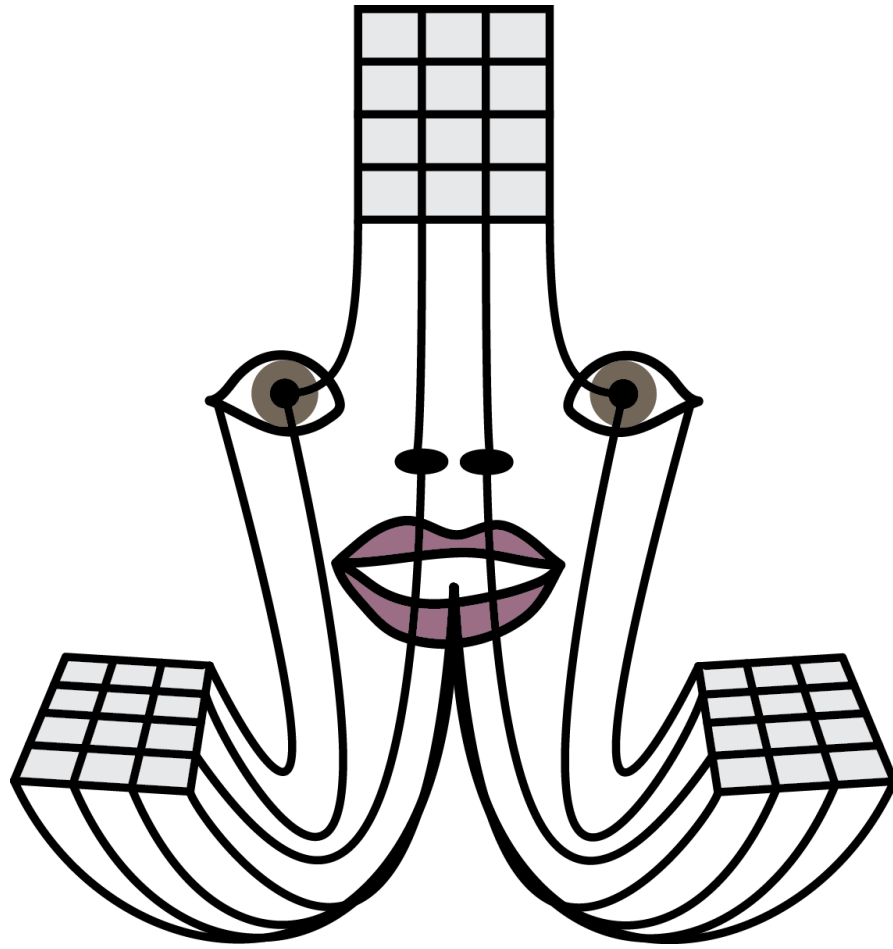




**Art Through Sensation:
Unfolding Image and Text Together, Through Bacon, Bergson and Jung**

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ABSTRACT

This book proposes an experiment: to unfold image and text together. Working in reverse, it begins with the painting processes of Francis Bacon (as analyzed by Gilles Deleuze), the metaphysics of philosopher Henri Bergson and the psychology of Carl Jung. The book attempts to build an in-between; to start with givens and fill in the space that blends them together into a smooth transition (intensity). Bringing ideas from philosophy, psychology and art together, and utilizing strategies that have practical application in creative arts as part of its methodology, the paper reframes creative (or analogical) thought process as being a key component in intelligence. We suggest new avenues that need to be further explored in order to bring image-sensation into more meaningful contact with the discursive systems of knowledge.

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1. Welcome

Welcome. Come in, come in. Yes, anywhere you'd like is fine. Make yourself comfortable, please.

More people are coming behind you. There's room for everyone.

As you are settling in, I'd like to tell you a little about this journey that we are about to set out on. This isn't really a text, as I see it, but more of an environment. I'll be your guide as we move into places that have unusual features. It may be different than what you have experienced before. Don't worry—I'll take good care of you.

Alright. Get set up with a warm cup of tea—the kettle is just over here—and I will show you around.

I'm so excited!

* * *

You take off your shoes and I lead you down a long hall. There are photos hung on one side, paintings on the other.

We'll talk about these in a bit, but first I want to show you the foyer. It's through here.

We enter a colossal space that goes on and on. It has light streaming in from a window above. In the middle, there is a model of a town with a train running through it. You note that the buildings are not rectangular, but have a crystalline shape. They are oblong and irregular, and of various sizes and colours. There are many facets on them and in-between there are very thin, iridescent strings.

This is the model of everything. I wanted to show it to you first. We are here. Look, these are the figures that represent us. See them?

This is the place that I'm going to show you around. You have to remember though, that we won't be able to visit every spot, and I won't be able to show you all of its features. We'll look at the key ones, of course. And you can ask questions along the way, too. The idea is to get a sense of it and to see how the parts connect.

See the strings that run throughout? These are the connective tissues. In a very real way, they are what make the place. As important as the nodes around which they wind are, it is the connections themselves that we will be feeling for. The spaces we explore will always be the in-between. Keep that in mind as we enter the first of the rooms.

Ok, come on! Come this way. Yes, that's it. Step into this entryway, here.

** * **

The In-between

The text is changing around you. It is becoming... different; shaky. You find it unsettling, but not unpleasant.

Now, a gust of wind is blowing on your cheek. The air seems to be heavy with moisture and... memories? You have the impression of being at the beach; with waves crashing nearby and the murmur of a crowd. People are laying on their towels. The sand is baking and a group of kids run by, kicking up clouds of dirt behind them.

Something soft touches your arm, snapping you out of your memory. Is it fur? It tickles. Goose pimples spread over the surface of your arms and this sends a tingle up your spine.

There are distortions in your visual field... lights are erupting and then dispersing slowly around you.

You hear my voice. It is far away, becoming clearer as we proceed. Suddenly I am present. Audible.

You ask, why is this so disorienting?

We are moving from the departure point towards a destination, yet we are in neither. There is no ground. Everything is in flux. Don't worry. This is normal. It takes time for the sense of self to adjust.

Just take your time.

Relax.

* * *

* * *

You are sitting cross-legged on a grid. It stretches out in every direction, seeming to go on forever. I am here, across from you. You touch the grid with your fingers and all-of-reality wobbles around us.

You jerk your hand back.

There is nothing absolute on which to attach ourselves. It is uncomfortable, but we can get used to it. We will stabilize.

Keep in mind, the groundless sensation we are feeling has more to do with the nature of thought—than with this place itself. If we can be here without trying to control it, we will be able to rest more easily.

How do we move forward? You ask.

There is no need to try to move. Just like falling asleep, the environment will change around us. Time and space are less than they seem.

* * *

2. The Transformers

What does this mean?

I have been trying to find a place to begin—a seed around which to build the book. The first words are key, because they set into motion the entire sequence of events that will unfold. But, even so, there are no perfect first words to start off a perfect sequence. Every thing that *comes to be*, has to proceed along its own unique path. No two things will ever *come to be* in exactly the same way.

To create is to move from potential, which has an infinite number of possible arrangements, to a specific realization within a fixed arrangement. What has its origin in an experience (whether an idea, inspiration, intuition, etc.) is put into the world as a thing; with a form that is the result of an active engagement with the real.

The problem with desiring to write the book is that there is always too much to be expressed—and no possible arrangement that could hold everything. This is perhaps why the image is so necessary. It is not that we cannot communicate with words—words are essential—but rather, that words can only carry so much of the authenticity of experience. What is missed is too important, *too essential*, to be left out.

The words that we begin with set in motion a cascade of movement. Text coalesces around what has begun, acquires mass. It forms according to the interplay of the logic at work and an environment in which it is taking shape. If it is meant to reflect a conceptual space, it can only show one pathway through that space at a time, and no two trips through will ever unfold in the same way.

I have been so immersed in images lately that they have begun to change my sense of what is expressible. *Images*. What do images allow that is outside of the realm of the word? Paintings, pictures, music, prose, poetry. They each have their own language; their own vocabulary and history. Each type of image has a timbre, encodes meaning in unique ways that are not quite the same as what words do. At times, they seem to have the potential to feel more like slices of experience than communications. At the very least, they express different aspects of the thing that they purport to refer to.

To unfold in words is different than to unfold in images. Words have their own logic; their own systems of rules that dictate where it is possible to go from each point. They can be precise, but they can also lead into abstractions that are remote from where they began. Words carry their own predispositions along with them, changing the manner and inclination of what they describe. They can also tend to proceed according to habit—following on familiar things that have been said before—rather than being an authentic reaction to what is present in *this* moment. They can lack subtlety and grace in their movement; though it is not always so.

The task presently is to unfold word and image *together*. By this we do not attempt to unfold images into a text, nor do we try to encode the text into the image; rather, something else is happening. It is the unfolding together.

To do this, we need a bridge to move from image to concept; and vice versa. It doesn't have to be a perfect one, of course—it just has to allow movement (keeping in mind here that a bridge doesn't have to match our *ideal* of a bridge, it just has to get us across).

* * *

And so I reflect on what could be helpful for such a purpose.

* * *

An idea keeps presenting itself to me, unconsciously... but I push it away. It is not the one I want.

It comes back. I refuse it.

I tell myself I can do better.

Yet, something is suggesting that this could be helpful. It almost seems to be coming from outside of me, or so it seems to my awareness.

It is a toy from my childhood. A Transformer. I keep dismissing it because it seems to be such a silly thing: a bright orange and red plastic tiger that changes into a robot. I don't want this to be the bridge.

But, perhaps we can give it a chance?

What *is* a Transformer?

In the mid-1980's there was a line of toys made by Hasbro¹. Each toy had two (or more) forms that it could take: 1. a recognizable vehicle, object or animal; and 2. a robot (or rather a clichéd version of what a robot might look like: a boxy, mechanical kind of figure). The toys

¹ This is what is now referred to as Generation 1 (or G1) Transformers, as opposed to the various series and the movie franchise that came later.

themselves were beautiful objects, expertly designed with material awareness and sophisticated colour palettes.

They were well marketed, and the cartoon series had a compelling story. On-screen characters added a depth to the toys that allowed for participation in a shared story among a community of fans. The objects were almost magically endowed. Transformers was myth, and these were these ritualistic objects, allowing the stories to be enacted as rites. They were also avatars, connected to the mythical personas of the cartoon.

Although recognizable in either of their configurations, there were always visible echoes of the alternate arrangements within the current form. If it was a car, for instance, its robot form had automobile parts sticking out of its body; in its vehicle form it was broken up by lines all over its surface (the seams which allowed it to transform). The toys were never static objects, but were always charged with the potential to take another form. They were kinetic, all at once implying their ability to flip between two things. Transformers were always becoming—always a verb; an action represented in the object.

Their ability to fragment and to rearrange their elements into a new, distinct arrangement was what made them special. The two forms are both wholes, with their own internal logic, but influenced by, and with clues to, their alternate function mixed in. Like the chimera, they were hybrid creatures. They were mythical monsters, gods or demigods.



Figure 1 The vintage Transformer toy, Rampage in “tiger” form

The specific toy that has been suggesting itself to me is Rampage, a “tiger” that changes into a “robot” (Figures 1 and 2). I put these words in quotations because neither of them really conforms to what we might normally think of as a realistic representation of those things. The Tiger doesn’t look like a tiger and the robot doesn’t look like a robot. What kind of tiger has cones, angular planes and mechanistic parts all over its body? As a robot, it doesn’t agree with how robots are usually imagined, in sci-fi (for example). It has parts that make no sense: a tiger’s head on its chest, claws and lines implying fur at various points on its surfaces.



Figure 2 Rampage in “robot” form

If we were to analyze this object and to try to determine its logic—what is the sense that it makes?—we would run into difficulty. Transformers are distinguished by their ability to be two things at once. As an object with dual forms, there is a strange interplay of different goals at work.

We might ask: which is its true form? Is this intended to be a tiger or a robot? Both the logic of a representation of a tiger and the logic of a representation of a robot are at play, but they are entangled. We can distinguish both likenesses within it, but they have been scrambled. Might we say, confused? Certainly, the two modes are interacting and affecting one another.

But they do so without establishing a hierarchy. Neither form takes priority over the other, and there doesn't seem to be a conflict with that being the situation.

The question, "is it *really* a tiger or a robot?" makes no sense in this context. The Transformer rests in the irresolution of its opposite forms. What the Transformer is representing is neither the ideal form of the tiger nor the robot, but the intensities between such ideals.

Intensities, as Henri Bergson used the term, involve the interpenetration of different states. Two things, which are different in kind, can be said to have intensities when we are able to move between them without any gaps. What we experience is a fluid transition between the things, rather than a series of static steps. In an intensity between states, the edges and defining boundaries are blurred and indistinct rather than delineated.

We could diagram the transition of Rampage, by putting a tiger and a robot on either end of a spectrum and plotting a series of points that occur as we move along the scale from one side to the other, mixing tiger and robot in different amounts:

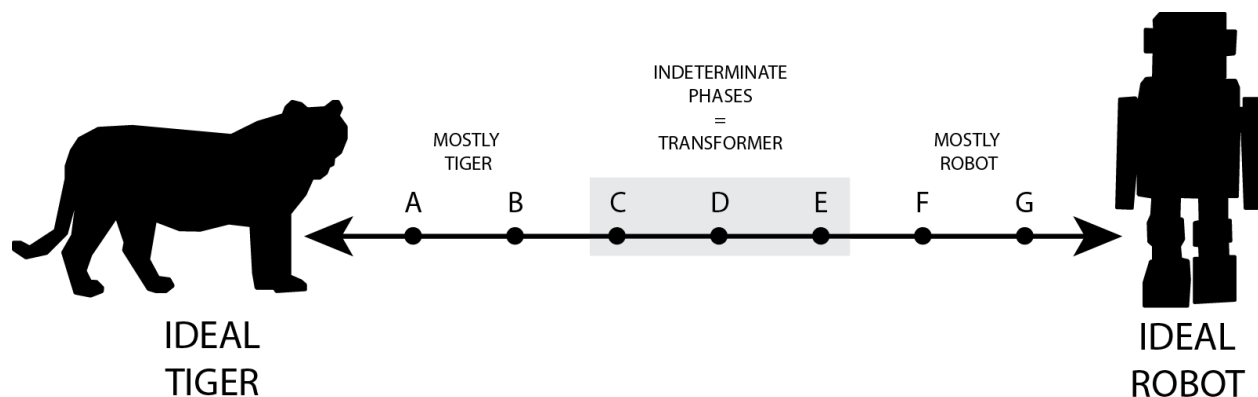


Figure 3 Phases of Intensities

(This is keeping in mind, of course, that the points A-G are arbitrary markers. We could easily have twice as many stops—or half as many—since it is really a smooth, unbroken transition along this spectrum. Similar to deciding the tempo of a song you are about to play, you can choose whichever division you like to break up the time. The divisions don’t pre-exist, but we establish them according to what is most useful.)

As we see in Figure 3, there are three main categories that are possible. A-B is a range where the thing is mostly a tiger. In the range of F-G it is mostly a robot; and, in C-E there is an indeterminate phase where it cannot be completely defined as either. In the ranges of A-B and F-G there is a preferred state, which we could call a “reigning logic”, or a “dominant function”. Where the dominant function reigns, there is a hint of the secondary function—but it is restrained or hidden. For instance, if the thing is on this axis at point A or B, it is primarily a tiger which has only hints of robot to it (and at F, G vice versa). Meanwhile, the Transformer toy sits around the range of C-D-E, since it is able to switch positions as it is manipulated. Its two determinate states are at C (as in figure 1) and E (as in figure 2), while D is an indeterminate state that would occur in between these points.

In designing a toy (or any representational object), it usually makes sense to identify the ideal² image and to eliminate or minimize the elements that are detracting from that ideal. If we were working with an object on the diagram at point A or B, it would make sense to recognize which “robot” aspects are detracting from the tiger, and to suppress or otherwise

² Here we mean ideal in the Platonic sense, where it is an imagined, perfect form which all real instances of the thing aspire to. For Plato, there is an eternal, spiritual realm where all of these ideals reside and which we can only access in thought. All things are understood to be imperfect versions of the perfect idea: such as a perfect tiger, a perfect human, a perfect leaf, etc.

hide those discontinuities as best as we can. In this way, we are able to intensify and focus the connection between the object and what is supposed to represent. But the transformer is different. Because being able to move freely, among C-D-E is its function, neither of the ideal states (ideal tiger and ideal robot) can ever really be said to be driving its logic. It never fully resolves into the image of a tiger (like A would in Figure 3) or the image of a robot (like G in Figure 3), but only suggests those things in mixed amounts.

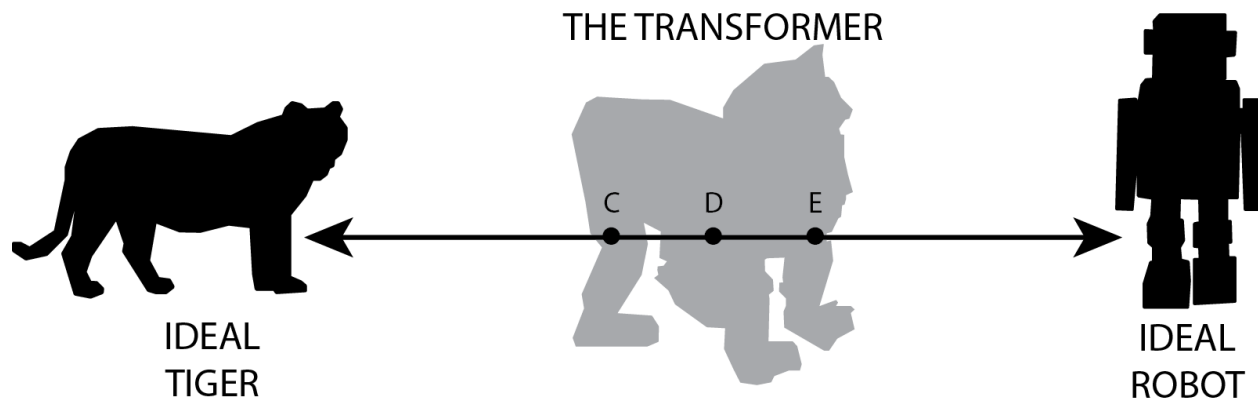


Figure 4 The Transformer within Intensities

We might say that the transformer exists between these two ideals but does not reach either. Rampage is defined by its melding of the two things into one—within itself. It does not represent either of the endpoints in its transformation, but a section of the possible transition between these two endpoints. The Transformer is like the line, subdivided along a particular series of points (C-D-E in Figure 4).

But, let's look a bit closer at point D. When the transformer is in-between its tiger and robot forms, does it really blend the two together, or does it in fact move outside of this axis?



Figure 5 Rampage in an in-between phase

As we see in figure 5, during its in-between states, the toy looks even less like a robot and even less like a tiger. In fact, it looks only like a Transformer toy—a kind of mechanical, jointed puzzle (like a strange rubik's puzzle, perhaps). In reality, there can be no *fixed* point at D, since there are many different possible arrangements it can take during transformation. The Transformer has many moving parts that can each rotate or shift into different positions independently. It doesn't need to be done in a particular order; you can begin by shifting the legs or the arms or by rotating the middle section. Even if done in a different order each time, it

will still lead to the same results. The shift through the indeterminate phase is completed once it is returned to one of its determinate states (C or E).

