual subject or object, subsisting as events beyond recognition as bodily feeling. Affect is at once the power by which a feeling comes into being, and at the same time, is contained and enfolded within that feeling. In this way, affects are not the sensation *of* a becoming, but a becoming internal to sensation itself and in which both form and a body that encounters it are as yet non-conceptualised. Affects, therefore, are not produced by or in a body, it is more the other way around; affects provide the potential sensations by which a body comes to regard itself as a locus of feeling.

There is, it seems, more to beauty than an inertia implied by a coming into equilibrium or the realisation of a pre-established harmony. If beauty reveals the basis for

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[96] *Ibid.*, para. 219.

[97] Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.164.

'cognition in general', then when this basis is considered from the perspective of an ontology of difference, the notion of free accord would thereby also involve a more fundamental dissonance that lies deeper inside of the process in which it arises. My point here is that a state of accordance and equilibrium alone does not fully account for the affective quality of beauty. There needs to be a power in excess of the balance; some more potential by which the affection is formed. In this sense the pleasure associated with beauty may be the effect of an intensive overspill, in other words, surplus affect making itself known through affection that is then recognised as pleasure.

In considering affect as autonomous to, but at the same time implicitly within, an individual subject, Deleuze and Guattari describe a process in which the individual is no longer separate from the world but is instead contained and expressed within it. In this respect, rather than a division between inner and outer, with affect as external stimulant and affection as internal response, both could be conceived as two aspects of one differentially creative process, where the subjective powers of presentation and the creativity of intensity beyond that subject become inseparable, as Deleuze notes:

> Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of difference: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, *difference in intensity*.[98]

The subjective accord of the faculties in Kant's notion of beauty amounts to a mode of pure thinking established within an internal reflecting between the faculties; a folding inward that without the limitations of a definite concept leaves, throughout the faculties, a subjective operation stripped back to a base functioning. However, from the perspective of an ontology of difference, the contemplation of beauty not only opens onto the conditions of emergence in terms of the object, but also entails the

[98] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.223.

conditions for the emergence of the unified subject. Beauty as contemplation without determinate concept is, therefore, indeterminate and 'disinterested', not only in respect to the object but also in respect to any subject in particular. This non-conceptual, felt understanding presents a scenario in which it cannot be discerned whether sensation is produced internally from the free play of the faculties or produced externally by an outside force that occupies or impinges upon them, since from the perspective of this order of contemplation there are no longer any fixed co-ordinates by which to establish an actual difference. To consider the ground for cognition as being revealed in an accordant free play of the subjective faculties, is to assume the existence of subject and faculties as given in advance of even the most non-conclusive of occurrences. In this regard, the question then remains as to the process by which the subject is given. In order to also account for the subject, the conditions for emergence must, therefore, be in excess of the subject, capable of passing through and beyond while remaining at the same time inseparable from it.

> Something remains unactualized, inseparable from but unassimilable to any particular, functionally anchored perspective... If there were no escape, no excess or remainder, no fade-out to infinity, the universe would be without potential, pure entropy, death. Actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them. Their autonomy is the autonomy of affect.[99]

What is important about this notion of affect in regards to beauty is that it shifts the determinant ground from a Kantian operation of subjective faculties to an immanent field that accounts for the production of the subject itself. Contemplation folding back onto its own conditions of emergence is, then, no longer a hermetic process produced and contained by a pre-structured subjectivity, but directly implicated within the world from which it emerges, as Deleuze and Guattari write:

[99] Massumi, Parables for the Virtual, p.35.

> We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it.[100]

Rather than internal faculties representing an external world, instead it is forces external to the subject that account for its becoming. Here the emphasis shifts from a dominant 'I' that contemplates, to one of intensity feeding a contemplation by which the 'I' becomes formed.

> Affect or intensity in the present account is akin to what is called a critical point, or a bifurcation point, or singular point, in chaos theory and the theory of dissipative structures. This is the turning point at which a physical system paradoxically embodies multiple and normally mutually exclusive potentials[101]

Driven by intensity autonomous to the subject, beauty places contemplation at a threshold fringing both the emergence of the interiority of the subject and the emergence of an exteriority of world, in other words, at a point of divergent bifurcation. Yet at the same time as the subject emerges out of contemplation, this threshold also reveals a potential for a movement in the other direction: a deformation and a folding back into, discernible only as a pleasurable feeling of an intrinsic mutuality that is an indeterminacy of self and world.

Thinking beauty in terms of affect as differential intensity, again, draws it further away from any reliance on classical principles of harmonious organisation and a transcendental unified whole. Instead beauty may be considered as a force of disorganisation that opens the given and 'the means by which the given is given'[102] onto the 'reality' of change, effectively shifting thought from a mode that leaps from

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[100] Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.169.

[101] Massumi, Parables for the Virtual, p.32.

[102] *'Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse'*, Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.222.

one identity to another to an immanent condition of transition and renewal. Position and distance give way to a heterogeneous continua; transition is no longer that of an object moving across an extended space or of a relational movement between static points, but a *feeling* of transition that is at once an actual expression of intensity at an affective level.

In being characterised by transition rather than objecthood, beauty's feeling involves an *abstraction* in which the determinate spatial parameters of form are overtaken by an affective charge that arises in the same measure by which perception is drawn into its elemental condition. This transition not only involves the uprooting of the positions from which we might assert a distance between self and world, but also renders indeterminate the categories by which we might phenomenologically structure experience, since the 'I' is no longer separable from what it might regard at a distance.

As an intensive field of emergence, the ground of cognition involves a feedback loop where subject and object enter into a co-determinous and transitional relating by which the background noise of emergence becomes consciously registered. This process is one that is overtly virtual, and yet at the same time as beauty consists of an indeterminate free play that is necessarily ungrounded by a determinate concept, there must also be an object of beauty capable of triggering this process of indeterminate contemplation, and that is somehow different to objects that are not beautiful. This presents a problem in regard to what has been argued so far, as it suggests the requirement of a criterion of beauty that would be composed objectively. Kant's solution to this seems to be perhaps necessarily ambiguous, since it is resolute about the conditions of aesthetic judgement providing 'absolutely no cognition (not even a confused one) of the object'[103]. If Kant does locate any external conditions for beauty then it is in nature, or more particularly, in the capacity for nature to produce

[103] Kant, CJ, para. 228.

forms that have an aptitude for, and an affinity with, a sustained free play of reflection. In order to exhibit what at this point Kant terms 'free beauty'[104], these natural forms must be without any identifiable purpose and, therefore, without any presupposed 'concept of what the object is (meant) to be.'[105] The examples he gives include flowers, birds, and sea crustaceans[106]. What Kant seems to be identifying in this conception of the beautiful in nature is not something excessive to, or beyond the grasp of the imagination, which would move it towards the realm of the sublime, but instead, a capacity to be outside or in excess of the understanding: a negative presentation in the form of a something that cannot lend itself to cognitive understanding. Since the imagination is not limited by a concept of the object, for Kant, contemplation becomes that of a play upon the shape, design and composition of a form that continues without arrest. In his essay, 'Aesthetics: A Place I've Never Seen', Stephen Zagala, draws out the resemblance between the aesthetics of Kant and Deleuze in this regard:

> To consider form rather as a dynamic play, with no conceptual resolution, would be to understand it as a perpetual self-preserving instability. In this sense, Kant's beautiful form approximates a Deleuzian notion of difference because it is endowed with an *internal* difference; difference which differentiates itself and affirms its difference without negation.[107]

From a perspective of a Deleuzian notion of difference, beauty as an indeterminacy within thought may be considered as a moment of intensive actualisation; a perceived virtuality in which the dualism of cognitive thought is overtaken by an excess formative energy. Beauty pushes perception beyond the limits of distinct cognition and beyond

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[104] See Kant, CJ, paras. 229 – 230 where he discusses the notion of 'free beauty' in contrast to mere 'accessory' or 'adherent' beauty.

[105] *Ibid.*, para. 229.

[106] *Ibid.*,

[107] Zagala, Stephen, Aesthetics: A Place I've Never Seen, in: A Shock to Thought, Expression after Deleuze and Guattari, ed. Brian Massumi, Routledge, London 2002, p.25.

the terms of the already given, and yet, cognition is not switched off but continues as an attentively felt, motile understanding that overflows the distinct borders of the object.

This affective felt understanding also has the potential to involve a level of recognition, just not one that consists of a distinct concept (parodying Deleuze a little we might say it is recognition in its transcendental capacity). Unlimited by a determined given, recognition may become a consciously perceived processual activity of *recognising* that, by being drawn into a motile correspondence with the event, moves into a more openly vague condition, exceeding its habitual limitations as it proceeds towards a less formed elemental condition. In these terms, beauty brings to life - *experientially* - that the whole world is not reducible simply to distinct forms and actual subjects.

> it is also important to remember the duplicity of form, that it has a double existence, participating spontaneously and simultaneously in two orders of reality, one local and learned or intentional, the other non-local and self organising.[108]

The contemplation of beauty cannot be understood in purely visual terms as an arranging of fragments within a rationally structured space, since form, in regards to beauty, must also include the intensive variations of musical and olfactory composition. It can perhaps be more usefully thought through a notion of durational multiplicity, wherein thought is occupied in a process of sustained *gathering*. What occupies the reflective imagination is precisely the interplay of this 'duplicity of form' which consists not only of its 'local' determinacy but also of a coinciding with the unstable processes of formation and deformation that characterise the field of intensity from which it arises and returns. Following Gilbert Simondon, Massumi

describes this relation between form and the conditions of emergence as a 'differentiated region, within a larger field of potential.'[109] In this respect, forms cannot be regarded as being distinctly bound entities or shapes, but are what he terms 'germinal' or 'implicit' forms that are inseparable from the continuity of the field in which they arise. In this scenario, the 'germinal' non-distinctness of form means that the edges and limits that correspond to thought's capacity to extract position and identity become indeterminately and productively fuzzy.

> The limit will not be a sharp demarcation but more like a multidimensional fading to infinity.[110]

Thought perceivably changes in kind to meet implicit form, with beauty operating as an outside force that opens thought onto a virtual condition. This shift is a 'smoothing out' of what Deleuze and Guattari have termed the 'striated', as a durational process in which the event takes precedence over the assumed exactitudes of static identity. What becomes smoothed is the abrupt delineations and determinations typical to a thinking that progresses through a logic of extensive space, and what smoothes is duration as uninterrupted or less differentiated passage.[111]

What characterises beauty and makes it a productively *expansive* experience is that it renders form as a dynamic site of transition, engaging thought in an activity that folds

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[108] Massumi, Brian, The Archive of Experience, in: Information is Alive: Art and Theory on Archiving and Retrieving Data, ed. Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder, Rotterdam: V2 Organisatie/EU European Culture 2000 Program, 2003, p.151.

[109] Massumi, Parables for the Virtual, p.34.

[110] *Ibid.,*

[111] In 'A Thousand Plateaus', Deleuze and Guattari consider two types of space; 'smooth' and 'striated', the former being multiplicitous or 'nomadic' and without centres or points by which to navigate, and the latter corresponding to extensive space through which progression is made by going from one identified point to another. As for the sensuous nature of smooth space, Deleuze and Guattari describe it as *'filled by events or haecceities, far more than formed and perceived things, it is a space of affects, more than one of properties – it is haptic rather than optical perception'*. A Thousand Plateaus, p.479.

together both actual and virtual and dualist and monist conditions by realising each as actively implicit within the other. Beauty thereby enables an effective virtualisation of thought without there being any clear detachment or *loosing sight*, so to speak, of the object's actual presence. It is precisely beauty's engagement with the actual that enables it to become a local site of virtualisation. It may not be noticed as an object with particular characteristics, but it can be noticed as a particular opening or interruption within thought's habitual processes of conceptualisation and recognition. In this sense, the occurrence of beauty is a feeling of intensity as perceptual *shift*, arising relatively suddenly with sufficient speed and force to assert a distinctive difference. This shift from familiar regularity to beauty as something *unfamiliar*, is noted by Kant in an example of the English philologist and ethnologist William Marsden coming across a pepper garden in Sumatra;

> the free beauties of nature there surround the beholder everywhere, so that there is little left in them to attract him; where as, when in the midst of a forest he came upon a pepper garden, with the stakes that supported the climbing plants forming paths between them along parallel lines, it charmed him greatly. He concludes from this that we like wild and apparently ruleless beauty only as a change, when we have been satiated with the sight of regular beauty. And yet he need only have made the experiment of spending one day with his pepper garden to realize that, once regularity has (prompted) the understanding to put itself into attunement with order which it requires everywhere, the object ceases to entertain him and instead inflicts on his imagination an irksome constraint.[112]

As an interruption, the singular intensity of beauty curves off less noticeably and perhaps more slowly than it arrives. There is a difference between the perceptual *fade in* and *fade out* of beauty, it arrives with a force necessary to announce its presence but it's fading out seems less marked or remarkable, as if thought tires of it, the

[112] Kant, CJ, para. 243.

intensity waning into an increasingly quiet signal as it becomes again overtaken by the normative and familiar.

Cognition continues its habitual ordering of givens - a shift occurs - beauty suspends the process, the moment passes and thought returns to it usual state. But does thought merely return to what it was before? It has already been accepted here that thought cannot think precisely the same thing twice; the question, therefore, becomes that of how the actual experience of beauty might effect a residual and continuing change in the way that thought thinks.

In 'Beauty: Machinic Repetition in the Age of Art', Melissa McMahon considers Beauty as having a productive potential that 'obliges us to think'[113]:

> the removal of the beautiful, in Kant's aesthetic, from any cultural or scientific concept by virtue of its lack of a determinate concept and hence interest, seems also to isolate and immobilise the aesthetic in an affective ineffability. But on the contrary, it is this quality that produces the dynamism of the beautiful and its capacity to provoke thought.[114]

However, the term 'obliges us to think' should perhaps be used guardedly in the case of beauty as there is still room for a difference between beauty and the sublime which, in part, rests on the strength of that imperative. My understanding of the strength of that obligation, in regards to beauty, is that it does not have the power of the sublime to present thought with a situation of impossibility, and neither does it amount to a 'shock' to thought that is entirely *involuntary* (both of which will be discussed in the next chapter). The involvement of thought with the event as something that is unthinkable, requires, as Massumi puts it, 'submitting to it, consenting to participate in

[113] McMahon, Melissa, Beauty: Machinic Repetition in the Age of Art, in: A shock to Thought, Expression After Deleuze and Guattari, ed. Brian Massumi, Routledge, London, 2002, p.7.

[114] *Ibid.,*

it, letting its self-propagating movement pass through.'[115] Although it may involve a presentation of the base conditions for cognition, the event of beauty does not necessarily concern the emergence of a new determination. From the perspective of the actual, beauty can, instead, provide a possible respite from thinking and an opportunity for thought to acquiesce to a process of transition and intensification that is noticeably *other* to its habitual tendency to recognise and determine.

If there is an imperative to think in the case of beauty, it is one that becomes amplified when considered from the point of view of philosophical endeavour. To put this another way, the imperative to determine and understand the event of beauty, rather than merely allowing and submitting to its indeterminacy, is greater when placed in a field that in any way stakes its identity upon conceptual theorisation. This would be to position the lived experience of beauty as a kind of theoretical nemesis, antithetical to the extent that it confounds the pre-conditioned expectations of 'theory' by replacing thought with intensity rather than the other way around. But to adopt this idea of beauty as a 'negative aesthetic' would be to detract from what it can positively do.

For McMahon, rather being determinately antagonistic to pre-existing ways of thinking, beauty engenders a 'new power of thought'[116] that is a capacity to think beyond the terms of the familiar and the already given. The notion of power that McMahon is putting into play here is that of *puissance*[117]; a power that belongs not to the will of a centred subject or to the mechanistic forces between specifiable

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[115] Massumi, A shock to Thought, Expression After Deleuze and Guattari, p. xxxi.

[116] McMahon, Melissa, Beauty: Machinic Repetition in the Age of Art, p. 4.

[117] In *A Thousand Plateaus,* Massumi, in his 'Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgements', provides the following description of puissance: *'It has been defined by Deleuze as a "capacity for existence," "a capacity to affect or be affected," a capacity to multiply connections that may be realized by a given "body" to varying degrees in different situations. It may be thought of as a scale of intensity or fullness of existence (or a degree on such a scale), analogous to the capacity of a number to be raised to a higher "power"'* p. xvii.

components of a closed system, but to a virtual power of invention as an open system that exceeds any specifiable relation. The puissance of beauty, therefore, connects the subject into an expanded and expanding field of potential relations, opening and loosening the otherwise fixed boundaries in which it ordinarily thinks. In extremis, perhaps a subject may become overwhelmed by an autonomy of puissance passing beyond and through it, destructuring, restructuring and forcing changes that could never have been predicted. Yet at a quieter and less discernibly invasive end of the intensive spectrum there is an implication of puissance within a subject's already determined, self-orientating powers. In this case beauty becomes an invitation towards the virtual, our 'submission' to its pleasure being perhaps gradual and even tentative.

As indeterminate and with different strengths, beauty's unlimited variety of effects finds common ground in their seeding of thought with a motility. This motility is a feeling for and proclivity towards thought's capacity to form alliances with intensity, loosening its stubbornness in order to, as McMahon writes, 'play into forces and arrangements of things more interesting than that of existence.'[118]

The contemplation of beauty works counter to thought's attraction to dualism and tendency to prescriptively identify. Intellectually, it can remind thought of its limits and prompt acceptance that its less defined, more fugitive modalities are useful, not just as a means to examine emergent and sub-representational 'forces and arrangements', but also in the sense of being a creatively productive participation of thought in its own potential. As an interruption in thought, beauty offers a respite from the familiarity of our own thinking, breaking the habitual replaying of our own dogmatic ways. At the tail-end of that interruption, as thought becomes again overtaken by the normative and familiar, there is some room for a re-considering and the potential for

[118] McMahon, Beauty: Machinic Repetition in the Age of Art, p.8.

some extra movement. In other words, there is, however slight, some overflow from the singularity of the event into the more intransigent arrangements that surround it and a sense that there is always more to things than we already know. When new thought arises in the midst of this overflow, it does so through a subtle increase in our capacities to rethink and to rearrange in regards to existing structures. Beauty does not change the world in ways that are precisely identifiable; its lines of cause and effect are too unpredictable and understated to be determinately traced. Instead, it acts upon our actualities, proceeding through incremental molecular movements that imperceptibly link up with larger molar systems. The residual effect of beauty, therefore, is not a cancelling or antagonism towards identity thinking, it merely augments thought with a subtle increase in its capacity for manoeuvrability and experimentation that is at once a small shift in our power to go beyond the fixity of organised and predetermined life.

Chapter Three

The Sublime is not the Absolute

> While it is thought which must explore the virtual down to the ground of its repetitions, it is imagination which must grasp the process of actualisation from the point of view of the echoes or reprises. It is imagination which crosses domains, orders and levels, knocking down partitions coextensive with the world, guiding our bodies and inspiring our souls, grasping the unity of mind and nature; a larval consciousness which moves endlessly from science to dream and back again.[119]

Introduction

The sublime in contemporary art is different to what might be termed a 'classical' sublime; this difference not only involves what a sublime artwork might look like but also how it *thinks*. Yet how the sublime in contemporary art seems often identified and discussed owes much to the notions and proclivities of 18th and 19th century aesthetics, most notably those of Burke and Kant. Such notions include: a fearful and mighty nature, a mixture of pleasure and pain, a failure of the imagination in the face of immensity and the possibility for absolute transcendence. However, to name only two historical shifts, the relationship between art and nature is not what it was and, for aesthetics at least, the appetite to out-think and dominate an unruly trans-human nature no longer has its enlightenment momentum.

The motivation for this examination of the sublime came from what appears to be a discrepancy between what the sublime in contemporary art does, in other words, how it performs, and how it often seems to be theoretically contextualised. In this regard, the intention here is not to attempt a new and all encompassing theory of the sublime, but, to try to find a way of thinking about the sublime that seems more relevant to the concerns of contemporary art.

One problem that seems intrinsic to thinking *about* the sublime is that of homeostasis, where, on the one hand, thought as a discursive and interpretative activity asserts a sublime power of indeterminacy and, on the other, replaces that power with a determinate and recognisable idea. When a thinking body encounters a sublime artwork, knowledge carried into that encounter in terms of, for instance, a theory by which it may be already understood, is not only insufficient to the expressivity of the encounter at hand but can go so far as to lock us out of its process. Moreover, this

[119] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.220.

poses a problem in regards to an artwork because its condition as a recognisable object may appear to be inconsistent with the overwhelming indeterminacy required by the sublime. Whereas an artwork and an art practice may be contingent within, and informed by philosophical and artistic precedent, the potential for singularity and so for actualising new modalities of thinking and experiencing lies in it having an aspect which exceeds simple recognition and that operates *eventfully* on its own terms. In this regard, the key intention here will be to investigate the possibility for thinking about the sublime in ways that both allow for and potentialise sublime activity in terms of perceiving otherwise overlooked, unthought and unfelt regions. One of the main problems to think through is that of how the kind of overwhelming indeterminacy, considered here as integral to the sublime, can be expressed within and /or by an artwork that is a determinate object, and correlatively, how an artwork might express that indeterminacy and incommensurability in a way that is discernibly sublime. These questions will be looked at mainly in relation to the philosophy of Kant and Deleuze. For both, albeit in quite different ways, the sublime is described as driving a pure condition of thought beyond the limitations of form and representation. For Kant this condition is the 'pure idea of reason' by which thought transcends sensation and attains the absolute itself, while for Deleuze, in this study, it is the 'sign' or 'fundamental encounter' as a force of intensity that overwhelms thought and shocks thought into thinking. In his theory of the fundamental encounter, Deleuze incorporates the power of the sublime into his notion of the role particular to philosophy; that of the creation of 'problems' that go beyond the doxa of recognition.

When art is associated with the sublime or described as being sublime, what is it that is being identified? Very simply to begin with there seems to be two clear aspects to

the sublime in art that allow for quick judgement and classification. Firstly, a work can present what may now be a familiar sublime *motif*; either that of 'immensity', suggesting the infinite, limitless and unimaginable, in relation to a finite and limited human capacity, and/or that of a 'mighty nature' placed at a safe distance by the confines of the artwork. Secondly, the sublime in art can be characterised by a romantic irony whereby it appears to attempt the infinite, the absolute or the unimaginable, but also admits its own limitations; in a manner consistent to Kant's limited capacity of the human imagination, the artwork strives towards the infinite but inevitably fails. The latter part of this chapter provides some instances of the sublime in art, and explores how these characteristics play-out in regards to thinking and feeling. What connects the various artworks mentioned is that they each produce a relation between impossibility in the sense of actual limit, and potential in terms of the virtual powers of imagination and thinking. What is of interest here is that despite the use of representational motifs and reflexive admission of limit, the sublime in art nevertheless manages to drive a kind of discernibly sublime thinking/feeling. This 'sensory thought', as I will argue, does not represent or signpost the attainment of a transcendent position above and beyond the formal qualities of the artwork, but is instead a relatively attenuated modality; a limit point with a *potential* towards the absolute and the infinite engrained within the material composition of the artwork itself.

This discernibly sublime thinking and feeling meets the recognisable sublime motif, not as a moment of agreement by which an external object is recognised by a unified subject, but as a processual relating, that Massumi might call a "conviviality".[120] In being limited, actual and recognisable but at the same time virtual and limitless, sublime experience and sublime artwork happen together, activating a *passage*

between molar and molecular, actual and virtual, with thinking and feeling caught in a suspended oscillation between the two.

Whereas in the case of beauty, the poles of subject and object, virtual and actual become pulled closer together, the sublime asserts their difference and occupies the incommensurality of their differential. As a situation of suspense, the sublime has one side turned towards a finitude of actual determinacy and another turned towards a virtual infinity, and it is the irreconcilability between the two extremes that drives and sustains a striving to think and to sense. In terms of the actual, there always seems to be a *more than* and a proliferation beyond, and in terms of the virtual there is an *almost but never absolutely*; the promise of a perceivable infinity that never arrives. Here, the sublime artwork may be considered to constitute a problem for thought, presenting a situation of sustained impossibility that forces a confrontation with its own limit.

Whereas problems have the possibility for solution, for an artwork to sustain a characteristically sublime and problematic identity, it must be capable of resisting and deferring that possibility. Correlatively, from the perspective of a thinking body that encounters such an artwork, once that instance of indeterminacy has passed, the residual change that such an engagement leaves in the subject would not be an increased capacity to find solutions, but an acclimatisation to the virtual that provides an increased capacity to enter into the immanence of the artwork as event, and to discern the processes of thinking and sensation that lie at the brink of actualisation.

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[120] In his essay 'The Brightness Confound', Massumi describes colours as *'convivial by nature. Deprive them of company and they blank out'*. Conviviality, therefore, involves an ongoing process of reciprocal

Section One

The Shock of the Sublime

In the introduction to this chapter it was proposed that the sublime is characterised by a 'strength of indeterminacy' sufficient to overwhelm thought's normative representational tendency and create an 'opening' whereby thinking and sensing are driven to the limit of their capacities. Furthermore, it was maintained that the investigation here would have a bias towards the sublime artwork as a determinate object that is somehow expressive of this overwhelming indeterminacy, and in doing so move away from absolutist notions of the sublime and towards an exploration of the threshold conditions of experiencing and perceiving that such an object may produce. In this respect, the intention of this section in particular is to consider the notion that the overwhelming indeterminacy of the sublime amounts to a 'shock to thought' whereby thought's processes of simple recognition are interrupted by a force arriving from 'the outside'.

In the most general sense, shock is an occurrence that surprises and happens abruptly and unexpectedly, it is something we are physiologically and intellectually unprepared for. Shock, therefore, may be considered as *punctual*, a sudden anomaly or 'atypical expression' that breaks with and interrupts the linear, rational flow of the familiar and the predictable. The notion of shock as critical interval may be familiar from the writings of Benjamin and in particular his study of Brecht, whose epic theatre he considers as utilising shock in order to break open the sympathetic relation of audience and theatrical space.

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correspondence. See 'The Brightness Confound' in Parables for the Virtual, p.163.

> Like pictures in a film, epic theatre moves in spurts. Its basic form is that of the shock with which the single, well defined situations of a play collide." This brings about intervals which, if anything, impair the illusion of the audience and paralyze its readiness for empathy. These intervals are reserved for the spectators' critical reaction.[121]

What the Brechtian moment of shock interrupts is the spectator's passive and non-critical acceptance of theatrical illusion, as Benjamin writes: 'The most primitive example would be a family scene. Suddenly a stranger enters.'[122] This entrance of a stranger is the announcing of a suddenly new perspective; the stranger's experiencing of the scene before him revealing to the audience the realisation of an objective distance from the 'conditions of our life', [123] and, 'another point of view from which the more usual scenes of bourgeois life do not look so very different from this'.[124] This mode of shock may succeed in interrupting the continuity of theatrical illusion and intervene within the complacency of our habitual modes of thinking to produce a 'critical reaction', but its dialectical structure in which 'well defined situations of a play collide' is different to the shock of the sublime that I will be heading towards here. Rather than an associative and contrastive collision between two determinate situations, the shock of the sublime concerns the event of the inexplicable itself, as an affirmation of thought's power to think beyond the limits of representation. As a rupture within the familiar, shock not only forms a break within the logic of simple recognition, but is also productive by bringing forth forces that proceed in ways that are autonomous from the field of determinate designation in which it emerges and wholly different to any narrative disjunctions that may be assumed to stand as its instigating cause. In this sense, the shock of the sublime is not the identifiably surprising nor the occurrence of a distinct *something* that is out of place, but another

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[121] Benjamin, Walter, Illuminations, trans. Harry Zohn, Fontana Press, London, 1992, p.149.

[122] *Ibid.,* p.147.

[123] Benjamin, Walter. Understanding Brecht, trans. Anna Bostock, Verso, London, 1992, p.100.

[124] *Ibid.,*

immanent plane of consciousness that 'presents' only to the degree that it becomes a *feeling of thought* opening onto the unthinkable.

In his introduction to 'A Shock to Thought', Massumi cites Nietzsche's example of a lightning flash to describe the error of hypostasis as the tracing back of an event's expression to 'its substantial products': 'the popular mind separates lightning from its flash and takes the latter for an action, for the operation of a subject called lightning'.[125] Following from Nietzsche, Massumi makes the case that the immanence of an event cannot be subordinated to a propositional logic of identifiable cause and effect, in other words, from the perspective of an immanent conception of a world in becoming, the event has no actual beginning or end, any actual perceptual capture cannot be divided out from the passage of intensive movement within which that capture partakes and by which it is formed.

> The event is everything. There is no subject before or after or behind it whose deed it would be. It is an autonomous doing.[126]

The determinately clear occurrence of a lightning flash is not an effect produced by a distinctly localisable *being* or simple dialectical relation that might stand as its substantive cause, its discharging is a culmination within, and the continuation of *its own* intensity, as the build up and expression of its force 'belonging directly to the relation *between* a myriad of charged particles.'[127] Similarly, the shock of the sublime cannot be identified with and subordinated to a simple, localisable cause or contrastive relation. In terms of the sublime artwork as an encounter, the shock produced belongs neither to the subject nor to the actual artwork itself; instead as a shock of immanence, it belongs to everywhere and to nowhere at once.

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[125] Nietzsche from 'On the Genealogy of Morals', trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J Hollingdale, New York, Vintage, 1967, p.45. Cited in the introduction to 'A Shock to Thought', Massumi, p. xxiv.

[126] Massumi, A Shock to Thought, p. xxiv.

Fundamentally, it is the inability to trace back and identify any representational origin that sustains the immanent mode of shock characteristic of the sublime, and, correspondingly, it is the occurrence of such attribution that precludes or cuts short its power to overwhelm.

The shock of an unexpected fall or slap to the face operates in a quite different way to the shock of the sublime. While each may announce a break with the logic of the predictable and familiar, the violence of a slap or a fall is too quickly and easily subsumed within commonsense space-time coordinates. The association of shock with an apparently clear cause establishes a point of orientation that finalises and cancels the non-orientated, immanent potential of the sublime. By exceeding any simple logic of cause and effect, shock's immanence also exceeds any subject or object that might lay claim to it, just as immanence overflows any thought that seeks to contain and represent it. Correspondingly, from the perspective of the senses, shock is not a *something* or *being* that can be seen or heard. Since its nature is to pass through and exceed any determination, shock can never become expressed as a consciously clear actuality; immanence has its own autonomous life, either proceeding outside of consciousness, or blurring and destabilising the distinctness of the already known. Shock's excessive ungraspability is precisely what makes it overwhelming. In terms of a thinking and feeling subject, it is precisely this inability to dissipate the *energy* of shock into the formation of *extensity* which sustains its process of *intensity*.

The shock of the sublime interrupts and establishes a fissure within the familiar, not by being oppositionally different; its *content* is not the collision, the slap, or the entrance of that stranger to the room, but an unlimited virtual content that is as incomparable as it is inexplicable. There is, therefore, nothing 'obvious' about the shock of the sublime,

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[127] *Ibid.,*

its power is intrinsically Other to the logic of cause and effect, and to the consciously familiar in general. As either entirely unconscious, or fringing the limits of a 'larval' consciousness that it calls forth, the vibration of shock arrives involuntarily and continues on *despite of us* and our capacities to predict or associate. The sublime artwork as an actual object may, to some extent, conform to the logic of identity, but the shock that it produces, its exceeding of, and resistance to identification, enables it to have an aspect that is expectedly unpredictable and allows its capacity for shock to replay across repeated encounters in ways that are indeterminately different each time.

In general terms shock can block or freeze as much as loosen and open, but the interstice produced by the immanent shock of the sublime is not merely a passive freezing of thought that results in an interval as an empty gap, but an involuntary and paradoxical condition in which thought is thrown back onto itself and compelled to think the indeterminately unthinkable. The key to shock's capacity to exceed and destabilise the habitual and familiar is its capacity to operate beneath and beyond as a 'subterranean' rupturing, this is what Deleuze means when he describes the fundamental encounter as an 'an original violence inflicted upon thought'.[128] This 'violence' is a force that runs beneath the actual and thinkable passing through the constitutive ground of thought itself: 'the mode in which thought thinks that which might be something other than thought... as if this were both the final power of thought and the unthinkable'.[129] For Deleuze, shock at this subterranean level is not the negative in terms of a *deprivation* of identifiable co-ordinates, but a situation in which the 'power of the whole' passes through the processes of thought itself.