Because of this flexibility in its reconfiguration, the number of possible arrangements is quite large (and certainly it doesn't move by degrees in a linear way). This means that in between C and E there is a zone of indetermination where it changes but not within a fixed order.

Let us say then that there is a third logic at play here... a third *ideal form* involved, which is the Transformer itself. Since there were hundreds of toys in the series which predated the design of this one, the idea of a Transformer had already been established, along with a system of pre-existing elements that were shared among all of them. If we consider what the designer who was making it was trying to achieve, we understand that they wanted to make something that was like other Transformers. This involved the use of established codes: solutions that had already been established to resolve issues common across the series. The new design had to fit within an existing aesthetic and "vocabulary" of forms. The Transformer is itself an ideal form that all of the toys in the series aspired to, while each new design always retained an individual uniqueness.

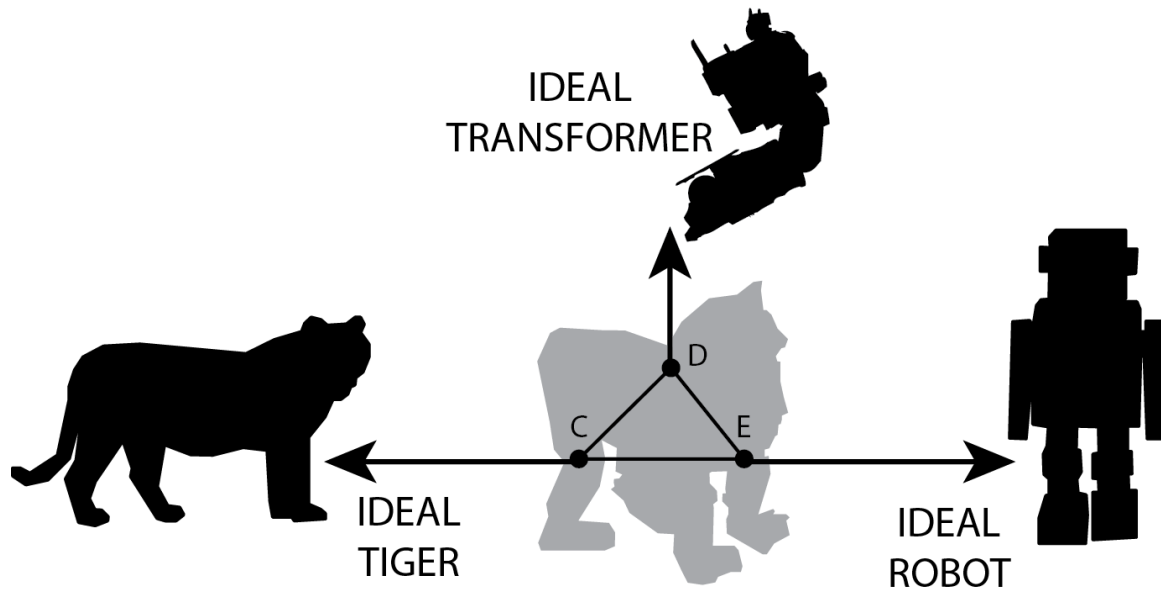


Figure 6 Three Ideals

In Figure 6 we have rearranged the diagram so that the object is structured around three poles. The third driving logic is that of the Transformer itself, a codified aesthetic/design system, with the function of changing between two forms.

Within the zone of C-D-E there is not a line, but a space—in which the toy can have a variety of configurations. If what we are aiming for is to identify what the logic of this toy's design is, we can consider that these three logics are here completely integrated. We see evidence of each particular one manifesting at different points—like the full tiger head that is always present, the shape of the robot's hands or the hinges of the transformer—yet, these intentions all meld together in the toy.

Each of the three intentions is equal in its weight. It could be argued that the tiger and robot roles are subordinate to its function as the Transformer, but consider what would happen if we were to take one of these three anchors away. It makes no sense to have a transformer that doesn't have two other poles to shift between. A Transformer-tiger, would just be a tiger

that transforms to... a tiger? Or, would a Transformer-robot that doesn't change to another form still be a Transformer? Even a tiger-robot that doesn't transform isn't a Transformer; it would just be a mixed image without the function of passing through a Transformer's indeterminate phase.

What we have in the zone of C-D-E in Figure 6 is like an environment where there are three distinct realities that are fused together; still distinguishable, but non-hierarchical in their arrangement. The realities are interpenetrating; there are no borders but a complete fusion within. We can make out the plateaus, areas where one logic is clearly evident, but when we try to isolate them the image begins to fall apart. The Transformer toy, diagrammed, begins to show us that *difference* can be clearly embodied within a model that is sensible, though not strictly logical.

The Transformer is not unique in having multiple systems of logic at play, but rather is useful to consider because it has these distinctly separate states structured into its design. It has its determinate states—places that we are meant to stop the action—but always with the implication that an action is still ongoing. The toy has clearly defined parameters that illustrate the fusing of its multiple logics together in a way that leaves traces of its path for us to observe.

In reality, there are always more factors affecting the way a thing *comes to be*. We might well imagine that the Transformer toy has more than three anchoring points; more than three logical considerations that make their way into its design. In addition to the ones that we have identified so far, it is likely driven by other factors that we don't immediately notice, such as: the possible forms that a die cast will allow; the colours that are possible to mix with the

chosen types of plastic and enamel; the way formal design elements come into play (such as symmetry, rhythm of line, repetition of shapes, etc.):

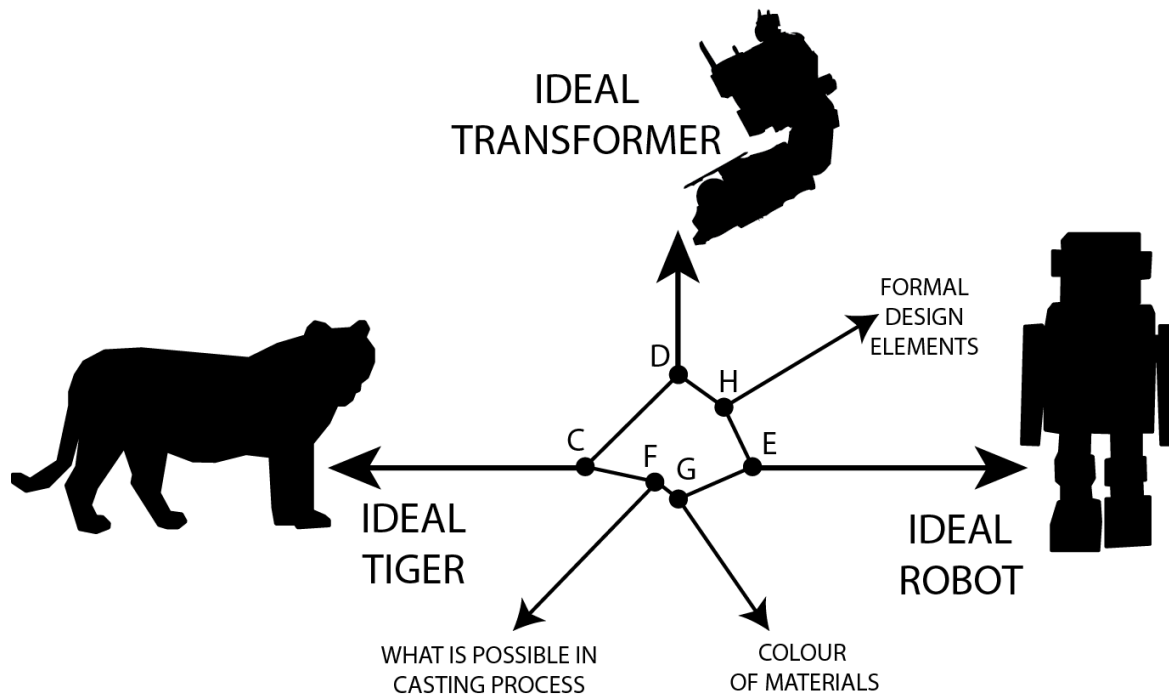


Figure 7 Multifacetedness

These additional considerations change the way that the ideals are articulated; the way they unfold when coming into contact in the real world of materials (vs. as a virtual idea). In Figure 7 there is more complexity to the indeterminate region than what initially seems. It had a seeming conflict of ideals (tiger vs. robot) that, when we look more closely is just one manifestation in a web of many smaller conflicting ideals that come into play. As the model gets more complex it shows itself to be multifaceted.

All things that *come to be* are like the Transformer, but the Transformer is illustrative because there is an obvious duality implied in it. Meanwhile, most things that *come to be* have their duality (or multifacetedness) suppressed. The conventions of meaning require us to

prioritize the most important aspects of a thing while suppressing the rest. We establish the true function, meaning or purpose and then make its others secondary (or superfluous) to this primary one. But this does not always lead to accurate descriptions of the thing. It does enable streamlined and concise packets of information which can be exchanged easily, but this is information which is necessarily distorted. Certain aspects have been amplified while others ignored. That is not to say that such streamlining of information is not useful or powerful; they are undoubtedly both. (the medium is the message)

The intention here is to see that it is possible to make certain things sensible that have traditionally been considered irrational and unintelligible. For now, let it be enough to recognize that there are aspects of reality that are always suppressed in order for us to make the experience sensible; but that this information doesn't go away when we cease to acknowledge it.

As a model, we can think of the Transformer as being a thing that *comes to be*, at the intersection of multiple strings, with each one connecting to something in the distance. While it makes these connections, the thing in itself is in-between, as if it is suspended and held in place by its relationship to the "anchors". While in the design of many other objects there has often been an attempt to make one ideal the reigning logic, in the Transformer there is a balance; a kind of truce among its conflicting constituent attributes.

The model that we build around the idea of the Transformer shows that to unfold an experience along different axes at the same time, is not senseless. Displaying an integrated complexity is, in fact, a valid reflection of the way that we proceed in our world. It is the way

that, as conscious beings, progression occurs in reality when we are not caught in the simplified abstract concepts of the discursive environment.

* * *

We look out at the grid again. It is like a spider's web which stretches to different horizons; different vanishing points depending on which way we turn our heads. From inside the diagram everything is transformation...

First there is the transition that is unending; then it becomes duration. Later on, it is integration—blending.

I have learned (or perhaps I should say mis-learned) to put concept above image, to make sure that idea is readable within image. To always be able to trace back to a fixed position in the world of words. There we can find our way back to the grid.

But to do this is to put intellect over feeling; description over experience.

It is to miss the thing, in and of itself.

To get to meaning we have to unravel the questions of meaning; to reorient ourselves within the field of connections. We turn to the image.

This comes through sensation.

* * *

3. There is something about Bacon...

There is something about Bacon's work that seems to embody the process of transformation. It has a sense of movement, change, and being two or more things at once. More than any other artist's works, his seem to have a strange energy that imbue them with motion and transition rather than the feeling of a static moment.

Of course, Deleuze was taken with Bacon, and he wrote the *The Logic of Sensation* to analyse the ways in which the artist was able to achieve his original effects. For Deleuze, Bacon was the only artist who was able to find a resolution to the standstill that painters found themselves within in the early to mid-20th century. It seemed that there was no way forward; both figuration and abstraction were equally dead-ends. Nothing was possible any longer, it seemed, now that the ideas underlying painting had been brought to their logical ends on both ends of this spectrum of possibility.

Bacon opened up a new field of possibility; a plane of imagistic reality that had been inaccessible before him. With Bacon, the functioning of regular logic came undone. He was able to elevate the work to another level; the level of sensation. This level of sensation is a system that is only accessible through the analogical modes; through a movement outside of typical arrangement and instead brought in through an activation of unexpected insight. For Deleuze, the catalyst for Bacon's innovation was the use of the *catastrophe*.

Bacon's painting process almost always began with the photograph. He used a representational logic to start, reproducing the shapes and forms of the photo in a manner that attempted to recreate the likenesses within it. This was always begun in a straightforward, if

haphazard way; his creating of the image was both loose and overly controlled. Yet, at some point in his progression towards the photographic likeness, Bacon would introduce an unexpected interruption. It felt like an attack: a handful of paint suddenly picked up and flung onto the canvas, a smearing out of a major section with an oil soaked rag, or the scraping off of layers of paint down to the canvas leaving only stains. This attack broke radically with the process that had led up to this point; with the manner of applying paint that had been established in the sessions prior to the event. In this way, it was a catastrophic act that completely broke with the reigning logic of the painting up to the point of its occurrence.

Although the catastrophe involved chance, it must be understood as having been deliberate. Certainly, there was an element of randomness involved in the elaboration of the act (how and where it hit, etc.), but as an intervention it was purposeful. It was a disruption that pushed the work out of its trajectory and into a new set of concerns. Where the artist had been proceeding according to a system with established rules, now he was forced to adapt to a new situation—one where he had to resolve a pre-existent, logical reality with elements that were at odds with that reality.

Now this liberation can only occur by passing through the catastrophe, that is, through the diagram and its involuntary irruption: bodies are thrown off balance, they are in a state of perpetual fall; the planes collide with each other; colors become confused and no longer delimit an object. In order for the rupture with figurative resemblance to avoid perpetuating the catastrophe, in order for it to succeed in producing a more profound resemblance, the planes, starting with

the diagram, must maintain their junction; the body's mass must integrate the imbalance in a deformation (neither transformation nor decomposition, but the "place" of a force); and above all, modulation must find its true meaning and technical formula as the law of Analogy. It must act as a variable and continuous mold, which is not simply opposed to relief in chiaroscuro, but invents a new type of relief through color. (Deleuze FB 96-97)

According to Deleuze, the entire system was thrown out of balance once the catastrophe was introduced. It was as though one experience of reality was invaded by a different understanding of reality. Yet these two realities had to be made sensible; there needed to be a meaningful connection among these dissonant pieces. It was through the "logic of sensation" that Bacon was able to make them resonate together. The logic of sensation was a framework in which this combination of diagram and catastrophe were merged in ways that bring in aspects of experience that are normally outside of visual perception. It did so at the gut level; as a felt bodily encounter. It implied touch: the touch of the artist's mark as a meeting of the hand and the eye.

It was only through the catastrophe that unspoken layers of perception became available, because they are outside of what is normally spoken; what is normally processed within discursive thought. The chance event, once introduced, created a rupture—unlocking a higher level of realism; breaking out of the cliché of existing modes of representation—accessing non-discursive levels of thought.

To help in the analysis of Bacon's catastrophe and how it allows him to move into the unspeakable, let us represent the process in a series of diagrams. To begin, imagine that *any* art practice proceeds within a framework that is represented as a grid:

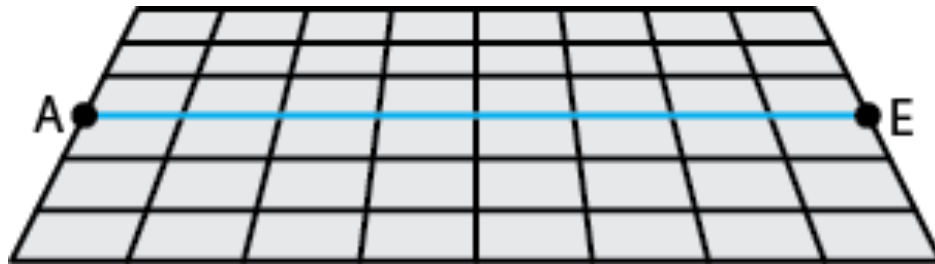


Figure 8 Logic of Painting

In Figure 8, a grid represents a system of logic that a painting is made within. This is a generalization of any practice; any framework that a practice exists within. The blue pathway indicates a series of moments that the process proceeds along within the logical environment. The activity of painting proceeds from point A, following the rules of the system, until it arrives at a resolution at point E, where it is complete. Our grid can represent any number of frameworks. It only requires that there are established criteria, with rules that are clearly defined and the painting progresses according to these set parameters. The grid here is simply a way of imagining the set of established, predictable parameters to work within.

For example, Deleuze explains that Mondrian's painting process can be understood as having operated according to a formal system of logic. His work, which involved reducing the visual perception into simplified arrangements of line, colour and basic shape, can be understood as a code. It proceeded by interpreting reality according to an invented, abstract

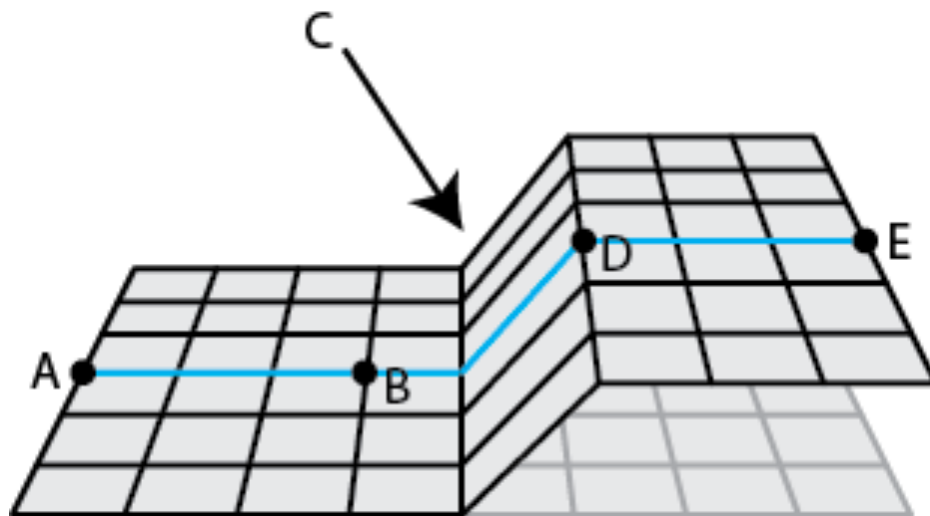
system, translating experience according to this set of rules. In this practice, the diagrammatic function has been replaced with pure code (Deleuze 84). In this way, we can understand the system to be stable (hence, grid-like). Its results are predictable—given the information that would lead to the production of its results.

Whether our grid (figure 8) is representing figuration, abstraction, abstract expressionism or any other system, Deleuze states that this type of progression is cliché³. What all of these methods have in common is systematization; a pre-established framework in which the art unfolds as an operation rather than through an active engagement. When a set of rules are pre-established and the painting process is a mere running of the logic involved, there is no possibility for anything new to emerge. He explains that abstraction leads to the same trap of cliché as figuration, because it proceeds according to a codifying of the reality and in doing so leaps over the messiness of chaos. (84) Abstract expressionism does the opposite: “Here it is no longer an inner vision that gives us the infinite, but a manual power that is spread out ‘all over,’ from one edge of the painting to the other.” (Deleuze 86) Abstract expressionism is an embracing the catastrophe and doing away with any attempt to connect with the reality of experience (85). It is all catastrophe and doesn’t connect with anything outside of the action; there is no symbolic or representative connection for a meaning to form around.

³ Deleuze’s use of the cliché implies a value judgement. His argument however is not against logic in art, but rather against that a system that uses logic exclusively, without accessing the analogical as well. Such art is imbalanced and lacks the important quality that the other faculty contributes. Without the inclusion of the imaginative—or sensation—there can only be a caged expression; a running over the same old ground. Logic itself is certainly valuable, but as an assemblage that uses logic and creativity together, in the moment. A becoming together.