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[128] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.139.

[129] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

Kant and the Sublime Shock of the Movement-Image

Deleuze explores the shock to thought or 'nooshock' in 'Cinema 2, The Time-Image' where he writes; 'the cinematographic image must have a shock effect on thought, and force thought to think itself in as much as it is thinking the whole. This is the very definition of the sublime'.[130] The two volumes of Deleuze's cinema project effectively divide the history of cinema into two regimes of thinking, the first dominated by the movement-image and the second by the time-image and each of the two regimes may be considered as developing a modality of shock that corresponds to its particular image of thought.

The movement-image of 'classical' cinema is characterised by the subordination of time to movement within extensive, divisible space — the cinema of the movement-image, developing chronologically and in conformity to a logic of traceable cause and effect. What makes sense of the movement that passes through and links together sections of film, is a Bergsonian schema of the 'sensory-motor'; the body/brain mechanism that coordinates the stimuli provided by the sensory organs and the responses of a body in terms of its capacity for action in relation to a given situation.

> The sensory-motor schema moves forward by selection and co-ordination. Perception is organized in obstacles and distances to be crossed, while action invents the means to cross and surmount them.[131]

The shock that may be produced by the cinematographic image is not to be confused with representational images of violence, which Deleuze describes as the 'formalist antics and commercial configurations of sex and blood'.[132] Instead, it is produced by

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[130] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.158.

[131] *Ibid.*, p.40.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

scenarios in which an image that is un-linked from the rest of a film impels thought to think an open whole that surpasses the actuality of the individual image. The film of the movement-image develops through chains of cause and effect, with the thought processes of a viewer, the actions of the film's characters and the narrative development of the film all interdependently linked. Deleuze discusses the mode of shock that corresponds to the movement-image in relation to Eisenstein's theory of montage, in which sections of film conflict and collide,[133] producing a break in its unfolding continuity that is at once a break in this interdependent linkage. This break shocks thought into an activity of mental linking by which it has to re-think the film as a whole in order to re-establish the existence of a chain of cause and effect by which viewing subject, individual image, and the whole of the film, re-link and communicate. There is, then, a developmental order to this scenario. Firstly there is an interdependent continuum between the viewer's consciousness and the film's linear unfolding; it is this connection, between filmic movement and viewer consciousness, that enables the shock produced by the conflicting fragment to pass directly through the very cortex of the viewing subject, as Deleuze puts it: 'producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous system and cerebral system directly'.[134] Secondly, this shock instigates an 'interval' within the continuity of the film itself from which arises a thinker as individual subject that no longer complicity sees or hears but becomes an actively involved protagonist compelled to *feel* and *think* in order to then re-link[135].

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[133] In 'Cinema 2', Deleuze refers frequently to Eisenstein and montage: *'As Eisenstein said over and over again, montage must proceed by alterations, conflicts, resolutions, and resonances, in short an activity of selection and co-ordination, in order to give time its real dimension, and the whole its consistency'*. See p.35. Furthermore, Deleuze, states that he takes the example of Eisenstein's dialectical methods of montage because they *'allow him to decompose the nooshock into particularly well-determined moments (but the whole of the analysis is valid for classical cinema, the cinema of the movement-image, in general)'*, p.157.

[134] *Ibid.*, p.156.

[135] Deleuze puts this in the following way: *'this is a shock wave or nervous vibration, which means that we can no longer say 'I see, I hear', but I Feel, 'totally physiological sensation'. And it is the set of*

The 'montage effect' is, therefore, dialectical in nature, consisting firstly of a moment of antithetical conflict and secondly of an overcoming of that conflict that results in a new synthesis. In order to overcome the initial rupture, thought must conceive of a whole of the film within which the fragmentary part may be re-integrated. This thinking of the whole becomes, for Deleuze, the 'higher power' to which the classical cinematographic image aspires, and its arising in and as thought establishes a moment in which it goes beyond the rational and representational. Whereas the conflicting image itself may be considered as a select determination, the whole with which it connects is not an entirely differentiated, stable condition, but a continuously changing 'open whole'; a diffuse becoming of thought or 'concept' in its 'non-rational', non-linear form that Deleuze, along with Guattari, describes in 'What is Philosophy?' as a 'conceptual becoming' and a 'heterogeneity grasped in absolute form'.[136] For Deleuze, this shock-driven movement by which the part as chaotic fragment results in the subject's attainment of the whole, as a non-representational 'intellectual totality' echoes Kant's conception of the sublime.

> What constitutes the sublime is that the imagination suffers a shock which pushes it to the limit and forces thought to think the whole as intellectual totality which goes beyond the imagination. [137]

Deleuze's analysis of the movement-image as cinema's 'classical image of thought', corresponds, accordingly, to what he considers to be the classical image of thought in philosophy, of which Kant may be considered to be a key proponent. This classical image of thought may be summarily characterised as one that attempts a rational and representational explication of its concepts, developing a 'verticality' of thought by

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harmonics acting on the cortex which gives rise to thought, the cinematographic I THINK: the whole as subject.', Ibid., p.158.

[136] Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.177.

[137] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.157.

which the thinker/philosopher assumes or establishes a position of objective distance or higher point from which causes and effects, problems and solutions, are surveyed. However, just as the shock of montage introduces a crisis within the linear rationality of the movement-image, the theory of the sublime put forward by Kant in 'The Critique of Judgement' complicates the above characterisation of the classical image of thought by seeking an ultimate and absolute unity between thinking subject and whole, man and nature, that comes about through a failure of representation.

As was briefly pointed out in Chapter One of this thesis, the Kantian sublime involves a subjective relationship between the faculties of imagination and reason. A confrontation with a 'formless' chaotic force of nature or absolute magnitude[138], for example, a raging sea, overhanging rocks or the pyramids[139], triggers a discordant split within the subject in which the capacity of the faculty of reason exceeds the capacity of the imagination. For Kant, the 'vocation' of the imagination is to serve the demands of reason, by this he means that as an a priori 'law', reason demands that imagination gathers the sensory manifold into a totalised image that corresponds to its (reasons) idea. In the sublime, reason demands the impossible - that imagination forms a unified image of reason's idea of a boundless whole. The imagination 'strives' to form a coherent image and in doing so becomes pushed to its limit and is overwhelmed, as Kant writes, 'imagination reaches its maximum, and as it strives to expand that maximum, it sinks back into itself'.[140] However, the imagination's failure to form a coherent image reveals a higher power within thought, the 'consciousness of an unlimited ability' to think the whole in a 'supersensible' idea of reason. [141]

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[138] Of the sublime in nature Kant states; *'It is in its chaos that nature most arouses our idea of the sublime, or in its most ruleless disarray and devastation, provided it display magnitude and might'.* CJ, para. 246. Whereas the mathematically sublime he describes as the *'absolute non-comparative magnum'* CJ, para. 248.

[139] Kant's examples. CJ, para's. 252 and 256.

[140] *Ibid.*, para. 252.

[141] *Ibid.*, para. 259.

> For what is sublime, in the proper meaning of the term, cannot be contained in any sensible form but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though they cannot be exhibited adequately, are aroused and called to mind by this very inadequacy[142]

Whereas the first moment of the Kantian sublime is one of a discordant correspondence between the *unequal* powers of imagination and reason that reveals a failure and 'impotence' on the side of the imagination, its second moment is one of a pleasurable recuperation in the realisation of the superior capacity of reason. In terms of any 'threat' that may be posed by an unruly, chaotic nature, the superiority of reason's supersensible power brings a feeling of 'relief' at the subjects ability to mentally dominate the threatening chaos of nature before it: 'To judge nature without fear and to think of our vocation as being sublimely above nature'.[143] Yet this moment of transcendence, *above nature*, is also the attainment of a higher unity of nature and subject. The ability to '*think* nature itself in its totality'[144] amounts to what Kant terms as 'an intuition of world'[145] revealing the supersensible substrate 'which underlies both nature and our ability to think'.[146].

Deleuze's examination of the shock of the movement image appears to some extent to follow this same procedure: a shock to the imagination driving the subject to think it in an intellectual totality beyond the imagination's capacity for representation. Yet Deleuze's description of the procedure of shock, both in the cinema project and in his work overall, suggests a possible reconfiguration of the Kantian sublime that could be developed in a number of different directions. For the time being, however, I will focus

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[142] *Ibid.*, para. 245.

[143] *Ibid.*, para. 264.

[144] *Ibid.*, para. 268.

[145] *Ibid.*, para. 254.

[146] *Ibid.*, para. 255.

the examination on one area in particular: that of the relation between thought and sensation.

The shock of the movement-image involves not the confrontation between man and an absolute magnitude, which for Kant is exhibited most suitably in an unruly nature, but a confrontation between thought and chaos as evinced by cinema as industrial art-form. Deleuze considers the images of cinema to be inextricably caught up with the processes of thought itself;

> Cinema, precisely because it puts the image in motion, or rather endows the image with self-motion (auto-movement), never stops tracing the circuits of the brain.[147]

Deleuze's examination of cinema is non-phenomenological, in the sense that it does not begin from the perspective of a division between thinker and external domain but considers cinema's relation with thought in terms of a 'horizontality', in which both are folded into and immanent within one another from the outset. As images on a screen, cinema becomes a kind of externalisation of thinking, or 'thought outside of itself', while at the same time, the subject internalises the images of cinema - its images and relations occupying, driving, forming and deforming its processes of thinking. Kant's theory of the sublime, on the other hand, pursues a verticality of thinking that begins from an initial division between subject and world, progressing though a discordance between this division and onto the attainment of a transcendent point above it. The dominance of reason over imagination in Kant's theory of the sublime is also the establishing of a hierarchical dominance of thought in its highest capacity over

[147] Deleuze, Gilles, The Brain is The Screen, An Interview with Gilles Deleuze, in: The Brain is the Screen, Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema. pp.365-373, ed. Gregory Flaxman, University of Minnesota Press, London, 2000, p.366.

sensation; imagination being the faculty that gathers the sensory manifold, a hierarchy that is evidenced by that moment of transcendence.

Deleuze's examination of the shock of the movement-image elaborates the two impulses of the sublime — one a horizontal and non-finite destabilisation, and the other an ultimately redemptive verticality. The shock of the movement-image is characteristic of the regime of classical cinema which ultimately results in a dominant subjectivity; an 'I think' that enables the viewer to become an actively involved protagonist in order to re-establish a rational relationship of cause and effect. Yet simultaneously, and importantly in regards to the aims of this thesis, Deleuze's infusing of thought with the images of cinema also places the shock of the movement-image at a juncture where the cinematographic image breaks away from the rationalising concerns of the classical cinema, and begins producing the non-rational horizontality of relation that characterises what he terms the 'modern' cinema of the time-image. This horizontality concerns an inseparable relation between the concept of intellectual totality and sensation which suggests a radically different conception of the sublime to that of Kant's in which there is no longer a supersensible idea of thought that transcends sensation but a 'suprasensory' inseparability of thought and sensation.

In a scenario of stimulus and response, the conflicting image of montage shocks thought into thinking an intellectual totality that links the part with the whole. This establishes the first movement of the shock of the movement-image as a moment in which shock passes from 'the image to thought, from the percept to the concept'.[148].Yet this movement of shock does not just pass in one direction, from part to whole, but develops as a 'double process' that also passes back in the other direction from whole to part.

[148] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.157.

Shock is the very form of communication of movement in images[149]

There is, therefore, a second moment in the shock of the movement-image in which affect returns to the image. [150] In this scenario, shock not only forces thought to think by interrupting and occupying the sensory motor interval; it is at the same time a force that communicates across that interval, linking sensation and thought, affect and concept, to create a compound 'sensory thought'.[151]

This compound of sensation and thinking brings us closer to an expansively non-representational, yet not absolutely transcendent version of the sublime. A sensory thought involves its object/image or linked set of images while at the same time exceeding the actuality of those images; the reciprocal relation of thought and sensation producing a proliferation of *virtual content* that although non-rational and non-determinate is thought and sensed nevertheless. Deleuze's second volume of his cinema project gives a relatively brief account of this particular relationship, and so in order to explore this relation in more detail it is useful to return both to Deleuze's examination of the fundamental encounter in 'Difference and Repetition' and also to Deleuze and Guattari's 'What is Philosophy?'.

The shock of the movement-image passes from image to thought – percept to concept, and correspondingly from thought to image – concept to affect. In 'What is

[149] *Ibid.*, p.157.

[150] *'But there is a second moment which goes from the concept to the affect, or what returns from thought to the image'. Ibid.*, p.158.

[151] *Ibid.*, p.159.

Philosophy?', the percept is described as 'the matter of expression'[152] by which art composes its forces of sensation (affect).

> Art takes a bit of chaos in a frame in order to from a composed chaos (or "chaosmos) that becomes sensory.[153]

Just as concepts are not representational *cogitanda,* but a heterogeneous becoming of thought, correspondingly, the image as percept does not represent an object and neither is it even perceptible from the perspective of recognition, instead the image becomes an aggregate of pure sensation developing a becoming in perception as a *seeing* and a *hearing* that exceeds any sensory given of the seen and the heard.

Firstly, the fragmentary image interrupts a film's chain of cause and effect and the film can no longer be understood or conceived of in the way that it was. This moment of incommensurability produces a charge of affect that passes through the cerebral and nervous system, and comprises the initial shock, giving rise to viewer consciousness; an 'I feel'. Secondly, this felt incommensurability 'compels' an 'I think' that proceeds to then recuperate this incommensurability by creating an intellectual totality; a concept of the film as an open whole capable of re-integrating the fragment. Fundamentally, in Deleuze's consideration of the shock of the movement-image, it is affect as "totally physiological sensation" that comprises the shock and which communicates between, passes through and bathes each element (subject, image, and whole). The representational and designating aspect of the fragmentary image of montage, is accompanied by its non-representational aspect which is the percept as a *composition* of affect. It is the excitation of affect that propels a viewer consciousness as an individual power, through which sensation may then become carried through into action, and correspondingly, linking the concept of the whole back into the image. This

[152] Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.177.

[153] *Ibid.*, p.206.

movement of affect through and between the three elements, establishes a circuit of 'suprasensory relations'[154] that surpasses any logocentric determination of a distinct something that is seen, heard or felt, infusing the thought of the whole as an intellectual totality with a correlative sensory totality or 'pathos' that constitutes the overall 'feel' of the film.

> It is a matter of giving 'emotional fullness' or 'passion' back to the intellectual process. Not only is the second moment inseparable from the first, but we cannot say which is first.[155]

Thought and sensation, therefore, combine to form a malleable and distinct/obscure mode of capture, a 'sensory thought' that has a virtual aspect that overflows the representational divisions of subject, image and whole but which is also discernible to the extent that it is *experienced* in an overall thought/feeling.

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[154] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.158.

[155] *Ibid.*, p.158.

The Shock of the Sublime as a Fundamental Encounter

This intensive procedure of the shock of the movement-image, which has affect passing through and linking divisions, echoes Deleuze's earlier reworking of the Kantian sublime in 'Difference and Repetition'. Chapter One of this thesis included an examination of Deleuze's notion of the 'fundamental encounter' as that which presents a problem for thought and compels it to think beyond the confines of recognition. The ideas that Deleuze puts forward here, both correspond and differ to his description of the shock of the movement-image. I would like to now revisit and to an extent rethink some of these ideas in order to clarify the difference between Kant and Deleuze with regards to the sublime, and correlatively, discuss some of the possible limitations of Deleuze's apparently sublime conception of the shock of the movement-image in terms of its powers to 'deterritorialize' thought.

The encounter which forces thought to think is not an object of recognition, but something that 'can only be sensed'.[156]. What the encounter produces and reveals in the first instance, is 'feeling' grasped within the faculty of sensibility. In this regard, Deleuze's notion of sensibility is fundamentally different to any characterised by recognition: rather than sensibility referring to objective forms of sensation in terms of external quantities or qualities, the mode of sensibility that arises from the fundamental encounter is the genetic condition of the sensible itself:

> It is not a sensible being but a being of the sensible. It is not the given but the means by which the given is given.[157]

[156] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.139.

[157] *Ibid.*, p.140.

In the shock of the movement-image, the conflicting image of the cinema of montage triggers thought to think. At first it may appear to amount to an instance of 'contrariety' or qualitative opposition between objective sensible forms, but the shock of the fragmentary image instigates an interval within the processes of recognition that surpasses the representational actuality of the image, triggering shock as an objectless affective charge. It is, therefore, shock itself, as something imageless and suprasensory that becomes the 'object' of the fundamental encounter, developing as a becoming within sensibility and which, although non-representational, consists nevertheless of a particular 'feeling'.

> It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed.[158]

For Deleuze, Kant's theory of the sublime suggests a moment in which Kant's philosophy breaks away from the model of recognition. Rather than the faculties of a subject entering into an accord and a convergence by which an object is recognised, the discordant relation between the faculties of imagination and reason produces a situation in which the imagination strives to present something unimaginable and objectless, and in reaching its limit 'sinks back into itself'. This striving of the imagination as 'both that which can only be imagined and the empirically unimaginable',[159] becomes, in Deleuze, the inception of thought's confrontation with difference in itself. Beginning from this shocked imagination as a differential becoming within sensibility itself, Deleuze elaborates on Kant's theory of the faculties, considering the fundamental encounter as a force of intensity that communicates throughout all of the faculties, fracturing any convergence or agreement between them.

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[158] *Ibid.*, p.139.

[159] *Ibid.*, p.144.

> a chain of force and fuse along which each confronts its limit, receiving from (or communicating to) the other only a violence which brings it face to face with its own element, as though with its disappearance or perfection.[160]

In Deleuze's ontology of difference, it is intensity (difference in itself), initially grasped as 'that which can only be sensed', which forms the ontogenetic conditions for both thought and thinker. For thought to think outside of recognition and confront difference in itself, *each* faculty in turn must be brought to its own limit 'to the extreme point of its dissolution'.[161] Each faculty is a modality of the subject as a whole, the shock of the fundamental encounter, passes through all of the faculties, disjointing each one in turn. This affects an extreme limit point within the subject overall such that the 'I think' no longer operates as a centre of unification but becomes a 'fractured I' that Deleuze describes as an 'aleatory point ... which signifies the highest power of thought only by virtue of also designating the unthinkable or the inability to think at the empirical level.'[162]

This situation in which all of the faculties, and so the unity of the subjective itself, become overwhelmed by intensive forces, marks a crucial shift away from Kant's structuring of the faculties. For Kant, subject and faculties are pre-structured in advance of any apprehension or comprehension of things in the world, and the failure of the imagination results in the demonstration of reason's superiority — its supersensible capacity to transcend and to dominate the world of sensation. Reason's supersensible idea of an absolute totality is at once the subject's attainment of a transcendent substrate which is ultimately regulative, the absolute whole equating to

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[160] *Ibid.*, p.141.

[161] *Ibid.*, p.143.

[162] *Ibid.*, p.144.

the absolute good, and sublime experience producing 'a mental attunement similar to that for moral feeling'.[163]

For Deleuze there are no co-ordinates or regulatory principles that are given in advance, only difference itself as 'the means by which the given is given', and by which the unity of each subject may become either actualised or dispersed. The fundamental encounter, its shock of intensity passing through all of the faculties, does not result in a recuperation or supersensible idea of reason, on the contrary, there is instead a primacy to the intensive procedure of sensation as ontogenetic force beginning from sensibility and resonating throughout the whole of the thinking subject. Sensiblity, sensing its own condition, (as the 'being of the sensible') is, therefore, the point of departure which forces the cogito to think the 'being of thought'.

> The violence of that which forces thought develops from the *sentiendum* to the *cogitandum.*[164]

In regards to the shock of the sublime in art, Deleuze's primacy of the 'being of the sensible' provides the potential for the shock of the sublime to be a fundamental encounter, as a mode of sublime experience without recuperation in a higher unity, and furthermore, provides the basis for the artwork to operate as a non-representational 'sign' capable of bringing the subject into confrontation with the genetic conditions of its own experience.

Kant considers the artwork as an object of representation, its form 'determined by a human purpose'. For this reason, it is not art but a chaotic, 'crude' nature that Kant

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[163] Kant, CJ, para. 268.

[164] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.141.

considers the most suitable trigger for sublime experience[165]. More fundamentally, Kant begins from a division between the internal processes of subjectivity and the external object as a pre-existent spatio-temporal form. From this perspective, the theory of sensibility concerns the subjective capacity for sense perception as a process that passively receives and conforms to the artwork as an external object of sensory recognition. Yet in the 'Critique of Judgement', sensibility is also a purely internal domain of subjective sensation, feelings of pleasure and pain that form the basis for aesthetic judgements that are 'reflective' and independent from the object.[166] For Deleuze, this gap between the artwork as external stimulus and feeling as internal experience, is a dichotomy that plagues theories of aesthetics founded upon the principle of recognition.

> Aesthetics suffers from a wrenching duality. On the one hand, it designates the theory of sensibility as the form of possible experience; on the other hand, it designates the theory of art as the reflection of real experience.[167]

Deleuze places the sign of the fundamental encounter as that which is beyond recognition and at the limit of sensibility; a 'being of the sensible' that can *only* be sensed. The intensity of difference that constitutes this limit of sensibility is at the same time that which occupies it and that which it grasps.

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[165] For the superiority of crude nature over art as sensory form determined by human purpose, see Kant's 'Critique of Judgement', para's 252 -253, where he writes: *'we must point to the sublime not in products of art... but rather in crude nature... insofar as crude nature contains magnitude.'*

[166] Kant makes this clear at the beginning of the 'Analytic of The Sublime': *'The beautiful and the sublime are similar in some respects. We like both for their own sake, and both presuppose that we make a judgement of reflection rather than a judgement of sense or a logically determinative one. Hence in neither of them does our liking depend on a sensation, such as that of the agreeable, nor on a determinate concept, as does our liking for the good... Hence the liking is connected with the mere exhibition or power of exhibition i.e., the imagination'. Critique of Judgement,* para, 244.

[167] Deleuze, Gilles, The Logic of Sense, p.260.

> What forces sensation and that which can only be sensed are one and the same thing[168]

In this way, Deleuze's notion of the sign overcomes the duality between external object and internal feeling by being a process of pure sensation (affect) that simultaneously comprises both the external form of experience *and* the internal condition of 'real experience'.[169] Just as the artwork reveals a condition of sensation, correlatively, sensation becomes that which is composed by the artwork. Deleuze's notion of the sign, thereby, becomes a means to understanding how the work of art can operate beyond the domain of representation and become 'experience', not as the capture of a given but as the *immediately* given of real experience itself. In 'What is Philosophy?', Deleuze and Guattari consider the production of this order of sign to be the aim of art, to 'extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensations.'[170] The non-representative conditions of the artwork, its 'percepts' as 'aggregates' of sensation, become therefore the specific means by which art may overturn the representational, 'dogmatic' image of thought.

In general, Deleuze and Guattari place art in the service of philosophy, considering art to be characterised by experimental configurations of sensation where focal points of immanent variability that we are not yet capable of recognising become a source of signs by which philosophical thought in particular may be compelled to think and create new concepts. Whereas Deleuze develops responses to art that are necessarily within the domain of philosophy, in terms of the practice of art, the interest here is in understanding how art may induce an *acclimatisation* to the virtual; an expanded capacity to experience, think and sense, sub-representational conditions beyond the clearly known.

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[168] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, pp.144-145.

[169] See Difference and Repetition, pp.56-57, 68, and Daniel. W. Smith, Overcoming The Kantian Duality, in: Deleuze: A Critical Reader, pp.29 -56.

In the shock of the movement-image and in the fundamental encounter, the shock of something unrecognisable forces sensation to *sense* and thought to *think* its own intensive condition. This shock, as affect, travels between the part as a percept that can only be sensed, and the open whole as a non-representational concept. The concept of the open whole thereby becomes infused with an intensive affective charge that enables it to be grasped 'in a range of affective tones'; a condition that is both feeling and thinking simultaneously. Ronald Bogue in his book 'Deleuze on Cinema' describes this 'sensual thinking' of the open whole in the following way:

> vague and non-rational, as much felt as thought, a kind of dreamlike, intuited, affective totality that gives each image its sense of "rightness" (something like the "artistic conception" of the film, that particular "feel" of the tone, ambience, rhythm, structure, and so forth...)[171]

This conception of the open whole is significant both in terms of the overall aim of this thesis and more specifically to reconfiguring the notion of the sublime in art. By producing this kind of open whole, rather than the subjective attainment of a pure absolute, the sublime in art may be considered as involving something which cannot be empirically recognised but that is nevertheless discernible in a quite specific way. In 'What is Philosophy?', Deleuze and Guattari position the artwork as an embodiment of sensation, 'sensory becoming is otherness caught in a matter of expression'.[172] Sensation, either as feeling or sensory thought, becomes the non-representational aspect of a particular focal point of perception.

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[170] Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.167.

[171] Bogue, Ronald, Deleuze and Cinema, Routledge, New York, 2003, p.169.

[172] Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, p.177.

> All the material becomes expressive. It is the affect that is metallic, crystalline, stony, and so on; the sensation is not coloured but, as Cézanne said, coloring.[173]

Concepts, on the other hand, are never embodied or expressed in a material, but are accumulations of components which form an inseparable and resonant totality.

> The concept of bird is not found in its genus or species but in the composition of its postures, colours, and songs.[174]

This totality is both finite and infinite. Finite because it has a consistency given by the 'contour' of its particular components and their relations to one another; there can be no concept that encompasses every component in an absolute totality as this would amount to "chaos pure and simple". The concept is also infinite because as a multiplicity, each of its components may in turn be grasped as a concept which itself is an accumulation of more components. In this respect, the concept may be summarised as a specific composition with the potential for an unlimited proliferation within thought.

As a concept, the open whole of the cinema of montage continually transforms in response to changes in the components that define it. The shock of the fragmentary image not only changes the concept as an intellectual totality, but also the expression of its intensive charge of affect contributes to and changes its sensory totality. Correspondingly, the sublime art object may also produce this same kind of open whole; a concept with the potential for an unlimited proliferation within thought that is at the same time infused with sensation. This notion of a sensory and intellectual totality is no longer purely a percept, as a composition of sensation, or a concept in the same way that each are described in 'What is Philosophy?', but instead seems

[173] *Ibid.*, pp.166-167.

closer to Deleuze's conception of the Idea where intensity resonates throughout all of the faculties at once to produce a 'discordant harmony'.

Of all the Deleuzian terms that approach the virtual as beyond empirical recognition but as discernible nevertheless, the Idea has the broadest scope. The Idea is not a pure virtuality, but occupies the edge of the virtual; the point at which the intensity of difference passes into and through a thinking body on its way to actualisation. As not yet fully actualised, it involves a problem for the thinking body, retaining an aspect of virtual indiscernibility whereby all the various powers of the subject are inseparable:

> a point at which thinking, speaking, imagining, feeling, etc., are one and the same thing.[175]

The Idea is not the 'sign' of the fundamental encounter, but what the fundamental encounter produces; its overall effect on the faculties of the subject as a whole:

> those instances which go from sensibility to thought and from thought to sensibility, capable of engendering in each case, according to their own order, the limit- or transcendent limit of each faculty.[176]

Although it involves a passage between thought and sensibility, which concerns all of the faculties, the Idea does not involve a relation of correspondence or accord that would result in recognition. Instead, the Idea develops contrary to recognition, determining 'only the communication between disjointed faculties'.[177] This forms a unity only to the extent that it draws together the differential processes of each faculty

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[174] *Ibid.*, p.20.

[175] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.194.

[176] *Ibid.*, p.146

[177] *Ibid.*,

in a 'paradoxical discordance' articulated as a 'sub-representational' condition that bridges the actual and the virtual.

We can see how the discordant unity of the Idea may be considered to correspond to the open whole of the cinema of montage, both involve a condition of heterogeneous multiplicity which, by not referring to any exterior object or specified set of external relations, is, therefore, purely *internal*.[178] Furthermore, both are produced from a shock to thought; a sign, a fragment, something unrecognisable and which can only be thought and sensed in a non-empirical way, forms an interval within a situation dominated by recognition and cause and effect.

The question here becomes one of how Deleuze's theory of the Idea might supply another way of understanding this situation of rupture. To answer this it is necessary initially to describe how the Idea is structured. In brief, the Idea has three interrelated aspects: firstly, as a problem it is unresolved from the point of view of recognition and thus intrinsically indeterminate and obscure. Secondly, although the Idea contains indeterminacy, it is also determinate to the extent that it is grasped as a real and distinct problem that is 'incarnated in real relations and actual terms'.[179] Thirdly, the Idea has the possibility for actualisation, in other words the possibility for the problem to become resolved in a solution.

In the cinema of montage, the fragment is something that cannot be recognised as a rational link in the movement-image's relations of cause and effect. The shock produced by this moment of irrationality reveals the fragment as a percept - a virtual

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[178] *'without external reference or recourse to a uniform space in which it would be submerged.'*, *Ibid.*, p.183

[179] *Ibid.*, p.183. Additionally on p.190, Deleuze describes the Idea as having *'an objectivity of conditions, which implies that Ideas no more than problems do not exist only in our heads but occur here and there in the production of an actual historical world'.*

sensory becoming that involves the faculty of sensibility. From within this interval in the sensory motor schema, there arises a thinking of the whole – a 'concept' to which the fragment contributes its sensory charge, resulting in a virtual whole by which all of the faculties of the subject are engaged in an overall sensory thought. What is actualised in this scenario is the 'I think', as a subjective unity compelled to think in order to resolve this irrationality by linking the fragment to the film as a whole.

In this way Deleuze's description of the shock of the cinema of montage becomes an elaboration of the sublime that corresponds to a 'classical' and Kantian structure. Its moment of tacit resolution and recuperation is that of an ordering verticality arising within a situation of apparently disordered horizontality involving, in this case, the establishing of a higher point where the subject divides off from and dominates the unruly realm of the sensory. The sublime shock of the cinema of montage, therefore, has a dual aspect; on the one hand the internal, virtual procedures of percept, affect and concept, and on the other, the actual of a subject submerged within an external unified space. It is perhaps for this reason that Deleuze places the sublime and the cinema of montage at the crossroads of the movement-image and the time-image.

In what is a dispersal of shock, instead of being purely a heterogeneous totality, the sensory thought of the open whole, *also* takes on the consistency of a homogenous spatial milieu that the image becomes linked to under a principle of causality and recognition. The open whole, therefore, now operates as the 'out-of-field', a space which incorporates both rational-vertical and irrational-horizontal modes of thinking.

> the out-of-field shows an associability which extends and goes beyond the given images, but also expresses the changing whole which integrates the extendable sequences of images.[180]

[180] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.210.

Although the out-of-field involves the heterogeneity of the open whole, its indeterminacy and virtuality no longer compromises the systematic integrity of the model of recognition, but now becomes dominated by a rationally extensive notion of space that designates a field of possible action for the subject/protagonist. The shock of the conflicting image of montage becomes subsumed under the power of a unifying sensory-motor by which the broken links between image and film whole, and individual and world, become re-established. In his conception of the Idea, Deleuze considers actualisation as a 'point of fusion' and a 'precipitation of circumstances', which by relation to the problem as a real situation comprised by unresolved virtuality becomes:

> the concentration of a 'revolutionary situation' that causes the Idea to explode into the actual. It is in this sense that Lenin had Ideas.[181]

The emergence of the 'I think' in cinema becomes precisely this 'revolutionary situation', a moment of actualisation whereby the individual re-establishes the sensory-motor unity and re-enters the realm of recognition and cause and effect, becoming connected to the world through its powers to act upon and transform it. It is in this scenario, which passes from problem to reaction and then to the possibility for action, that shock may be considered as ideologically useful as a means to effect change on a pre-existing situation. However, this situation in which the Idea 'explodes' into the actual, is that in which the intensive virtual potential of the Idea becomes at that moment exhausted and cancelled in the extensity of the actual. Rather than an interval in which sensibility senses that which can only be sensed and thought thinks that which can only be thought, there is now a scenario in which, as Greg Lambert notes:

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[181] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.190.