For all of these modes of expression (figuration, abstraction, abstract-expressionism), the resultant images are pre-coded and already existent within the system. They are operations for which we know the results in advance. Deleuze says that when the artist approaches the blank canvas, it is not empty but full; that there are an infinite number of pre-existing cliché images already there, and her job is to empty it out, to “clean it.” (71)

In this way, figuration is an obvious potential cliché for Deleuze, where the artist merely follows either the photograph or the live model, mimicking the outlines and recording the play of light as though the artist is an instrument of optical translation. Like a machine, the artist draws parallels between subject and correspondent work. At best, it is a stylization. The outcome is already in the system, simply a movement of its likeness onto another medium. Yet Bacon was able to overcome the cliché in a way that no one else was; to wrench the process out of such prescribed outcomes, and to shift to a new system of logic, meaning and understanding. As we know, Deleuze called this the catastrophe (C), which allowed this shift within the process of figuration to occur:



In Figure 9, we see that Bacon began a painting along A-B, in a typical representational framework that appeared to be resolving itself according to the logical environment that it was taking place within. From A-B it seemed as though the process would resolve itself on its original plane, but, at point C, a catastrophe was introduced. Here an illogical intervention occurred (a splattering of paint, for instance, thrown violently onto the figure's face), which knocked the work out of its established order, along a different trajectory and onto a new plane.

At point D, the image-diagram was thrown off balance, as Deleuze stated, and needed to right itself. It needed to be returned to a state of equilibrium again; to a resolution. But what was the logic with which it would right itself? What were the available parameters along which to find such a balance? Deleuze described this as the logic of sensation, but can we rightly consider this a logic in the same way as the other ones? The new logic doesn't have the same certainty and stability as the other ones. The artist can no longer appeal to the photograph for support, to find an objective framework against which to operate. There can be no return to the plane of A-B for Bacon, because this would mean merely undoing the catastrophe. Yet there has to be something that the artist is working towards; some sort of ideal that he could stabilize the image against, and in relationship to.

In this way, the logic of sensation is quite different from the other logics that we have been speaking about. In photographic realism, for instance, there was a clear set of parameters that need to be addressed. Similarly, in an abstract system (like that of Mondrian) there were fixed codes which were adhered to in order to proceed logically. In Bacon's bringing together of

pictorial and catastrophic elements however, the ideal (or goal) was not prescribed in the process that led up to this point. Something has ruptured the logic, and requires a new one to spontaneously emerge. Bacon's logic then, is a logic of unknown rules, ideals and parameters.

If we want to describe the plane of D-E as a logic, then we must realize that it is a logic where the rules are discovered rather than brought in by memory. They do not necessarily follow along from systems that were previously learned. In this new environment—the plane of D-E—it is the imagination that has to fill in the gaps. The painting begins to operate like a Rorschach blot, eliciting an interpretation from the analysand, which may or may not be expected. It pulls a meaning out of the artist—from areas of perception or sensation that are not immediately known or under control. It is as though something has come from outside—a stroke of inspiration—or should we say hallucination? The ideal is not an existing image, but a virtual one.

This operation, of calling forth unspoken levels of sensation from the felt reality rather than from the discursive thought processes of the controlling ego, involves a trust. A trust that there are deeper layers of experience that may not be able to be spoken, but which can be found through the material interaction between imagination and paint.

I'm also trying to say that they come over inevitably - they come over without the brain interfering with the inevitability of an image. It seems to come straight out of what we choose to call the unconscious with the foam of the unconscious locked around it - which is its freshness. (Bacon in Sylvester, 139)

Bacon is clear that the product of this operation is something beyond his ability (to control). It is a necessity for him, in order to achieve the type of image he hopes to “trap.” It is not merely a mannerism or style. In using the catastrophe, he has sensed that there was a possibility that was proximate to his reality but not quite accessible. He intuited that there was a way to shift into this other possibility.

In the following chapters, we will test the idea of what it means to “feel around” for the rules rather than to know them in the way that we usually understand logic. First, we will explore the idea of synthesis and then we will try to stabilize the practice around presence within a series of particular moments of action.

We must note that the upper plane was not actually possible to reach, was not accessible, until the catastrophe was introduced. It was not as though Bacon could have chosen to begin a painting using the logic of D-E, because that plane was only within reach once a process was begun and then shifted; once a logic was established and then broken with. Yet, once the new plane at D-E was unlocked, it became the new reality of the painting practice. The catastrophe opened up this new plane of possibility.

This diagrammatic representation of the logic of sensation explains graphically how Deleuze presents Bacon’s solution to the historical standstill between the logics of abstraction and representation that occurred in the mid 20th Century. His process incorporated rupture through the catastrophe to unlock layers that could only be accessed by breaking from the parameters of a given system; that the logical can only allow innovation through incorporating the analogical; the intuitive. This graph will allow us to investigate the practice from a few different angles.

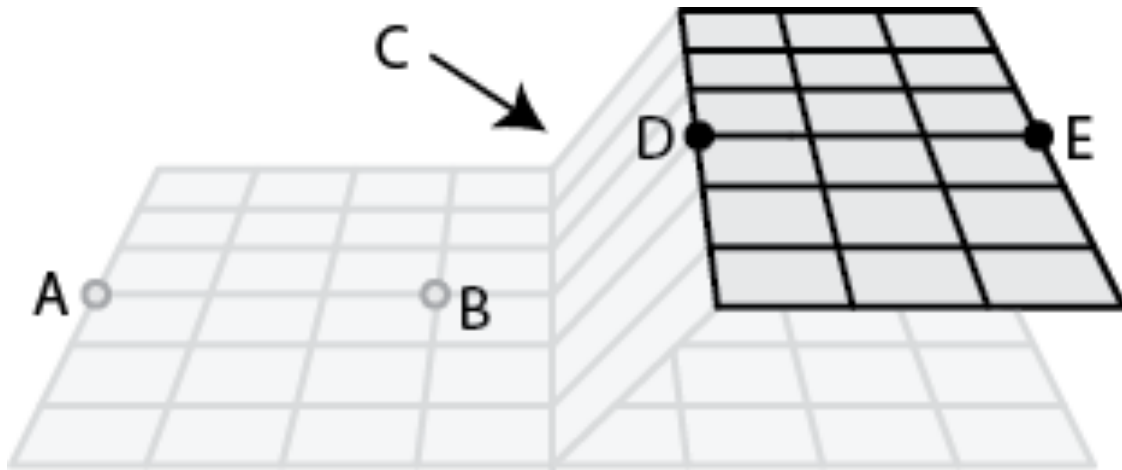


Figure 10 The Logic of Sensation

At this point, it makes sense to ask the question: if the desired result is a painting that displays the logic of the plane D-E, can A-B and C be excluded from the final work? Can one show a work that only embodies the idea of D-E? Logically, it seems that such an editing of the work at a later stage should be possible, since we have only shifted from one logic to another. Further, it is common process to “hide the scaffolding” when constructing or manufacturing. In the final version, we exclude the process work and only show the desired result; to distill the thing down to its essential idea and remove that which disagrees or distract from it.

Yet, in Bacon’s oeuvre, this is not what he does, nor does it seem to be a thing that he desired. As we will see, in order for his work (which was resolved along the logical framework plane of D-E) to make sense, it needs to include the entire set of shifting frameworks that it moved through. It must be more than what is within its final, resolving framework. It is as

though it must carry the previous frameworks along with and within it; to embody the movement between them without ever resolving into any one static environment.

We may keep in mind the question: why is the pathway important for Bacon, over the final destination?

Over the next few chapters, we will propose that *what a painting does* can only be partially understood through “logic.” There are aspects of the work that can only be traced out meaningfully along different avenues of understanding. A painting aims to communicate a reality, which must be understood as coming from a creative practice which involves the inner world of a creator. What we will explore next is how the level of sensation can describe aspects of reality that are of different types than those that are available to the discursive logics. This does not mean that what is not accessible lacks purpose or intelligent thought, but rather that these are inexpressible within the rules of discourse as text.

Whereas so far, we have described sensation as having its own logic, we will contend that this type of logic is radically different from the other ones, and that these distinct levels of understanding are not interchangeable. As we will see in the next sections, that which operates on the level of sensation and that which operates within a discursive framework cannot simply be substituted, or transposed upon one another. They are differences in kind, which can only supplement one another, adding depth yet never able to quite meet.

4. Synthesis: The Meeting of Matter and Memory, Text and Image-sensation

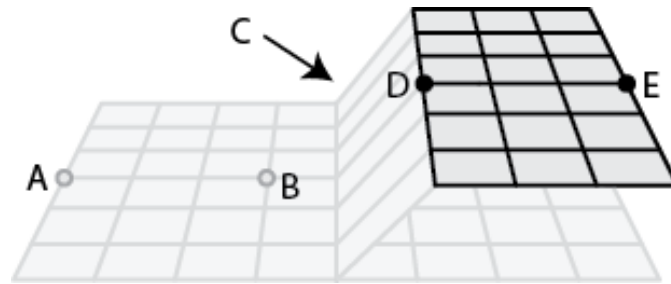


Figure 11 The Logic of Sensation

We have established that in the two “logics” used in Bacon’s practice, there were different types of relationships to the rules of the system and knowledge that had been previously learned. Within the path A-B, the rules were clearly defined and the techniques employed already established (see figure 11). These techniques had been committed to memory through past experiences with painting, drawing, etc.—and applied again in the situation at hand. In section D-E however, the rules of the practice did not come from comparing this situation to past ones, but needed to be discovered in the moment. The rules were not established through generalizations, but in the encounter of the artist’s imagination and *this* painting. It was a matter of seeing only what was possible in the here and now, and not attempting to make it conform to a pre-existing idea of the outcome. The logic of sensation could only be accessed by recognizing *the current reality as a unique and incomparable whole*.

Let us further explore this idea that the painting is attempting to describe a *reality* and that such a thing may be approached in different ways. To test this idea, we will first introduce Henri Bergson’s descriptions about the nature of experience (his metaphysics) as well as an

exploration of the ways in which memory operates in relationship with the experience of conscious awareness.

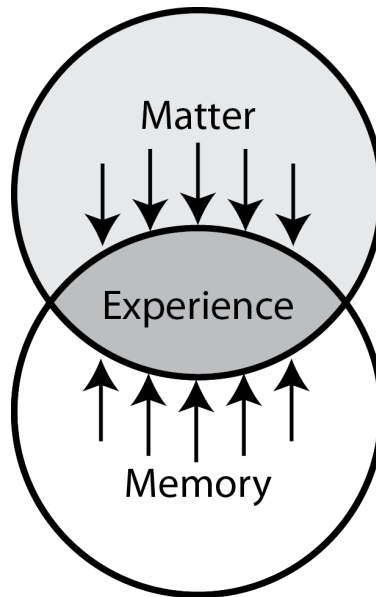


Figure 12 Matter and Memory

In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson explained that conscious experience always involves a meeting of the external world (matter) and the internal world (memory) (see figure 12). When we encounter an object, it is a perceptual encounter: we see its form, smell it, feel it. Yet, at the same time, we also bring our memory into the meeting: our past knowledge comes to meet the object. The encounter with the object involves a “pulling forward” of our ideas, concepts and previous experiences with similar things. It does so clearly and immediately. As we encounter a cat, for example, the word “cat” spontaneously comes into awareness along with our strongest impressions and memories of that type of animal. A whole body of knowledge is immediately pulled into short-term memory, in a way that can be deployed into action without hesitation. If the cat instills fear, we may jump or even run before vocalizing the thought of that action. There is an ability to act without “thinking” (if by thinking we mean the act of putting thoughts

into a stream of words). The experience of observing the cat is not a passive receiving of its likeness onto the sensory apparatuses, but rather it is an active meeting of perceptions with memories: which are oriented towards action (we note that “memory” includes not only our access to past events, but also to previously learned information, concepts and ideas).

This ability to act on a memory, without the need to stretch out the thoughts into a text, is an important function of the mind. While we need to be able to translate thoughts into texts (which are only sensible when elaborated in time), we also need to be able to act on thoughts without such an elaboration. This leads to two different models for the same thing which we call “memory.” On the one hand, a memory is always complete—operating as a whole whose meaning is sensed. At the same time, this sensed meaning is also expandable into an array of components: concepts, descriptions, comparisons, etc. The meaning of the concept and its elaboration into a string of other ideas are always present together in thought. Meanwhile, to apply the idea within a situation requires it to be used alternatively as one and then the other; it requires the ability to flip between these dual modes in order to be used practically.

In the moment, we process our experiences as both tending towards a text (ie. talking to ourselves in our heads; describing the experience with words) and tending towards an image (as a complete, felt reality that is multi-sensory and connected only by being together in the present), together. This lends memory a dualistic complexity:

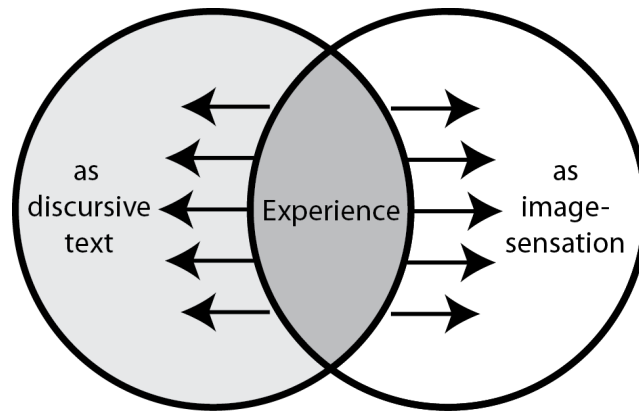


Figure 13 Discursive and Sensation Experience

Bergson tells us that what we call memory is the retention of the past into the present. In bringing the past into the present, it is necessary to bring both of these approaches to reality together. In order to bring it more fully to the present, the past must be both perceived as having the qualities of text-memory and the qualities of image-memory. Yet, we tend to confuse and conflate these two tendencies, not recognizing the complexity of the operation, because they work together so seamlessly. Bergson says that it is necessary to recognize how and why these two parts of memory work in different ways, in order to more accurately reflect what happens in our minds.

To understand how these two aspects function and interrelate, Bergson invited us to consider the example of what happens when we memorize a passage from the text of a lesson:

I study a lesson, and in order to learn it by heart I read it a first time, accentuating every line; I then repeat it a certain number of times. At each repetition there is progress; the words are more and more linked together and at last make a continuous whole. When that moment comes, it is said that I know my lesson by heart, that it is imprinted on my memory. (Bergson MM, 79)

By repeating the lines over and over again they become like a habit. It is this ability to repeat, to perform the same action again and again, that is its function. Bergson tells us that this kind of repetition is schematized as a motor diagram. It describes a movement between words, relative to one another (within the larger field of words; which is language) rather than having to do with the words in themselves. With each reading through, the form, the flow, how we move from one word to the next becomes continuous. We begin to sense each phrase coming out of the one before it, and to know the next word as it is about to come. We abstract in this way—finding what is similar among all of the instances of recitation (the passage of the words).

The words are perceived as being like a pathway through an environment that can be navigated again and again. It is the movement that is memorized; the order—as well as recognizing the spots that are entered along the way. The words have to come in the correct sequence; we could not recite the words of the poem out of order, or backwards for instance because it would not flow from our memory as easily. Of course, it is possible to pick up within the lesson (to start somewhere other than the beginning and proceed forward), but this requires a more intimate knowledge. The more repetitions that have been completed, the more easily one can move in and out of what is known while retaining awareness of its structure. Bergson tells us that the text as a motor diagram is a particular aspect of memory; one which “has all the marks of a habit (80).”

Yet, in the same act of repeating the lesson over and over again, we also experience each of the separate, successive readings that we did as different occurrences. Each time we

reviewed the text is a separate event in our own history. The circumstances change: we are at school in one reading, at home in the next; on the bus or train in another. Even the mere change of having read it through once more than the last time has an effect on the reading.

The memory of each successive reading, on the contrary, the second or the third for instance, has none of the marks of a habit. Its image was necessarily imprinted at once on the memory, since the other readings form, by their very definition, other recollections. It is like an event in my life; its essence is to bear a date, and, consequently, to be unable to occur again. All that later readings can add to it will only alter its original nature; though my effort to recall this image becomes more and more easy as I repeat it, the image, regarded in itself, was necessarily at the outset what it always will be. (Bergson MM, 80)

This second type of memory is not like a habit at all. Whereas the first type (repetition-habit) is an abstract movement that can be recreated by tracing the same steps over and over, in this second type of memory there is only the specific and non-generalizable. One reading of the text cannot be replaced with any other; for each reading is an event that has occurred. Each instance is a specific actualizing of the text within a life; which we can describe as an image.

Image memory is not an abstraction but a “whole slice” of the non-decomposable reality. It is understood without being broken down into parts or units. It is sensational: it unites the scents, sounds, feelings, perceptions and thoughts that are all together in the present. All of these sensations are not separated in the image memory, but fused together through the

specific experience where they were all bound together: the actual situation which is always in the present. They are linked by this moment, inextricably. For instance, when we remember talking to a person, it is as a whole *image* which includes their likeness, their body language and demeanor, their smell, the way we felt, the atmosphere, the music that was playing in the background, all the tangential thoughts we were having about other things. The memory may be *dim*, by which we mean it may not be an important memory and so it may not be easy to hold in awareness. But if we are able to remember it and to bring it closer to awareness—to activate it (to relive it, so to speak)—we can feel the depth of these sensations more intensely⁴. From this image-memory, it is easier to recall the sense of the whole than it is to isolate the specific details. To identify the parts is to work backwards from an already complete whole.

Every memory has these two aspects of it, which we could call the *whole as indivisible* and the *whole which is decomposable*. Memory needs to be able to work in this dual way, to experience along both tendencies together. We need to break up experiences into smaller units because we are social creatures and we have the need to communicate. Our inner experiences and observations need to be able to be identified and shared in order for us to function as collectives. Meanwhile we still are individual creatures, with the need to be able to attend to ourselves and to experience inner worlds directly and without mediation. So, conscious awareness is always having this experience of two tendencies within the one: the tendency

⁴ It is worth noting that for Bergson, a more *intense* experience is not merely a difference of degrees of the same experience but is actually a difference in kind. An emotion is called more intense, when it causes more areas of the body to be affected by the experience. Each perceived change is noticeable (which we might call an increase in intensity) because it is registering in more parts of the body: now causing the tensing of muscles, next, trembling, palpitations of the heart, tears, etc. With each increase in the number of body areas under affect, there has been a change in kind (i.e. affecting the body differently), not in degree.

toward fragmenting experience into distinct units and the tendency to also be whole. It seeks to generalize and conceptualize into parts while also working to reintegrate the fragmentary, experience directly and synthesize meaningfully.

It is not just in memory that this duality/indeterminism exists, but in all areas of our thought and experience. Bergson challenged us to consider this in several ways. What is a number? For instance, what is 100? On one hand, it is a single digit that we can hold onto within our thoughts. It is whole. It is as though the component units have been collected into one unit—and so able to be processed in mathematical equations. Yet, at the same time, we know that it is a collection of different individual smaller units that are not bound in that configuration. We know that 100 humans or sheep cannot be taken together as one individual thing, yet we also find such a grouping useful and necessary. Within our thoughts, we hold 100 as both one unit and an assemblage of many smaller (and interchangeable) units.