> thought leaps over the interval to become, in principle, the condition of an action that remains fundamentally unthought, like an involuntary reaction, habitual response or nerve impulse.[182]

Shock initially can force thought to think by overwhelming its normative and habitual processes of recognition, producing a 'violence' at the ground of thought that is necessarily unpredictable and involuntary. And yet, this subsequent recuperation, although apparently driven by the volition of a unified subject, marks instead the return of that 'involuntary reaction or habitual response' that is formed from precisely the same pre-conditioned and implicit image of thought that the shock of the fundamental encounter seemed capable of overturning.

> If we find an implicit analogy here between the crisis of the movement-image and the crisis of the imagination in the encounter with the sublime, it is because Deleuze uses this analogy to figure the relationship between the 'failure' of classical cinema and the 'deformation' that the power of reason suffers in the advent of the modern notion of Ideology.[183]

Although the shock of the cinema of montage may, in Deleuze's analysis, conform structurally to a classical sublime (Kant's higher recuperation as an attunement towards the good of morality becoming here an attunement towards the good of ideology), nevertheless, its linkage and possible carry through of thought into action within a designated spatial milieu results in an over actualisation of the sublime, where the potential for a virtualisation of thought is missed. Furthermore, the intrinsic openness and malleability of sensory thinking, rather than initiating a situation where thought creates a new solution or way of thinking, becomes instead subsumed by the tendency to think and act in accordance with already constituted ideologies and opinion. For Deleuze, the danger of this in regards to the movement-image is that the

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[182] Lambert, Greg, The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, Continuum, London, 2002, p.129.

[183] *Ibid.*, p.126.

shocked interiority of the subject becomes prey to a 'mediocrity' of cinematic production, and by the same measure, the art-form of cinema itself can, in its worst instances, degenerate into a vehicle for state driven manipulation and propaganda, becoming, 'a kind of fascism which brought together Hitler and Hollywood, Hollywood and Hitler.'[184]

Deleuze's tracing of the representational schema of the movement-image and the embedding of shock within that schema, marks the turning point in his study of cinema where the linked rationality of the 'classical' cinema of the movement-image gives way to the unlinked irrationality of the 'modern' cinema. For the shock of cinema to maintain and maximise its creative potential, it must assert an incompatibility with the recuperative tendencies of recognition and sustain the process of sensory thinking in such a way that it cannot become the motive for conscious action. It is here that Deleuze turns to Artaud's consideration of cinema.[185] The importance of Artaud, in this respect, lies in his conceiving of cinema's potential to bring thought into confrontation with itself by producing images that shock thought into thinking *and* remain unlinked to the logic of spatial movement and recognition. Such images would not reveal the power of thought and the power of a subject to act within an external milieu but, on the contrary, uncover a recognition of thought's 'impower', that is 'a powerlessness to think at the heart of thought' as a process that is purely internal to thought and to the subject.

At first Artaud's notion of shock, as that which forces thought to think, resembles that of Eisenstein's theory of montage. Its difference, however, consists in that inability for shock to become recuperated by a re-linking of the relation between internal subject and external world. This powerlessness is one in which thought plunges into the

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[184] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.164.

[185] Deleuze's reference here is: Artaud, *'Oevres complètes', Volume III.*

sensory-motor interval rather than leaps across it, the capacity for thought as recognition becoming 'dismantled, paralysed, petrified'.[186] For Artaud this situation is a matter 'of bringing cinema together with the innermost reality of the brain',[187] where thought experiences not an external world or the possibility for action but the functioning of thought itself.

> Thought has no other reason to function but its own birth, always the repetition of its own birth, secret and profound.[188]

By analogy, the shock of the sublime in art may also be considered along the same lines. This, therefore, would not be the recuperative sublime put forward by Kant, but would entail an impasse in which the finality of a higher and dominant thought is rendered impossible by a sustained disassociation that involves the whole of thought. The confrontation with the sublime would in this case be that of a fundamental encounter, and its ultimate object would not be a higher unity or 'intuition of world' but an inseparable disunity of sensory thinking that reveals to itself the genetic conditions of its own emergence.

From Artaud's revealing of a powerlessness within thought, Deleuze then turns to Jean-Louis Scheffer[189] in order to begin to outline the condition that this unlinked thought establishes in relation to the image. According to Deleuze's reading, for Scheffer, this image by which thought is broken free from the sensory-motor schema is that of 'a suspension of world', in which the initial disturbance within thought passes back into the visible, charging the visible with that which is imageless.

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[186] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.166.

[187]. Deleuze either quoting or paraphrasing Artaud. *Ibid.*, p.167.

[188] *Ibid.*, p.165.

[189] The reference Deleuze gives here is: Jean-Louis Scheffer, L'homme ordinaire du cinèma, Cahiers du cinèma/Gallimard.

> it is the suspension of the world, rather than movement, which gives the visible to thought, not as its object, but as an act which is constantly arising and being revealed in thought: 'not that it is a matter of thought become visible, the visible is affected and irremediably infected by the initial incoherence of thought, this inchoate quality'.[190]

The 'suspension of world' gathers a momentum in which thought remains under the terms of the Idea as sub-representational problem, yet where the possibility for actualisation and solution is attenuated. By folding back into the sensory-motor interval rather than exploding out from it, thought is caught 'suspended' in a feedback loop between itself and the image; its 'inchoate' process of striving to form and cohere, submerging it deeper into its own virtual condition. It is this conception of a sublime characterised by suspension, feedback and submergence that forms the basis for the section that follows.

[190] *Ibid.*, p.169. It is unclear here whether Deleuze is quoting Scheffer directly or paraphrasing.

But far beneath this wondrous world upon the surface, another and still stranger world met our eyes as we gazed over the side. For, suspended in those watery vaults, floated the forms of the nursing mothers of whales, and those that by their enormous girth seemed shortly to become mothers. The lake, as I have hinted, was to a considerable depth exceedingly transparent; and as human infants while suckling will calmly and fixedly gaze away from the breast, as if leading two different lives at the time; and while yet drawing mortal nourishment, be still spiritually feasting upon some unearthly reminiscence; - even so did the young of these whales seem looking up towards us, but not at us, as if we were but Gulf-weed in their new-born sight.[191]

[191] Melville, Herman, Moby-Dick, Wordsworth Classics, England, 1993 (1851), p.321.

Section Two

From Suspense to the Sublime as a Crystal-Image

The shock of the movement-image develops between the individual and an 'open whole' which is in a way conceivable as a general situation. By contrast, Deleuze considers the shock of the time-image as developing from a whole that is an inconceivable 'outside' of thought, which arises as a force and a 'fissure' within both rational and extensive space and the viewing subject. In this sense, the time-image is not merely a moment of interruption or moment of irrationality that can be subsequently recuperated within a larger whole, but is instead a situation without any possibility for resolution.

The principle characteristic of time-images as 'situations to which one can no longer react'[192] is that they cannot be linked back into any form of rational action within extensive space. This breakdown in the relations of cause and effect reveals 'a hole in appearances' and a powerlessness to act in which the individual no longer has any reason to believe in their own powers to transform the world. However, just as a powerlessness to think in terms of recognition discloses a power of thinking within thought itself, correlatively, this powerlessness to act means that the link between individual and world, in other words, between man and 'what he sees and hears'[193] can only be reconnected through a belief in the world 'as it is'; a non-determining mode of belief that affirms indeterminacy and the process of thinking by investing in that which cannot be known.

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[192] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.272.

[193] *Ibid.*, p.172.

> To believe not in a different world, but in a link between man and world, in love or life, to believe in this, as in the impossible, the unthinkable, which none the less cannot be thought: 'something possible, otherwise I will suffocate'. It is this belief that makes the unthought the specific power of thought.[194]

To my understanding, the time-image provides a *space* by which we not only think, see and hear, but also are conscious of doing so. The time-image establishes a primacy of thinking over thought, but according to Deleuze, also involves the arising of a 'thinker within the thinker'[195]. From my reading, this consciousness of thinking in the time-image is not a form of internal reflection in which a centred subject is able to witness its own thinking, instead, conscious thought is brought into confrontation with an irrational power that is external to it, and by which it encounters its own disassociative undoing. In this sense the time-image, as a fissure in thought, may be considered a point of bifurcation where an unthinkable power of the outside flows in to meet thought's power of thinking. The individual becomes no longer that of a self-empowered thinker, but the reverse, since the power of the outside does not merely meet thought's power to think but overwhelms it with another power that is its own. The point I would like to make in this respect is that although the time-image is unthinkable in terms of recognition, the absence of any belief in the possibility for resolution and recuperation means it does not produce a problem for thought in the same way as described earlier. The replacement of a belief in resolution with a belief in the world 'as it is' and the affirmation of the indeterminate power of the unknown that it entails, creates a situation where there is no longer any imperative to think of a solution, but instead the potential for thought to remain suspended within the sensory motor interval and sustained in its powerlessness.

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[194] *Ibid.*, p.170.

[195] Alluding to Blanchot, Deleuze writes; *'On the one hand the presence of an unthinkable in thought, which would be both its source and its barrier; on the other the presence to infinity of another thinker in the thinker, who shatters every monologue of the thinking self'. Ibid.*, p.168.

What is interesting about these situations where thought remains unlinked from action is that it is the image itself that becomes important, and not how the image can effect a world that is external to it. The time-image does not present an extensive space, but one that is boundlessly temporal. Yet although this space is in way unformed and limitless, it is not a pure chaos but remains an image in particular with its own uncertain and 'inchoate' specificity. Borrowing a term from the anthropologist Pascal Augé, Deleuze terms this space of the time-image as an 'any-space-whatever' (espace quelconque). At the beginning of 'Cinema 2', Deleuze considers the Second World War as marking a break between the development of the classical cinema of the movement-image and the modern cinema of the time-image. His reason for this is that the post-war period saw an increase in 'situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe'.[196] These situations suggest the particular quality of any-space-whatevers that Deleuze has in mind:

> deserted but inhabited, disused warehouses, waste ground, cities in the course of demolition or reconstruction[197]

Such spaces appear initially as actually determinate and extensive, what makes these spaces temporal and indeterminate is not their appearance, but the individual's relationship with them as situations of irrationality and crisis. Any-space-whatevers are spaces of transition without explicit purpose and where no predictable outcome can ever be ascertained. They do not necessarily involve the desolate drama of a bombed out aftermath, but can equally be found in scenes of 'everyday banality'; what is necessary, however, is that they remain disconnected and floating spaces of uncertainty. In the encounter with these spaces, the individual/viewer becomes directly implicated within them, just as the spaces themselves are disconnected voids within a landscape, isolated from their

[196] Deleuze, Cinema 2, Preface to the English Edition, p. xi.

[197] *Ibid.,*

relatively coherent surroundings, the thought that thinks the space becomes equally disconnected and de-rationalised. For this reason, the irrationality of any-space-whatevers renders them determinate yet empty receptacles of an indeterminate pure potential of thinking that links the extensive space of the seen with an unlimited and unthinkable that is beyond it. In this sense, the thinkable, external relations of space, and the objects which may define it, are permeated and overwhelmed by a thinking that consists of the durational processes of internal relation. Regarding this relation between determinacy and indeterminacy in the time-image Deleuze writes the following:

> all reference of the image of description to an object assumed to be independent does not disappear, but is now subordinated to the internal events and relations which tend to replace the object and to delete it where it does appear, continually displacing it.[198]

There is an aspect of cohesive determinacy to any-space-whatevers by which they are recognisable as places, objects, and images in particular, and this determinacy constitutes a focal point and a beginning for a temporal becoming that exceeds and uproots. As it does so, the question becomes that of what can be seen in the image itself and what the image itself shows, rather than what we might see next or how the image makes sense in relation to what has gone before it. Whereas in the cinema of montage the image arises as an interruption that forces a change of state within a concept of the whole, here, on the other hand, the interval becomes 'irreducible and stands on its own'[199] as a situation that is purely optical and of sound, and as a pure seeing and hearing that continues without any subsequent re-linkage.

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[198] *Ibid.*, p.22.

[199] *Ibid.*, p.277.

This notion of an 'image in itself' seems a familiar one within contemporary art, but, in the case of any-space-whatevers, the image is not that of an essentialist, self-sufficient object with its own distinct formal characteristics. For Deleuze, although these images appear to begin from something extensive and visible, an actual object or place, they pass beyond that actuality into something that cannot be determinately seen in the image, a visuality that belongs more to a virtual condition of sensing and thinking than to what is actually seen:

> seeing... is torn from its empirical exercise and is carried to a limit which is at once something invisible and yet can only be seen (a kind of clairvoyance, differing from seeing, and passing through any-space-whatevers, empty or disconnected spaces.[200]

Furthermore, these images do not suggest merely a melancholic absence of a lost object or world, in this regard, Deleuze's description of any-space-whatevers in terms of empty post-war landscapes might be deceptive; there is no belief in a world that is now lost any more than there is a hope in a better world to come – 'we have ceased to believe' – in any thing other than a continuance of thinking and sensing, and in the suspension of world that this entails. With nowhere to go but further into the image, what seeing begins to see and what thinking begins to think, are the inexhaustible processes of their own functioning. This functioning effectively thinks out of, and sees through, the determinations of the image, into an invisible and unthinkable virtuality beyond it: 'a point of beyond outside of any external world'.[201] Just as with the virtual, there is an open potential and a proliferation of functioning, in terms of the actual, there is an inability to form any unified concept by which the image may be grasped and situated. And yet, for Deleuze, the investment of belief sides with, and so increases, the positive of virtual potential rather than the negative of actual limitation.

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[200] *ibid*, p.260.

[201] *Ibid.*, p.181.

The role that belief plays here, its reversal from a belief in the possibility for solution to a belief in that which cannot be known, is crucial to the power of the time-image. However, one might also consider the possibility for conditions that lie or vacillate between the two, and that are characterised by an uncertainty to go fully in either direction. The reticence and indecision of such conditions in regard to the unthinkable, would, to varying degrees, attenuate rather than capitalise upon this potential. But where the decision is taken to believe in that which cannot be known, then it seems there would still be room for differences in level, with the strength of potential being tied to the strength of commitment to that belief.

If we return to Kant's theory of the sublime to look for an instance where the function of thinking and sensing overcomes the logic of extensive space, then perhaps it can be found in Kant's notion of sublime magnitude, and in particular his recount of general Savary's description of pyramids from his report on Egypt[202]:

> if one stands too far away, then the apprehended parts (the stones on top of one another) are presented only obscurely, and hence their presentation has no effect on the subjects aesthetic judgement; and if one gets too close, then the eye needs some time to complete the apprehension from base to peak, but during that time some of the earlier parts are invariably extinguished in the imagination before it has apprehended that later ones, and hence the comprehension is never complete.[203]

[202] The citation given here in Werner S. Pluhar's translation is 'Lettres sur l'Egypte, 1787, by Anne Jean Marie Rene Savary. Duke of Rovigo (1774-1833).' In: The Critique of Judgement, p.108.

[203] Kant, CJ, para. 252.

For Kant, an aesthetic estimation of magnitude is one which the mind is able to take in 'directly in one intuition'. It differs from a mathematical measurement, by being given subjectively as a 'non-comparative magnum' that is equal only to itself. Although there is, as Kant writes 'no maximum to mathematical progression (inasmuch as the power of numbers progresses to infinity)',[204] there is, however, a maximum to the subjective estimation. It is when this limit point of what the subject is able to take in at once is exceeded, that the magnitude then 'carries with it the idea of the sublime'.[205] In the example above, when too close to the pyramid, the viewer is unable to take it in as a coherent form and comprehend it as a totality. Without the finality of a stable and coherent image, the capture of extensive space as something externally determinate, becomes subordinated to the temporal functioning of the imagination:

> the partial presentations of sensible intuition that were first apprehended are already beginning to be extinguished in the imagination, as it proceeds to apprehend further ones, the imagination then looses as much on one side as it gains on the other.[206]

In this situation, vision becomes non-successive and space looses its Euclidean coordinates, furthermore, what is sensed is not so much the fragmentation of space but a transitional and internal condition where vision is turning in and linking only with itself.