Next, consider space: when we look into the world, we see a lot of different objects. The world is clearly not one thing, but many. We are surrounded by a table, chairs, the walls, the pictures on the walls, the rug. Yet, we also see the scene as a field. We imagine that there is a container that we call “space;” that underneath all the things, there is an empty area which all of the things around us are occupying. Emptiness seems to be the default state; a void that is filled with the things around us. This imaginary “space” that things seem to occupy is itself one thing. It is an absolute volume with no beginning or end. Because of this, our environment is both one thing and many. It is one thing, space which is unified, and many things, differentiated. Bergson writes:

“We know two quite different realities. One is heterogeneous, the realm of sensible qualities. The other is homogenous, which is space. This, strictly conceived by human intelligence, lets us make clear distinctions, lets us count and abstract, and perhaps even speak” (Bergson, quoted in Guerlac, 64)

So, we experience space as we have this dual experience of a heterogeneity (differentiated things) and a homogeneity (one space that contains everything). Yet the grid that we perceive to be underlying the spaces around us does not exist as a part of reality itself; it is something that we project outward onto it.

For Bergson, everything in experience always has properties of being both an indivisible whole while also able to break up into smaller units which can reassemble into different wholes. This is the nature of our being. While such a duality seems to imply a paradox, he goes to lengths in his arguments to show that such a situation is the very ground of our experiences. This overlap of homogeneity and heterogeneity is the only situation where we *can* exist. Because our experience has these two tendencies, our perception of *reality* is located within, at the in-between of these “logics.” Reality, as experienced by conscious awareness, can only exist in an in-between, where these (seeming) oppositions overlap.

We will describe *reality* now as a meeting of these three ideals: where matter meets memory (actual meets virtual), and where memory is experienced as homogeneous (whole) and heterogeneous (differentiated):

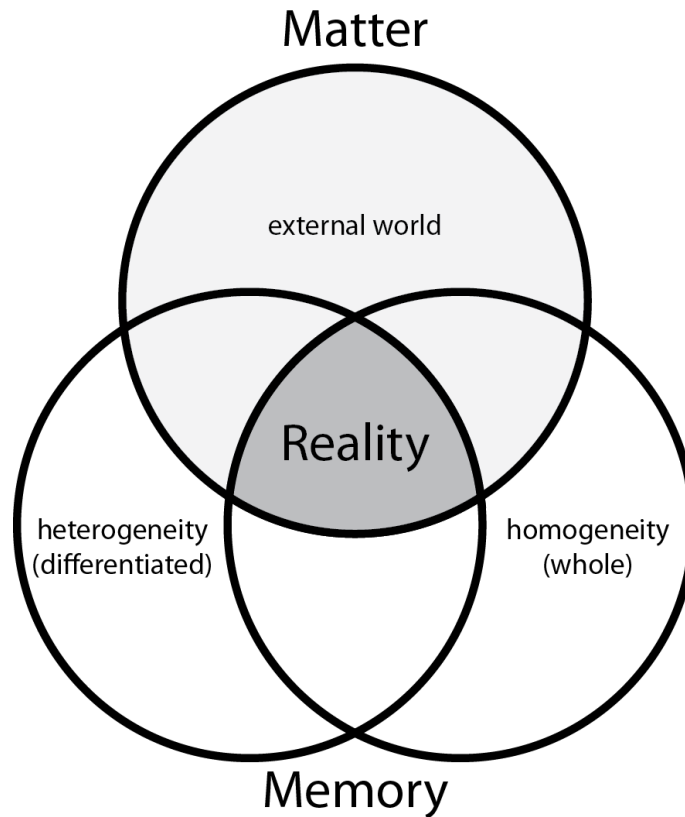


Figure 14 Reality as Overlapping Ideals

Figure 14 shows that our experience of a reality has these overlapping natures which are different but necessarily encountering one another. Internal and external are brought into one another (as the meeting of matter and memory), while it is experienced as both whole and fragmentable, together. Reality, for us as conscious, aware beings, only occurs in this overlap which, as we said, involves these three tendencies.

Everything that is outside of our reality—that is, outside of the overlap—can only be accessed as ideals: as abstractions. We can imagine a homogeneity, where everything is united into one absolute, but a whole that unifies all time, space and difference into one is outside of our ability to experience (it would be what Deleuze calls the all-at-once). We might also imagine a perfect heterogeneity, where the universe is reduced down to its absolute smallest units.

While we do succeed in dividing up experience quite far, we do not ever reach the ultimate smallest unit of the universe (quantum units?), or the smallest units of thought without paradoxical results. In practice, we only divide up experience to the degree that the division has bearing on experience⁵.

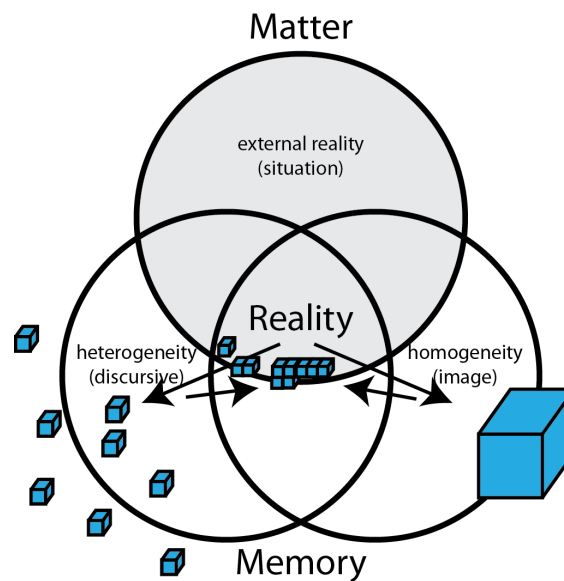


Figure 15 Synthesis

In Figure 15, we see that we have tendencies towards breaking up experience and unifying it, together. The impulse (in fragmentation) is not towards an infinite breaking up, but of a breaking up with the intention of re-integrating the pieces back into the whole. Alternatively, the tendency towards wholeness is always within a differentiated reality.

⁵ In the case of the external world, this may seem incorrect, since the external world is not an abstraction. While this is true, *our access to the external world*—that which is beyond the immediate perceptual range—is what is considered the abstraction here. For instance, I can conceive of the parts of my city that I cannot currently see via abstraction. Such abstractions have been constructed over a lifetime, and are built from collections of past memories, ideas and concepts. The external universe that we agree exists is only accessible to conscious awareness via abstraction (since such a thing is not completely perceivable).

Our movement towards wholeness (towards homogenous unity) always leads to the connection of the fragmented parts.

Our synthesis—our meaningful thought—occurs in overlapping spaces where we break up and recombine experience in new mixtures; new configurations. We generate concepts out of the pieces, which are both wholes (functioning on their own) and fragments. All of our concepts are mixtures of these (heterogeneous) parts which have been reintegrated back into new (homogenous) wholes. Intelligence proceeds through layer upon layer of reflection, analysis and synthesis. Of course, our processes of decomposing and synthesising are much more complex than the diagrams can describe. Fragmented pieces of experience are continuously compared with other fragments and then assembled into new theories, concepts, and ideas.

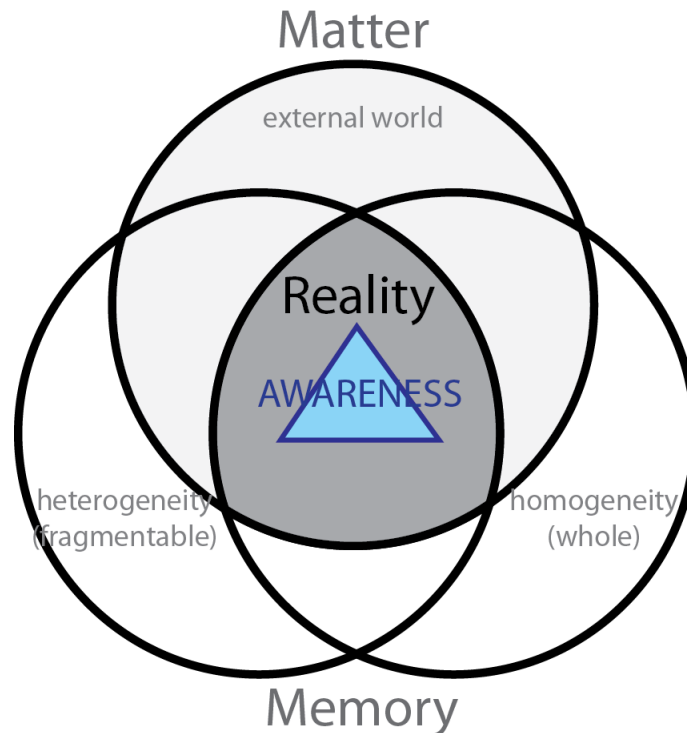


Figure 16 Awareness

It is necessary now to take awareness into account. In our experience, we do not become aware of everything that we come into contact with. There is always more than we are aware of in a reality: more information, sensation, memory than we could experience at one time, consciously. We are therefore able to move our awareness towards or away from certain aspects of the experience⁶. For instance, in one moment we may be intently aware of our physical environment, while at another we may be attending more to our memories. We may be focused on our embodied action, or we may be working on problems in our imagination. In Figure 16, we have indicated that awareness is a feature within the reality; in a region inside the whole experience and within which there is an indeterminate area that allows for movement.

⁶ But whether we are aware or not, we still experience the full reality.

Much like the transformer, the space of awareness within the overlapping ideals allows for different configurations of what is being experienced and in what way. If conscious awareness is to be understood as the self, then that self can reconfigure itself by identifying with these ideals in different mixtures.

In the next chapter, we will look more closely at the orientations that are possible for awareness to take within an experience of reality. We will examine how these orientations relate to discursive thought and image-sensation, as well as the relationship to the situation (and the coordination of inner experience towards action). All of this will enable us to apply an understanding of these aspects of experience to art-making processes.

4.1 Notes on Difference

Before moving on to the next sections of the book we would like to take notice of two important ideas about difference that are necessary for moving into the spaces we would like to go to next:

1. **Difference does not (only) mean opposition.**

For every pairing that is possible (whether it is among concepts, objects, moments) there are aspects of connection and opposition, together. The relationship between things establishes both their differences and their similarities. Cat is *not* dog, but cat is also *similar* to dog.

How things differ and how they connect are never absolutes. They are always *relative*; a function of their being put into an interaction. Whatever qualities they display in contrast and connection with the other cannot be an absolute quality of the thing in and of itself).

2. **Any *thing* can be put into a relationship with any other *thing*.**

Things being related do not have to be the same *type of thing*. Objects, ideas, moments, images can all be put into relationships with one another. “Cat” can be related to “dog”, but it can also be related to “diagram” or “math.” When the things being connected are of a different order or specialization, the types of distinctions and connections involved will be of different type (metaphorical, analogical, symbolic).

Perhaps cat is like math because they both have “digits” and are both things that are found in human environments. They are distinct because one is a living entity and the other is a conceptual tool.

To put things into relationships is to build both the intensities and distinctions together.

5. Orientations of Awareness: Discursive, Image-sensation and Action

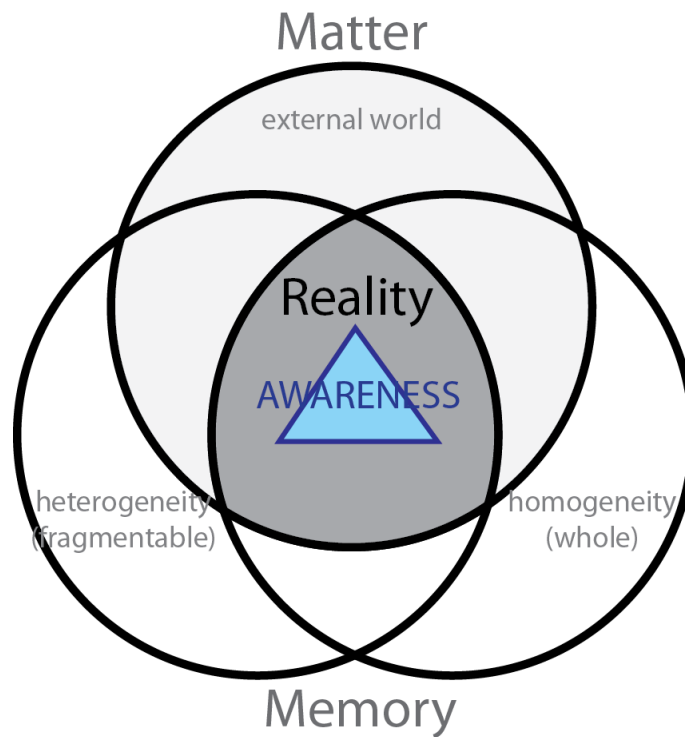


Figure 17 Awareness

By combining certain aspects of Bergson's metaphysics, we have established that (in our model) a *reality* involves the mixing together of various ideals (inner and outer world, fragmentation and wholeness) which seem to be contradictory. Though these ideals are distinct approaches to the same reality, they must *always* be combined (and experienced together). We might say that it is not possible to separate these ideals because they are merely different ways of describing the same thing; or rather different ways of orienting the self (as perception-sensation-thought-awareness) to the experience. In Figure 17 we note that reality is only experienced at the in-between, and that everything surrounding reality (the white circles) is only possible to experience *theoretically*. We also note that awareness is a smaller region within

reality. Here it is possible to shift attention, to reconfigure relationships and to fragment and connect parts of experience.

In this chapter, we will look more closely at the region of *awareness*:

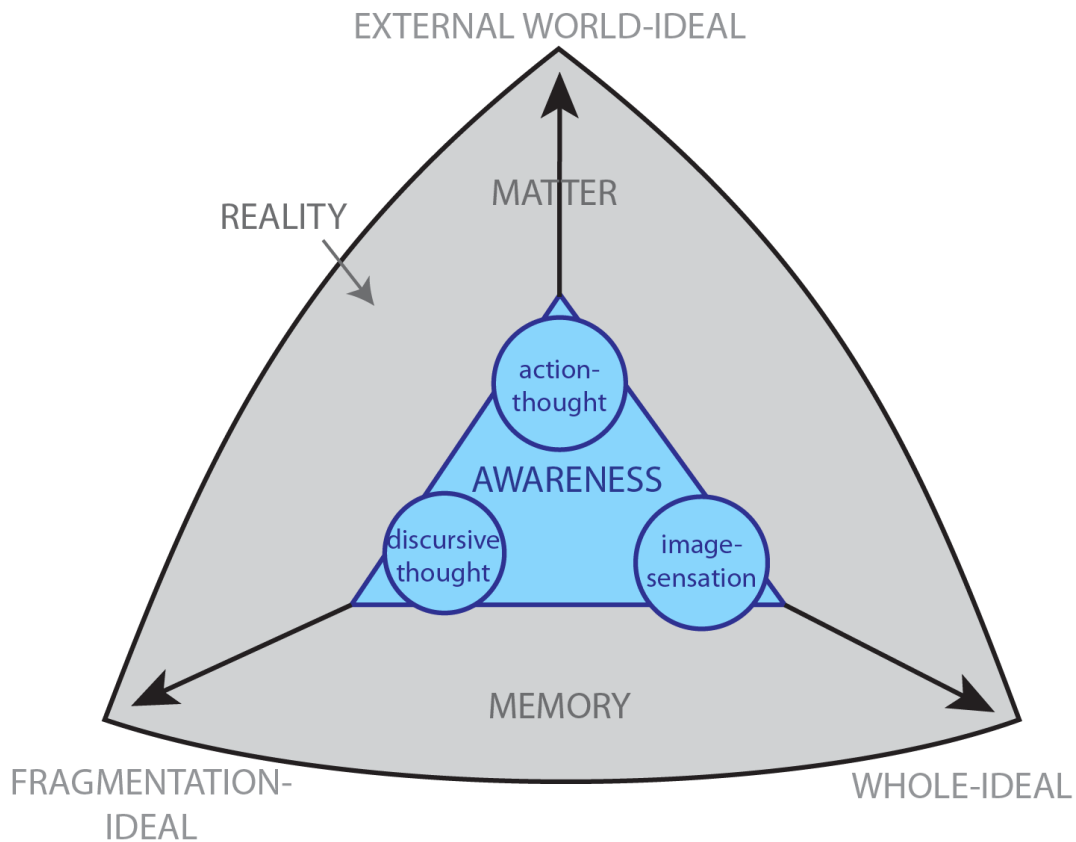


Figure 18 Orientations of Awareness

In Figure 18, we have identified three systems that are always operating within awareness which we will call its orientations. These systems are the aspects of thought which we explored through Henri Bergson in Chapter 5, and are now mapped onto the diagram as aspects of aware, conscious thought. Awareness is able to shift the focus of its attention, shown here as circles at its edge where it meets reality (which includes both the external world and

the whole of memory). These are labeled as the tendencies towards *discursive thought*, *image-sensation* and *action-thought* (which we will summarize below):

In *discursive-thought*, we create texts, narrate experience, develop theories and seek to understand relationships of parts—of differentiated objects, aspects and abstractions. Within the experience of reality, words form in the mind as the inner voice, the stream of consciousness, or the internal talking to ourselves that we do as we go along in our lives. Discursive thought is depicted in figure 18 as pointing towards the fragmentation ideal. While, as we noted earlier, discursive thought utilizes both fragmentation and synthesis together, language is the system that prioritizes the fragmentary aspects over the connective ones; it preferences difference, delimitation and definition.

For *discursive thought*, it is necessary to establish oppositions. This allows one to determine the most important aspects of experience within this system, which are: causality, order and spatial location. This means that objects (and ideas, memories, words, concepts) have to be put into oppositions with one another to determine their relative position, timeframe and properties. For example: this moment must be distinguished against other moments, events from my childhood need to be opposed to those happening in the present, cat is not dog, hard is not soft, etc. Within discourse, every unit is separated in a virtual field of space and time (which may or may not correspond to actual space and/or time).

As Bergson explained, in order to translate experience into words, it must be broken into units where internal experiences (sensations based on perceptions, moments in time, etc.) can roughly be corresponded to the words that can be used to describe them. The words are

always approximations of what they aim to represent, and so it is necessary to break up experience by subtracting from it whatever cannot be put into words. Discursive thought is not the experience itself, but a tendency within the experience (i.e. the words form *in the experience*, the words are not *the experience itself*). It is always less than experience in itself, working with abstractions, theories and generalizations.

Note that discursive thought is located *within* awareness. While words can also take form outside of direct awareness, we are locating it within because there is a difference between the types of linguistic structures that are assembled “subconsciously” (or “unconsciously”) and those “spoken” in the mind consciously. Outside of awareness, collections of words or phrases still retain ambiguity. They are unfixed in their arrangement and context, which allows them to take on different meanings when put into formations. It is in awareness that such words are arranged into specific texts and their relationship concretized. Whereas outside of awareness the words only have the potential to take form, within awareness they take on a specific arrangement that requires elaboration in time. Words have to be “spoken” in the mind to become a discursive thought. This “stream of consciousness” has properties of both a virtual and an actual text.

In *image-sensation*, we orient towards the sensory aspects of experience. This is not as a series of differentiated parts, but as a whole image. It is a fusion of the moment: the *sense of this experience*. *Image-sensation* is what we know immediately as meaningful without an explanation.