In 'The Fold', Deleuze describes the event as not just an occasion where 'a man has been run over', but also as 'The Great Pyramid' its duration for a period of one hour, thirty minutes, five minutes...'.[207] Deleuze is not referring to Kant here, at least not

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[204] *Ibid.*, para. 251.

[205] *Ibid.*,

[206] *Ibid.*, para. 252.

[207] Deleuze. The Fold, p.76.

directly, but is choosing the pyramid as an example of something that persists beyond any individual act of conscious apprehension, in order to link 'permanence' with the flux of micro-events that compose both conscious perception and the extensity of an object:

> The Great Pyramid signifies two things: a passage of Nature or flux constantly gaining and loosing molecules, but also an eternal object that remains the same over the succession of moments.[208]

The object itself is composed of a 'fluvia' of micro-events; a constant 'gaining and loosing of molecules'. This obscure and unconscious life of the object and the volatile thresholds that constitute its permanence, as Deleuze writes; 'somehow anticipate psychic life.'[209] In other words, beneath the permanence of extensive matter, and likewise beneath the integrated and ordered apprehensions of conscious perception, are the same unstable ontogenetic forces. When Napoleon's soldiers (and also general Savary) came across the Great Pyramid, they encountered something that was already known to have stood for millennia. The pyramid objectifies this quantum of time but only obscurely, this duration adding it to, and going beyond its extensity and mass so that the soldiers could feel that age stretching away and feeding into the pyramid as event: 'forty centuries are contemplating us'.[210] As Savary approaches too close to take in the whole pyramid at once, the functioning of the imagination, which is 'loosing as much on one side as it is gaining on the other', correlates to the molecular flux of the pyramid. This is not to say that the imagination and the pyramid become materially the same, but that they correspond in terms of temporal processes that run beneath appearances at a micro level, as for both 'Extensions

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[208] *Ibid.*, p.79.

[209] *Ibid.*, p.78.

[210] *Ibid.*,

effectively are forever moving, gaining and loosing parts carried away in movement; things are endlessly being altered.'[211]

With no direct presentation of a whole, but also, as discussed earlier, no imperative to link to an indirect whole in terms of a belief in an intellectual totality, whether that of the open whole or that of an idea of reason, the functioning of thought is no longer driven by an imperative from the individual subject itself. The impetus now comes from outside of thought. What drives is now the trans-subjective forces of time that Bergson would call the 'élan vital' or 'vital impetus'. What we see is what is not actually there, it is not that the pyramid or that the distinct parts that constitute it disappear, but that the obscure within that distinctness becomes disclosed. In the same way, the arising of the time-image does not cancel the movement-image, but surpasses and displaces it with an order of movement other to that of the sensory-motor and extensive space.

> The movement-image has not disappeared, but now exists as the first dimension of an image that never stops growing in dimensions.[212]

This 'growing' is the proliferation of thinking and sensing that constitutes the virtual side of the image: 'that of an outside more distant than any exterior, and that of an inside deeper than any interior'.[213] What Deleuze means here when he talks of 'dimensions' is, therefore, not that of left and right, up and down, but the displacing of the extensive distance between image and viewer, and the opening of a variable, non-extensive space that plays beyond the determinate limits of both.

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[211] *Ibid.*, p.79.

[212] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.22.

[213] *Ibid.*, p.261.

Deleuze considers a variety of time-images and points to ways in which they can link to other images with varying levels of virtuality; for instance, to recollection and to dream-images. However, not all time-images are sublime in the way that I am putting forward. For an image to be sublime there needs to be a limitless dimension supplementary to the image, for Kant this dimension is the idea of an infinite whole provided by the faculty of reason and transcendent to the functioning of the senses. In the light of what I have argued so far, this supplementary dimension of the image needs to be directly tied to both thinking and the senses and occur as an intrinsic aspect of the image itself, and not as something that is 'supersensory' and extrinsically transcendent. This intrinsic supplementary dimension is one that I believe can be found in Deleuze's notion of the 'crystal-image'.

Deleuze does not directly relate the sublime to the crystal-image. Yet, whereas the notion of an external whole is kept in place when he discusses the sublime and the cinema of montage, the crystal-image reveals an indiscernibility of thinking and sensation that is consistent with Deleuze's elaboration of the sublime in his theory of the fundamental encounter, i.e. the violence of a force of intensity running throughout all of the faculties. It is also consistent with the Idea as a sub-representational problem produced by this encounter and with the notion that I introduced towards the end of Section One of this chapter, where the Idea's possibility for actualisation and solution becomes attenuated in a 'suspension of world'. The crystal-image becomes useful to this study of the sublime by being an image which is not purely representational or purely non-representational, but one in which the virtual becomes discernible from within an actual, recognisable world of appearances, and the actual becomes impregnated by its virtual conditions.

> the actual image and the virtual image coexist and crystallize; they enter into a circuit which brings us constantly back from one to the other; they form one and the same 'scene'[214]

The crystal-image involves a simultaneous arising of both virtual and actual in the same image; we see an actual and objective image that implies an obscure and virtual realm that cannot be directly seen. In this sense, the crystal provides a condition of directionlessness and a refusal of solution and resolution that is distinctly placed. Like the age of the great pyramid, stretching away and feeding into the pyramid as event, similarly, Deleuze discusses Carné's 'Daybreak' where we are repeatedly brought back to a hotel room and to the 'recollection of a murder which has just taken place in this very same room.'[215] In both cases, we encounter an imaginary and virtual past that is indissociable from the actual and real present of the image.

> the crystal constantly exchanges the two images which constitute it, the actual image of the present which passes and the virtual image of the past which is preserved: distinct and yet indiscernible, and all the more indiscernible because distinct, we do not know which is one and which is the other.[216]

In the cases of the pyramid and the hotel room, the circuit between virtual past and actual present can be made relatively clear, by which I mean that it is still possible to occupy a point external to the image and therefore ascertain a periodic distance between the actual image and the particular point in time when the pyramid was built or when the murder took place. However, what Deleuze is searching for in the crystal-image is its capacity to contract to contain the 'smallest of circuits', and reveal an internal operation that is fundamental to time, memory and perception itself.

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[214] *Ibid.*, p.83.

[215] *Ibid.*, p.68.

[216] *Ibid.*, p.81.

Following Bergson, Deleuze describes this operation of time as a 'splitting' of the present into two heterogeneous directions: 'What is actual is always present... but also the present passes at the same time as it is present'.[217] This is not a case of relation between the past as something that once was and the present as an immediate perception of the 'now'[218], but as Bergson writes; 'the progressive movement by which past and present come into contact with each other'.[219] When the crystal-image contracts time in this way, what we see and experience is not a specific past but a 'past in general', implicated in an ongoing present. What Bergson terms as a 'progressive movement' is a prolonging of the processes of thought before recognition takes place; an oscillation where thought becomes immanent to an image in the process of being made.

What I find interesting in this respect is Deleuze's notion of how the past is preserved in the crystal-image. The past does not accumulate to form a stable successive space of a before and after, but becomes preserved as an amorphous 'third side' of the image. What we see in the crystal is, as Deleuze writes: 'its double movement of making presents pass, replacing one by the next while going towards the future, but also of preserving all the past, dropping it into an obscure depth.'[220] Deleuze suggests that it is depth which builds-up in the image as the residual preservation of the past that supplies the virtual dimension to the extensive actuality of the image. In this sense the crystal-image does not merely involve a sustaining of indeterminacy and a flux in which perception is 'loosing as much as it gains', but involves an accumulation and an increase in durational intensity that is directly implied by and within the actual space of the image.

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[217] *ibid*, p.79.

[218] *'instantaneous, perception is, in fact, only an ideal, an extreme. Every perception fills a certain depth of duration, prolongs the past into the present, and thereby partakes of memory'*, Bergson, Matter and Memory, p.244.

[219] *Ibid.*, p.237.

The quotation from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* at the beginning of this section describes a vision of the nursing mothers of whales floating suspended in water, which 'was to a considerable depth exceedingly transparent'. The hyper-transparency of water tends to render space dynamically uncertain, and this uncertainty becomes further compounded when seen from outside of the water and from a position that is mobile and floating. Visually, the depth of water can reveal with distinct clarity a milieu that contains an intrinsically obscure indiscernibility. Furthermore, when we look into the water, the indiscernibility of its depth is something that we recognise and believe in. Its uncertainty does not necessarily present a problem that needs to be overcome but is part of its allure as 'another and still stranger world'.

Just as the crystal-image, as the shortest of circuits, is a self-contained world that does not link with any image external to it, the whales float within an ambiguous depth-space that is other to, and disconnected from, the rational and extensive space above the surface. However, Melville's description offers a virtual line of escape from this self-contained world implied by the unobtainable perspective of the young whales:

> and as human infants while suckling will calmly and fixedly gaze away from the breast, as if leading two different lives at the time... even so did the young of these whales seem looking up towards us, but not at us, as if we were but Gulf-weed in their new-born sight.

Importantly, for Deleuze, depth in the crystal not only connects the actual that is the *seen* with a virtuality of *seeing* that lies within it, but can also constitute a 'point of flight, a flaw'[221] in the crystal that gives the image a limitless background that recedes beyond the image itself.

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[220] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p.87.

[221] *Ibid.*, p.85.

> something is going to slip away in the background, in depth, through the third side or third dimension, through the crack... something can escape in it[222]

This 'something' is not that of visible depth, but a proliferating sensory thought of depth, "expanding virtualities on the deep circuits"[223] that are beyond and yet remain still attached to the seen of the actual image.

[222] *Ibid.*,

[223] *Ibid.*, p.81.

Section Three

The Sublime as a Feeling of Depth

One notion that I examined in the last section was that of the break down in the sensory-motor schema in the time-image producing a powerlessness to act according to any pre-defined logic. The affirmative side of this powerlessness lies in its capacity for a belief 'in this world, as it is' and correspondingly, a belief in the potential for a non-conclusive and imageless proliferation of thinking and sensing rather than the possibility for solution and finality. The crystal-image provided a way of considering how this process of limitless thinking that characterises the virtual can become directly connected to the limitations of the actual. Moreover, it was pointed out that the crystal-image stores time, allowing it to accumulate as a perceiving of depth which eventually escapes the image itself through a 'flaw' in the crystal.

There can, however, be certain limitations to virtuality when it is considered as a proliferation of thinking and sensing. Thinking can continue to spiral away from the given consistency of the actual, to become so remote that it can no longer effectively reconnect with life as it is conventionally and actually lived.

> Whether we are Christians or atheists, in our universal schizophrenia, *we need reasons to believe in this world.*[224]

Deleuze's solution to this remoteness is to bring in a deliberate connection to the body as 'a 'medium level' between earth and sky'.[225] The body brings us back, so to speak, not only from the dangers of a belief in absolute transcendence, but also from the schizoid conditions that arise when all traces of the given disappear. This is not to

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[224] Deleuze, Cinema 2, p. 172.

[225] *Ibid.,*

place an obstacle before the virtual, but to consider the virtual from the perspective and consistency of the body where we regain our place among things. It is the body which gives us a 'reason to believe in this world' as it is that 'which bears witness to life, in this world as it is'.[226]

> The body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it has to overcome to reach thinking. It is on the contrary that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life.[227]

It is the body, its sensations, the forces which pass through and become implicated within it that provide the impetus and the basis for thinking. The question, in a general sense, becomes that of how we might explore virtuality at a level of the body, and more specifically, how this may inform an understanding of the sensing of depth that I am arguing is characteristic of the sublime. In this respect, I will first present some brief case studies of the sublime in art, and then carry these forward into an examination of Massumi's notion of 'movement-feeling' as a placing of time and the unthought into the body, and as a means by which the virtual becomes discernible. Again, this will involve both a coalescence and a play between actual and virtual, but this time between the actual of the body and the limits of what it is capable of physically doing, and the relatively limitless, fluid potential of thought.

The paintings of Casper David Friedrich present many of the familiar sublime motifs: In 'The Wanderer Above the Mists' (fig.1) a dark figure, clear in the foreground, stands upon a craggy overhanging escarpment of rock, looking across a vast landscape that

[226] *Ibid.*, p.173.

[227] *Ibid.*, p.189.

fades away into a foggy distance. 'The Sea of Ice' (fig.2) presents a similarly immense natural landscape, this time of ice, that in moving with imperceptible slowness and unimaginable force crushes a sailing ship. In 'Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon' (fig.3), a couple loom in a dark mid-ground looking up towards a yellow moon, any pleasurable sense of contemplative wonder is counterbalanced by a silhouetted vegetation, the animated tendrils and branches suggesting, an invisible and threatening power concealed within the darkness.

With Friedrich's paintings we do not directly encounter the sublime ourselves, in the sense that it is not *us* that is being faced with a immensity of nature, and it is not us that stand before unimaginable natural forces. What these paintings present are situations of possible sublime experience, possible and yet not actually experienced, in that the situations themselves are accessible only through another 'proxy' subjectivity. We see and imagine 'figures' in the midst of sublime experience and any access to sublime experience is gathered through an act of empathetic identification and imaginative projection that works by summoning our memories of immensity and of invisible and inconceivable power. With their deliberate playing out of representational 'limit' in terms of the inconceivable and the infinite, the work of Friedrich presents one way of considering the sublime in art; not as a fearful encounter with an overpowering immensity, but as something more distantly approachable and low key.

More recently, the artist Mariele Neudecker produced three-dimensional simulacra of Friedrich paintings (fig.4,5). Her translucent vitrines show vast landscapes distinctly confined and contained. The extensive limitations of modelled trees and rock are given a nebulous amplification of scale and distance by the foggy liquid in which they are immersed. Whether painted surface or plastic model, both Neudecker and Friedrich employ a technique by which compositional matter evokes depth more

convincingly when the edges are blurred in a hazy fog. In the works, space recedes into an uncertain distance and this fading away emulates the decreasing capacity of perspectival vision across a vast expanse, and at the same time reproduces the limitations of the imagination in relation to a limitless beyond. This indeterminate foggy distance places the artwork out of synch with the proximity of the body that perceives it. Regardless of how that body might move in relation to the artwork, a disjunctive sense of vast space is maintained at an uncertain distance from the empirical time and space in which it is viewed. Furthermore, this vanishing edgelessness, by producing an indeterminacy that is visual, imaginative and spatio-temporal, also produces an inverse effect of radiating spatial depth and actual imagined reality into the surfaces of flat paint and modelled plastic.

Artworks can also suggest a non-visible and non-finite space without the use of a visibly apparent immersive fog. Graham Gussin's 'Apartment' (fig.6) is a proposal as artwork that involves the prospective purchase of an apartment on the south coast of Spain which has a balcony with a sea view:

> This apartment would be purchased, emptied, secured and left empty for as long as possible, at least a hundred years. It would not be possible to gain access to the premises under any circumstances.
>
> Photographs would be taken from the balcony of the property, lots of images of the sea with nothing really different about them, horizon at mid point in the picture, nothing else. These would be given to participants in the project, those purchasing the property. Each party owns a photograph and a certificate stating what percentage of the project they own. None of these people, or anybody else, is allowed access to the apartment.[228]

What this work by Gussin offers is precisely not a possible viewpoint onto the infinite. The limit that prevents access to that viewpoint is not just the restriction set out in

[228] Gussin, Graham, Apartment Project, 1996, in: Graham Gussin, exhibition catalogue, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England, 2002, p.47.

advance by the artwork, but more fundamentally, the limits of the body itself, slow and immobile by comparison with the agile capacities of thought and imagination. The project could be considered as the presentation of a sublime concept in which a prospect of infinite viewpoint is both suggested and rendered inaccessible. What lies between the suggestion of this viewpoint and its simultaneous impossibility is not merely the idea of an incapacity or inability, but also an active potential of imaginative proliferation. This potential is not that of an imagined form but that of an *imagined looking*; desirous through being a triggered response to the actual limits set out beforehand in the artwork, and limitless in that what we are imagining is a feeling of space fading out into the distance. Crucially, if we were to somehow access that apartment and actually experience its view across the sea and into the distance, it would, in all probability, feel less profoundly expansive than the feeling of imaginative potential produced by its inaccessiblity.