The moment is a multisensory complexity, outside of words. There are no clear borders or distinctions. Time doesn't have clear boundaries; the past moments seem to glide unendingly together, without distinction. Sounds and visual phenomena interpenetrate and seem to become an environment. Smells overlap and integrate with other layers of perception. This is experience as connected and interconnected. It binds together along all possible ways of forming connection: according to feeling, likenesses, similarity of shape or form, colour, taste, smell, as well as similarity of arrangement or function. The image-sensation prepares the experience to be integrated into the memory system along multidirectional pathways that aren't defined, but which are felt.

When awareness is oriented towards this tendency, we will experience more directly bodily sensations, emotional states, and impressions. This also allows a presence in the moment: to see clearly this experience (here and now) without expectations or theories that generate distance from the encounter (such as the dissociation or withdrawal that discursive thinking can create). Image-sensation awareness is as close as we can come to direct contact to our feelings, emotions and internal sensations. Holding the self in this way (for instance in meditation) can also lead to the sense of being meaningfully connected to the larger whole, as though there is no separation from the community, family, the universe as interconnected, etc.

Image-sensation is located within awareness, since it is activated consciously, in a real, lived situation. This is different from the image sensations of memory that are outside of awareness, such as memory that is unconscious. When image-memory is brought into this experience, to actively remember something, it feels like we are reliving it—at least to some degree—which is different from memory that we are not actively accessing. Memories that

enter into awareness, become present in a way that allows them to be much more active, and to bring them to bear directly onto the current situation.

In *action-thought*, we orient ourselves most fully to engaging with the situation, towards the external as embodied thought. Here we don't "think", we simply act.

We use *action-thought* in activities that require the highly trained use of the body. These are activities where action has been trained through repetition, including things such as dance, playing musical instruments, playing sports and flying a fighter-jet. In these activities, attention has to be primarily located in the body-situation, where the meeting of the external and the action that is being mediated must be executed with full attention.

We enter into action-thought when we are confronted with an emergency. For instance, while driving a car at night, if suddenly there is a deer in the path, we enter into a focused action-thought form of awareness. Without "thinking," we will have slammed on the brakes, turned the wheel to avoid the collision and then recovered control over the car as it begins to fish-tail. There was no "thought" involved, only a direct overtaking of the active self; without taking time to hesitate or reflect, but only to do what is possible in the situation.

Action-thought can also be brought into awareness through the manipulation, or playful interaction, with materiality. Rather than being a productive activity (with a specific goal or outcome in mind), when *playing*, the outer experience is permitted to guide the inner. For example: when building structures out of sand or with blocks that emerge from the activity rather than an intentional structure; rubbing fingers on a textured surface; or mixing different

substances together intuitively. Action thought is oriented towards the meeting of the external, and involves focusing the body toward the meeting with that external.

Action-thought is located within awareness, because it can only include the parts of the external world that are available to our perceptions. We are only aware of what we come into contact with and which we are able to engage with through the use of our body. The external parts of the world which do not have a bearing on our potential action do not enter awareness (for instance, we are usually not aware of whatever is going on next door, across town or in another country⁷).

What we are *unaware of* in the active environment also includes the parts of reality that have been filtered out by our perceptual apparatus because they have been interpreted as being irrelevant or invalid. This could include information or detail such as textures we may not notice at all (like the stippling on the ceiling). It is here, available to us, and we could sense it if we choose to, but it has been interpreted by awareness as irrelevant information unless otherwise brought to our attention.

Of course, while we are able to focus attention into these orientations, there are no clear distinctions or borders between them. In fact, they are not really different experiences at

⁷ The parts of the external world that are outside awareness function for us very much like unconscious memory. There is the potential for it to become aware, but certain steps must be achieved in order for that to happen. In order to access these things (places, objects, people) a repositioning of awareness is required. This means moving the body through space and time; actually going to spaces that are not here and now. Some places may be inaccessible without more complex interactions; they may be locked or restricted by conditions that must be met. These conditions could be social (access is only given to persons in a particular employment or social role) or physical (you would need a specific tool or vehicle to get to this place).

all, but more like different ways of *holding onto* our thought. Remember that what we are talking about here is what is happening in awareness. These three orientations are always active in this awareness, but we are able to make some of them more aware and to push others to the fringe of awareness, where we are barely aware of them (or able to actively suppress them as though we are not aware of them). While we can focus attention in this way, holding onto one aspect over the others for a period of time, each of these inclinations are needed in different mixtures and at different times, in order for us to be able to function in the world.

While we are identifying these three aspects of awareness as distinct and having unique attributes, we also understand that they are always operating as both distinct and connected, together. They are always both one thing (awareness) and more than one thing (orientation).

Clearly in our social world, there are elaborate rules for when certain ways of holding the self are acceptable or normal, and when it is inappropriate or unusual to orient oneself in the wrong way. For instance, it could be considered inappropriate to become oriented toward image-sensation, focusing most strongly on internal sensations, becoming absorbed in memory or being deeply emotional during a business meeting. Yet under appropriate circumstances, these sensations may be exactly what is needed or desired.

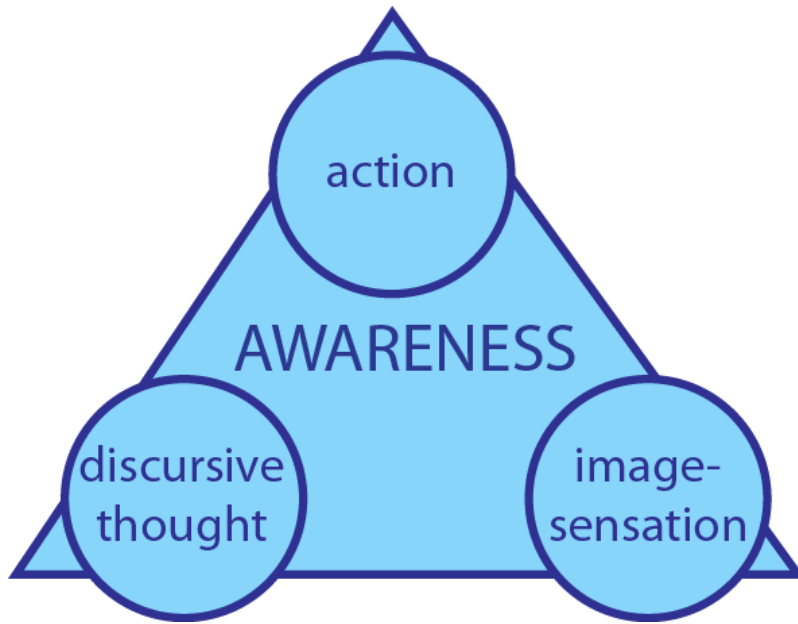


Figure 19 Orientations

We proposed earlier that a work of art cannot be understood through its logic alone, and that we must also take into account other aspects of its being if the goal is to understand it more fully. Using this model, we will now reflect on how certain art practices may be understood as leaning towards certain of these aspects of thought awareness as we have identified them so far.

Of course, in art practices there is always a negotiation of these tendencies. The process must include all three of the orientations converging together in order to yield a work of art. Yet, we also know that within different practices, the artists will value or prioritize particular aspects of their work over others. It is useful to consider how these different ways of leaning into experience can change how an artwork is developed if the artist is intending to make one aspect of experience more formally present in the work.

In Chapter 3, we had described Deleuze's examples of three paths that were available to artists working in the early to mid 20th Century. Deleuze had proposed that there was an impossible situation where any system that operated according to logic alone was doomed to fall into cliché; into repetition of information that was already given rather than the generation of new, original and authentic creations. In this section, we will explore the four examples that Deleuze used to illustrate his argument, and propose to understand each of these positions, through our model, as highlighting a different aspect of the orientations available in awareness.

Abstraction: Mondrian

The first path for Deleuze was that of abstraction, exemplified by Mondrian. Mondrian's process was described as being exceptionally logical—a codification of the visual reference which the process was putting into paint. This logical process was a highly discursive orientation. It operated according to a set of rules and operations that could be translated into text (the rules can be put into words). His practice limited the *action-thought* that was involved, by minimizing chance and maximizing control via the theory or logic. As Deleuze says:

Abstraction would be one of these paths, but it is a path that reduces the abyss or chaos (as well as the manual) to a minimum: it offers us an asceticism, a spiritual salvation. Through an intense spiritual effort, it raises itself above the figurative givens, but it also turns chaos into a simple stream we must cross in

order to discover the abstract and signifying Forms. Mondrian's square leaves the figurative (landscape) and leaps over chaos. (84)

For Deleuze, Mondrian's system reduced the chaos or catastrophe that is involved in opening up to the situational—the engagement with the canvas is through the code, through the system of operation that has to be able to be expressed discursively:

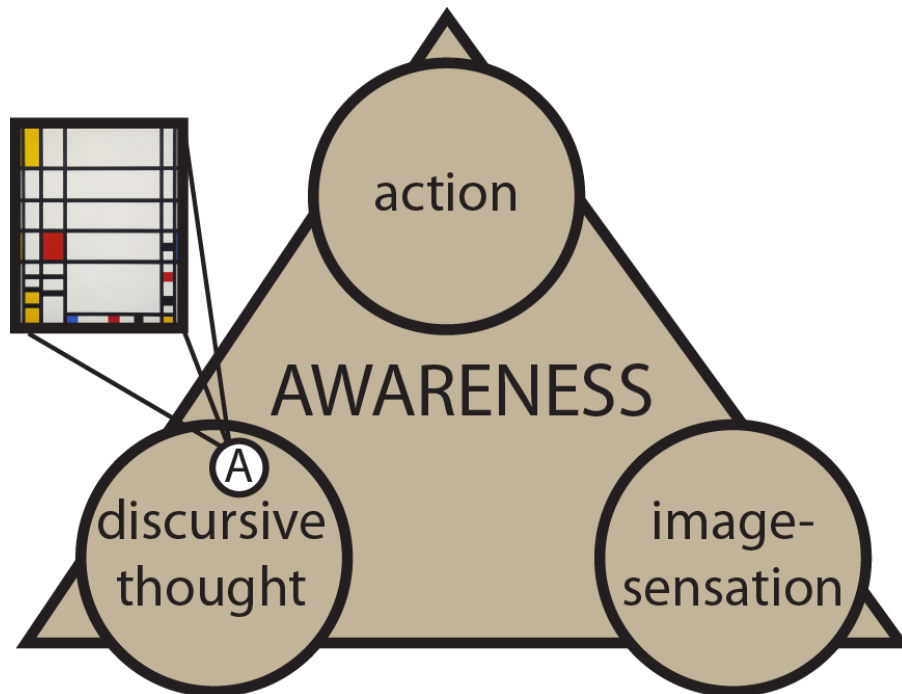


Figure 20 Mondrian's Practice/Discursive

In Figure 20, Mondrian's practice is located as being oriented towards the discursive. This does not mean that image-sensation and action-situation were not also affecting the process; what it means is that the artist was highlighting the discursive aspects of the work—which were the aspects of experience being leaned into most strongly during its making.

Mondrian proceeded according to his own coded operations, translating the visual experience into an arrangement of lines and coloured squares. Here, we imagine that the openness to the situation is minimized and that the process is a controlled activity that proceeds according to a plan. In this operation, the artist was not actively responding to what was happening on the canvas; to an emergent image or pattern, but instead subordinating what happened on the canvas to the plan. Each decision that was made was done to bring the painting closer to the intended outcome; to the idea that preceded the image. As Deleuze pointed out this was “pure code” where chaos has been “reduced to a minimum”.

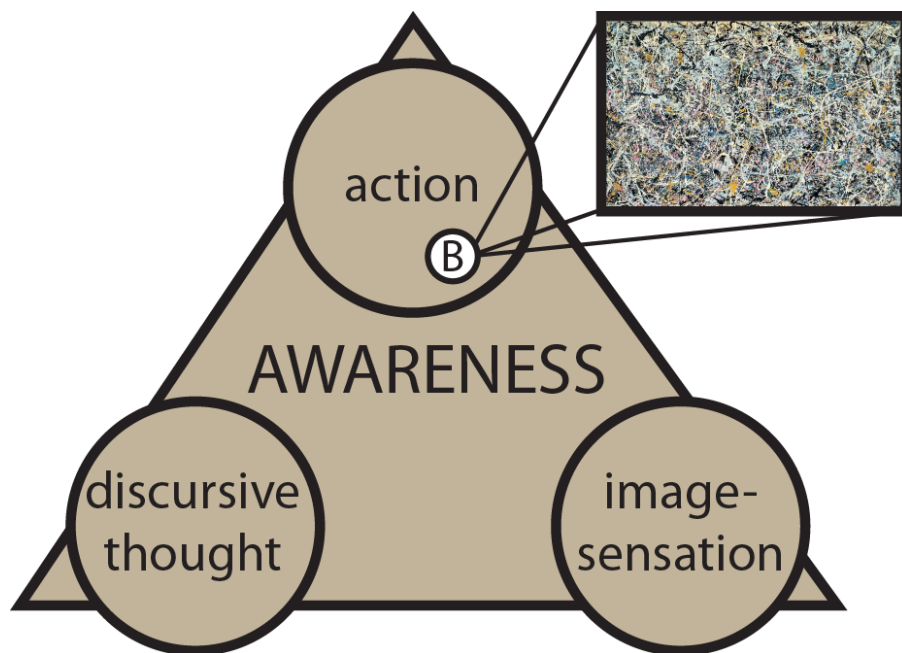


Figure 21 Pollock's Practice/Action

In Figure 21, we have the case of Abstract Expressionism as exemplified by Pollock's action paintings. In Pollock's practice, the activity became located in the situation (B), as an encounter between the body and the surface. Control was (mostly) limited, so that chance was

brought in at every move. The surface developed as a reaction to the emergent situation. It was “pure” action thought.

Image-sensation was minimized. We understand that Pollock was not looking for images or impressions to represent, but was aiming to focus on the situation without any indexical or sensational reference being brought in. Presumably, if Pollock began to see a panda within the splatters, or a face beginning to emerge from the chaos, he would have suppressed it—eliminated it. We can also safely assume that he would not want the viewer to make such connections. The painting was meant to stay (in terms of its interpretation or what it is meant to elicit in the viewer) on the level of the “haptic.”

It may be argued that for Pollock, there was also a discursive aspect to the work. Certainly, Greenberg’s analysis of the practice brought in an important discursive understanding of it (where the process of action-painting is presented as being within a logical system). Clearly the codified understanding of balance, rhythm, colour choices have a basis in the discursive—though they are subordinated to the trained movement—to being a reaction to the situation in the moment. Yet, while these discursive aspects were important in the discourse of the work as it circulated in the art institutions (and the world), we can still locate the overall practice as highlighting the action-thought that was involved in it.

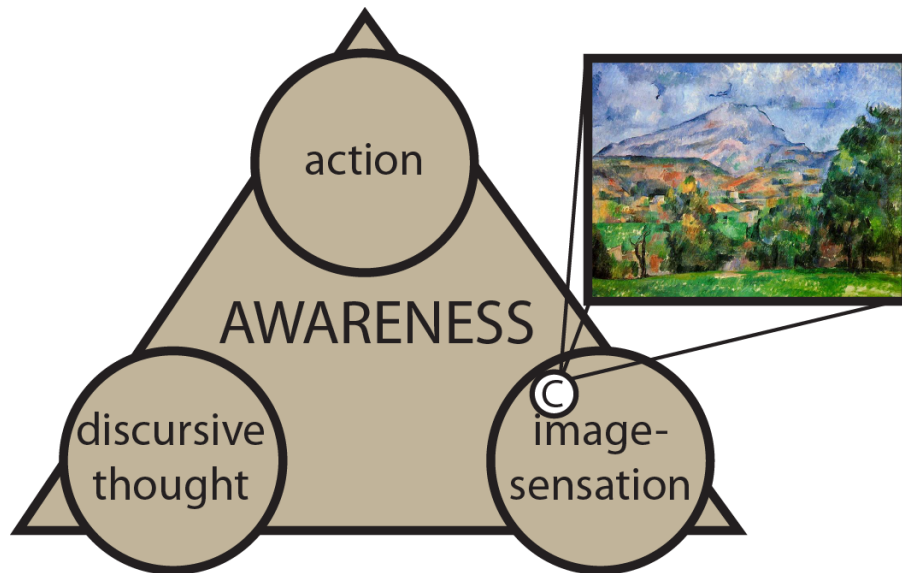


Figure 22 Cezanne's Practice/Sensation

This leads us to the third orientation (C) of image-sensation. Since Bacon used the *Logic of Sensation*, we might think that he would be the example of image-sensation, but this is not quite the case. We will look at Bacon's way next, but first consider Cezanne as a prime example of sensation being highlighted (by Deleuze). Perhaps other examples of (C) could also include Munch's *The Scream* or some of Van Gogh's more psychologically charged images. Certainly, Deleuze saw Cezanne's work as carrying a great deal of sensation.

Cezanne's work, which includes pictorial representation as well as expressive qualities brings together aspects of inner and outer experiences that create opportunity for the imagination to bring in memory—in a way that is not quite possible in abstraction and abstract expressionism. The inconsistencies in pictorial representation bring in irregularities or breaks in the subject matter. This allows the viewer to project their own experience or memory into the space, and to have more of a feeling with the image than a cerebral experience. This is similar to impressionism, though impressionism sought to capture time in static moments (to freeze the passage of sensation, rather than to imply a flow of sensation).

Certainly, this was also going on in Bacon's practice, where his paintings were able to access such levels of sensation. Yet for Bacon, the element of change was more pronounced, and had to be unfolded in its own peculiar way for the sensation to appear.

Consider how Bacon's practice proceeded, remembering the sequence of events that would lead him to access his (higher) levels of image-sensation (from chapter 3):

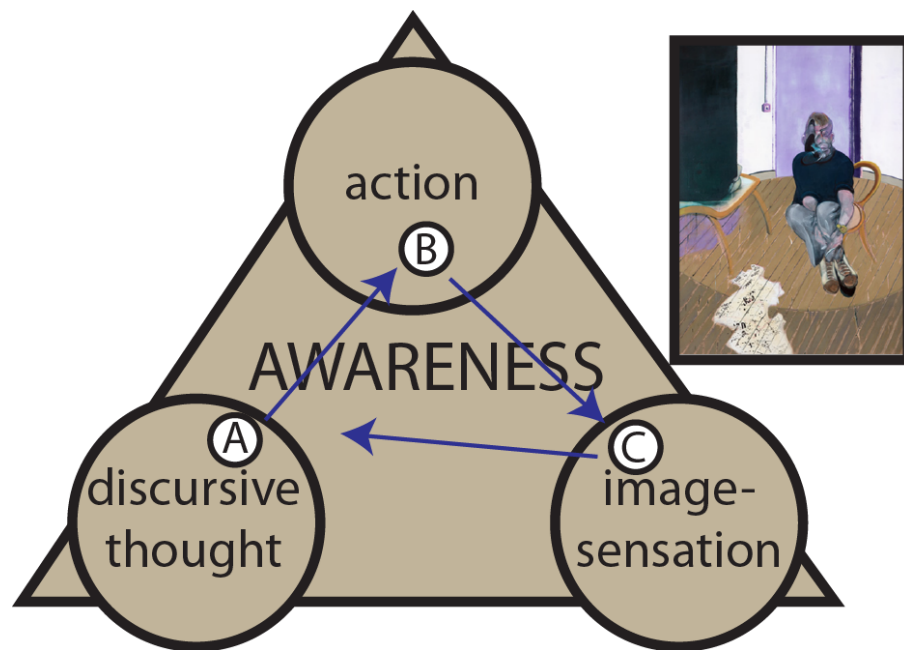


Figure 23 Bacon's Practice/Movement

In Figure 23, we have transposed Bacon's progression onto this new diagram. We remember that Bacon began with a photographic-based realism, proceeding as though the process would resolve itself within that logic (A). At point (B), Bacon stopped painting according to the rules, and instead reacted to it bodily—letting the situation dictate the way forward (i.e. he grabbed a handful of paint off his pallet and threw it into middle of the face, causing a splatter of colour to explode into the features). This “catastrophe” was a complete action-situation orientation. It minimized the internal/virtual world (memory), instead orienting to this canvas—this present moment. At point (C) the image began to evoke other memories, to utilize

pathways and connections that were not implied by the original photograph or by the catastrophe-act itself. It opened the painting up to suggestion—to make unexpected connection. This enabled sensation to come into play for both for the artist—who began to care for the sensation-suggestions and to make them appear more deliberate—and for the viewer, who will experience their own sensation memories, which may or may not be the same as the artist's.

To reach the image-sensation, there had to be a process which proceeded “logically” then encountered a “catastrophe” which opened up another way of seeing that we call “sensation”. The steps involved indicate a movement; one which utilized image-sensation, but not exclusively.

And, in my case, I feel that anything I've ever liked at all has been the result of an accident on which I have been able to work. Because it has given me a disorientated vision of a fact I was attempting to trap. And I could then begin to elaborate, and try and make something out of a thing which was non-illustrational. (Bacon in Sylvester, 60)

Importantly, we see that Bacon is not an artist of image-sensation on its own. To capture the sensation, there had to be a movement between different modes of approaching the experience. One did not merely access the sensation, but had to “trap it” or to have these things come over, as he says, “with the foam of the unconscious locked around it.” We could imagine that Bacon had to sneak up on the aspects of the real that he wanted to show; like a

hunter lying in wait until the attack becomes possible within the changing situation of the meadow.

Earlier, we asked: why was it important for Bacon to keep the progression of shifting logics visible within the final product? Why did his process necessarily display for us a series of situations rather than focusing on the final one that it resolved into? Now we may understand that it is because what is being shown is not to be understood as a text (a story or statement)—but as an attempt to capture the complexity of experience.

Experience includes duration, which is felt in one's awareness as change, transition and affect. For Bacon, the painting had to occur in time (as a series of moments, not merely one moment) and it has to implicate that lived time in a pictorial form (by capturing the sense of movement, transformation, distortion). If what one wants is to communicate "real experiences," then it is not possible to hold such a thing within a static slice of time and space. What Bacon shows is that the painting has to be more than what can be held in a single logic, because it has had to have elapsed in time, or more accurately, within a sense of a lived duration. Moving through such a duration, one is always oscillating among all of these three orientations of attention. This is a necessary part of any painting practice, though it is often de-emphasised in the discourse that surrounds the artwork. There has to be some degree of balance among these aspects of making the work, because it involves more than one process to complete. For instance, the medium of paint cannot be absolutely controlled because it is inefficient, messy and prone to accidents.

Since all three of these orientations are important aspects of our experience, we begin to see that, although it is possible to hold onto one or more orientation to the (near) exclusion

of the others, it may not be desirable. While holding the artwork tightly in a discursive orientation may lend the work the authority (associated with reasoning and logic), there is a cost to suppressing the other aspects of the real experience. Bacon's process lays bare the complexity involved in experience that is available to the artist, and displays it in an exaggerated way. Through his example, we can see that there is necessarily *a movement* that is inherent in reality, and that cannot be captured (or communicated) without an appeal to the image-sensation side of our awareness.

Much like the Transformer, which showed that different ideals can be made sensible within a single object, Bacon's paintings here show us that a painting must likewise be understood as not merely a single experience, but as a duration—a series of distinct moments which are flowing together into one larger experience. Bacon reveals the change that is necessarily embodied within painting. It is not merely a series of thoughts that are all parallel and logical, but a multi-sensory experience which makes a multiplicity of different sensations, thoughts and ideas come together. The result is something which is both strange and sensible: strange because we cannot exactly identify it, and sensible because it feels like the kinds of things we feel. There is a feeling that what is being shown is somehow akin to our everyday experience of the strangeness and complicated nature of being. It shows that what seems to be discontinuous according to "logic" is resolvable in experience.

6. Barriers to Thinking Through Image-Sensation

With Bacon's example, we can see the need to take *duration* into account when analysing a work of art through the orientations of awareness. The *idea or logic* that underlies the work can never have taken place in a single moment, but is something that must have changed and adapted over time. Analysing an artwork can only provide us with impressions of the way attention may have been held over a series of moments. This is akin to taking a sample (or even an average) as though it represented the whole sequence. It does not account for the switching between processes that would naturally have occurred.

Painting takes time and is rarely done in one sitting. An artist will have many encounters with the work; many sessions where it is paused and later revisited. Each time the artist picks up the brush again it is within a different reality than before; a different day, a different mood, etc. It is always a slightly different way that the inner and outer worlds meet. This produces a multiplicity of experiences that need to be made sensible within one pictorial space. The artist has to resolve the many interactions they have had with the work into something that implies a cohesion.

It becomes like a puzzle, where the incongruous elements (that arise from the evolving relationship of artist and the pictorial situation) must be integrated back into the overall organization of the picture. This happens in every painting practice, to a lesser or greater degree, though it is not always evident in a finished piece; especially if there has been an effort made to suppress such a multiplicity. It is difficult to logically explain a complex interaction such as this under any simple model.

Additionally, the ideas that are underpinning the work may be altered by whatever is happening in an artist's life, away from the canvas. How attention was held in the time between each painting session, for instance, remains outside of the scope of our attempts at diagramming. This may seem irrelevant to understanding the art, unless we consider that what happens in the intervals between sessions may have significant bearing on *the meaning* of the results. For instance, if an artist was midway through a painting, and visited a museum on their off-day, they may have seen a technique that they want to try; or encountered a painting that shows a solution to a similar problem they are having in their work. When returning to the studio, there are now additional conceptual tools: access to new memories that could be applied directly. These new memories must be understood to have altered the situation, since the artist has gained access to tools and techniques which they did not have in the previous sessions. Similarly, we can imagine that changes in the artist's emotional or psychological state could have dramatic effects on how the artist interacts with the canvas (hence changing its meaning).

Including duration in analysis makes any concise description of a process exceedingly difficult, but it does yield the potential for more understanding. There is always trade-off between how easy it is to communicate a meaning and how accurately it describes a reality.

With this being the case, we may wonder if Deleuze's representation of the practices of Mondrian, Pollock and Cezanne are at odds with his larger goals of opening up new pathways and complicating meaning along multiple lines. To have utilized the artists' works through somewhat simplistic representations (as though they each had a singular purpose and didn't change their directions over time) is curious. Perhaps Deleuze's stance in this regard was a

reaction against Greenbergian-style interpretations which dominated the scene of the time.

Under such interpretations as these, an artist's work was clearly reduced down to the essential aspects that could circulate discursively (as tools in the exchange of power and wealth).

Greenberg famously celebrated Pollock's shift from the vertical plane of the easel to the horizontal of the floor. He praised the all-over flatness of the pictures and appreciated the translation of the artist's action into a purely optical arrangement. Yet, his writing aimed to situate the work within a specific narrative, as the culmination of the goals of Modernism. Modernism had been leading up to this point as a continual progression towards medium specificity, purifying each field through specialization and suppressing whatever was not considered to be within its domain.

For Greenberg, the art was fully symbolic of its intended meaning: the part of it which is interchangeable with its discourse. It is not the action which is being celebrated in Pollock, but the *idea* underlying the use of the action. Under this model, the genius of the work was in the concept that led to the image, which was interchangeable with the image. What might have been important for the artist, himself (what he may have needed to express) was left out of the equation, as irrelevant or meaningless information.

The suggestion is that Deleuze was reacting to the discourse around the work of Pollock and Mondrian as much as he was taking the work on its own terms. Yet, paintings are not interchangeable units that can be reduced to one level of meaning—even if the artists may have come to understand them that way. Their practices were both adapting to and being changed by the historical situation that surrounded the art (the hyper-commodification of the artworld that occurred in the mid-20th Century and the nationalist politics of the cold war era).

Deleuze attempted to *rescue sensation* from being lost in such an amplification of discourse because it was under threat of being excluded. For Deleuze (and Guattari), knowledge, as an evolving field, needs analogical reasoning and the ability to move in and out of semiotic chains (disciplines; closed fields of meaning) that sensation can give access to. In order for new ideas and concepts to evolve, there has to be movement between systems of meaning that are usually kept closed from one another, “between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles” (Deleuze and Guattari 7). There are barriers to considering such movements as being reasoned and rational. Part of the purpose of *The Logic of Sensation* was to show how the use of sensation operated as “more than logic” and had purpose and value within a reasoned practice.

We need to question whether Deleuze’s attempts to elevate sensation with Bacon are liberating, or whether they serve to bring sensation under the control of the discursive intellect. This type of criticism has been leveled against Deleuze in the past (i.e. Irigaray, Jardine, Haraway), where he is understood to take what he wants from the marginal position while leaving the marginalized behind; as when “becoming woman” elevates certain aspects of womanhood, but still reinforces the power gap between genders (i.e. it is always *a man* who “becomes woman” and who gains the benefits from such a blending) (Stark, 29). In the case of *The Logic of Sensation*, we may ask if calling *sensation* a “logic” becomes merely another way to contain and control something that exists outside of the realm of such control? Is he freeing sensation or subordinating it?

We will explore this question by examining the relationship between discourse and sensation, and the social attitudes which colour our relationships to both. In this chapter, we

shift the direction of the discussion in a slightly different direction; considering the much broader implications and reasons behind the biases against image-sensation. To do this we will explore the *social status* that is involved in the discourse-sensation relationship.

STATUS

In *Impro; Improvisation and the Theatre*, Keith Johnstone introduced the concept of *status* as a way to understand how social relationships are arranged as power exchanges. For Johnstone, the term *status* is slightly different than how we may use it in other contexts. Here status is something one *does* rather than something that one has; it is always a performative stance that one has within an interaction or relationship. “Status seems to me to be a useful term, providing the difference between the status you are and the status you play is understood.” (36)

A person can play high status or low status regardless of his or her actual role in society. A king may play low-status by deferring authority to his servant, for instance, by letting himself be bossed around and following his orders. Playing with status can be quite comedic, such as when there is a sudden drop in status or a reversal. Johnstone proposed that how one performs their status in general can have a large role in whether we understand something as funny or tragic. If something bad happens to someone who plays high status (a strict teacher falling down) it may make us laugh, while the same thing happening to someone who has low status (a helpless old lady) could make us sad, upset or feel pity or annoyance with them.

Once you understand that every sound and posture implies a status, then you perceive the world quite differently, and the change is probably permanent. In my view, really accomplished actors, directors, and playwrights are people with an intuitive understanding of the status transactions that govern human relationships. This ability to perceive the underlying motives of casual behavior can also be taught. (Johnstone, 72)

Johnstone showed that there are many socially coded behaviors that are involved in how we interpret such performances of status. For instance, how one occupies space denotes how they view themselves. To spread out into maximum space indicates a high-status posture (eg. arm across multiple chairs, standing tall), while low-status postures involves making oneself as small as possible (crossing limbs, crouching down). How we speak can denote status (is it tentative or authoritative?), as does decisiveness (high) vs indecisiveness (low). In interpersonal interactions and conversations, status is often displayed when we indicate that we have more or less than others. What that specific thing that we have more of *is*, depends on what is being highlighted as desirable in the exchange. In one situation, it could be wealth that is considered valuable, while in others it may be knowledge, power, intelligence, or happiness, etc. Having more of whatever is valued always increases the status of the person in question while decreasing that of the others.

Johnstone explained that, while those who prefer to play low-status predictably come across as low-status individuals, those who habitually play high-status do not come across as having high-status. They come across instead as low-status because they do not give or share

their status with others in their group (which is itself a low-status position: i.e. selfish). Imagine an overly strict teacher who, despite acting very high-status, no one likes or respects. For Johnstone, to gain *actual status* requires the finesse of being able to shift how one plays their status: sometimes lowering it and sometimes raising it. A status expert adjusts depending on the situation—in order to maintain a balance (between goodwill and control). This strategic lowering and raising of status allows a status expert to exert influence on others while ensuring that each person feel respected and valued.

Discursive-thought and Image-sensation

How does the way that we hold our awareness fit into such a social status exchange? While we usually consider thought to be something private and outside of the social realm, it is not as removed as one might think. Thought is always happening to a person when they are in a real space and time. It is always embodied, and so is evidenced in the way that their body is positioned, oriented and moved. From one's posture to how the eyes are directed, there are subtle cues that indicate not only that one is thinking, but also the type of thinking one may be doing. When one scratches the head, or scrunches up their face in response to someone else's idea, these have definite, coded meanings. There are social cues that indicate if someone is paying attention, listening to others as they speak. How we hold our thought within awareness is not only a personal matter but always has performative aspects as well.

How we perform thought is very similar to how we perform status. Certain postures can imply higher standing within the group because it can display a higher intellectual standing. Non-verbal cues indicate an understanding of what is being said (nodding the head, making eye

contact, holding the body at attention, etc.). Such cues can also give status: giving signs that we are listening to someone and understanding or admiring their statements. Meanwhile, appearing to do these things may or may not be the same as *actually* listening, understanding or admiring. If the situation is one where intelligence is highly valued (such as the classroom), then there are always interplays of status that establish the balance of power among the group. For instance, a pecking order and expectations for interaction will be established: who is the expert, the one whom others will defer to (usually the leader but not always), who will give answers to questions, who is the “smart one,” “the dumb one,” “the joker,” etc.

Intelligence is therefore performed based on established codes or stereotypes of what it should look like. Being clearly articulate, clever, displaying focus and being able to solve difficult problems are all generally seen to be signs of intelligence. Meanwhile, to lose one’s train of thought, to trail off or get lost in tangential ideas, or to not be able to find a word or answer are all considered to be traits of lesser intellectual standing. Clearly there is a tendency to equate the ability to communicate effectively, and to be able to put thoughts into words, with intelligence. To perform discursive-thought is to play high-status. It is seen as showing intelligent thought, reason, objectivity and focus. Meanwhile when image-sensation is performed it is considered a low-status orientation; being unfocused, introspective and tangential to what is at hand.

Education

Think of the way in which we are trained in school, and in many work and social settings, to focus our attention almost exclusively on the narrative; on what is being said.

Whether it is a lecture or a group discussion, we are expected to be following along. This means to attend to the “text”; to what is being presented as the story or group narrative. Yet, to follow along is not to passively receive the text, we also must be actively mirroring such a narrative in our minds—following the shape of it along with the speaker(s).

To not follow along is to put oneself at risk. If a teacher calls on you, you will need to be able to respond as though you were listening. If you have allowed yourself to daydream then you will be surprised. It can be easy to follow tangential thoughts away from a lecture and to let memories enter into awareness rather than actively following along. This is sensation-awareness taking over when there is a gap in interest (or something happening in the memory that is more compelling). But if it becomes apparent that you are daydreaming, either through your body language or by not knowing an answer, you may well receive a reprimand, become embarrassed (shamed) or receive some form of discipline.

We learn to prepare for such surprises, to ensure that our attention is able to capture what is needed in order to *perform attention* within such situations that school and work life have put us in. If we have a tendency to lose interest or to trail off into memory when we are supposed to be listening, we may learn to pretend; to fake it. This means that, when caught in sensation-awareness when we were expected to be “listening,” it is possible to pick up on clues—on the recent, partially heard fragments—and quickly re-locate ourselves within the text-environment. This allows us to respond in a somewhat believable way, as though we had been paying attention. Socially, it is important to be able to locate yourself quickly within a discursive situation.

While daydreaming or a wandering mind can be a handicap in situations like this, it is not always problematic or undesirable. In fact, these are the hallmarks of sensation-awareness, where memory-sensation can become active in the moment, allowing for fantasy, imaginative exploration and original connections to form. Such sensation-awareness is a key component in creative thought, spontaneity and any attempt at original composition. It is necessary for one to be able to generate works of art such as fiction, poetry, lyrical music, visual arts and more. Yet, although such processes are the source of a great deal of valuable thought, our experiences often train us to reframe such ideas *as though they had come out of controlled, discursive thought processes*.

Clearly, there is a social bias to holding the self in a discursive orientation. This has been necessary to maintain order in the standardized worlds of work and education. How individuals think—how they hold their awareness within consciousness—has had to focus and orient itself towards text, and to keep image-sensation out of awareness. This not only affects how people orient their thought, but also how they *value* their thought processes.

To be required to “pay attention” all day long, and over many years, has effects on an individual’s inner world; on their sense of self and ideas about how one should *be* in the world. Holding attention exclusively in a discursive orientation teaches the inner self to devalue its creativity; it’s imagination. It forces a suppression which has effects on the psyche. These imbalances affect everyone, but some individuals will be more affected—particularly if they are naturally creative, curious and introspective.

It can be quite problematic to consider one aspect of thought as more valuable or legitimate than the others. If the mind becomes overly cautious, preventing thought from

running its natural course, problems can develop. In these cases, the repressed images or actions can be plunged out of awareness forcefully, where one will find that they do not disappear but return in disguised or distorted forms (as we will see with Jung). Yet, if the goal is to develop an artistic voice and to maximize creativity, then engagement with image-sensation may be a necessity. This is not to suggest that one must only focus on sensation to the exclusion of other aspects of experience. Quite the contrary, the suggestion is that sensation-awareness needs to be integrated into a healthy creative environment in a balanced way.

Mistrust of Sensation

Generally, sensation is considered to be something that is indulged in private. It is to be kept personal (hidden), especially if it is of a bodily or sexual nature. In fact, any physical sensation can become socially inappropriate if one becomes absorbed in it and stops attending to the situation around them. Think of the scene from “When Harry Met Sally”, when she actively enjoyed her food to the point where her taste sensation blended perfectly into codes of sexuality. Or, sadly, in cases of people who suffer from schizophrenia and may be entirely focused on inner sensations to the exclusion of outer reality. The extreme focus on sensation (or not being able to distinguish it from perception) results in the loss of awareness of interpersonal borders, as well as clear definitions and distinctions between things. This is because sensation is always aiming to dissolve difference in favor of a wholeness. In extreme cases, this can lead to problems perceiving personal space, interpersonal codes and rules about how to interact (as well as confusion of internal and external, dream and reality, self and other).

The fear of losing such distinction, or the ability to distinguish such things, is a major fear in our society, almost to the point of it being a paranoia. Consider the number of movies or books that deal with loss of reality. Whether this loss is due to technology altering consciousness or losing touch because of mental illness, our legends include many, many examples of protagonists who venture into creative, imaginative or fantastic worlds and in doing so lose their sanity (which is also sometimes part of a healing process).