What connects these works by Friedrich, Neudecker and Gussin is the production of a sense of limit which rather than merely revealing an incapacity, drives a potential of thinking and imagining. A reason for this, which will be returned to later, is that this sense of limit is itself imprecise and indeterminate. In the works by Friedrich and Neudecker, there is no clear cut off point between what can and cannot be seen or imagined, objects and the metric parameters of extensive space *gradually* fade out. In the work by Gussin, the indeterminacy of limit occurs through a suggestion of an inaccessible space that contains a limitless vista, the imagining of which is unavoidably and intrinsically open.

Another way in which sublime art produces this indeterminacy of limit is by presenting an incommensurable relation between depicted space and material surface. The work of Vija Celmins often involves unlimited spaces and natural surfaces - desert, sea, sky and fields of stars (fig.7). Her drawings of stars, sometimes based on images from the

Hubble space telescope, show images that were originally acquired digitally as minutely re-rendered in charcoal. The relation of limit to indeterminate space in these drawings spirals in various directions at once. When referencing the Hubble telescope they suggest not only a capacity to see beyond organic human vision, but also tap into the notion that the pictures taken by Hubble begin as non-visible data which is artfully visualised to correspond to an already familiar cosmic image. However, referencing the now well-known characteristics of Hubble images is not what makes the work of interest here; there are other more pertinent relational factors: the use of graphite and charcoal as compositional material may be considered to link drawing, human and universe through carbon as a cosmological element of organic emergence. This macro-scalar notion, along with the limitless spaces depicted in the drawings, relate irresolvably with the modestly small size of these monochromatic images, the evidence of their manual endeavour, and to their micro-visible dusty surfaces. What these drawings produce is a nexus of interrelation between the inestimably large and the evidentially small, which involves an indeterminate fading-out of a different kind to that of the work by Friedrich, Neudecker or Gussin. Common to all of Celmins' drawings is that a feeling of virtual limitlessness is produced through a limiting of actual perception as it is confined and pulled back into close proximity with a visibly textural material presence.

The limit-point in the work of Celmins is not just that of the imagination, vision or the body, but matter itself; tiny grains of graphite or charcoal adhere to a granular texture of paper. The actual seeing of this material grain is a perceptual contracting inwards towards a micro-perception that runs counter to the cosmological magnitude in the image. The image enfolds back into its own visibly formative material, yet rather than this cancelling or attenuating an expansion outwards, it instead accelerates and compounds it.

While the work of Celmins brings the limitless into relation with the limits of matter in a process that folds inwards and outwards at the same time, I would like finally to suggest a different kind of folding inwards that does not involve a familiar visual motif of the sublime. Craigie Horsfield's 'Zoo' (Fig.8) is a near life-sized black and white photograph of a rhino standing side-on. The image, for a number of reasons, suggests a condition of introversion. The animal is held captive, contained inside of the zoo and inside of the limits of the photographic frame. Its head appears to hang in a way that suggests an inertial pointlessness of movement, depression, heaviness, or perhaps merely drowsiness. This image is not that of an expanding outwards or of an actual activity or *doing*, but that of a sinking and turning inwards which meets with the formal qualities of the photograph itself, its overall grey tonality merging with the animal's grey flesh and the grey concrete environment in which it stands. What this image initially presents is an internal and self-reflective mental condition. Its limit-point is comprised by not only an idea of captivity, but also by the inaccessibility and the impossibility of our actually knowing this mental condition. The feeling of an *internal sinking into* involves two aspects; a merging of the materiality of both the photograph itself and that which is *in* the photograph, and at the same time an impossible coalescence of the mind of the animal with the mind of the viewer. If the self-containment of the former is sufficient to categorise it as a crystal-image, the unknowable limitlessness of the latter would then become the 'flaw' in the crystal as an indeterminate depth that escapes and exceeds that containment.

> More directly than the other dimensions of space, depth forces us to reject the preconceived notion of the world and rediscover the primordial experience from which it springs: it is, so to speak, the most 'existential' of all dimensions[229]

The feeling of depth is resolutely and recognisably vague. By exceeding precise position, depth becomes limitless, and yet through being distinctly grasped it remains sufficiently determinate to not involve a presentation of a pure absolute or pure infinite. Neither the pure absolute nor the purely logically determinate, the feeling of depth nevertheless does not exclude the two, but instead involves a felt and irresolvable process of relation between both. To think of the sublime in terms of a region of feeling and a process of relation, is to consider it in a way that does not involve the absolute as a transcendence that is above and beyond form and sensation, but as an *experience* and as an event that passes through the body.

> It is a gap, like the event, but one that is still attached to empirical time as a punctuation of its linear unfolding.[230]

Each of the artworks mentioned produces a relation between impossibility in the sense of actual limit, and potential in terms of the virtual powers of thinking and feeling. This relation may be considered as not only a polarity of actual and virtual, but also as a passage of double movement by which each tendency is passing through and effecting the other. When confronted by the fog in a work by Friedrich or Neudecker, and when we imagine the limitless spaces suggested in the works by Gussin and Horsfield, we do not *see* a depth of space in an empirical sense, but perceive an indeterminacy that is another order of spatiotemporality. This spatiotemporal order is not that of linear time or extensity but of discernible virtuality, a

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[229] Ponty, Maurice. M, Phenomenology of Perception, Trans. Colin Smith, Routledge, London, 1995, p.256.

[230] Massumi, Parables for the Virtual, p.60.

'space without image' in which the brain continues to think and the body continues to measure in terms of a potential of movement.

In 'Parables for the Virtual', Massumi puts forward the idea that indeterminacy is actually perceived by a body through 'proprioception', as 'the specialized sense of spatial perception'[231]:

> the mode of perception proper to the spatiality of the body without an image because it opens exclusively onto that space and registers qualities directly and continuously as movement.[232]

Proprioception is a perceiving of indeterminacy. Rather than indexing movement to fixed points, it is the way in which a body senses the *transition* and *variation* of its own movement. Massumi describes this proprioceptive feeling of movement as 'real-material-but-incorporeal'[233]: 'real and material' because it involves a sensing within the actual flesh of the body itself, and 'incorporeal' because at the same time this feeling of movement is imageless by being fluidly different to, and intensively in excess of, the stasis of fixed positionality.

Correspondingly, the indeterminate sense of space that arises within a sublime artwork involves an activity of feeling and thinking which processes beyond the empirical space-time of its visually apparent materiality; we see an actual and limited object and at the same time we feel and think an unlimited virtual space. There is no possible extensive movement capable of linking to this indeterminate space, instead, what the body is actually registering is a virtual potential for movement: a perceivable and visceral resonance that I am proposing is recognisably felt as a feeling of depth.

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[231] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[232] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[233] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The body generates a feeling of indeterminacy and of an unbounded continuity of transition in a way that the eye alone cannot. Furthermore, this feeling of a virtual potential for movement is, as Massumi points out, already stored in the body in advance of any actual action as *proprioceptive memory*, consisting of accumulated movement experiences from the past, stored within the muscles, ligaments, and the parasympathetic nervous system[234]; in other words, a virtual past implicated in the actual viscerality of the body.

> Call the spatiality proper to the body without image *quasi corporealty*. This quasi corporeal can be thought of as the superimposition of the sum total of the relative perspectives in which the body has been implicated, plus the passages between them: in other words, as an interlocking of overlaid perspectives that nevertheless remain distinct.[235]

The body can deploy movement with a complexity that defies conscious thought. If the memory of the body's capacity for movement was not stored at a corporeal level beneath consciousness, the most apparently everyday of activities, such as walking, with its precise articulation of hundreds of muscles, would be impossible. The ability to walk in a smooth and co-ordinated way depends upon a body's embedded memory of the macro-perceptual overall feeling of walking, more than it does a consciously deliberate engaging and relating of separate joints and muscles. Proprioception, which Massumi also terms 'movement-feeling', is, therefore, a diffuse feeling of transition that runs through and interrelates otherwise discrete elements of matter. Although internal to the body, the memory and experience of our own movement establishes the means by which we visually perceive the movement of objects that are

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[234] The parasympathetic nervous system is considered to have its own operative consciousness that is usually independent of conscious thought, and which provides the continuance of the body's vital process such as the functions of the heart, breathing and the digestive system.

[235] *Ibid.*, pp 57-58.

prior to recognition. What a body then feels in this 'pure relationality of process' is an indivisible continua of processing that is the principle of movement itself.

Massumi's notion of movement-feeling becomes of most interest to this study of the sublime, when it considers the perception of things that are not seen to be actually moving. Whereas both subject and object might appear to be immobile, the feeling of movement continues — it has merely become detached from extensity. When suspended between extensive movement, the perception of space and of movement as traverse are overtaken by a process of duration and perceptual becoming that is also a suspension of time's linear unfolding.

At a standstill, what remains is proprioceptive memory as the virtual potential to feel movement stored within the visceral flesh of the body. To my understanding, it is this memory of movement that enables not only the feeling of actual movement but also the purely internal, or 'interoceptive', feeling that a body has of itself. This feeling as 'visceral perception' is what Massumi is referring to by the 'second dimension of the flesh'. The implication here is that without having experienced movement and so having accumulated proprioceptive memory, the body would be effectively numb at a standstill.

> Just as the spatiality of the body without an image opens out onto another time-form, its temporality opens onto another space. This opening occurs in a second dimension of the flesh: one that is deeper than the stratum of proprioception, in the sense that it is further removed from the surface of the skin.[238]

When encountering the fog of a work by Friedrich or Neudecker, or the non-visible and limitless space in the works by Gussin and Horsfield, what a viewer is presented with is the suggestion of something that exceeds the empirically seen. My contention

[238] *Ibid.*, p.60.

here is that the feeling of depth that these works imply, is an order of movement-feeling that processes in relation to an object which is not actually moving. In this regard, it seems there are some correspondences that can be drawn between Massumi's notion of movement-feeling and Deleuze's idea of the crystal-image. It is the preservation of the past as an accumulation of durational intensity that produces the depth in crystal. This build up of depth in the image may be considered as a form of proprioceptive memory as the feeling of transition itself stored within the body itself.

Whereas visceral perception is 'interoceptive' and contained inside of the body, proprioception is 'exteroceptive', because it connects to the five exteroceptive senses and goes on to become attached, provisionally at least, to recognised objects. In the case of the sublime artwork, what we see is an actual and recognisable object that is static but which simultaneously implies a virtual depth that continues beyond its material limitations. The key here is the fact that it *continues* as a sustaining of feeling that overtakes and yet remains attached to the extensity of the object. Perception attempts to account for, and make up, the 'space' between the two conditions. What fills this space is that 'pure relationality of process': a feeling of virtual movement attached to an object that is static.

When we look at a sublime artwork we have a feeling that is linked to the actual image and also continues to pass beyond it. This link enables virtual movement to obtain a focus and a direction, becoming a feeling of depth that exceeds the frame in a forward direction. And yet, at the same time as we feel an exteroceptive proliferation outwards, this feeling is also one that is interoceptively plunging inwards towards the depth of the body. In this way the feeling of depth triggered by a sublime artwork can be considered as a felt openness of potential in which the interior of the body folds inwards and outwards towards a limitlessness that is both within and beyond it. Correspondingly, the sublime artwork that activates this corporeally felt process does

so because it contains and expresses this same relation within its material form: an actual and visually apparent object implicating a limitlessness that folds both into and out beyond its own extensive limits.

Conclusion

Artwork as Object of Learning

A discussion about and around an artwork usually proceeds differently to a discussion about and around a philosophical problem. This may be to state the obvious, but it is a difference that can become forgotten when an artwork becomes identified as exploring or exemplifying notions familiar to the field of philosophy. In such instances a discussion can switch into a philosophical mode of discourse that favours and emphasises a kind of reiterative knowing and conjecture informed by already established philosophical texts and modes of argumentation. This shift in emphasis constitutes a movement away from an artwork's eventful processes. In effect, the artwork as an event, and the potential for thinking to respond in alliance with that event, can become subsumed by procedures more conducive to philosophical exegesis.

Although the fields of art and philosophy overlap and inform one another, the operative differences between the two are such that they can develop themes and ideas along different trajectories and in different ways. Whereas the audio-visual and the relationship between sound and vision is perhaps too recent or particular to be an established area of philosophical investigation, a conversation about beauty or the sublime at least, tends to proceed in a different manner within the field of art to how it does in the field of philosophy. Firstly, there is a difference between the references used, with fine art and philosophy both tending towards referring to precedents within their own fields; art referencing ideas and visual images within art, and philosophy referencing 'ideas' within philosophy. Secondly, there is a difference of discursive style; generally, the thinking and discussions around art practice can be relatively

quick and mobile in attempting to grasp a fugitive surface reading or *gist*. To some degree, this mobility and speed corresponds to the way in which viewer and artwork tend to interrelate. Within a space of exhibition a mobile body encounters artworks that are relatively static in their placement. The mobility of that body means that it is capable of passing by and through such encounters at different speeds, proximities, and from different directions. The parameters of nearer-further and faster-slower, together with a variability of directional perspective are an active process of collusion interwoven within the qualitative variability of the artwork as event. Furthermore, even when artworks link up with philosophical or textual 'content', the first moments of expression and capture develop durationally and, more often than not, visually and/or sonorously. In other words, the expressed content of an artwork cannot be entirely separated from its sensory conditions. Even in conceptual art practises which claim a 'dematerialisation of the art object' and assert a primacy of thinking over sensation, there is an expressive *something*, however slight, to occupy the sensory circuits of action and response and so trigger that thinking.

The field of philosophy tends towards caution when it comes to gist meaning and rapid shifts. Philosophical thought, both when written and spoken, occupies itself with the explication of ideas rather than the experiencing of events, with philosophies of the sublime in particular, unfolding steadily and with degrees of linearity that make it fundamentally different to the event that it bears upon. The problem of thinking becomes particularly acute in relation to the approach taken to art in this thesis, since here, the artwork is considered from the perspective of an indeterminacy that occupies the non-representational and affective extremes of what a thinking and sensing body are capable of grasping. In this sense, as an event, the artwork evades and exceeds both the extemporisations of philosophy as well as the most highly mobile of interpretations, with the result that discussions within art can have difficulties finding approaches and tools capable of effectively working with, and potentialising an

artwork's expressivity. In such instances, thought tends towards interpretative structures capable of rationalising and grounding the vague territory of felt experience. In other words, thought's aversion to its own disempowerment and correlative tendency towards representation means that it seeks out explanatory or justifying philosophies. In the case of beauty, the sublime, and to a lesser extent the audio-visual, the field of philosophy holds not only the promise of possible solutions but also a recognisable heritage that, by association, is capable of lending stability and gravity to a situation otherwise characterised by instability and transience. The challenge, in this respect, is to invent concepts, ideas and ways of approaching that are capable of engaging with and becoming implicated within an artwork's indeterminate processes, in ways that do not so much ground and inform the artwork, but instead allow for an openness of experimentation and improvisation.

Chapter One explores the destabilisation of identity thinking in relation to the audio-visual. The process by which an artwork may present something that cannot be thought in terms of recognition but that is thought and felt nevertheless, is taken into the relation between sound and vision. Just as the fluid indeterminacy of a 'fundamental encounter' overwhelms and places in movement the opinions and fixed points of thought, it is argued that the durational continua and ambiguous positionality of sound can uproot the relatively stable identities of the visual.

Chapter Two looks at beauty as a movement between the poles of actual and virtual. It is argued that beauty is an instance of monadic perception in which an actual subject and object begin to virtualise and dissolve into one another in a way that pleasurably exceeds the extensive limitations of both. It is proposed that the driving force of beauty's particular mode of becoming is that of an intensive asymmetry, as the ontogenetic ground of formation itself passing through the processes of conscious perception. Furthermore, objects of beauty are considered as having a relatively quiet

signal, and in this regard, the perceiving of beauty's affect requires that a subject meets an object of beauty with a correspondingly subtle responsivity, 'acquiescing' to it and to its processes rather than resisting.

Whereas Chapter Two examines beauty as an instance where the actual and the virtual fold into one another, Chapter Three approaches the sublime as a condition of dynamic suspense and oscillation between the two. It is maintained that a sublime artwork involves an object which is determinate and yet at the same time expressive of an overwhelming indeterminacy. Under these terms the artwork does not trigger a condition of transcendence or an attainment of the absolute, but is instead characterised by an inability to stabilise a final actual or virtual condition. This irreconcilability between the actual of what that artwork is or seems to be and the promise of limitlessness that it seems to offer, drives a proliferation of thinking and feeling which can be sensed as a feeling of depth.

A general interest of this thesis is that of investigating experiential conditions that play close to the event. As experience, such conditions remain, to a variable extent, tied to a perceiving body, whose capacities extend and transform through traversing the thresholds of what it is capable of thinking and sensing. By moving back and forth across this 'edge' or limit point of capacity, such threshold experiences can become regions of learning that not only enable exploration and analysis of otherwise fugitive occurrences, but also leave a residual change in experiential capacity and an expanded perceptual potential. In 'Difference and Repetition', Deleuze puts forward notions of learning and 'apprenticeship' that stand in opposition to both to the already known and to representation in general.

> Learning takes place not in the relation between a representation and an action (reproduction of the Same) but in the relation between a sign and a response (encounter with the Other).[239]

For Deleuze, learning is not the acquisition of knowledge or, it seems, even the ability to provide concrete solutions to problems, but lies in the intermediary process between non-knowledge and knowledge. What triggers the development of learning, in the first instance, is a confrontation with the Other as a 'sign' that causes a problem for thought.

> Learning to swim or learning a foreign language means composing the singular points of one's own body or one's own language with those of another shape or element, which tears us apart but also propels us into a hitherto unknown and unheard-of world of problems.[240]

The activity of learning itself, therefore, is a process of relating in which procedures of adjustment and 'composition' develop beyond the parameters of what the subject already knows. Deleuze's notion of learning inverts an established hierarchy within the image of thought by subordinating the stasis of acquired knowledge to learning or apprenticeship as a condition of temporal engagement with the immanence of the problem. Although learning may result in the solution to a problem, by giving primacy to the condition of the problem, learning as apprenticeship becomes an infinite task in which any solutions that may result become merely a potential entrance point into a further problem.

What is interesting about Deleuze's notion of the problem is that it becomes objectified in terms of becoming identified as a problem in particular, yet as a problem, it nevertheless remains indeterminate. In this sense, an encounter with the Other

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[239] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.22.

[240] *Ibid.*, p.192.

produces a problem when the image of thought or a body's determinate composition encounters its own incapacity in relation to a demand placed upon it from the outside. Deleuze's instance of learning to swim in the ocean is particularly appropriate to a consideration of both the problem of the indeterminacy of the artwork and to the threshold conditions that this may produce. For the apprentice swimmer, the problem is one of learning how to adjust the body in order to stay afloat and move through water. Deleuze gives the example of 'the movements of the swimming instructor which we reproduce on the sand'[241] to make the point that in terms of the learning of motivity, knowledge of gestures acquired outside of the encounter with the ocean is quite different to the activity of swimming in the ocean; 'there is no ideo-motivity, only sensory motivity'.[242] The act of learning to swim cannot occur outside of the encounter that demands it, but instead must necessarily involve the Other as a direct relating with the problem at hand. Even in a practical sense, it would be insufficient to carry from the sand to the sea even the most accurate reproduction of pre-defined movement. Such movement would be reminiscent of a toy clockwork diver that although perhaps able to make some progress, is nevertheless unconsciously prey to the unpredictable movements of waves which disturb its fixed and non-relational gestures. By contrast, a sensory body learns to swim by engaging in a process of adaptation by which it composes and recomposes itself in response to the continuously changing movement of the ocean. In this sense the movement of the ocean can be considered as a tangible expression that is analogous to the temporal condition of the problem itself. An artwork may be considered along the same lines — as a determinate object that, in relation to the subject, produces a problem that is recognisable only insofar as its indeterminacy causes a problem for knowledge. When a thinking body encounters an artwork, knowledge carried into that encounter, in terms of, for instance, a theory by which it may be already understood, is not only

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[241] *Ibid.*, p.23.

[242] *Ibid.*,

insufficient to the expressivity of the encounter at hand, but can go so far as to lock us out of its process.

Whereas encounters with problems may on occasion yield solutions, for an artwork to sustain a characteristically sublime and problematising identity, it must be capable of triggering an encounter that resists the finality of a solution. Correlatively, from the perspective of a body that encounters such an object, once that instance of indeterminacy has passed, the residual change that such an engagement may leave in the subject is not primarily that of an increased capacity to find solutions (though this too may occur), but an increased power of abandonment and ability to 'swim' with the condition of the problem in general that, in effect, constitutes a learning to learn.

In terms of what it is that may be consciously perceived within this 'sub-representational' condition, the inability to actualise a final and clear perceptual identity is one direction of a double movement in which, perception moves deeper into its own intensive and differential process. When examining the 'synthesis of the sensible', Deleuze recounts Leibniz's well known example of the sound of the sea as composed not by one discrete wave or by a collection of distinct wave sounds, but by 'a system of differential relations' that are multiplicitous and indivisible[243]. The point here is that although conscious perception may be assumed to be clear, it is in fact constituted by an 'infinitesimal' accumulation of parts that diminish into an infinity beyond and beneath any perceived actuality. Deleuze explores this at greater length in 'The Fold' where he writes:

> the perceived as a "being of imagination" is not a given, but possesses a double structure that allows for its genesis. Macroperception is the product of differential relations that are established among microperceptions.[244]

[243] See 'Difference and Repetition', pp.165 and 253.

[244] Deleuze, *The Fold*, p.95.

As a problem for thought, the art object may produce just this condition of double movement between macro and microperceptive capacity. The impossibility of any final solution that could account for the work as a totality, can, under certain circumstances, plunge conscious perception into an uncovering of its micoperceptive capacity, and thus an unfolding of ever smaller folds of perception into the 'great fold' of consciousness:

> Unfolding sometimes means that I am developing – that I am undoing – infinite tiny folds that are forever agitating the background, with the goal of drawing a great fold on the side whence forms appear.[245]

This emphasis on the perceivable edges of experience as process of learning, establishes a marked difference to ideas of art constructed around the rationality of knowledge, representation, and distinct chains of cause and effect. Moreover, it also establishes a difference to what may be regarded as the irrational mirror-image of such ideas; notably, unity, oneness, and absolute transcendence. Although at its threshold, conscious perception may engage with processes which are unavailable to normative, representational modes of thinking, what is maintained here is that in relation to the art object (and particularly the sublime art object), perception does not continue to unfold into a conscious infinity, but is caught in a movement between the potentially infinite and the material arrangement of the art object.

What is gained by this approach is the potentialisation of the artwork as an object by which a body may learn to extend and develop its power to think and sense beyond that which is already known, by bringing processes that would otherwise lie indeterminately virtual into the experiential scope of conscious perception. Rather than such processes becoming merely added to the already known without incurring a

[245] *Ibid.*, p.93.

transformation in the normative processes of recognition, instead, a thinking body must itself change and continue to do so in order to engage with varying less-than-determinate occurrences. This entails not so much the actualising of the virtual, although this would play a part, but a process of virtualisation in which perception's microperceptive capacity brings forth the expression of what Deleuze terms the 'sub-representative problematic instance: the presentation of the unconscious not the representation of consciousness'.[246]

This process of virtualisation provides not only for shifts in receptivity, but new modes of receptivity, in turn, provide for new kinds of productive activity in terms of the creation of open-ended sub-representational modalities of thinking and sensing, that operate at the level of question and problem. However, as a capacity, the sub-representational itself may be considered as a general condition that arises in response to each specific problem and question. Whether from the perspective of a partially determinate object or a partially determining subject, what characterises each sub-representative encounter is an immanent process of sustained and non-conclusive forming and un-forming that is fundamentally ontological. Regarding the productive capacity of sub-representation, Deleuze writes the following:

> Being answers without the question thereby becoming lost or overtaken, on the contrary, it alone has an opening co-extensive with that which must respond to it only by retaining, repeating and continually going over it. This conception of the ontological scope of the question animates works of art as much as philosophical thought. Works are developed around or on the basis of a fracture that they never succeed in filling.[247]

In terms of the practice of art, the development of this sub-representational capacity enables the creation of correspondingly open-ended art-objects. In terms of practices

[246] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p.192.

[247] *Ibid.*, p.195.

which bear discursively upon such objects, such encounters foster modes of sensing and thinking capable of unfolding immanently in relation to the obscurity of a problem/question. Just as the encounter with an artwork has a determinate aspect — a body and/or an object which unfolds something less-than-determinate — the modes of thinking and sensing developed by such encounters occur within an identifiable territory or plane, as occasions of engagement which are as experimental as they are indeterminately open-ended. Such openness allows thought to develop differently each time in ways that correspond with the singularity of each encounter. Considered in terms of a 'potential' that resides within the actual, the sub-representational belongs to neither philosophy nor art, but may occur in any field and become developed in an unlimited variety of ways. Since the concern here is that of the indeterminacy of the art object, from this perspective, the sub-representational itself may be put into play as an Idea and a problem by which to think the artwork in ways that cross the borders of both art and philosophy with a precise vagueness that may be appropriate to the problematic complexity of the world.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. Casper David Friedrich
The Wanderer Above The Mists, 1817-18,
Oil on canvas, 94,8 x 74,8 cm.

Fig. 2. Casper David Friedrich
The Sea of Ice, 1824.
Oil on canvas, 96,7 x 126,9 cm.

Fig. 3. Casper David Friedrich
Man and Woman Contemplating The Moon,
c. 1824, Oil on Canvas, 34 x 44 cm.

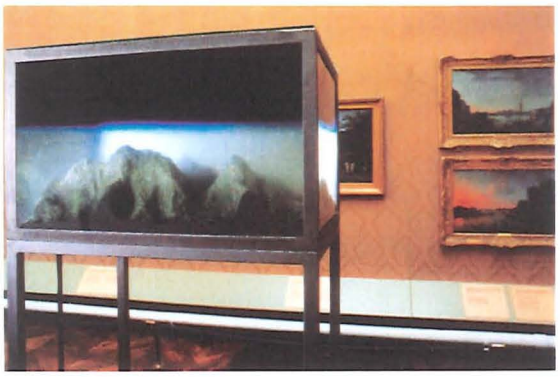

Fig.4. Mariele Neudecker
Stolen Sunsets, 1996.
Glass, water, food dye, salt, fibre glass.
45 x 65 x 180 cm.
Photograph, J. Hardman-Jones.

Fig.5. Mariele Neudecker
I Don't Know How I Resisted The Urge To Run,
1998.
Detail. Glass, water, acrylic medium, salt, fibre glass,
plastic. 61 x 75 x 90 cm.
Photograph, Woodley and Quick.

APARTMENT

THE PURCHASE OF AN APARTMENT SOMEWHERE ON THE SOUTH COAST OF SPAIN, IT SHOULD BE IN A BLOCK OF APARTMENTS AND ABOVE GROUND LEVEL, IT SHOULD HAVE A SMALL BALCONY AND A CLEAR VIEW OF THE SEA. THIS APARTMENT WOULD BE PURCHASED, EMPTIED, SECURED AND LEFT EMPTY FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, AT LEAST A HUNDRED YEARS. IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE PREMISES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Apartment: An unrealised project to find a suitable apartment through agents and then to close it (to all uses) for as long as possible. Photographs would be taken from the balcony of the property, lots of images of the sea with nothing really different about them, horizon at mid point in the picture, nothing else. These would be given to participants in the project, those purchasing the property. Each party owns a photograph and a certificate stating what percentage of the project they own. None of these people, or anybody else, is allowed access to the apartment.
1996

Fig. 6. Graham Gussin, Apartment Project. 1996, from the exhibition catalogue 'Graham Gussin', Ikon Gallery. Birmingham, England, 2002. p.47.

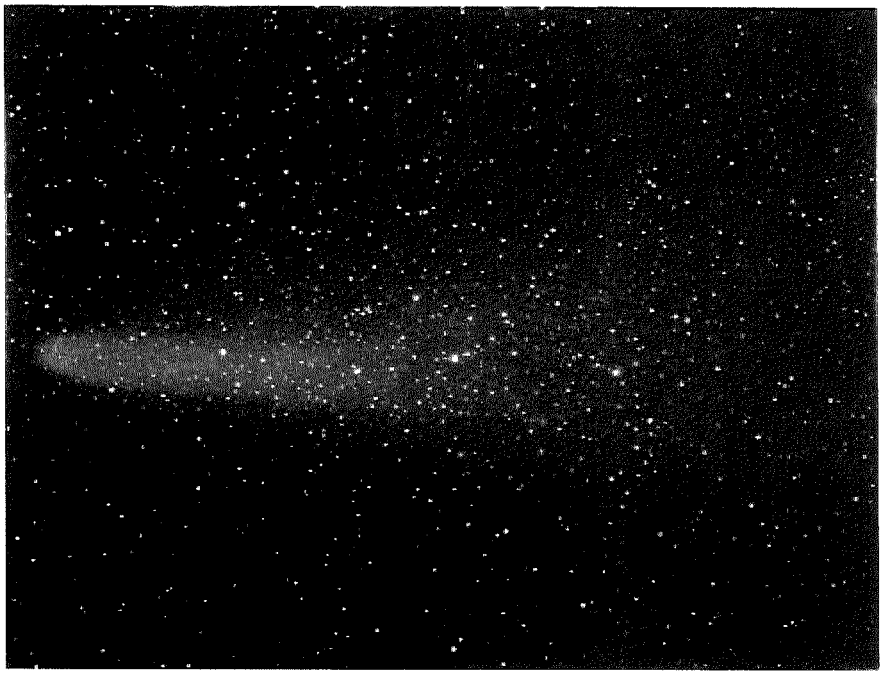

Fig. 7. Vija Celmins, Untitled #10, 1994-95,
charcoal on paper, 53.5 x 68.5 cm.

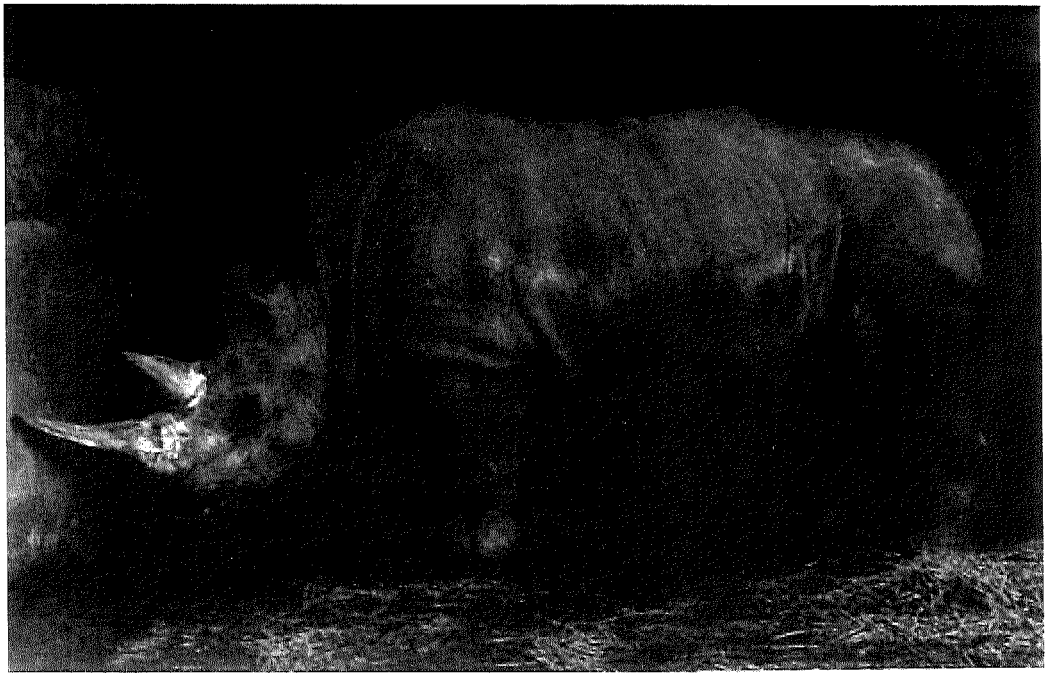

Fig. 8. Craigie Horsfield, Zoo, 1996,
black and white photograph, 120 x 190 cm.