Consider the stories of popular movies: Fight club, A Beautiful Mind, eXistenz, Lost Highway, Jacob's Ladder, Inception; books: Neuromancer (Gibson), City of Glass (Auster), Breakfast of Champions (Vonnegut), Naked Lunch (Burroughs); or various television series: Star Trek, Black Mirror, The Outer Limits, The Twilight Zone, Mr. Robot, etc. This is by no means an exhaustive list. There is a general anxiety in our culture about the fragility of discursive reality. In such stories, anxieties are revealed about the risks posed by technology (virtual reality, artificial intelligence, nanorobots) and poor mental health (which itself may be seen as a response to technology and the declining state of the world).

Our culture is full of warnings against allowing sensation into awareness without controlling it or at least keeping a grounding in reality on the journey. Here, the discursive is equated with "reality," but we may note that *discourse* is itself only a tool. We use it to navigate and negotiate our relationship with the real, but it is not *the real* in and of itself. The descriptions of things are not the same as the things: one is text and the other is the things in themselves. The true fear involved is not the *loss of reality*, but the *loss of discourse*—which is certainly not nothing—but it is not the same thing as losing access to reality. The loss being feared involves our attachment to the essential role that text plays in the maintenance of order

(and of our status). It organizes what we have, where we stand and how we may interact with our world.

The subtext here is that, not only is indulging in image-sensation low-status and unintelligent, but it is actually dangerous. It threatens to plunge us into chaos if we are not careful. In fact, this was Freud's position regarding the unconscious and the need to control libidinal forces that would upset the stability of civilization if individuals were to let themselves get out of control (and here we can note that the libido is an aspect of the psyche that is tied and entangled quite clearly with sensation).

Performative Thought and the Unconscious

This chapter has aimed to show that *not being creative* is often a choice that is made for social reasons: to maintain status and to position oneself as safe, normal and intelligent. This can cause individuals to get confused about what kind of thinking is acceptable or desirable. As a result of such critiques, they may judge their thoughts harshly and throw away valuable creative insights. These are serious problems for developing a discourse and methodology of image-sensation and catastrophe. To understand how image-sensation can contribute to knowledge means a somewhat radical undoing of entrenched ideas about what is considered intelligence⁸.

It is important that—as we advocate for the integration of sensation into awareness, in a conscious effort to restore balance—this does not mean putting sensation to work for the

⁸ It is acknowledged here that such challenges to the dominant discourse of knowledge exist and are active in the various fields of philosophy and theory, though these ideas typically do not circulate widely outside of their specialized areas.

goals of the “intellect” or discursive self. Rather, it means that together such aspects of the self can enhance each other’s efforts and allow the individual to achieve more (self-realization).

In the next chapter, we will plunge into the unconscious, and inquire further into what dangers may lie underneath if we are to follow sensation into the unknown areas of the psyche. Do we need to be afraid of the loss of reality and does it mean letting go of discursive control over our world?

7. Jung, the Unconscious, Fear

In the previous chapter, we observed that sensation-awareness is held back, at least in part, because of socially trained behaviors and the fears associated with it. In particular, there is a worry that such modes of awareness can open up the self to dangers: whether it be social blunders, revealing hidden aspects of the self or more serious concerns about the ability of the individual to maintain their grasp on reality. All of these anxieties are based on a general mistrust of the unconscious. But what actually is the unconscious? How does it relate to sensation-awareness in art-making? Is the fear of the unconscious a legitimate one?

Unconscious vs. Sensation

We first need to disentangle the concepts of *sensation* and the *unconscious*, because they can become conflated with one another. When we speak of a fear of the unconscious, we tend to associate this with the ways we engage in sensation-awareness; for instance, in fantasy, imagination or (its more concerning version,) psychosis.

By unconscious, we mean thought and memory which is fully outside of our present awareness. This is simply whatever we are not holding in attention, in this moment. It includes all concepts, ideas and images which we have experienced, but we are not currently aware of or thinking about. Such memories always continue to exist and are able to make their way to awareness, but are currently “out of mind”. Bergson argued that it is not merely *some* memories which are retained in the unconscious, but *all* memory. The entire past of an

individual is always active, bearing in on the present moment and influencing thought and action, although we are not aware of most of it.

Sensation, however, is the aspect of the psyche that always points towards the wholeness of experience. Presenting as image, it aims for its own completeness, as *sense*. While image-sensation is non-discursive, it is not necessarily unconscious. It can be either conscious or unconscious, but we may tend to refer to it as though it was unconscious in either case. This is because we often don't have the words to speak such thoughts, to turn what has been thought as an image-sensation into the "legitimate thought" of a text.

When we remember the face of a loved one, for example, it may be difficult to describe what we "see" in words. We only have an overall impression of the likeness, not the specifics. To try to capture such an image by, for instance, trying to draw it out on paper shows how fleeting our awareness of it is. The imagined likeness is not precise enough to trace out in such a way, because we can only conceive of the whole, not the parts. But, whereas we may not be able to speak the image, it is nonetheless experienced *consciously*. Calling up the likeness brought it into our awareness, moving the image from unconscious to conscious states, and back.

Activating the image in the present can cause all sorts of related thoughts and memories to present themselves, following the direction of the initial memory. In this way, sensation can be a bridge to the unconscious, beginning a daydream, fantasy or "trip down memory lane". But such a triggering of the unconscious is not exclusive to image-sensation. It can be brought about by any thought or situation. Discursive thought will similarly trigger an array of memory, but it gives the illusion of having control over what sort of memories come forward. Saying the

word is understood by the ego as having “requested” the related thoughts, ideas or information. In fact, “daydreaming” can easily be mixtures of sensations and words, as we describe and explain our own memories back to ourselves while reliving them. The distinction is much less clear than we may have initially thought.

Freud’s vs. Jung’s Unconscious

For Freud, the unconscious was something which needed to be controlled. The goal of revealing the contents of the unconscious in psychoanalysis was to uncover troubling thoughts in order to define, classify, and take control over the way they operated in the psyche. Freud’s unconscious was wild, dangerous and deeply troubling. For Jung however, the unconscious is a natural part of the psyche and should be understood as neither negative nor positive, but merely a part of the self. Jung saw the darkness of the unconscious as neutral. It had no absolute truth in terms of being good or bad, destructive or productive, but rather was something natural:

I was never able to agree with Freud that the dream is a facade behind which its meaning lies hidden—a meaning already known but maliciously, so to speak, withheld from consciousness. To me dreams are a part of nature, which harbors no intention to deceive, but expresses something as best it can, just as a plant grows or an animal seeks its food as best it can. These forms of life, too, have no wish to deceive our eyes, but we may deceive ourselves because our eyes are shortsighted. Or we hear amiss because our ears are rather deaf—but it is

not our ears that wish to deceive us. Long before I met Freud I regarded the unconscious, and dreams, which are its direct exponents, as natural processes to which no arbitrariness can be attributed, and above all no legerdemain. I knew no reasons for the assumption that the tricks of consciousness can be extended to the natural processes of the unconscious. On the contrary, daily experience taught me what intense resistance the unconscious opposes to the tendencies of the conscious mind. (Jung MDR 162)

There is no need to mistrust the unconscious for Jung, because it is not malicious or deceptive, but rather an essential aspect of the self that has a purpose and function. The strange and often confusing images that it presents are not intended to undermine the order of the ego consciousness, but rather to speak in the best way that it can—as symbols of what is missing and needed for whatever the (larger, complete) self truly desires.

If the unconscious is causing mistakes, errors or self-sabotage (as in Freudian slips, etc.), it does so in order to restore something that the ego is neglecting, fighting or ignoring despite the clues that it is important. For Jung, what the unconscious offers is always needed, though not always in the form that it immediately appears. In order for the unconscious to be incorporated into life, it has to be transformed, symbolically.

For Jung, when the individual splits its awareness into an ego which it sees as “the self” and the unconscious, which it sees as “other,” it will always be divided and in conflict with itself. One has to understand that the unconscious is the self, also. One of the goals of his version of psychoanalysis was to understand the *shadow self*. The shadow is the dark side of being that one doesn’t admit. We may see this as destructive and working against us, but for Jung the

conflict that the shadow brings is always necessary for the wholeness of the true self. This is realized by transforming the life of the individual in a way that returns the shadow to having a place within that life.

This does not mean to always literally perform the actions that the unconscious suggests, but to interpret the sense behind them—and incorporate them symbolically. One has to see their role within that individual's own symbolic order, as something that holds a meaning within their own system of meaning. Only then can it be integrated. For example, to interpret an image of violence, there is a need to discover what aspects of the patient's life are symbolized by the target of the violence, and what actions could symbolically satisfy the desire to "attack" it.

For Jung, there is a fundamental indeterminism that must be brought into both the analysis of the patient and interpreting one's own inner life. Whereas for Freud, there was truth and absolute meaning (behind dreams, etc.) which he could interpret with his theory, for Jung the patient had to be taken on his own terms. He had to allow the patient's story to unfold according to its own logic, even when he was dealing with a psychotic or schizophrenic individual, whose reality he knew to be false.

Repression

In earlier chapters, we mentioned that there are always aspects of experience that are suppressed, and that such things do not cease to be, but are always still present but inactive. While this is a normal process that is necessary to make experience sensible, Freud explained that certain types of memory can become problematic when they are interpreted by the psyche

as troubling or unwanted. While some types of memories are able to circulate freely between the conscious and unconscious as needed, when there is painful or disturbing emotion attached such memories can activate the defence mechanisms of the psyche:

The simplest place to start is with the notion of defence. Freud argued in his early work of the 1890s that most aspects of human suffering were linked to how we defend ourselves against disturbing thoughts or images. If we have experienced a traumatic situation or had an unpalatable thought, we tend to do something about it. We can't just keep it in consciousness, where it would continue to affect us, so we try to transform it. The most obvious way of doing this is simply to forget that it ever happened. We apply an amnesia to what is too unbearable for us to remember. Everyone is familiar with this on an everyday level, where an upset or argument can be swiftly obliterated from memory.

Although it is usually possible to remember an everyday tiff with some prompting, Freud believed that more fundamental traumas and disturbing trains of thought cannot be accessed so readily. They have been buried so deeply that they won't obligingly appear when we search for them. To find them, however, there are clues: in place of the forgotten memory, a symptom appears, like a ghost that keeps on coming back. This could be a phobia, a tic, a headache, an obsessive thought, a paralysis or any other form of mental or physical intrusion into our lives. Usually unexplainable medically, the symptom troubles us, yet we have no conscious knowledge of its cause. (Leader, 35)

While most thought that is defensively held out of attention will not cause a problem, when it crosses a certain threshold of intensity, the individual will find there becomes a need to deal with it. This is possible through productive means, but there is also the danger of the transformation of the idea into something else, via repression, projection or displacement. In cases where the individual simply cannot accept the thought—*it is unthinkable*—it can develop into more serious forms of mental illness.

Within our investigation, what we want to note is that when sensation-awareness suggests ideas that seem unusual, it is communicating that there is something that has been lost—and the unconscious is trying to incorporate this back into the present reality. We may also note that if we attempt to hold ourselves strictly within logical, discursive engagement with paintings (or essays, texts, etc.), then we may find that the sensation aspects of our awareness do in fact become unconscious, and play out in the work in ways that we did not intend or (consciously) desire.

Theory and the Subject

Jung felt that a patient had to be taken as the expert in his (or her) own reality—and that his process was one of treating individuals. He made the distinction between theories and individuals:

Now whether it is a question of understanding a fellow human being or of self-knowledge, I must in both cases leave all theoretical assumptions behind me. Since scientific knowledge not only enjoys universal esteem but, in the eyes

of modern man, counts as the only intellectual and spiritual authority, understanding the individual obliges me to commit the *lèse majesté*, so to speak, of turning a blind eye to scientific knowledge. This is a sacrifice not lightly made, for the scientific attitude cannot rid itself so easily of its sense of responsibility. And if the psychologist happens to be a doctor who wants not only to classify his patient scientifically but also to understand him as a human being, he is threatened with a conflict of duties between the two diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive attitudes of knowledge on the one hand and understanding on the other. This conflict cannot be solved by an either/or but only by a kind of two-way thinking: doing one thing while not losing sight of the other. (Jung US 496)

In order to understand a patient, Jung wrote, it is necessary to suspend knowledge, and to simply enter into their world and see what it is. All theories about how the psyche should function—and according to what “logic”—didn’t matter if he couldn’t meet the patient as an equal. Of course, this suspension of theory did not mean entering the situation without any tools, or losing control over one’s own faculties. Rather, it meant engaging with the patient’s reality as it was. Once the two established a common ground—a shared space among equals—it could be possible to see how a theory could be applied. The theory could not be imposed (trying to change the patient’s mind to the “truth” for instance) but the theorist had to see how it could help; by seeing where the patient was stuck and perhaps helping to restore movement in those areas.

We may say that, similarly, the artist should be seen as the expert in his or her own reality as well. We can draw parallels between the analyst seeking to draw out insight and understanding from the unconscious depths of the patient, and the artist seeking to bring an imaginative vision to reality. In the case of the artist, whether it be a novelist, painter or musician, there are benefits to similarly approaching the process as both theoretical (and having general strategies) while also needing to be entirely subjective (reacting only to *this* situation or work, and what it needs).

In fact, to move between theory and *feeling* is the very task we are trying to achieve. To unfold discursively and through sensation together is to hold the general and the specific together in ways that are not in opposition but complementary.

Opening up to Unconscious: practice and teaching

Artists and art educators are not psychologists, obviously, so how much awareness of these things should be involved in those practices? What we are suggesting is that an artistic practice should involve an awareness of the ways that the art is functioning in relation to the psyche on more than one level. An authentic practice cannot divorce itself from engaging the unconscious, and must be balanced in terms of orientations of awareness.

For instance, a work that does not include sensation-awareness is likely to, in fact, embody its sensation in a way that is unintended (and unconsidered) by the artist who hasn't acknowledge the role of such a sensation within their work. As we see with repression, when we hold something out of our awareness, it makes its way back into the process either in a disguised (transformed) way or as a projection (externalized).

8. Concerns About Working with The Unconscious (in practice and teaching)

The Unconscious could suggest *anything*...should I (or my students) just do *anything*?

This is a valid concern, and we will try to establish rough criteria for how and why we should give *any* suggestion that comes forward a reasonable consideration.

First, there is no such thing as a random thought. What seems to be ill-considered, cliché, obvious, or based on things that are inappropriate for serious consideration may in fact be exactly what is needed by the individual at this point in their development (as an artist, as a person and as a member of a community).

Is it OK to paint Spider-Man?

Let us consider the example of an undergraduate art student who, in response to an open-ended project, proposes to paint Spider-Man.

We can give the benefit of the doubt, and assume that the student's unconscious has suggested this idea because it feels this is something that is needed. They say that the idea "feels right" and seems to legitimately think this is something that should be explored. This suggests that there is an underlying *feeling* that Spider-Man will allow them to investigate some aspect of their experience.

While the student may not be able to articulate why exactly Spider-man is important, this does not indicate that there is no reason for it. To ask, "why Spider-Man? What is the critical reasoning and intention here?" is to put questions to the individual's self that it may not be ready to understand. Understanding why the symbol was chosen is a process that may

require modes of investigative inquiry that need to be developed before such questions can be answered.

To put the idea immediately under tests of its discursive logic could undermine a process which may be intended (by the unconscious) to unfold in stages, and over a period of month or years. While the unconscious is suggesting symbols that may move the individual towards its self-realization in the form of images and motor diagrams, these need to be externalized into the real world before they can be processed (into words and intelligent reflection). To see how ideas work, they may need to be unfolded in space and time, experimentally. One cannot foresee all of the ways in which the idea will interact with the world, and its complexity, until it actually plays out in the real.

Is the choice simply naïve? Is it ill-considered and based on uncritically accepting the codes delivered by popular media and entertainment? Perhaps. But, if this is the place that they are in their development, perhaps that is where they need to begin from. To start with the (clichéd) visual reference that is known may be a way to begin to question what has been taken for granted. Would it be helpful to deny that space the potential to expand and grow, from what it is?

When asked about the reason for using Spider-Man, they may say something such as, “I just think he looks really cool and it was my favorite movie.” Does the lack of depth in the answer confirm that there is no real reason why we should take the idea seriously? Let us assume that, while the student may say that there is no deeper meaning or significance to the symbol, there are always multiple pathways that an unconscious suggestion can be followed, and that the unconscious significance is of no less importance than those which the student

may be able to put into words. It can be argued that an educator's role is to draw out these possible reasons and to assist the student in recognizing and articulating them. The goal here would be to assist as they expand the vocabulary that is accessible to them to explore more personal aspects of such a symbol.

Let us speculate on what might be going on in the case of the Spider-Man painting; and what types of thought process and reasoning could be occurring outside of the reasons that are consciously given by the student's statements. According to our orientations of awareness, we could find three different directions that thought might follow. In this case the symbol has at least three purposes, of which they may have only recognized the first:⁹

1. **Action Orientation**—they find the character visually interesting; they enjoy the experience of engaging with this character

2. **Discursive Orientation**—Spider-Man represents “good” in the world and maintains the balance where “evil” threatens to overwhelm and create chaos if it is not kept in check. Logically, he is a symbol of certainty and knowing what is right or wrong.

3. **Sensation Orientation**—They feel unsafe in some way, perhaps because of major changes in life (adult responsibilities), and the uncomfortable ideas presented in art school. Spider-Man is nostalgic, comforting and gives a sense of stability.

⁹ Note: Since this is only a hypothetical case, based loosely on experiences in similar situations, we can speculate about the types of ideas that they may be thinking unconsciously in the situation.

Unconsciously, the symbol of Spider-man represents aspects of experience that may need to be reevaluated or reorganized in order to make sense of a new experience. In the art class, there may be feelings of dislocation or of not feeling certain in processes which used to be comforting. Now the student is feeling unsafe and as though chaos is threatening stability. Spider-Man, is brought in as a stabilizing symbol. They like the character and find that the stories provide a sense of stability and order. They understand that the character represents “good” in the world and maintains the balance where “evil” threatens to overwhelm and create chaos if it is not kept in check. Perhaps they are displacing the threat by incorporating a symbol that fights against unknown.

What we do not see is the event horizon on which the unconscious intelligence has placed this as a step in an investigation. What is the long-term process? What needs to happen, and in what order, for the inner world and outer situation to come back into balance and harmony? How does such a small gesture, as incorporating the Spider-Man back into the symbolic order allow for a bridge to be built between what is known now and what is possible to know but currently unthinkable?

We do not see that the unconscious is also reorganizing its own system of symbols, trying to determine how to relate to the new environment. It is not merely the use of the symbol as it initially appears (as a stabilizing force), but also working through the deconstruction of that symbol. It needs to fragment and rearrange the symbol, coming to understand how it is operating and why.

Through critiquing the painting with a group of other artists, they come to see how the symbol is operating more clearly and to bring deeper questions to the symbol: “is this a positive stereotype?” “Are good and evil as clear and definite as this type of story suggests?” “Are there systemic hierarchies implied or displayed within them (i.e. men rescuing helpless women, racist tropes, etc.)?” Once such questioning is begun, then a new set of investigations grows out from the original one. The symbolic order is changed, shifted and restored to a different balance. Over the course of time, what began as a naïve investigation may grow into a deeper understanding of the self as it relates to the larger culture and the symbolic order.

The question for the art educator is, at what point is it helpful to put critical pressure on the idea or experiment? How does one recognize whether the idea is of importance to the unconscious of the individual? The students themselves may not be willing to defend their idea if it is seen to lack the required explanation. At some point a critical understanding of the idea will become necessary and helpful, but if introduced too soon, then there is a risk of shutting down the imagination of the student.

If Spider-Man is dismissed as “inappropriate,” “childish” or “stupid,” then they will be unlikely to put forward any other ideas which they think will be met with similar reactions. To reject the idea to paint Spider-Man, or similar ideas, forecloses that possibility of a longer-term and complex unfolding or restructuring of the symbolic order, which may actually be necessary for the art student to be able to integrate the codes of art which are being taught as additional tools with which to explore their world.

The idea that we should follow unconscious suggestions may be troubling for anyone who feels that decisions should be grounded in discursive logic. The proposal here is not that one should “just do whatever,” irrationally and impulsively following any thought as it occurs. What is rather being suggested is to fold sensation-awareness into a practice that also includes discursive reasoning. In such a combined effort of intelligent thinking through problems, one can suspend judgements long enough to play with ideas and see if they “have legs”—if they are able to take the practice in an interesting direction. Once the impulse is tested in this way, then at a later stage, one can begin an analysis of how and why the idea suggested itself in the moment when it appeared. At that point, it is likely that the reasons will be more apparent, because the connections will have been made.

In fact, it is argued that this is always the way the process of creation already works, but in many practices and within the discourse that surrounds it (artist statements, etc.), the text implies that the ideas, choices and edits were reasoned out before being done, when in fact they were often done intuitively—as a synthesis of already known information, technique and strategy.

When to Follow an Unconscious Suggestion

Possible criteria for whether an idea is worth pursuing or not, is that it there seems to be an agreement between all three aspects of awareness. For example, one may be able to assess that:

A. **Discursive:** “I *think* this solution will work.”

B. **Sensation:** “I *feel* it is the right direction.”

C. **Action:** “My body is *suggesting an action* to put the idea into motion.”

The idea is that, rather than subject the idea to too much critical evaluation, if there is a sense that these needs are being met, it is worth trying to see where it leads.

The Unconscious is Important

If art (as an institution) and art education doesn't take into account the fact that there are many layers involved (and often unconscious) in any practice, it risks foreclosing on meaningful processes of unfolding that may be necessary and essential. If the meaning of the work is restricted to what can be understood objectively, as a discursive element that must circulate within social or intellectual discourse (or within the circulation of objects as in commodity exchanges), then important aspects (such as the expression of the individual) may become lost, unvalued or even a source of shame.

What may be lost is too important, too essential to be ignored. There is a need for individuals to learn to use their own voice, to allow their fantasy/imagination to play out in a dialogue with the real (materiality, social/exhibition, play) and to integrate their unconscious back into the experience of the real. On the societal scale, there is a need to express collective unease, anxiety, hope and dreams. The collective unconscious will also reflect the repressed elements back to the society in ways that can be productive or counterproductive (through its stories of hope or hopelessness, meaning or meaninglessness, etc.)

We can understand then, through Jung, that the unconscious is not to be feared or dismissed. It is not a separate force that threatens from within, but rather, it *is us*. Whereas Freud suggested that inner urges needed to be dominated, for Jung they are not obstacles but messages; communications sent to consciousness in the form of symbols and analogical connections. These clues provide real information about the overall state of the psyche as it is manifested in this situation (here and now). It can hint at vital information or memories that have been lost or held inactive but which may be necessary for understanding (a bigger picture, etc.). In fact, we are never disengaged from the unconscious, since it is the very ground of our awareness, providing access to all knowledge and memory that we require to experience a meaningful reality.

Incorporating sensation-awareness in art practice does not result in a loss of agency of the self and does not threaten the stability of the discursive frameworks that we understand to be “maintaining control and order.” Contrary to such worries, sensation is part of normal and everyday experience, and is particularly useful if one desires original, innovative or unexpected solutions to problems that one is engaged with.

In order to access image-sensation (as a creative tool or otherwise), we need to appreciate that this part of our experience is meaningful and valuable. In the next chapter, we suggest that to incorporate sensation we need to also accept “play” as a valid and important approach to reality, despite messages in our culture that may lead us to avoid it.

9. Play

Since we live in a society where productivity and expertise are highly valued, *play* can be taboo. In fields where there is a need to be “playful,” such as in the arts, it is common to reframe it as activity that is necessary, serious and valuable. But what about the possibility of *play* as a goal—in and of itself? In *Playing and Reality*, D. W. Winnicott explained that play is not a frivolous matter, but a fundamental sign of an individual’s well-being and mental health. For Winnicott, in order for an individual to achieve a sense of purpose, happiness and well-being—that person needs to be able to engage with their world in a manner that feels playful and creative.

It is creative apperception more than anything else that makes the individual feel that life is worth living. Contrasted with this is a relationship to external reality which is one of compliance, the world and its details being recognized but only as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation. Compliance carries with it a sense of futility for the individual and is associated with the idea that nothing matters and that life is not worth living. In a tantalizing way many individuals have experienced just enough of creative living to recognize that for most of their time they are living uncreatively, as if caught up in the creativity of someone else, or of a machine.

This second way of living in the world is recognized as illness in psychiatric terms. In some way or other our theory includes a belief that living creatively is a healthy state, and that compliance is a sick basis for life. There is

little doubt that the general attitude of our society and the philosophic atmosphere of the age in which we happen to live contribute to this view, the view that we hold here and that we hold at the present time. We might not have held this view elsewhere and in another age. (Winnicott 65)

Creativity here is not specific to the arts, but can be a part of any interaction. Therapy is considered to be a primary arena where an individual can learn (or relearn) how to play, by engaging in interaction with between the patient and analyst, where the unconscious is allowed to manifest itself within a space that is real and interactive. This exchange can be freeing for the individual (particularly if they are able to engage in the interaction with aspects of the self that have been severely repressed).

In Winnicott's psychology, play and creativity are highly interrelated and often used interchangeably.

...I am concerned with the search for the self and the restatement of the fact that certain conditions are necessary if success is to be achieved in this search. These conditions are associated with what is usually called creativity. It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self. (Winnicott 54)

If we understand play to be essential to creativity, as Winnicott does (and Jung might agree), then certainly we must understand it to have an important role in the arts. How do we bring playfulness into art-making practices, when the discourse that surrounds them (and especially the funding) depends upon presenting the work as serious and having deliberate and concrete social benefits? How to bring play into a sphere where the stakes are high?

To play is to give the unconscious an opportunity to become active within the real, and artistic activities are certainly one space where such a meeting is possible (and even necessary). To allow the unconscious to inform action and decision is to adopt an attitude of openness and acceptance of what comes. This is a willingness to let down one's guard; to allow ideas to come out unimpeded by critical judgements and restrictions.

In terms of the model that we have been developing, we could understand play as having the function of allowing a mixing and circulation to occur between unconscious (memory) and the external reality. While this is something that always occurs, in *play* there is a loosening or softening of the automatic defense mechanisms that restricts the flow:

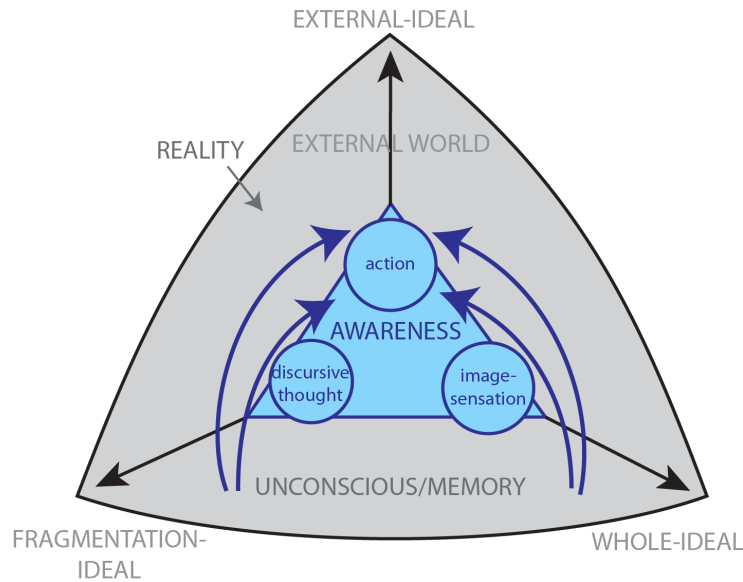


Figure 24 Play in Awareness

Thoughts or ideas normally come into contact with the external world only once they have been subjected to the judgements and restrictions of the discursive awareness (and possibly those of sensation-awareness as well, ie. based on its emotional charge, intensity). The defense mechanisms, which are habitual, protect one from danger and ensure that nothing embarrassing, shameful or inappropriate makes its way out from the imagination. In play however, the individual can relax such defenses, feeling that the reality is safe and that there is no immediate threat (of social rejection, for instance). In such a situation, there is spontaneous manifestation of creativity, through playing out of the impulses and suggestions that come from the unconscious. In this way, play may be more of an attitude towards reality than an activity. The more one is able to manifest a playful engagement with reality, the closer one may get to authenticity, where the self simply *is*, with no need for oversight (by the ego).

While play is valued in young children, it is not the typical wording that is used to frame adult activity. In adult—read, serious—activity, play is codified, and must be adapted to the

forms that are socially accepted within the society. These codes are quite stratified and rigid, and often are at odds with actually encouraging a “playful” engagement.

If play is something that can be understood to be necessary in the production of art or creative ideas, then what types of play are we employing? Are they providing enough opportunity for creative ideas to manifest? Specifically, if the unconscious is suggesting play, is it being dismissed because it has judged *the type of play* as unacceptable?

Codification of Play

There are codes of play—of how one is allowed to play—and these codes become increasingly rigid with age. In infancy and early childhood, play is valued and seen as important. A child who does not play is considered to be exhibiting a lack of development in some way, and this would be worrying. During these early phases, play can be quite imaginative, with reality being blended with thought to a degree that would be extremely troubling if observed in an adult (a child may insist that fantasies are real, that imaginary friends are actually there, that a ghost lives in the closet, etc.). Such a blending of reality and imagination is healthy, despite it having parallels to delusional thought or psychosis (in adults).

In adolescence, play becomes divided into categories, such as: sports, video games, the arts (drama, music, visual arts) and certain social situations (parties, clubs, social media). As the individual becomes acclimatized to life within the systems of labour and capital, there is more division between serious and recreational activities.

In adulthood, even video games and the arts are often looked down upon. In many communities and social circles, the range of acceptable forms of play may be very restricted

(for instance, in some groups it may be only acceptable to play via sports and using alcohol or recreational drugs). In situations such as these, where there may be social pressure to only engage in pleasurable activities through certain avenues, one may think they are meeting the needs of the self for play (as enjoyment, pleasure), but they are not. Since the activities being performed are not in line with the wants and desires of the true self, the individual may not be gaining the benefits needed from such types of play¹⁰. The unconscious may be suggesting other activities, ones which are being rejected by the individual, who is perhaps labelling them as stupid, childish or perverted.

But play is not a need that can be met by the discursive awareness (or the ego-self) by checking off a box. It is not as though watching a certain number of hours of sporting events can meet the individual's requirement for pleasurable activity. Of course, it is true that for some people, this may be enough play to meet their needs, but particularly in the case of creative individuals, there may be a need for more language of play; for more acceptable ways for individuals to allow themselves to play.

The Stereotype of the Artist

Consider how adult play is portrayed in popular culture—whether it is the aspiring artist, actor, or musician; or an adult who plays video games or collects toys—they are depicted as childish, buffoonish, self-absorbed, deluded, idiotic.

¹⁰ We could see how repeatedly engaging in “play” that doesn’t meet the needs of the individual could lead to addictive behavior. The act which is thought to meet a need is not actually providing relief, so the non-relieving, “play” act is engaged again and again.

Almost every sitcom has an “artsy” idiot and a “man-child.” A few examples are: *Life in Pieces* (Tyler, Matt)¹¹, *The Office* (Andy, Pam), *Brooklyn 99* (Gina, Terry-as-artist/writer), *Good Place* (Jason), *Arrested Development* (Tobias, Buster), *IT Crowd* (Moss, Roy), *Friends* (Phoebe), *Superstore* (Bo, Jerusha). These are people who do not readily conform to the norms of what is expected from serious, productive citizens. When they are artists (or musicians, actors, etc.) they are portrayed as absurd stereotypes: idealistic, flighty and/or illogical. The story arcs for such characters usually follow along two possibilities: either they 1. Become the best of the best, acquiring fame and fortune. This shows that their talent was, in fact, exceptional and that their “sacrifices” were merited, or 2. They find that they are “not good enough” and have to admit that their dreams were unrealistic, stupid or based in fantasy. Both of these reinforce the idea that creativity is only valid and valuable when it is the absolute best (but according to whose standards, we may ask).

In such stories, artists and people who are “playful” are seen to be easy targets. They are already low-status individuals. Taking shots at them raises the status of people who do conform to such normative standards by comparison. For individuals who are invested in the systems, they are reminded that the correct position is to perform their role as a serious, productive and docile worker, ready for deployment within systems of exchanges (capital and

¹¹ While all of these examples put “artsy” individual in a negative light, I take note in particular of the disdain that “*Life in Pieces*” treats its characters with, as completely abject and worthless so long as they are not productively working alongside their creative endeavors. There was one memorable scene where Matt had failed in his life and career, and his father sympathises with him, saying that “losing everything means you have more to gain. Without all those distractions, who knows what you are capable of?” Matt interprets this as support and says, “That’s a good point...my life can be all about focusing on my art.” to which his father quickly responds: “Oh—no, no, no; you’ve got to stop with that nonsense.”

labour). Here, it is reinforced that creative play is allowed but only if it is embedded within specialized discourse that makes it an “expertise.” One can be a collector of Star Wars memorabilia, trading cards or vintage toys, but we should not be “playing” with them.

Likewise, we can be artists, provided that we are agreeing with the codes of what is allowable and can circulate within discursive or commodity markets. Play is here reframed as productive or contemplative work, where the expert is working according to their logic and understanding. Of course, once we move away from the dominant discourse and into the specialized environment of the Artworld, we find that play is once again welcomed and valued. What is not acknowledged is that, in presenting itself to the larger society, the Artworld returns to putting its value in terms of contribution to knowledge, social benefit, which are certainly aspects of its purpose, but decidedly leaving out the aspects that are needed by the individuals involved, including activating sensation, exchange of status (acceptance of one another) and play.

This is not intended to be an extended social critique, but rather we are taking the opportunity to see (through the lens of a more critical theory), that play may be both essential to the wellbeing of all people (as Winnicott explains)—and that our cultural narratives regularly represent such a thing as abject: worthless and idiotic (and the very opposite of intelligence and reason). Play needs to be reconsidered, in particular in order to get to sensation-awareness, which certainly has a direct correlation and connection to it.

10. The Journey Must Also Be Done in Reverse

And now we begin the trip back to the main foyer.

We see Jung, sitting with a patient. They are exploring the undiscovered self, unearthing shadows like an archaeologist. He is dressed in khakis and holding digging tools and a magnifying glass to his eye. He peers into the space that we cannot access in the light of day. A single tear rolls down his cheek.

We see Bergson, mixing together a pure duration and a pure space. Like a scientist, he is holding a beaker and pouring the solution into a misty puff of smoke. We are careful not to confuse the smoke for the air around us, though there is nothing keeping them from blending into one another.

We see Mondrian and Pollock. Pollock is throwing paint at Mondrian, who sits calmly at the easel, turning the splatters into a grid. Cezanne is undulating in the background. The others ignore him because they think he is being obscene. But Bacon has taken notice of him, and they sit down together at a little espresso table on the edge of a precipice. The view is amazing and you and I wish we could stay and look for a while, but the hour has gotten late and we must make our way back.

The others are expecting us!

We travel back through the transformer, with the grid rotating like a strange puzzle whose geometry we cannot grasp or understand. But we are within it and it moves our essence from the one way of being back into the other.

We have returned to ourselves; our true selves.

Now we can speak freely again.

The foyer has changed, somehow. The model of everything has grown... or perhaps it has shrunk? Either way, it is no longer a group of many structures, but now—at least from our perspective—it seems to have become one lattice. What were strings before have crystalized, and the whole is now complete.

Remember, we were giving form to something that had no form.

* * *

This has been quite an adventure. For me, it has been six months since I welcomed you into my space, perhaps your time here has not been so long. It has been a strange experience, having you here with me. It has been different and rewarding.

Having now written the book I see things differently. The book has changed me. Perhaps that is always the case... that attempting to communicate changes the speaker.

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Appendix A: On the Materiality of the Artwork

Why did Bacon display his paintings behind glass? What did the experience of viewing through the glass add to the experience that was of importance to him? Certainly, there is the idea of distance, of keeping the violence or sensation that is implicit in the work as a comfortable proximity so that it does not become overwhelming. There is also the reflection that one sees when looking at the work, which can and often does, implicate the viewer in the experience: I see myself when I look at the work, not just the work. I see my own gaze, but also the space of the museum around me. I'm taken out of the world of the painting and back into the institution, in a cyclical awareness of artwork, self, and institutional context. It complicates the experience.

But let us explore the glass a little more.

What is a window? From one perspective, the window may be understood as a barrier, a dividing surface that restricts access to the environment that is behind it. In this way it is continuous with the walls, which prevent movement and keep the occupants contained within the space that is delineated by the architecture. On the other hand, we might understand the window as allowing access—enabling us to see what would otherwise not be seen. Rather than keeping the truth—of what is beyond the wall—hidden and secret from the occupant, it allows a certain kind of access to what is going on behind the wall. It allows access via certain sensibilities to what cannot be accessed according to others. The window, thus is the architectural in-between a wall and a door. Some aspects (light, sound, movement) are perceivable while others are not (touch, direct action).

We might say that, in general, the materiality of a painting—its surface, the evidence of layers and changes that are given by changes in brushstroke directions, its sheen—all give clues about the story of its making. It makes explicit certain relationships that may not be accessible, say in a photograph of the same work. In seeing how marks are layered, we can understand the causal relationships involved in the process: which marks are on top of which others; how does the logic unfold as a series of actions and reactions? Seeing the material, directly, enables distinctions to be made and allows us to delineate and categorize. It establishes a hierarchy (this mark is on top of that mark) and an order (this part was done after that part).

To reverse the image; to paint on the back of a plexiglass rather than on a canvas involves a collapse of this order. It is no longer possible to establish which mark is on top of which, because everything is always perceived only at the surface. It is not possible to establish sequence, because the surface is uniform. Time and distinctions are collapsed at the place where the viewer meets the painting, which is the absolute flatness of the reverse plexiglass surface. This is to undo the hierarchy of cause and effect in the painting; to level out its perception into the all-at-once, which is the pure image-experience. The reality of the painting here is an attempt to recreate *experience*, where there is no cause and effect, no duration, no outside of *this*: it merely is.

If the material experience is being suppressed, it is the image that comes through more forcefully. It orients attention towards an interior rather than an exterior; towards the meeting of unconscious and the situation. Whose unconscious? The artist's or the viewer's? It doesn't matter; there is no need for such distinctions. The painting is neither and both; something to be experienced.

The window here is a window that restricts access to causal relationships and haptic sense, but which allows access to certain things that are hidden and otherwise inaccessible: the unconscious; the image-sensation; the all at once sense of being in a pure duration.